

COVID-19 Purchase Leave Process

In response to the uncertain economic future arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts on our business and our people, Australia Post and its subsidiaries are allowing eligible employees to purchase additional leave to cover absences from work as we manage our business and focus on measures to ensure job security for all employees.

Summary

- Eligible employees can purchase up to 4 additional weeks of leave in one week blocks.
- The leave must be used in 2020.
- The taking of purchased leave is subject to approval at the local level and employees may be directed to take this leave in line with operational needs.
- Employees must have exhausted their annual leave, long service leave and pre-purchased leave before they can purchase leave under this procedure.
- Applications are now open and remain open until it is deemed appropriate to close the application period.
- Your salary will be reduced over the period between approval of your purchased leave and 31 December 2020.

What is Purchased Leave?

Purchased leave is an arrangement where you can buy and access leave in addition to your existing recreation leave entitlement. You can now apply to buy blocks of one, two, three or four weeks of “purchased” leave. The weekly “purchased” leave is based on your normal weekly hours.

How does it work?

- When you purchase leave, you'll receive your normal base salary but with an automatic deduction each pay over the period between your approval date and 31 December 2020 to cover the additional leave without pay. Tax is then calculated on the reduced amount.
- For example, if you take two weeks of purchased leave as at 30 March, you'll be paid for the equivalent of 38 weeks for the remainder of the year, but your purchased leave payment is spread out evenly over the full 40 weeks between 30 March and 31 December (essentially a 5% reduction in your taxable income for the remainder of 2020).
- To apply speak to your manager who will assess your eligibility and complete the relevant paperwork with you (see “**How Do I Apply**” below)

Who is eligible?

All permanent full-time and part-time employees employed by Australia Post, StarTrack, Decipha, SecurePay and PoliPay may apply for purchased leave as long as they have **exhausted all of their annual leave, long service leave and pre-purchased leave** (or due to planned leave and shutdowns, they will not have enough paid leave to cover these periods).

Applications which don't meet the eligibility criteria, will not be processed and are subject to operational requirements.

When can I apply to buy purchased leave?

Applications are now open and remain open until it is deemed appropriate to close the application period.

How do I apply?

- To apply speak to your manager. Your manager can request an application spreadsheet by emailing PayrollBulkUpload@auspost.com.au.
- Depending on your eligibility criteria and operational requirements, your manager will approve or decline your request and let you know why.
- If you are eligible your manager will complete the application spreadsheet with you and send this back to PayrollBulkUpload@auspost.com.au.

What if I'm a Retail employee?

Talk to your Network Support Officer about how you can apply for purchased leave under this procedure.

How will I know if my application is approved?

Purchased leave isn't an automatic entitlement and is subject to eligibility criteria and operational requirements.

If your purchased leave request application isn't approved, your manager will explain the reason why this is the case.

When can I take my purchased leave?

Your purchased leave must be taken before 31 December 2020 and may be directed to be taken in line with operational needs.

Can I cancel my purchased leave?

Purchased leave must be taken during 2020. If there are extraordinary circumstances during the year requiring you to cancel your leave then please discuss your situation with your manager and contact Employee Assist on 1300 363 772.

What happens if I leave Australia Post before the end of the year?

If this occurs, we'll complete a reconciliation between your purchased leave and the fortnightly deductions already taken. If you are owed a refund, it will be paid in your final termination payment. If you owe money, it will be taken out of your final termination payment as agreed by you in the purchased leave application process and if your final termination payment does not cover the amount you are required to pay back, then you must pay that back separately.

What if I have taken a form of leave without pay during the year, will it impact my purchased leave arrangement?

Yes, it may. Your purchased leave financial arrangement (what you pay back each fortnight) will be re-adjusted to reflect the original leave repayment amount calculated at the beginning of the calendar year. This is because a leave without pay booking can impact your ability to meet your fortnightly purchased leave repayment. Therefore, an adjustment is completed at the time to avoid an overpayment situation at the end of the calendar year. There is no impact to the amount of purchased leave you have requested.

What happens if I have an occupancy change which changes my weekly hours or ordinary pay permanently or temporarily?

Your purchased leave quota balance will change to align with any movement in your weekly hours or ordinary pay caused by an occupancy update.

This means that if you have purchased leave and are working in a higher paid role, when you take the purchased leave, you will receive the higher rate. Equally, if you have agreed to be redeployed to a lower paid role as an alternative to being stood down, you will receive the lower rate.

What happens if I incur an overpayment at the end of the year?

If an overpayment is generated after the end of year reconciliation, you will have to pay this back, as agreed by you in the purchased leave application process. If the overpayment is \$60 or less, it will be taken out of your next pay. If the overpayment is more than \$60, Payroll will contact you to make arrangements to repay the overpayment.

Can I apply to pay for my purchased leave in advance?

No, purchased leave cannot be paid for in advance.

More questions?

- Talk to your manager if you want to know how much purchased leave you can take or when you can take it.
- Call Employee Assist on 1300 363 772, Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 5.30pm AEST for any questions on the purchased leave policy or process.