

Santa Monica College – Reduction in Force Classified Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is a layoff?

A layoff is the separation of an employee due to **lack of funds or lack of work**.

2. What rules govern classified layoffs at SMC?

Classified layoffs at Santa Monica College are governed by SMC Merit Rules, Chapter XIII (Rules 13.1-13.4), the CSEA Chapter 36 Collective Bargaining Agreement, specifically Article 15 (Layoff and Reemployment), California Education Code §§ 88017, 88117 and 88127, and SMC Board Policies and Administrative Regulations.

3. Which classified employees may be laid off?

Layoffs may affect Permanent classified employees and Probationary classified employees. Under the Merit Rules and CSEA contract, probationary employees generally have fewer rights than permanent employees.

4. How much notice will a classified employee receive?

Per California Education Code §§ 88017, classified employees must be notified by no later than **March 15** for layoffs scheduled to take place on July 1. Notice requirements are outlined in the SMC Merit Rules 13.2.1 and the CSEA Chapter 36 Contract 15.3.1.

5. How is it decided which classified employees are laid off?

The District identifies the positions to be cut due to **lack of work or lack of funds**. Layoff order is determined by seniority within the affected classification as defined in Merit Rules 13.1.1 and 13.1.2.

Merit Rule 13.2.1(A) provides that “the employee who has been employed the shortest time in the class plus higher classes shall be laid off first.” Seniority is calculated based on hours in paid status in the class plus higher classes, excluding overtime-only hours (Merit Rule 13.1.2).

6. What are displacement rights (bumping)?

Displacement rights allow a permanent classified employee who is subject to layoff to **displace a less senior employee**. Displacement rights are governed by Merit Rule 13.3 and CSEA Contract Article 15.1, which require that the employee with the *least seniority* in the affected classification be displaced first.

Displacement is defined in Merit Rule 13.3.1(A) as “the replacement of an employee by an employee with more seniority in the same class.” Permanent employees may be displaced into their own class, into a lower classification for which the employee meets the minimum qualifications, or into another class with the same or lower maximum salary in which they hold seniority credit greater than an incumbent (Merit Rule 13.3.1(B)).

7. How do I request a copy on my seniority list(s)?

Contact the Personnel Commission at personnel_commission@smc.edu for a copy of your seniority list(s). The seniority list will contain your classification title, classification hire date, District date of hire in permanent status, months per year, hours per week, and are listed in order of classification seniority.

8. Can a classified employee decline a bumping opportunity?

Yes. An employee may decline a bumping opportunity; however, declining may result in a **layoff with a waiver of the right to displace**.

9. Can a classified employee Transfer or Demote in lieu of a layoff?

Yes. Under Merit Rule 13.2.1(D), when assigned work year or hours are reduced, or when a position is reclassified to a lower level, an employee may elect a *voluntary demotion or voluntary reduction* to remain employed "in lieu of layoff." Transfers or demotions in lieu of layoff are governed by Merit Rule 9.5.4, which authorizes reassignment without examination to a vacant position at the same or lower salary range, provided minimum qualifications are met.

10. Do laid-off classified employees have reemployment rights?

Yes. Permanent classified employees who are laid off are placed on a **reemployment list** pursuant to Merit Rule 13.4.1 and CSEA Contract Article 15.2. Under Merit Rule 13.4.1(A), an employee who must be laid off "**shall be placed on a preferential 39-month reemployment list**" and shall be reemployed in the reverse order of layoff (by seniority) when vacancies occur. During this 39-month period, they do not need to compete for a position in their former classification; they will have automatic first rights to fill this vacant position based on seniority. In addition, employees who are placed on a 39-month reemployment list will still retain the right to compete in promotional recruitments to fill a vacancy in a different classification.

During the reemployment period, vacant positions in the employee's former classification are offered to employees on the reemployment list. Offers are made in order of seniority.

11. How long do reemployment rights last?

Reemployment rights last **thirty-nine (39) months** under Merit Rule 13.4.1(A) and CSEA Contract Article 15.2. Employees who accept a voluntary demotion in lieu of layoff are entitled to an **additional twenty-four (24) months** on the reemployment list under CBA Article 15.2.1.

12. Will laid-off classified employees receive severance pay?

No.

13. If I am laid off from the District, what will my last day of employment be?

June 30, 2026.

14. What happens to my District health care coverage. When will it end?

If you are currently enrolled in the District's health care coverage (medical, dental and/or vision), your coverage will end on **August 1, 2026**. You will be eligible to continue your coverage via COBRA for up to 18 months. With COBRA, you have to pay 100% of the premium cost. The Office of Human Resources will mail COBRA information to your home in July 2026.

15. What happens to my Voluntary Benefits Policy?

If you currently have a voluntary benefit policy with Colonial Life and/or Pacific Educators (life insurance, disability, cancer, etc...) your last payroll deduction will be on the July paycheck. To inquire if your policy is eligible for a conversion to an individual policy, please contact Colonial Life directly at 800-325-4368 or Pacific Educators at 800-722-3365.

16. Are laid-off classified employees eligible for unemployment insurance?

Yes. Classified employees who are laid off may be eligible for **unemployment insurance benefits** through the California Employment Development Department (EDD), subject to EDD rules. Please visit the website at <https://edd.ca.gov/>.

17. Who do I contact regarding my retirement eligibility, service credit, or refund options.

Please contact the appropriate [SMC Retirement Plan and/or System](#):

- California Public Employees' Retirement System (**CalPERS**) at (888) 225-7377 or <https://www.calpers.ca.gov/>
- National Benefit Services (formerly MetLife/LARISA) at (800) 274 – 0503 or <https://www.nbsbenefits.com/non-erisa-403b-forms/>
- Social Security Administration at <https://www.ssa.gov/>

18. Can a classified employee appeal or grieve a layoff?

Employees may challenge whether the District followed the required procedures. Merit Rule 13.3.1(6) requires that **“each employee shall respond to the Director of the Personnel Commission within one week after notification of layoff whether or not the employee will exercise displacement.”** Failure to timely respond may waive displacement rights.

Employees may file a **grievance** if they believe the layoff violated the CSEA Chapter 36 Contract or applicable Merit Rules, or if there are procedural errors. Employees cannot grieve based on the District's financial determination (CSEA Contract Article 10 – Grievance Procedure) (Rule 16.1: Complaint Procedures).

A classified employee may also request a hearing to determine if there is cause for not reemploying the employee for the ensuing year. A request for a hearing shall be in writing and shall be delivered to the person

who sent the notice, on or before a date specified in subdivision (a), which shall not be less than seven days after the date on which the notice is served upon the employee. If an employee fails to request a hearing on or before the date specified, this failure to do so shall constitute waiver of the employee's right to a hearing. (Education Code 88017)

19. Does the District have to negotiate layoffs with CSEA?

No. The District is required to **meet and negotiate the impacts and effects** of layoffs with CSEA Chapter 36 pursuant to CBA Article 15.3.2 and Government Code § 3543.2, even when the decision to layoff is based on lack of funds or lack of work.

20. Where can classified employees get assistance or more information?

For more information or assistance, employees can contact **SMC Human Resources, the Personnel Commission, or the CSEA Chapter 36 representatives**. Employees can also review the **SMC Merit Rules** and **CSEA Chapter 36 Contract**.

For counseling assistance to manage anxiety or stress of the layoffs, employees can contact EASE at (800) 882-1341 or [SMC EASE Program website](#).

21. What happens to my Vacation and Comp Time balance when I'm laid off?

Vacation balances at the time of separation from the District will be administered accordingly:

- **Permanent classified employees** will be paid for any vacation they earned but did not use when they separate from the District (Merit Rules 11.1.3.J).
 - **A Classified employees who are laid off before completing six months** of continuous regular employment is **not** entitled to be paid for unused vacation time (Merit Rules 11.1.3.K).
 - If an employee used **vacation time before it was earned**, the value of that vacation time will be **deducted from the final paycheck** when the employee is laid off (Merit Rules 11.1.3.L).
-

22. What happens to my sick time balance when I'm laid off?

Sick time is **not** paid out upon separation from the District. Employees who have any unearned sick leave which has been taken shall be deducted from the employee's last paycheck upon separation (Merit Rules 11.3.1.J)

23. What will my salary placement be if I am bumping into a lower classification.

Salary schedules are listed on the Human Resources website for your information only. Final salary determination will be provided prior to you moving into the classification.

This FAQ is intended to provide general guidance and does not supersede the Merit Rules, Collective Bargaining Agreement, or applicable law.