

# Annual Leave and Public Holidays (Officers)

Procedure

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## Overview

### What is this about?

Time off work is an important part of maintaining a good work-life balance. Here we set out the entitlements and arrangements for annual leave and public holidays.

### Who is this for?

This is for officers.

### Key information

* The annual leave year runs from the 1st April to the 31st March inclusive.
* Those joining or leaving will have their entitlement adjusted based on the number of completed days’ service in that leave year.
* Those promoted to a rank where there is a difference in entitlement or who are due a service progression increment, will have their entitlement adjusted based on the number of completed days’ service which fall after the promotion date or service anniversary in that leave year.
* Service increases will be applied at the start of the leave year in which the anniversary falls.
* Probationary constables may be allocated leave during college closures and/or before being deployed at division by Leadership, Training and Development. The Resource Deployment Unit (RDU) will apply and approve periods of annual leave on SCoPE for probationers.
* Officers based on Coll, Colonsay, Islay, Orkney, Tiree, the Western Isles or the Shetland Isles can request to have eight hours leave (this is not pro-rated for part-time officers) added to their entitlement on up to three occasions per leave year. This is to allow travel to the mainland before starting leave. RDU will manually adjust annual leave balances on SCoPE when they receive a request.
* The leave provisions for officers are detailed in Regulation 25 and Annex 12 of the Police Service of Scotland Regulations 2013 and associated Determinations.
* RDU are responsible for setting and allocating leave periods.
* With the exception of superintending ranks an officer’s leave entitlement is based on their length of service.
* The leave entitlement for officers can be found below – please refer to the relevant rank.
* Officers are entitled to the following Public Holidays: Christmas Day and New Years’ Day. This is equal to 16 hours (2 days).
* Where a public holiday falls on the same date as a rest day, the public holiday will take precedence and the rest day will require to be moved to a separate date.
* These entitlements and any others referred to in the procedure are pro-rated for part-time officers unless stated otherwise.

#### Leave entitlement for all officers in federated ranks:

Less than 2 years’ service - 224 hours (28 days)

2 to 9 years’ service - 272 hours (34 days)

10 or more years’ service - 312 hours (39 days)

**Note:** From April 2024 the following entitlements will apply for officers in federated ranks with more than 2 years’ service:

2 to 4 years’ service - 272 hours (34 days)

5 to 9 years’ service - 288 hours (36 days)

10 or more years’ service - 312 hours (39 days)

#### Leave entitlement for Superintendents and Chief Superintendents:

320 hours (40 days)

#### Leave entitlement for Senior Officers – Assistant Chief Constable and above:

Less than 10 years’ service - not less than 336 hours (42 days)

10 or more years’ service - not less than 384 hours (48 days).

## Staff/Officer

### What you need to do:

* Check your annual leave entitlement and the detailed balance on SCoPE.
* Check your allocated annual leave sub-group and leave period.
* Discuss your annual leave requirements with your line manager as early as possible and in line with the annual leave request process.
* Give as much notice as you can for leave requests.
* Use your full annual leave entitlement.
* Tell your manager as soon as possible if you need to make any changes to your approved requests.

### Annual leave allocation

Each year federated ranks are allocated an annual leave period linked to a lettered sub-group attached to their post. This defines the dates within which you can apply for the majority of your leave.

RDU set and rotate these leave periods over the years to ensure you get different leave opportunities from one year to the next. You can see the sub-group allocated to you and the corresponding leave periods by accessing your personal record in SCoPE.

RDU start the work required for the allocation of sub-groups in July each year (with the information made available in October) for the following leave year. Leave blocks may be restricted or amended at certain times of the year due to operational demand and RDU will communicate this to you when necessary.

Mutual swaps of single or multiple annual leave blocks are allowed but must be on a like-for-like basis. Mutual swaps are managed by Divisional Resource Advisors and once all the swaps have been allocated they need to be signed off by Area Commanders or equivalent. Where a swap is authorised both officers will return to their default annual leave sub-group the following year.

Mutual swaps of an entire leave sub-group is allowed and Area Commanders or equivalent will consider requests based on the advice of Divisional Resource Advisors. Where a swap is authorised this can be for one year or a permanent change. If an entire leave sub-group is swapped with that of a vacant post this will be a permanent change.

Superintendents and above are responsible for making their own arrangements locally for annual leave to ensure operational resilience is maintained.

### Making a request

After the annual leave information is published (from 1st October) to ensure you have adequate opportunity to use your leave, we guarantee requests falling entirely within your block so long as you apply more than five weeks ahead of the first date of leave requested in the block. You cannot share an annual leave block with another officer, even if you do not intend to use all of your allocated block.

You can request up to nine days leave (six for officers with less than two years’ service) outwith your allocated leave blocks. You must submit requests with as much notice as possible and at least five weeks before the date requested. A request for a period of more than three consecutive days outwith a block must be approved by the Area Commander or equivalent.

All requests for annual leave must be made using SCoPE. If you are not at work or do not have access to SCoPE your line manager can apply for leave using the system on your behalf. The following rules apply to federated ranks.

* Requests can be for full days, half days or in hour blocks.
* There is no restriction to the number of days of annual leave that can be taken as half days.
* At least four hours must be worked to take a half day of leave.
* A leave request for a future leave year cannot be submitted before 1st October in the preceding year except in exceptional circumstances with the approval of your Area Commander or equivalent.

### Refusal of a request

Area Commanders or equivalent are responsible for the final sign off of annual leave requests which are not automatically granted by SCoPE. Advice will be sought from Divisional Resource Advisors where appropriate. They may refuse a request if less than five weeks’ notice is given or it falls outwith the allocated block and operational resilience is compromised.

A request for annual leave that is refused and returned to you will remain in your Personal Workbasket on SCoPE until you delete or amend and resubmit.

### Annual leave and sickness absence

If you are sick while on annual leave you may ask for these hours back to use at another time. You must follow the Attendance Management Procedure and report as sick in the normal way during your leave period. If you want to ask for the time back but did not report the absence when you were on leave you will need to provide a med 3 certificate to support the absence. Your manager must email RDU to have the system updated on your behalf. Public Holidays cannot be reclaimed.

During periods of long-term sickness absence you are entitled to take your 20 days (or 160 hours) statutory holiday and get your full rate of pay. Please refer to the Attendance Management procedure for further detail.

If you want to go on holiday during a period of sickness absence you should discuss this with your GP and your line manager to consider the potential impact it may have on your recovery. You will remain absent and not use any of your annual leave entitlement for this period. There will be no adjustment to your leave balance under these circumstances unless the previous paragraph applies.

### Carrying over unused leave

You can request to carry over up to 5 days or 40 hours into the next annual leave year using the Flexible Annual Leave Application Form (089-016) and submitting this to your line manager to forward to the Area Commander or equivalent for approval. In exceptional circumstances you may request more than 40 hours (5 days).

If you have five hours or less annual leave entitlement at the end of the leave year this will automatically be carried forward to the next leave year on SCoPE.

If you have been unable to use all of your Working Time Directive annual leave (20 days or 160 hours) during the leave year due to being on sickness absence, you are entitled to carry over what you have not used into the following leave year. The maximum amount of leave you can carry over is the Working Time Directive, less any annual leave already taken. This leave needs to be taken within 15 months of it being carried forward. This leave entitlement will always be used first when applying to take leave.

If you have been unable to use all of your full annual leave entitlement during the leave year due to being on maternity, adoption or shared parental leave you are entitled to carry this over into the following leave year. This leave needs to be taken within 15 months of your maternity leave ending.

### Bringing forward annual leave

You can request to bring forward up to 40 hours (five days) annual leave from the following leave year in March of the current leave year using the Flexible Annual Leave Application Form (089-016) and submitting this to your line manager to forward to the Area Commander or equivalent for approval.

You should discuss the request with your line manager to ensure that you will be able to use this leave before the current leave year ends.

### Changing public holiday dates

The public holidays we have agreed to recognise might not suit you for religious or cultural reasons. As such you can request to swap these dates and take time off on another date which has significance to you.

Requests should be sent to your line manager with as much notice as possible and at least five weeks before the date requested using the Flexible Annual Leave Application Form (089-016). You must specify the date you would like to request instead of the public holiday.

Once approved you will not be entitled to an enhanced rate of pay if you are required to work the original public holiday date but would be entitled to the relevant enhancement if you are required to work the alternative public holiday date.

If you change a public holiday date you will revert to the Police Scotland public holiday dates the following leave year and will have to submit a new request for any further changes to be made.

If you move post after you have changed public holiday dates the amended date will apply to your new posting.

### Contact during annual leave

There may be occasions where we are required to contact you while you are on annual leave. This will only be for matters which we cannot deal with in your absence or that we cannot postpone until your return. Your contact details on SCoPE must be up to date and you must provide alternative contact details when you are away. If you are unable to give precise contact details, for example due to touring, you must provide a contact number where information can be left.

### Annual leave following transfer

On permanent transfer to a new post we will allocate you the annual leave sub-group for that post. Pre-booked annual leave from a previous posting will be honoured. If you are temporarily posted away from your base post you will retain the annual leave sub-group of your base post.

If you request annual leave after being told of the transfer date to a new post you must consult with your new line manager and RDU. If this is approved by your current line manager and consultation has not taken place with your new line manager the leave period will be deleted when you move post.

### Annual leave during suspension

To apply for leave during suspension, contact your liaison officer who will make the request through SCoPE on your behalf. Your line manager will consider your application in the normal way.

The same carry over limits apply while on suspension therefore you should continue to request to use your annual leave as normal.

Retrospective requests will not be considered unless your previous applications have been refused or you have had a request to carry over or bring forward leave approved.

### Annual leave on return from a career break

When you return from a career break your leave entitlement in the year you return will be based on the number of completed days service in that leave year.

In circumstances where a career break starts and ends in the same leave year the calculation will be based on cumulative completed days service in that leave year taking into account the service accrued before the career break starts and after it ends.

### Citation for court during annual leave

If you receive a citation for court and this falls during your annual leave period you should request an excusal from court duties without delay. Further detail on this is contained within the Citations (Police Officers and Staff) SOP.

If an excusal is refused you should inform your line manager, attend court and submit the appropriate claims on SCoPE. Further detail on this is contained within the Police Officer Handbook and the Allowances and Expenses (Officers) procedure.

### Part-time workers additional leave

If you are part-time and work additional hours you will accrue additional annual leave hours on a pro-rata basis dependant on the number of additional hours worked throughout the leave year.

Where part-time officers work more than their normal hours (up to full-time hours) their annual leave entitlement will be increased to reflect the additional hours worked, up to the maximum entitlement. You will receive any additional annual leave the month following the processing of your approved claim for additional hours.

### Recall to duty during a period of annual leave

A period of annual leave is defined as a period of leave from duty of four or more days, where at least one of those days is a day of annual leave (with the others being either rest days, day taken off in lieu of overtime, public holidays or monthly leave days).

If you are recalled to duty from a period of annual leave you have the option to choose the following compensation:

#### Recalled on day taken as annual leave or TOIL

One day’s annual leave and one day’s pay at double time or two day’s annual leave.

#### Recalled on rest day

One rest day and one day’s pay at double time or two rest days.

This includes situations where an officer is required to be advanced into an annual leave day or is detained into an annual leave day. Level of notice is irrelevant in these circumstances.

On recall to duty from a period of leave, you cannot take TOIL as compensation and must submit a claim using the SCoPE Overtime claim process

## Manager

### What you need to do:

* Process all requests for annual leave in a fair and transparent way.
* Ensure adequate resourcing levels are maintained.
* Take operational requirements locally, regionally and nationally into consideration as appropriate.
* Provide officers with every opportunity to take the annual leave that they are entitled to in the year it is allocated.

### Annual leave allocation

The method of giving leave to federated ranks is by rotating sub-groups with the aim of limiting leave abstraction at 16%. RDU will publish leave periods in July each year for the following leave year.

The leave year will be split into six periods, running in chronological order with each period sub-divided into three blocks. These periods will be attached to posts in line with the lettered leave sub-group of the post and given to officers based on their posting to those posts.

RDU will give you the details of the sub-groups and leave periods allocated to your teams so that you can consider requests for mutual swaps and the impact on resource levels, skills, specialisms or expertise in your teams.

You must review and update the information with any changes or swaps. You must maintain the resource balance required and return all information to RDU by the given deadline.

### Receiving a request

All requests for annual leave must be made using SCoPE. The following rules apply to federated ranks.

* Requests can be made for full days, half days or hour blocks.
* There is no restriction to the number of days of annual leave that can be taken as half days.
* At least four hours must be worked without a refreshment break to take a half day of leave.
* A leave request for a future leave year cannot be submitted before 1st October in the preceding year except in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of your Area Commander.
* A request for annual leave which falls completely within a team member’s allocated block and where at least five weeks’ notice has been given will be approved automatically.

SCoPE will automatically indicate if a request includes days outwith the allocated block and these should be assessed against known Operational Base Levels, staffing levels and red days to make sure operational resilience is maintained.

The Area Commander or equivalent has overall responsibility for the final sign off of all annual leave requests outwith the automatic approval process.

### Annual leave and sickness absence

A team member may ask to reclaim a period of annual leave due to sickness if they have followed the Attendance Management Procedure. Public holidays cannot be reclaimed. If the team member did not report sick while on leave they will need to provide a med 3 certificate to support the absence if they want to reclaim the annual leave. You will need to email RDU to arrange for their leave balances to be adjusted.

During periods of long term sickness absence team members can choose to take their 20 days’ statutory holiday entitlement and receive their full rate of pay. This is often the case where a period of reduced pay is applied. Refer to the Attendance Management Procedure for further detail and discuss any individual cases with People Direct.

If a team member is off sick and submits a request to go on holiday you should talk to them about this and make sure they have discussed this with their GP and considered the potential impact it may have on their recovery. If granted, they should remain absent. They must not submit a leave request through SCoPE. There are no adjustments to leave balances under these circumstances unless the previous paragraph applies.

### Carrying over unused leave

Team members can ask to carry over up to 40 hours (five days) unused annual leave into the next annual leave year using the Flexible Annual Leave Application Form (089-016). In exceptional circumstances team members may request to carry over more than 40 hours (five days).

An Area Commander or equivalent must review this application and email approved requests to RDU to arrange a SCoPE update.

### Bringing forward annual leave

Team members can ask to bring forward up to 40 hours (five days) annual leave from the future leave year in March of the current leave year using the Flexible Annual Leave Application Form (089-016). You must discuss the request with the individual to ensure they will be able to use this leave before the current leave year ends.

An Area Commander or equivalent must review this application and email approved requests to RDU to arrange a SCoPE update.

### Changing public holidays

Team members can ask to swap the public holiday dates and take time off on another date which has significance to them such as for religious or cultural reasons.

Requests should be forwarded to you with as much notice as possible and at least five weeks before the date requested using the Flexible Annual Leave Application Form (089-016). This must be forwarded to the Area Commander or equivalent for approval and then emailed to RDU to arrange a SCoPE update.

### Contact during annual leave

You should only contact a team member for matters which cannot be dealt with in their absence or that cannot wait for them to return.

### Annual leave following transfer

If a team member permanently transfers to a new post they will be allocated the annual leave sub-group which corresponds to their new post. If they have pre-booked annual leave from their previous post this will be honoured.

If you receive a request for annual leave after the team member has been notified of their transfer date to the new post this should be rejected and the individual must consult with their new line manager and RDU.

### Annual leave during suspension

Team members suspended from duty should continue to apply for annual leave within their allocated annual leave blocks. Their liaison officer may make applications on their behalf, for you to approve in the normal way.

All requests and approvals must be entered into the suspended officer’s contact log.

## Resources

### Forms

* Flexible Annual Leave Application Form (089-016)

### How to Guides

* Guidance for calculation of entitlements

### Related Procedures

* Annual Leave and Public Holidays (Staff)
* Attendance Management
* Fertility Treatment
* Flexible Working
* Volunteer Reserve Forces

### Useful Links

* [Police Officer Handbook](https://pnb.scot/)
* [The Police Service of Scotland Regulations 2013 Regulation 25.](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2013/35/regulation/25/made)
* [Workforce Agreement (for Superintending Ranks)](https://scottishpolicesupers.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Workforce-Agreement-Superintendents.pdf)

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| 3.00 | Updated to reflect changes in data protection legislation | 24/05/2018 |
| 4.00 | Procedure revised as part of the Policy Simplification Project | 21/08//2020 |
| 5.00 | Updated to reflect changes in RDU allocation process | 18/06/2021 |
| 6.00 | Updated to reflect specific elements of the most recent pay agreement in relation to annual leave entitlement. | 28/03/2023 |

**Feedback**

All Police Scotland People Policies and Procedures are subject to regular reviews. It is important that user feedback is taken into account when documents are reviewed.

If anyone wants to provide comment, or make suggestions for improvements to this or any associated document, please email **[REDACTED]**.