

Attendance related issues are among the most common challenges for federal supervisors. Failure to report to work as scheduled can have a negative impact on an organization's ability to complete the mission and thus affect the efficiency of the service. Therefore, addressing attendance issues is a critical component of a supervisor's responsibilities. Supervisors should establish written leave requesting procedures for their work unit and provide employees a copy.

Placing an employee in an absence without leave (AWOL) non-pay status is one way to address unapproved absences from duty. An employee is AWOL when:

- Absent from their assigned place of duty; and
- The absence is unauthorized or the leave requested is properly denied.

AWOL is different from leave without pay (LWOP) in that LWOP is an *approved* non-pay status and AWOL is *unapproved*. Generally, granting LWOP versus charging AWOL is a matter of *supervisory discretion*; however, approval of LWOP should be limited. AWOL does not require the employee's request or consent.

Supervisors may place an employee in an AWOL status when an employee does not report to duty for all or part of a day and when the employee is on agency premises but is not at their specified work location when required. Supervisors may also retroactively place an employee in an AWOL status when the employee fails to provide requested medical documentation or other documentation to support their absence.

Charging an employee with AWOL in and of itself is not a disciplinary action; however, it could be the *basis* for taking disciplinary action. In addition, supervisors may hold the employee accountable for failing to follow established leave procedures. See [Disciplinary Actions – Selecting the Appropriate Penalty](#) for more information on determining the appropriate corrective action for misconduct associated with AWOL, failure to follow leave procedures, and other attendance related offenses.

Supervisors should contact their [servicing CG-124 Specialist](#) regarding questions about charging AWOL and should always refer to the applicable collective bargaining agreements for any further clarification on leave policies if they supervise bargaining unit employees.