



D 2022 036

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Authorization of Administrative Leave For State Employees Acting as Volunteer Firefighters and First Responders

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Colorado Constitution, I, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order directing the Executive Departments of the State of Colorado to provide additional administrative leave to support and encourage Colorado State employees to engage in formal volunteer services related to fire suppression.

I. Background and Purpose

Climate change is increasing the frequency, severity, and intensity of forest fires in Colorado. Fire season has become a year-round occurrence. As such, we need to maximize all of the State's resources to combat wildfires to protect lives, homes, and properties. Volunteer firefighters and first responders provide critical support to suppress forest and grassland fires, and assist people during fire emergencies. As many as 70% of Colorado's firefighters are volunteers. The volunteer firefighters and first responders face the same expectations as their career counterparts, including responding at all hours of the day and night, over long distances, and experiencing the same impacts on their physical and mental health as full-time firefighters and first responders. On top of those experiences and duties, volunteer firefighters and first responders usually maintain employment outside of their volunteer duties.

To ensure we continue to encourage Coloradoans to engage in this critical volunteer work, it is important that employers including the State of Colorado support employees who volunteer and take time away from their employment to help with fire mitigation and suppression.

II. Definitions

- A. "Volunteer firefighter" is defined the same as in C.R.S. § 31-30-1102(9).
- B. "Volunteer first responder" means an individual who responds to an emergency in a professional capacity including, but not limited to, a paramedic, emergency medical technician ("EMT"), and/or member of search and rescue who does not receive compensation as a first responder.

III. Declarations and Directives

- A. All executive departments shall provide up to five (5) days of additional paid administrative leave per fiscal year for any employee deployed in responding to a fire as a volunteer firefighter or volunteer first responder. One day of administrative leave shall consist of eight (8) hours. Administrative leave shall be available only when the volunteer firefighter or first responder is not otherwise compensated for the time spent mitigating or responding to the fire.
- B. The additional five (5) days of administrative leave per fiscal year shall be for active formal volunteer fire response, not including training, and subject to denial of the employee's supervisor if denial is necessary to ensure the State's critical needs and the employee's job responsibilities are being met.
- C. Executive departments shall adopt and communicate a policy regarding the expectations for when eligible employees may use the additional administrative leave; employee eligibility; and the process for requesting, approving, and reporting on the administrative leave.
- D. The Governor calls upon private sector employers to consider similar policies in support of our State's fire response.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall remain in effect unless modified or rescinded by future Executive Order of the Governor.



GIVEN under my hand and the Executive Seal of the State of Colorado, this twentieth day of July, 2022.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Polis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jared Polis
Governor