

FREE SATURDAYS SEE: F-21, Section 581.15

1. Free Saturday Combined With Annual / Sick Leave

* A regular rural carrier or substitute rural carrier (Designation 72) or a rural carrier associate (Designation 74) in a leave earning capacity who has an approved absence on Saturday occurring within or at the beginning or end of a period of annual or sick leave is not charged such leave or loss of compensation, provided:

1. There are 5 or more consecutive days of annual or sick leave within the period:
or

2. There are 4 or more consecutive days of annual or sick leave plus a holiday within the period. If a holiday falls on Saturday, which is a scheduled workday, absence on the preceding Friday will not be charged to leave. If the leave period is for fewer than 4 days, absence on the Friday will be charged to leave.

3. Interruption during the approved period of annual or sick leave by court leave due to circumstances beyond the employee's control shall not disqualify the carrier for coverage as provided in a. or b. above.

2.

Maximum Free Saturdays Within a Pay Period

* Maximum free Saturdays within a pay period include the following:

1. 6-day routes H or M may receive 2 free Saturdays within the pay period.
2. 5.5-day J routes receive only 1 free Saturday per pay period.
3. 5-day K routes do not receive free Saturdays.

Questions & Answers on Free Saturdays

1.

What Is meant by Free Saturday" when referring to annual leave for rural carriers?

A. Rules for approved absences of rural carriers or substitute rural carriers are subject to the specific conditions of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement. Accordingly:

a. Absence on Saturday which occurs within or, at the beginning or end of a period of annual leave or sick leave, is not charged to such leave, nor is there loss of compensation provided:

(1) There are 5 or more days of annual or sick leave within the period; or

(2) There are 4 or more days of annual or sick leave plus a holiday. If the holiday falls on a Saturday which is a scheduled workday, absence on the preceding Friday Is not charged to leave. If the leave period Is for less than 4 days, absence on Friday Is charged to leave; or

b. Interruption during the approved period of annual or sick leave by 1 day of court leave due to circumstances beyond the carrier's control does not disqualify the carrier for coverage as provided above; or

c. Upon request, a rural carrier is granted annual leave or LWOP on Saturday, at the carrier's option-provided a substitute rural carrier is available for replacement.

Congress first granted "Free Saturday" to rural carriers because they were scheduled to work 6 days a week when other Postal Service employees were scheduled to work only 5 days a week. The Saturday leave provisions were made a part of the National Agreement at a later date. The provisions remain in effect. The Saturday leave provisions still only apply to those rural carriers that are scheduled for work 6 days a week. A carrier assigned to an "H" route is entitled to those provisions on each Saturday, provided the carrier meets the requirements. A carrier assigned to a "J" route is entitled to the Saturday leave provisions only when the "J" day does not interrupt the sick or annual leave period that would qualify the carrier to have the Saturday not to be changed to annual leave. A "K-route" carrier is never entitled to the "Free Saturday" provision since they are not scheduled to work 6 days a week. If a "K" carrier works their relief day, another day, "X" day, is provided (Unless they are on the Relief Day Work List and choose Code "5" compensation at 150%).

Q: I have previously read in the national magazine that Regular Carriers sometimes qualify for a "Free Saturday." Are there any circumstances in which an RCA could have a "Free Saturday"?

A: Yes. The approved absence on a Saturday of a Regular Rural Carrier, Substitute Rural Carrier, or Rural Carrier Associate in a leave earning capacity, which occurs within or at the beginning or end of a period of annual or sick leave, shall be without charge to such leave or loss of compensation provided certain conditions are met. This applies to leave replacements who have the designations 72, 74, 77 or 79. For additional information, you should carefully read the below referenced article of our National Agreement. (Reference: National Agreement, Article 10.4.A., 10.5 & 10.6)

1.

In order to qualify for a free Saturday, an "H" Route or "J" Route carrier must request 6 consecutive days of chargeable leave. A "J" day is not considered a chargeable leave day and if the carrier's leave request includes a "J" day in the middle of 6 days of A/L or S/L, the continuity of leave would be broken, and there would be no "free Saturday". (Example: AJAAAAA - 6 days of leave will be charged to the carrier.)

2.

If the free Saturday in question happens to be part of the next pay period, the system will still give the credit for the free Saturday as long as the timecards are appropriately marked for the pay periods involved.

3.

In a directive issued by the USPS on 3 March 2004, a change was made in the long-standing and widely accepted practice of permitting "X", "O", and "Z" days to qualify a carrier for a free Saturday(s). According to the directive, effective pay period 06-04, the following rural DACA codes will not break the continuity for a "free Saturday" on a "J" or "H" route:

Annual Leave, DACA code A

Sick Leave, DACA code S

Donated Leave, DACA code D

Court Leave, DACA code 6 (new code)

Holiday Leave, DACA code H

The use of any other DACA codes during a period of leave will break the continuity of the leave and therefore disqualify the carrier for a "free Saturday."

4.

HIGHER LEVEL ASSIGNMENTS (P DAYS) - - Article 25 Higher Level Assignments, Section 2. Work Week of the national agreement states that: "A rural carrier who normally serves a route six days a week or six days every other week who is detailed to a position under a different salary schedule for five 8-hour days in a service week will be paid for the full work week without carrying the route on Saturday." DACA code "O" should be on the timecard for that Saturday. "P" days and "F" days can be mixed and matched with each other or with a HOLIDAY, to qualify for the free Saturday or "O" day after five in a row.

5.

QWL/EI (F Days) - F-21, Section 586.53.f. states: "(Where) the regular carrier is assigned to a 6-day route and works 5 full days on QWL/EI activities. Use the following procedure: The regular rural carrier is not required to work the sixth day (usually Saturday). Therefore, enter "O" in the DACA field for the (sixth) day the carrier did not perform QWL/EI duties. The replacement carrier will service the route that day (see: F-21, Exhibit 586.53)." "P" days and "F" days can be mixed and matched with each other or with a HOLIDAY, to qualify for the free Saturday or "O" day after five in a row.