

October 30, 2003

Memorandum

To: OSM Employees

From: James E. Reed (*signed the above date*)
Human Resources Officer

Subject: Information on Excused Absence for Voting and Participation in Political Activities

For your reference and information, this office is providing the following guidance on excused absence for voting, and information on political activity by Federal employees.

VOTING

An employee who wants to vote or register in an election or in a referendum on a civic matter in his or her community may be granted excused absence as follows:

When the polls are not open at least 3 hours either before or after an employee's regular hours of work, an employee may be granted an amount of excused time to permit the employee to report for work 3 hours after the polls open, or leave work 3 hours before the polls close, whichever requires less time off.

Example: If polls open at 7:00 a.m., and close at 8:00 p.m., and an employee's regular hours of work are 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., the employee could be excused from 5:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. since this would be 3 hours before the polls close and would require less time off than if the employee were to report to work 3 hours after the polls open (10 a.m.).

Under exceptional circumstances where the general rule above does not permit sufficient time, an employee may be excused for such additional time as may be needed to enable the employee to vote depending upon the particular circumstances in the individual case but not to exceed a full day.

If an employee's voting place is beyond normal commuting distance and vote by absentee ballot is not permitted, the employee may be granted sufficient time off in order to make the trip to the voting place to cast his/her ballot. Where more than 1 day is required to make the trip to the voting place, the necessary annual leave (or if annual leave is exhausted, leave without pay) may be granted.

For employees who vote in jurisdictions which require registration in person, time off to register may be granted on the same basis as for voting, except that no such time will be granted if registration can be accomplished on a non-workday and the place of registration is within reasonable 1-day, round-trip travel distance of the employee's place of residence.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Under the 1939 Federal Hatch Act, Federal employees were restricted on their participation in political activities. In 1993 Congress amended the Act to permit more political activity by Federal employees. Under the 1993 amendments, many Federal employees are now permitted to take an active part in political management or in political campaigns. However, certain Federal agencies and categories of employees continue to be restricted in their participation in political activities. Attached is information on what Federal employees may and may not do in the political activity area under the Federal Hatch Act. The attachment also includes answers to frequently asked questions about political activity by Federal employees.

If you have any questions regarding voting, please contact your servicing Human Resources Specialist:

<u>Specialist</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Servicing Area</u>
Barbara Chadwick	(202) 208-2697	Director's immediate staff Finance and Administration Program Support WRCC/Field Offices
Ann Warren	(202) 208-2861	ARCC/Field Offices MRCC/Field Offices

For questions regarding political activity, please contact Peggy Moran-Gicker on 202-208-2762.

Attachment