



Office of HUMAN RESOURCES NEWSLETTER



July 2020

This edition of the HR Newsletter is dedicated to helping employees navigate requirements, policies and practices of furlough programs.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that closed all non-essential businesses, and in consideration of the health, safety and wellbeing of all TCNJ community members, most employees began telework in March 2020. As a result of these unanticipated COVID-19 related circumstances, and due to a future where COVID-19 will impact how we operate, interact with one another, deliver service, perform our jobs and educate TCNJ students, the college faces budgetary challenges for fiscal year 2021. Difficult economic decisions have been made including elimination of positions, freezing position vacancies, program reductions and, one of the most difficult and painful, implementation of furlough programs that impact TCNJ employees. The first furlough program was implemented at the end of June. Now, furlough programs have been implemented for the entire TCNJ workforce.

Many of you have had questions about furloughs and how your furlough program impacts certain aspects of your employment. Below are answers to your most frequently asked questions.

What is a furlough? A furlough is a mandatory, temporary unpaid leave of absence. Furloughs do not reflect upon your performance or contributions to the college.

How will I know my furlough schedule? HR, or your supervisor will speak with you about your furlough schedule.

How will a furlough affect my health benefits? You will experience no loss of health benefits during a furlough period, and the furlough will not affect your eligibility for health benefits (medical, dental, prescription drug). Your cost share (the employee deduction) will be unchanged, meaning you are still required to pay for your share of the health benefits you elected.

How will a furlough affect my retirement (pension benefits)? You will experience no loss of retirement (pension) benefits during a furlough.

How will a furlough affect my years of service credit for pension plan purposes? There will be no impact to service credit during a furlough.

May I use vacation time on my furlough day? No, you may not use vacation time to remain in a paid status on a furlough day.



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What if I was approved a vacation day that now falls on my furlough day? Any employee who is furloughed on a day previously approved for vacation will take the day as a furlough day and your vacation day will be credited to be used on a later date after the furlough period comes to an end.

Am I able to perform work such as responding to emails or phone calls on my furlough day? No. While serving a furlough day, you are not permitted to perform work duties, including responding to emails or phone calls.

What auto response message should I put on my email when I am on furlough? Please update your out of office message as follows:

Thank you for your email. I am currently out of the office and will return on _____. If you need immediate assistance please contact _____ otherwise, I will respond to your email upon my return.

How do I apply for unemployment insurance benefits? Please check the HR Newsletter email for an attachment that provides tips for applying for unemployment insurance.

Where can I find a copy of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for my bargaining unit? You may find a copy of your bargaining unit's furlough plan MOA on the union website as follows:

1. **CWA:** <http://cwa1031.org/>
2. **AFT:** <http://www.cnjscl.org/>
3. **IFPTE:** To receive a copy of the local agreement between TCNJ and IFPTE, please contact an IFPTE shop steward.

General questions about the furlough program may be directed to woodski@tcnj.edu or cochranj@tcnj.edu. Questions about your benefits during a furlough may be directed to lyonsc@tcnj.edu