

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

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Responsibility: Director of Human Resources, Payroll and Health and Safety Services

POLICY

The City of Fort Saskatchewan is committed to managing Employee attendance through a positive, supportive environment that promotes the best possible attendance in order to provide quality, best value municipal services.

DEFINITIONS

- *absence* - an incident of non attendance at work.
- *acceptable Average* - the number of incidents or days of non-culpable absences over a defined period of time.
- *attendance Management Program* - the guidelines and procedures to support optimum attendance at work and address non-optimum attendance at work.
- *culpable absence* - an unauthorized absence.
- *disability absence* - a category used to define absences that result from an identified condition of disability.
- *non-culpable absence* - an authorized absence.
- *undue hardship* - the limit by which the Employer is not expected to accommodate, usually related to the inability to sustain the economic or efficient cost of accommodation.

GUIDELINES

Employee absence is an expected factor at the workplace, however, this does not mean that all absences should be regarded as inevitable and accepted passively. The Employer recognizes the cost, increase disruption and burden on co-workers caused by uncontrolled absenteeism. The ability to meet the needs of citizens and customers can be greatly reduced if levels of workplace absence are unacceptably high. In order to provide a high level of service, the City of Fort Saskatchewan depends on the contribution of its Employees and their regular attendance is essential to the achievement of this goal. Employees have a responsibility to fulfill the duties for which they were employed unless prevented from doing so for legitimate reasons. Fostering an attendance culture is a key component of ensuring that the organization meets its performance and accountability obligations to deliver a quality service and therefore the City of Fort Saskatchewan supports the Attendance Management Program.

Human Resources monitors trends and patterns in determining what the City of Fort Saskatchewan will consider as an acceptable average of non-culpable absences and once an individual is identified as exceeding this average, they will be placed in the Attendance Management Program. The Employer



considers an acceptable average of absenteeism as 6 days/year, however the details of each situation must be considered.

The City of Fort Saskatchewan's Attendance Management Program has been developed to assist Supervisors in managing attendance. It does not intend to diminish the provisions of the collective agreement nor does it intend that Employees incapacitated due to illness or disability be influenced to work if unable to do so.

The Attendance Management Program provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved in attendance management, defines the various types of absences, focuses on how to identify an attendance problem and outlines the counseling process to be used in assisting Employees overcome their absenteeism challenges. The objectives of the Attendance Management Program are:

- To promote optimal and consistent attendance at work.
- To raise awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- To promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, fairness and concern.
- To provide a framework for responding to excessive absenteeism.
- To assist individual Employees overcome difficulties which adversely affect consistent attendance and to help prevent absenteeism problems from escalating.

Attendance management is the function of many individuals, and its success is dependent upon the commitment of all participants. Outlined below are some of the key responsibilities of the various groups who will impact the success of the program.

It is the responsibility of the **Employee** to:

- Maintain a record of optimum attendance by attending work as assigned.
- Follow established reporting procedures.
- Schedule medical and dental appointments during non-work hours whenever possible.
- Advise Supervisor of any disability that prevents them from maintaining optimum attendance.
- Identify barriers to optimum attendance.
- Comply with reasonable requests to provide medical evidence.
- Participate in a plan to improve attendance with the Supervisor.

It is the responsibility of the **Supervisor** to:

- Use the Attendance Management procedures to manage Employee attendance.
- Raise awareness about the importance of consistent attendance.
- Communicate the Employer's attendance expectations to Employees.
- Advise Employees of proper procedures for reporting absences.
- Ensure completion and maintenance of accurate attendance records.
- Monitor and assess attendance statistics consistently.
- Exhibit concern for the Employee's well being.
- Maintain appropriate contact with Employee while on medical leave.
- Assist Employees by ensuring they are aware of the services available through the Employee Assistance Program.



It is the responsibility of **Human Resources** to:

- Provide advice to Supervisors concerning matters related to attendance management.
- Assist in carrying out the necessary stages of the program as required.
- Interpret existing policies and the collective agreement to ensure proper application.
- Assist in the development of return-to-work options.
- Guide and assist Employees to access benefits available to them.
- Liaise with Workers' Compensation, Alberta Blue Cross and other benefit providers when appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the **Leadership Team** to:

- Be accountable for the attendance levels within their department.
- Offer support to Supervisors in the consistent application of attendance management.
- Reinforce the value the Employer places on regular attendance and support the program.

Absences that will require some type of Employer intervention are split into two distinct categories; Non-Culpable and Culpable. It is essential that we differentiate between these two types of absences, record them separately and resolve them differently. For instance, disciplinary measures may only be used to address absences that are determined culpable. Counseling measures are used to address non-culpable absences and are designed to be constructive and assist Employees reduce their level of absenteeism.

Non-Culpable Absence

Situations where an Employee is away from work too frequently and yet has genuine and documented reasons for the absences are presumed to be non-culpable. Although the Employee may be capable of doing the job when at work, the excessive absences create problems for the Employer. As a result, the Employee is not fulfilling the requirements of the employment contract. It is important to note that non-culpable absenteeism is not corrected in a disciplinary fashion but through education and assistance.

Examples of non-culpable absences may include:

- Excessive sick leave, with or without pay, even with medical certification.
- Excessive outside appointments during working hours.
- Excessive absences from work to deal with ongoing family problems.

Disability Absence is a category used to define absences that result from an identified condition of disability. These absences are considered to be non-culpable. Supervisors should consult with Human Resources in these situations to address opportunities for accommodation. Employers are required to accommodate Employees with a disability, within the meaning of the legislation, to the point of "undue hardship". This type of absenteeism may also require special, personalized attendance goals which may be below the norm as part of the employment accommodation.

Culpable Absence

These are unauthorized absences which are within the Employee's control and may warrant a disciplinary response, however, only after consultation with Human Resources is discipline to be contemplated. The following are situations of culpable absence:

- Excessive lateness.
- False explanation for an absence.
- No reason is provided for the absence.
- Unsubstantiated absences, where evidence of the reason is required.
- The reason for the absence is not legitimate.



Supervisors have a right to expect regular attendance by Employees, however, it is important to recognize that most absences are legitimate. Nevertheless, any absence is potentially disruptive for a section/department and Supervisors should be concerned about every instance of absence. Furthermore, excessive absence is a strong indication that a problem may exist. The way in which a Supervisor deals with Employee absences will play a critical role in effective attendance management and the prevention of attendance problems from escalating.

PROCEDURES

Identifying attendance problems begins with monitoring the attendance of all Employees periodically and in a consistent manner. Promoting and maintaining regular attendance and assisting Employees overcome difficulties which reduce consistent attendance is dependent on early identification of attendance problems. In this regard, it is essential that Supervisors keep up-to-date records of Employee leave, as well as, monitor attendance regularly. "Appendix 1" includes a sample attendance record which can be used to document the various types of Employee absences. "Appendix 2" is an attendance profile which can be used to help Supervisors note important information about absences (i.e. provided doctor's note etc.) Supervisors need to keep in mind that certain absences are excluded from statistics used to calculate absenteeism rates for the purposes of attendance management. These absences still need to be recorded; however, they should not be included when calculating an Employee's absenteeism. Some of these include:

Authorized Vacation	Banked Overtime Leave	Bereavement Leave
Witness/Jury Duty	Pregnancy Leave	Parental Leave
Family Sick Leave	Suspension	Approved Union Business

We must also ensure that those absences which are identified as culpable form part of the attendance record; although they are not included when calculating an Employee's non-culpable absenteeism rate. It is important that culpable absences are dealt with in accordance with the principles of progressive discipline. The process for the management of culpable absenteeism is outlined in "Appendix 5". After removing the above-noted absences, the total remaining absences/year is compared against the Employer average. The Human Resources department maintains statistics on the Employer's average absenteeism rate. This is based on section and department data provided to Human Resources via Leave and Attendance forms.

When an Employee's absenteeism record exceeds the Employer's acceptable average, this signals that there is *potential* attendance issue that requires attention. At this point the Supervisor needs to review all available information to determine the appropriate course of action. It is important to recognize that each Employee and situation is different and that each case must be assessed independently with some consideration and flexibility given to the particular circumstances. Therefore, once we have identified that there is a potential attendance issue, we must consider all available information before deciding how to best intervene.

The number of incidents of absence and length of absence are important in determining the approach that should be taken in handling attendance issues. For example, one (1) incident of twenty (20) days absence due to a bona fide illness is handled differently than twenty (20) separate incidences of one (1) day each. All absences have an adverse impact on a section/department; however, a single, lengthy episode will not usually be categorized as problem absenteeism where an Employee's previous attendance record has been good and is expected to return to acceptable levels after the current absence issue is resolved. You will need to assess whether it was an isolated illness or injury which has caused a spike in an otherwise acceptable attendance record. It should be noted that an Employee's absences from work does not necessarily constitute problem absenteeism simply because they have an



above average number of absences. It is the Supervisor's responsibility to review the available information and assess whether an absenteeism problem exists.

There are five stages in the counseling process to address *non-culpable attendance* issues, in addition to the initial interview, which are designed to raise awareness about an Employee's attendance problem and to encourage improvement. The objective is that through the encouragement and support of the Supervisor and the use of available resources, the Employee can be successful in achieving and maintaining an acceptable level of attendance. There are a number of points that may apply which are common to each stage:

- Any stage of the process can be extended, repeated or suspended all together if circumstances warrant, such as sufficient attendance improvement noted.
- If the attendance record continues to improve and the Employee achieves and maintains an acceptable level for a period of 12 months, then the attendance problem is considered resolved. The Employee is commended on their success and is removed from the program.
- If the Employee, after having been removed from the program, is required to re-enter the program, the process re-starts at the initial interview.
- **If the Employee indicates at any step that there is a medical condition or disability contributing to their attendance challenges then the Supervisor should discuss the situation with Human Resources so that appropriate steps can be taken.**

In instances where an attendance concern has been identified, the Supervisor will need to meet formally with the Employee to address the attendance issue. Many attendance issues are resolved during the initial-interview phase and, in such cases, the Supervisor continues to encourage the Employee and provides on-going monitoring and feedback. In other cases, the Employee shows no improvement and absences continue to be excessive. A series of subsequent meetings may be required in these situations in order to facilitate a solution to the attendance problem. What follows is an outline of procedures for Supervisors dealing with non-culpable attendance issues. It is important to note that:

- These guidelines should be administered with flexibility and discretion in order to allow the Supervisor to deal effectively with numerous types of attendance issues that may arise. For instance, in some situations it may be advisable to repeat one or more of the stages.
- The sample letters provided in "Appendix 4" are offered as guides to assist the Supervisor in letter preparation and, as such, may require editing to be suitable for a specific situation.
- Supervisors should be aware that unionized Employees have the right to union representation at meetings, if requested by the Employee.
- Supervisors should be cautious when dealing with disability absences. The Supervisor will need to consider whether accommodation is the appropriate response. Supervisors should contact Human Resources for assistance when dealing with such absences.
- Human Resources and Health and Safety representatives are available to provide assistance and advice throughout the process.

Below you will find each of the counseling stages explained and the process by which an Employee progresses through the stages.

The Initial Interview

Once the Supervisor identifies a situation of excessive absence, the Supervisor needs to arrange to meet with the Employee in order to ensure the Employee is aware of the concern and discuss ways to improve the situation (see "Appendix 3"). The interview should focus on discussing the attendance concern only, not other issues. The Supervisor explains that the interview has been scheduled because a review of the Employee's attendance profile has raised some concerns. As well, the Supervisor points out that when an



Employee is away there is an impact on the section/department. This impact, depending on the particular circumstances, **may** include:

- Increased work load for others (which affects staff morale).
- Decreased quality of service.
- Unmet deadlines.
- Overtime.

It is important during this first meeting for the Supervisor to review the Employer's policy on attendance management with the Employee. When the Supervisor takes a professional and positive approach to the interview and communicates with tact and sincerity, the Employee is encouraged to view the meeting as a sincere attempt to resolve the attendance issue. It is important that the Employee be engaged in determining the solution. In situations where it seems appropriate, the Supervisor can offer assistance by describing services that may help such as, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Personal problems can affect the physical and emotional well-being of an Employee. The Supervisor should be vigilant as to indications that Employees are experiencing personal problems, particularly when these appear to be affecting their attendance or performance, however the EAP service is voluntary and therefore a Supervisor cannot force an Employee to seek help from the EAP. Furthermore, Supervisors should be aware that, if requested, unionized Employees have the right to union representation at any of the counseling meetings.

The interview concludes with a mutual plan. This will include:

- Outlining the problem and the plan for correcting it.
- Describing future goals; expectations and timeframe for improvement (usually 3 months).
- Monitoring Employee attendance during the defined timeframe.

The initial interview is considered an informal meeting to raise awareness about the attendance problem. As a result no formal letter is issued unless the Employee progresses to Counseling Stage 1 after the initial monitoring period. It is important for the Supervisor to ensure that the Employee feels future discussions are welcomed and that the door is open if difficulties arise. The Employee's absenteeism record is monitored over the next 3 months following the initial interview. The Employee's progress will dictate the next course of action.

If the Employee's attendance improves:

- a) Inform the Employee that their attendance will continue to be monitored periodically and that the initial improvement is encouraging.
- b) If the Employee maintains one year of satisfactory attendance, acknowledge the Employee in writing (see "Appendix 4") and revert to standard attendance monitoring used for all Employees.
- c) If the Employee's absenteeism record deteriorates before they have attained one year of satisfactory attendance, the Supervisor can repeat this stage of the process, or proceed to the next stage, depending upon the circumstances.

If there is no consistent attendance improvement:

- a) Proceed to Counseling Stage 1.



Counseling Stage 1

At this stage the Supervisor will:

- Meet with the Employee to review the attendance record following the monitoring period.
- Re-emphasize the attendance expectations.
- Assist the Employee in identifying other resources which may be of benefit, such as the EAP.
- Communicate to the Employee that their attendance will continue to be monitored.
- Confirm the attendance issues and expectations for improvement in writing (Stage 1 concern letter, "Appendix 4").

The Employee's absenteeism record is monitored over the 3 months following the Stage 1 meeting. The Employee's progress will dictate the next course of action.

If the Employee's attendance improves:

- a) Acknowledge the improvement with a letter to the Employee (Improvement letter format, "Appendix 4").
- b) Continue to monitor the attendance record every three months.
- c) If the Employee maintains one year of satisfactory attendance, acknowledge the Employee and remove the Employee from the program (1-year sustained improvement letter, "Appendix 4").
- d) If the Employee's absenteeism record deteriorates before they have attained one year of satisfactory attendance, the Supervisor can repeat this stage of the process, or proceed to the next stage, depending upon the circumstances.

If there is no consistent attendance improvement:

- a) Proceed to Counseling Stage 2.

Counseling Stage 2

In certain cases, there may be no sustained improvement after two interventions by the Supervisor. In these instances, the Supervisor will:

- Meet with the Employee to review the attendance record, re-emphasize the attendance expectations, and recommend other resources.
- Suggest that the Employee seek a medical assessment and encourage discussion about other ways to improve attendance.
- Advise the Employee that there is a continuing concern regarding attendance, and emphasize that improvement is required during the next three-month review period (Stage 2 concern letter, "Appendix 4").
- Confirm the attendance issues and expectations from improvement in writing.

The Employee's absenteeism record is monitored over the 3 months following the Stage 2 meeting. The Employee's progress will dictate the next course of action.



If the Employee's attendance improves:

- a) Acknowledge the improvement with a letter to the Employee (Improvement letter, "Appendix 4").
- b) Continue to monitor the attendance record every three months.
- c) If the Employee maintains one year of satisfactory attendance, acknowledge the Employee and remove the Employee from the program (1-year sustained improvement letter, "Appendix 4").
- d) If the Employee's absenteeism record deteriorates before they have attained one year of satisfactory attendance, the Supervisor can repeat this stage of the process, or proceed to the next stage, depending upon the circumstances.

If there is no consistent attendance improvement:

- a) Proceed to Counseling Stage 3.

Counseling Stage 3

At this stage the Supervisor will:

- Meet with the Employee to once again review the attendance record and the attendance expectations.
- Recommend the Employee seek out other resources to assist the Employee in addressing the attendance difficulties.
- Advise the Employee that if there is no improvement in the next 3 month period, the Employer will be required to take further action (Stage 3, concern letter, "Appendix 4").
- Confirm the attendance issues and expectations for improvement in writing.

The Employee's absenteeism record is monitored over the 3 months following the Stage 3 meeting. The Employee's progress will dictate the next course of action.

If the Employee's attendance improves:

- a) Acknowledge the improvement with a letter to the Employee (improvement letter, "Appendix 4").
- b) Continue to monitor the attendance record every three months.
- c) If the Employee maintains one year of satisfactory attendance, congratulate the Employee and remove the Employee from the program (1-year sustained improvement letter, "Appendix 4").
- d) If the Employee's absenteeism record deteriorates before they have attained one year of satisfactory attendance, the Supervisor can repeat this stage of the process, or proceed to the next stage, depending upon the circumstances.

If there is no consistent attendance improvement:

- a) Proceed to Counseling Stage 4.

Counseling Stage 4

If there is no improvement in the 3 month period following the Stage 3 meeting, the process includes two meetings with the Employee.

At the preliminary meeting the Supervisor will:

- Ensure that unionized Employee brings along a union representative to the meeting.
- Advise the Employee of the seriousness of the attendance concerns.



- Review the Employees past attendance record and the reasons why the Employee has reached this stage.
- Ask the Employee to seek a medical assessment to determine their capability of maintaining regular attendance at work.
- Provide the Employee with a letter to take to their doctor.
- Inform the Employee that they will be required to attend a follow-up meeting to discuss the outcome of the medical assessment once received and reviewed by Human Resources.
- Advise the Employee to bring a union representative to the follow-up meeting (if the Employee is unionized).
- Confirm the attendance issues and expectations for improvement in writing.

If the Employee refuses to provide the required medical information or the information indicates that regular and consistent attendance cannot be expected:

- The Supervisor, General Manager and Human Resources, in consultation with the City Manager or C.U.P.E. representatives where appropriate, will meet to review the case and determine the appropriate options and course of action.
- Once a decision has been made by the Employer, a follow-up meeting is held to advise the Employee of the action that will be taken.

If the Employee provides medical information indicating that there is no medical condition which would prevent regular and consistent attendance from work, a follow-up meeting proceeds as follows.

- Give the Employee another opportunity and advise the Employee that his/her attendance will be monitored over the next 3 months.
- Advise the Employee that he/she has reached the final stage of the counseling process and that if the attendance expectations are not met and sustained for a period of 12 months, termination will be considered.
- Document the attendance concerns and expectations for sustained improvement in a letter (Follow-up to Stage 4 meeting, "Appendix 4").

The Employee's absenteeism record is monitored over 3 months following the Stage 4 meeting. The Employee's progress will dictate the next course of action:

If the Employee's attendance improves:

- (a) Acknowledge the improvement with a letter to the Employee (improvement letter, "Appendix 4").
- (b) Continue to monitor the attendance record every three months.
- (c) If the Employee maintains one year of satisfactory attendance, congratulate the Employee and remove the Employee from the program (1-year sustained improvement letter, "Appendix 4").
- (d) If the Employee's absenteeism record deteriorates before they have attained one year of satisfactory attendance the Supervisor, General Manager and Human Resources meet to determine whether to repeat this stage of the process, or proceed to Stage 5.

If there is no consistent attendance improvement:

- (a) Proceed to Counseling Stage 5.

Counseling Stage 5

If the counseling provided at Stage 4 does not yield the necessary attendance results then the Supervisor meets with Human Resources to discuss the termination process and assess whether any conditions exist which would suggest re-considering termination.



Discharge should be considered only when all the steps outlined previously have been met and when every possible action has been taken to accommodate the Employee. The following would be some of the considerations in ruling on a non-culpable absenteeism dismissal case.

- Has the Employee done everything possible to regain their health and return to work?
- Has the Employer provided assistance in every way possible (i.e. counseling, support, time off)?
- Has the Employer given the Employees sufficient notice that the attendance problem is jeopardizing his/her employment?
- Has the Employer determined if a disability requiring accommodation exists?
- Has enough time elapsed to allow for every possible chance of recovery?
- Has the Employer treated the Employee in a fair and equitable manner?

These procedures including the counseling stages outlined in the previous paragraphs are designed to help Employees resolve their attendance problems. However, when it is demonstrated that the Employee is not likely to be able to maintain regular attendance in the future, the Employee may need to be released through non-disciplinary discharge. This decision needs to be substantiated by the following test:

- The absences have been shown to be clearly excessive.
- It has been proven that the Employee will be unable to attend work on a regular basis in the future.
- All reasonable accommodations have been considered and provided when possible.

Conclusion

It is important to note that most attendance issues are resolved early in the process. While the steps described in the latter part of these procedures are occasionally necessary, in the majority of cases, the situation is resolved before it is necessary to terminate employment. Through implementation of positive actions suggested earlier, such as counseling the Employee and ensuring that the Employee is aware of the resources available to assist with their individual situation, the Supervisor will encourage and support the Employee in achieving and maintaining good attendance.

City Manager (Original Signed by DD)



CITY OF
FORT SASKATCHEWAN
ALBERTA

Appendix 1: Employee Attendance Record for the year 20XX

Employee Name: _____

Date of Hire: _____

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Vacation	Sick	Other				
January																																						
February																																						
March																																						
April																																						
May																																						
June																																						
July																																						
August																																						
September																																						
October																																						
November																																						
December																																						
Total																																						

V= Vacation Day

S= Sick Day

O= Other



Appendix 3: Suggestions for Attendance Interviews

Supervisors need to be well-prepared in order to encourage a successful interview. In order to be well-prepared, the supervisor should:

- Think about what is intended to be accomplished (e.g., raise employee awareness of employer concerns, help understand the cause of absences, identify solutions, etc.);
- Review the employee's file and past attendance record, identify similar problems in the past, reasons, and action taken to resolve the problems;
- Develop an appropriate approach and a number of alternatives;
- Seek advice from General Managers and/or human resources staff on key points to address during the interview;
- Set a mutually suitable time;
- Allow enough time for discussion;
- Organize all the facts and information well in advance of the interview;
- Discuss the attendance concern, not other issues;
- Plan for taking notes about the interview;

In any meeting with an employee to address an attendance issue, the interview tone and setting are extremely important to the success of the meeting. It is important that the supervisor conducts the meeting in a respectful manner and in a tone that shows genuine concern. A tactful presentation of the issue by the supervisor and a request for improvement will encourage a positive employee response and help to establish a cooperative relationship. Keep in mind that the purpose of these meetings is to raise the employee's awareness of the attendance problem, inform them that the employer is concerned, identify solutions and encourage improvement.

To ensure a well-conducted interview:

Points to Make

- Have a copy of the employee's attendance record to review with them;
- Emphasize the City's need and desire for every employee to be at work when scheduled;
- Identify how absences affect the department (morale of fellow employees, effectiveness and productivity of work group, quality of service provided);
- Stress the requirement for improvement and clearly define expectations;
- Inform the employee that their attendance will continue to be monitored;
- Remind the employee that the Employee Assistance Program is available to them;
- Emphasize future improvement rather than negative issues from the past;

Tone to take

- Meet in a suitable location (e.g. privacy);
- Ensure confidentiality;
- Show respect for the individual;
- Listen carefully, put the employee at ease (the purpose of the interview is to find a solution, not discourage the employee);
- Observe non-verbal communication signals and body movements;
- Use a tone of voice that demonstrates concern rather than anger or discipline;
- Control voice volume;
- Recognize that the choice of spoken words will affect the outcome of the meeting;
- Allow the employee the opportunity to comment;

Be sure to document the meeting.

Most attendance issues can be resolved if the situation is handled properly. Remember, unless there is evidence to the contrary, the supervisor always assumes that an absence is one of innocent or non-culpable absenteeism and therefore, is not subject to disciplinary action.

Suggested Answers to Questions Frequently Asked During Attendance Interviews

Q. The attendance of others is much worse than mine. Why have I been singled out for an interview when others who have worse attendance than mine have not been talked to?

A. This meeting has been arranged to discuss your attendance. It would not be appropriate to discuss another individual's attendance record in this meeting.

Q. I have medical certificates for every one of the days you mentioned. Don't you realize that I was sick on each one of those days?

A. Yes, I realize you were sick on those days. I do not believe you have been abusing sick leave, if I did, I would be considering a disciplinary process. I am, however, concerned that you are unable to be at work on a regular basis and that your absences have resulted in unsatisfactory attendance. Good attendance is a requirement of your position. We are entitled to expect a reasonable level of attendance from you. Your absences create staffing problems and increase workload for other staff. I would like to be able to provide you with support or resources that would help you with this problem. If there is a medical problem, it will benefit all to ensure that you seek advice and resources to remedy the situation. If you have a medical condition that may require accommodation, I can refer you to someone within Human Resources that will be able to discuss the specifics of what you require and what we can accommodate.

Q. How long will you be monitoring my attendance?

A. I monitor all my employees' attendance on an ongoing basis. In addition, as a result of your attendance record, you will remain in the attendance management program until you maintain an acceptable attendance record for 12 continuous months.

Q. What if I don't want to provide the medical evidence regarding my condition?

A. That certainly is your decision to make, you are under no obligation to provide us with any medical information however in the absence of any information that supports your medical condition, we will have to determine the likelihood of your ongoing employment with only your poor work record as reference. We are not required to accommodate your employment until you have disclosed the necessary information and continue to keep the employer informed of any changes.

Appendix 4: Sample Employee Attendance Letters

Improvement Letter

DATE

Employee Name

Department

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear:

I am writing to confirm our meeting held on DATE.

In that meeting we reviewed your attendance record and found that some improvements were required. You will recall that you were also advised that your attendance record would continue to be monitored closely and reviewed further in three months.

Assessment of your attendance for the period X to Y reveals you recorded (no/very few) sick leave absences during this period. I want to commend you for the effort you have made and the resulting improvement in your attendance.

While your attendance record will continue to be monitored on a regular basis, your improvement indicates a positive resolve to our plan to improve your attendance in the months to come.

Keep up the good work!

Yours truly,

Supervisor

cc: General Manager
Human Resources

One Year Sustained Improvement

DATE

Employee Name

Department

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear:

I am writing to confirm our meeting held on DATE.

A review of your attendance record indicates that you drew X days of sick leave (year), X days in (year) and X days so far in (year).

Your record for the past 12 months reveals that your attendance has improved significantly and you have been able to minimize your absences for an extended period of time. We are very pleased and would like to recognize your efforts and acknowledge this improvement.

Recognizing that you have met your attendance targets, no further meetings will be required as long as an acceptable attendance record is maintained.

Thank you again for your efforts and diligence in improving your attendance.

Yours truly,

Supervisor

cc: General Manager
Human Resources

Relapse Letter

DATE

Employee Name

Department

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear:

I am writing to confirm our meeting held on DATE.

In a letter dated X, following an initial three-month review of your attendance, I noted that your attendance record had improved and acknowledged your efforts.

However, the Department is concerned about your frequent use of sick leave during the current review period. A review of your record for the period X to Y reveals that you have drawn an additional X days of sick leave. A copy of your most recent attendance record is attached.

While the validity of your use of sick leave is not being questioned, the efficient operation of the Department depends on good attendance. Unscheduled absences reduce the Department's ability to plan, organize, and carry out its activities. Continual absences undermine employee reliability and may result in increased staffing and overtime costs.

Although you have been given an opportunity to improve your attendance, it appears that you have not maintained your initial improvement. Accordingly, your attendance record will again be monitored closely over the next three months and immediate and significant improvement is required. A meeting will be scheduled with you at that time to discuss your progress.

I would also like to take the opportunity to remind you again that if you are experiencing personal difficulties which you feel may be affecting your attendance, the City of Fort Saskatchewan has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is a voluntary, confidential counseling service for employees and their families and can be reached at 780-992-6267.

Yours truly,

Supervisor

Attachment

Supervisor

cc: General Manager
Human Resources

Stage 1 Concern

DATE

Employee Name

Department

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear:

I am writing to confirm our meeting held on DATE.

A review of your attendance record for the period X to Y indicated you have utilized a significant amount of sick leave.

Your record indicates you were absent for X days in (year), X days in (year) and X days so far this year (please see attached copies of your attendance record). While the validity of your use of sick leave is not being questioned and we sympathize with your apparent need for frequent use of sick leave, the department must insist upon regular attendance. Frequent absences hinder the planning, organization and completion of work. Significant absences such as yours also place unwelcome stress on co-workers and may result in increased workload, deterioration in the quality of service and overtime costs incurred.

Your use of sick leave over the past X years/months is above the City of Fort Saskatchewan's average of 6 days. This is unacceptable and immediate and significant improvement in your attendance is required. Your attendance record will be monitored closely and reviewed again for improvement in three months time.

The City is willing to provide you with whatever assistance is required in order to maintain your attendance at an acceptable level. If you are experiencing personal difficulties, which you feel may be affecting your attendance; we recommend you contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP service can be reached at 780-992-6267.

Yours truly,

Supervisor

Attachment

cc: General Manager
Human Resources

Stage 2 Concern

DATE

Employee Name

Department

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear:

I am writing to confirm our meeting held on DATE.

In this letter dated (*XXXX-Stage 1 Concern Letter*), you were advised that your attendance record was unacceptable and that an immediate and significant improvement was required. You were further advised that your attendance would be monitored closely and reviewed in three months time.

A review of your attendance for the period X to Y reveals that you drew an additional X days of sick leave (please see the attached copy of your most recent attendance record).

While the validity of your use of sick leave is not being questioned, as previously noted, the efficient operation of the Department depends on good attendance. Unscheduled absences reduce the Department's ability to plan, organize and carry out its activities. Continual absences undermine employee reliability and may result in increased staffing or overtime costs.

Although you have been given an opportunity to improve your attendance, significant improvement has not materialized. While we sympathize with your situation, the Employer cannot accommodate ongoing absences without information to substantiate your need for accommodation. Accordingly, your attendance record will again be monitored closely over the next three months and immediate and significant improvement is required. A meeting will be scheduled with you at the end of the three month period to discuss your progress.

I would also like to take the opportunity to remind you again that if you are experiencing personal difficulties which you feel may be affecting your attendance, the City has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is a voluntary, confidential counseling service for employees and their families). The EAP service can be reached at 780-992-6267.

Yours truly,

Supervisor

Attachment

cc: General Manager
Human Resources

Stage 3 Concern

DATE

Employee Name

Department

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear:

I am writing to confirm our meeting held on DATE.

Through letters dated (Stage 1 Concern and Stage 2 Concern), you were advised your attendance was unacceptable. You were further advised that an immediate and significant improvement was required and that your attendance would be reviewed in three months time.

A review of your attendance record from X to Y reveals that you have drawn an additional X days of sick leave (please see attached copy of your most recent attendance record). Although you have been given a number of opportunities to improve, and despite your commitment to maintain an acceptable level of attendance following the above-noted meetings, no significant change has occurred. While we sympathize with your situation the employer cannot accommodate ongoing absences without information to substantiate your need for accommodation.

Your attendance record indicates that you have claimed ___ sick days so far this year. (Refer to prior years if they support your case) These ongoing absences place undue strain on staff and operations in general and the Employer cannot permit this to continue. I must emphasize that your regular attendance at work is a requirement of your position.

(Refer again to the EAP program where appropriate)

Your attendance will again be monitored closely over the next three months. If immediate and significant improvement is not evident at the end of the period, the Department will be forced to take further action. A meeting will be scheduled with you at that time to discuss your progress.

Yours truly,

Supervisor

Attachment

cc: General Manager
Human Resources

Stage 4 Concern

DATE

Employee Name

Department

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear:

The Employer has written and met with you on a number of occasions (X times) regarding your frequent use of sick leave. On each occasion, you have been advised that, while you have otherwise been a valued member of the organization, your attendance record has been unsatisfactory. You were further told your frequent absences were having an adverse effect on the Department's ability to carry out its work, and of our expectation for immediate and significant improvement. You were also informed that your attendance would be monitored on an ongoing basis.

A review of your attendance for the period X to Y indicates you have drawn an additional ___ days of sick leave. Although you have been given a number of opportunities to improve over the past ___ years/months, your attendance continues to be substantially below acceptable levels. We view this as a serious matter, which has a significant negative impact on operations.

From our assessment, regular attendance would appear impossible in the future. That being the case, I must ask you to provide medical documentation indicating whether the Employer can expect regular and consistent attendance from you. I have enclosed a letter for you to take to your doctor. Please return this information in a sealed envelope to the Human Resources Department prior to "date of meeting".

You are required to attend a meeting on (date) at ___ a.m./p.m. At that meeting we will discuss your ability to maintain regular attendance in the future and expectations for your attendance. If you choose not to provide the requested medical information, as specified above, we may not have full information regarding your medical status and will be forced to rely on your attendance history to determine whether to terminate your employment. Please bring along a union representative to attend this meeting with you.

(Refer again to EAP if appropriate)

Yours Truly

Supervisor

Attachment

Cc: General Manager
Human Resources
CUPE Local 30

Follow-up to Stage 4 Meeting

DATE

Employee Name

Department

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear:

On DATE, we met to discuss our expectations of your attendance in light of the information you have provided from your doctor.

By letters dated X, Y, and Z, you were advised that your attendance was unacceptable. You were further advised that an immediate and significant improvement was required or the City of Fort Saskatchewan Employer would be forced to take further action. On DATE, you were asked to provide medical information to determine your ability to attend work on a regular and consistent basis.

We were advised, based on the medical information provided, that you do not have a medical condition which would prevent you from performing your duties or from attending work on a regular and consistent basis.

Your attendance record indicates that you have used ___ sick days in (year), ___ sick days in (year), ___ sick days in (year) and ___ sick days so far this year. This is well-above the City's acceptable standard and the Employer cannot continue to accept this level of attendance. However, we will once again give you an opportunity to meet your attendance expectations. Your attendance will continue to be closely monitored at three month intervals. If at the end of any review period within the next 12 months you have not maintained an acceptable attendance level, the Employer will consider terminating your employment. We will meet with you again in three months to review your progress.

You have now been clearly advised that continued, excessive absenteeism could result in the termination of your employment. We sincerely hope that you are able to use this opportunity to demonstrate your ability to attend work on a consistent and regular basis.

If I can offer any assistance towards this goal, please let me know. I can be reached at _____. If you wish to utilize the confidential support services of the Employee Assistance Program, they can be reached at 780-992-6267.

Yours truly,

Supervisor

Cc: General Manager
Human Resources
CUPE Local 30

Termination Innocent Absenteeism

DATE

Employee Name

Department

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear:

Re: Termination of Employment

Note:

This letter is only drafted as a last resort to the attendance management program, as the goal of the program is to inform employees of attendance problems and to work towards a resolution. Reaching this stage means that it has been determined that the employment relationship has broken down and there is no reasonable prospect for acceptable attendance in the foreseeable future.

Should an employee reach this stage, the supervisor and Human Resources will work closely to review the employee's progress through the program and to discuss the termination process.



Appendix 5: Corrective Action for Culpable Absenteeism

Some absences clearly warrant a disciplinary response. If the employee's unacceptable attendance is clearly within the employee's control (i.e. the employee chooses to be absent without permission), it is appropriate for the Supervisor to respond with disciplinary measures in a manner specified within Policy or the Collective Agreement. Instances of culpable absenteeism include situations where the employee:

- Gives a false reason for the absence
- Offers no explanation for an absence
- Does not provide a doctor's certificate when required
- Is excessively late

Such absences may be deliberate violations of the employment agreement or they may be situations of poor employee judgment. Appropriate action by the Supervisor involves a response in which discipline is progressively increased for each related infraction until the behavior is corrected or the employee has been discharged. One thing to note, in the event of a serious offense, (e.g., an absence without leave for a lengthy period), strict adherence to the progressive discipline model is inappropriate and more serious disciplinary action up to and including discharge may be warranted at the first offence. The nature and frequency of the offence must be taken into consideration when determining the discipline issued. Some offences will require more serious disciplinary action than others. These decisions must be made in consultation with your Supervisor, Human Resources and in some situations the City Manager.

Progressive discipline is meant to be corrective and therefore a first offence is usually treated less seriously than subsequent offences. If after an early discipline, an employee commits a related offence within a reasonable period after the previous discipline, the process is normally moved to the next disciplinary stage. Of course, at any stage of the process a satisfactory resolution may be achieved and, in that event, the disciplinary response process will conclude.

Stages of corrective progressive disciplinary action response involve five main steps, which normally progress as follows:

- A verbal warning
- Written warning
- Suspension
- Discipline
- Discharge

The specifics of the circumstance will dictate whether it is appropriate to repeat a step rather than proceed to the next.

When an employee's absence is deemed to be culpable, the Supervisor should meet with the General Manager and Human Resources to determine the appropriate course of action.