



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 1501, Hartford, CT 06103

DATE: February 3, 2023

RE: General Letter No. 31 – Working Test Period Extension for Bargaining Unit Employees

PURPOSE

A number of questions concerning Working Test Period Extensions have prompted the development and distribution of this General Letter. DAS Memorandum No. 96-99 announced the Decentralization of Extension of Working Test Periods; however, this General Letter replaces that document. Therefore, DAS Memorandum No. 96-99 is abolished.

This General Letter is provided to:

- Emphasize that agencies benefit when correctly calculating and regularly reviewing working test period expiration dates
- Clarify the length of time a working test period shall or may be extended when an employee has been absent from work during the working test period
- Advise agencies on the appropriate method of implementing working test period extensions including information concerning decentralization

Decentralization of Extension of Working Test Periods

In September 1996, the Commissioner of Administrative Services delegated authority to agencies to review and approve requests for extension of working test periods for bargaining unit and managerial employees. In order to comply with this authorization, agencies must ensure the following criteria are met:

- Pertinent bargaining unit contracts must be reviewed to be sure extensions are made within the appropriate contractual language and
- individuals must be notified in writing prior to the extension of the working test period.
- Individuals must be counseled prior to any extension of the working test period due to performance deficiencies.
- Some contracts require Union approval prior to any extension of the working test period.

This General Letter supersedes the General Letter on this same topic dated August 22, 2000.

POLICY

Extensions of Working Test Periods are limited to the following situations:

1. When an employee is placed on sick leave for more than fifteen (15) working days during the working test period, the working test period may be extended for the same number of working days charged to sick leave.
2. When an employee is placed on Workers' Compensation during a working test period, the working test period may be extended for the same number of working days the employee is out due to Workers'

Compensation. (Some contracts expressly provide that periods on Workers' Compensation do not count towards completion of the working test period.)

3. When the employee is placed on a leave of absence without pay for more than three (3) days during the working test period, the working test period shall be extended for the same number of working days the employee is on unpaid leave.
4. When an employee transfers to another agency in the same class having only partially completed the working test period, the new appointing authority may allow the balance of the working test period to be completed. Or, the appointing authority may extend the working test period based on other reasons described in this letter.
5. When an employee's performance during a working test period indicates that performance is steadily improving but has not been entirely satisfactory, an extension may be requested on those rare occasions where the extension would allow a more extensive evaluation. Agencies must document prior employee counseling and performance evaluations in these situations.

SCOPE

This General Letter applies to all Executive Branch bargaining unit employees. This General Letter applies to all classified employees in the Executive Branch under the jurisdiction of the DAS.

REQUIREMENTS

Documenting Working Test Period Extensions and Expiration Dates

All extensions of working test periods must be properly documented in CORE-CT for CORE-CT agencies. (Non-CORE-CT agencies must record extensions of working test period in the personnel system utilized.)

It is important to note historical information is reviewed when it involves an employee completing a working test period. If the historical data reveals the employee has taken unpaid leave or has been absent due to workers' compensation during the working test period, the CORE-CT auditor must calculate the length of time the employee was absent from work. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of the action and the number of leave days (or the number of days the employee was out on Workers' Compensation, depending on the contract) the action will not be approved.

An example: An employee's original working test period expiration date is July 18, 2000. They have taken four (4) unpaid leave days during the working test period. The expiration date must be changed to July 22, 2000. Upon successful completion of the working test period, the agency must submit an action effective July 23, 2000 (the day immediately following the working test period expiration date) in order to appropriately record the employee's completion of the working test period. The same is true for an employee who has taken more than fifteen (15) sick leave days during their working test period.

As indicated in the above example, it is essential Human Resources staff are notified when situations impacting working test period expiration dates occur. Again, if an employee is absent from work due to any of the following circumstances, his/her working test period expiration date **must** be recalculated:

- Unpaid leave (more than three (3) days)
- Periods of absence as specified in the particular contract

This type of notification to Human Resources along with the proper calculation of an extended working test period expiration date and the timely submittal of an action will ensure all employees serve a full working test period. We will continue to provide assistance to agencies and will work with you and your staff to achieve this result.

POST AUDIT

All transactions under this General Letter are subject to post-audit by DAS HR Policy and Information Systems Unit. Agencies must provide a copy of the letter to the employee advising the employee of the extension of their working test period and the reason for the extension at the time of the annual post audit.

OTHER

Please contact the assigned DAS HR Professional or DAS HR Policy and Information Systems Unit for questions regarding this policy.