

Leave of Absence Frequently Asked Questions for Virtua Employees

Category	Question	Answer
General	What is a Leave of Absence (LOA)?	A Leave of Absence is time missed from work that is governed by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), The New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA), The New Jersey Security and Financial Empowerment Act (“NJ SAFE Act”), P.L., contractual agreements and Virtua policies.
	How do I apply for a Leave of Absence?	<p>Any leave of absence requested by an employee begins with informing his/her manager and the completion of the on-line request for leave of absence form found on the VINE. To access the form, go to the VINE home page > Human Resources > Request a Leave of Absence or apply on our external application at LOA.Virtua.org (does not require Citrix)</p> <p>Note: employees who are unable to apply online should call the HR LOA team for assistance in completing the request.</p>
	What types of LOA are available?	<p>Generally speaking there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous medical leaves for your own serious health condition • Continuous family leaves for a qualified family member’s serious health condition • Intermittent leaves for serious health conditions for yourself or a qualified family member • Continuous or intermittent leave of absences related to Domestic Violence • Military leaves and • Personal leaves of absence <p>The type of leave is determined and approved based the set of circumstances, the request for LOA and a qualification analysis by the LOA team</p>
	What criteria are used to determine if a LOA request is approved?	Your current situation and needs, the length of your employment, the hours you worked over the past 12 months from the start date of the leave of absence, prior leaves of absences that you have taken and other relevant information based on your current situation.
	What does position protection (sometimes called job protection) mean?	Position protection, or job protection, means that you are able to return to work to the same position and status that you held prior to your leave beginning. You will be informed at the beginning of your leave whether your LOA includes position protection. In general, employees are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks position protection in a rolling 12 month period.
	How much notice do I need to give when requesting a leave of absence?	An employee is required to give 30 days or more notice to their manager and submit the online request form for all non-emergent leave of absences.

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		<p>All emergent leaves of absence should be communicated to management as soon as reasonably possible (generally the same day or next business day). If you are in a position where you are unable to apply for the leave of absence online, you must contact the leave of absence team for assistance.</p> <p>Note: A medical certification must be received by the LOA team before any non-emergent leave of absence can commence. For all emergent leave of absences, you will have 15 days from the time you applied for your leave of absence.</p>
	<p>What if I don't qualify for leave under the FMLA or the NJFLA law or I have exhausted by FMLA/NJFLA time?</p>	<p>Virtua offers a MLOA which is a medical leave of absence. This leave is a continuous medical leave due to your own serious health condition.</p> <p>MLOA does not guarantee that you will return to the same position held prior to the commencement of the leave of absence.</p> <p>Note: MLOA may not be used to care for family members and may not be used intermittently.</p>
	<p>What are the eligibility requirements for a Personal Leave of Absence?</p>	<p>A Personal Leave of Absence is a Virtua policy not governed by the FMLA/NJFLA law. To be eligible, you must be in a full or part-time status and employed a minimum of 6 months. A Personal Leave of Absence may not be used for a leave needed for your own serious illness or injury.</p> <p>You must submit the request in writing utilizing the electronic application on the VINE and must have manager approval. The leave of absence must be longer than 7 days and shorter than 60 days, unless stipulated under contractual agreements.</p> <p>Note: Eligible employees are permitted ONE Personal Leave of Absence every rolling 12 month period. Additionally, per diems are not eligible unless otherwise stipulated under contractual agreements.</p>
	<p>What paperwork must be returned to the leave of absence team in order to process my leave?</p>	<p>You will receive a Leave of absence packet after applying for a leave of absence. You may elect to receive this paperwork by mail, email, or you can print the required paperwork which is located at the end of the LOA application. In this packet you will receive a check list to help you process the required paperwork. Please follow the checklist to ensure completion of all requirements.</p>

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		All medical leaves of absence and family leaves of absence to care for a sick family member require a “Medical Certification by Health Care Provider form” completed in its entirety and submitted to the leave of absence team within 15 days of the time of application.
	What if I fail to submit the Certification by Health Care Provider form?	Failure to submit the Certification by Health Care Provider form, cure any incomplete deficiencies or comply with other Leave requirements may result in you being out of work on an unauthorized Leave, which may result in discipline, up to and including termination.
	How will I know if my LOA request has been APPROVED?	<p>You will receive a letter entitled “THE RESPONSE TO LEAVE OF ABSENCE”. This is the formal letter the HR LOA Team will send you notifying you of your eligibility under the FMLA/NJFLA Law, contractual agreements and Virtua policy. This form also explains your responsibilities while on LOA. This notice will include the number of weeks/hours of job protection you are entitled to under FMLA/NJFLA, contractual agreements, Virtua policies, and Military Law.</p> <p>** Leave eligibility is provisional upon receipt of required documentation.</p> <p>***You and your manager will be contacted by the leave of absence team if your leave request is denied and you are not permitted to take the leave of absence you requested.</p>
	What responsibility do I have to communicate with my manager and the LOA team during my LOA?	You are required to make periodic updates to the LOA team and your manager when you receive updated information from the treating physician(s). This includes all leave of absence changes such as extensions of leave of absence and return to work updates. These communications are done verbally or through email, however, all supporting documentation must be sent to the leave of absence team.
	What if I cannot return to work as planned?	You will be required to fill out a Request to Extend form if unable to return when originally anticipated. Supporting medical documentation must be submitted with the extension form for medical leave of absences.
	What paperwork does the leave of absence team need prior to my returning to work?	If you are returning to full duty, you will submit the “Return to Work” form and your physician’s clearance note. (Family and personal leaves do not require physician notes) This should be presented to the leave team 5 days prior to your return date or as soon as possible.
	Will I be able to return to work with restrictions?	If your physician is returning you to work with restrictions (i.e., shortened length of work shift, physical restrictions, etc.), you will still need your “Return to Work” form and your physician’s note must include the following:

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific work restrictions or limitations; (please note that general terms such as “light duty” are not acceptable) • Anticipated duration of restrictions • Next follow-up appointment date with physician <p>Once the LOA team receives the Return to Work form and an acceptable physician’s clearance note indicating the restrictions, the LOA team will email your manager the details of those restrictions. The LOA team will ask if your manager has the ability to accommodate the restriction(s) and time frame(s) associated with them. If your manager can accommodate the restrictions, you must be seen at Virtua at Work for a “Fit for Duty” evaluation. Once cleared from VAW, you may return to work. If your manager cannot accommodate your restrictions, you will continue with your leave of absence until the restrictions change or are lifted returning you to work full duty.</p>
	<p>Can I take a leave because my spouse, son, daughter or parent is on active military duty or is being activated?</p>	<p>Effective 1/28/08, the FMLA was expanded to provide leave when certain family members are called to military duty. FMLA-eligible employees are entitled to 12 weeks of FMLA due to a spouse, son, daughter or parent being on active duty or having been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces. Leave may be used for any “qualifying exigency” arising out of the service member’s current tour of active duty or because the service member is notified of an impending call to duty. To access this leave, a copy of the service member’s orders will need to be provided as well as a description of the exigency.</p>
	<p>Can I take a leave because my spouse, son, daughter, parent or nearest blood relative has suffered an injury/illness while on active duty?</p>	<p>Effective 1/28/08, the FMLA was expanded to provide leave to care for certain injured service members. FMLA-eligible employees are entitled to 26 weeks of FMLA leave during a single 12-month period for a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or nearest blood relative in order to care for a recovering service member. A recovering service member is defined as a member of the Armed Forces who suffered an injury or illness while on active duty that may render the person unable to perform the duties of the member’s office, grade, rank or rating. To access this leave, a note from the military medical providers will need to be provided along with the Medical Certification Form.</p>
<p>Payroll</p>	<p>How do I get paid while on medical leave of absence?</p>	<p>The LOA team will pay you up to your budgeted hours for every pay period while on LOA utilizing PTO/EST and/or NJ State benefits. Short-Term disability insurance is an insurance you pay through payroll taxes if you work in the state of NJ. Claimants are paid two-thirds (2/3) of their average weekly wage, up to a maximum set at the beginning of each calendar year.</p>

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		If you choose not to apply for NJ's short-term disability insurance, we will pay you in full from your PTO and EST time down to a 40 hour PTO balance or until exhausted.
	How do I get paid while on a Family leave of absence?	The LOA team will pay the employee up to their budgeted hours for every pay period while on LOA utilizing PTO and/or NJ Family Leave Insurance Benefit. The Family Leave Insurance Benefit is an insurance tax you pay if you work in the state of NJ. Claimants are paid two-thirds (2/3) of their average weekly wage, up to a maximum set at the beginning of each calendar year. The maximum payment is 6 weeks of your salary in any rolling 12-month period. Note: EST is not permitted pay while on any type of family leave of absence.
Benefits	Do my health benefits remain intact during their LOA?	An employee's health benefits remain intact for six months from LOA start date while on a leave of absence. This is for all Virtua employees unless stated differently in your union contract.
	Am I responsible for the cost of my benefits during LOA?	If you normally pay a portion of the premiums for your health and welfare benefits, these payments will continue during your leave of absence as you continue to receive PTO/EST payments. After you are no longer receiving pay (PTO/EST) from Virtua, normal benefit premium deductions will go into arrears. Once you return from leave of absence, these missed deductions will be withheld from future paychecks until your health premium debt is satisfied.
	Can I volunteer or attend Virtua classes or activities while on LOA?	Employees on LOA are NOT able to participate in educational classes, volunteer opportunities or attend Virtua activities while on a continuous Leave of Absence.
Contact Information	How do I reach the LOA team directly?	The LOA team is located at: 1200 Howard Blvd, Suite 200, Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054 Email: HRLOATEAM@VIRTUA.ORG OR call (856) 761-3900, Option #2 Fax: (856) 761 3895
		For additional information, please consult the Leave of Absence team or refer to the Human Resources policy manual on the VINE: Leave of Absence policies: FAMILY/MEDICAL LEAVE LOA-05-01 MILITARY LEAVE LOA-05-02 PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE LOA-05-03