

Caltech HUMANRESOURCES HUMAN SOLUTIONS

CAMPUS SPECIAL RELEASE DAYS
DECEMBER 29, 30, 31, 2026
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below are frequently asked questions regarding the special release days at the end of the calendar year. Please note that JPL will remain open during the campus-wide special release days, which are scheduled for **December 29**, **30**, and **31**, **2026**.

The holiday schedule during this period includes:

DECEMBER 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	**25**	26
27	**28**	**29**	**30**	**31**		

- Institute Holiday: December 25
- Floating Holiday 2 2026: December 28
- Special Release Day: December 29-31

JANUARY 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31					**1**	2
3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

- Institute Holiday: January 1
- First Official Day of New Year: January 4

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Q: What does observing the “special release days” on December 29, 30, 31, 2026 mean?

   A: It means that most benefit-based members of the campus community, including LIGO, Palomar, and Owens Valley, may take those days off, with pay, without having to use vacation or personal holiday time.

2. Q: Does JPL observe the campus special release days?

   A: No. JPL does not observe special release days and will maintain normal business operations from December 29 through 31, 2026.

3. Q: Will the same policy that applies to Caltech’s regular holidays apply to the special release days?

   A: Although there are many similarities, the special release days will be treated somewhat differently than regularly observed holidays. The information provided in these FAQs covers most of those differences.

4. Q: What happens if my supervisor schedules me to work on one or more of the special release days?

   A: If you are asked to work on a special release day, you will be granted another day off with pay on or before February 26, 2027.

5. Q: What if a special release day falls on my regular day off?

   A: Similar to the way regular holidays are handled, you will be provided with an alternative day off, with pay, on or before February 26, 2027.

6. Q: What happens if schedules make it impossible to grant an alternative day off?

   A: Although we anticipate that in most cases it will be possible to grant an alternative day off, with pay, on or before February 26, 2027, there may be some cases where that does not happen. In those cases, you will be paid holiday pay equivalent to your regular work schedule and straight time for the first eight hours worked on a special release day. For any hours you work in excess of eight, you will be paid overtime as defined by Caltech policy.

7. Q: What if I have a non-standard work schedule, how will the special release days be handled?

   A: If the special release day falls on a regularly scheduled workday, it will be handled like any other holiday. If a special release day falls on a regularly scheduled day off, please contact either the Payroll Office (**626-395-8668**) or Employee and Organizational Development (EOD, **626-395-6382**) to discuss how to handle the special release day that involves a non-standard work schedule.

8. Q: What if I work an alternate work schedule, e.g. 9/80 or 4/10, how will the special release days be handled?

   A: If the special release day falls on a regularly scheduled workday, the special release day will be handled like a regular Institute holiday. Employees will receive pay for the special release day equivalent to one regularly scheduled workday.

   If a special release day falls on a regular day off (RDO) the employee will be provided an alternative day off, with pay, on or before February 26, 2027.

9. Q: What if I am asked or called in to work a partial day on a special release day?

   A: You will be paid the equivalent of holiday pay for your regular work schedule, and straight time for the first eight hours worked. For any hours you work in excess of eight, you will be paid overtime as defined by Caltech policy.

10. Q: If I am scheduled to work on a special release day, but am sick and cannot come to work, how will that be handled?

    A: You will be paid sick time for the hours you were scheduled to work on the special release day, but you will not receive pay for the special release day.

11. Q: If I am scheduled to work on a special release day, can my alternative day off come prior to the scheduled workday?

    A: No, the alternative day off must be taken after the special release day and on or before February 26, 2027.

12. Q: When and how can I get my bi-weekly paycheck before the special release days?

    A: Bi-weekly paychecks will be available on the regularly scheduled pay date, December 18, 2026. We strongly encourage employees to sign up for direct deposit. If you receive a paper check, your check will be mailed to your home mailing address via the USPS. Paper checks cannot be delivered to a Caltech address that uses a Caltech mail code as a mailing address (e.g., 1200 E. California Blvd., MC 104-6). Undelivered paychecks will be returned to Payroll and available for pick up after the holiday on January 4, 2027.

13. Q: When and how can I get my monthly paycheck before the special release days?

A: Monthly paychecks (for all employees normally paid on the 26th) will be available on December 23, 2026. We strongly encourage employees to sign up for direct deposit. If you receive a paper check, your check will be mailed via USPS to your home mailing address. Paper checks cannot be delivered to a Caltech address that uses a Caltech mail code as a mailing address (e.g., 1200 E. California Blvd., MC 104-6).

Undelivered paychecks will be returned to Payroll and available for pick up after the holiday on January 4, 2027.

14. Q: If I need to work, will childcare services be available at the Child Education Center at JPL and at the Children's Center at Caltech?

A: Please contact the Child Educational Center at JPL (CEC) **818-354-3418**, or the Children's Center at Caltech (CCC) **626-395-6860** for their schedules during this period.

15. Q: What if an international employee or international student needs a travel signature on their immigration documents, will it be available?

A: A missing travel signature is not considered an emergency. F and J students and scholars will be able to return to the United States without a travel signature. If individuals have an urgent question for an international advisor during the holiday or special release period, they may call Security at **626-395-4701**, and an advisor will be contacted.

16. Q: What do I do if there is a work injury and an employee needs medical attention?

A: Contact Security at **626-395-5000** to coordinate medical treatment.

17. Q: What should I do if I have difficulty using my benefits during the special release days?

A: If you are experiencing issues or need help accessing your benefits, please contact the insurance carrier. The carrier's' contact information may be on the back of your medical ID card or visiting the Benefit office's website by clicking **here** to view the **2027 Benefits guide** to access each plan's contact information.

If you still need assistance and have an urgent benefit matter, please contact the **Benefits Office** at **hrbenefits@caltech.edu** or **626-395-6443**. The email and voicemail will be checked daily and your message will be returned as soon as possible.

DEPARTMENT ASSISTANCE DURING SPECIAL RELEASE DAYS

Security

Campus Security will remain in normal operations (24/7) during the special release days. All injuries should be reported to Security.

Campus Security Emergency line: **626-395-5000**
Campus Security Non-Emergency line: **626-395-4701**
Campus Security website: **http://security.caltech.edu**

Payroll Office

The Payroll department may be reached by visiting their website (click **here**), email at **payroll@caltech.edu**, or dialing **626-395-8668**.

Facilities

Click **here** to visit the Facilities Department website for information on services that will be available during the special release days.

The Central Utilities Plant is continuously staffed during the holidays and special release days to maintain all utility services and to dispatch personnel for facilities maintenance emergencies.

For any building-related emergency, call Campus Security at **626-395-5000**.

Campus Services

Please refer to the specific department's website for information on services that will be available during the special release days.