

What's Your Holiday Policy for Your Paraprofessionals?®

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Some say it is better to give than to receive, but what is your practice giving away with its holiday policies? What are reasonable expectations for employees called in on a holiday? What is reasonable, as an employer, calling people in on a holiday? Let us help you revise your holiday policies and you may be even more thankful when the next holiday comes around.

Let us say the next holiday were to fall on a Monday. Unfortunately, you start the day by finding your practice unexpectedly understaffed, with a full day ahead and an emergency on its way to the hospital. You decide to call in one of your paraprofessionals, who normally works Monday to Friday, but is "off" due to the holiday. Luckily, he or she is free for the entire day and happy to come in and help. He or she finds you at the end of the day because he or she cannot remember the policy from the employee manual pertaining to compensation for that day. You politely thank him or her for coming in and reply:

1. "You'll be paid a straight eight-hour pay" (8h)
2. "You'll be paid time-and-a-half for today" (12h)
3. "You'll be paid an eight-hour pay AND time-and-a-half" (20h)
4. All of the above (40h)

We at Veterinary Business Advisors believe that choice #2 is acceptable compensation for this circumstance. There is no law or legal obligation of employers to increase compensation to employees for working on a holiday or day he/she was not originally assigned to work. However, in recognizing the employee's commitment to the practice and demonstration of his or her work ethic, we believe time-and-a-half is a reasonable reward.

Now let us pretend your paraprofessional normally works 35-hours per week, Tuesday to Saturday. You call him or her in on a Monday, which also happens to be a holiday. For his or her hard work and time at the clinic, you may expect to compensate your employee with:

1. Time-and-a-half (12h)
2. An eight-hour pay (5h + 3h time-and-a-half)
3. A day off on another day he or she was originally scheduled to work

While these are all potential options, we believe the best answer is #1. Remember, an employer has no obligation to increase pay for an employee on a non-scheduled work day. However, to provide a proper incentive and reward your employees for their hard work, we suggest giving your employee time-and-a-half.

If you would like help with your own holiday policies, please contact Lisa Bell at Veterinary Business Advisors today!