



Title: Attendance Management Policy		Number: 8007
Reference: Administrative Committee: March 25, 2009.	Adopted by City Council: April 6, 2009.	Supersedes: ASAP Program approved by City Council November 18, 2002
Prepared by: Human Resources Department		

STATEMENT

All employees are expected to attend work on a regular basis and have a personal responsibility for lifestyle choices that impact their ability to meet that goal. The City works proactively with employees to create work conditions conducive to good attendance and address issues that may be impacting an employee's ability to meet attendance expectations in order to provide excellent customer service to the residents of the City of Medicine Hat.

PURPOSE

1. To ensure a consistent approach to managing absenteeism across the organization.
2. To be pro-active in addressing issues that may be impacting an employee's ability to maintain regular attendance.
3. To increase awareness in those employees who are not able to meet regular attendance requirements of the City's concerns and intentions to assist in the reduction of absenteeism.
4. To reduce the loss of productivity and customer service that occurs with unplanned absences from the workplace.
5. To manage employees that can no longer fulfill their employment obligations in a manner that is appropriate for the circumstances.

ROLE OF COUNCIL

1. City Council is responsible to adopt/amend policies.

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1. **DEFINITIONS**

- 1.01** Attendance Record means the reference to three important measures used to determine whether or not an employee's absenteeism is considered unsatisfactory and/or excessive, as follows:
- a. Number of Days Absent refers to the number of days an employee is absent from work due to an illness and/or an injury.
 - b. Number of Incidents refers to the frequency of occurrences that an employee is absent from work due to an illness and/or an injury.
 - c. Pattern of Absences refers to the history of intermittent and/or frequent absences from the workplace for varying reasons.
- 1.02** Casual Sick Leave means sick leave not requiring a physician's care or intervention from the City's Disability Case Manager.
- 1.03** Culpable Absenteeism means the absence of an employee from the workplace due to factors that are within the employee's control. Culpable absenteeism is considered blameworthy absenteeism as is managed using the City's progressive discipline process.
- 1.04** Employee means any person employed by the City of Medicine Hat.
- 1.05** Managed Sick Leave means sick leave requiring a physician's care and/or the involvement of the City of Medicine Hat Disability Case Manager in addressing their health concern.
- 1.06** Manager/Supervisor means any non-union employee of the City who supervises other employees.
- 1.07** Non-Culpable Absenteeism means the absence of an employee from the workplace due to illness or injury for reasons beyond the employee's control. Non-culpable absenteeism is considered innocent absenteeism is not subject to disciplinary action but is approached on the basis of identifying and understanding the medical needs, if any, of the employee as identified by the employee's health care practitioner.

2. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

2.01 City Council

- a. Receive, review, amend and adopt any recommended changes to the Attendance Management Policy.

2.02 Administrative Committee

- a. Make recommendations to City Council regarding any necessary changes to the Attendance Management Policy.
- b. Receive, review, amend and adopt any recommended changes to the Attendance Management Procedures.
- c. Ensure prompt and consistent application of the Attendance Management Policy.

2.03 General Manager/Manager/Supervisor

- a. Set clear expectations with employees with respect to the attendance expectations of the City, the appropriate use of the sick leave, and the consequences of failing to comply with the established standards of attendance.

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- b. Conduct regular reviews of attendance reports to identify individuals who may require support to improve attendance records.
- c. Ensure prompt and consistent application of the Attendance Management Policy.

2.04 Employee

- a. Be aware of the City's attendance expectations.
- b. Understand the intent of the City's sick leave/short term disability benefit plans.
- c. Attend work regularly and on time as per established work schedules.
- d. Report absences from work as outlined in this policy.
- e. Make every effort to schedule and attend to personal/private business and obligations, including medical appointments, outside of working hours.
- f. Take measures to maintain good health and well-being and inform the manager/supervisor when/if health related and/or personal issues may be impacting attendance at work.
- g. Work collaboratively with manager/supervisor and Disability Case Manager to address health related issues that may be impacting attendance at work.
- h. Provide supporting medical documentation in a timely manner if any absence from work will be extended, or if requested by the City.
- i. Access Employee Assistance Program services to assist in overcoming personal issues that may impact attendance at work.

2.05 Human Resources

- a. Develop, communicate and evaluate the Attendance Management Policy and make recommendations to the Administrative Committee when revisions are required.
- b. Monitor the effectiveness and consistency of the Attendance Management Policy.
- c. Distribute absenteeism information to all employees on a regular basis.
- d. Advise managers/supervisors with respect to culpable and non-culpable absenteeism cases.

2.06 Disability Case Manager

- a. Act as a resource for managers/supervisors with respect to issues created by absenteeism.
- b. Work collaboratively with employees, health care providers and managers/supervisors to minimize absences from work.
- c. Advise Managers/Supervisors of employee compliance in addressing health and/or personal issues contributing to absences from work.

3. PROCEDURES

3.01 Introduction:

- a. It is an expectation of the City of Medicine Hat that all employees attend work on a regular basis to ensure that excellent public service is delivered to the community.

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- b. When it becomes necessary to utilize the Attendance Management Policy to address absenteeism issues, managers/supervisors should do so in a manner that encourages and supports employees to attend work regularly and to be valued contributors to the workplace.
- c. The City acknowledges that, from time to time, employees do suffer from illnesses and/or injuries that may prevent them from attending work regularly.
- d. Employees managed under the Absenteeism Policy will be encouraged/expected to be pro-active and to engage in courses of action that mitigate absences from work.
- e. Employees with attendance records considered to be unsatisfactory and/or excessive absenteeism will be made aware of the City's concerns and of the City's intention to assist, where possible, in reducing absenteeism so that regular work attendance and productivity can be sustained.

3.02 Reporting an Absence:

- a. An employee who is unable to attend work must contact his/her manager/supervisor as soon as possible, either via a designated contact person or by leaving a recorded voice message providing his/her name, the reason for the absence and the anticipated return-to-work date.

3.03 Monitoring Absenteeism:

- a. Absenteeism can be monitored by managers/supervisors through reports provided by Human Resources and by employees through the information provided on bi-weekly pay statements.
- b. When determining whether or not an employee's attendance record is unsatisfactory and/or excessive, the manager/supervisor should consider the following:
 - (1) A review of the number of days an employee has been absent, the number of separate incidents an employee has been absent and the pattern of the employee's absences compared to the department average;
 - (2) If an employee has been identified as having an unsatisfactory and/or excessive attendance record, the manager/supervisor should contact the City's Disability Case Manager to identify the number of absences that were considered managed sick absences or casual sick absences.
- c. If, based on the above review, an employee's attendance record remains to be considered unsatisfactory and/or excessive and his/her absences are considered to be non-culpable or innocent in nature, the manager/supervisor should initiate the Attendance Management Policy Action Steps.
- d. If, based on the above review, an employee's attendance record remains unsatisfactory and/or excessive and his/her absences are considered to be culpable in nature, the manager/supervisor should consult with a Labour Relations Officer to determine the appropriate next steps.

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3.04 Attendance Management Policy Action Steps:

a. Step 1 – Assessment Interview

- (1) An employee who has an unsatisfactory and/or excessive attendance record must be made aware that his/her attendance is unsatisfactory and/or excessive and be given the opportunity to improve.
- (2) Once an employee has been identified as having unsatisfactory and/or excessive absenteeism, he/she should be asked to attend a meeting with the manager/supervisor. A review should occur of the employee's attendance record focusing on how his/her record compares to the rest of the department and the impact the employee's absences from work have on the organization. An offer of assistance and/or support from the manager/supervisor should occur at the meeting if there are any work-related obstacles identified as contributing to the employee's unsatisfactory and/or excessive absenteeism record. If health and/or personal issues are identified during the course of the conversation as contributing to the absences from work, the manager/supervisor should offer an appointment to be set up for an assessment by the Disability Case Manager. Expectations and goals should be set by the end of the meeting with respect to acceptable attendance and a timeframe should be established for the employee to demonstrate improvement. A follow-up meeting should occur within 3-6 months.
- (3) The manager/supervisor should provide the employee with a letter confirming the discussion took place, the expectations for improvement and the action items that were agreed upon, as well as a follow up date to meet and review the employee's progress.

b. Step 2 – Follow Up Meetings:

- (1) If, after the time frame identified at the assessment interview has lapsed, the employee has improved his/her attendance and the Disability Case Manager has identified that any health and/or personal issues have been resolved, the manager/supervisor should meet with the employee to acknowledge his/her progress and offer ongoing support for the future.
- (2) If, after the time frame identified at the assessment interview has lapsed, the employee's attendance remains unsatisfactory and/or excessive, a second meeting should be held to review the ongoing attendance situation. At the meeting, the employee should be made aware that his/her attendance remains unsatisfactory and/or excessive. The employee should be advised that an appointment will be made with the Disability Case Manager for an assessment and review of his/her absences and of any health and/or personal issue that may be impacting attendance. The manager/supervisor should set the expectation that the employee will follow through with any treatment recommendations that will assist him/her in improving his/her health and/or personal issues that may be contributing to his/her absences from work. The employee should be advised that the City may, for future absences, require additional information through medical documentation completed

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by a physician to support future absences. In addition, the employee should be advised that he/she may be required to follow-up with the Disability Case Manager prior to the manager/supervisor authorizing payment of sick leave.

- (3) The manager/supervisor should provide the employee with a letter confirming the discussion took place, the expectations for improvement and the action items that were agreed upon, as well as a follow up date to meet and review the employee's progress.

c. **Step 3 – Further Follow-Up Meetings:**

- (1) If, after the time frame identified in any follow-up meeting has lapsed, the employee has improved his/her attendance and the Disability Case Manager has identified that any health and/or personal issues have been resolved, the manager/supervisor should meet with the employee to acknowledge his/her progress and offer ongoing support for the future.
- (2) If, after the time frame identified in any follow-up meeting has lapsed, the employee's attendance still remains unsatisfactory and/or excessive, a third meeting should be held to review the ongoing attendance situation. Prior to this meeting, the manager/supervisor should consult with a Labour Relations Officer. At this meeting, the manager/supervisor should clearly indicate to the employee that improvement is expected and new attendance improvement objectives will be set. This step will be repeated at necessary intervals, based on the unique circumstances of each situation, until the employee attains and maintains an acceptable attendance record.
- (3) If, after appropriate intervention, the employee has not improved his/her attendance record, the manager/supervisor should consult with a Labour Relations Officer regarding appropriate next steps. Ultimately, if it is determined that the employee will not be able to attend work on a regular basis in the future, there may be a need to pursue termination of the employment relationship for non-culpable reasons or frustration of contract.

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4.0 ATTACHMENTS

4.01 Interview/Counseling Guide

Action	Steps
Planning the Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize information for the discussion including attendance records, unit peer group average etc. • Note any patterns (e.g. Mondays, Fridays). • Identify incidents vs. days. • Contact Occupational Health to determine managed versus casual sick days and incidents. • Review past and current performance, personnel file, etc...
Opening Discussions and Identifying the Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify that the meeting is not intended in any way to be disciplinary. • Ensure privacy: indicate that the meeting is confidential. • Describe attendance in terms of incidents and days – assume that the absences are innocent and do not be judgmental. • Show physical record of attendance to the employee and indicate any trends/patterns. • Show the employee the unit peer group average.
Offer Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate that the intention is to support the employee with their efforts to come to work on a regular basis. • Remind the employee of their responsibility to attend work on a regular basis and ask what you can do to assist in ensuring this can occur in the future. • Offer a referral to the Disability Case Manager to assist the employee with any health-related. • Remind the employee of the availability of the Employee Assistance Program.
Establish Guidelines and a Follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if the employee expects his/her attendance to improve and note their responses. • Ask the employee for suggestions on improving their attendance – how can the department help? • Re-communicate policy and procedures around reporting absences. • Set a follow up date to review process – should be within 3-6 months maximum.
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note discussion with employee – date, time, agreed upon commitment of employee and supervisor. • Advise employee that a letter outlining the interview will follow.