

TRAINEE INTERNS' NEWSLETTER



August 2020

Dear colleagues,

We hope you are well, and keeping safe during this turbulent time. This newsletter focuses on leave which we are sure you will all be eager to take after this whirlwind of a year we have been experiencing. Please read on to find out about annual leave, time off in lieu (TOIL) and leave abutting weekends.

We also have a video on the topic, made by Dr. Ralston D'souza, an experienced member of the National Executive team. You can view this video and other informative videos on what your day to day life will be like as an RMO [here](#). You can also access other helpful Trainee Intern resources [here](#).

Leave

Leave is by far the most frequently raised topic from first year House Officers, so we thought it would be best to give you some further details regarding annual leave and time off in lieu (TOIL). You are taking on a stressful job which can have a high impact on both your physical and mental wellbeing. Without adequate downtime you run the risk of burn out and all that goes with it; so, it is important to take work life balance seriously and use your leave!

Annual leave

You are entitled to 30 days of annual leave per annum. You must apply for annual leave in writing: most DHBs will have a hardcopy application form they would prefer you to use or otherwise some DHBs have an electronic leave kiosk system in operation. The DHB must respond to your application within 14 days in writing either approving or declining your request. If the request is declined, they must state the reasons why the leave is unable to be taken at the time you have requested.

Obviously there are times during the year when it may not be possible for everyone to get the leave they have requested (the holiday period, examination time etc.) but for the rest of the year if the DHB has adequate numbers of relievers or locums etc. declining leave due to lack of cover is not reasonable. If you have been told this is the reason your request has been declined, ask:

- What steps have the DHB taken to source cover?
- How many relievers are there on the run?
- How many others are taking leave at this time?
- Has the DHB approached locums/ SMOs etc.?
- Has the DHB made efforts to rearrange workload?

The second most common reason for leave being declined is because the roster has not yet been written. Again, this is not a good reason in our view given the number of relievers is decided, so if there are X RMOs wanting leave and X+Y relievers available, what your roster might be at the time is irrelevant –there is a reliever available to cover and they will get the roster in the normal way! So again, declining leave on these grounds is not reasonable.

If you still have not had your leave approved then contact your local RDA delegate (remember, we have an updated list of our delegates on [our website](#)) or [get in touch with us](#) here at the office.

Some DHBs have been known to try the “you have to accrue your leave before you can take it” approach. Thanks to the MECA however this is not true for you (it is for other employees!). The MECA provides for 6 weeks in the first year – so you can take leave from day one.

If you leave DHB employment before the end of the year and have taken more than the annual prorated allocation however, you will have to pay it back! When you move from one DHB to another (and chances are you will at some stage during your career) your outstanding annual leave balance can move with you or if you prefer you can get your annual leave paid out. Remember as tempting as the money may be you have an obligation to ensure you are sufficiently rested – so think carefully before deciding what you want in this scenario.

Time off in Lieu (TOIL)

If you work a public holiday, and trust us you will, you are entitled to (in addition to holiday pay for the day) a day off in lieu. This day in lieu is just that “a day”, it is not necessarily 8 hours. For example if you are rostered on nights on Christmas Day that commence at 2200hrs Christmas Day night and therefore only work two hours on a public holiday you

are still entitled to a day in lieu, conversely if you work a long day on a public holiday you are still entitled to a day in lieu. Your day in lieu must be taken within 12 months of working the public holiday and you must give 14 days' notice of your intention to take it – but you get to decide when to take it (albeit with 14 days' notice and as long as you do not want to take it on another public holiday). Your day off in lieu cannot be declined, if there is disagreement around when you take it you must take into consideration the DHB's view as to when is a convenient time but the final decision is yours. These days off are gold – use them wisely.

Leave abutting weekends

If you are taking leave on the days immediately before or after a weekend, then you cannot be required to work the weekend and the Saturday and Sunday cannot be deducted from your leave entitlement. You cannot be rostered to work a night shift that would end on the Saturday morning, but you can be required to commence a nightshift on a Sunday night if your annual leave does not include the Monday e.g. If you took Mon to Fri as annual leave you can be required to work the nightshift commencing on the Sunday of the last weekend. Leave abutting applies to all leave except TOIL (i.e. bereavement leave, medical education leave, special leave, sick leave...).

Contact Us

The next NZRDA trainee interns' newsletter will be published in the second half of August. If you have any specific issues you would like us to cover in our upcoming newsletters or have some interesting information you would like us to include please [email us](#) to let us know! We love feedback and will do our best to accommodate your wishes.



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