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Employees Can Have Christmas Eve With Families, Thanks to McCall

State employees will get an extra day off this month, thanks to Gov. Tom McCall.

The day is Christmas eve.

"State employees ought to have an opportunity to spend more time with their families during this holiday season," McCall said.

He asked agency administrators and department heads to allow employees to take the day off on Friday, December 24, with straight-time pay.

"As with previous holiday schedules," McCall said, "it will be necessary to maintain open offices to serve the public and provide coverage in the institutions. Employees who must work are to be credited with compensatory time at the straight-time rate."

State Employees Due 8 Holidays in 1972

State employees will get eight paid holidays during 1972, according to Personnel Division rules and the calendar. They are:

Lincoln's Birthday, Monday, February 7th.

Washington's Birthday, Monday, February 21st.

Memorial Day, Monday, May 29th.

Independence Day, Tuesday, July 4th.

Labor Day, Monday, September 4th.

Veterans' Day, Monday, October 23rd.

Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 23rd.

Christmas Day, Monday, December 25th.

In all, state employees will get six three-day weekend holidays. The one holiday they won't get in 1972 because it falls on Saturday is New Year's Day.

Whenever a holiday falls on Sunday, state employees get the following Monday off. Holidays that fall on Saturday are lost.

Full-time employees get time off with pay for each of the holidays listed above. Part-time employees and employees who are on leave without pay status get time off with pay on a prorata basis for any of the above holidays that fall in a month during which the employee works 32 hours or more.

Employees who are required to work on holidays which fall within their regular work schedule shall be given, in addition to their regular monthly salary, compensatory time off for the time worked or, at the discretion of the agency head, paid in cash for the time worked, according to Personnel Division rules.

Holiday pay, regardless of whether it's in the form of cash or compensatory time off, must be given at the rate of time and one-half.

The rules also say that holidays which occur during vacation or sick leave shall not be charged against such leave.

Under state law, employees are not entitled to a day off when a holiday falls on a Saturday, as both Christmas and New Year's Day do this season. However, McCall has authority to designate special days off.

"Even though some public jurisdictions and many private employers will grant both the Fridays before Christmas and New Year's Day off, we cannot follow that course because the added costs cannot be justified during a time of fiscal crisis for state government," the governor said.

Reversal Frees Vacation Leave

Reversal of a decision by President Nixon's Cost of Living Council means state employees will be permitted to accumulate vacation leave increases during the wage-price freeze, Cleighton L. Penwell, director of the Executive Department, said in a letter to all agencies recently.

The Cost of Living Council had previously ruled that increases in paid vacations are the same as longevity pay and may not be granted as long as the freeze is in effect.

Following the decision, Penwell ordered agency administrators to freeze vacation level accumulation rates for all employees at the rate effective last August 14.

Recently the Cost of Living Council said employees may be credited with increasing amounts of vacation leave during the freeze. However, it said that increased vacation time may not be utilized during the period of the freeze.

"While it is irritating for all of us to spend so many man hours adjusting payroll and personnel records, it at least corrects the obvious inequity promulgated in the initial ruling," Penwell said.

Member Count Drops Sharply

OSEA suffered its biggest membership loss in years during November. It had a net loss of 238 members.

LaRetta Albin, OSEA's membership secretary, said most of the loss was due to the fact that the Association "has been carrying many higher education employees—both classified and academic—on the membership rolls since school ended in June."

She said many did not return when school started in September. That fact was not known until OSEA received October and November payroll information from the colleges and universities.

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