

# Frequently Asked Questions



## Changes to PTO policy

Starting Jan. 4, 2026, NKC will simplify paid time off by introducing two buckets: Paid Sick Time for illness and safety needs, and Paid Time Off for holidays, vacation, and personal time. Read on for answers to frequently asked questions about what's changing and how it affects you. If you have questions that are not answered here, please email [People@nwkidney.org](mailto:People@nwkidney.org). We'll update this document as needed.

### What's changing

#### **Q1) What is Paid Sick Time?**

**A1)** It's a new bank of paid time off that you can use when you need to take time off work for illness, medical appointments, or safety issues. Each employee (except per diem) will start 2026 with 72 hours in their bank. You'll accrue sick time at the rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked.

#### **Q2) How is PST different from PTO?**

**A2)** Paid Sick Time (PST) is specifically for when you need time off due to illness, medical appointments, or safety issues. Paid Time Off (PTO) covers everything else – holidays, vacation, and personal time.

#### **Q3) Why are you separating out sick time from PTO?**

**A3)** We're trying to make the process of tracking and using paid time off simpler for everyone, and ensure we're complying with local, state and federal laws.

#### **Q4) Why aren't holidays being split out from the PTO bank?**

**A4)** We know past updates about PTO changes may have been confusing, so to clarify: While we originally considered separating holiday and sick pay, we decided to keep holiday time included as part of your overall PTO. Why? Because not everyone takes the same holidays, and many clinical staff work on those days. Plus, with PST, you'll have more PTO to use for personal time. Our goal is to give you as much flexibility as possible.

## Paid Sick Time (PST)

### **Q5) What's the difference between Paid Sick Time (PST) and the Extended Illness Bank (EIB) we used to have?**

**A5)** Paid Sick Time (PST) is our sick leave benefit. You start with 72 hours and earn additional hours as you work. You can use them for short-term illness, doctor visits, or safe time needs. The Extended Illness Bank (EIB) was a separate benefit for use in situations where an employee was unable to work for a longer period of time. The EIB stopped accruing in January 2023 and officially ended on Dec. 31, 2024. When EIB went away, we added a short-term disability benefit to help employees who need extended time off for serious health conditions. PST is for your regular sick or safe time needs, while short-term disability now helps protect your income if you need to be out for a longer period.

### **Q6) Are there rules about when I can use my PST hours?**

**A6)** You can use your Paid Sick Time (PST) when you're sick, need to care for a family member who's ill, have a medical appointment, or need time off for safety reasons, like issues related to domestic violence. We want you to have peace of mind knowing these hours are there for you and your loved ones when you need them most. If you're not sure a situation qualifies for you to use PST, please reach out to your manager or the People Team for guidance.

### **Q7) Can I schedule PST for a doctor's appointment? Or is it only if I need to call out unexpectedly?**

**A7)** Yes, you can schedule your PST for doctor's appointments.

### **Q8) Do I have to provide a doctor's note to use PST?**

**A8)** No, we're removing this requirement for a doctor's note.

### **Q9) Do per diem employees get PST, too?**

**A9)** Per diem employees will have the hours in their Illness Bank transfer over to Paid Sick Time. They'll continue to accrue one hour for every 30 worked.

### **Q10) What happens if I run out of PST and I need to take a sick day? Can I combine it with PTO?**

**A10)** If you're ill and do not have enough PST hours to cover the full shift, you'll need to use PTO hours to make up the difference. If you don't have enough PTO hours, the rest of the shift would be unpaid.

## Accruals, rollovers & cash-outs

### **Q11) How does PST accrue?**

**A11)** All current employees (regardless of FTE, but excluding per diem employees) who are employed at Northwest Kidney Centers as of Dec. 31, 2025, will start 2026 with 72 hours in their PST bank. You'll accrue additional time at the rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked. New employees who start as of Jan. 1, 2026, will begin earning PST at the regular rate (1 hour for every 30 hours worked).

### **Q12) Will my PTO accrual be reduced because I'm getting PST?**

**A12)** No, Paid Sick Time is a new type of paid time off, separate from your PTO. You will begin accruing PST in addition to your current PTO rate. This gives you dedicated hours specifically to use for illness, medical appointments, or safety-related absences. This means you'll have both PTO and PST available, each accruing independently to support your time off needs.

### **Q13) What are the maximum rollover amounts for PST and PTO?**

**A13)** For Paid Time Off, you can roll over up to 200 hours from one calendar year to the next. For Paid Sick Time, that annual rollover cap will be 72 hours for all employees.

### **Q14) I've accrued more than 200 hours of PTO right now. Will I lose all my hours above the cap?**

**A14)** No, you won't lose those hours. You'll have until Dec. 31, 2026, to use hours you've accrued that are over the cap. At the end of 2026, we'll give you a one-time payout for any amount you have that's over 200 hours.

### **Q15) Can I cash out my unused PST?**

**A15)** No, PST is meant to be used for specific circumstances, as needed.

## Misc questions

### **Q16) Does this have any impact on our attendance policy?**

**A16)** We're updating our attendance policy to reflect the addition of PST, but the guidelines will remain the same. You're expected to be at work for scheduled shifts or to notify your manager of unscheduled absences. The updated attendance policy will be posted in January.

### **Q17) Can I donate Paid Sick Time to other employees, like I can with PTO?**

**A17)** No, PST is an individual benefit for each employee. It can't be donated or cashed out.