

Frequently Asked Questions - December Holiday Reduced Operations

Q: Why do we have reduced operations during the December holidays?

A: Reducing operations at Washington State University (WSU) for a period of time began as a measure suggested by WSU employees in response to university officials' request for possible cost-saving ideas. The university chose to implement this suggestion during the last week of December. In 2014, this practice was revisited by sending out a survey to all WSU employees and forming an employee task force. Based on nearly three-quarters of survey respondents favoring or having neutral feelings for the closure, and a thorough review of pros and cons by the task force, it was decided to continue the practice of reduced operations and to provide more flexibility to departments regarding work schedules. The practice may be re-evaluated in the future.

Q: Where can I find the Holiday Schedule and the December Holiday Reduced Operations schedule?

A: The Holiday schedule and December Holiday Reduced Operations schedule can be found at the links shown below. The observed holidays during the December Holiday Reduced Operations will vary from year to year.

- Holiday schedule through June 2020:

<http://hrs.wsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Holiday-Schedule-2015-2020.pdf>

- Reduced Operations schedule through 2019:

<http://hrs.wsu.edu/december-holiday-reduced-operations/>

Q: Who determines which operations and services are operating during Reduced Operations?

A: The Vice President, Dean or Chancellor of a given unit, college or regional campus will determine which business operations and services under her/his jurisdiction will be required to remain open and staffed.

Business operations and services that are open may have reduced staffing levels as determined by the Vice President, Dean or Chancellor and/or the appropriate department head.

Q: When should the building coordinator or office administrator notify Facilities Services of buildings or offices that will be occupied during the December Holiday Reduced operations?

A: Regional Campuses contact your Facilities group by mid-November.

Pullman Campus: During Fall Semester Facilities Services contacts areas regarding their building needs for the December Holiday Reduced Operations. Colleges and Areas are encouraged to be proactive and notify Facilities Services prior to the second week of November regarding operational needs.

Q: Is flexibility encouraged when determining staffing levels?

A: Yes, areas should carefully consider and be as flexible as possible when reviewing requests for time off or requests to work. Areas need to consider staffing requirements to meet deadlines for grant submittals, payroll and personnel processing.

Managers are encouraged to be as flexible as possible when determining schedules during the December Holiday Reduced Operations. If employees request to work and there is work to be performed, managers can and are encouraged to allow employees to work. Flexibility is encouraged and supported by the WSU administration to the extent that it works for both managers and employees.

Q: Do I need to report my leave during the December Holiday Reduced Operations?

A: Yes, employees are to report their leave, per normal processes, during the Reduced Operations period. Employees who do not have sufficient annual leave balances, available personal holiday, and/or accrued compensatory time, may request leave without pay (LWOP) in accordance with department guidelines*.

Refer to the links below for more information on leave types and usage for specific employee categories.

- Bargaining Unit Covered
hrs.wsu.edu/labor-relations, see the appropriate collective bargaining agreement
- Civil Service
[Civil Service Employee Leave](#), BPPM 60.57

- Faculty and Administrative Professional
Faculty and AP Personnel Leave, BPPM 60.56

***Note: LWOP may affect eligibility for holiday pay.** Refer to the appropriate leave policy (linked above) for your employment type or contact HRS at 509-335-4521 or hrs@wsu.edu.

Q: Are payroll processing dates impacted by the December Holiday Reduced Operations?

No, to ensure faculty and staff are appropriately paid, payroll processing will occur during the Reduced Operations period. Areas/colleges must ensure staff are scheduled to process required payroll or personnel actions in accordance with the payroll document schedule. Find the current payroll document schedule at the DEPTPAY Users link below:
<http://payroll.wsu.edu/deptpay/deptpay.htm>

Q: My department will be closed, but I do not want to take leave during this time. What are my options?

A: Employees should discuss work options with their supervisor/manager. If there is no work to be performed during the reduced operations, employees are strongly encouraged to use leave during this time.

However, employees may request alternative arrangements be made to perform the responsibilities of their position during business days of the reduced operations period. Such requests will be evaluated by the department and approved based upon business needs.

Q: If employees work during the December Holiday Reduced Operations, must the office be open to the public?

A: The Vice President, Dean or Chancellor of a given unit, college or regional campus determines which business operations and services under her/his jurisdiction are required to remain staffed and open to the public.

If it is determined the unit, college or regional campus is not required to be open to the public, employees may still request to work in their physical office space. If an employee is permitted to work, it does not mean the office/department has to be open to the public.

Employees should discuss work options with their supervisor/manager.

Q: My department will be open/is considered an essential operation, but I want to take leave during the December Holiday Reduced Operations. What are my options?

A: Employees whose employing departments are open or considered an essential operation may request to take leave. However, as per normal processes, leave requests must be approved by the supervisor.

The university encourages departments to approve leave requests whenever possible. However, be aware that in order to ensure adequate staffing levels in certain business operations and services, departments may not be able to accommodate all leave requests during the reduced operations period.

Q: Can I work from home (telework) on the business days occurring in the December Holiday Reduced Operations period?

A: Upon prior authorization from the supervisor and if business operations allow, Civil Service, Bargaining Unit, and Administrative Professional employees may work from home (telework).

Faculty members should seek approval from the appropriate department chair or director.

A formal telework agreement is not required for this period.

Q: I am told that I must work my regular schedule during the December Holiday Reduced Operations period, except for days that are university observed holidays. How will I be compensated?

A: You will be compensated at your regular rate of pay.

For employee's whose positions are overtime eligible, time worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek is compensated at time and one-half and may be approved for compensatory time.

Refer to BPPM 60.59- Overtime Eligible Employees, or the relevant bargaining unit agreement for additional information regarding overtime eligibility and compensation hrs.wsu.edu/LR%20Home.

Q: I am a Faculty member who must utilize my office and/or laboratory during the December Holiday Reduced Operations period. Will this be possible?

A: Yes, faculty members will retain access to their individual offices and/or laboratories during Reduced Operations. However, if the building housing the office/laboratory will otherwise be closed during this period, the thermostats may be turned down.

Q: I am a Faculty member on an academic year (9 month) appointment and do not earn annual leave. What are my options?

A: For academic faculty on less than 12-month appointments, a break in the academic calendar when classes are not taught is not considered a holiday unless the break coincides with a designated university holiday. [Refer to [BPPM 60.76](#)].

The university expects academic faculty with ongoing responsibilities to perform those duties during academic breaks (unless exempted from this requirement as part of his/her employment contract).

Additionally, an academic faculty member may request to use leave without pay (LWOP)* during Reduced Operations if he/she will not be executing work related duties during this time.

***Note: LWOP may affect eligibility for holiday pay.** An employee must be in pay status the work day prior to the holiday in order to receive pay for the holiday. [Refer to [BPPM 60.56](#)]

Q: I am a Civil Service employee and still in my probationary period. What are my leave options during the December Holiday Reduced Operations?

A: The following types of leave are available:

- Accrued compensatory time (if your position is overtime eligible) - may be required to use first;
- Personal holiday (full day only); and/or
- Leave without pay upon approval from your supervisor*.

***Note: LWOP may affect eligibility for holiday pay.** In order to receive holiday pay, you must be in pay status the entire work shift prior to the holiday. [Refer to [WAC 357-31-010](#)].

Q: I am a WFSE Bargaining Unit employee and still in my probationary period. What are my leave options during the December Holiday Reduced Operations?

A: The following types of leave are available:

- Accrued compensatory time (if your position is overtime eligible) - may be required to use first;
- Personal holiday (full day only if you have been employed for at least 4 months); and/or
- Leave without pay upon approval from your supervisor.

Q: I have exhausted all of my paid leave options (annual leave, personal holiday, compensatory time). What can I do?

A: For days that are not university observed holidays, most employees will need to take additional leave on the remaining week days.

If you have no available paid leave options, consider the following:

- Request leave without pay (LWOP)*;
- If your unit is open, request to report to work; or

If your unit will not be open, request if arrangements may be made such as teleworking, temporary work location change, or alternative assignments. (A formal telework agreement is not required for this period.)

*Note: LWOP may affect eligibility for holiday pay. Refer to the appropriate leave policy for your employment type or contact HRS at 509-335-4521 or hrs@wsu.edu.

Q: I still have questions. Who can I call?

A: Contact your department's HR Service Team. You can find the members of your team at the following website: hrs.wsu.edu/hrs-information.

You may also call HRS at 509-335-4521 or email hrs@wsu.edu.

Regional campus employees may contact their local HRS office.