Guidance for Absences

The ARS Research Participation Program is established in order to provide opportunities to participate in ongoing research programs at ARS research facilities. Participants receive a monthly stipend, and are not considered employees of the facility to which they are assigned. Participants are expected to observe and conform to all applicable rules, regulations, and requirements of the facility including, but not limited to, those respecting environment, safety, health, security, operating, health physics, drug free workplace, conduct, and attendance.

**Holidays**

Participants are expected to observe the holidays recognized by the host facility staff. For federal facilities these include: New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King’s Birthday, President’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran’s Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

**Absences during Office Hours**

Since participants are not employees, they do not “earn” sick or annual leave. Recognizing that “breaks” are desirable and routinely observed by the academic, federal, and private sectors, the following guidelines are established for participants on twelve-month appointments:

1. Up to 14 days off per year, excluding weekends and scheduled holidays observed at the host facility, are permitted without a reduction of the participant’s stipend. Prior approval by the mentor is normally required.
2. Up to 14 sick days off per year may be granted without a reduction in the participant’s stipend. Mentor must be notified as soon as possible or in advance when possible.
3. Emergency time off for serious family illnesses, death, etc., is to be handled on a case-by-case basis.

All of the above absences are allowed at the discretion of the participant’s mentor. Approved absences should normally be taken in half-day increments. Proportional adjustments in the granting of absences are to be made for appointments of more or less than twelve months, and for part-time appointments.