

Annual leave request form template

A holiday request form needs six things: who's asking, the dates, the type of leave, the balance before and after, the manager's decision, and the date it was decided. The full template is below - copy it into a document, or skip it entirely and let people book on a shared calendar, which is what most UK teams did the moment they outgrew paper.

The template

Everything from here to the end of section 4 goes into your form. Replace each [bracketed placeholder].

1. Employee details

- Name: []
- Team / department: []
- Manager: []
- Date of request: []

2. The leave requested

- Type of leave: annual leave / time off in lieu / unpaid / other: []
- First day: [] Last day: []
- Half day? No / Morning only / Afternoon only
- Total working days requested: []
- Handover notes - who is covering, and what needs finishing first: []

3. Balance check

- Entitlement this leave year: [] days
- Taken or already booked: [] days
- This request: [] days
- Remaining if approved: [] days

4. Manager decision

- Decision: Approved / Declined
- If declined, the business reason: []
- Counter-notice given on: [] (see the notice rules below - a refusal needs counter-notice at least as long as the leave requested)
- Manager signature: [] Date: []
- Recorded on the leave record by: [] Date: []

How much notice does a holiday request need?

Unless your contract or policy says otherwise, the Working Time Regulations set the defaults - and they're symmetrical in a way most people don't realise:

- Leave requested - Worker must give - Employer's refusal needs
- 1 day - 2 days' notice - 1 day's counter-notice
- 1 week - 2 weeks' notice - 1 week's counter-notice
- 2 weeks - 4 weeks' notice - 2 weeks' counter-notice

Most employers set friendlier rules in policy, which is fine - the statutory positions are the fallback, not a target. What an employer can't do is refuse so persistently that someone loses their statutory minimum: see [can my employer refuse my holiday request?](#)

How to adapt the form

- Match the leave types you actually offer. If you run TOIL, appointments or a purchase scheme, list them - an "other" box collects nothing useful.
- Keep the balance section. It's the part that prevents the awkward conversation in November about days that were never there.
- Don't ask why. There's no need to record the reason for annual leave, and a "reason" column invites inconsistent decisions.
- Say where it's stored. Leave records are personal data - the form should end up in one known place, not a manager's inbox.

Or stop using forms

Honest version: this template exists because people search for it, and if you're running leave on paper it's better than nothing. But a form is a workflow written down - request, check the balance, look for clashes, decide, record it, tell payroll - and every one of those steps is arithmetic and memory that software does for free.

A free template from CoDash - codash.co.uk/templates. Edit it to match how your company actually works, and take advice on anything unusual.