



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

TO: All North Carolina state agencies, departments, boards, commissions, and committees under the authority of the North Carolina Office of the Governor
From: Governor Roy Cooper
Date: October 23, 2019
Re: Safe Days

Introduction

Domestic violence has devastating impacts on North Carolina residents, families, and workplaces. This administration has taken meaningful steps to raise awareness and provide support, information, and counseling to domestic violence survivors. During the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the North Carolina Council for Women and Youth Involvement served more than 60,000 clients through its grantees, including fielding more than 112,000 crisis calls.

But more work needs to be done. According to the *2019 Status of Women in North Carolina: Health and Wellness* report, 35% of women in North Carolina have experienced at least one type of intimate partner violence or sexual violence. In 2018, the North Carolina Department of Public Safety reported 103 domestic violence related homicides in North Carolina. To date, 47 domestic violence homicides have been committed in North Carolina this year. The effects of domestic violence are also experienced on a national level. In the United States, one in four women and nearly one in ten men have experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner and reported at least one impact related to these or other violent behaviors in these relationships.

This administration has an obligation to ensure that quality services, policies, and programs are provided to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, including leave. Survivors may need time off work to seek legal counsel, secure a restraining order, relocate to a safe place, or take other actions to secure their safety and that of their families. Taking the necessary time to recover emotionally, physically, and financially from domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking should not jeopardize a survivor's ability to remain in the workforce.

Therefore, I, Governor Roy Cooper, consistent with the authority vested in the North Carolina Office of the Governor, hereby direct the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources to take the following actions:

Section 1. Definitions

- a. "State Agency" is a North Carolina department, agency, board, commission, or committee for which the undersigned has oversight responsibility.
- b. "Eligible Employee" is a full-time, part-time (half-time or more), permanent, probationary, or time-limited employee of a State Agency.
- c. "Sick Leave" is leave time that is granted to an Eligible Employee that can be used for illness or injury, medical appointments, temporary disability due to childbirth, caring for an immediate family member, a death in the immediate family, the adoption of a child, or donated to an immediate family member who is an approved voluntary shared leave recipient.
- d. "Vacation Leave" is leave time that is granted to an Eligible Employee that can be used for vacation, other periods of absence for personal reasons, absences due to adverse weather conditions, personal illness in lieu of sick leave, illness in the immediate family, time lost for late reporting, or donated to an employee who is an approved voluntary shared leave recipient.

Section 2. Office of State Human Resources Responsibilities

- a. The North Carolina Office of State Human Resources ("OSHR") shall permit Eligible Employees to use earned Sick Leave and Vacation Leave to:
 - i. Receive services from a local domestic violence agency, sexual assault crisis center, or any other intimate partner violence or sexual violence services organization after surviving domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking;
 - ii. Obtain legal services or social services after surviving domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including but not limited to meeting with an attorney, obtaining a restraining order, or preparing for or participating in any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking;
 - iii. Relocate to protect their safety or their families' safety from domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including but not limited to securing temporary or permanent housing or enrolling their children in a new school; or
 - iv. Take other steps necessary to protect or restore their physical, mental, emotional, and economic well-being or the well-being of an immediate family member who is recovering from domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- b. OSHR shall work with State Agencies to ensure State Agency management and staff receive information about and understand the obligations and rights established by this Executive Directive. OSHR shall develop and disseminate guidelines to State Agencies on the administration of Sick Leave and Vacation Leave for domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Section 3. **Miscellaneous**

- a. This Executive Directive is consistent with and does not otherwise abrogate federal or state law.
- b. This Executive Directive does not create a private cause of action.
- c. State entities not subject to the undersigned's oversight are encouraged but not required to comply with this Executive Directive.
- d. This Executive Directive is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by future Executive Directive or Executive Order.



Roy Cooper
Governor

