

Bereavement Leave

Original Implementation Date:	April 1, 1996	Approved by:
Date of Last Revision:	June 10, 2025	Approved by: Cathie O'Toole, CAO
Effective Date of Last Revision:	June 10, 2025	Approved by: Cathie O'Toole, CAO

1 – Policy Name

Bereavement Leave

2 – Purpose

The Municipality recognizes that all employees may experience the loss of family members and other persons significant in their life; and need time to mourn, attend to related affairs, attend the funeral or other similar events, support family members, etc. A leave from work responsibilities can support the employee through such difficult times. As such, the Municipality provides approved paid and unpaid bereavement leave. The intent is to provide job protection so employees can take time off from their job for the leave.

3 – Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are:

- To provide employees with a leave from work responsibilities following the death of a family member or other persons significant in their life.
- To foster a workplace which supports employee wellbeing and psychological health.
- To encourage work-life balance.
- To provide workplace flexibility.
- To meet legislated requirements under the *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code*.
- To treat employees in a fair and equitable manner.

4 – Scope

This Policy applies to all permanent, non-union Halifax Regional Municipality employees. For the terms and conditions of employment for temporary non-union employees, refer to the policy Temporary Non-union Employees.

5 – Definitions

In the context of this document:

Child means all child-parent relationships, including birth child, step-child, adopted child, foster child and ward.

End of Pregnancy means a pregnancy that concludes without resulting in a live birth.

Extended family means the employee's aunt, uncle, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, grandparent-in-law, niece, nephew, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law.

Grandchild means the child of an employee's child. See the definition of Child above.

Grandparent means the parent of an employee's parent including all child-parent relationships as defined under the definition of Child above.

Immediate family means the employee's spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandparents, grandchild, or parent-in-law.

Parent means all parent-child relationships including birth parent, step-parent, adoptive parent, foster parent, or guardian.

Sibling means all sibling relationships including birth sibling, step-sibling, sibling by adoption, foster sibling, or any other person who has a common parent with the employee.

Spouse means married, common-law spouse or registered domestic partner.

6 – Roles and Responsibilities

Chiefs/Executive Directors

Chiefs/Executive Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring proper administration of this Policy and delegating approval authority to directors/managers/supervisors as appropriate.

Directors/Managers/Supervisors

Directors/Managers/Supervisors with delegated authority from the Chief/Executive Director, are responsible for:

- Considering leave requests in accordance with the requirements of the Policy.
- Assessing operational requirements, in light of all leave requests.
- Approving/denying leave requests.
- Supporting the employee in addressing situations that require leave while balancing operational requirements.
- Administering the Policy in a fair and equitable manner.
- Adhering to legislated requirements and ensuring leaves are accurately recorded.

Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- Accurately reporting all leaves on a bi-weekly basis. It is understood that in certain circumstances (e.g., sudden death of a family member, etc.) advance notice may not be possible.
- Submitting leave requests to their immediate director/manager/supervisor, with as much advance notice as possible.

Human Resources

Human Resources is responsible for:

- Providing support to business units and employees regarding the fair and equitable administration of this Policy and any relevant legislation.

7 – Policy Regulations

A. On the death of a member of the employee's immediate family, the employee will be granted bereavement leave with pay for a maximum of five working days.

B. End of Pregnancy Leave

- a) If an employee's pregnancy ends before completing week 19 of pregnancy, they are entitled to a bereavement leave with pay for a maximum of five working days.
- b) If an employee's pregnancy ends after completing week 19 of pregnancy, they are entitled to an unpaid leave of absence of up to 16 consecutive weeks. Please refer to the Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policy for additional details.
- c) Employees are entitled to Bereavement Leave with pay for a maximum of five working days if:
 - i. their Spouse or partner's pregnancy ends
 - ii. their former spouse or partner's pregnancy ends if they would have been the biological parent
 - iii. they would have become a parent of a child, born as a result of the pregnancy, under a surrogacy agreement
 - iv. they would have become a parent of a child, born as a result of the pregnancy, by means of an intended adoption.

C. On the death of a member of the employee's extended family, the employee will be granted bereavement leave with pay for a maximum of three working days.

D. The above days may be taken consecutively or not; and where a funeral, celebration of life or similar event and cultural practice is held at a later time, the employee may choose to delay some or all of their leave so as to be able to attend.

E. On the death of any other relative not listed here or a person who resides with the employee, the employee will be granted bereavement leave with pay for a maximum of one working day.

F. The Municipality may grant the employee permission to use vacation, time in lieu, personal leave, other accumulated leave, or unpaid leave in the event of the death of a friend, like-relative, etc.

G. The Municipality may grant employees permission to attend the funeral or similar event of a co-worker, retiree or the immediate family member of a co-worker. If the event or any portion of the event occurs during the normal workday, employees attending the event will not suffer a loss of pay.

H. More time, paid or unpaid, than that provided for in this Policy may be granted at the discretion of the Manager if the circumstances warrant, for example, extended travel time is required.

8 – Repeal

NA

9 – Effective Date

June 10, 2025

10 – Related Policies and Practices

Internal:

- Compassionate Care Leave
- Vacation
- Overtime
- Personal Leave
- Leave of Absence
- Temporary Non-union Employees
- Pregnancy and Parental Leave

External:

- *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code*
<https://novascotia.ca/lae/employmentrights/docs/labourstandardscodeguide.pdf>

11 – Policy Review

Review every year.

12 – Contact

MyHR@halifax.ca or 902-490-6145.

13 – Attachments

NA