

## **VACATION ACCRUAL ADJUSTMENTS**

*MEC eNews, 5FEB10*

Over the past several weeks, many of Flight Attendants received company emails regarding vacation adjustments for incorrect prior year vacation accrual. Most often, 2010 vacation days were over-projected, leaving members with the choice to either forego a planned and scheduled vacation, or keep the days off as credit without pay. While the company does make calculation errors that require correction, other times, a more thorough understanding of the accrual and projection process matched with your individual CMAS information leads to—voilà!—the answer. Hint: it doesn't hurt to have a calculator on hand to get to the bottom of it.

Company emails directed Flight Attendants to write to [IFVACHLP@nwa.com](mailto:IFVACHLP@nwa.com) with questions, or to indicate which vacation option they would choose. Company representatives have been returning email inquiries and/or walking members through their calculation via phone, as necessary. Many of the email answers were unclear, however, leading to more confusion.

If you received a Vacation Adjustment email and don't understand where the discrepancy lies, it is important to start by pulling up ALL of your Crew Member Activity Statements for the previous year on ATLAS. Write down a running total of your accrual activity month-by-month:

Previous Period Ending Balance  
Adjustments  
Earned This Period  
Used This Period Current Period Ending Balance

Verify your contractual accrual rate, which can be found HERE <http://nwaafa.org/contract/section10/>, both in the text at the beginning of the section and an easier-to-read chart at the end.

Following is an explanation of the accrual calculation process, which is necessary to understand should you wish to dispute a company error discrepancy.

First, it is important to remember that vacation (and sick leave) accruals are pro-rated proportionately when credit hours drop below 70 hours for the month. This means, for instance, if you fly 35 hours (50% of 70) for the month (or take Reserve Releases that similarly reduce your guarantee), your vacation accrual will be reduced by half (50%) for that month.

Second, many members have an adjust SIV date (see updated Seniority List) due to adjustments for various leaves, including unpaid medical, maternity, Company Convenience leaves, Family Emergency, Personal Release, and any other unpaid status throughout their employment history. As a result, they might not move to the next vacation accrual step at the same time as their classmates.

Third, due to pro-rations and adjustments for these same leaves and other factors, very few members have a perfectly even number of vacation days due. There are almost always invisible fractions involved that are rounded up or down each year.

The most common reason for vacation over-projection is a leave of some sort during the prior year. While not technically a “leave” in the sense that we normally use it, any unpaid payroll code can affect accrual, including all types of Reserve Releases, Family Emergency (FE), Personal Release (PR), Unpaid Sick (SU), Downward Adjust (DA), OWTs, etc.—especially if they occur during the last four months of the year.

Every year, the company computer takes a snapshot of your year-to-date accruals after August payroll closes. It then adds its estimated projection of how much more vacation you will accrue September through December, assuming a full schedule. That is how the computer arrives at the number of vacation days you receive for the October vacation bid. Any leave taken (using the definition above) following that snapshot can result in a downward adjustment of vacation time the actually company owes you, even though you’ve already got a vacation bid award in your hand. In January, the company typically audits the awards and makes corrections for such over-projections. Hence, the recent emails.

There are a handful of other less common occurrences that may result in an incorrect number of projected vacation days. Sometimes members on FMLA have exhausted their sick time and all of this year’s vacation, and they may “borrow” from next year’s vacation already accrued in the current year. Other times, a FA may be advised they have additional days coming to them (due to SLIP leave accrual the prior year, for instance). When they try to pick up the extra days from the open board, however, they are denied for attempting to pick up the incorrect amount. This can happen if they used a BH (birthday holiday) or donated vacation in the meantime.

Of course, there are countless potential causes for vacation over and under-projections and discrepancies, including company error. If you have an unresolved dispute with the Vacation Help Desk and your records indicate company calculations are wrong, contact your Local AFA Council [ [http://nwaafa.org/contacts/Local\\_bases/](http://nwaafa.org/contacts/Local_bases/) ] for assistance.