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# **HRDG 4630 - Absence and Leave - Section B - Subsection d**

Last Modified:

**Subchapter 4630 - Absence and Leave**  
**Section B - Annual Leave**  
**Subsection d - Annual Leave Ceilings**

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Except as noted below, most employees stationed in the 50 States or the District of Columbia may only carry over a maximum of 240 hours of annual leave from one leave year to the next.

**If the employee had a leave accumulation in excess of 240 hours: Then the annual leave ceiling is: Unless:**

At the end of leave year 1952

**Annual Leave Ceilings for Employees in the U.S.**

As of close of business (COB) 7/6/58, while headquartered in Alaska

As of COB 8/20/59, while headquartered in Hawaii

The employee's annual leave balance at that time (i.e., a personal leave ceiling)

The employee's balance at the end of the leave year goes below the personal leave ceiling. If so, the reduced balance or 240 hours (whichever is greater), becomes the new ceiling.

**Example:** As of 8/20/59, an employee stationed in Hawaii had a personal leave ceiling of 320 hours. At the end of the next leave year, the employee's balance was 270 hours; 270 hours became the new leave ceiling. However, at the end of the following year, the employee's balance was 230 hours and 240 became the new annual leave ceiling.

Employees stationed outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia are eligible to accumulate 360 hours of leave if one or more of the following conditions are met. Employees must be/have been:

**Annual Leave  
Ceilings for  
Employees  
Outside the U.S.**

- Directly recruited or transferred by the Federal Government from the U.S., including transfers to Puerto Rico,
- Directly recruited or transferred by the Federal Government from Puerto Rico or possessions of the U.S. for employment outside the area of recruitment or the area from which they were transferred,
- Natives of Puerto Rico or possessions of the U.S. and are temporarily absent from their homes and are directly recruited in the U.S. for service in their home areas, or
- Persons who are normally residents of the area concerned and are discharged from service in the Armed Forces of the U.S. to accept employment with the Federal Government.

**Note:** Employees stationed overseas must meet the requirements at 5 U.S.C. 6304(b) in order to receive the 45-day (360 hour) annual leave ceiling.

**Retention of 360-  
Hour  
Accumulation**

If an employee who is eligible for 360-hour accumulation moves to a location in which he/she is no longer eligible for that accumulation, he/she will retain an accumulation above the 240-hour ceiling until his/her balance at the end of the leave year is less than 360 hours. When this happens, the new balance, or 240-hours (whichever is greater), becomes the new leave ceiling.

Senior Executive Service (SES), Senior Level (SL), and Scientific and Professional (ST) employees' annual leave ceiling is 90 days (720 hours). (National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008, Section 1112 amends 5 USC 6304 [f] [1], [PL 110-181, 01/28/08].

When an employee is appointed to the SES, SL or ST from a position outside the SES, SL or ST, any annual leave accumulated prior to that move remains to the employee's credit. However, if that annual leave balance is in excess of the amount allowed under the former position (e.g., 240 hours, 360 hours, etc.) and it is not used by the end of the current leave year, it is subject to forfeiture. (Because this requirement is based on annual leave accumulated under a previous non-SES position, it is separate and apart from the 720-hour annual leave ceiling discussed below.)

**Ceiling for Senior Executive Service (SES), Senior Level (SL), and Scientific and Professional (ST) Employees**

The annual leave ceiling for SES employees is 720 hours (effective 10/16/94). If an SES employee had an accumulated balance in excess of 720 hours on that date, the excess balance became the employee's personal leave ceiling. However, beginning with leave year 1996 and each leave year thereafter, the personal leave ceiling will be reduced by the number of hours used in excess of the number of hours earned during the previous leave year. If the employee's leave balance falls below 720 hours at the end of any leave year, the personal leave ceiling is eliminated and the employee is thereafter subject to the 720-hour limit.

**Example:** At the beginning of leave year 1996, an SES employee had a personal leave ceiling of 1020 hours. During leave year 1996, he earned 208 hours of annual leave and used 240 hours of annual leave. His new leave ceiling for leave year 1997 would be 988 hours.

Questions on annual leave ceilings for employees moving from SES positions to or from non-SES positions should be referred to the HR specialist, Human Capital Planning Branch, MRPHR.

**Forfeiture of Annual Leave**

At the end of the leave year, an employee forfeits all unused annual leave in excess of the maximum allowable accumulation.

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