

The Guardian

Holiday Edition

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NTEU Chapter 68 wish you
Season's Greetings



Weather and Safety Leave

During the COVID pandemic, most people relate Weather and Safety Leave (W&S) to a COVID issue. However, traditionally W&S has been looked at for snow leave or building closure due to snow, ice storms etc... W&S wears multiple hats, but on 12/2/2020 management sent out an email with guidelines for weather and safety.

As most of our employees are teleworking and experiencing their first winter where they are working from home. There are some things to know about teleworking vs. being in the building during a snow event. The first question is, are you a telework ready employee? There are two main factors as to whether you are telework-ready:

1. Do you have an approved telework agreement in place?
2. Do you have the necessary equipment (laptop) and work at home or transportable to your home?

If both are yes, then according to article 50 section 7, you are a telework-ready employee.

If you are a telework-ready employee, when the building is closed or a delayed opening for any weather or safety related issue and the employee's home is not affected by that issue, then that employee must work from home during their normal TOD.

For example, if we get a snowstorm with 5 feet of snow and the building is closed, if you have a telework agreement in place and you have your equipment and your work, you will be required to work from home as long as you have internet/electricity.

During the COVID crisis, many employees filled out a telework agreement. The evacuation order will supersede that requirement. So, if you have been working from home under the evacuation order, with or without a telework agreement, you will still be required to work from home during a building closure.

Employees working in the building should be aware of this. You may have a telework agreement for one reason or another. If you have one, then you would most likely be required to work from home during a building closure. Employees should check to see if they have a telework agreement in place.

What happens if I lose electricity/internet during the same storm that closed the building?

This is covered under Article 50 Section 7. Any time you lose electricity/internet/connectivity of any kind you should notify your manager right away. If the same issue that closed the building also affected your home, you are also eligible for weather and safety leave. The most important thing is to notify your manager as soon as you no longer capable of teleworking.

If you have any questions about your rights, please do not hesitate to contact NTEU!



Credit Hours

What are credit hours? Am I eligible to receive credit hours? How can I get credit hours?

The first step in understanding Credit hours is to know the different kinds of schedules. The term AWS (Alternative Work Schedule) is an umbrella term which is often confused with a Compressed Work Schedule (CWS). Often, employees on a 4-10 or a 5-4-9 schedule term it an AWS. While these are types of AWS, more specifically they are a CWS which falls under the umbrella of AWS. Other versions of an AWS are Flexi-tour, MaxiFlex, and Gliding schedule.

In this case, credit hours are covered under Article 23 Section 5, Flexi tour with credit hours which has a basic work requirement of 5 workdays of 8 hours each. Part time employees can also generally work credit hours.

Credit hours are similar to annual leave or comp time where you can use it to take time off. The purpose of credit hours is to give some flexibilities to employees so they do not constantly have to use sick leave or annual leave for appointments or going to parent teacher conferences etc... Where employees on a CWS have 1 day a week off or 1 every other week, employees on a straight 8 hour schedule would be required to take leave since they do not have a full day off to make appointments.

Since credit hours have this specific reason, an employee can only earn up to 24 hours. Employees eligible to earn credit hours should simply request to work additional time for credit. Overtime does NOT need to be offered to work credit hours since you do not get paid for credit hours. It's simply that you may work 3 hours today so that you can take 3 hours off another day. It's a straight time trade.

The employee's request to earn credit hours will be approved if management determines that:

1. Appropriate work is assigned
2. Is necessary and available
3. Is not rendered inappropriate based on logistical, safety or other factors such availability of seating, security, utilities or supervision.

In most cases, all of our employees have work that is assigned which is necessary to complete which covers the first two points. As long as you can satisfy #3, you should be approved to work credit hours. If for example you request to work credit at 4AM, there is likely no supervision available and certain systems may still be down so you would be denied.

Generally, an employee may earn up to 3 hours of credit per day and up to 10 on a non workday such as a Saturday or Sunday. Given there is generally no supervision on a Sunday, we would probably be denied working that day. As for using credit hours, it is to be requested the same as annual leave.

If you have any questions about this, do not hesitate to contact NTEU!



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Emergency COVID Leave

The Chapter has sent out a few emails in regard to the potential to use emergency COVID leave. We wanted to revisit this as unfortunately we have new spikes of COVID19 happening all around us. In order to get an easy understanding of emergency COVID leave and its uses, we highly recommend that you view the following document:

http://imdtrack.web.irs.gov/IG_Uploads/IRS.gov_No/2020-22121%20%20%20Interim%20Guidance%20Memo%20HCO-06-0420-0007%20-%20Families%20First%20Coronavirus%20Response%20Act%20-%20Emergency%20Paid%20Sick%20Leave%20FINAL%20signed%20by%20CHCO.pdf

You can also access this document and many others by going to the IRS Intranet page and on the right, there is a box which reads “COVID19”. If you click on that box and then click on Pay/Leave/Benefits and then scroll down under the heading “Sick”, you will click the second bullet which says “Families First Coronavirus Response Act- Emergency Paid Sick Leave”. Once you click this, you can then click on the first option which is the interim guidance.

It is a bit lengthy so to summarize, section II is where you will find the uses for the leave. There are 6 different uses for this leave. Three of the uses are for self-care and three are for care of others. These distinctions are important because anything used for self-care you will get full pay however, if it's reasons 4, 5 or 6, it is care for others and you are only eligible for 2/3 pay.

If you use this under reasons 4,5 or 6, you will actually receive full pay, but ***you will incur a debt***. The care for others also includes if a child's place of care such as a school or daycare has been closed due to COVID.

You are NOT required to use up your own time prior to using the emergency sick leave. You can use this leave prior to using any of your other time. You are eligible to receive up to 80 hours of time. Once you use your time it does not replenish. Also keep in mind that the use of this leave must be COVID related. This is not to go to a routine doctor's appointment or if your child has the day off of school due to Christmas vacation etc...

If you have any questions in regard to this or any other right or benefit, please contact NTEU!

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS



NTEU CHAPTER 68

HOME PRESIDENT'S BLOG EXECUTIVE BOARD STEWARD CADRE MORE

WELCOME
CHAPTER 68

Our mission is to organize federal employees to work together to ensure that every federal employee is treated with dignity and respect.

FACEBOOK

The Chapter would like to invite you to take part in our monthly raffle where you can win a \$5 gift card to Dunkin Donuts or a Gas Card simply by going to our website and answering our trivia questions. There will be 5 winners each month. There are only 3 questions and the answers each month can be found within the website! You should send your answers to me (Gary Karibian) no later than the 10th of each month.

www.nteuch68.org

NTEU TRIVIA LET'S PLAY!

NTEU
National Treasury Employees Union

In 1982, NTEU won passage of a groundbreaking new workplace option—alternative work schedules. This gave employees more flexibilities and more time to dance along with a best-selling Michael Jackson album, also released in 1982. What is the name of the album?

NTEU TRIVIA LET'S PLAY!

NTEU
National Treasury Employees Union

Which president signed an executive order giving federal employees the right to collective bargaining?



Join NTEU Online

Dear Nonmember,

The world has changed and so has your workplace. Whether you're at a worksite or teleworking from home, your concerns, issues and priorities are different today than just a few months ago. NTEU understands our new challenges and we are working tirelessly to ensure agencies have adequate health and safety protocols in place and are addressing individual needs and circumstances.

We've been out front from the start. When COVID-19 began spreading in communities, NTEU pressed agencies to immediately close federal buildings and maximize telework wherever possible. On the local level, we've worked one-on-one with employees to resolve issues with pay, leave, telework equipment and policies. Now we're working with members of Congress and agency leaders to make sure employees called back to offices have the health and safety protections and flexibilities they need. Nothing is more important than your health and well-being.

At the same time, NTEU remains vigilant on other workplace matters—because we must be; we cannot take for granted vital contractual rights like alternative work schedules and protections from unfair treatment, in how you are appraised, how and when you use the leave you have earned, and career advancement opportunities, to name a few.

NTEU is also laser-focused on legislation impacting you and building on monumental victories we secured last year, including an average 3.1 percent pay raise and a new paid parental leave program. This year, we're pushing legislation on emerging issues like raising the caps on use or leave that don't make sense right now and hazard pay for employees at high risk of Coronavirus infection because of their jobs.

Success on these issues is never guaranteed, but NTEU fighting for employees is always guaranteed. On Capitol Hill, in the workplace and at bargaining tables, we have only as much clout as our membership numbers. There is strength in numbers and when you join, we can do more.

For more than 80 years, NTEU has been there for federal employees. We're there for you every day, and you can count on us to be there for you in times of crisis—whether the current pandemic or a government shutdown. Now we need you to be there for us.

Join us today by visiting www.nteu.org/join and completing our one-page membership form or you can complete the attached form and return it to us.

If you have questions about NTEU, please contact Chapter 68 Union Office and we would be happy to speak with you!

Sincerely,
Chapter 68

Season's
Greetings

Holiday Word Search Challenge

- December 25th holiday: _____
- Jolly man in red suit: _____
- Hung by the chimney: _____
- December holiday celebrating African-American heritage: _____
- Family customs passed down to next generation: _____
- Kwanzaa candle holder: _____
- Hung on a door at Christmas: _____
- Jewish Festival of Lights: _____
- Special Jewish candelabra: _____
- Red and white striped Christmas sweet: _____
- A wax light that is used as a ceremonial symbol of many holidays: _____
- Number of days of Hanukkah: _____
- Santa's vehicle: _____
- Kwanzaa feast: _____
- Gifts given on the last day of Kwanzaa: _____
- Christmas songs: _____
- Potato pancakes: _____
- They pull Santa's sleigh: _____

N Z R D C C J Y H C H R I S T M A S
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 S G S V Z N W V F C D X H R U N E L
 V W V C E L E B R A T E F T A W M I



How to say "Happy Holidays" in 10 different languages

- French: Joyeuses fêtes
- German: Frohes Fest
- Spanish: Felices fiestas
- Italian: Buone Feste
- Portuguese: Felizes Festas
- Dutch: Fijne feestdagen
- Romanian: Sărbători fericeite
- Polish: Wesołych Świąt
- Swedish: Glad helg
- Czech: Hezké svátky

How to say "Happy New Year" in 10 different languages

- French: Bonne Année
- German: Gutes Neues Jahr
- Spanish: Feliz Año Nuevo
- Italian: Felice Anno Nuovo
- Portuguese: Feliz Ano Novo
- Dutch: Gelukkig nieuwjaar
- Romanian: Un an nou fericit
- Polish: Szczęśliwego nowego roku
- Swedish: Gott nytt år
- Czech: Šťastný Nový rok

Merry Christmas

Family's Holiday Bucket List

Holiday Bucket List. You've probably spent weeks—okay, months—counting down the days until it became socially acceptable to do all those Holiday activities and winter activities you love so much: putting up your favorite wreath, shopping for fun gifts until you drop, making lots of holiday craft projects, and generally getting in the holiday spirit!



Hold a (socially distant!) neighborhood cookie swap. With all that beautiful Holiday cookie decorating you've been toiling away at all month, you should show off your cookie skills by hosting a cookie (socially distant) swap with your neighbors. Share recipes and ideas and taste the delicious batches of cookies your neighbors have whipped up!



Try a new dessert. Now's the time to start a new family tradition like a delicious gingerbread cheesecake.



Video chat with an out-of-town friend or relative. Take a few minutes to wish a faraway friend or family member Happy Holidays!



Swirl up a new hot cocoa. Instead of a packet of instant hot chocolate, whip up this white hot chocolate variety on your stovetop. Wait for your family to be impressed.



Intended for canning, Mason jars serve a different purpose come Holiday season! As food gifts, candleholders, and more, this vintage kitchen staple will keep you crafting through the holidays. I'm sharing our favorite easy Mason jar craft ideas from Better Homes & Gardens.



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www.nteuch68.org



Happy Holidays

Gary, Beth, Nellie, Rob, Nell, Barbara & Bob