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Public Service and Administration  
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**TO THE HEADS OF ALL NATIONAL/PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**

**(FOR ATTENTION: ALL HR MANAGERS / HEADS OF CORPORATE SERVICES / CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS)**

**ANNUAL LEAVE: PLANNING OF ANNUAL LEAVE AND CLOSURE OF OFFICES DURING FESTIVE PERIOD**

1. Our circulars referenced E1/2/2/P and 1/6/2/P, dated 6 December 2001 and 10 November 2005 respectively, regarding the closure of offices during festive periods, refer. (Copies attached.)
2. It has come to this Department's attention that certain National and Provincial Departments took a decision, in the latter part of 2006, to close offices during the festive periods. As a result of the decision taken at a very late stage, certain staff did not have sufficient leave to take over the festive period and hence the leave was captured from the 2007 leave cycle. This practice is not viewed favourably and is discouraged.
3. In view thereof, Departments are strongly urged to ensure that employees are notified at the beginning of an annual leave cycle or immediately at appointment in a department if the intention is to close office for the festive period. This allows employees to plan their annual leave and to ensure that leave is available for the closure of the office.
4. Departments who close offices during the festive periods are also strongly advised not to deduct the leave days at the end of the year but to deduct the necessary leave days in the beginning of the year from employees. Leave forms must be completed for the period of closure. Communication with employees on this aspect is essential and should be done timeously and continuously.

5. With regard to new employees appointed during October – December of the year and who may not have sufficient leave to cover the festive period, the annual leave taken during the compulsory closure of office, could be taken from the next leave cycle.
6. Departments are once again reminded on the importance of leave planning which must be done timeously and correctly. Managers and employees should therefore as soon as possible develop leave plans for 2007 for all staff, taking into consideration the operational requirements (service delivery) of the department and the needs of the employee. Departments are requested to ensure that leave entitlements of employees are as far as possible taken in 2007 and not carried over into 2008. The practice of leave planning should be done at every annual leave cycle.

  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
FOR 24/3/2007