



Personnel Management:

Purpose: Many hours could be spent learning all the personnel laws that apply to conservation districts. We will only cover the highlights and address issues that commonly come up in conservation districts. Personnel management will be covered in two issues. This month we will cover general personnel management and leave rates.

Employees: All employees receiving a paycheck from your conservation district, no matter the funding source and no matter the job duties, are considered conservation district employees. As such, all applicable laws and policies pertain to every district employee. As their employer, conservation districts must use care to apply policies and laws fairly to each employee, for example pay raises.

Employee Supervision: Consider appointing one or two supervisors, at most, to take care of the routine supervisory functions. This would include:

- conducting performance appraisals,
- making recommendations to the board for pay;
- setting and approving work schedules,
- handling personnel issues as they come up; and
- serving as the main contact for conservation district employees.

Some conservation districts appoint the chair to serve in this capacity and other conservation districts opt to delegate this responsibility to another board member.

Personnel Policy: Every conservation district should have a personnel policy. This document will guide your conservation district in answering questions about how to handle situations as they arise, such as:

- how much leave is earned or paid out upon termination;
- how to handle overtime;
- how to conduct employee performance appraisals; and
- grievance procedures and discipline handling.

If your conservation district does not have a personnel policy or your policy is out of date, you should work diligently to adopt one or revise the outdated one if necessary.

Leave: Conservation district employee's leave rates are set by law, which spells out how much leave can be earned, carried on the books, and paid out upon termination.

Annual leave and sick leave are accrued as shown in the table below.

LEAVE EARNED			
NUMBER OF YEARS	Full time	(Part time is prorated)	MAXIMUM ALLOWED TO ACCRUE (full time)
Annual Leave			
0-10	15 days	.058 x No. Hours	240 Hours
10-15	18 days	.069 x No. Hours	288 Hours
15-20	21 days	.081 x No. Hours	336 Hours
21+	24 days	.092 x No. Hours	384 Hours
<i>All annual leave credits are paid upon termination.</i>			
Sick Leave			
0 - +	12 days	.046 x No. Hours	No limit
<i>One quarter of sick leave credits are paid upon termination.</i>			



Personnel Management Cont'd :

Important Leave Considerations:

The law limits the amount of leave employees can accrue in order to limit your financial obligation should your employee quit. Conservation district supervisors are required to manage the amount of leave to ensure:

- 1) your employee is receiving the amount of leave allowed by law;
- 2) your employee gets a chance to use the leave; and
- 3) that you don't have huge unlimited payments upon termination.

Check the maximum amounts in the table and if your employee has leave credits in excess of the amounts shown, steps should be taken right away to reduce the number.

A common mistake made by conservation districts is to not budget the amount of money it would take to pay your employee should he or she leave. Make sure you set up an account to cover the amount of leave you would have to pay if your employee were to quit. That way, you won't have to spend your entire budget on pay out.

Q&A:

Question: Can a conservation district pay an employee for excess leave in order to get the excess leave credits off the books?

Answer: No. Conservation districts follow state law regarding employee leave and it does not allow for paying the employee for leave while still employed.

The only time leave can be cashed out would be upon termination.

Question: We use a calendar instead of a time sheet. Is this OK?

Answer: Generally speaking, no. A time sheet should be used. It is important that the time sheet be signed by a conservation district supervisor and the employee. It is also a good idea to have leave balances on the time sheet so the board is in a position to manage the time.

Question: Do we still have to pay sick and annual leave, and other benefits if our employee is paid with grant money?

Answer: Yes. It is important to figure out your real cost and charge the grants for leave as well as other employer costs. Your conservation district will be responsible for paying leave, so make sure your funding source covers it.

For example, if an employee makes \$20 an hour, an additional \$0.92 per hour should be charged for sick leave. Annual leave will vary, depending on years of service, but at minimum an additional \$1.16 per hour should be charged. Keep the money in an account to cover leave expenses.

Did you know:

- Conservation district supervisors are governmental employers?

Next month we'll continue personnel management topics important for conservation district supervisors to know.