



# **Department of Social Services'**

**2021**

**Employee**

**Attendance Policy**

**&**

**Guidelines**

## **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (DSS) ATTENDANCE POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

### **Policy**

This policy will standardize, revise, and replace existing Guidelines, Policies, and Frequently Asked Questions utilized by various divisions at the Department of Social Services.

The scope of the policy incorporates collective bargaining agreements, including, but not limited to, Maintenance and Service Unit (NP-2), AFSCME (NP-3), AFSCME (P-2), SEIU (P-4), Protective Services Employee Coalition (P-5), Administrative and Residual (P-5), and NEHCEU (1199).

Prevailing bargaining agreements will supersede policy where applicable.

### **Introduction**

Sick, Vacation and Personal Leave requests must be made in accordance with these guidelines and any other relevant requirements:

### **Definitions**

- **Absence.** An Absence is any time you are not at work during your scheduled hours, regardless of the reason. However, not all Absences reflect negatively on your record. Only the number of “Occasions of Absence” may.
- **Leave.** A leave is permitted for a fixed duration, with a certain date for return and requires approval.
- **Occasion of Absence.** An “Occasion of Absence” (or “Occasion”) is one or more unscheduled or unapproved continuous day(s) or partial day(s) of Absence.
- **Exceptions.** The following Absences will not be counted as an Occasion:
  - Approved Vacation Time
  - Personal Leave Time
  - Approved Compensatory Time/Holiday Compensatory Leave (T-Days)
  - Bereavement Leave (advance notification to your supervisor is required, when possible)
  - Jury Duty/Subpoenaed court appearances (court provided document and advance notification to your supervisor is required)

- Military Leave

### **Definitions (continued)**

- Workers' Compensation Time
  - Sick Appointment Time (SP), such as surgery or scheduled doctors' appointments.
  - Sick Family Time (up to ten (10) days per year, or as governed by the employee's Union Agreement) (advance notification to your supervisor is required, when possible)
  - Designated and documented leave under the State or Federal Family Medical Leave Acts (FMLA) or entitlements pursuant to the 2017 SEBAC Agreement.
- **Unscheduled.** Unscheduled means less than one (1) day notice to your direct supervisor. For each Unscheduled Absence you will be charged with an Occasion of Absence, unless the Absence is an exception from the definition of "Occasion."

If you do not notify your supervisor within a ½ hour after the beginning of a work shift (or at any time before the shift – when it is known that you will be unable to report for work) and are unable to provide a reasonable explanation, you will be charged with an Occasion of Absence and you will be charged with Unauthorized, Unpaid Leave (ULU) from your scheduled start time until the time you called in.

If you do not contact your supervisor at all to notify him/her that you will be absent for the day (a.k.a. "no call, no show"), you will be charged with an Occasion of Absence and with Unauthorized, Unpaid Leave (ULU) for the day. Progressive discipline may be initiated for repeat offenses. Five (5) or more consecutive days of Unauthorized, Unpaid Leave is considered an involuntary resignation not in good standing (a non-disciplinary separation) in accordance with C.G.S. 5-243-1a.

- **Tandem.** A tandem Occasion is an unscheduled absence immediately preceding or following a scheduled day(s) off.

### **Attendance: Employee Procedures for Reporting an Absence**

#### **Who Must Be Notified**

All employees shall report any absence to the immediate supervisor or management designee in accordance with Department or facility procedures.

Messages may not be left with secretarial staff, a receptionist, or co-workers unless the supervisor is unavailable.

If you are unable to call in, because of medical reasons, another family member may call in for you. When a request for sick leave is not personally made, the supervisor may contact you or the family member to determine if assistance is required and to determine whether the absence is likely to be of five (5) days or longer.

### **Information to be Reported**

A report of an Absence must include:

- The reason(s) for absence;
- The expected day or time of return; and
- Any other information which may impact the work environment during the employee's absence.

### **When to Report an Expected Absence**

An expected absence should be reported as far in advance as practical to ensure adequate work coverage. Vacation Leave and use of compensatory/holiday time shall be requested as far in advance as possible and is subject to agency operating needs.

### **Attendance: Supervisory Responsibilities**

#### **Review of Attendance Records**

The immediate supervisor or management designee shall review all attendance records on a quarterly basis.

The supervisor shall:

- Identify those employees whose attendance falls below the standards set within this guideline.
- Report to the appropriate manager any excessive occasions of absenteeism that occurs between review periods.

#### **Criteria for Review of Absences**

Managers and/or first-line supervisors will monitor Occasions of Absence taking into consideration the following:

- (1) The number of days taken;
- (2) The number of Occasions;
- (3) The pattern of Occasions (i.e., Tandem Occasions);
- (4) The employee's past record; and
- (5) The reasons for the Occasions.

The review will consider that:

- An absence of one day is recorded as one (1) Occasion
- An absence for any part of a day will be recorded as one (1) Occasion
- An absence for any number of consecutive working days will be recorded as one Occasion or one period of absence
- Patterns of sick leave are the use of sick leave in tandem with scheduled days off.

Guidelines established through collective bargaining will also be taken into account when considering action.

**Note regarding A&R/P-5 Members:** Pursuant to an arbitration award and related Stipulated Agreements, Administrative & Residual union employees (A&R/P-5) have certain important distinctions concerning sick leave use, including:

1. A&R employees may receive a Fair or Unsatisfactory rating in The “Dependability” category of their performance appraisal if:
  - a.) They use more than the contractually earned 15 sick days per year with frequent occasions, or
  - b.) They use less than 15 days but have a clearly identifiable pattern of usage (i.e., Mondays, Fridays, day before or after holiday, etc.), or
  - c.) They use less than 15 days but have repeated or extended occasions of unauthorized leave without pay.
2. If they use less than 15 sick days, and there is no identifiable pattern of usage, no unauthorized leave, A&R employees **cannot** receive a Fair or Unsatisfactory Service Rating in the “Dependability” category

### **Constructive Counseling**

An employee whose attendance falls below Department standards will be counseled constructively, and a program of expected improvement will be implemented.

Supervisors shall document and maintain supervisory notes of expectations for improvement.

### **Excessive Occasions of Absenteeism**

Excessive Occasions of absenteeism will have a bearing on the employee's work record. Following constructive counseling and progressive discipline, continued Occasions of absenteeism may be cause for the mandatory termination of an individual's employment with the Department.

Occasions of absenteeism will be recorded on the employee's service rating. Two (2) unsatisfactory ratings in attendance may be cause for dismissal.

Additionally, after consultation with **Human Resources**, an employee may be put on a Medical Certificate requirement, if permissible under the applicable bargaining unit contract. An employee will be notified, in writing, of such requirement.

### **Attendance: Agency Correction Action**

#### **When to Take Corrective Action**

In all situations, final judgment on a remedial course of action will not be made until all relevant information has been carefully evaluated and weighed in accordance with the criteria listed under supervisory responsibilities.

#### **Consultation with Human Resources**

The supervisor must consult with Human Resources before issuing any written notice of disciplinary action or unsatisfactory service rating.

#### **Agency Contact Information**

Any questions regarding the Department of Social Services Attendance Policy and Guidelines may be directed to Human Resources at (860) 424-5060.

The previous Frequently Asked Questions are no longer in effect.

## Stages of Corrective Actions

The Table below summarizes the stages of corrective action in accordance with the standards for review.

**Note:** This policy does not prevent DSS from taking separate disciplinary action against employees for other policy violations, including insubordination and fraudulent use of sick and other leave.

### STAGES OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TABLE

<b>Number of Occasions</b>	<b>Within This Time Period</b>	<b>Action Likely to be Taken</b>
3	3 months	Attendance record will be reviewed with employee to determine contributing problems and possible solutions.
5	6 months	Attendance record will be reviewed with employee to determine contributing problems and possible solutions.  This counseling session will be recorded in a Formal Counseling Letter, which will be maintained in the supervisory file.  Once an employee has reached this threshold, any additional occasions will be reviewed by Human Resources and may result in progressive disciplinary action.
9	12 months	Attendance record will be reviewed with employee to determine contributing problems and possible solutions.  This discussion will be documented and a copy will be maintained in employee's personnel file.  An "Unsatisfactory" performance appraisal may be given to employee for unsatisfactory attendance and dependability.  Employee will also be notified that receiving two "Unsatisfactory" performance appraisals in a row (for poor attendance or any other reason) is just cause for dismissal from State service.

## **QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES**

### **Attendance: Employee Responsibilities**

<b>Who Must Be Notified</b>	Immediate supervisor or management designee in accordance with Department or facility procedures.  .Employees may not leave a message. They must have a response from the supervisor or supervisor's designee.  Except for medical reasons, messages may not be left by family members.
<b>Information to be Reported</b>	A report of an absence must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The reasons for absence</li><li>▪ The expected day or time of return</li><li>▪ Any other information which may impact the work environment during the employee's absence.</li></ul>
<b>When to Report an Expected Absence</b>	As far in advance as practical to ensure adequate work coverage, but at least within ½ hour of the start of the shift.



## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORS

### Attendance: Supervisor Responsibilities

Tardiness	Review collective bargaining agreements for provisions regarding tardiness before taking any action.
Review of Attendance Records	<p>Review attendance records on a quarterly basis. (Records of attendance during an initial working test period require reviews at least at the third and sixth month performance appraisals.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Identify those employees whose attendance falls below Department standards, and</li><li>▪ Report to the appropriate manager any excessive occasions of absenteeism that occurs between review periods.</li></ul>
Criteria for Review of Absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Number of days taken</li><li>▪ Number of occasions</li><li>▪ Patterns of occasions</li><li>▪ Past record</li><li>▪ Reason(s) for occasion</li><li>▪ An absence of one day is recorded as one occasion</li><li>▪ An absence for any part of a day will be recorded as one occasion</li><li>▪ An absence for any number of consecutive working days will be recorded as one occasion or one period of absence</li><li>▪ Patterns of sick leave are the use of sick leave in tandem with scheduled days off.</li></ul>
Constructive Coaching/ Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Counsel an employee whose attendance falls below Department standards.</li><li>▪ Implement a program of expected improvement.</li><li>▪ Document and maintain supervisory notes of expectations for improvement.</li></ul>
Human Resources Consultation	Consult with Human Resources before issuing any written notice of disciplinary action or an unsatisfactory service rating.



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
ATTENDANCE POLICY 2021  
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT**

I have received a copy the Department of Social Services' Attendance Policy and hereby acknowledge that I have read the policy and understand that I am responsible for adhering to this policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please print or type name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature