

**Congress secures more paid
leave for federal employees in
new COVID-19 relief law**



THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT
Effective March 12, 2021

APWU

Under the new stimulus bill called the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) there was new leave for federal employees added called Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL). Postal employees qualify for this leave.

USPS management shared information with me that they provided to their USPS leadership. The content of this email is as follows:

Effective March 12, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (Act) provides employees with up to 600 hours of paid Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL). This leave is available to employees beginning on March 12, 2021, and continuing through September 30, 2021— or until the funding established in the Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund (Fund) for reimbursement is exhausted. The leave is available to eligible employees who are unable to work due to one of eight qualifying reasons as summarized in the chart below.

As a reminder, the Postal Service provides an essential federal government service as part of the nation’s critical infrastructure. Therefore, postal employees are generally not subject to Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation orders related to

COVID-19, so employees will generally not be eligible to use EFEL for qualifying reason (1) above. Additionally, no substantially similar condition has been identified that would qualify an employee to use leave for qualifying reason (6) above.

We are continuing to work the issues associated with implementation of these new leave requirements, and we anticipate receiving additional guidance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which will administer the Fund, in the coming weeks. In the interim, employees seeking to use EFEL should submit a PS Form 3971 indicating for which of the eight qualifying reasons they must take leave, and employees must affirmatively state that they are unable to work because of the qualifying reason.

For now, this leave should be managed and tracked within the Enterprise Resource Management System (eRMS). Timekeepers will be instructed to enter the interim hours code 086-21 in eRMS for all employees, and then verify the Administrative Leave is entered in the appropriate timekeeping system using either hours code 086-21 for City or DACA Code O for Rurals. For immediate reference, attached is the timekeeping quick reference table.

We will update you with additional instructions and guidance as our processes for managing this new leave are developed and implemented. We ask that you share this information with your teams as soon as possible, given that this leave will become available on March 12.

Thank you for your support as we continue to prioritize the safety and well-being of our employees during this challenging time.

The timekeeping quick reference table that is referenced above was not included in the email we received. Once receive it will be provided to you. This is excellent language in this legislation that the APWU fought to have put in the bill. As more information is receive from the USPS, we will share it with you.

Vance Zimmerman
Industrial Relations Director
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
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Emergency Federal Employee Leave

Qualifying Reasons	Leave Eligibility
<p>An employee is entitled to take EFEL related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work because the employee:</p> <p>is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.</p> <p>has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.</p> <p>is caring for an individual who is subject to such an order as in (1) or has been so advised as in (2).</p> <p>is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.</p> <p>is caring for the employee's son or daughter if the school or place of care of the son or daughter has been closed, requires or makes optional a virtual learning instruction model, requires or makes optional a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning instruction models, or if the child care provider of the son or daughter is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions.</p> <p>is experiencing any other substantially similar condition.</p> <p>is caring for a family member with a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older and incapable of self-care, without regard to whether another individual other than the employee is available to care for such family member, if the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19.</p> <p>is obtaining immunization (vaccination) related to COVID-19 or is recovering from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All career and non-career employees, regardless of tenure, are immediately eligible for EFEL. • Full-time Employees can receive up to 600 hours of paid EFEL, capped at \$2,800 per pay period. • Part-time Employees can receive up to the proportional equivalent of 600 hours, capped at a proportional equivalent of \$2,800 per pay period. <hr/> <p align="center">Other Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFEL does not count as creditable service toward an employee's retirement benefits. • Employees cannot contribute to Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) while on EFEL.

Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL)

Employee Type	eRMS Leave Code/Reason Code	Timekeeping System (RMSS/TACS)	Description	Comments
Rural Carrier	086-21	DACA O - for 1314A use OL block	Pandemic Relief 2021	Used when requested for scenarios 1-8 of EFEL, up to \$2,800.00 per Pay Period
All Other	086-21	086-21	Pandemic Relief 2021	Used when requested for scenarios 1-8 of EFEL, up to \$2,800.00 per Pay Period

UPDATED 3/11/2021

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