

## Contractor doctor: how do holidays work when contracting?

Dear Contractor Doctor

I am a permanent employee who is under real threat of redundancy and considering a move to contracting. I have no idea what the implications are and have found your site extremely useful. I have a question relating to holidays:

How do they work? Do you have to organise your holidays "in-between" contracts? (Assuming of course that you can get back-to-back ones). Say for example, I got offered a contract next week but I have holidays booked up within the contract time offered.

So, if I take a 2 week break does that automatically push the contract expiry date back by 2 weeks?

Thanks for your help!

Mark Gorman

ContractorDoctor says:

Thanks for your question.

Sorry to hear you are facing redundancy. Still, you might find that a move to contracting will be great for you!

Regarding your question, contractors can take as many holidays as they like during the year, provided that during contracts the client agrees to the time off. This works exactly the same way as permanent staff, except you are unrestricted as to the number of days you can take off.

Most clients will agree to time off during a contract, expect for short contracts of a month or less.

You can organise holidays in between contracts, but if I would suggest you only do this if you are planning on taking a month or more off. Bear in mind that you will have downtime on return from a holiday whilst you search for a new contract.

Even for short holidays of 2 weeks it is unlikely you will be able to line up a new contract before you leave due to the short lead times clients have for contractors.

Thus, other than for long holidays the best method to avoid downtime is to take holidays during existing contracts.

Your contract end date will not change due to holidays taken because you are contracted between certain dates, rather than for a set number of days. Whilst unlikely, your client might want you to sign a small extension if you take the time off towards the end of a contract. If they do then this can be quite useful for avoiding downtime. You could even engineer this situation with a contract you were not going to renew, to avoid downtime - that would be a neat trick!

For more information see our article [Contracting - Taking Holidays and Time Off](#)

Good luck!

Contractor Doctor

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