

BULLETIN

NO.: 25-86
DATE: June 25, 2025
TO: All Personnel
FROM: James Gaboury, Assistant Fire Chief, Business Operations
SUBJECT: Unscheduled Leave / Blocked Days & Progressive Discipline
(REVISED)

This bulletin describes the procedures the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) will utilize when employees use Unscheduled Leave (UL) and clarifies the progressive discipline that may be associated with UL in accordance with Staffing Manual Section 2.4.B.5. The information in this Bulletin supersedes all other previous Bulletins as they relate to UL, including Bulletin 11-071, Bulletin 21-177, and Bulletin 22-122.

Background

UL and Mandatory Refusal (MR) data analysis shows that every UL results in an average of eight mandatory refusals. To reduce last-minute mandatory overtime assignments and the discipline associated with mandatory refusal, the use of progressive discipline for UL will remain in effect and resume property rights discipline beginning on July 1, 2025. The Department will not pursue progressive property rights disciplinary action for any violation of UL policy that occurred before June 30, 2025. Moving forward, any violation of the UL policy will be subject to progressive discipline, as outlined in the UL policy and restated in this bulletin.

Unscheduled Leaves (UL) – Are defined in the Staffing Policy Manual Section 2.4.B.5 (Attachment 1) as “Leaves, with the exception of Annual Leave Trades- Off or Comp Day Trades-Off (ALTOs/CDTOs), submitted less than 20 hours prior to the beginning of the effective shift (by 1200 hours the day before) are considered UL. This includes the extension of previously approved leaves of less than 24 hours.” Cancellation of overtime assignments after 0630 on the day of the scheduled overtime shall be treated as UL unless personnel are available and agree to backfill from the picklist. Consistent with Staffing Policy Manual, Section 2, UL does not apply to job-protected leaves, including but not limited to leaves covered under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), California Family Rights Act (CFRA), Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL), Long Term Disability (LTD), or Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

Blocked Days – Identified Blocked Days are listed in the Staffing Policy Manual Section 2.4.B.7. Forms of approved leave on a Blocked Day are listed in the Staffing Manual Section 2.4.B.11.

Blocked Day Policy – The discipline for the use of UL on a Blocked Day was published in Bulletin 11-071, which stated: “UL that is taken on a Blocked Day will result in the second level of written discipline if an initial occurrence.” This means that all unexcused uses of UL taken on a Blocked Day result in the discipline progressing by two steps rather than progressing by one step. This has been the practice of the Department since Bulletin 11-

071 was issued, and the Department, through this Bulletin 25-86, intends to continue this practice of progressing discipline by two steps for UL taken on a Blocked Day.

Workflow - When employees request UL, the Staffing Unit enters the UL work code into Telestaff. PSU runs UL reports bi-weekly and after a Blocked Day for evaluation and review purposes. If personnel are in violation of the UL policy contained in the Staffing Manual, PSU will determine the appropriate level of continued progressive discipline.

Exemptions for UL—Staffing Policy Manual, Section 2.4.B.5, states that UL will be excused when illness or a medical condition of the employee or an immediate family member requires intervention by a physician. Personnel must submit verifiable documentation to SDFDProfessionalStandards@sandiego.gov. UL for extraordinary situations will be considered by the Deputy Chief of Employee Services and may be excused on a case-by-case basis. Personnel must submit an explanatory email (with supporting documentation) for review within five (5) working days to SDFDProfessionalStandards@sandiego.gov and CC their immediate supervisor. Requests for exemption after five (5) working days from the date of their UL or that lack supporting documentation will not be accepted or approved. For 56-hour employees, each working shift constitutes two “working days” for the purpose of determining time limits for submitting an exemption.

Obsolete Bulletins

The information in this Bulletin supersedes all other previous Bulletins as they relate to Unscheduled Leave, including Bulletin 11-071, Bulletin 21-177, and Bulletin 22-122.

Timeline for Tracking Violations of UL

Instances of any unexcused UL, including on a Blocked Day, exceeding 24 hours of unexcused UL in a rolling 3-month period, or exceeding 48 hours of unexcused UL in a rolling 12-month period, will be tracked for progressive disciplinary action for one year from the date of each occurrence.

Progressive Discipline for Violations of UL

Unexcused violations of UL will be tracked as progressive discipline for one year from each date of occurrence, based on the prior level of settled discipline retained by PSU in the employee’s disciplinary folder.

As of January 1, 2023, progressive discipline has been issued for each infraction of the UL policy consistent with the terms set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding between San Diego City Firefighters, I.A.F.F Local 145 and the City of San Diego.

- Verbal Warnings and Written Warnings for unexcused UL less than one-year-old are considered for the purpose of progressive discipline for specific similar misconduct but will not be considered for the purpose of promotion, transfer, or special assignment.
- Written Reprimands for unexcused UL less than two years old are considered for the purpose of progressive discipline for specific similar misconduct but will not be considered for the purpose of promotion, transfer, or special assignment.
- Suspensions for unexcused UL less than two years old are considered for the purpose of progressive discipline for specific similar misconduct.
- Suspensions of greater than 48 hours in length for unexcused UL may be a bar

to promotion.

- Progressive discipline for unexcused UL includes severe suspensions up to termination.

Progressive Discipline Timeline

Discipline Type	Length of time in Employee's File
Verbal and Written Warning	1 Year
Written Reprimand	2 Years
Suspension	2 Years

Please route all questions regarding UL and progressive discipline to the PSU through your chain of command or your Local 145 representatives.