

DHHS Policy on Employee Time and Attendance

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Signature:

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Purpose:

To provide consistent guidelines for handling and monitoring employee time and attendance issues.

Policy:

The ability of DHHS to carry out the mission of Helping People Live Better Lives is severely impacted when employees demonstrate unreliable attendance. Regular and predictable attendance is an essential function of every job.

Employee Expectations:

- To report for duty as scheduled;
- To adhere to call-in procedures and contact the designated person to report their unscheduled absence or tardiness within guidelines established by their supervisor, department, work unit, or facility;
- To provide an acceptable reason for their absence or tardy and indicate the time or date they expect to return to work; and
- To provide additional substantiating documentation for their absence, when requested. Additional information and/or medical documentation may be requested:
 - when an employee is absent for a medical or dental appointment
 - when abuse of sick leave is suspected
 - to substantiate the appropriate use of any type of leave benefit
 - when the employee's absence exceeds three consecutive days

When employees are required to submit medical documentation to substantiate the use of leave, such documentation should be furnished by the attending physician or other attending practitioner who is performing within the scope of his or her practice. The documentation should provide information sufficient to support that the employee's use of leave meets one or more of the conditions for leave usage described in the applicable Labor Contract or Classified System Personnel Rules and Regulations. Supervisors may accept substantiation other than medical documentation if they believe it supports approval of the leave request.

Any absence from work that has not been approved by a supervisor, or designee will be considered to be unexcused and may be subject to informal corrective or formal disciplinary action. (Supervisors will need to use discretion when extenuating circumstances exist and will need to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused.)

Examples of Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences may include, but are not limited to:

- Tardy -- Any incident in which the employee is not at their scheduled work station, ready for work at the beginning of the designated time/shift, may be considered a tardy.
- No Call/No Show - Employees failing to report for work as scheduled or failing to report their absence to the designated person may be considered to be a no call/no show.
- Unscheduled Time Off -- Absences not planned or approved in advance by a supervisor. It is understood that an emergency may occasionally arise which prevents an employee's prompt attendance at work, or requires early departure from work. Such instances may include personal illness, illness of a family member, or a death in the family. When leave use is not approved for such absences, the absence may be considered as unexcused.
- Leave Without Pay may be considered to be unexcused, except when taken in conjunction with approved Family Medical Leave, ADA accommodation, or an approved Leave of Absence.
- Vacation Leave not requested in advance of the absence, or vacation leave requested to supplement sick leave use or for use in lieu of sick leave. Vacation leave use is not guaranteed under such circumstances, and when not approved, the absence may be considered as unexcused.
- Sick Leave when the employee fails to use sick leave for a valid reason. Sick leave may be denied and the absence may be considered as unexcused.
- Sick Leave not substantiated with medical documentation upon return to work when requested by a supervisor, or required by policy. Sick leave may be denied and the absence may be considered as unexcused.
- Misuse of any type of leave. When misuse of any type of leave has been determined, the absence may be considered as unexcused.

Unexcused absence of any type may result in unpaid time. Supervisors should work with HR and payroll representatives to ensure proper documentation of unexcused absence which results in unpaid time.

Supervisor Guidance for Addressing Unexcused Absences

Informal Corrective Action

Repeated unexcused absences constitute unreliable attendance. Patterns of irregular and unpredictable attendance may indicate an attendance problem and/or a possible abuse of leave and should be evaluated on a case by case basis. Supervisors should work to address attendance problems with employees immediately through informal corrective actions. Informal corrective action may

be taken when an employee demonstrates unreliable attendance or a supervisor suspects abuse or misuse of any type of leave.

Informal corrective actions include verbal warnings, informal written counseling, and/or performance improvement plans to include clearly defining expectations for attendance.

Depending on the circumstances, informal corrective action may not always occur prior to the imposition of formal disciplinary action. Failure by the employee to sufficiently improve attendance may result in formal disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the applicable Labor Contract or Personnel Rules.

Formal Disciplinary Action

If an employee's attendance continues to not improve after informal corrective actions the supervisor should consider proceeding with formal disciplinary action. Depending on the circumstances, informal corrective action may not always occur prior to the imposition of formal disciplinary action.

Formal discipline must be imposed in accordance with applicable labor contract or personnel rules and will be imposed with good faith, for cause and be progressive in nature.

When formal disciplinary action is necessary, the type and extent of disciplinary action is generally governed by the nature, severity and effect of the offense; the type and frequency of previous offenses; the period of time elapsed since a prior offense; and consideration of extenuating circumstances.

A general guideline for addressing unexcused absence (over a 12 month rolling period of time) is found below. Individual circumstances should be considered and may warrant informal corrective and/or formal disciplinary action different from that suggested below.

A formal disciplinary action of written warning may be issued when an employee incurs the fifth unexcused absence.

A formal disciplinary action of disciplinary probation may be issued when an employee incurs the sixth unexcused absence.

Employees who have accumulated seven or more unexcused absences may have their employment terminated through a formal disciplinary action.

Special Circumstances

In some cases, such as No Call/No Show, a single incident of an unexcused absence is so significant that it has a major impact on others and the Department's ability to function and provide services, and may warrant immediate formal disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Contact your local HR representative for more information or specific guidance