

# Bereavement Leave Policy

**Document ID:** HR-LOA-015 **Effective Date:** January 1, 2024 **Last Updated:** January 2024 **Owner:** People Operations **Applies To:** All Employees

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## Purpose

NovaTech provides bereavement leave to support employees during times of loss. This policy ensures employees have time to grieve, make arrangements, and attend services without concern for work obligations.

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## Eligibility

All employees are eligible for bereavement leave from their first day of employment, including:

- Full-time employees
- Part-time employees
- Temporary employees

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## Bereavement Leave Entitlement

### Immediate Family

**Up to 5 days paid leave** for the loss of:

- Spouse or domestic partner
- Child (including stepchild, adopted child, foster child)
- Parent (including stepparent, parent-in-law)
- Sibling (including step-sibling)
- Grandparent
- Grandchild

### Extended Family

**Up to 3 days paid leave** for the loss of:

- Aunt or uncle
- Niece or nephew
- Cousin
- Spouse's grandparent
- Spouse's sibling

### Close Non-Family

**Up to 1 day paid leave** for the loss of:

- Close friend
- Colleague
- Other significant relationship

## **Additional Considerations**

**Pregnancy loss:** Covered under bereavement leave. Contact HR for support.

**Pet loss:** While not covered under bereavement, employees may use PTO. Talk to your manager if you need flexibility.

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## **Using Bereavement Leave**

### **Notification**

1. Notify your manager as soon as reasonably possible
2. Provide expected duration of leave
3. No documentation required unless requested by HR (rare circumstances)

### **When to Take Leave**

Leave may be taken: - Immediately following the loss - For memorial services (even if later) - In non-consecutive days if needed - Flexibly based on circumstances

### **What's Covered**

Bereavement leave is intended for: - Grieving and emotional recovery - Funeral or memorial service attendance - Travel to services - Making arrangements - Handling estate matters

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## **Additional Time**

### **Extended Leave**

If you need more time than the policy provides: - Talk to your manager and HR - Additional PTO may be used - Unpaid leave may be available - Leave may be extended for extenuating circumstances

## **FMLA Eligibility**

In some cases, additional leave may qualify under FMLA: - Serious health condition related to grief - Care for family members

Contact HR to discuss options.

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## **Pay During Leave**

### **What's Paid**

- Bereavement leave is paid at your regular salary
- No impact on PTO balance
- Benefits continue during leave

### **Travel Expenses**

- Travel for bereavement is a personal expense
  - If death is of a colleague, company may assist (case-by-case)
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## **Manager Responsibilities**

### **When Notified of a Loss**

1. Express condolences
2. Don't ask for details unless offered
3. Confirm leave duration
4. Arrange coverage
5. Communicate only what's necessary to team
6. Check in appropriately upon return

### **Supporting Your Team Member**

- Be flexible with return timing
- Reduce workload initially if possible
- Don't pressure for quick return
- Offer EAP resources
- Follow up periodically

## **What NOT to Do**

- Don't question the relationship
  - Don't ask for documentation (unless directed by HR)
  - Don't discuss with others without permission
  - Don't assign work during leave
  - Don't express frustration about coverage
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## **Returning to Work**

### **Transition Back**

- You may return whenever you're ready
- Consider a gradual return if needed
- Talk to your manager about workload
- Take breaks if needed

### **Available Support**

- EAP counseling (free, confidential)
- Mental health days (3 per year)
- Flexible work arrangements
- HR check-in available

### **Manager Check-In**

Your manager should:

- Welcome you back warmly
- Brief you on essential updates
- Not overwhelm with work immediately
- Check in periodically
- Respect your privacy

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## **Support Resources**

### **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

- 24/7 phone support: 1-800-XXX-XXXX
- Up to 6 free counseling sessions
- Grief support specialists available
- Family members can also access

## **Additional Resources**

- Headspace (free for employees) - Grief meditations
- Mental health days (3 per year)
- Flexible work arrangements
- HR support: hr@novatech.com

## **Grief Support Groups**

HR can connect you with: - External grief support groups - Employee communities (if desired) - Professional counseling referrals

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## **Documentation**

### **Typically Not Required**

NovaTech trusts employees and does not require: - Death certificates - Obituaries - Funeral programs - Proof of relationship

### **When Documentation May Be Requested**

In rare circumstances (e.g., extended leave, pattern concerns), HR may request:  
- Basic information about the loss - Documentation supporting extended leave

This is handled sensitively and confidentially.

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## **Privacy**

### **What We Keep Confidential**

- Reason for leave (shared only on need-to-know basis)
- Details about the loss
- Your emotional state
- Family circumstances

## **What May Be Shared**

With your permission: - That you are on leave - Expected return date - How to handle urgent matters

You control what information is shared with colleagues.

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## **Multiple Losses**

If you experience multiple losses in a short period: - Additional leave may be provided - Contact HR to discuss your situation - We will support you through difficult times

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## **FAQs**

**Q: Do I need to provide proof of the death?** A: No. We trust our employees. Documentation is only requested in rare circumstances.

**Q: Can I take bereavement leave for a miscarriage or stillbirth?** A: Yes. This is covered under bereavement leave. Contact HR for support.

**Q: What if the funeral is weeks after the death?** A: You can take bereavement leave for the service even if it's later.

**Q: Can I take leave for a death that happened before I was employed?** A: Leave is intended for recent losses. Talk to your manager if you need time for an earlier loss.

**Q: What if I need more time than the policy provides?** A: Speak with HR. We will work with you on PTO or extended leave options.

**Q: Is bereavement leave separate from PTO?** A: Yes. Bereavement leave does not reduce your PTO balance.

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## **Contact**

For questions or support: - **HR:** hr@novatech.com - **Slack:** #ask-hr - **EAP:** 1-800-XXX-XXXX

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*Related Documents: PTO Policy (HR-LOA-001), FMLA Policy (HR-LOA-020), Mental Health Days (HR-LOA-025), EAP Guide (HR-BEN-020)*