



Change to annual leave accrual for veterans in staff positions

As a commitment to recruit and retain veterans, effective Jan. 10, 2023, a change will be implemented to include service in the military, National Guard, or reserve military service time to the annual leave accrual rate. This change will apply to employees in staff positions eligible for annual leave and does not impact service time for retirement or any other benefit.

Eligible service includes:

- Active duty military;
- National Guard or reserves active or inactive duty; or
- Full-time State or Federal National Guard duty.

Veterans must submit Form DD214 and equivalent service records to validate the service time. Following is a link to a secure electronic platform for submitting the required information.

This change will not be retroactive and will apply going forward. In order for the change to be effective Jan. 10, the required information must be submitted by Jan. 6. If you are unable to submit by the deadline for the Jan. 10 effective date, you can submit and the change will be effective the following month.

Example outlining how the change for annual leave accrual benefits veterans:

A veteran was hired into a staff position in 2020 (two years of Virginia Tech service with no previous state service) and has 20 years of documented service in the military. The current annual leave accrual rate is four hours per pay period (under five years.) The new accrual rate will be eight hours of annual leave per pay period (22 years).

If you do not have a copy of your DD214, please request a record at <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/>.

Submit military service records here: <https://forms.microsoft.com/r/0y7PP4jH0r>.

For more information, contact the HR Service Center at hrrservicecenter@vt.edu or 540-231-9331.

Enjoy January savings from the PerkSpot discount website

Virginia Tech's discount shopping website, PerkSpot, features discounts on electronics, books, pet supplies, and more.

The website is available to employees with a current Virginia Tech email address.

The website includes discounts in more than 25 categories and is updated daily. It's completely free and optimized for use on desktop computers, tablets, and phones. Discounts average 25 percent. You can filter the offerings by selecting your interest areas, such as health and wellness, travel, and home and garden.

To reach PerkSpot, go to the Hokie Discounts page at <https://hokiewellness.vt.edu/discounts.html>. From this main page, you'll be asked to create an account with your vt.edu email address.

You can opt into PerkSpot's weekly email to receive a curated selection of discounts. Each week's email features both new and popular deals, as well as seasonal and thematic groupings of offers. Special gift guides are tailored to the season.

Annual tax document mailings: Employees need to update addresses by Jan. 1

As the year draws to a close, Payroll and the Commonwealth of Virginia are getting ready for the annual mailing of tax documents, including employee W2s and IRS 1095-C forms. All tax documents will be available electronically or will be mailed to your home address of record by Jan. 31.

We encourage all faculty and staff to review their address and update it, if necessary, by Friday, Dec. 30. While some may access their W2s electronically, the state is required to mail IRS Form 1095-C, which provides information regarding any employer-provided health insurance coverage – or offers of coverage – to your home address of record.

To update your address, log in to Hokie Spa and select Update Address(es) and Phone(s). If you have questions about updating your address, please contact the HR Service Center at 540-231-9331. For questions about W2s, email VTW2@vt.edu.

Mental health and wellness resources available from TimelyCare

Virginia Tech offers no-cost mental health and wellness resources to employees from TimelyCare.

TimelyCare is a virtual health service available to full-time faculty and staff and non-student wage employees.* Employees may access TimelyCare services regardless of their location in the United

States. Employees can connect to TimelyCare by computer, tablet, or smartphone using their Virginia Tech email address. Phone/video sessions are available.

TimelyCare offers employees three services:

- TalkNow, an on-demand service available 24/7 that connects an employee with a mental health professional to address issues promptly by telephone or video. It provides immediate care in a crisis.
- Twelve scheduled counseling appointments per academic year with counselors licensed in the state where the employee is located.
- Unlimited health coaching appointments providing information and guided sessions on well-being topics such as dealing with conflict, time management, exercise, sleep, nutrition, weight management, tobacco cessation, mindfulness, and more.

To access TimelyCare, sign up with your @vt.edu email address at <https://timelycare.com/virginiatech>.

- Complete a short health survey. All information shared with TimelyCare is confidential, secure, and HIPAA compliant.
- Click “Get Care.”
- Check out the Explore page for on-demand wellness content, including guided mindfulness and yoga videos and more.

TimelyCare is an addition to the Employee Assistance Program (<https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/health-insurance/eap.html>) and other mental health and wellness support (<https://hokiewellness.vt.edu/Employees/mentalhealth.html>) currently offered by the university.

For assistance with questions about TimelyCare, contact TimelyCare at help@timely.med or 1-833-4-TIMELY, or contact Hokie Wellness at hokiewellness@vt.edu or 540-231-8878.

Staying safe online over the holidays

The holiday season typically marks an increase in online scams and email phishing attacks.

As we approach the holiday season, the Information Technology Security Office would like to remind you to watch out for such malicious activities. Review these tips on how to stay safe online, both at home and at work. We encourage you to keep these in mind as you shop, browse, and communicate online.

Be aware of the most prevalent types of holiday season scams

The top ten online scams are:

- Impostor scams - examples include money transfer scams (a.k.a. advance fee fraud or letter scams)
- Fake law enforcement notifications
- Online shopping through insecure sites (also watch for

- fake negative or positive reviews)
- Investment-related scams
- Fake business or job opportunities
- Fraudulent promotional offers or dire messages seeming to come from your internet, telephone, or mobile service provider
- Fake warnings related to health care or Social Security Benefits
- Travel, vacation, or timeshare scams
- Prizes, sweepstakes, and lotteries
- Foreign money offers and fake check scams

Many of these scams have similar motives - either to trick you into sending them money or giving access to your account numbers or passwords. Be very suspicious of any unsolicited emails, phone calls, or texts asking for this information or offering any deal that seems too good to be true.

Conduct research before patronizing an online store
When using a new website for purchases, read reviews and see if other consumers have had a positive experience.

When in doubt, throw it out: Links in emails, pop-ups, posts, and texts are often how cybercriminals try to steal information or infect devices. Before clicking on any link in an email or text, check where it actually takes you — and if you don't know the sender, it's probably best not to interact at all. If you suspect a message is a phish, self-report it to your email provider (i.e., Outlook, Gmail).

Get two steps ahead: Turn on two-factor authentication on key accounts like banking and email. Also, ensure your passwords are unique and don't contain any identifying information.

Use caution with Wi-Fi hotspots: Limit the type of activity you conduct on public wireless networks when shopping on the go. These networks are likely not encrypted, making it easier for bad actors to steal information.

Protect your hard-earned money: When shopping, check to make sure the site is secure. Look for URLs with the “https://” in the address to help secure your information. Use credit cards instead of debit cards or automatic bank drafts when possible, and make sure to monitor your bank accounts.

You can visit the Federal Trade Commission website at <https://www.ftc.gov/> for more information on how to protect yourself and your loved ones against these and other types of scams, and report cases of fraud.

Visit article with links: <https://vtx.vt.edu/notices/2022/12/it-security-avoid-holiday-scams.html>

Editor Note: Holiday Blackout

This is the last issue for 2022. The Blue Sheet newsletter will not be published on Dec. 28 and Jan. 4 due to winter closing. The newsletter will resume Jan. 11.

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