

PAID ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

The Basics of PAL

PAL (paid administrative leave, or simply “paid admin”) is a standard procedure the agency implements when a report has been filed with APS (Adult Protective Services). If you’ve been placed on PAL, it normally means you were involved in a client-related allegation, triggering Human Resources’ internal protocol: (1) Make a report to APS, (2) Put you on leave, (3) Do nothing until APS concludes its investigation, (4) Conduct an HR investigation and interview you, and (5) Issue a letter likely clearing you for work. On PAL you will be paid and accrue CTO.

Some things to bear in mind

- ✦ HR does not consider an allegation’s plausibility or credibility prior to making an APS report.
- ✦ You will be notified by a generic letter that varies only in its opening sentence that tells you next-to-nothing about why you’re being put on PAL. The whole thing will be vague and anxiety-inducing, and conclude with a confusing statement that appears to instruct you against interacting with agency clients or employees, and mention your right to union representation throughout this process. You will be required to turn in your keys and agency ID badge. Your agency email access will be suspended.
- ✦ In spite of the HR letter, you are legally entitled to speak with coworkers *even about what is happening to you*, so long as you are not intentionally attempting to interfere with an investigation.
- ✦ PAL has no set length; 2-6 weeks seems typical, but can sometimes last for months; APS moves at a snail’s pace, HR’s doesn’t seem much faster, and their investigations are not carried out at the same time.
- ✦ You probably won’t hear anything from the agency until it’s time to schedule an HR interview.
- ✦ When you are cleared for return to work, you will be provided with a letter from HR concluding their investigation. It will say that HR was unable to substantiate the allegation—*not* that it was baseless or that you’re innocent of it. This letter is deeply frustrating but it means the ordeal is over.
- ✦ *Your union is here for you throughout this experience and after it as you readjust.*

Dos and don’ts

- When you are placed on PAL, acknowledge the letter and do not say anything else. Immediately contact the union by sending a text message to (802) 391-0123 and/or emailing howard.union@gmail.com.
- ✗ Resist the urge to freak out.
- ✗ Don’t get into your own head or entertain nagging questions you can’t actually answer.
- ✓ Remain confident that your coworkers, to the extent they’re aware of the situation, have only thoughts of concern and support for you: this can and does happen to anyone, sometimes for ludicrous reasons.
- ✗ Don’t isolate yourself. Reach out to your union, your coworkers, your friends and family. Stay active. Maybe even try and relax a bit. It can feel like it’s dragging out forever, but it will end.
- ✓ You will have many questions. We will be here to answer them.



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