



Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation  
Working Together

## Compassionate Leave

The largest Professional Union  
for Nurses and Midwives in Ireland  
representing over 41,000 members

### 1. Introduction

This leaflet sets out guidelines on the granting of compassionate leave in accordance with the Department of Health's Circular regarding special leave for domestic reasons.

### 2. Compassionate Leave

Compassionate Leave, with pay, may be granted to an employee on the death of a relative.

### 3. Discretionary

The granting of compassionate leave is at the discretion of the employer and the right to leave cannot be taken as automatic, particularly in the case of distant relatives. However, it is usually offered automatically on the death of a close relative.

### 4. Standard Guidelines

Standard guidelines exist which determine the amount of compassionate leave which may be granted to employees on the death of a relative.

### 5. Amount of Compassionate Leave

Compassionate leave with pay may be granted under the following conditions:

- A maximum of **twenty working days** may be granted on the death of a spouse (including a cohabiting partner), child (including adopted children and children being cared for on the basis of 'in loco parentis') or any person in a relationship of domestic dependency, including same sex partners.
  - A maximum of **five working days** may be granted on the death of an immediate relative, i.e. father, mother, brother, sister, mother-in-law or father-in-law.
  - Extra days may be allowed where an immediate relative dies abroad and you have to go abroad to take charge of funeral arrangements.
  - In exceptional circumstances, a maximum of **three days** may be granted on the death of a more distant relative, if for example, an employee has to take charge, of funeral arrangements or has lived in the same house as the deceased.
- ### 6. General Conditions
- Compassionate leave may be granted provided staff are rostered for duty.

- The period applicable to the taking of compassionate leave covers the time directly associated with the relative's death and subsequent funeral.
- Compassionate leave may not be granted at a later date, e.g. where an employee has returned from annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave, etc. However, all applications for compassionate leave are assessed on an individual basis.

## 7. Help is at hand

Overall, the arrangements surrounding compassionate leave usually fall into place in a calm and professional manner. However, it must be remembered that the granting of compassionate leave is discretionary. The right to leave simply cannot be taken as automatic, particularly in the case of more distant relatives.

Members who feel they are being treated incorrectly are urged to contact their local INMO Nurse/Midwife Representative and/or local Industrial Relations Officer for further advice and assistance.

### Eastern Region:

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### Mid - Western Region:

Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation  
Unit 4B, Courtfields  
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Tel: 061 308999 Fax: 061 309035

### Midland (Longford/Westmeath/Laois/Offaly) Community Health Organisations:

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### Southern Region:

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This leaflet aims to set out guidelines on the granting of compassionate leave in accordance with the Department of Health's Circular regarding special leave for domestic purposes (errors and omissions excepted).

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