



Absenteeism

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Guideline owner	Human Resource
Applies to	All employees and Volunteers
Related guidelines & procedures	Equal employment opportunity Leave
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Objective

To provide guidelines to supervisors on the management of absenteeism of their employees and administer sick leave provisions in a fair and equitable manner.

Introduction

Recognising that illnesses and injuries do occur, all full-time and part-time employees have paid sick leave allocated to them in accordance with personal / carers leave provisions within the Fair Work Act (Division 7), their award or agreement. This, however, does not entitle an employee to use all possible days off as a matter of right. Absenteeism related to sick leave can appear in different situations and may require attention where there has been:

- a pattern of repeated absences from work for short periods of time; or
- misuses the entitlement to sick leave (e.g. combining sick leave with weekends or other types of leave to have extended absences from work).

While absenteeism is not solely related to abuse of sick leave, these guidelines relate specifically to absenteeism due to alleged illness. References to 'repeated absences' in this section should not be confused with repeated absences due to legitimate illness. In cases where legitimate repeated absences are having a severe detrimental effect on the workplace, and there is some doubt about recovery, the supervisor should consider the person's fitness to continue in employment.



Identifying the Underlying Cause of the Absence

Repeated absences on sick leave may become a problem when the absences affect the efficient and effective operation of the workplace, including the morale of the absentee's team members. In some cases, absenteeism may be just one aspect of performance related issues. When misuse of the sick leave conditions is suspected or an employee is taking excessive amounts of sick leave, the Parish Priest/Manager should meet with the employee to discover the reason for the excessive amount of leave taken and any underlying causes for the absences, e.g. problems with the organisation of work, occupational hazards, or other problems that may affect work performance. Attempts should then be made to resolve any identified problems. Advice on matters such as work redesign, identification of occupational hazards, or counselling is available from Human Resources.

Once the cause of the problem has been identified and a solution agreed upon, the Parish Priest/Manager should allow appropriate time for the proposed resolution to be effective.

At each discussion with the employee, the Parish Priest/Manager should give a clear indication of the standards considered acceptable, and outline any subsequent steps which may be taken to monitor compliance with these standards. In accordance with the Parish procedure, the Parish Priest/Manager should:

Document the discussion and provide a copy of the documentation to the employee.

The employee should either: acknowledge receipt of the copy on the original document, and indicate that it is a fair and accurate record of the discussions; or if the employee believes the document is not a fair record, the areas of agreement and disagreement should be recorded and forwarded to the Parish Priest/Manager

The Parish Priest/Manager will review all documentation and then place in the employees personnel file.

Requesting Medical Evidence for Absence

1. If, following discussions with the employee and attempts are made to address the cause of the absenteeism, the employee's sick leave record continues at an unsatisfactory level, the Parish Priest/Manager should consult with Human Resources. If appropriate, the employee should then be warned that, if the absences continue, a medical certificate will be required for each future absence attributed to sick leave.
2. Written instructions issued by Human Resource to an employee about the provision of medical certificates will also specify the process and time frames in which this requirement will be reviewed. A copy of the instructions will be placed on the employee's personnel file.

Legislation

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)