

## **CHECKLIST FOR HANDLING REPORT-OFFS/CALL-INS AND FOR OBTAINING REPLACEMENTS**

- \_\_\_ If the report-off is by telephone, the supervisor should request to speak directly to the employee.
- \_\_\_ If the employee is unavailable, the supervisor should ask the caller where and when the employee may be reached, and the supervisor should decide whether or not to attempt to contact the employee.
- \_\_\_ Obtain the identity of the caller and ask the location and phone number from which the call-in is being made.
- \_\_\_ Carefully note if the call is to "notify" or to "request," and remember to treat requests for time off by phone according to the same criteria as requests in person. If in doubt as to the purpose of the call, ask the employee, "Is this a request for time off or a notification of absence?"
- \_\_\_ If the call is for notification, ask when the employee anticipates he/she will return and remind the employee of proper call back or report back procedures, including the requirement for the employee to report in person to the supervisor upon the employee's return to work.
- \_\_\_ If the call is for an absence request, make absolutely certain to determine the exact dates and shifts which the employee is discussing. Do not leave this "open-ended."
- \_\_\_ Review the employee's schedule with the employee.
- \_\_\_ Tell the employee when he/she is expected to re-notify or re-contact the company.
- \_\_\_ Remember, notification of absence within Agreement provisions does not guarantee excused absence status for the absence, but merely relieves the employee of possible disciplinary action for failure to properly notify. Do not confuse the two areas.
- \_\_\_ The final determination as to whether the absence/lateness is assigned an excused or unexcused status should be made only after the supervisor meets face to face with the employee, preferably as soon as the employee returns to work.
- \_\_\_ Ask specifically, "What is the reason for the absence, report-off?", and do not accept such general answers as "sick" or "out of town" without attempting to obtain more information.
- \_\_\_ Always refer to the OVERTIME CALL-OUT PROCEDURE CHECKLIST and the OVERTIME ROSTER if the employee reporting off is to be replaced for overtime work.
- \_\_\_ Do not proceed hastily when taking report-offs or call-ins.
- \_\_\_ If the employee refers to illness during the report-off, the supervisor should at that time inform the employee if doctor verification will be required. The supervisor should inform the employee that the doctor verification note should contain the following information:
  - 1) name and signature of doctor,      4) statement of physical limitations,
  - 2) date of doctor visit,                5) medication prescribed, if any.
  - 3) diagnosis,
- \_\_\_ The supervisor should inform the employee that the supervisor in conjunction with the company physician or medical department will make the ultimate determination as to whether or not the employee will be permitted to work. The supervisor should make it clear that such decision is the responsibility of the employer, not the employee's physician.

**NOTE:** The supervisor and the Medical Department have the responsibility and authority to determine whether or not the employee's condition or extent of disability would be sufficient to excuse the employee from his or her job performance obligation. The supervisor may find it appropriate to request specific information on a doctor's note, such as the extent or nature of the employee's disability as a result of the alleged illness. The supervisor or Medical Department should then decide (based upon the doctor's diagnosis or prognosis of extent of injury/incapacity) whether or not the employee is capable of performing the job. Job performance proficiency decisions should not be the employee's doctor's decision.

- \_\_\_ The supervisor should always perform an in-person, private return-to-work interview with the employee; and if disciplinary action is anticipated, a steward should be present during the interview.
- \_\_\_ During the return-to-work contact or interview, the supervisor should review the report-off with the employee by saying: "I would like for you to review this report-off, as it will be placed in your records, and I want to be certain it is accurate."
- \_\_\_ When talking to the employee face to face, the supervisor should remind the employee of:
  - 1) the company's attendance policy, and the company's position on attendance,
  - 2) the employee's present attendance/disciplinary track record.

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**REMEMBER:** The return to work interview is one of the most important attendance improvement tools available to the supervisor. In all discussions regarding attendance problems, the supervisor should inform the employee that attendance is a job performance factor which significantly affects promotion.

### **PERSONAL BUSINESS/ABSENCES/WORK REFUSAL**

- Problems for supervisors often occur when an employee is either absent or declines to work required overtime for reasons stated simply as "personal" or "personal business," or when employees refuse to do assigned work for "personal reasons."
- Such absences often make scheduling, replacement, and meeting departmental objectives very difficult. Arbitrators are likely to uphold the right of management, especially the employee's immediate supervisor, to request to know the general nature of the reason the employee desires to be granted "personal business" leaves or absences, without prying or infringing on the employee's privacy. The key words are "general nature." Discussions should be in private, and confidentiality should be maintained.
- The supervisor should, by all means, advise the employee that accuracy and honesty are highly encouraged and appreciated in discussing the actual reasons an employee is requesting personal leave, and that both accuracy and honesty are part of the "good faith" obligation shared by all parties to the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- The supervisor should display sincerity, genuine concern, understanding, and a cooperative attitude toward the employee when discussing the matter; and the employee should be reassured that confidentiality will be maintained. Likewise, the supervisor should advise the employee that falsification of reasons for absence will be cause for disciplinary action.
- The supervisor is justified in asking the employee requesting the time off if there is any other time that the employee could take care of the "personal business." Also, the supervisor should determine through questioning if the employee believes additional time beyond that under consideration would be required in order to deal with the same personal business, and if so, what would the frequency, duration, or amount be expected to ultimately represent.
- Before making any decision, the supervisor should consider the employee's previous work and attendance record, the provisions of the Agreement, prevailing company rules and policies, and whether the day or time requested is before, after, or during a scheduled vacation period, holiday, etc. Peculiarities or coincidences of such requested times in line with past absences for the same employee should be considered and discussed with the employee.
- It is not harassment to request an employee to "write out and sign" a brief explanation of the reason for the requested leave or absence before granting an excused or an unexcused status. State that the request for the brief, confidential written explanation is in the best interest of the employee, and that the note will be placed in the employee's packet to eliminate any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the reasons in the future. If the employee refuses and offers no other satisfactory explanation, the supervisor should remind the employee that it is the supervisor's duty to determine the legitimacy of each such request, and that he/she is a fair and reasonable person but needs sufficient facts to make a reasonable, prudent decision.
- If no reasonable explanation is provided, the supervisor is justified in denying the request, if the personnel and operating and production conditions of the present situation so demand.
- If the employee disagrees with the supervisor's decision, the employee may grieve according to the grievance procedure in the Agreement.
- The supervisor may find it appropriate to remind the employee of the availability of the Employee Assistance Program to assist employees with personal problems which may be necessitating requests for leave.