

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR LEAVE

At the beginning of each leave year, career employees are credited with the total amount of annual leave they will earn for the year. Your annual leave is then earned over the course of the year. If you separate from the USPS (for example: retire) and have not yet earned the annual leave you've used, you will then owe the USPS for the annual leave you used, but did not earn.

The HBG Plant Mail Handler Local Agreement (Union Contract) provides for a Choice Vacation Period. The Choice Vacation Period allows Mail Handlers to preschedule annual leave during the calendar year. Confusion sometimes exists between a calendar and a leave year. The leave year is not the 'normal' calendar year.

*What's a leave year?* — the leave year begins on the first day of the first complete pay period in a calendar year (and ends on the day before the first day of the first complete pay period in the following calendar year).

The 2016 leave year begins on Saturday, January 9, 2016 and ends on Friday, January 06, 2017. As a career Mail Handler, you will be credited your 2016 annual leave on Saturday January 9<sup>th</sup>. You can use your newly credited 2016 leave beginning on Saturday January 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Remember:** your maximum annual leave carryover amount is 440 hours. If you have more than 440 hours of annual leave by the start of the leave year, you will lose your overage. "Use it, or lose it."

If you are unable to use your annual leave overage by the start of the new leave year, consider donating leave or participating in an Annual Leave Exchange.

**Annual Leave Sharing Program:** the Annual Leave Sharing Program (LSP) allows career Mail Handlers to share leave by donating unused annual leave to others.

**Annual Leave Exchange:** Mail Handlers will receive a letter each fall if they are eligible to participate in the Annual Leave Exchange (ALE) Program. The ALE Program provides an option for Mail Handlers to receive a lump sum payment for a portion of annual leave advanced at the beginning of the leave year.

**Questions about LSP and ALE?** Visit your PostalEASE website or call Shared Services at 1-877-477-3273 (TTY 1-866-260-7507).

**Leave Without Pay (LWOP)** – remember – if your LWOP reaches 80 hours in a leave year, then your sick leave and annual leave balance will be reduced by the amount of leave you earn in a pay period.