



THE HONORABLE GINA MCCARTHY  
 ADMINISTRATOR  
 U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
 1200 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.  
 WASHINGTON, DC 20460

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
 HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
 WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

January 14, 2014

**Via email (scales.wuanisha@epa.gov) and U.S. Mail**

The Honorable Gina McCarthy  
 Administrator  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
 Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

The Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") has the important key mission "to protect human health and the environment." The EPA work force is critical in achieving that mission. I write to learn more about the work force employed by the EPA. Specifically, I am interested in the number of employees each year who have hours where they are absent without leave, or "AWOL."

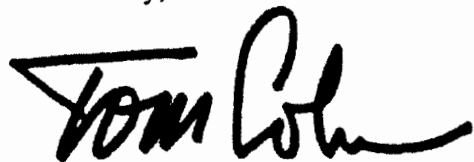
Please provide the following information by February 5, 2014 for Fiscal Years 2008 to 2013:

1. the agency's definition of AWOL, including any changes made to the policy during the specified years;
2. an explanation of how AWOL is recorded by the agency, including whether AWOL hours are recorded distinctly from Leave Without Pay (LWOP) or other personnel statuses in payroll records;
3. any penalties for employees who are AWOL without agency approval, and a description of who determines such penalties at the agency;
4. the number of employees currently AWOL at your agency;
5. the annual number of total reported AWOL hours for all agency employees;
6. the annual number of employees who have been deemed AWOL during the specified years;
7. the total annual number of employees at the agency in each year for which information is requested;
8. the total annual number of hours worked by all employees at the agency;

If possible, please provide the above requested information by department or sub-agency.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. If you have any questions, please contact David Demirbilek at (202) 224-9873 or by email at [david\\_demirbilek@hsgac.senate.gov](mailto:david_demirbilek@hsgac.senate.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Coburn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "T" and "C".

Tom A. Coburn, M.D.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

APR 15 2014

OFFICE OF  
ADMINISTRATION  
AND RESOURCES  
MANAGEMENT

The Honorable Tom A. Coburn, M.D.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security  
and Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Coburn:

Thank you for your January 14, 2014, letter regarding absent without leave policies, definitions and numbers of participants at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. I appreciate the opportunity to clarify the agency's policies and processes regarding absent without leave status for our workforce.

The EPA Leave Manual, Chapter 4, "Absence Without Pay" (dated 1987) includes the definition of Absent Without Leave (AWOL) as: "absent from duty without having the absence approved." The AWOL policy includes that upon returning to duty, the employee must explain to the immediate supervisor at the earliest practicable time, the cause of the absence and the reason for his/her failure to obtain approval to be absent. In addition, when an employee has been notified in writing that a medical certificate is required to support all sick leave requests, and absents himself/herself from duty without furnishing a medical certificate, the absence will be charged as absence without leave. There have been no changes to the policy during the specified years.

To account for time charged as absence without leave, the EPA time reporting system uses the transaction reporting code of "AWOLV". The EPA charges AWOL in fifteen minutes increments, the minimum length of absence programmed into the EPA time and attendance system. Leave Without Pay, unlike Absence Without Leave, is an approved absence and is recorded in a distinctly different manner in the EPA payroll system with a transaction reporting code of LVWOP.

The EPA's Conduct and Discipline manual (EPA Order 3120.1 dated September 20, 1985) contains the following table which guides immediate supervisors in administering any applicable penalties:

Nature of Offense	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
<b>1. Attendance related offenses</b>			
a. Unexcused tardiness. This includes delay in reporting at the scheduled starting time, returning from lunch and returning after leaving work station on official business.	Oral admonishment	Oral admonishment to 1-day suspension	Oral admonishment to 5-day suspension

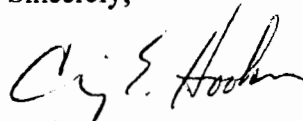
4th offense may warrant 5-day suspension to removal.			
<b>b. Absence without leave (AWOL).</b>  These penalties generally do not apply to AWOL charged for tardiness of 1.2 hours or less. (See 1a above.) The AWOL offense includes leaving the work station without permission.  Penalty depends on length and frequency of absences. If absence exceeds 5 consecutive work days, employee may be removed at anytime.	Written reprimand to 5-day suspension	1-day to 14-day suspension	5-day suspension to removal
<b>c. Failure to follow established leave procedures</b>	Written reprimand to 5-day suspension	1-day to 5-day suspension	5-day suspension to removal

Below is the information for fiscal years 2008-2013:

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Annual Number of AWOL Hours</b>	<b>Number of Employees with AWOL Hours</b>	<b>Number of Employees at EPA for each year</b>	<b>Annual Number of Hours Worked by EPA Employees</b>
2008	10,531	91	17,361	35,109,475
2009	10,208	95	17,569	32,105,955
2010	7,473	86	17,615	34,355,865
2011	8,014	103	17,623	36,113,479
2012	13,193	90	17,384	35,528,514
2013	4,209	62	16,051	33,056,710

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Carolyn Levine in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at [Levine.carolyn@epa.gov](mailto:Levine.carolyn@epa.gov) or (202) 564-1859.

Sincerely,



Craig E. Hooks  
Assistant Administrator