

**Policy & Procedure Manual**

---

**ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT AND RETURN TO WORK**  
**HR-III-35**

---

**POLICY:**

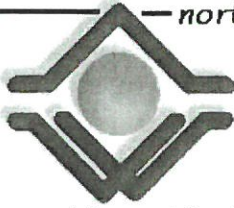
All employees of OPTIONS northwest have a contractual obligation to be in regular attendance so they may perform the functions for which they were hired.

All employees play an important role in our organization. Their regular attendance and participation is required.

OPTIONS will make every reasonable effort to work with employees on an individual basis to maintain regular attendance at work. This may include assessing reasonable accommodation in compliance with the Human Rights code. Where an employee identifies a disability, reasonable accommodations, up to the point of undue hardship, are available throughout employment. Accessible formats regarding communication and information will be made available, where possible, upon request.

**PURPOSE:**

1. To communicate to all employees, the expectation that they must maintain their obligation to attend work regularly.
2. To work with employees to improve attendance.
3. To treat all employees fairly and effectively.
4. To take into account the individual circumstances of the absenteeism so improvement can occur.
5. To identify and address absenteeism from an organizational perspective.
6. To communicate to all employees who have a disability that workplace accommodation will be assessed and wherever possible, an early and safe return to work plan will be developed..

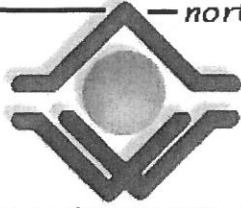


Definition of Absenteeism:

Absenteeism as referred to herein is defined as the failure of employees to report for scheduled work, and/or to be absent during scheduled working hours without prior approval. NOTE: When an employee is absent from work on approved time off i.e. vacation, statutory holidays, etc. such time is not considered as failure to meet scheduled work hours.

PROCEDURE:

1. For all staff, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. – Monday to Friday: If an employee is going to be absent from work, or becomes ill on shift he/she must notify either by telephone, or in person, their immediate Supervisor, or designate before the start of their shift (with as much advance notice as possible) or as soon as possible when at work.
2. Additionally for staff who work shift work: Between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., Monday to Friday and 4:00 p.m. on Fridays, through to 8:00 a.m. on Mondays, and for all hours on a statutory holiday:
  - a) Calling in prior to the start of the shift – call the on-call scheduling clerk.
  - b) Becomes ill while on shift – call the on-call supervisor.
3. In all cases, the employee must provide an explanation for the absence and convey their anticipated return to work date. NOTE: If an employee calls in and does not speak with a supervisor, the supervisor will follow up with the employee regarding the absence as soon as possible. The Supervisor will request medical documentation as required.
4. The Supervisor or designate will document each absence and the explanation provided. When an employee reaches 2 periods of absence within one quarter of a year or upon reaching 6 days of absence (cumulative), the supervisor/ designate, will discuss any particular plan of action required with the employee, as per his/her individual circumstances. Additionally, the Supervisor will determine and access resources as required. (re: Supervisor's Director, Coordinator Health and Safety, Human Resources Representative, Union Representative) NOTE: Where workplace accommodation due to disability requires assessment, the above noted resources will become involved.
5. Any written Plan of Action put in place will remain in effect until the employee is able to perform with regularity the duties for which they were hired, or until such time as it is determined that the Plan of Action is no longer effective.



6. Where the employee's absenteeism constitutes grounds for disciplinary action, a constructive discipline process will be followed, rather than a Plan of Action under this policy.

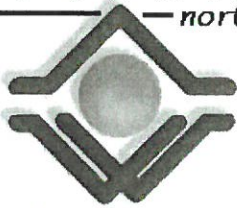
**Specific Responsibilities:**

Employee's Responsibilities:

1. Understand their obligation to perform with regularity the duties for which they were hired.
2. Be at work regularly and on time.
3. Be interested in their own health and well-being.
4. Understand the intended use of sick leave.
5. Make every effort to live and work safely by following all agency policies and procedures and practice accident prevention both on and off the job.
6. Attend to personal affairs and obligations outside of work hours.
7. Personally maintain regular contact when off work due to disability or other reasons as determined in discussion with supervisor. NOTE: "Regular" contact will be determined between the supervisor and the employee.
8. Adhere to any Plan of Action established in order to improve attendance at work.
9. Cooperate in providing all required/requested medical documentation in the event of absence from work, after a period of 3 days of absence, at any time upon request, or in accordance with an established plan of action.
10. Support fellow employees back into the workforce following an absence.

Supervisor's Responsibility:

1. Provide employees with competent, dedicated, professional leadership and a positive role model to follow.
2. Maintain accurate attendance records for all employees supervised.
3. Determine when an employee requires intervention and the type of intervention required for improving attendance.



4. Communicate regularly with their employees and their Manager(s).
5. Request assistance from their Supervisor, Human Resources and Health and Safety as required.
6. Document all conversations and meetings regarding attendance management counseling.
7. Make sound judgments and provide clear and concise direction to their employees.
8. Work in cooperation with the Coordinator Health and Safety to ensure that sufficient documentation is in place indicating an employee is fit to return to work after illness/injury.

**Return to Work Plan of Action:**

A return to work plan of action will take into account any disabilities an employee may have and reasonable accommodation related thereto.

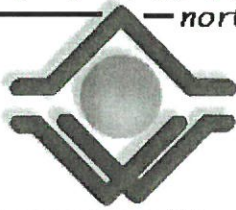
1. The Supervisor and a representative of Human Resources (usually the Health and Safety Coordinator) will determine when a written Plan of Action is required in order to improve employee attendance and/or support a successful return to work following absence.
2. The Supervisor and representative of Human Resources will develop the Plan of Action in concert with the employee and where necessary, a union representative as well as any other resources as required, and a copy will be provided to the employee. See policy HR-XI-27, Workplace Accommodation Policy, as required.
3. The Plan of Action will include: regular contact/meetings with the employee, external documentation to verify treatment participation, documentation. The Plan of Action may include: working with an employee's physician in order to determine prognosis, workplace restrictions, etc, utilizing external resources such as E.A.P., treatment centres, etc, working within internal resources to deal with workplace concerns, such as conflict resolution among employees, etc.
4. The Plan of Action will be in place until the employee returns to work on a regular basis, and with the determination that he/she will continue to do so, or until such time as it is determined that the Plan of Action is no longer effective.



**POLICY: HR-III-35**  
**DEPARTMENT:** Human Resources  
**CATEGORY:** Working Conditions  
**EFFECTIVE DATE:** March 2016  
**SUPERSEDES VERSION DATED:** August 2009  
Page 5 of 6

**Examples:**

1. Employee X is off work for 3 days and then brings in a note from her physician indicating that she will be off work for next 4 weeks. No reason is provided on the note. The Supervisor calls the employee to develop a Plan of Action. During the meetings it is determined that Employee X will be off for 4 weeks due to surgery. This is verified in writing. The Plan of Action is developed for the employee to maintain weekly contact with the Coordinator Health and Safety, in order to determine recovery in relation to the expected return to work date, and to contact the Supervisor during her third week off to verify her return to work date, and discuss workplace re-entry. Employee X returns to work after 4 weeks and is able to function at full capacity; she has one follow-up doctor's appointment in two weeks, and is expected to have no further absences.
2. Employee Y has been off every Monday after the weekend during the month of June. Supervisor has had discussion with the employee regarding each absence. The employee calls in unable to come into work on the first Monday in July and the Supervisor sets up a meeting with the employee. Through their meetings it is determined that Employee Y has child care issues every Monday, and she is under stress due to her marital situation and finds herself unable to work on Mondays. Employee Y agrees she needs to resolve her issues and the Supervisor and employee put in place a Plan of Action. The employee agrees to call the Employee Assistance Program in order to deal with her stress and the Supervisor is able to put her in touch with alternate child care arrangements. Employee and Supervisor maintain a Plan of Action until Employee Y is able to maintain regular attendance.
3. Employee Z is off work for three days each month for three months. The Supervisor has met with the employee after each absence. The employee has provided a number of reasons re: flu, cold, headache, etc. The Supervisor initiated a Plan of Action at the end of the second month, and request medical evidence be produced after each absence; however, the employee has not provided any to date. After three months, it comes to the Supervisor's attention that the employee has another job and has in fact worked at her job during her absence from OPTIONS northwest. This employee's actions will now be investigated, and if it is determined that she has stolen time from the agency, a disciplinary process will commence.



**Agency Responsibility:**

1. Provide a safe and healthy work environment and promote "wellness" among all employees.
2. Treat employees fairly and provide supervisory staff with direction and assistance in order to meet performance targets and maximize attendance.
3. Recognize the benefits of a formal rehabilitation program for disabled workers and work cooperatively with employees regarding the same.
4. Provide guidance and assistance toward obtaining effective health care and benefits either through Human Resources, including Health and Safety, Employee Assistance Program and/or other agencies which can facilitate assistance.
5. Ensure Supervisors and employees understand the intended use of sick leave and of this policy and its implementation.
6. Abide by applicable legislation and collective agreements.

**RECOMMENDED BY:** Director, Human Resources

**APPENDICES:** 0

**OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY:** Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Personal Support Services Administration, Personal Support Services, Community Resource Team

**ORIGINAL POLICY DATE:** April 1996

**AUTHORIZED BY:** Executive Director

**SIGNATURE:**