



PERSONAL ATTENDANT CARE INC.
 1650 DUNDAS ST. E. SUITE 200
 WHITBY, ON L1N 2K8
 Telephone (905) 576-5603
 Fax (905) 576-8020

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DEPARTMENT		Human Resource Management
SUBJECT		Attendance Management
APPROVED BY (Signature)	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	<i>N. Carter</i>
APPROVED DATE		
REVIEWED BY (Title & Signature)		Pamela DeRaaf CHRP, Human Resource Manager
REVIEW DATE		September 2009

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Preamble

The Attendance Management Program sets out the general principles regarding attendance management within the Organization and details the monitoring and counseling procedures which are to be applied to individual employees who are unable to provide a reasonable level of attendance.

Procedures

Training

Supervisor/Manager is provided with detailed information on the principles, practices and techniques for the effective management of attendance. Refreshers and updates are also routinely provided at the request of any part of the Organization.

Expectation

Personal Attendant Care Inc. has a right, in return for regular employment, to expect a reasonable level of regular attendance from employees.

Assumption

Unless proof to the contrary is evident, it is assumed that absences are blameless or innocent in nature. Disciplinary action is therefore inappropriate. Where proof of abuse of sick leave exists, discipline rather than the blameless approach of this guideline is appropriate.

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DEFINITION

Non-Culpable Absenteeism: Absence from work due to illness, or non-occupational injury, including absences that may be a result of a disability other than a compensable illness or injury.

Culpable Absenteeism: Absence from work due to factors within the employee's control. Culpable absenteeism includes failure to notify, absences without leave and abuse of leave. Culpable or blameworthy absenteeism problems may be grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal.

Absences which are legitimized by Policy and Operational Procedures or Collective Agreement are not relevant in any statistical summary used in support of attendance management. Examples of such absences are:

- a. jury duty;
- b. pregnancy/parental leave of absence;
- c. bereavement leave;
- d. emergency leave;
- e. union leave;
- f. family leave;
- g. disciplinary suspension;
- h. paid holidays;
- i. vacation and time-in-lieu unless used to cover unscheduled absences caused by illness or injury;
- j. WSIB claims.

Absences which should be considered in managing attendance are:

- a. paid or unpaid sick time;
- b. time absent without prior approval.

Chronic lateness or other time theft must be dealt with as a disciplinary matter and not included in innocent absence statistics.

General Guidelines

Prior to terminating an employee due to attendance related issues, the following guidelines result and should be applied in all cases:

- a. The employer must be able to demonstrate that the employee has clearly been warned that termination will result from the failure to provide regular attendance.

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- b. The requirements both in terms of the time allowed to correct the problem and the standard of attendance sought must be reasonable. Generally, reliance on the attendance records of other employees or averages establishes what is reasonable.
- c. The employer needs to be able to show that constant and consistent follow-up has occurred since the problem was first raised with the employee.
- d. Finally, and most important, the employer must be able to show that it has every reason to believe that the employee will not succeed in providing the regular attendance required. This will usually be demonstrated by evidence of the employee having taken no appropriate action to overcome the problem or by medical evidence of a disability which will prevent regular attendance for the foreseeable future.

Naturally, there are other considerations in dealing with the merits of each individual. Whatever the considerations, they need to be reasonable and applied in a manner which cannot be seen as arbitrary. In short, before we reach the point of termination the employee must have had every reasonable opportunity to make the necessary improvement or concrete plan for improvement in attendance.

PRINCIPLES

Managing attendance effectively requires that supervisors and managers at all levels apply the following procedures in their areas of responsibility:

- a. Be sure each employee is aware of Personal Attendant Care Inc.'s attendance expectations;
- b. Maintain and monitor the attendance records of each employee as well as the attendance levels of the group.
- c. Adhere to policy for reporting of absence which requires personal contact with the Supervisor/Manager.
- d. Employee must provide a note from their doctor for absences due to illness 3 or more days, refer to the Collective Agreement.
- e. Take action in cases of excessive innocent absenteeism. Supervisor/Manager consults with Human Resources in evaluating individual absenteeism cases.
- f. Recognize good or improved attendance.

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COUNSELLING PROCEDURE

In cases of chronic, excessive or recurrent innocent absenteeism, counseling is essential. The following is a general guideline:

- a. Identify the problem by means of an effective summary record of the individual's record of absenteeism since the day of hire. Look at the total record and note any patterns which emerge.

- b. Meet with the employee to review their attendance record:
 - (1) Get the employee's comments or explanation of the record including any patterns and make notes of what is said;
 - (2) Reinforce Personal Attendant Care Inc.'s expectations for attendance; make it clear that the recurrent, periodic nature of absences, even though legitimate, is unacceptable;
 - (3) Get a commitment to make a voluntary effort to improve; and
 - (4) Establish timelines for follow-up with employee.

- c. Follow-up every subsequent absence by discussing it with the employee:
 - (1) Make a record of the individual's explanation for each absence;
 - (2) Ask the individual what he or she is doing to overcome the problem and record the answer; and
 - (3) If satisfactory improvement is forthcoming, meet with the employee to review the improved record and offer recognition of that improvement. Such recognition counseling must also be recorded.

If there is no improvement then progressive discipline should be initiated in accordance with progressive discipline.