

STANTON TERRITORIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

GUIDELINES

Category: Human Resources	PAGE NUMBER: 1 of 9
Subject: Sick Leave Management Guideline	DISTRIBUTION: Hospital Wide Manuals
CURRENT EFFECTIVE DATE: September 2015	NEXT REVIEW DATE: September 2018

PURPOSE

This Administrative Guideline is intended to ensure a consistent approach to absence due sick leave and provide tools and processes for Stanton Territorial Health Authority (STHA) managers/supervisors to effectively manage employee attendance challenges relate to illness or injury.

These guidelines establish methods and provide tools to maximize attendance at work, balance fairness to the employee and maintain work efficiency. Each situation should be viewed on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with Human Resources (HR).

This sick leave guideline has been developed to:

- Promote optimal attendance at work
- Raise awareness about the importance of good attendance
- Promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, fairness and cooperation
- Provide a framework for responding to and managing excessive absenteeism
- Confirm roles and responsibilities of manager/supervisors so they are able to set expectations for employees at the time of hire and to prevent escalation

SCOPE

These guidelines apply to all employees of STHA, except physicians.

SPECIAL POINTS

STHA recognizes the need to focus on employee wellness to reduce absenteeism.

**STANTON TERRITORIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
GUIDELINES**

Human Resources: Sick Leave Management

STHA is committed to practices that support employee and workplace health and wellness to ultimately benefit the people and communities served.

The privacy of all employees is respected and any information obtained as a result of administering these Sick Leave Guidelines will be kept strictly confidential. An employee's medical prognosis is personal and confidential.

DEFINITIONS

Absenteeism: Absence from the workplace for reasons beyond an employee's control.

Day: refers to the number of hours in an employee's regularly scheduled work day/shift, i.e. STHA employees include employees who work part time, job share, irregular shifts and shiftwork.

Duty to accommodate: the Employer's obligation to modify work or find alternative work for employees who are disabled or have disabling medical conditions. The duty to accommodate stems from Human Rights legislation that bans discrimination on the basis of disability and other prohibited grounds. The Employer must make every reasonable effort to accommodate employees, to the point of undue hardship.

Medical prognosis: a statement from a health care practitioner, which outlines the long or short-term impact of the employee's medical condition on their ability to carry out all or some duties. The medical prognosis does not provide detailed information respecting the condition but provides the employee's medically endorsed precautions and capabilities. The prognosis also provides information respecting when and under what circumstances the employee might return to work or continue to remain at work.

Request for Time off Work : the method used to request time off work. Either by email, phone or entering days in the peoplesoft system

Sick Leave: intended to protect an employee's income when s/he is incapable of performing their duties due to illness or injury.

**STANTON TERRITORIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
GUIDELINES**

Human Resources: Sick Leave Management

PROCEDURE

Attendance Standards

STHA recognizes that some sick leave will always be required. The expectation is that employees will use sick leave only when it is required. **An employee whose sick leave exceeds eight days per fiscal year, shall be flagged.** The supervisor will review the reports and determine appropriate follow up if any is required.

Role of all Staff in Attendance

1. All staff are expected to maintain their health and well-being to ensure regular attendance at work. When they are required to be absent from work they shall adhere to the following procedure:
 - a. If unable to report for work due to illness or injury, employees are required to call their direct supervisor or the Patient Care Coordinator (PCC) each day that they are sick to inform them that they are sick and to provide an indication of the expected length of the absence. If the expected length of absence is longer than one shift, the employee must also call their direct manager/supervisor to inform them of the expected length of absence.
 - b. In the event that neither the direct manager/supervisor can be reached, employees shall leave a message with their manager/supervisor's supervisor indicating that they are ill and unable to report for work and provide a number at which they can be reached.
 - c. In unusual circumstances such as hospitalization, a spouse or family member may call the appropriate individual as noted above, to request sick leave on behalf of the employee.
 2. In some instances, sick leave may be conditionally approved. Conditional approval of sick leave is based on the information available at the time that sick leave is requested. Conditional approval of sick leave is not a guarantee that full approval will be granted when the complete facts are known.
 3. Immediately upon returning to work, the employee is required to enter their sick leave request into PeopleSoft, and may also be required to submit a paper leave form / email requesting sick leave.
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**STANTON TERRITORIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
GUIDELINES**

Human Resources: Sick Leave Management

Subject to verification of leave credits, the manager/supervisor may approve the leave, request additional information in support of the application for leave or, if circumstances warrant, deny the leave.

4. Where a lengthy period of sick leave is requested (e.g. in excess of two weeks, consecutive or not), the employee will be requested to provide a note from their medical practitioner stating the amount of time the employee needs to be absent due to illness. A manager/supervisor, after consultation with HR, may request that the employee provide a medical prognosis to determine if the Employer needs to take action to support the return to work of employees or to accommodate the employee's medical situation upon their return. HR advice should be sought.
5. In circumstances where sick leave would be authorized but the employee has insufficient or no sick leave credits, sick leave can be advanced up to a maximum of 112.5 hours for full time employees (this amount is prorated for part time employees), to be charged against future credits earned. Employees are required to let their manager/supervisor know, in writing, if they want their sick leave advanced or if they want to take sick leave without pay.

Advancement of sick leave is sent to the Director for approval in accordance with the approval authorities. Manager/supervisors should retain email approval in their records in the event of an audit.

6. When an employee will be absent due to sick leave and it is anticipated that an employee will exhaust sick leave credits, the employee should be encouraged to inquire via the HR Helpdesk about disability insurance benefits. Manager/supervisors are advised to seek HR advice and assistance with this process.
7. Actively participate in the return-to-work processes.
8. Provide appropriate medical documentation when requested.
9. Employees should be aware that non-participation in this process may result in discipline.

Managers/Supervisors Role in Sick Leave Management

1. It must be emphasized that this procedure is a guideline only and that managers/supervisors must use their discretion and knowledge of staff to apply this procedure in a fair and positive manner. Managers/supervisors may repeat meetings at any level as they deem appropriate.
 2. Documentation must be kept of all discussions with employees.
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**STANTON TERRITORIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
GUIDELINES**

Human Resources: Sick Leave Management

3. Upon hire, managers/supervisors shall communicate expected attendance requirements to staff and provide a copy of this guideline.
 4. Educate staff on the importance of regular attendance
 5. Comply with the legal duty to accommodate and support a safe and timely return to work.
 6. Inform employees of the supportive resources available to them i.e. Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP).
 7. Twice a year (or more often if required) and with assistance from HR, review leave reports to identify unusual attendance patterns which may include but are not limited to the following examples:
 - Employees with a negative balance of sick leave
 - Sick leave taken on first or last day of a work schedule, before or after annual leave
 - Sick leave being used on a specific day of the week or certain day each month over a period of several months
 - Sick leave coinciding with other events or employment
 - Sick leave taken following on call or overtime
 - Use of sick leave as soon as it is earned
 8. Based on their analysis, the manager/supervisor will review their findings with the Client Service Manager, HR and, if necessary, will arrange a meeting with the employee to determine causes their absenteeism. If a duty to accommodate situation is triggered from this discussion, please follow the procedure outlined in STHA policy O1570, *Duty to Accommodate/Workplace Accommodation* and the GNWT Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy (2011) Duty to Accommodate Guidelines
 9. Address attendance challenges due to sick leave in a timely manner.
 10. If there is improvement, acknowledge the improvement and coach employees who are having difficulty with attendance.
 11. Be a positive role model with respect to attendance (i.e : Utilizing sick time when required, not coming into work when sick).
 12. The manager/supervisor should consider if the absenteeism is related to a single significant incident or possibly related to a chronic disability supported by medical documentation. If an employee's absenteeism is above eight days and is known to be related to a chronic
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**STANTON TERRITORIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
GUIDELINES**

Human Resources: Sick Leave Management

disability supported by medical documentation, or a single significant incident, the manager/supervisor should follow process number 2 below.

1. Above Eight Days

If an employee's absenteeism is above eight days and is not known to be related to a chronic disability or a single significant incident, the following procedure should be followed:

Step One: Informal meeting with employee

If an employee's attendance is a concern and exceeding eight days in a fiscal year, the manager/supervisor will hold a meeting with the employee and share the employee's attendance statistics and calendar with the employee. The manager/supervisor will provide support to the employee while ensuring the employee is made aware of the effects of absenteeism on the unit (which may include disrupted work schedules, increased costs, increased workload for coworkers and decreased client service).

The manager will ask the employee if there is a medical condition that is causing them to be absent above the peer group average. If the employee states there is a medical condition a medical prognosis may be requested

The manager/supervisor will make informal notes of the discussion and how it went. Notes should be kept by the manager/supervisor and information entered afterwards into the Action Taken on going document.

After the meeting, the manager/supervisor will monitor the employee's attendance for the next three to six months.

Step Two: Meeting with the employee

If the employee's attendance is still above the eight days after the informal meeting and the three to six month monitoring period, the manager/supervisor, if deemed necessary, will meet with the employee to discuss attendance. The employee may request to bring a union representative with them.

The manager/supervisor will review the employee's attendance statistics and calendar with the employee. The manager/supervisor will provide support to the employee, while ensuring the employee understands the expectation of regular attendance and that the employee's attendance needs to improve. Depending on the situation, offer support including EFAP.

**STANTON TERRITORIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
GUIDELINES**

Human Resources: Sick Leave Management

The manager/supervisor may request a medical prognosis letter at this meeting . After this meeting, the manager/supervisor will monitor the employee's attendance for the next three to six months.

If the employee's attendance is still above the eight days after the three to six month monitoring period the manager/supervisor will meet with the employee to have another meeting. An HR representative may be required to attend. The manager/supervisor will again review the employee's attendance record with the employee. The manager/supervisor will provide support to the employee, while ensuring the employee understands the expectation of regular attendance and that the employee's attendance needs to improve.

If the employee has provided a medical prognosis related to absences, the medical prognosis will be reviewed at the meeting and, if considered necessary, additional medical information will be requested from the employee. Duty to Accommodate may be considered and if appropriate, the Duty to Accommodate Advisor will be invited to the meeting or consulted.

Again depending on the situation, the manager/supervisor may offer support including EFAP.

The manager/supervisor will keep notes of this meeting and will provide the employee with a letter/email documenting the meeting. The notes will be added to the Action Taken ongoing document.

After this the manager/supervisor will continue to monitor the employee's attendance.

2. Single Significant Incident

If an employee's absenteeism is above the eight days and the manager/supervisor is informed that the employee has had a single significant health incident, the manager/supervisor needs to determine if the employee's absences leading them to be above the eight days are related or unrelated to the single significant incident.

The supervisor needs to request a medical note from the employee's medical practitioner indicating the amount of time the employee will be off and if any type of accommodation is required when they return to duty.

**STANTON TERRITORIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
GUIDELINES**

Human Resources: Sick Leave Management

The manager/supervisor's role is to meet with the employee:

- Offer support and encouragement
- Make the employee aware of available resources.

Afterwards, notes of the discussion should be entered into the Action Taken ongoing document.

Attendance Discussion about Accommodation

The manager/supervisor shall set up a meeting with the employee, union representative and Duty to Accommodate Advisor to:

- Offer support and encouragement
- Make the employee aware of available resources
- Follow the accommodation process. The Duty to Accommodate Advisor will work with the manager/supervisor, employee and union to find an effective accommodation for the employee.

STHA may have to provide modified work where appropriate and an assessment may be required. STHA needs to be aware of any restrictions that an employee may have, so these restrictions can be accommodated when it is appropriate to do so. If the employee is absent due to illness, the employee will be required to contact their supervisor on a monthly basis. If the employee is not in contact, then the manager needs to contact the employee. If it has been determined that STHA has not accommodated to the point of undue hardship, accommodation efforts will continue.

If a reasonable accommodation cannot be made at STHA, the Chief Executive Officer seeks approval from the Deputy Minister of HR for a cross departmental accommodation by providing the rationale supporting the request. An example of when a cross departmental accommodation would occur is:

- If the employee is unable to perform job demands due to medical reasons and there are no accommodations that can be made to the job to allow the employee to perform job duties. In addition, there are no vacancies or upcoming vacancies within the department that could be performed with or without modifications.

The Duty to Accommodate Advisor can facilitate the search for, and case management of, an accommodation in another department, board or an agency. This should be done

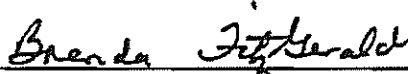
STANTON TERRITORIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
GUIDELINES

Human Resources: Sick Leave Management

in conjunction with the HR Client Service Manager and with the cooperation of Deputy Heads.

The employee is entered onto a priority hiring list. This list is considered prior to job vacancies being advertised. If there is a possible match between the employee's skills, abilities and knowledge and those required in the position, a meeting may be coordinated with the employee and department to further assess suitability for a reasonable accommodation.

Reviewed and approved by:



Chief Executive Officer (Sign & Date)
02. July. 2015

40
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