
Attendance Support Program

Purpose	To support the attendance of City of Regina Employees.
Policy Statement	<p>To establish methods for maximizing attendance at work, communicate the attendance goals of the organization and maintain work efficiency. The policy has been developed in accordance with the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• contribute to excellence in service delivery by having all employees attend work regularly• ensure the implementation of measures by Manager/Supervisors to minimize absences within their respective areas of responsibility• approach problem attendance in a positive and concerned manner, in accordance with this policy• provide ongoing Management support, training, and consultation on attendance problem issues.• assist Employees in minimizing absences from work by making every reasonable effort to provide accommodation, assistance and rehabilitation
Scope	All Employees of the City of Regina.
Authority	Human Resources Department Relevant collective bargaining agreements
Contact	Human Resources Department
Definitions	<p><i>Absenteeism</i></p> <p>Refers to all absences, with an emphasis on “illness” as outlined below. “Absenteeism” includes both paid and unpaid absences from work.</p> <p>Absenteeism does not include leaves such as: maternity leave, parental leave, education leave, jury duty, union business, bereavement, approved leaves of absence, and leaves which are consistent with the provisions of a governing collective agreement.</p> <p><i>Innocent (Non-Culpable) Absenteeism</i></p> <p>Refers to the consistent inability of an employee to attend work on a regular basis due to circumstances beyond the employee’s control. In this kind of absenteeism the employee has a <i>bona fide</i> reason for the absence such as illness or personal problems.</p>

Innocent absenteeism, while not normally a disciplinary matter, may result in discipline, depending upon the circumstances. No matter how excessive the absenteeism, the response is normally to assist the Employee in identifying the reasons for the excessive absenteeism and exploring options with the employee to correct the absenteeism. It must be noted that at some point, while the absenteeism may still be non-culpable, there could be a breach of the employment contract.

Key types of innocent absenteeism include:

Illness - Short duration; may or may not require medical intervention; results in return to full job ability; usually less than eight weeks duration.

Disability - Chronic condition; results in long, consecutive days off or short periods of absence for the same reason (ongoing; severity may reduce with job accommodation).

Injury -Results from accidents; may be Workers' Compensation or off-the-job injury.

Blameworthy (Culpable) Absenteeism

Absences for which the Employee will be held responsible as the absences are within the Employee's power/to address and correct. Examples include, but are not limited to: failure to report to work, failure to provide adequate notice, failure to provide adequate explanation for absence, providing a false explanation for absence, calling in sick to receive pay for time not worked, calling in sick to work at another job, and tardiness.

This type of behaviour will be managed through a corrective discipline process. (Refer to the City of Regina Corrective Discipline Policy)

Approved Absences

Absence from work to which an Employee is entitled by law or in accordance with the terms of the collective Agreement or which may be granted subject to management approval.

Excessive Absenteeism

An Employee's absence (frequency or duration) that is in excess of the average absence/year for a given branch or department and/or has a negative impact on the employee's work productivity or branch/department's overall work efficiency.

Responsibilities

Management:

- Communicate the protocol for advising of absenteeism (reporting procedure) and expected attendance standards and obligations to their staff
- Ensure staff are aware of patterns of usage, should an issue with absenteeism be observed
- Monitor levels of sick leave usage in their department(s) and take appropriate action to correct absenteeism issues
- Maintain written documentation where absenteeism issues have been identified
- Conduct a return to work interview for each instance of absence/illness greater than 24 hours.
- Identify excessive usage based on the individual situation
- Using the procedures outlined and guideline references, meet with the Employee to discuss and resolve issues regarding attendance. In the case of an extended absence, the Manager will arrange with the Employee to maintain contact at a frequency determined by the employer.

Employees:

- Maintain regular attendance at work
- Being aware and understanding the Attendance Support Policy
- Notify (absence reporting procedure) their supervisor as soon as possible when there is a reason to be absent from work
- Maintain communication with the Manager or designate – this is important when the Employee is unable to return to work and the estimated length of illness is unknown.
- Submit regular medical certificates as required.
- Attend to personal affairs and obligations (i.e. medical appointments, etc.) during days off and personal time. It is understood that this may not always be possible (i.e. specialist appointments, etc.).
- If necessary participate in the return to work process after any period of sickness absence

Human Resources:

- Provide advice to management on the provisions of this policy.
- Assist management to identify the source of Employee attendance issues, determine available resources and to facilitate return to work programs.

- Provide advice on Human Rights, *Labour Standards Act* and collective agreement provisions, where applicable.
- Promoting the consistent application of the Attendance Support Policy and Procedures.

Payroll Department

Collecting, analysing and publishing (where appropriate) departmental and organizational absence statistics.

**Please See APPENDIX A – Guidelines for further information
Appendix A Guidelines – Attendance Management**

*Review of Sick Leave
Statistics*

Attendance records should be reviewed regularly to ensure that an Employee's sick-leave days are excessive compared to other Employees. If a Manager/Supervisor suspects that an Employee is excessively absent, this can be confirmed through reviewing the attendance records. In order to determine if sick leave usage is excessive, Management is encouraged to compare the utilization of sick leave for Employees within a work unit, department, etc. In instances where utilization appears to be above the norm, or where there are patterns of usage, the manager will review the data and determine the appropriate follow-up, if any, that is required.

Medical Evidence

When an Employee is absent from the workplace due to illness or injury, the Employer may request the completion of a “Medical Certificate – Employee Absence From Work” Form (see Appendix A). This form must be completed by a licensed medical practitioner.

A similar request may be made of Employees whose sick leave is above the average of their peer group (as determined by the Employer), or where a suspect pattern of usage has or is developing.

When requesting medical evidence it is reasonable for the Employer to request clarification from the physician detailing:

- if the problem is work related
- if the absence from work is medically required

Note: The Employer will not accept medical information relating to diagnosis. Information relating to the employee’s abilities, limitations and prognosis for recovery will be collected.

The Employer will assume costs associated with requests for medical information.

Discretion is to be used when seeking medical verification of an absence. *When making the determination as to whether or not it would be appropriate to seek medical verification, please contact your Human Resources Department for assistance prior to requesting the information from the employee.*

Note: Collective Agreements may require a medical certificate be produced after a defined length of absence.

*Return to Work and
Employee
Accommodation*

In instances where an Employee is absent from the workplace due to an illness or injury which is preventing them from carrying out their complete duties, an accommodation (ie. modified duties, hours, etc) may be provided, where appropriate.

For further information, refer to the Return to Work Guidelines.

*The Employee and
Family Assistance
Program*

The City of Regina has an Employee and Family Assistance Program (**EFAP**) designed to assist employees with personal issues that may be affecting the employee's ability to attend and participate productively at work. Information on this program is available from Family Services Regina EFAP provider at 757-6620. The City of Regina's EFAP services are provided on a confidential basis.

*Manager/Supervisor
Procedure*

It is the responsibility of all departments and Managers to ensure the consistent application of the Attendance Support Program Policy. In conducting the Attendance Review, the Manager should first determine whether the absences are defined as "Innocent or Non-Culpable", or "Culpable or Blameworthy" or "Approved" and the applicability of disciplinary and non-disciplinary measures.

When an Employee fails to comply with reporting or timekeeping rules, his/her Manager will meet with the Employee to determine the reasons.

When the Manager determines there was a satisfactory reason for the failure to comply, the behaviour is deemed non-culpable.

When the Manager determines that the reasons are unsatisfactory, the behaviour is deemed culpable, the Manager will deal with the situation as a corrective disciplinary matter. Please refer to the City of Regina Corrective Discipline Policy.

If at any point during a 12 month period an Employee is absent due to illness on a number of occasions which is greater than the branch/departmental average, an informal interview will be conducted by the Supervisor. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Identify concerns with attendance
- Explain the impact of absences on the work operation
- Identify expectations for improvement
- Identify resources for assistance

If the Supervisor feels there are special circumstances such that a meeting is not required, the Supervisor will document this.

Work Absence Interview

When an employee has been absent from work (>24 hours) the Manager/Supervisor will interview the Employee on the first day of their return or as soon as reasonably practicable after that. This meeting will ensure that the Employee is fit to return and may discuss the Employee's absence record if appropriate.

Work Absence Interviews help to ensure that Employees are aware that their absence has been noticed and their attendance is valued. It also allows Managers to discover any underlying problems that are causing the absence and try and solve them before absence reaches problematic levels.

Managers should interview all Employees on their return to work after all absences, irrespective of length. This establishes the reason for the absence and whether the illness is likely to recur. An Employee's absence record should be available for reference during a Work Absence Interview to inform the discussion if necessary.

In the case of some Employees who have long periods of sickness absence you may have to consider carefully whether they will ever be capable of doing their jobs again.

Process Summary

Prior to setting up the Initial Meeting with an Employee that has attendance concerns, refer to the Home Departments overall average sick time usage over a rolling 12 month period. Compare this average to the Employee's attendance. Also refer to the time and attendance chart and print off copies to provide to the Employee for your meeting. Have a few Medical Certificates at your disposal if required for the meeting.

1. Set up the Initial Meeting with the Employee and indicate to them that you would like to meet to discuss their attendance.
2. Meet with the Employee to discuss the following:
 - Inform the Employee that you are concerned about them and want to discuss their attendance. Indicate that their inconsistent attendance is also affecting their work performance. Give examples if applicable.
 - If applicable refer them to the Time and Attendance Chart to review the days that they have either been absent or late. Present the Employee with their current sick time/year versus that of the Department's average sick time/year.

- Ask them as to why they are having difficulties maintaining consistent attendance and or timeliness.
 - Ask them if there is something in their personal lives that may be affecting their attendance/timeliness and subsequent work performance? Inform them that there are resources that the City Of Regina can provide to assist them such as the Employee and Family Assistance Program. If applicable ask them if they would be interested in the EFAP and provide them with an EFAP Brochure.
 - If the work absence is determined to be culpable please refer to the Corrective Discipline Policy.
 - Ask them what solutions/strategies might assist them to improve their attendance and or timeliness. Develop a strategy and document it. Meet (every month) with the Employee on a regular basis to review their attendance.
 - If the Employee notes that they have a medical condition that is preventing them from attending work on a consistent basis, ask them to have a City of Regina Medical Certificate completed by their Medical Practitioner outlining the prognosis, their abilities, limitations and potential re-assessment date.
3. If the Employee's sick time is greater than the department's sick time, inform the Employee that effective immediately you will also be conducting Work Absence Interview's with them for all absences immediately upon the Employee's return to work. The Work Absence Interview consists of a meeting to discuss the particulars regarding the absence from work.
- If applicable ask if the Employee is alright and if there is anything that you can do for them?
 - If applicable ask them for an explanation of the absence and if they for see further absences related to this one?
 - If the work absence is non-culpable please refer to the Medical and consult with the Human Resources Consultant – Employee Health & Wellness.
 - Ask them what solutions/strategies might assist them to improve their attendance and or timeliness. Develop a strategy and document it. Meet with the employee on a

regular basis to review their attendance.

4. As a last option and if the Employee's sick time is greater than the department's sick time and a significant number of meetings have been held to discuss the Employee's attendance with little success, requesting a completed Medical Certificate from the Employee for each absence at the City of Regina's expense may be considered.

Further Reference

Appendix A – Medical Certificate – Employee Absence From Work Form
Return to Work Guidelines
Corrective Discipline Policy