

TOPICS COVERED

General/New Employee

- [How do I know who to contact in Human Resources?](#)
- [How do I notify my employer of a name change, or change of address or phone number?](#)
- [How do I make changes to my beneficiaries?](#)
- [I'm thinking about resigning my employment with the City. What do I need to do?](#)
- [How do I change my paycheck withholding exemptions?](#)
- [How do I obtain a new ID card?](#)
- [How do I make changes to my accounts for direct deposit?](#)
- [Does the City promote from within? How do I bid on a promotion?](#)
- [Does the City offer employment that has multiple shifts? Does the City offer shift differential pay \(premiums\)?](#)

Benefits

- [What are my benefits as an employee with the City of Punta Gorda?](#)
- [Will I receive my insurance identification \(ID\) cards in the mail?](#)
- [How can I get more detailed information about retirement?](#)
- [Who can I talk to about my benefits?](#)
- [When are my benefits effective?](#)
- [What do I need to do to add or delete a dependent?](#)
- [My medical/dental/vision insurance plan does not show coverage for me and/or my dependent\(s\). What should I do?](#)
- [How do I start/stop/change a 457 deferred compensation account? Savings Bond?](#)
- [I have heard that I can join a local health club and have the dues deducted from my paycheck. Which health clubs allow me to do this? How do I sign up?](#)
- [How do I change/cancel my voluntary payroll deductions?](#)

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Leave

- [What is FMLA Leave?](#)
- [Are there any eligibility requirements I must meet in order to take FMLA Leave?](#)
- [What is the definition of a "serious health condition"?](#)
- [What is the maximum amount of leave I can take?](#)
- [What is the maximum amount of PAID leave I can take?](#)
- [Am I required to use my sick and vacation leave while I am on FMLA Leave?](#)
- [Will I continue to accrue benefits while I am out on FMLA Leave?](#)
- [Will I still be eligible to convert sick leave to cash, vacation time, or sick leave escrow if I take FMLA Leave?](#)
- [Is my job protected while I am on leave?](#)
- [If my serious health condition extends beyond the twelve weeks of protected leave that is guaranteed by the FMLA, but I have sick and/or vacation leave still available that will enable my being able to continue to draw a paycheck during my absence, will I get my old job back when I am able to return to work?](#)

- [Do I need to request my leave in writing?](#)
- [Do I need a note from the doctor?](#)
- [How soon do I need to enroll a new child in health benefits?](#)
- [How will I get my paycheck while I am on leave?](#)

Employee Development

- [What kind of training does the City offer to its employees?](#)
 - [Does the City offer any type of financial help to employees who want to take classes or improve their skills?](#)
 - [If I take classes and improve my skills, will the City pay me a higher salary?](#)
 - [If my job requires me to take training courses on a regular basis, will the City pay for it?](#)
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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL/NEW EMPLOYEE

Q How do I know who to contact in Human Resources?

A Select the [EMPLOYEE SERVICE CONTACTS](#) link on this web page and you will be taken to a page that lists all the Human Resources contacts and their extension numbers.

Q How do I notify my employer of a name change, or change of address or phone number?

A Contact the Human Resources Executive Assistant at extension 3304 to receive more information regarding making such changes.

Q How do I make changes to my beneficiaries?

A Contact the Benefits Coordinator at extension 3303 to receive more information regarding making such changes.

Q I'm thinking about resigning my employment with the City. What do I need to do?

A Write a letter of resignation to your supervisor and copy Human Resources. HR will contact you regarding the separation process and provide appropriate documents for your review and disposition. The documents will provide information on your retirement benefits and eligibility for COBRA insurance benefits.

Q How do I change my paycheck withholding exemptions?

A You must complete a new IRS Form W-4 which is available through the Benefits Coordinator at extension 3303.

Q How do I obtain a new ID card?

A *Contact the Human Resources Executive Assistant at extension 3304 to request a new ID card.*

Q How do I make changes to my accounts for direct deposit?

A *Contact the Payroll Coordinator, ext. 3337, to make changes in your direct deposit accounts.*

Q Does the City promote from within? How do I bid on a promotion?

A *All open positions within the City of Punta Gorda are generally posted internally for five working days prior to being posted outside the organization, unless it is in the best interests of the City to post it externally at the same time. The City makes every reasonable effort to promote from within, but does not exclude outside candidates. If you wish to bid on a promotion, fill out an Internal Transfer Form available on the "z" drive in the Human Resources/Forms folder. After the form is filled out, submit it to Human Resources prior to the cutoff date for the posting.*

Q Does the City offer employment that has multiple shifts? Does the City offer shift differential pay (premiums)?

A *The City has many positions available that are not your regular Monday-Friday, 8-5 positions. They are primarily in Public Safety (Police and Fire) and at the Water and Waste Water Treatment Plants. Shift premiums are available.*

BENEFITS

Q What are my benefits as an employee with the City of Punta Gorda?

A *Select the [PAY & BENEFITS](#) link on this web page and you will be taken to a page that gives a general overview of the benefits available through employment with the City of Punta Gorda. For details regarding a specific benefit contact the Benefits Coordinator at ext. 3303.*

Q Will I receive my insurance identification (ID) cards in the mail?

A *Yes. Our health insurance providers generally send insurance identification cards to your home. That is one reason it is critical that your personal information is kept up to date.*

Q How can I get more detailed information about retirement?

A *The City's defined benefit pension plan is closed to employees who were hired on or after October 1, 2011. This fund is controlled by a Pension Board that meets quarterly. Two City employees sit on this board and are intimately familiar with the pension and its workings. If you were hired prior to that date and joined*

the pension plan, contact Human Resources for the names and extensions of these individuals.

If you were hired on or after October 1, 2011 you are eligible to join the City's defined contribution retirement savings plan. For more information regarding taking advantage of this benefit, contact the Benefits Coordinator at extension 3303.

Q Who can I talk to about my benefits?

A *An overview of the City's benefits package is available online by selecting the [PAY & BENEFITS](#) link on this web page. For details regarding a specific benefit contact the Benefits Coordinator at ext. 3303.*

Q When are my benefits effective?

A *The date your benefits become effective depends on the type of benefit. Generally, health insurance benefits are effective the first day of the month following your first thirty days of employment with the City. Leave benefits (sick, annual) may not be used until after your six month anniversary. For details regarding a specific benefit contact the Benefits Coordinator at ext. 3303.*

Q What do I need to do to add or delete a dependent?

A *Depending on the type of benefit, there are specific rules that govern how you may add dependents. Contact the Benefits Coordinator, ext. 3303, if you need to add or delete dependents.*

Q My medical/dental/vision insurance plan does not show coverage for me and/or my dependent(s). What should I do?

A *If you believe that your medical, dental, or vision insurance plan is not providing the coverage you are expecting, the first step is to check your most recent pay advice to verify that the premium is being deducted from your check. The second step is to contact the insurance provider at the 800 number that is on your insurance card. If both of these actions are unsuccessful, contact the Benefits Coordinator at ext. 3303 for assistance.*

Q How do I start/stop/change a 457 deferred compensation account?

A *A deferred compensation account is a method of saving for retirement with pre-tax dollars. Deferred compensation accounts must be set up directly with one of the three companies that the City has authorized to provide such benefits. The contact information for each company is available through Human Resources. All three companies periodically send representatives to visit the City to provide personalized service. When one of these providers is scheduled to come here, you will be notified in advance so that you can obtain permission from your supervisor to meet with the representative.*

Q I have heard that I can join a local health club and have the dues deducted from my paycheck. Which health clubs allow me to do this? How do I sign up?

A *The City participates with two (2) local facilities to provide this benefit. To obtain enrollment information and forms, contact the Benefits Coordinator, ext. 3303.*

Q How do I change/cancel my voluntary payroll deductions?

A *Depending on the benefit, there are specific rules that govern when you may or may not cancel voluntary payroll deductions. For details regarding a specific benefit contact the Benefits Coordinator at ext. 3303.*

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA) LEAVE

Q What is FMLA Leave?

A *The Family and Medical Leave Act is a Federal law that requires employers to allow eligible employees to take up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave each year to have or adopt a baby, to take care of a personal serious health condition, or the serious health condition of an immediate member of the family.*

Q Are there any eligibility requirements I must meet in order to take FMLA Leave?

A *Yes. You must have been employed for at least twelve months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during that year in order to be eligible to take FMLA Leave.*

Q What is the definition of a “serious health condition”?

A *A “serious health condition” means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either: (1) in-patient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity (for purposes of this policy defined to mean the inability to work, attend school or perform other regular daily activities due to the serious health condition, treatment therefore, or recovery therefrom), or any subsequent treatment in connection with in-patient care; (2) an absence of more than three (3) days to receive treatment or care for an illness; or (3) continuing treatment by health care provider.*

Q What is the maximum amount of leave I can take?

A *The maximum amount of leave you may take in a calendar year is twelve weeks, or 480 hours. Each calendar year, you will receive twelve more weeks, or 480 more hours.*

Q What is the maximum amount of PAID leave I can take while on FMLA?

A *The amount of paid leave you may take depends on how many hours of sick leave and vacation leave you have accrued, and the limits specified by FMLA.*

Q Am I required to use my sick and vacation leave while I am on FMLA Leave?

A Yes. *FMLA Leave is unpaid leave. The City requires you to use any accrued sick leave or vacation leave hours you have available while you are on FMLA Leave. Once your paid leave hours are used up, if you still have FMLA Leave available, your leave will be unpaid.*

Q Will I continue to accrue benefits while I am out on FMLA Leave?

A No. *The FMLA does not require continued accrual of employment benefits, such as vacation pay, sick days, seniority, etc. If changes are made to the City's benefits package while you are out on FMLA Leave, you will be entitled to any such changes when you return.*

Q Will I still be eligible to convert sick leave to cash or vacation time if I take FMLA Leave?

A No. *Sick leave that is taken concurrent with FMLA Leave is still used when calculating eligibility to convert sick leave.*

Q Is my job protected while I am on leave?

A Yes. *The law views an employee who is on FMLA Leave as if that employee is continuously employed for the period(s) they are on FMLA Leave. When you return from FMLA Leave, the City is required to return you to your original job or a job of equivalent stature and pay.*

Q If my serious health condition extends beyond the twelve weeks of protected leave that is guaranteed by the FMLA, but I have sick and/or vacation leave still available that will enable my being able to continue to draw a paycheck during my absence, will I get my old job back when I am able to return to work?

A Generally, *once you have exhausted all your FMLA leave, the City will extend your job protections for 30 days as a reasonable under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you are still unable to return to work, the City may exercise its right to terminate your employment, regardless of whether or not you have paid leave on the books. If you are able to return to work prior to exhausting your FMLA- and ADA-protected leave, the City will make an effort to return you to your original position if it is still vacant. If the position has been filled, we will place you in a vacant position for which you are qualified.*

Q Do I need to request my leave in writing?

A Generally, *the City expects employees who anticipate needing FMLA Leave to request it in writing thirty (30) days in advance. Obviously, certain emergencies or other unexpected circumstances may come up where it is not practical or possible to request leave in advance. In such cases, the City expects prompt notification of the need for FMLA Leave.*

Q Do I need a note from the doctor?

A Yes. The City requires that the need for FMLA Leave to take care of a serious health condition be supported by documentation from a health care provider. If the City doubts the need for FMLA Leave, it can require, at the City's expense, that you get a second or third health care provider's opinion. The City can also require that you provide subsequent certification, after you are on Leave, of the need for continued FMLA Leave. In order to return from FMLA Leave you will be required to provide a return to work authorization for you health care provider.

Q How soon do I need to enroll a new child in health benefits?

A If you have an addition to your family through birth, adoption, or foster care, it is important that you notify the City immediately of the new family member. We allow up to thirty (30) days to notify, but immediate notification will minimize the number of bills and collection notices that health care providers may send to your home.

Q How will I get my paycheck while I am on leave?

A The City requires that all employees participate in direct deposit so picking up your check is not a problem. Your pay is deposited directly into your account.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Q What kind of training does the City offer to its employees?

A Some technical positions with the City require that employees obtain certificates or licenses in order to legally hold the position. If the City makes the decision to hire you without the requisite documentation, we will provide such training as is necessary for you to pass certification testing. This training is at no charge to the employee. You will, however, be subject to a certain retention period during which you must continue working for the City or the City could deduct the cost of training from your final paycheck. The City will also pay for most continuing education that is necessary to keep the license or certificate. If you have further questions regarding what the City will, or will not, pay for, contact the Human Resources Manager at ext. 3371.

Q Does the City offer any type of financial help to employees who want to take classes or improve their skills?

A If you wish to voluntarily pursue educational opportunities such as a degree program or technical education that will enable you to do a better job, but the City does not require you to take the training, you must pay for any such classes yourself. The City will reimburse up to \$1500 per year for approved course work. There are conditions attached to this reimbursement so make sure you have discussed this matter with your supervisor, the Benefits Coordinator (ext. 3303), or the Human Resources Manager (ext. 3371). You must get approval in advance in order to receive reimbursement.

Q If I take classes and improve my skills, will the City pay me a higher salary?

A *Training and development that results in your receiving specific necessary certifications and licenses may lead to a higher pay grade, and with it an increase in salary. Not all such training and development will lead to a higher pay grade, however. If you have a question as to whether the training you are pursuing, or are receiving, will result in a higher salary, contact the Human Resources Manager, ext. 3371.*

Q If my job requires me to take training courses on a regular basis, will the City pay for it?

A *Continuing education that is required by the City in order to keep licenses or certificates that the City needs in order to maintain certain operations will be paid in full by the City. There are conditions attached to this reimbursement so make sure you have discussed this matter with your supervisor, the Benefits Coordinator (ext. 3303), or the Human Resources Manager (ext. 3371). You must get approval in advance in order to receive reimbursement.*