



## **3.7 Sick Leave Policy**

### **Intent**

The employer's Sick Leave Policy outlines the provisions for employees who will be absent from work because of health issues. It is designed to protect the employee from losing pay for reasons beyond their control. This policy will be managed with discretion and all situations treated with the highest of confidentiality.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees who have been employed a specified amount of time on a full-time basis.

Unionized employees shall adhere to their current Collective Agreement for policies governing sick leave. Where the Collective Agreement is silent, bargaining members of the employer shall refer to the contents of this policy. In situations where the directions of this policy cover issues also in the Collective Agreement, the Collective Agreement will be the final authority.

### **Guidelines**

The company, in accordance with any legal requirements that exist, may grant its employees a right to paid sick leave which will be addressed on a case by case basis and at the discretion of the employer.

Sick leave may also be granted in the rare event of a public health emergency, including closure of the employee's place of business or closure of the employee's child's school or daycare, by order of a public official due to a public health emergency, to provide self-care or care for a family member if the presence of the employee or family member in the community would jeopardize the health of others as determined by a public health authority or by a health care provider.

Sick leave might also apply to spouses/partners and/or dependents of the employee as well as any person for whom the employee is a primary caregiver. With consent from the employer, sick leave may also be used in a circumstance that the employee must take care of a member of their extended family including parents, step-parents, in-laws and siblings.

Sick leave is paid at normal straight-time rates, plus any applicable shift differential, and must be reported on attendance records as required by payroll policies.

If an employee has been granted personal leave and becomes sick, they may request to use sick leave instead.

If sick leave is exhausted, annual leave will be used in its place.

### **Procedure**

When an employee requires sick leave, they must notify their immediate manager to get the necessary approval. When the need for sick leave is predetermined, the employee must give notification in advance per company requirements and it must be approved. In cases of unforeseen absence, the employee must inform their manager of the anticipated duration of the leave or where the duration is unknown, the employee must keep his/her manager informed at reasonable intervals of his/her progress toward recovery and expected date of return to work. Employees are expected to notify their manager as early as possible of their expected date of return to work. If the employee is unable to directly inform their manager, they should where possible, have a person designated to communicate on their behalf.



Under certain circumstances the employee may be obliged to submit a physician's note or other medical certification and/or complete a sick leave form. Those circumstances include but are not limited to:

- Surpassing a certain amount of time off on medical grounds (paid or unpaid leave)
- Continuous absence beyond a pre-specified number of days
- Cases where a pattern of absence becomes noticeable (e.g. the employee is away on a specific day or days each week or month)
- A physician's certificate may also be required to certify that returning to work would not be detrimental to the employee or to others before allowing an employee to return to work
- When requested, certification and/or verification shall be provided within 15 calendar days or as soon as practicable. Failure to provide requested certification/verification may result in the denial of eligibility for the use of paid sick leave for periods of absence covered by the requested certification/verification.

Employees are required to provide notice of their use of paid sick leave or unpaid sick time as follows:

- When sick leave is unforeseeable, the employee must notify their manager of the need for sick leave (with or without pay) before the start of the scheduled work shift, or as soon as practicable; and, if possible, state the anticipated duration of the sick time requested.
- When sick leave is foreseeable or planned, the employee must make a reasonable attempt to schedule the use of sick leave (with or without pay) in a manner that does not unduly disrupt operations, including attempting to avoid scheduling sick leave during peak work hours, when work is time-sensitive, or when mandatory meetings are scheduled.
- If the use of sick leave is planned and the duration of leave is 3 or more days the employee must notify their manager of their need to use sick leave at least 10 days prior to the date the leave will commence, or as soon as practicable; and, if possible, state the anticipated duration of sick time requested.
- In all circumstances, the employee must inform their manager of any change in the expected duration of sick time as soon as is practicable.
- In all circumstances, the employee is responsible for continuing to make their benefit premium payment regardless of whether they are on paid or unpaid leave otherwise, benefit coverage may lapse.

Sick leave records will be maintained in the employee's personnel file. The employee's immediate manager must certify the accuracy of the sick leave record and approve and submit their employee's time sheet within established deadlines to ensure timely and accurate issuance of employee wages and paid sick leave.

Except when leave is protected by law, decisions about granting unpaid sick leave are at the sole discretion of the employer and may be denied based on department or program needs. Unpaid leave is generally available for no more than 6 months, but extensions beyond six months may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Reassignment of the work of an employee incapacitated by illness over a period longer than one month is at the discretion of the employer.

### **Long Term Disability (LTD)**

Long Term Disability insurance is part of your Employee Group Benefits Plan. If you become unable to work for a prolonged period due to an illness or injury while you are insured, LTD benefits provide you with income replacement after a qualifying period as specified by the service provider. The qualifying period is the duration of time you must be off work due to a disabling condition before you are eligible for LTD benefits.



- Eligibility – insurance company will confirm that you are covered by your group benefits contract for LTD benefits.
- Level of function – insurance company will compare your level of function to the demands of your job to confirm whether you meet the definition of disability within your group benefits contract.
- Appropriate treatment – insurance company will review your claim to confirm that you are under the care of a licensed medical doctor and that you are receiving regular, ongoing care and treatment that is appropriate for your disability.

If your claim is approved, your eligibility for LTD benefits will be reviewed on a regular basis. Periodically the group benefit insurance company will ask you and/or your healthcare provider(s) to provide them with an update on your medical condition. If you are accepted on LTD, all benefits you participated in at the time you were accepted on LTD will be maintained at no cost to you. This includes your pension contributions (employee and employer portion). You will also continue to accrue pensionable service but will not accumulate annual leave or any other type of leave.

LTD payments are based on a percentage of your income at the time you are approved for LTD. Your collective agreement or your benefits booklet will explain what percentage your plan covers. The amount of LTD benefit you receive may be reduced by other sources of income as defined by your collective agreement and the group benefits contract.

Your payments will continue for the period during which you satisfy all the terms of your group benefits contract including the definition of "disability", or until you reach your normal retirement date.

To promote recovery, it is important to maintain as normal a routine as is medically possible. Given that work is part of a normal routine, it is important to return to work as soon as you are healthy enough to do so. Sometimes a gradual return to work is best when you've been off work for a long period. Your manager, healthcare provider(s) and the insurance company will work with you to develop a modified return-to-work program that takes into consideration your job duties and your capabilities when possible to do so while still meeting business needs.

Where an employee does not have LTD coverage, he/she may request an unpaid leave of absence if they have used up their sick leave. Decisions regarding an unpaid leave of absence will be made after consideration of the individual's case, the department's operational requirements and any other relevant information. If leave is granted, the employee must pay the full premium cost for all his/her selected benefits.

Please refer to your Benefit Information Booklet for additional information on LTD.

### **Workers' Compensation**

Sick leave may be used when an illness or injury has been determined to be job-related, and if the employee elects to utilize accrued sick leave in combination with Workers' Compensation Benefits. Sick leave, when available, may be taken in the amount equal to the difference between the Workers' Compensation benefit for lost time and the employee's regular salary rate. In such instances, prorated charges will be made against the employee's sick leave account. An employee may not receive salary and workers' compensation benefits that exceed the employee's regular pay for that period.

An employee who receives a regular salary payment and a workers' compensation lost time benefit payment shall immediately notify the employer; the employer is responsible for recovering any salary overpayment that may have occurred, and shall promptly recover the amount of salary overpayment through payroll deduction or by cash payment per existing procedures.

Abuse of this Sick Leave Policy will have serious consequences up to and including termination of employment with the employer.



Any health information obtained by the employer about an employee or the employee's family member will be treated as confidential to the extent provided by law.