

Supporting Attendance at Work Program

Guidelines for Employees

Introduction – Program Philosophy

The Board recognizes its responsibility to provide a working environment that supports employee wellness, attendance at work and ultimately, optimal performance. We believe that absence can be minimized through prevention, early intervention and individual case management, and that employee attendance issues are best resolved in a positive, supportive manner.

This program applies to all employees and includes clearly defined roles for individuals at every level of the organization in an effort to resolve attendance issues co-operatively.

Program Objectives

1. To support and encourage employees to be well and at work.
2. To assist employees who are at or off work, and need help.
3. To provide accommodation, where necessary, and to assist employees when they return to work from a sick or WCB leave and cannot perform their regular duties during transition.
4. Recognizing the impact of personal issues on individuals, the program provides guidelines to encourage a consistent and fair process and outcome, while providing individual flexibility as needed.

Guiding Principles

The program was designed using certain assumptions and these are the principles within which the program operates. They are:

- Employees want to be at work, and administrators and managers want them to be at work and to be productive.
- Every absence is legitimate unless shown otherwise,
- SSRSB is committed to accommodating employees' health-related limitations. These limitations may affect their ability to perform their work, or their ability to be at work.
- Where an employee's inability to be at work is for non- health-related reasons, Financial Services will, when requested and whenever possible, work with our employee to identify possible solutions.
- Employees are committed to working with the Employer to find individual solutions.

Supporting Attendance at Work – Six Easy Steps

(Program Overview)

1. Human Resources monitors attendance reports and identifies the need for awareness with employee(s), or employee identifies a need for assistance through discussion.
2. Discussions and contact focus on reasons for the absence and on an employee's need for accommodation or assistance.
3. Discussions and contact are documented with goals and timelines.
4. Follow-up meetings will be held to review progress and continue planning, or to show the situation as resolved.
5. Further meetings will occur, as required, until resolution.
6. If progress is not made, or a situation is not resolved, a review team of employee, Supervisor / Administrator, Human Resources (HR), and as necessary a health practitioner will be consulted.

Partners in Solution

Responsibility for, and commitment to the Supporting Attendance at Work Program, exists at all levels of the organization.

Your Responsibilities as an Employee

- To attend work regularly and consistently
- To facilitate early notification of absence and to follow absenteeism reporting procedures whenever it is necessary to be off work.
- To maintain regular contact with your administrator / Supervisor during your absence.
- To provide medical information and/or reports (or facilitate their availability through a health care practitioner) to Human Resources as quickly as possible when requested within the terms of applicable collective agreements.
- To co-operate and assist in identifying solutions/accommodations and report any difficulties with modified work plan to your administrator / manager.

Your Administrator's/Supervisor's Responsibilities

- To treat all employees fairly, consistently and in compliance with the guidelines collective agreements and policies and procedures
- To maintain regular contact with employees who are absent from work.
- To facilitate operations by reviewing workload requirements and adjusting work allocations as required during absences.
- To work with employees and Human Resources as required to provide modified work opportunities and to monitor progress.

- To ensure that other employees/departments affected are aware of the need to support individual employees/accommodations.

Senior Manager's/Director's Responsibilities

- To support the Program.
- To assist supervisors and/or managers with the delivery of the program.
- To assist with the identification/provision of accommodation in complex situations.
- To ensure consistent application of the Program.
- To provide feedback and input to Human Resources (HR) regarding the program and tools.

Human Resources' Responsibilities

- To monitor the success of the program and to update/revise it as required, with consultation from stakeholders.
- To provide coaching, advice and training to management on implementation of the program.
- To provide advice and assistance to supervisors/administrators on individual cases.
- To attend initial and follow-up employee meetings when requested to do so.
- To facilitate access to health practitioners where appropriate.
- To create and update tools and guidelines necessary for program delivery.
- To provide absence data and records as required.

Suggested Union Responsibilities

- To support members.
- To attend initial and follow-up meetings with members, if requested by member.
- To assist with arranging for accommodated work duties for individual members and to help with the communication and follow-up with the affected employee and other members who may have concerns.
- To provide feedback to HR regarding the program and tools.

Supporting Attendance at Work – Intervention Steps

For the purposes of the Supporting Attendance at Work Program, employee absences in the following situations will prompt a review:

- Employees in the top 15% of each employee group taking the most time off work due to illness.
- Employees that demonstrate an absence “pattern” that is unusual for that individual.

Definitions



Short-Term Absences

These are absences that usually last from a portion of one day to several days in duration.

“Patterned” Absences

“Patterned” Absences are defined as absences where there is a pattern of occurrences to an employee’s absence, for example:

- adjacent to days off, weekends or holidays
- particular days of the week each week, month or year
- days off after performance related matters are addressed
- days off after work assignments that the employee finds non- agreeable

This type of absence may indicate a problem which might benefit from intervention through EAP initiatives or discussions with direct supervisors and administrators about surrounding circumstances.

Extended Absences

These are absences where an employee is away from work for approximately two or more weeks (i.e: greater than 10 consecutive working days) or longer. Usually, these are infrequent and less disruptive as the period of absence is known and arrangements can normally be made to maintain operational continuity.

The scope of the Program will not apply to those instances of extended absences that:

- Are greater than 10 consecutive working days where the Disability Management process applies.
- Result from a Workplace Injury.

Case Review

The case review process ensures that the collection and consideration of all necessary information has taken place and includes the:

- Review of the attendance records of the work group,
- Identification of potential patterns, issues, improvements,
- Determination of the need for a letter or a meeting.
- Determination of whether there might be a need to arrange a discussion with Human Resources and/or the Supervisor, Manager and Senior Manager/Director about the situation.

Employee Meetings

Employee meetings are not intended to be disciplinary. The objective of the meeting(s) is to explore with the employee (while meeting employee privacy needs), the cause(s) of any difficulties affecting their ability to attend work and to identify potential solutions.

If there are accommodation and/or assistance requirements, they need to be identified and appropriately arranged. The proposed solution(s) needs to address the needs of Financial Services as well as those of the employee. Your manager will ensure that sufficient notice, time and privacy are available for all meetings and that you are aware of the option to bring a union representative to all meetings.

- Despite the time you have spent in information sessions and in reading this manual, each time a meeting is held regarding attendance, the purpose and objectives of the Supporting Attendance at Work Program will be explained and the program Philosophy will be reviewed.
- The purpose of the meeting and the roles and responsibilities of all involved in the meeting will be stated to remind you that the meeting is not disciplinary.

2. Review

- Your absences will be reviewed; HR personnel will be specific and will only deal with facts,
- Pertinent information will be elicited and a discussion with a view to problem solving will be encouraged. **You are not required to disclose medical information to management.**
- Judgement will not be passed, but relevant facts will be reviewed and acceptable goals for improvement established.

3. Plan for Improvement

- Management 's commitment to accommodate employees when possible will be reinforced.
- Your input as well as that from your union representative about possible solutions and goals for improvement will be sought and is appreciated.
- The discussion will be about solutions, and timing and goals for attendance improvement.
- An Attendance Improvement Plan will be completed.

4. Closing the Discussion

- Together, the Plan for Improvement that has been mutually agreed to will be summarized.
- A date for a follow-up meeting will be set.

Post-Meeting Activities

Whenever meetings are held, the result of all meetings (accommodation, assistance, other solution, no action etc.) will be documented and notes retained for future reference. In all instances, you will be provided with a copy of the agreed- upon plan.

Follow-up meetings will be established to review progress. In all instances, even when no action is considered necessary, at least one follow-up meeting will occur to ensure that the situation has been resolved and to confirm that accommodation, assistance or other action is still not required. Assuming

that there will be improvement, these meetings will be used to reinforce Ryerson's commitment to the program and to you.

Continued contact and open communication are important aspects of case management under this program. At all meetings, the HR representative will:

- Ensure that you are aware of the option to bring a union representative with you.
- Review notes, action plans and solution(s) developed at previous meetings.
- Review data concerning absences since the last meeting, noting improvements and difficulties.
- Review reasons given for any absences.
- Discuss, progress, new goals and/or revised solutions with you.
- Be ready to hear new information and to collaborate on problem solving.

Employee Assistance

All employees have access to Employee Assistance programs that are supportive in helping them remain at or return to work. They focus on a healthy and engaged employee working in a safe and supportive environment. Access to the programs is on a self-referral basis and contact information is available from your Supe

Summary

The Human Resources Department is available at any time to discuss this program, and/or to assist you with accommodation or employee assistance that you may require. Please contact any one of these individuals for help, should you need it.