

From the desk of CIVMAR Placement Division Director, Mr. Britt Skogstad

There have been several recurring issues with CIVMAR leave requests indicating that a few key requirements are not well understood. This document is intended to clarify the most common problems the placement specialists are seeing with regard to CIVMAR leave when not assigned to a ship:

Key Concept 1:

MEDICAL CANNOT APPROVE SICK LEAVE - they can only RECOMMEND sick leave.

Discussion: When medical makes a mariner Not Fit For Duty (NFFD) and discusses sick leave, it is only a recommendation. The medical staff does NOT have the authority to approve sick leave. The CIVMAR must submit a request for sick leave to their respective placement specialist for approval. (Of course, annual and/or shore leave may be requested, if desired, in lieu of sick leave.)

Key Concept 2:

BEING MADE NFFD DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY RESULT IN APPROVED SICK LEAVE.

Discussion: When medical makes a NFFD determination, sick leave cannot be automatically charged. The CIVMAR must submit a leave request in order to have sick leave approved and properly charged. By law, the placement specialist cannot place a CIVMAR in a leave status without a request from the CIVMAR.

Key Concept 3:

NFFD STATUS HAS AN EXPIRATION DATE - sick leave cannot extend beyond the expiration date.

Discussion: When Medical makes a determination of NFFD, it always has an expiration date associated with it and it is the CIVMAR's responsibility to be aware of that date and to submit follow-up medical documentation before the expiration date. The placement specialist cannot approve sick leave beyond the expiration date of the NFFD status. Therefore, sick leave will expire on the same day that the NFFD expires UNLESS the CIVMAR (1) provides updated medical documentation that results in the NFFD period being extended AND (2) submits a leave extension request to the placement specialist for approval. Both steps are important! The leave extension request is critical since sick leave cannot be automatically extended when NFFD is extended because, again, the placement specialist cannot place a CIVMAR in a leave status without a request from the CIVMAR. End dates for other forms of leave (annual and shore) are not affected by the NFFD expiration date.

Key Concept 4:

PLACEMENT CANNOT PLACE A CIVMAR ON LEAVE WITHOUT A REQUEST FROM THE CIVMAR.

Discussion: This has already been mentioned, but bears repeating - each CIVMAR is responsible for managing his/her leave and, by law, the placement specialist cannot place a CIVMAR in a leave status without approving the CIVMAR's request. So if you believe you are on leave, but haven't submitted a request or don't know that a submitted request has been approved then you probably are not in a valid leave status, even if you have a large accrued leave balance.

**Key Concept 5:
LEAVE REQUESTS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED IN ADVANCE.**

Discussion: The regulations regarding leave require leave to be requested AND APPROVED in advance. CIVMARs should never assume their leave is approved simply because they submitted a request. They should verify that the leave is actually approved prior to starting their leave either by getting a copy of the approved SF-71 or by contacting the placement specialist and confirming that the leave has been approved (not simply confirming that the request was received). Leave administration instructions provide details regarding how far in advance leave requests are to be submitted.

This is not intended to be an all inclusive list of every rule regarding leave administration but highlights the most commonly seen errors and misunderstandings. This does not constitute a change in any policy or regulation but is provided as clarification of existing regulations in an effort to help CIVMARs avoid an undesired AWOL status. All CIVMARs are encouraged to review the regulations regarding leave administration contained in MSFSCINST 12631.1. <http://www.msc.navy.mil/civmar/instructions/MSFSCINST12631.1.pdf>