



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

January 15, 2025

Memorandum

To: Solicitor
Inspector General
Assistant Secretaries
Heads of Bureaus and Equivalent Offices

From: Jennifer A. Ackerman
Director, Office of Human Capital
Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer

Subject: Department of the Interior Emergency Leave Transfer Program for Federal Employees Adversely Affected by the California Wildfires January 2025

An emergency leave transfer program (ELTP) has recently been established to assist employees adversely affected by the destruction caused by the California Wildfire emergency. The memorandum from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) authorizing the ELTP can be found here: [Emergency Leave Transfer for Federal Employees Adversely Affected by the California Wildfires January 2025](#).

This ELTP is authorized consistent with OPM's regulations at 5 CFR Part 630, Subpart K and the Departmental [Personnel Bulletin \(PB\) 23-10](#), *Emergency Leave Transfer Program*. As the Department's payroll provider, the Interior Business Center (IBC) will collect, review, and process applications to become an ELTP recipient and requests to donate annual leave for this purpose. An ELTP allows employees to donate unused annual leave for use by employees who have been adversely affected by a disaster or emergency. An employee is adversely affected if the disaster or emergency has caused severe hardship to such a degree that the employee's absence from work is required. In addition, an employee may use donated leave under the ELTP to assist a family member who has been adversely affected by a disaster or emergency, provided such family member has no reasonable access to other forms of assistance.

An emergency leave recipient must use donated leave for purposes related to the major disaster for which the emergency leave recipient was approved and may not receive more than 240 hours of donated annual leave at any one time from the ELTP. Donated annual leave may be substituted retroactively for any leave without pay (LWOP) used by the emergency leave recipient during a major disaster or emergency or may be used to liquidate an

Indebtedness incurred by the emergency leave recipient for advanced annual or sick leave. Donated annual leave **may not** be retroactively substituted for accrued annual or sick leave used because of the emergency. Employees interested in becoming emergency leave recipients must submit a written application using the [OPM Form 1637](#), “Application to Become a Leave Recipient under the ELTP.” Applications to become an emergency leave recipient must be submitted to the Bureau/Office Servicing Human Resources Office (SHRO) by February 21, 2025. Bureau/Office Human Resources Directors (or their designee(s)) must review and either approve or disapprove applications to become an emergency leave recipient based on evidence determined to be administratively acceptable. The SHRO will recommend the total amount of donated annual leave to be transferred to each emergency leave recipient. The amount may vary according to individual needs.

Employees who wish to donate annual leave to the ELTP must complete an [OPM Form 1638](#), “Request to Donate Annual Leave Under the Emergency Leave Transfer Program,” and submit the completed form to their SHRO. Employees may donate up to 104 hours of annual leave in a leave year to the ELTP.

The SHRO will submit the completed OPM Forms to the attention of Rebecca Romero, IBC Payroll Operations Branch Chief, at rebecca_n_romero@ibc.doi.gov for processing.

If donated leave is to be applied to advanced leave or LWOP, this must be specified on the recipient’s documentation. Donated annual leave not used by emergency leave recipients will be returned to the emergency leave donors after the emergency has ended.

Questions regarding this guidance can be directed to Joy Buhler, Office of Human Capital, at joy_buhler@ios.doi.gov.

cc: Bureau Human Capital Officers and HR Officers/Directors