**Leave Policy — Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Comprehensive HR Manual Version)**.

**1. Executive summary — 5 legal facts you must follow**

1. Annual leave: **21 days** after 1 year; **30 days** after 5 continuous years with the same employer. [Ministry of Human Resources](https://www.hrsd.gov.sa/en/knowledge-centre/articles/321?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
2. Sick leave: certified illness entitlement up to **120 days** in a 12-month period — typically structured 30 days full pay, next 60 days at 75%, final 30 days unpaid. Employers may not lawfully dismiss an employee before exhausting statutory sick leave. [Ministry of Human Resources](https://www.hrsd.gov.sa/en/knowledge-centre/articles/325?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
3. Maternity: **12 weeks (84 days)** full pay (6 weeks must be taken after birth; remaining 6 weeks may be scheduled as employee prefers; start up to 4 weeks before delivery with medical certificate). [Ministry of Human Resources](https://www.hrsd.gov.sa/en/knowledge-centre/articles/312?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Morgan Lewis](https://www.morganlewis.com/pubs/2024/08/key-amendments-to-the-kingdom-of-saudi-arabia-labour-law-announced?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
4. Hajj leave: first-time pilgrims in private sector are entitled to **10–15 days** (includes Eid Al-Adha). Conditions: usually at least 2 consecutive years’ service and only once. [Gulf News](https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/saudi/saudi-arabia-sets-1015-day-hajj-leave-for-first-time-pilgrims-1.500114105?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[ZenHR Blog](https://blog.zenhr.com/en/hajj-leave-in-saudi-arabia?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
5. Qiwa / procedural requirements: employment contracts, key updates and certain work arrangements must be registered/managed via the **Qiwa** platform; HR must ensure digital documentation and follow Qiwa procedural rules. [Ministry of Human Resources](https://www.hrsd.gov.sa/sites/default/files/2022-10/E23102022.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Batic Law Firm](https://baticfirm.com/electronic-employment-contracts-through-qiwa/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**2. Scope & principles**

* **Scope:** All employees in KSA. For special categories (seafarers, armed forces), follow sector rules.
* **Principles:** statutory compliance, fairness, operational continuity, transparent approvals, confidentiality of medical data (PDPL), and integration with WPS/GOSI payroll processes.

**3. Leave types (detailed)**

**3.1 Annual leave (paid vacation)**

**Entitlement & timing**

* **After 1 year** of continuous service: **21 calendar days** paid. After **5 consecutive years**: **30 calendar days** paid. Annual leave is granted for the year it is due; employees may not renounce statutory entitlement. [Ministry of Human Resources](https://www.hrsd.gov.sa/en/knowledge-centre/articles/321?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Accrual & formulas**

* **Standard accrual (monthly):** Annual entitlement ÷ 12 = days accrued per month.
  + Example (21 days entitlement): 21 ÷ 12 = **1.75 days/month**.
* **Pro-rata for partial months**: compute days per day-of-service = (Annual entitlement ÷ 365) × days worked (company may use monthly approximation). Choose one formula and apply consistently in payroll SOP.

**Sample pro-rata calculation (digit-by-digit)**

* Employee salary = SAR **9,000** per month. Entitlement = **21 days/year**. Employee served **7 months** and is leaving; calculate accrued leave payout:
  1. Monthly accrual = 21 ÷ 12 = 1.75 days per month.
  2. Accrued days = 1.75 × 7 = **12.25 days**.
  3. Daily rate (company method A: monthly ÷ 30) = 9,000 ÷ 30 = **SAR 300**.
  4. Payout = 12.25 × 300 = **SAR 3,675**.  
     (Use and document your chosen payroll method; show formula on payslip.)

**Scheduling & blackout**

* Employees must request planned annual leave at least **14–30 days** in advance depending on seniority and role. Managers publish blackout periods (e.g., fiscal year-end) with alternatives (compensatory time or rotation). HR resolves conflicts by seniority/coverage rules.

**Carryover & encashment**

* Carryover allowed only with manager/HR approval and must be taken within the agreed period (e.g., next 12 months). Otherwise, company will encash unused statutory leave at termination per statutory formula.

**Public holidays during annual leave**

* Public holidays that fall within annual leave **do not** count toward annual entitlement. The employee gets the holiday in addition.

**3.2 Sick leave / medical leave**

**Entitlement & pay**

* Up to **120 calendar days** per 12-month period, commonly:
  + First **30 days**: **100%** pay.
  + Next **60 days**: **75%** pay.
  + Final **30 days**: **unpaid**.  
    Employers cannot lawfully terminate employment for legitimate sickness before statutory sick leave is exhausted. [Ministry of Human Resources](https://www.hrsd.gov.sa/en/knowledge-centre/articles/325?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Certification & approved providers**

* For absences > **3 consecutive days**, require a medical certificate from an **accredited medical provider** (company may maintain an approved provider list). For suspicious patterns, company may request second opinion.

**Payroll example (digit-by-digit)**

* Monthly salary SAR **9,000**; employee is off sick for **45 days**:
  1. Daily rate = 9,000 ÷ 30 = SAR **300**.
  2. First 30 days at 100% = 30 × 300 = **SAR 9,000**.
  3. Next 15 days (of the 60) at 75% = 15 × 300 × 0.75 = 15 × 225 = **SAR 3,375**.
  4. Total paid sick = 9,000 + 3,375 = **SAR 12,375** (paid across payrolls per policy).

**Interaction with probation & absenteeism**

* Sick leave entitlements apply during probation. Excessive/unexplained absenteeism is addressed via medical verification and capability procedures (PIP and occupational health referral).

**3.3 Maternity leave & nursing**

**Entitlement**

* **12 weeks (84 days)** paid maternity leave; **6 weeks** mandatory post-delivery; remaining 6 weeks may be taken by the employee (can start up to 4 weeks before expected delivery with medical proof). Employer must provide nursing breaks on return. [Ministry of Human Resources](https://www.hrsd.gov.sa/en/knowledge-centre/articles/312?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Morgan Lewis](https://www.morganlewis.com/pubs/2024/08/key-amendments-to-the-kingdom-of-saudi-arabia-labour-law-announced?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Process**

* Employee must provide medical certificate (expected delivery date). HR coordinates maternity pay, health insurance coverage, and return-to-work planning (phased return, light duties if medically necessary).

**Nursing breaks**

* Provide paid nursing break(s) (e.g., **1 hour/day** aggregated) within working hours for breastfeeding, and provide private lactation space.

**Enhanced company policy (optional)**

* Company may offer enhanced maternity pay (e.g., full pay beyond statutory weeks) or extended unpaid leave—document eligibility and return-to-work commitments (e.g., keep job/grade, training on return).

**3.4 Paternity / parental leave**

* **Paternity (parental) leave:** Male employees are entitled to **3 days** paid parental leave to be taken within 7 days of the child’s birth (statutory amendments/ guidance). Company may offer enhanced parental benefits. [Morgan Lewis](https://www.morganlewis.com/pubs/2024/08/key-amendments-to-the-kingdom-of-saudi-arabia-labour-law-announced?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**3.5 Hajj leave (pilgrimage)**

* **Entitlement:** First-time pilgrims in private sector: **10–15 days** paid leave including Eid Al-Adha (conditions: usually at least two consecutive years service and one-time entitlement). Employees must apply in advance and provide Hajj booking proof. [Gulf News](https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/saudi/saudi-arabia-sets-1015-day-hajj-leave-for-first-time-pilgrims-1.500114105?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[ZenHR Blog](https://blog.zenhr.com/en/hajj-leave-in-saudi-arabia?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Operational rules**

* Supervisor approves based on operational needs; HR confirms eligibility and updates payroll record.

**3.6 Bereavement / compassionate leave**

* **Standard practice:** **3 calendar days** paid for immediate family (spouse, parent, child, sibling). For extended needs, approve additional unpaid leave or annual leave. Company may require documentation.

**3.7 Public holidays & unpaid special leave**

* Publish annual public holiday calendar. Work on public holidays is overtime (see Overtime Policy). For other leaves (study, marriage, jury/court attendance), define user-specific rules; normally unpaid or paid at manager discretion.

**3.8 Unpaid & extended leave**

* Unpaid leave may be granted for personal reasons, secondment, study, long-term care, etc. Benefits (GOSI, insurance) may be paused depending on duration—HR & Payroll to confirm impact before approval.

**4. Operational SOP — requests, approvals & documentation (step-by-step)**

**4.1 Leave request workflow (system & manual)**

1. **Employee** submits request in HRIS (fields: leave type, start/end, contact, backup contact, supporting doc upload). For emergencies, phone notify manager and log in HRIS within 24–48 hours.
2. **Manager** responds within **3 business days** (approve, deny, ask to reschedule). Manager confirms coverage and notes task handover.
3. **HR** validates entitlement (service length, balances), confirms payroll flags (paid/unpaid/encashment), and records leave in HRIS and Qiwa where required.
4. **Payroll** applies pay treatment in next payroll cycle per payroll cut-off. WPS submission must reflect paid amounts.
5. **Employee** receives confirmation email with leave entry and return date.

**4.2 Documentation requirements (by leave type)**

* **Annual:** request form; manager approval.
* **Sick:** medical certificate for >3 days; for <3 days local self-cert allowed (company choice). For long absence, periodic medical reports.
* **Maternity:** medical certificate, expected delivery date, post-delivery certificate confirming date.
* **Hajj:** proof of booking + eligibility verification.
* **Bereavement:** funeral/relationship proof if requested.

**4.3 Failure to return / extended unexplained absence**

* HR attempts contact (phone, email, registered address). If no contact in **5 business days**, issue written warning; prolonged unexplained absence may trigger dismissal per Disciplinary Policy after due process.

**5. Payroll implications & WPS / GOSI interactions**

* **Paid leave**: Salaries paid via WPS; ensure correct pay element codes (annual leave pay, sick pay, maternity pay, encashment) in payroll file.
* **Unpaid leave**: payroll must flag unpaid periods to pause cash payments; verify insurance/GOSI coverage implications and update providers.
* **Encashment at termination**: calculate using company payroll formula (documented), and pay in final WPS payroll.
* **Records**: retain leave payroll entries for minimum 5 years for audit/inspection.

**6. Special cases & edge rules (practical guidance)**

* **Cross-jurisdictional hires / expats**: ensure contract references KSA rules, Qiwa registration is correct, and visa/Iqama implications are managed when employee takes long/foreign travel leave.
* **Linked absence (sick then annual)**: employee may request to combine sick and annual leaves; HR to verify medical certificates and payroll treatment.
* **Leave during notice period**: employees serving notice may use accrued annual leave with employer approval; employer may set limits for business continuity. If employer places employee on garden leave, record as paid leave if pay continues.
* **Redeployment / transfers**: accrued leave transfers with employee records if moving between group entities in KSA (document in Qiwa if required).

**7. Records, confidentiality & PDPL**

* Medical and leave records are **confidential**; access limited to HR, direct manager (need-to-know) and Legal. Store documents in HRIS with access controls and retention rules aligned to PDPL (Personal Data Protection Law). Retain leave records 5 years minimum.

**8. HRIS / Qiwa field mapping & system requirements (practical)**

**Required HRIS fields (per leave request):**

* Employee ID (IQAMA/passport), Employee legal name (Arabic/English), Job title, Department, Manager ID, Leave type code, Start date (yyyy-mm-dd), End date, Number of working days requested (calculated), FTE factor, Work schedule attached, Supporting document (file upload), Manager approval (timestamp + approver), HR validation (timestamp), Payroll flag (paid/unpaid/encash/carryover), Return-to-work clearance (for long sick leave), Notes.

**Integrations**

* **Qiwa**: ensure employment contract changes (long-term leaves affecting contract terms, extended unpaid leave >90 days) are checked for Qiwa update requirements. Follow procedural guidance for contract validity and expatriate records. [Ministry of Human Resources](https://www.hrsd.gov.sa/sites/default/files/2022-10/E23102022.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Batic Law Firm](https://baticfirm.com/electronic-employment-contracts-through-qiwa/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
* **WPS/GOSI**: payroll export maps leave pay elements to WPS codes and GOSI contributions; for unpaid leave confirm GOSI reporting adjustments.

**9. Examples & worked calculations (digit-by-digit)**

**Example A — Annual accrual & payout**

* Monthly salary = SAR **9,000**. Annual entitlement = **21 days**. Employee worked **7 months** and resigns.
  1. Monthly accrual = 21 ÷ 12 = **1.75** days.
  2. Accrued days = 1.75 × 7 = **12.25** days.
  3. Daily rate (method A) = 9,000 ÷ 30 = **SAR 300**.
  4. Encashment = 12.25 × 300 = **SAR 3,675**.

**Example B — Sick leave payment**

* Monthly salary = SAR **9,000**. Employee sick **45 days** (first 30 days full pay; next 15 days at 75%).
  1. Daily rate = 9,000 ÷ 30 = **SAR 300**.
  2. First 30 days = 30 × 300 = **SAR 9,000**.
  3. Next 15 days at 75% = 15 × 300 × 0.75 = 15 × 225 = **SAR 3,375**.
  4. Total paid = 9,000 + 3,375 = **SAR 12,375**.

**Example C — Maternity scheduling**

* Female employee requests to start maternity **4 weeks** before expected delivery (medical certificate provided). HR marks leave start date and schedules payroll to apply maternity pay for 12 weeks total (6 weeks compulsory after delivery).