

	<p><b>POLICY</b></p> <p>Number: 7311-30-014  Title: ATTENDANCE POLICY</p>
<p>Authorization</p> <p>[ ] President and CEO  [X] Vice President, Finance and Administration</p>	<p>Source: Director, Worksafe and Employee Wellness and Director, Employee Relations</p> <p>Cross Index:</p> <p>Date Approved: December 17, 2010  Date Revised: June 20, 2011  Date Effective: June 29, 2011  Date Reaffirmed:</p> <p>Scope: SHR &amp; Affiliates</p>

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**DEFINITIONS**

**Absenteeism** means failure to appear for work.

Types of absenteeism include:

**Non-Culpable (innocent) Absence** means behaviour for which the employee is not responsible or deserving of blame; inability to attend work due to illness, disability or injury.

References to “absenteeism” in the following policy shall be deemed to refer to either non-culpable (innocent) absenteeism, with an emphasis on “Illness” or possibly culpable (blameworthy) absenteeism. There are separate approaches included in this document.

**Culpable (blameworthy) Absence** means behaviour within the control of the employee; behaviour that the employee can correct; i.e. calling in sick to have extra days off; calling in sick to work at another job; tardiness. Possible culpable absences will be investigated in the same manner as when dealing with a matter that may become disciplinary.

**Annual Accrual** means the amount of paid short term sick leave that each employee has access to. For an attendance situation to be considered for non-culpable termination for excessive absenteeism, an employee’s attendance record must be over the peer group average and over the annual accrual for their employee group.

**Chronic Disability** means a medically documented, ongoing condition.

**Disability** means a chronic condition; results in long, consecutive days off or short periods off for same reason (ongoing; severity may reduce with job accommodation).

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

**Injury** means results from accidents; may be at-work injury (WCB) or off-the-job injury.

**Peer Group Average** (absenteeism rate) is a benchmark measure to which employees are compared. Peer group average absenteeism is calculated by taking all of the paid sick hours of employees in a particular union (or out-of-scope group) and dividing by the number of full-time equivalent employees in that union. Peer group average rates can be described as a number of hours (for full-time employees only) or as a percentage of hours paid (which applies to full-time, part-time and casual employees).

**Single Significant Incident** could mean be a serious accident, a heart attack, surgeries or a stroke. These examples are considered “significant” as they may result in related absences that the employee would not ordinarily incur.

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish Saskatoon Health Region’s (SHRs) expectations and standards for employee attendance at work.

## 2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Reasonable attendance standards are an expectation of employment and will be communicated to employees. These standards are in place to ensure that our clients continue to receive high-quality care and to ensure respect and consideration for colleagues and coworkers.
- 2.2 SHR recognizes the need to focus on employee wellness to reduce absenteeism. This will transform the work experience, create healthiest people, healthiest communities and exceptional service and responsible use public resources.
- 2.3 SHR is committed to research and practice that supports employee and workplace health and wellness to ultimately benefit the people and communities served.
- 2.4 The privacy of all employees is respected and any information obtained as a result of administering this Attendance Policy will be kept strictly confidential. An employee’s medical diagnosis is personal and confidential.

## 3. POLICY

- 3.1 SHR shall assist employees with attending work regularly by offering supports and effective management practices to deal with culpable and non-culpable absenteeism.
- 3.2 **Attendance Standards**
  - 3.2.1 SHR recognizes that some sick leave will always be required. The expectation is that employees will use sick leave only when it is required. A reasonable standard is to compare the employee with his or her peer group or by similar job classification groupings and averages. Peer group average is the benchmark used by the Region.
  - 3.2.2 An employee whose sick leave (sick hours per year) exceeds the peer group average, shall be flagged in the Attendance Database. The manager will review the reports (available through the Enterprise system), and on an individual basis determine the appropriate follow-up, or if any follow-up is required.
- 3.3 SHR does not apply a formula to attendance management, nor does it have a standard definition of how much sick leave is excessive. The determination of excessive usage shall be based on the individual situation.

## **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1 Senior Leadership and Directors**

Region senior leadership and directors will support and ensure that managers are complying with the Attendance Policy and the legal duty to accommodate.

### **4.2 Managers**

4.2.1 Communicate expected attendance standards to their staff, and will ensure that all staff are aware of their own patterns of usage.

4.2.2 Ensure that employees are aware of the effects of absenteeism, including disrupted work schedules, increased costs, increased workload for coworkers and/or decreased client service.

4.2.3 Comply with the legal duty to accommodate and support a safe and timely return to work.

4.2.4 Shall not request a medical diagnosis.

4.2.5 Inform employees of the supportive resources available to them: e.g. Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), SAHO benefits and the Region's Healthy Workplace website.

4.2.6 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 an agreed upon frequency.

### **4.3 All Staff**

4.3.1 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 follow department-specific procedures for reporting absences due to illness or injury so that alternate arrangements can be made by the supervisor to ensure that all work is completed.

4.3.2 Keep their manager informed about issues that may impede their ability to work.

4.3.3 When an employee is unable to return to work and the estimated length of disability is unknown, the employee will maintain communication with the manager or designate at an agreed upon frequency.

4.3.4 Actively participate in the return-to-work processes.

4.3.5 Provide appropriate medical documentation when requested.

## **5. POLICY MANAGEMENT**

The management of this policy including policy education, monitoring, implementation and amendment is the responsibility of the Director, Worksafe and Employee Wellness and Director, Employee Relations.

## **6. NON-COMPLIANCE/BREACH**

Non-compliance with this policy will result in a review of the incident. Repeated non-compliance may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and/or privileges with SHR.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	
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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish the process for managers to manage culpable and non-culpable absenteeism and to;

- Provide sufficient supports to assist employees with attending work regularly.

## 2. PROCEDURE

### 2.1 General

- The Enterprise reporting system will provide monthly, comprehensive reports to all managers responsible for staff that shows the rate of usage of sick time for all employees in his or her department. Comparison figures showing peer group averages and usage will be provided so managers can identify the amount of sick leave used by each of their staff.
- Managers are responsible for implementing the Attendance Policy in their areas of responsibility.

### 2.2 Manager's Procedures

It must be emphasized that this procedure is a guideline only and that managers must use their discretion and knowledge of staff to apply this procedure in a fair and positive manner. Managers may repeat meetings at any level as they deem appropriate.

Managers should review unit-level absenteeism reports from Enterprise and should actively promote, acknowledge and recognize good attendance with staff. Managers should also check to ensure the accuracy of the documents received and review how absences are reported at the unit-level to ensure accuracy.

#### 2.2.1 Non-Culpable Absenteeism

The manager 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 peer group average and is known to be related to a chronic disability supported by medical documentation, or a single significant incident, the manager should follow process 2.2.1.2 or 2.2.1.3 below. Managers should share confidential information with consent.

### 2.2.1.1 Above Peer Group Average

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

#### 1) Level 1 - Informal discussion with employee:

If an employee's attendance is a concern and exceeding the peer group average, the manager will hold an informal discussion with the employee and share the employee's attendance statistics and calendar with the employees. The manager will provide support and coach 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 make informal notes of the discussion and how it went. Notes should be kept by the manager and information entered afterwards into the Attendance Database.

After the informal discussion, the manager will monitor the employee's attendance for the next three to six months.

#### 2) Level 2 - Meeting with the employee:

If the employee's attendance is still above the peer group average after the informal discussion and three to six month monitoring period, the manager, if deemed necessary, will meet with the employee to discuss attendance. A union representative will be invited to attend this meeting.

The manager will share the employee's attendance statistics and calendar with the employee and union representative. The manager will provide support and coach 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 and make the employee aware of other SAHO benefits.

The manager will keep notes of this meeting and will provide the employee with a letter documenting the meeting. The letter should be placed on the employee's personnel file and notes added to the Attendance Database.

After this level 2 meeting, the manager will monitor the employee's attendance for the next three to six months.

If the employee remains above the peer group average and is below the annual sick leave credit accrual rate for his/her peer group after the three to six month monitoring period, repeat the level 2 meeting with employee.

#### 3) Level 3 - Meeting with the employee:

If the employee's attendance is still above the peer group average after the level 2 meeting, three to six month monitoring period and is above the annual sick leave credit accrual rate for his/her peer group, the manager will meet with the employee to have a level 3 meeting. A union

representative and SHR Labour Relations representative are required to attend.

The manager will again share the employee's attendance statistics and calendar with the employee and union representative. The manager will provide support and coach 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 medical information related to absences, the medical will be reviewed at the meeting and if considered necessary additional medical information will be requested from the employee. The duty to accommodate will be considered and if appropriate a Region Accommodation Consultant will be invited to the meeting or consulted. Again depending on the situation, the manager may offer support including EFAP and make the employee aware of other SAHO benefits.

The manager will keep notes of this meeting and will provide the employee with a letter documenting the meeting. The letter should be placed on the employee's personnel file and notes added to the Attendance Database.

After this level 3 meeting, the manager will monitor the employee's attendance for the next three to six months.

If the employee remains above the peer group average after the three to six month monitoring period but is below the sick leave credit accrual rate for his or her peer group, consider repeating the level 2 meeting with employee.

#### 4) Level 4 - Consideration of Non-Culpable Termination for Excessive Absenteeism

If the employee's attendance is still above the peer group average after the level 3 meeting, three to six month monitoring period and is above the annual sick leave credit accrual rate for his/her peer group, the manager will discuss the employee's attendance with a Region Labour Relations Consultant. Non-culpable termination for excessive absenteeism will be considered.

Depending on the course of actions agreed to by the manager and the Region's Labour Relations Consultant, the manager will repeat the level 3 meeting or have a level 4 meeting to terminate the employee for non-culpable excessive absenteeism.

#### 2.2.1.2 Single Significant Incident

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

If the employee's absences (leading them to have above peer group average absenteeism) are not related to the single significant incident, the manager should follow the Above Peer Group Average Procedure; 2.2.1.1.

If the employee's absences (leading them to have above peer group average absenteeism) are related to the single significant incident, the manager's role is to meet with the employee:

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

Afterwards, notes of the discussion should be entered into the Attendance Database. The Attendance Database will be used to continue monitoring the employee's attendance. If the employee is still off work, the manager should repeat the process above, as appropriate.

### 2.2.1.3 Chronic Disability

Level 1 – Informal discussion with the employee

If an employee's attendance is a concern and exceeding the peer group average, the manager will hold an informal discussion with the employee and share the employee's attendance statistics and calendar with the employee. The manager will provide support and coach 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).

If an employee's absenteeism is above peer group average and the manager is informed that they have a chronic disability, the manager needs to determine if the employee's absences leading them to be above peer group average, are related or unrelated to the chronic disability. The manager may simply ask the employee for this information, or medical may be requested to determine this.

If the employee's absences (leading them to have above peer group average absenteeism) are not related to the chronic disability, the manager should follow the Above Peer Group Average Procedure; 2.2.1.1.

If the employee's absences (leading them to have above peer group average absenteeism) are related to the chronic disability, the manager should contact their Service Team Facilitator and put in a request to interface with their Accommodation Consultant.

Notes about the discussion and how it went should be entered into the Attendance Database.

#### Attendance Discussion about Chronic Disability

The manager would set up a meeting with the employee, union and Accommodation Consultant to:

- Offer support and encouragement
- Make the employee aware of available Region resources
- Follow the regular accommodation process. The Accommodation Consultant will work with the manager, employee and union to find an effective accommodation for the employee.

Afterwards, notes of the discussion should be entered into the Attendance Database. The manager will monitor the employee's attendance for the next three to six months.

If, after three to six months, absenteeism is still above peer group average and attempts to accommodate have been unsuccessful, the manager and Accommodation Consultant will meet and assess if SHR has accommodated to the point of undue hardship.

If it has been determined that the Region has not accommodated to point of undue hardship, accommodation efforts continue.

If it has been determined that the Region has accommodated to point of undue hardship and employee still has excessive absenteeism, the manager holds a meeting with the employee, union and Accommodations Consultant. During the meeting:

- The manager and Accommodations Consultant summarize attempts to try to accommodate the employee's restrictions, and explain that the employer is at the point of "undue hardship." A letter is given to the employee.
- Any final options are considered including termination.

### 2.2.2 Possible Culpable Absenteeism

When a manager is faced with an attendance situation that could possibly be culpable, they should make a SharePoint request to interface with the Labour Relations Consultant. The investigative process to follow is the same as when dealing with any situation that may become disciplinary. The Labour Relations Consultant will work closely with the manager and lead the process.

## 2.3 Return to Work and Employee Accommodation

SHR may provide modified work where appropriate and an assessment may be required. It is important for SHR to be aware of any restrictions that an employee may have, so these restrictions can be accommodated when it is appropriate to do so. This is in keeping with SHR policy on Return to Work/Duty to Accommodate.

## 3. PROCEDURE MANAGEMENT

The management of this procedure including procedures, education, monitoring, implementation and amendment is the responsibility of the Director, Worksafe and Employee Wellness and Director, Employee Relations.

## 4. NON-COMPLIANCE/BREACH

Non-compliance with this procedure may result in a review of the incident. Repeated non-compliance may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and/or privileges with SHR.

## 5. REFERENCES

**Attendance - Manager Guide**