



United States Department of the Interior

INTERIOR BUSINESS CENTER

Denver, CO 80235

D-2400

Memorandum

To: Federal Personnel and Payroll System (FPPS) User Group Representatives and Client Accounting Offices

Subject: American Rescue Plan Act - Emergency Paid Leave (EPL) Interim Solution

From: Christine Zertuche-Rocha, Chief, Payroll Operations Division //S//
Robert Crest, Chief, Personnel and Payroll Systems Division //S//

This is a follow up to our memo dated March 22, 2021 with Subject: Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund FPPS. The Emergency Paid Leave (EPL) provision in section 4001 of the American Plan Rescue Act “Act” establishing a new category of paid leave, referred to as EPL, for certain categories of Federal employees based on qualifying COVID-19-related circumstances. This EPL is to be funded by a \$570 million Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund administered by the Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Due to the possibility of fund exhaustion, EPL is granted on a *conditional* basis. If an agency does not receive reimbursement for conditionally funded EPL, that EPL must be cancelled and the employee will be obligated to resolve any overpayment debt, which could include changing the leave used to another type of leave.

Official guidance has been issued by OPM as of April 29, 2021. Below are the links to the specific guidance documents they issued

- Memorandum to heads of departments agencies (CPM 2021-15) providing primary EPL guidance material and form templates (Go to <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/covid-19-emergency-paid-leave>.)
- Benefits Administration Letter (BAL 21-102) providing guidance related to the effect of EPL on employees’ retirement benefits (Go to <https://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/publications-forms/benefits-administration-letters/>.)
- Benefits Administration Letter (BAL 21-303) providing guidance related administration of the \$570 million fund under which EPL is provided (Go to <https://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/publications-forms/benefits-administration-letters/>.)
- OPM has created a separate webpage devoted to EPL leave at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/ARPA>. OPM will provide agencies with regular updates on the balance remaining in the OPM-administered fund on that webpage.



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The Interior Business Center (IBC) is providing the below interim solution to accurately record EPL, until an enhancement can be fully implemented into FPPS. This interim EPL solution does not replace or supersede any prior or forthcoming client-specific administrative leave guidance.

The IBC's client agencies use several different time and attendance (T&A) systems. Each system may require unique handling of messages to payroll to accommodate the interim solution. Please give your timekeepers and/or administrators the applicable coding and payroll remarks for your T&A system(s). Client agencies should implement the interim solution in coordination with their human capital offices. The IBC will enable the interim solution within Quicktime production environments, effective May 5, 2021.

Based on the information available, here are some important items to note:

- **This interim process does not** monitor the biweekly and aggregate limits outlined in the Act:
 - If the below limitations are not monitored, the work around could result in an overpayment:
 - Biweekly limit (EPL hours allowed only to extent that the value of those EPL hours in a biweekly pay period does not exceed \$2,800 gross salary for full-time employee or equivalent limit for part-time employee, which can limit number of leave hours)
 - Aggregate limit (total of 600 hours for regular full-time employee or equivalent limits for employees with part-time, seasonal, or uncommon tours);
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 - For employees coding the interim EPL work around, it is imperative that timekeepers validate that employees do not code pay code 131 (Night Differential Not Worked) if they have more than 8 hours of EPL or they will get overpaid
 - Night pay under 5 U.S.C. 5545(a) for hours within an employee's tour of duty established for leave-charging purposes is payable only as allowed under the 8-hour rule in 5 CFR 550.122(b).
 - Fund exhaustion (no EPL available once Fund exhausted).
- **This interim process does not** reduce the employee's total service EPL hours paid in calculating retirement benefits

For all covered employees conditionally using EPL for the below qualifying circumstances, meeting all the required authorizations, IBC recommends those employees code their time to **pay code 061** (Administrative Leave – Weather & Safety Leave Used) with the below associated payroll remarks during the qualifying period from March 11 through September 30, 2021.

*Please note an employee may use other types of paid leave or paid time off in the same biweekly pay period in which emergency paid leave is used, if applied to hours not covered by



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emergency paid leave—subject to the normal rules applicable to each type of paid leave or paid time off.

Qualifying Circumstance Reason Code	Description	Payroll Remark
1	Is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.	EPL - 1, Occurrence # and dates used
2	Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.	EPL - 2, Occurrence # and dates used
3	Is caring for an individual who is subject to such an order or has been so advised.	EPL- 3, Occurrence # and dates used
4	Is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis.	EPL - 4, Occurrence # and dates used
5	Is caring for a son or daughter of such employee if the school or place of care of the son or daughter has been closed, if the school of such son or daughter requires or makes optional a virtual learning instruction model or requires or makes optional a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning instruction models, or the child care provider of such son or daughter is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions.	EPL- 5, Occurrence # and dates used
6	Is experiencing any other substantially similar condition.	EPL- 6, Occurrence # and dates used
7	Is caring for a family member with a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older and incapable of self-care, without regard to whether another individual other than the employee is available to care for such family member, if the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19.	EPL- 7, Occurrence # and dates used
8	Is obtaining immunization related to COVID-19 or is recovering from any injury, disability,	EPL- 8, Occurrence # and dates used



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	illness, or condition related to such immunization.	
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IBC has created a data query accessible in OBIEE to assist client agencies with their reporting requirements requesting reimbursement from OPM for EPL. The query will allow agencies to identify employees who have coded their T&A with pay code 061 and the applicable EPL remark. The query will include the associated adjusted base hourly rate salary computation for the 061 hours coded for that pay period. Clients can access this query which will be located in OBIEE at Dashboards>components>Time Attendance> COVID/FFRCA/ARPA-EPL/WEATHER&SAFETY.

Once FPPS has been programmed for the new pay codes (estimated to be in the next FPPS release scheduled for August 6th, 2021) associated with EPL, IBC will make the associated updates to Quicktime and webTA as soon as possible, facilitating the ability for corrected T&As to be processed. Agencies using other T&A solutions will receive advanced notice of the new FPPS pay codes to ensure the programmatic changes needed for the new pay codes associated with EPL are available for use to process corrected T&As, as needed.

IBC will schedule a meeting with FPPS User Group Representatives in the very near future, to help clarify this interim solution and to answer questions. We appreciate your patience while we work through this process. For questions, please use the contact list below, based on the type of inquiry:

- **Employee questions:**
 - Employees should contact the Customer Support Center (CSC) at the **interim contact number: 720-673-9958** or via email at Payroll_Helpdesk@ios.doi.gov

- **User Group Representatives and Client Accounting Office questions:**
 - Quicktime or webTA assistance:
 - Tammy Mitchell at 303-969-5245 or
 - LeAnn Potts at 303-969-5249
 - Information regarding this memorandum:
 - Contact the Division listed below:
 - Payroll and Personnel Systems Division
 - Robert Crest, Chief, at Robert_A_Crest@ibc.doi.gov or 303-969-7490
 - John Brady, Deputy Chief, at John_Brady@ibc.doi.gov or 303-969-7799
 - Payroll Operations Division



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- Christine Zertuche-Rocha, Chief, at [Christine L Zertuche@ibc.doi.gov](mailto:Christine_L_Zertuche@ibc.doi.gov) or 303-969-7739
- Lisa Puente, Deputy Chief, at [Lisa Puente@ibc.doi.gov](mailto:Lisa_Puente@ibc.doi.gov) or 303-969-7739
- **Timekeepers and/or administrators** may contact any of the below Payroll Processing Branch point of contacts

	Name	Phone Number	Email Address
Branch Chief	Rebecca Romero	303-969-7450	Rebecca_N_Romero@ibc.doi.gov
	Karen Galperin	303-969-7409	Karen_A_Galperin@ibc.doi.gov
	Monica Dybing	303-969-7424	Monica_L_Dybing@ibc.doi.gov
	Brandi Hartman	303-969-7475	Brandi_J_Hartman@ibc.doi.gov
	Debbie Bentley	303-969-6347	Debbie_S_Bentley@ibc.doi.gov

Attachments

1. IBC Memo Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund FPPS Dated 3/22/2021
2. Quicktime EPL