
DEPARTMENT: ALL TOWN DEPARTMENTS

TITLE: **ATTENDANCE ADMINISTRATION**

Minutes reference date: January 24, 2005
Date approved: Effective date:

1st Revision date:
2nd Revision date:

PURPOSE:

The following attendance policy is for all permanent Town of Amherst Employees.

Where the provisions of this policy and a collective agreement are in conflict, the collective agreement shall prevail.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Town of Amherst (the "Town") is committed to developing workplace excellence and providing complete satisfaction to the residents of Amherst.

It is important that all Employees of the Town work together as a team as we strive to achieve these goals. It is important for all Employees to report to work regularly and punctually, return from breaks on time and make every effort to maintain good health so that excellent service to the residents of Amherst is not compromised by employee absenteeism.

The Town recognizes that Employees may be absent from time to time due to disabling illness, injury or other factors beyond their control. The Town is committed to informing Employees about the proper use of their sick leave and to promoting a healthy work environment in which service delivery will not be jeopardized by frequent or unnecessary absences.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide top quality service to residents of the Town by encouraging all Employees to attend regularly for work.
- To assist Department Heads and Supervisors by providing clear procedures for addressing absenteeism within their area of responsibility.
- To approach Employee attendance issues in a positive and constructive manner.
- To improve Employee attendance through monitoring, awareness, identification of causes of absenteeism and provision of support to Employees striving to improve their attendance records.

This policy is intended to address innocent absenteeism, that is, absences due to illness or other factors beyond the Employees' control. Issues involving unauthorized absences, non-compliance with this policy or abuse of sick leave benefits are disciplinary matters and will be dealt with as such.

The Town recognizes the important contribution that each Employee makes to its overall efficient operation. Excessive or chronic absenteeism not only interferes with the efficient operation of the Town but undermines the Employee's responsibility to attend work on a regular basis and could ultimately jeopardize the Employee's continued employment.

The Town, through the Department Heads and Supervisors will:

- (I) constantly monitor sick time;
- (II) be as consistent as possible;
- (III) control and manage absenteeism through Employee interviews, support, and referrals where appropriate to remedy excessive absenteeism;
- (IV) verify absences from work as required and make reasonable requests for medical certificates or other supporting documentation as individual circumstances may require.

EMPLOYEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Attend work regularly and promptly.
2. Report to their Supervisor or his/her designate (before the start of the regular work shift) any absence, general reasons for absence and expected date of return to work.
3. Obtain necessary care to facilitate a prompt return to work.
4. Where applicable, follow recommended assistance programs to facilitate a prompt return to work.
5. Provide medical certificates or other verification of illness as may be requested by the Supervisor or designate.
6. Notify their Supervisor 24 hours in advance of any scheduled medical appointments. Employees are to schedule personal appointments outside working hours where possible but where not possible are encouraged to schedule appointments either early or late in the day and to avoid mid-day appointments.

SUPERVISORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Note attendance during performance appraisals.
2. Commend Employees for good attendance.
3. Maintain an accurate system of documentation and review attendance on an on-going basis. The Supervisor may request supporting documentation for an Employee claim as circumstances warrant. If a doctor's certificate or other supporting documentation is received, it should be forwarded to the Town Manager to be included in the Employee's personnel file.

4. Conduct interviews with Employees to highlight any concerns respecting attendance and discuss any steps that may be taken to improve the individual Employee's attendance record.

DEPARTMENT HEADS' RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Monitor departmental sick leave. Review Supervisor's implementation of this policy.
2. Subject to the *Human Rights Act*, refer to attendance records in the hiring or promotion process.
3. Inform new Employees of attendance expectations and this policy during orientation.
4. Provide feedback on good attendance and inform Supervisors of the number of sick days used by each of their Employees (monthly report submitted to Supervisors).
5. Analyze sick leave records for indications of patterns of possible misuse of sick leave.
6. Trigger the monitoring system when an attendance problem is recognized by frequency or pattern of use and continue until attendance improves or the problem is resolved.

Determining When Monitoring Will Commence – The Frequent User

The Department Head will determine the number of times an Employee is absent due to illness in a given period. The number of times an Employee is absent in a given period shall be referred to as the frequency. A frequency of five or more times in a 12 month period or four total sick days with a frequency of three or more times in six months will result in the Employee being designated a "frequent user".

Calculating Frequency:

- Sick leave for consecutive working days has a frequency of one.
- Sick leave for an individual work day or shift has a frequency of one.

Employees identified as frequent users may be required to submit a completed sick leave request form (Appendix 1) for each sick leave claim. The forms are to be forwarded to the Supervisor. If the forms are not submitted, the Department Head will notify payroll and sick leave benefits will not be paid for that period.

When requesting sick leave verification, the Department Head or Supervisor will consider all relevant circumstances including whether or not the absences may relate to a disability in respect of which the Employee requires accommodation.

STEPS IN DEALING WITH FREQUENT USERS

Step 1:

A private interview will be conducted (by the Supervisor) with any Employee designated as a "frequent user". The interview (private and confidential) will be scheduled with the Employee in

advance, held as soon as possible once the Employee is designated a frequent user and documented.

The Employee will be provided with details of their attendance record and given an opportunity to discuss the causes of the absences including whether or not the Employee suffers from a disability which may require accommodation in the workplace.

The Supervisor will stress the importance of regular attendance by the Employee and how his or her absence affects coworkers and overall service delivery. The Supervisor will inquire whether there are any supports or referrals that would assist the Employee in improving his or her attendance.

The Supervisor and the Employee will set an attendance goal and schedule a follow up meeting in three months.

The Supervisor will follow up with a letter summarizing the interview and noting the attendance goal and follow up meeting date.

Step 2:

After the follow up period, a second meeting will be held as previously scheduled. The Employee's attendance record since the last meeting will be reviewed and any improvements noted. Where the Supervisor determines, in consultation with the Department Head, that the problem is resolving or resolved, the Employee may be removed from the monitoring program or, alternatively, may be monitored for an additional period of time with follow up interviews, as deemed appropriate by the Supervisor and Department Head.

Where the Employee's attendance fails to show improvement, the attendance record will again be reviewed and the concerns identified. The Employee may use the attendance record as an aid in discussing the reasons for the continued absences.

The Supervisor will explain again how the continued absences are affecting the work unit and service to the public. The Supervisor will again inquire about causes of the absences and offer assistance or referrals as appropriate.

The Supervisor and Employee will establish an attendance goal and schedule a further follow up meeting within three months. The Employee will be advised that they will continue to be closely monitored. The Employee will be advised that in the event the absences continue the Department Head will attend the next meeting.

The Supervisor will follow up with a letter to the Employee summarizing the meeting, and noting the attendance goal and the next meeting date.

Step 3:

After the follow up period, a third meeting will be held as previously scheduled. The Employee's attendance record since the last meeting will be reviewed and any improvements noted. The Supervisor in consultation with the Department Head will determine whether or not further monitoring or other steps are required.

Where the Employee's attendance fails to show improvement, both the Supervisor and the Department Head will attend the meeting with the Employee who will be given the opportunity to discuss the reasons for the continued absence and advise what steps, if any, might be taken to have the Employee attend more regularly at work. Previous meetings and discussions will be reviewed.

The Employee will be advised that continued inability to attend regularly at the workplace could result in referral of the file to the Town Manager for review and assessment of whether or not employment will be continued.

Goals for improved attendance and steps that the Employee will take to try to improve his or her attendance record will be reviewed. The Employee may be requested to obtain medical information concerning the likelihood of improving attendance in the future.

Following the meeting, the Supervisor will summarize the meeting in a letter to the Employee outlining any agreements that have been made and documentation that is required as well as confirming the date for the next meeting.

Step 4:

After the follow up period, a fourth meeting will be held as previously scheduled and the procedure for the meeting will be as in the earlier steps and will include a summary of all past meetings and a review of the medical prognosis, if one has been obtained. If the Employee's absences relates to a disability, further medical information may be required to assist in the assessment of accommodation options.

If no disability has been identified and a prognosis is obtained that the Employee is not likely to be able to attend employment regularly in the future, the Employee will be advised that his or her employment is in jeopardy and that the matter will be reviewed by the Town Manager to determine whether termination will result.

Absences from work will continue to be monitored and the frequent user steps repeated as required. Supervisors and Department Heads will exercise discretion in requesting medical information as circumstances warrant.

Letters prepared in accordance with this policy will be retained in the Employees' personnel file. Medical information will be safeguarded and reviewed only by those who have a need to review it to administer employee benefits or this policy.

APPENDIX 1

TOWN OF AMHERST
APPLICATION FOR PAID SICK LEAVE

Dates away from work:

Reason for absence:

Did you receive medical attention?

Doctor's name:

Were you away from home? Yes () No ()

If yes, for what reason?

I hereby certify the above information is correct and is to be used to verify my application for paid sick leave.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

***THIS APPLICATION IS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO AN EMPLOYEE RECEIVING PAY
WHEN ABSENT FROM WORK DUE TO SICKNESS.***