

**NOTICE OF POLICY REVISION
ISSUANCE: 2006.01**

TO: ALL MET EMPLOYEES
FROM: FRANCISCO LUIS ESPARZA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DATE: 02.08.2006

Due to the high importance of information contained herein, this notice is being distributed as guidance pending a revision of MET's *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual*.

MET's governing board has modified employee leave benefits and has instructed the executive director to implement a system consistent with the board's decision. Also, to streamline accounting procedures, MET is moving to a single calendar year system for all employee leave benefits eligibility and distribution. This will replace the current practice of determining leave benefits by the individual's annual employment anniversary, except for employees who have not completed their first year of employment.

The board's expressed desire to maintain reasonable leave benefits for MET employees shall be implemented as follows:

- The new agency calendar year for employee leave benefits is January 1st through December 31st.

Vacation

1. The maximum level of annual vacation leave accrual shall be 200 hours or 25 working days. This only affects staff who have been with the agency for 20 years or more. The new vacation accrual schedule is:
 1. After one year of employment 80 hours (10 working days)
 2. After five years of employment 120 hours (15 working days)
 3. After ten years of employment 160 hours (20 working days)
 4. After fifteen years of employment 200 hours (25 working days)
2. All employees must exhaust their vacation leave each year, on or before December 31st. No employee may carry unused vacation leave into the next calendar year. In simple terms, this is a "use it or lose it" policy. After action concurrent with this notice (see 4 below), no MET employee will be allowed to receive payment in lieu of actual release time.
3. Consistent with the board's instruction, each MET employee shall be paid for vacation leave identified on the recently distributed "Release Time Hours as of 12/31/05" worksheet, plus any accrued vacation hours as of 12/31/05. This is a one-time action that will essentially exhaust all previously accrued vacation release time at the close of the 2005 calendar year. Funds will be electronically deposited into the same accounts that MET's finance department uses for payroll deposits.

4. As of 01/01/06, each MET employee who has been with the agency for at least one year will be eligible for vacation leave – in the form of actual release time – consistent with the new vacation accrual schedule. In order to ensure that staff are not penalized, employees will be credited with having attained their 2006 employment tenure, or years of employment with MET, as of January 1, 2006. For example, if your annual employment anniversary falls on June 1st, and June 1, 2006 is your 10th anniversary with the agency, you will be credited with vacation leave, effective 01/01/06, consistent with the vacation accrual schedule given above (160 hours or 20 working days). You will receive the higher vacation leave benefit for which you would otherwise have been eligible given your projected tenure in 2006.

This is one-time action for purposes of integrating the new vacation leave policy, and will not be utilized for any other purpose.

Sick & Personal Leave

1. *Sick Leave* and *Personal Leave* are now combined and shall be designated as *Staff Release Time*.
2. The annual accrual of 24 hours (3 days) for *Personal Leave* has been eliminated by the board; however, eligible employees will still have access to this type of leave consistent with item 3, below.
3. *Staff Release Time* will accrue at .5 days/4hours per pay period – 1 day/8 hours per month – 12 days/96 hours per year (this is the same schedule as currently used by MET for *Sick Leave*). *Staff Release Time* may be used consistent with either MET's traditional *Sick* or *Personal Leave* policy, but will only be listed as *Staff Release Time*.

Summary

The revised categories of leave available to eligible MET staff are as follows: *Staff Release Time*, *Vacation*, *Court-Related Obligation*, *Military Service*, and *Leave Without Pay*.