

November 2015: Important Topics for DOM Staff

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To: All DOM Staff

To provide better customer service and to keep staff informed of important and upcoming HR issues, you will be receiving a monthly notice of these topics. For October 2015, I have listed for your review.

Reminder - Upcoming Holidays:

The Thanksgiving, 2015 holidays are:
Wednesday, November 25 (Full day holiday)
Thursday, November 26
Friday, November 27

The December, 2015 and January 2016 holidays are:

Wednesday, December 23
Thursday, December 24
Friday, December 25
Thursday, December 31
Friday, January 1st
Monday, January 18th (Martin Luther King Day)

Social Security Wage Base for 2016: The Social Security Administration (SSA) has announced that the 2016 social security wage base will be \$118,500, which is the same wage base as 2015. As in prior years, there is no limit to the wages subject to the Medicare tax; therefore, all covered wages are still subject to the 1.45% tax. As in 2015, wages paid in excess of \$200,000 in 2016 will be subject to an extra 0.9% Medicare tax that will only be withheld from employees' wages. Employers will not pay the extra tax. The FICA tax rate, which is the combined social security tax rate of 6.2% and the Medicare tax rate of 1.45%, will be 7.65% for 2016 up to the social security wage base. The maximum social security tax employees and employers will each pay in 2016 is \$7,347.

Limits for 2016: The limits for Tax Deferred Savings Plans for 2016 are:

Standard Limit	\$18,000
Age = or >50	\$24,000

Exempt Tax Status: Persons claiming "exempt" for their 2016 W-4 or VA-4 forms must file new tax forms no later than **Monday, February 15, 2016** to continue this status during 2016.

This is an IRS regulation. If the employee neglects to file new tax forms, the employee will be switched to have taxes withheld with a status of Single and zero exemptions.

Reminder - 2015 W-2's: Get your W-2 sooner! The online W-2 will be available mid-January, 2016, two weeks earlier than the paper version. If you don't elect to get your W-2 online, your paper W-2 will not be mailed until **January 31, 2016**. Employees who have not elected to receive their W-2 online can expect an email in early November with instructions on how to enroll.

Reminder - Review Emergency Event Status and Policy: The winter inclement season will be here all too soon. It is important that managers convey to employees their "designated" or "non-designated" status as it applies to an Emergency Event. An employee may view their status via Employee Self-Service under "My Information".

Reminder - Review "Use/Lose" Leave: We are now past the mid-point of the Leave Year. Timekeepers are encouraged to remind their employees to view their "use/lose" leave information that can be found on the SSTL timecard in the *Leave Information* section by clicking in the drop down area.

Reminder - University Leave Cash-Out: The University Staff leave program has a cash-out option for employees who have "use-or-lose" hours at the end of the leave year. These are the hours in excess of the maximum hours allowed for carry forward. Employees will be paid 50 percent of the value of the University Staff leave that they lose, provided they have used a minimum of 10 days (80 hours) during the leave year ending December 27, 2015 (pro-rated for part-time University Staff). This minimum usage requirement is intended to encourage employees to take some time off to relax and rejuvenate. The cash-out payment may be received as taxable income or it may be deposited into a tax-deferred savings plan. After the processing for the final leave period of the year (December 27, 2015) is completed, a process is run for the carry forward of leave which identifies any amount above the carry forward limit for the employee. Any University Staff employee with an amount above the carry forward limit and who met the 80-hour threshold of usage will have a "payout" automatically created for half of the hours. This payout will be processed in the first pay period of the new leave year with pay period ending January 10, 2016 for check date of January 15, 2016.

2015 VSDP and University Leave Allotments: The new allotments of Family/Personal, VSDP Sick leave, and University Leave will be given the beginning of the new leave year. This year, the new leave year begins on **December 28, 2015**. For those *non-University Staff* employees enrolled in the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program, the new Family/Personal and VSDP Sick leave allotments will be available for use on December 28, 2015. For *University Staff*, the new University Leave allotments will be available for use on December 28, 2015. None of these allotments will show on the Employee Self-Service timecard balances or Discoverer balance reports until after the updating of the January 10, 2016 bi-weekly payroll on January 12. The timecards and reports will be reflective of the new allotments when accessed on or after **January 13, 2016**.

Happy holidays!