

**EMPLOYEE POLICIES**  
DIVISION OF COMPARATIVE MEDICINE  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

**PURPOSE:** *To detail Comparative Medicine policies for Staff and Temporary personnel employed by this division. All employees within the Division of Comparative Medicine are required to abide by the following stated policies. Receipt of this document indicates that each employee has read, understands, and accepts the policies as stated. All policies are effective immediately.*

These policies will serve to address the following areas:

- I. **Work Schedules**
- II. **Conducting Personal Business During Working Hours**
- III. **Procedures for Requesting Time Off for Medical Reasons**
- IV. **Procedures for Requesting Time Off**
- V. **Conduct**
- VI. **Employee Relations Processes**
- VII. **Timesheets**
- VIII. **Holidays**
- IX. **Reporting Injuries**

## **I. Work Schedules: Full time Staff/Temporary Employees**

- The standard work shift for Staff assigned to an animal facility is Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 3:30 pm.
  - ✓ Other work shifts may be scheduled by the Facility Manager/Supervisor, with approval by the Assistant Director, if it is determined that shifts other than the standard are required to ensure adequate operation of the facility or office.
  - ✓ Nonstandard work shifts must meet with the approval of the Assistant Director and the employee.
  - ✓ Exceptions to the standard work shift may occur if a scheduled procedure requires employees to work at times other than scheduled, including weekends, holidays, and emergency events, or if an exception is approved in advance with the Assistant Director.
- Standard work shifts for all other divisional Staff personnel will be determined by the employee and their Supervisor, with approval by the Assistant Director or Director.
- All employees must be prepared to begin work at their appointed start time and continue to be available to work until the end of their work shift. For Staff assigned to an animal facility, the following additional guidelines apply:
  - ✓ Time will be provided at the beginning and the end of a work shift to allow the employee time to change into and out of their work uniform. The amount of changing time must be reasonable and is at the Facility Manager's discretion.
    - Time allowed for changing is considered a part of the work shift. You still must report to work at the appointed start time and then proceed with changing into your work uniform.
  - ✓ It is not acceptable to be out of work uniform during the workday except for instances as described in SOP #905 under Section III. 1.e. or with the permission of the Facility Manager/Supervisor.
  - ✓ Staff assigned to an animal facility may change into their street clothes no sooner than 15 minutes prior to the end of the workday, unless otherwise directed by the Facility Manager/Supervisor.
- A standard work shift provides for an unpaid 30-minute lunch break to be taken at a time agreed upon between the employee and the Facility Manager/Supervisor.
  - ✓ Occasionally lunch breaks may be interrupted due to the delivery of animals or supplies which must be received at that time, or other activities which may interfere with a lunch break. On those occasions, the Facility Manager/Supervisor will ensure that employees affected by the interruption still receive their full lunch break.
  - ✓ If you decide to leave the facility for your lunch break, you must change into street clothes, per SOP #905.
  - ✓ If you need to take an extended lunch break, you must receive approval in advance from the Facility Manager/Supervisor.

- Employees are allowed two 15-minute breaks, which may be taken mid-morning and mid-afternoon.
  - ✓ Break times may be predetermined by the Facility Manager/Supervisor.
  - ✓ If breaks are not taken, that time may not be used to shorten a work shift.
  - ✓ In addition, breaks may be interrupted or excluded if there is a need for your assistance in the workplace.
- Exceptions to the above may be made for part-time Temporary employees. Their work shifts will be established with the approval of the Facility Manager/Supervisor and/or the Assistant Director.

## II. Conducting Personal Business During Working Hours

- Excessive use of telephones located within the facilities or in offices for personal reasons will not be tolerated.
  - ✓ Employees should make an honest effort to arrange for personal telephone calls during scheduled breaks and/or during lunch break.
  - ✓ Exceptions will be made for genuine emergencies, in which case the Facility Manager/Supervisor should be notified.
- Personal cell phones, smartphones, tablets, and other handheld electronic devices are not to be used for personal communication (e.g., talking or texting) within the animal facility during working hours. Use is limited to scheduled breaks and/or lunch breaks. Use should be confined to break room areas or to areas outside of the facility. These policies include text messaging.
- Computers located within the office areas of the Division, including those located in Facility Manager's offices and technician workstations within the animal facilities, are to be used for University and Divisional business only.

## III. Procedures for Requesting Time Off for Medical Reasons

- If you have an unanticipated absence for medical reasons, you must call in at the beginning of your work shift and communicate directly to a Facility Manager or Supervisor. Per USF HR policy, the "use of sick leave must be requested and approved in advance {of your work shift}, except in an emergency situation. In emergency situations where leave cannot be requested and approved in advance, absences should be reported as soon as possible to the employee's supervisor or designee."
  - ✓ You may contact Irina Ramirez (Office Manager), Marta Perez (Assistant Director), Margi Baldwin (Assistant Director) Chris Perry (Assistant Director), or Dominique Abrahams (Assistant Director) directly if you are unable to reach your Facility Manager or Supervisor. You may leave a clear message and a call back number in case they need to contact you.
  - ✓ After three (3) full days (consecutive days) of absence for medical reasons you are required to provide a documentation from a health care provider before any additional absence for medical reasons will be approved. This documentation must indicate that your absence from work is required, the date you are allowed to return to work, if applicable, and indicate if there are any restrictions on your work activities.
  - ✓ If you are hospitalized, you may be required to bring a "return to work" notice from your health care provider.
  - ✓ The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a Federal law that entitles eligible employees up to 12 workweeks or up to 480 hours of job-protected unpaid leave for family and medical reasons during a 12-month period.
    - More information about FMLA can be found at <http://www.usf.edu/hr/benefits/attendance-leave/fmla.aspx> , or by contacting USF HR directly.
    - USF HR representatives will help to determine whether an employee is eligible and qualifies for FMLA.
    - FMLA does not guarantee paid time off. However, employees are to use accrued sick and annual leave to remain in a paid status for some or all of the FMLA leave period.
- When absent from work for an appointment with a health care provider, you will be expected to report to work prior to and after the appointment, as applicable, except when verification from the health care provider indicates that you are unable to work.
- Outside of normal working hours, in cases of emergency or extenuating circumstances, you may contact your Facility Manager/Supervisor or the Assistant Director at their home phone numbers.

- The following is a list of contact people for when you need to request time off for unanticipated medical reasons:

COM:	Crystal Rivera, Lab Animal Manager	974-3836 or 974-4935 or 974-3845
ALZ / PSY/CPH/ IDRB/BPB:	Ana Almonte, Lab Animal Manager	396-0601 or 396-0612 or 396-0718
SRB:	Crystal Reed, Lab Animal Manager Eden McCann, Lab Animal Manager	745-6744 or 745-4320 or 745-4335
MDD/CAMLS	Courtnee Parr, Lab Animal Manager	396-0134 or 396-0137

#### IV. Procedures for Requesting Time Off

- Requests for time off must be made in advance, in GEMS, and approved by your Facility Manager/Supervisor, or in their absence, the Assistant Director. General guidelines for the amount of advance notice necessary for requesting time off are as follows and are at the discretion of the Facility Manager/Supervisor and may be adjusted to meet the staffing requirements of each facility or office area.
  - ✓ For requesting time off, as much advance notice as possible should be provided.
  - ✓ Generally, the more time you are requesting to take off, the more advance notice you should provide.
  - ✓ These guidelines may be deferred in the case of genuine emergencies.
- Facility Managers/Supervisors have the authority to limit the number of personnel requesting the same time off in order to meet the staffing requirements of each facility or office area.
- It is not appropriate to come to work and then ask for the rest of the day off unless there is a genuine emergency. Simply saying, "I forgot to tell you", is not an emergency.
  - ✓ Doctor's appointments, business appointments, personal reasons, etc., are not emergencies.
  - ✓ Time off may be granted at the discretion of your Facility Manager/Supervisor under these circumstances.
  - ✓ For the majority of occasions you may need time off, arrangements and approval should be done in advance.
- In cases of unanticipated absences or tardiness due to emergency or extenuating circumstances, you must follow the same procedure as described above when calling in due to an unanticipated medical reason.
  - ✓ Remember that you are expected to begin work on time unless your absence has been approved in advance. Therefore, unanticipated absences and tardiness may be considered unauthorized and may result in docked pay, as determined on a case-by-case basis, even when the call-in procedure described above is followed.
  - ✓ Exhausting leave balances is unacceptable, except in extenuating circumstances.
  - ✓ Excessive absences and/or tardiness may result in disciplinary action.
    - Excessive absenteeism may be defined as a pattern of absence such as consistent absence on the day preceding or following regular days off, or absence on the same day of each week or each month.
  - ✓ An employee who uses leave in an amount which is less than a full hour is charged leave to the closest quarter hour. For example, an employee who is more than 8 minutes late but less than 23 minutes late will be required to use a quarter hour of leave; more than 23 minutes but less than 38 minutes, one half hour of leave; etc.

#### V. Compensatory Leave

- There are two types of compensatory leave: overtime and special. In the Division of Comparative Medicine, Staff employees are eligible to earn both types compensatory leave. Whether it is overtime or special compensatory leave that is earned depends upon the situation.
- Special Leave: When a Staff employee is required to work on a holiday, he/she is eligible to earn special compensatory leave. For example, if a Staff employee works 32 hours during a week with a holiday in it, works 4 hours on the holiday, and earns 8 hours for the holiday, this totals 44 hours for the week. Of these 44 hours, 40 hours is straight time paid and 4 hours is special compensatory leave earned.
- Overtime work: Normally, full-time employees (both Staff and Temporary) are compensated for 80 hours each biweekly pay period (40 hours each work week). If an employee, eligible to receive overtime pay, actually works more than 40 hours during a work week, he/she will be paid the equivalent of 1.5 times his/her regular hourly rate of pay for the actual time worked in excess of 40 hours in the work week.

- ✓ Overtime work is to be approved in advance by an employee's supervisor or other appropriate authority.
- ✓ All hours of work are to be reflected on the timesheet.
- ✓ Holiday hours and any leave hours used in a work week do not count as time worked when determining if overtime is applicable.
- ✓ Staff employees do have the option of being paid for overtime work or accruing overtime work hours as compensatory leave.
- Use of Compensatory Leave: Staff employees who accrue compensatory leave are required to use part or all of his/her accrued compensatory leave before using accrued annual or sick leave.

## VI. Conduct

- While working within an animal facility or divisional office, you are a representative of the Division of Comparative Medicine and must conduct yourself in a professional manner.
  - ✓ This includes interactions between Comparative Medicine staff and research staff, as well as interactions between Comparative Medicine staff.
  - ✓ A "professional" manner incorporates being polite, respectful and responsive to service requests.
  - ✓ It is important to dress appropriately to project a professional image when attending meetings or seminars on campus outside of animal facilities, to recognize that some clothing choices are inappropriate to the work place (e.g., shorts, flip-flops, tank tops) and to plan your dress appropriately.
    - Topics of a sexual nature, sexually-oriented language, jokes, stories, or other remarks and activities are inappropriate and are not tolerated in the workplace. Witnesses to such occurrences must report the incident immediately to a supervisor, Director, or Human Resources representative, who in turn, must report it to the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity (DIEO).
- Employees are here to facilitate research by caring for animals and assisting investigators with their research projects. Remember and practice principles of good customer service.
  - ✓ It is inappropriate to refuse to assist or ignore a request to assist an investigator, research technician or student working on an approved project unless you are unfamiliar with the procedure or material you are being asked to assist with.
  - ✓ If this is the case, it is appropriate to assist the investigator in finding someone who may help them or by contacting the Facility Manager/Supervisor, the Training Coordinator, or a veterinarian.
  - ✓ It is appropriate to ask the investigator to schedule time in advance to assist them if a technical procedure will require a significant amount of time, e.g., more than half-an-hour. However, this arrangement should be made with the assistance of the Facility Manager/Supervisor.
  - ✓ If you are ever unsure about how to proceed when asked to assist an investigator, contact your Facility Manager/Supervisor, the Training Coordinator, or a veterinarian.

## VIII. Employee Relations Processes: Staff Disciplinary Actions

- Comparative Medicine will follow the University HR processes regarding disciplinary actions. More information about these processes can be found at <https://usfweb.usf.edu/human-resources/resources/procedures> select Discipline.
- Discipline is a form of training used to correct inappropriate or unacceptable behavior.
  - ✓ The University's discipline program is based on the concepts of progressive and cumulative discipline.
  - ✓ Once an employee has been informed of the behavior expected of them, when an infraction occurs, appropriate discipline will be administered progressively from minor to major penalties.
  - ✓ Violations need not be identical in nature to be cumulative.
- When a concern first becomes apparent, that concern will be verbalized to the employee.
  - ✓ If employee fails to respond to expressed concerns in a positive manner, formal counseling will occur.
  - ✓ Formal counseling is fair warning. It will describe the concern, address inappropriate or unacceptable behavior, provide specific details, and warn of consequences if misconduct continues.
  - ✓ Formal counseling will be followed-up with written documentation.
- Discipline may only be imposed for "just cause", i.e., incompetence or misconduct. The University provides written Standards for Disciplinary Action to use as reference for just cause.
  - ✓ Disciplinary actions which may be taken include oral reprimand, written reprimand, suspension, and dismissal.

- The University also provides Grievance Procedures for all employees. It consists of a two-step process to which certain conditions/exceptions apply. More information can be found about this procedure on the University HR website.

## VIII. Timesheets

- All Staff and Temporary personnel should be using the Excel form of their timesheet. Timesheets should be completed on the computer and then printed out for signature.
- Leave requests for Staff employees should be made in advance in GEMS
- If a Manager is in doubt as to whether a Staff timesheet has been completed accurately, it would be best if the timesheet is reviewed by the Attendance & Leave Coordinator prior to signing it.
  - ✓ A “cut-pay” status should only occur in emergency situations, when unpaid leave has been approved in advance for specific reasons (e.g., FMLA or medical reasons), or in situations where pay is being docked for disciplinary reasons.
  - ✓ Staff and Administration employees are responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient accrued leave to cover their absences.
  - ✓ Facility Managers/Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that Temporary/hourly timesheets are accurately filled out and the original Temporary timesheet, signed by both the employee and Facility Manager/Supervisor sent to the Administrative Staff in a timely manner.
- When timesheets are turned in to Facility Managers/Supervisors for signature, Facility Managers/Supervisors are to ensure that the timesheets are completely and accurately filled out and signed in all appropriate spaces.
- Employees may request a copy of their timesheet for their records before it is submitted to the Attendance & Leave Coordinator. For eligible Staff, overtime (COT) hours are earned only when the employee physically works over 40 hours in a work-week (Friday through Thursday).
  - COT is time and half and may be taken as either hours earned or pay.
  - Working on a day off (either during the week or on a weekend) does not automatically earn an employee COT. Remember that the employee must have actually worked over 40 hours during the work-week to be eligible for COT. If the employee takes any leave hours during the week, this may reduce or negate their COT hours.
  - When employees are required to come in to work on their day off (either during the week or on the weekend), they must record the actual hours worked on their timesheets.
- ✓ For Temporary employees, overtime hours are earned only when the employee physically works over 40 hours in a work-week (Friday through Thursday), and are paid at time and a half during that payroll period if overtime is worked the first week, or the next payroll period if overtime is worked the second week.

## IX. Holidays and Emergency Management

- Holiday dates and emergency events are determined by the University.
- University holidays include; Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving and day after, Christmas, New Year's Day and two floating holidays.
- In order to provide for the well-being of the animals in the care of Comparative Medicine, animal facilities must be supported and maintained during an emergency event (i.e., campus closure). Thus all staff are considered essential personnel.
  - ✓ Facility Managers/Supervisors will be responsible for determining and assigning the minimum number of employees from their facilities to each holiday or campus closure in order to satisfy the minimum coverage requirements of that facility.
    - It is preferable to schedule at least 2 employees per facility per holiday and during an emergency closure. However, smaller facilities with lighter workloads may be able to manage with only one person scheduled. This can be done at the Facility Manager's discretion. Smaller facilities may also consider working in coordination with a larger facility to ensure adequate coverage.
    - For larger facilities with greater workloads that require more staff present, it is preferable to schedule either the Facility Manager or a Supervisor to work.
    - Facility Managers/Supervisors have the authority to limit the number of personnel requesting the same time off in order to meet the staffing requirements of each facility or office area.

- In general, holiday and emergency work assignments can be satisfied by requests for volunteers to work. However, when necessary to meet the operating requirements of the facility, the Facility Manager may impose some other means of identifying working personnel. Any alternate methods of identifying working personnel must be approved by the Assistant Director.
- Employees who work on a holiday or during an emergency closure will record actual hours worked on that day on their timesheet. Hours worked on a holiday are accrued as special compensatory (SC) hours.
- In the event of a campus closure a volunteer, or designated employee, if no one volunteers, will remain in the animal facility overnight to ensure the continuity of facility operations and well-being of animal holdings. Benefits and hours of work during an emergency will be administered consistent with University regulations and policies, and any applicable federal or Florida law.
- Scheduling end of the year holidays, i.e., the weeks that include the Thanksgiving holidays, Christmas, New Year's Day, and the floating holidays can be found <http://www.usf.edu/registrar/calendars/>
- ✓ Requests for time off during one of these holiday weeks shall be made in advance in GEMS.
  - Facility Managers/Supervisors have the authority to limit the number of personnel requesting the same time off in order to meet the staffing requirements of each facility or office area.
  - If there are multiple requests for leave during these holidays, it is at the Facility Manager's discretion, with approval of the Assistant Director, to impose some unbiased means of approving leave requests.

## X. Reporting Injuries

- It is the employee's responsibility to notify their Facility Manager/Supervisor or the Assistant Director of any work-related injury or illness.
  - ✓ Facility Managers are required to maintain a record of information regarding every reported work related injury/illness whether or not the injured employee seeks medical attention.
  - ✓ You do not have to seek medical care immediately but it is recommended that you report the incident to the insurance carrier so there will be a record of the injury if treatment is required at a later date.
  - ✓ If an injury is considered an emergency, an employee and/or Facility Manager/Supervisor is directed to call 911 or go directly to any emergency room. The closest emergency room to the USF Tampa campus is AdventHealth Hospital of Tampa. The closest emergency room to Heart Institute and CAMLS is Tampa General Hospital.
- Except in cases of emergency, the injured or ill employee must be present with the manager/supervisor when the injury or illness is reported.
  - ✓ Facility Managers must have the completed *Online Consolidated Injury/Illness Reporting Form* when calling AmeriSys at 1-800-455-2079 within **24 hrs** of the incident at [https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_d4kadgH4ipJ6vb0](https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d4kadgH4ipJ6vb0)
  - ✓ Once AmeriSys has taken the required information over the telephone, the intake specialist will assess the employee's medical needs and refer the injured/ill employee to a medical facility as appropriate.
  - ✓ Ensure that the emergency room is aware that the injury is due to a work-related incident. Worker's Compensation coverage is provided by AmeriSys and they can be contacted 24/7 at 1-800-455-2079.
- Facility Managers have been provided with "Procedures for Reporting Work Related Injury/Illness" reference notebook, which contain detailed information, including the necessary forms, to complete when a work-related injury/illness occurs.
  - ✓ A Workers' Compensation Specialist is available at USF to provide assistance regarding the entire Workers' Compensation process and can be contacted at [ehs@usf.edu](mailto:ehs@usf.edu)
  - ✓ Complete information is available on the Worker's Compensation webpage on the HR website at,
    - ✓ <http://www.usf.edu/administrative-services/environmental-health-safety/programs-services/risk-management/workers-comp.aspx>