

Using Paid and Unpaid Time Off for Bereavement - Guidelines

Benefits-eligible staff and faculty employees are entitled to use Paid Time Off (PTO) for bereavement upon the death of an immediate family member: spouse, children, parents, brothers, and sisters, including step, grand, half, foster, or in-law relationships. Employees may also request PTO to attend the service for the loss of a friend, co-worker, member of their extended family, or other loved one. Supervisors may request reasonable documentation supporting the need for the leave, such as a published obituary or written verification of death/burial/memorial services.

Employees who have experienced the death of a loved one often need to process their own grief and adjust to the loss while helping other family members do the same. They may also need to travel to a different city, state, or country. At the same time, they may need to help with final arrangements such as legal and financial documents; manage the estate of the deceased; and contact extended family, friends, and life insurance providers.

Often there are extenuating circumstances that supervisors should consider when accommodating bereavement time for employees, especially those who may have exhausted their PTO and those who do not accrue PTO. Of most importance, supervisors are encouraged to act with compassion and work with employees to allow the time needed to attend to the passing of their loved one.

Typically, employees should be approved for three to five days' time off from work for bereavement leave. Depending on the circumstances, additional time may be approved.