

# CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



POLICY	<b>Attendance Management Policy</b>
CATEGORY	Corporate
AUTHORITY	Human Resources
RELATED POLICES	
APPROVED BY	Senior Management
EFFECTIVE DATE	April 26, 2004
REVISION DATE	February 10, 2010

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## POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all City of Guelph full-time, part-time, casual and temporary employees.

- As employees of the City of Guelph, working together to provide the highest level of customer service possible is an expectation of employment.
- Regular attendance is an expectation of employment.
- The City will provide a healthy and safe working environment.
- The City will provide programs and resources to assist employees in achieving healthy, balanced and satisfying work.
- Employees must exercise responsibility for their health, safety and well being.
- Employees who return to work quickly following an injury or illness recover faster.
- The City will make every effort to accommodate an early and safe return to work program, in an effort for the employee to return to their pre injury/illness position in a timely manner.

## PURPOSE

1. To provide the employees of the City of Guelph attendance guidelines and procedures.
2. To assist employees and management in the understanding of their roles and responsibilities required to maintain regular attendance, in accordance with the City policy.
3. To promote employee health and wellness.

## DEFINITIONS

**Accommodation:** Employees, who have a medically verified and documented requirement, will be accommodated on either a temporary or permanent basis, whenever possible. The primary goal is to have the employee return to their pre injury/illness job in a timely manner. If the functional abilities of the employee prevent the return to their job, placement in another job in their department is investigated. In certain situations, placement in another position in the City may be considered and approved.

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**Attending Physician:** a member of a college of health professionals, as defined in the Regulated Health Professional Act. This would include but may not be limited to physicians, surgeons, chiropractors, dentists, periodontists, nurse practitioners, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists.

**Culpable Absenteeism:** is defined as lateness or absence from scheduled work for which the employee should be held responsible because the reason for the absence is within the employee's power to address and correct.

There are four key types of culpable absenteeism:

- Lateness/leaving early
- Failure to notify
- Absence without approved leave (permission)
- Abuse of leave

If an absenteeism problem is culpable, disciplinary procedures may be invoked by management. The discipline imposed will reflect the gravity of the immediate offence but will be take into consideration any prior disciplinary record.

**Functional Abilities Evaluation:** the assessment by an attending physician of the employee's abilities to perform physical or cognitive tasks (eg lifting, standing, walking) in order to for the employer to determine the ability of the employee to return to employment and perform their job (or a modified job for a defined period of time).

**Modified Job:** a variance from the employee's regular job duties to accommodate the abilities identified in the Functional Abilities Evaluation form, when the employee cannot perform the majority (approximately 85 %) of their job. This is normally a temporary change in work duties or hours.

**Non-culpable Absenteeism:** is defined as absence that is involuntary or not controllable by the employee.

Non-culpable absenteeism is normally non-work related medical leave (illness) but may include other types of non-culpable absence such as:

- WSIB leave
- Maternity/parental/adoption leave
- Bereavement leave
- Jury/witness leave
- Personal leave (may include Emergency Leave as defined by Employment Standards)
- Union leave (where applicable)

Non-culpable absenteeism is not grounds for discipline in the way culpable absence would be. However, chronic non-culpable absenteeism may result in termination of employment for non-disciplinary reasons.

**Occurrence:** Absence from the workplace; usually, but not limited to, culpable absences, other than approved vacation. Non-culpable absenteeism may be considered as an occurrence if the absence becomes chronic, and/or the reason can be addressed and corrected.

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**Return to Work Plan:** The focus of a return to work plan is to assist the employee in returning to their pre-injury job in a timely manner and is prepared by the Human Resources Specialist in consultation with the supervisor, the employee and the attending physician. The employee is offered suitable work assignments and/or modified hours of work for a temporary period of time, based on the clearly identified capabilities listed by the attending physician in the Functional Abilities Evaluation form. The progress of the plan is followed closely and every effort is made to facilitate the employee in returning to their pre-injury/illness job.

**Modified Job:** a variance from the employee's regular job duties to accommodate the abilities identified in the Functional Abilities Evaluation form, when the employee cannot perform the majority (approximately 85 %) of their job. This is normally a temporary change in work duties or hours.

## **PROCEDURE**

Supervisory approval is required for all leaves of absence.

### **ATTENDANCE RULES OF CONDUCT:**

1. Employees must report all absences directly to their supervisor on each day of absence, as per established departmental procedures, unless approval for an extended leave has been authorized. Union employees should follow contract language regarding their duty to notify. Proper reporting is a necessity but does not mean approval to be absent.
2. Culpable absenteeism will result in progressive disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
3. Non-culpable absenteeism may result in progressive counselling in order to facilitate a successful return to active employment.
4. Chronic non-culpable absence may result in termination of employment for non disciplinary reasons.
5. Fulfillment of the employment contract is an expectation in any employer/employee relationship, including the expectation of attendance at all scheduled work.
6. For employees covered by Short Term Disability: an application form must be completed by the Attending Physician and submitted to the Human Resources Specialist for all absences exceeding *three (3)* working days.
7. For employees covered by a sick leave plan, the language of the collective agreement must be followed in providing the required medical documentation.
8. The Human Resources Specialist can advise the employee on obtaining the appropriate medical forms.
9. If an employee is absent from their scheduled work for a period of *three (3)* or more consecutive working days without notifying their supervisor and does not provide a satisfactory reason for their failure to notify, they will be deemed to have abandoned their employment and may be terminated.
10. Lateness: the employee must contact their supervisor to report their inability to be on time, give the reason for the delay and the estimated time of arrival. When the employee is delayed on the way to work, they should report directly to their supervisor on arrival at work. Proper reporting does not mean approval of the lateness.
11. Leaving Early: When an employee needs to leave before the end of a scheduled work day, they must report to their supervisor and give the reason for the need to leave early. The expectation is that employees will not make excessive requests to leave early. Supervisors may not approve leaving early in every circumstance.

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## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Provide a system for City departments to accurately and systematically monitor attendance and to ensure that the monitoring and control program is being consistently applied.
2. Compile and make available to management, regular statistics related to departmental and total City absenteeism.
3. Ensure policies, collective agreement provisions and relevant legislative requirements are adhered to in relation to attendance management.
4. Counsel employees, on long term absences with respect to their rights and their responsibilities.
5. Explain to employees their options under the City benefit plan and government plans, in conjunction with the Human Resources Specialist.
6. Assist employees, who have medically verified and documented requirements for job accommodation. The primary goal of an accommodation is to have the employee return to their pre injury/illness job in a timely manner. If the functional abilities of the employee prevent the return to their job, placement in another job in their department is investigated. In certain situations, placement in another position in the City may be considered and approved.
7. Counsel supervisors on case management of the chronically absent employee.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES SPECIALIST RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Promote employee health and absenteeism reduction through health, safety and wellness and programs. Co-ordinate the required Health and Safety training programs by identifying training needs, facilitating the training and providing quarterly training reports to management.
2. Co-ordinate the claims management of absent employees. Communicate with the appropriate parties to facilitate successful claims management results and a timely return to work.
3. Liaise with the employee's Attending Physician to determine:
  - Verification of the employee's pertinent health information in order to evaluate the employee's absence from work and the employee's timely return to employability.
  - That the employee has received or is receiving appropriate medical treatment for his/her health issues.
  - That the length of absence is reasonable with respect to the nature of the employee's condition.
  - If a Functional Abilities Evaluation is required to assess an employee's ability to perform his/her essential job duties in relation to their current or future health status.
  - Any recommendation that may be appropriate in the return to work of the employee (modified work, referral to a Specialist, consultant etc.)
4. Keep the supervisor advised of the employee's capabilities, while at all times respecting employee confidentiality of all medical information. Keep the supervisor advised of the planned date of return of the employee and the potential need for accommodation of temporary or permanent disabilities.
5. Monitor and assess an employee's ability to return to work. When required, prepare a "Return to Work" plan in conjunction with the supervisor and the employee, to support the employee's timely return to work.

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6. Administration of all Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and Short Term Disability cases: filing claims, communicating with WSIB and STD claims adjudicators and case managers, representing the City in WSIB and STD appeals.

#### EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To be in attendance at work, as scheduled, in a physically and mentally fit condition and to be able to effectively perform assigned duties.
2. To be fully aware of the attendance policies and requirements of the City and the reporting expectations when absenteeism occurs.
3. To work cooperatively with their supervisor and the Human Resources Specialist, in providing satisfactory explanations for absence and when required provide medical documentation supporting their absence.
4. Make every effort to consistently live and work safely by following safety rules and procedures and by practicing accident prevention both on and off the job.
5. To make every effort necessary to recover quickly to ensure a prompt, healthy return to productive employment.
6. To avoid allowing minor ailments and inconveniences from preventing attendance at work.
7. Attend to personal affairs and obligations outside of working hours and to make every effort to schedule medical appointments outside working hours.

#### SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Counsel employees on the reporting responsibilities for absence.
2. Be cognizant of the difference between culpable and non-culpable absence in administration of attendance management. .
3. Advise employees of required medical documentation for absences due to injury or illness, in consultation with the Human Resources Specialist.
4. Maintain strict confidentiality in relation to employee information. In general, the supervisor has a need for functional abilities information but not for medical information.
5. Use the Attendance Management policy, collective agreement provisions, relevant legislative requirements and attendance tracking information to achieve consistent attendance management administration.
6. Work with the Human Resources Specialist in case management of employee absence due to injury or illness, which will include prompt exchange of information, preparing return to work plans and providing modified work, when required.
7. Work with Human Resources in the case management of culpable absence and the chronically absent employee.