

## **Attendance Support and Management Policy**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**(Revised February 13, 2019)**

- 1. Is this disciplinary?** No, the Attendance Support and Management Policy is *non*-disciplinary. It is intended to support improved performance with respect to attendance by raising employee awareness of the impact of absences in the workplace, and establishing good communications between employee and supervisor with respect to the issues underlying the absences. It is *not* about warning or threatening employees.
- 2. When are Attendance Support Discussions to be held?** Monthly attendance reports identify employees who meet or exceed the thresholds of 67.5, 101.25 and 135 hours. Attendance Support Discussions are to be scheduled once these thresholds are met.
- 3. What is the point of the Attendance Support Discussions?** These discussions are helpful conversations that give both the employee and the supervisor or manager an opportunity to exchange information regarding what is driving absences, identify barriers and solutions to improve attendance, communicate attendance expectations, and make it clear that attendance is a part of employee performance.
- 4. What types of absences are tracked?** The policy tracks all hours of sick leave, family illness and medical appointments. Please refer to the policy for additional details.
- 5. Who tracks absences?** Tracking attendance is the responsibility of managers and supervisors. Managers run monthly reports that identify those employees who have met the thresholds in the Attendance Support and Management Policy. The Human Resource team can assist managers in setting up these reports to be generated and sent by email to managers on a monthly basis.
- 6. How are absences tracked?** Absences are tracked on the basis of hours absent using a rolling calendar. A rolling calendar means that reports will capture the previous 12 months from the date the report is generated. For example, an attendance report that is run on July 1, 2016, will report on absences between July 1, 2015, and July 1, 2016, that have been entered into the PeopleSoft system.

7. **Are absences tracked on the same basis for part-time employees?** Yes.
8. **During reference checks, do we refer to the Attendance Support Discussion level an employee is at?** No. However, the policy does not change how supervisors and managers should respond to reference check inquiries re attendance.
9. **What is a deviation?** Under this policy, “deviation” refers to some portion of absences that are not to be included in the accumulation of hours towards a threshold for an Attendance Support Discussion. It is typically in relation to a major health event that causes an employee to miss a significant number of consecutive shifts, or a chronic condition that causes recurrent absences for which the employee and employer have discussed a plan.
10. **Can a discussion be skipped if an employee passes more than one threshold before a meeting?** No. The policy does not endorse skipping Attendance Support Discussions. The intent of the policy is to promote conversations about the importance of attendance. Thresholds identify that conversations are needed; however, Health PEI believes it is important that employees have an opportunity to discuss what is underlying their absences and to have time to improve their attendance. Therefore, we do not skip or omit Attendance Support Discussions. Regardless of number of hours absent, discussions start at #1, and proceed in order.
11. **Is there a minimum amount of time between discussions?** Reports are run on a monthly basis. The report tracks absences based on a 12 month rolling calendar. An Attendance Support Discussion would be necessary if the report indicates there has been an increase of 33.75 hours since the previous Attendance Support Discussion. Supervisors are also advised that a minimum of one month should pass before a subsequent Attendance Support Discussion is scheduled.
12. **Does a union representative *need* to be present for Attendance Support Discussions?** No, not at discussions #1 and #2. Attendance Support Discussions are performance discussions (not disciplinary). Because they are not disciplinary, there is no *requirement* for a union representative to be present. Discussion #3 is also non-disciplinary; however, by this point absenteeism is becoming significant. Therefore union representation is invited to the conversation. Contact Human Resources for advice if you have concerns.
13. **How do medical certificates fit with the policy?** The employer’s rights and limitations regarding requests for medical certificates are addressed in collective agreements. Because this policy is based on the presumption that employee absences are for good and valid reasons, the provision of medical notes is not central to the policy. Medical information under this policy is typically only needed when the employer needs more information to support a deviation, an accommodation request, or planning a return to work. Consult with Human Resources for further information.

- 14. What happens after Attendance Support Discussion #3?** If an employee’s attendance continues to be of concern after Attendance Support Discussion #3, a meeting with Human Resources, the employee, and union representative may be held to discuss the impact of the absences on the workplace, and to discuss the factors that will impact the assessment of whether the employee’s absences amount to excessive absenteeism.
- 15. What is excessive absenteeism?** Excessive absenteeism arises when an employee experiences high absence rates over a prolonged period of time and there is no reasonable likelihood that this will improve in the near future. This must be assessed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Human Resources.

Please note that family illness leave is not considered for excessive absenteeism.

- 16. Scheduling of attendance support discussions:**

<b>Attendance Support Discussion 1 (67.5 hrs)</b>	<b>Attendance Support Discussion 2 (101.25 hrs)</b>	<b>Attendance Support Discussion 3 (135 hrs)</b>
Discussion is not documented on personnel file, but noted in PeopleSoft	Discussion form is placed on personnel file but not copied to union	Discussion form is copied to union
Led by direct supervisor	Led by direct supervisor	Manager, and Union representative present at meeting
EAP option is raised	EAP recommended	Employer initiated referral to EAP required
	Continued absenteeism may impact job opportunities	Continued absenteeism at this level may place employee’s job in jeopardy and failure to improve may result in employment termination