

**Flight Attendant SLIP Leave Program
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
March 12, 2009**

Q: How many SLIP leaves will be granted?

A: As stated in the March 10, 2009 memo from Julie Showers, the number of leaves by duration and base has not yet been finalized. At this time, we do not have an estimate of the number of leaves to be offered.

Q: What would happen to my SLIP if we achieve SOC status and our flying is integrated with pre-merger Delta flight attendants prior to the end of my leave?

A: Nothing will change for you. Your SLIP leave status would remain in place should the flying be integrated prior to the end of your SLIP leave.

Q: I have heard a rumor that at the end of my SLIP leave, Delta policy may not allow me to return to flying unless there is a spot for me. Is this correct?

A: No. That is not correct and is simply wrong information. At the end of your SLIP, you will be returned to flying, in your base, at your seniority. Although none are planned, should an involuntary reduction in force be required in the future, being on a SLIP leave will not impact you. Your status will be determined by your seniority, whether or not you are on a SLIP.

Q: Why offer SLIP leaves and not another Early Out at this time?

A: In-Flight Service recently completed three Early Out programs. No other Early Out programs are planned at this time. During the time they were offered, many Flight Attendants expressed interest in a SLIP leave alternative. To be responsive to that interest, Northwest is pleased to provide a SLIP leave option to allow Flight Attendants to manage their needs while addressing the excess staffing situation.

Q: Can the Company cancel SLIP leaves?

A: Although we do not contemplate the need to cancel a SLIP leave once awarded; SLIP leaves may be cancelled if required in some or all bases with adequate notice.

Q: Can a Flight Attendant awarded a SLIP leave request to end the leave early or not take one after the award?

A: Flight Attendants may not voluntarily cancel a SLIP leave once awarded.

Q: Please explain how Company-paid benefits are continued while I am on a SLIP leave?

A: The Company will continue to provide Company-subsidized benefits for medical including prescription drugs and dental coverage, as well as Company-paid basic life insurance through the duration of the SLIP leave for those employees who had these benefits while in active status. Any employee contribution, which was required as an active employee, will also be required during your SLIP leave. For example, if you are enrolled in the NWA Medical and/or Dental plan, you will need to make your monthly contribution for coverage to be continued.

Your Long Term Disability (LTD) coverage can also be continued, but you will be responsible for paying the full monthly premium for the duration of your SLIP leave.

Finally, any optional life insurance in place while an active employee may be continued by paying the monthly premium. Optional AD&D coverage is not eligible for continuation; however, the coverage may be converted to an individual policy.

However, the continuation of benefits is not automatic. Please read the next Q&As carefully.

Q: How do I find out what I need to do to continue my benefits?

A: On the last day of the calendar month in which you are placed on a SLIP leave, your benefits coverage will be cancelled. Benefits, including your SLIP Leave program Company-subsidized benefits, will not be reinstated until you return your completed election form(s) and employee contributions.

You will receive two notices from NWA regarding your continuation options. These notices will be automatically mailed to you at your home address so it is important to ensure that your mailing address is current with NWA (as shown on your most recent paycheck).

1. COBRA Continuation Notice and Election form – to continue your medical, dental or life insurance coverage
 2. Continuation of Long Term Disability (LTD) Coverage form – to continue your LTD coverage
- YOU MUST TAKE ACTION in order to receive the benefits available to you, including the SLIP leave program Company-subsidized benefits.
 - You have 60 days (from the end of the month in which the SLIP leave occurs or the date on the form – whichever is later), to complete and return the election form.
 - From the date that you sign the election form, you have up to 45 additional days before you must pay all retroactive contributions (from the first of the month following the start of your SLIP leave).
 - For limited disruption of your coverage, you should pay your monthly contributions as soon as possible. Otherwise, coverage remains cancelled until after your contributions have been received at NWA and your plans can be advised that your coverage has been reinstated.
 - Until coverage is reinstated, you won't be able to pick up a covered prescription at your pharmacy or have your eligibility verified by a medical or dental provider.

Q: What is COBRA?

A: COBRA is a federal law that applies to group health plans. Under COBRA, if certain events occur (such as a leave, reduction in hours or termination of employment) an employee and their dependents participating in the employer's health plan (on the last day worked) have the opportunity to continue coverage under the plan for up to 18 months.

Q: Where can I find out how much my benefits will cost when I'm on a SLIP leave?

A: The COBRA continuation packet and Continuation of LTD Coverage form will automatically be mailed to you and will show the monthly premiums for each benefit. The rates shown will reflect any Company-paid portion of the rate along with the employee contribution for medical, dental, optional life and the full cost of LTD insurance coverage. The 2009 employee contributions are on RADAR/Benefits/References & Resources.

Q: If I want the SLIP Leave Program Benefits, what must I do and when do I have to make my employee contribution payment, if any, to NWA?

A: To elect to participate in the SLIP Leave Program Benefits you **must** complete and sign the COBRA election form that you receive (mailed to your home address). Your contribution payment is due within 45 days of the date that you sign your COBRA Election Form. You must pay the full monthly contribution before coverage will be reinstated.

For limited disruption of your medical and/or dental coverage, you should pay your employee contribution, if any, as soon as possible. Otherwise, coverage remains cancelled until after your contribution has been received at NWA and your plans can be advised that your coverage has been reinstated.

Q: Can I continue my FlexSaver accounts while I am off payroll?

A: You may continue your health care flexible spending account (FSA) with after-tax dollars after you are off-payroll, but there is no tax advantage to do so. However, if you haven't incurred enough eligible expenses to use your annual health care FSA balance prior to your SLIP leave date, you may wish to continue contributing to your FlexSaver account.

The rule of thumb is that "eligible expenses" for FSA reimbursement must be incurred while you are a plan participant. This means that your expenses must have been incurred while you were contributing to your accounts. After you stop contributing, you can still request FSA reimbursement, but only for expenses incurred through the end of the month in which you made your last contribution (generally the month in which your leave occurs). You can submit eligible 2009 expenses until the 2009 deadline, April 15, 2010.

Health care FSA continuation costs will be included in your COBRA information sent to your home after your coverage is canceled.

You cannot continue your dependent (day) care FSA after you are off-payroll.

Q: If I elect COBRA continuation for benefits not covered by the SLIP Leave Program, when do I have to make my first premium payment to NWA?

A: If you want to continue your optional life insurance and/or LTD coverage, or FlexSaver, your first payment is due within 45 days of the date that you sign your COBRA/Continuation Election Form(s). Your first payment must include all retroactive contributions (back to the date coverage was cancelled). Thereafter, your monthly COBRA contributions are due on the first day of each month. If you miss your deadline for payments, you lose your right to continue these benefits.

Q: If I don't respond or make an election for COBRA benefits, can I elect COBRA at a later date?

A: No, you only have 60 days to elect COBRA. If you don't make an election within this 60-day period, your COBRA election opportunity ends. If you are uncertain whether or not you will need to continue coverage, we recommend that you return your election form within the 60-day window. By returning your election form, you are not obligated to make premiums but you "reserve" your right for continuation. However, if you don't take the final step of making your premium payments (within 45 days of the date that you signed the election form), you lose your COBRA continuation rights.

Q: If I decline COBRA benefits, will I be eligible for benefits when I return to work?

A: Yes, you will be eligible for benefits upon your return to work in accordance with your labor agreement and benefit plan eligibility rules. Upon your return to work in your same status in 2009, the coverage you had in place on the day before you went off-payroll will be automatically reinstated. If you return to work in 2010 you will be given an open enrollment opportunity.

Q: If I choose not to elect COBRA Continuation Coverage for myself (the employee), can I elect to continue coverage for my dependents?

A: Yes, each qualified dependent has an independent right to elect COBRA if the dependent was covered by your plan on the day before you took a SLIP leave.

Q: How can I pay for COBRA?

A: You have two payment options:

- Automatic checking account (ACH) withdrawal (savings account withdrawal is not currently available)
- Personal check - mail payments to:
NWA
2700 Lone Oak Parkway, A1430
Eagan, MN 55121-1534

Please note: You will not receive a monthly COBRA premium reminder.

Q: Do the NWA benefit plans have pre-existing condition clauses that I need to worry about if I experience a break in coverage?

A: No, there are no pre-existing condition limitations under the NWA sponsored group health care plans.

Q: My spouse also works for NWA, how can I get my coverage transferred under my spouse?

A: Your spouse can add you to his/her coverage through NROL & More, the online enrollment system which can be found on RADAR/Benefits.

Keep in mind, unless your spouse is a pilot or a dispatcher, your coverage through NWA must be canceled before you can be added to their coverage.

Q: What happens if I have a payroll deduction for medical, dental or other coverage while on a SLIP leave?

A: In the event an employee contribution taken after the end of the month in which your SLIP leave occurs, the Benefits Department will issue you a refund. You will need to pay the employee contribution in accordance with your COBRA election.

Q: Can I still use the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

A: All active employees and their dependents can use the EAP program. In addition to active employees, employees who are inactive (on leave or laid-off) and employees who are on COBRA continuation may use the EAP program. The EAP program provides free, confidential counseling and referrals for many issues including family, relationship or job concerns, emotional or stress related concerns, alcohol or drug abuse, and legal or financial worries. The toll free number for the Employee Assistance Program at National Employee Assistance Services, Inc. is (877) 464-4009.

Q: Will I receive other Benefits communications during my SLIP leave?

A: As soon as your coverage is cancelled in the system, you will receive a "Certificate of Group Health Plan Coverage." This document is commonly called a "HIPAA" notice. The purpose of a HIPAA notice is to provide you with evidence of when you had medical coverage and when it ended. It is not necessary to save these forms for NWA coverage, but this information may be needed when enrolling for coverage under another plan – especially if that plan has a pre-existing condition limitation.

Q: Are employees on a SLIP leave eligible for unemployment compensation?

A: Individual state laws determine eligibility for unemployment compensation. In most states, employees on a SLIP leave have been eligible following the state's waiting period (three to seven days in most states). However, in some cases, most noticeably in Minnesota, some flight attendants have been denied unemployment benefits. To access unemployment information by state, log on to the following Web site: www.dol.gov (site may not be accessible on base computers).

Q: What does "projected to be active" mean as it relates to being awarded a SLIP leave?

A: If you are on a medical leave for April, for example, we must have a release to return to work on file no later than the close of business of March 26, to be effective no later than May 1, 2009.

Example: Mary has a note from her doctor that states she will be on a medical leave March 2009 - May 2009. Mary bids a SLIP leave. No release to return to work is received prior to the close of the SLIP leave bids, on March 26, 2009; therefore, Mary will not be awarded a SLIP.

Example: Jim was on a medical leave in April with a return date of the May 2009 bid month. Jim bids a SLIP leave and is awarded the leave.

Example: Jane was on medical leave in February and returned effective Mar 1, 2009. As of Mar 27, 2009, Jane has dropped her first three patterns as pattern drops (DA) and has done an OWT for the other remaining pattern on her line for March. Jane bids for SLIP leave, is eligible, and is awarded the leave.

Example: Joe is currently on a SLIP leave scheduled to end May 31, 2009. Joe is eligible for this SLIP program.

Q: If I only want a 3-month SLIP, can I be assured that is what I will be awarded?

A: If you only want the 3-month SLIP leave, on the bid screen, enter an X in front of that duration. While we cannot guarantee that you will receive a 3-month SLIP leave at your base and at your seniority, it will guarantee that you will not be awarded a SLIP leave of longer duration.

Q: I will accept a 3-month or a 6-month SLIP, but I would prefer the 3-month SLIP. How can I preference the 3-month as my first choice?

A: Since the 6-month SLIP will be awarded prior to the 3-month SLIP leave, there is no way to preference a 3-month SLIP prior to a 6-month SLIP. Entering an X in front of these durations means you will accept either a 6-month or a 3-month SLIP, understanding that a 6-month may be awarded.

Q: What resources are available to employees?

A: The RADAR Web site at www.nwapeople.nwa.com will be your best resource for finding information. Here you can look for the Employee Resource Center and/or review all of the various sections in RADAR (e.g., information about Benefits, Employee Assistance Programs, Retirement, Paychecks, etc.).

***This FAQ is intended as a summary only.
For Benefits-Related questions, please refer to your Summary Plan Descriptions
and Plan Documents.***