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Election Day is Tuesday, November 2, 2021. Because employees work different schedules throughout the state, this advisory offers guidance to assist you with administering time off to vote. The State of Georgia encourages employees to exercise their right to vote in all federal, state, and local elections and has developed guidelines to allow employees to request time off for voting. Employees who meet certain guidelines may be provided not only time off to vote but also paid voting leave. Click [here](#) to access State Personnel Board (SPB) Rule 478-1-.16, *Absence from Work*, and review section (17) on voting leave.

[Eligibility for Voting Leave](#)

Paid voting leave is available to non-temporary, salaried employees when their work schedules do not allow them at least two (2) hours (including travel) to vote either before or after work. **Employees who are scheduled to begin work at least two (2) hours after polls open or end work at least two (2) hours before polls close are not eligible for paid voting leave.** Note that paid voting leave is not available for voting in the middle of a workday.

The amount of paid voting leave that may be granted to an employee depends on the employee's work schedule and the polling hours. In Georgia, polls usually open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m. on election days. Based on this information, the chart below provides some practical examples of how SPB Rule 16 (17) should be applied.

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7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (30-minute lunch)	Yes	Employee does not have at least two (2) hours before or after work to vote.	Two (2) hours at the beginning of the workday or 30 minutes at the end of the workday.
8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (1-hour lunch)	Yes	Employee begins/ends work within two (2) hours of poll closure. 30 minutes of voting leave will ensure the employee has a full two (2) hours to vote.	30 minutes at the beginning of the workday or 30 minutes at the end of the workday.
6:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (30-minute lunch)	No	Employee ends work more than two (2) hours before poll closure.	None
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (30-minute lunch)	No	Employee ends work more than two (2) hours before poll closure.	None
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (30-minute lunch)	No	Employee's shift ends two (2) hours before poll closure.	None
9:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. (30-minute lunch)	No	Employee's shift begins two (2) hours after polls open.	None
9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (30-minute lunch)	No	Employee's shift begins more than two (2) hours after polls open.	None

Agencies are also free to make flexible work schedule arrangements with employees for voting purposes. Employees of agencies that do not permit flexible start or end times may request to use compensatory time or accrued leave, other than sick leave, if they are not eligible for paid voting leave or require more than two (2) hours to vote. Approval of the request is at the discretion of the agency; however, effort should be made to ensure that employees can vote.

Early Voting

Some jurisdictions open polls for early voting prior to the official election day. Agencies may authorize paid voting leave on early voting days if doing so minimally disrupts normal operations. Because polling hours are typically shorter during early voting, an employee who wishes to vote early may need to request more than two (2) hours of leave. **However, no employee may be granted more than two (2) hours of paid voting leave.** Thus, if an agency, in its discretion, decides to allow paid voting leave for early voting, an employee may have to use both paid voting leave and appropriate accrued leave or compensatory time to cover the requested absence.

For early voting locations and times by county, see the Secretary of State's [website](#).

Scheduling and Approval of Voting Time

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Rule 16 (17), should request the leave in advance through normal leave request procedures. The agency has discretion to determine the timing of the leave (i.e., before work or after work).

Agencies with 24/7 operations should note that any voter standing in line at 7:00 p.m. on an election day will be permitted to vote and may need more time off than originally planned; however, no employee may be granted more than two hours of paid voting leave. Additional time needed may be covered by accrued leave (other than sick leave) or compensatory time.

To balance support of each employee's right to vote with the business need to minimize operational interruptions, consider providing written reminders to employees to obtain advance approval to take time off to vote.

If you have questions about the information in this advisory, please contact a member of the HRA Policy team or send an email to hrapolicy@doas.ga.gov.

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