

Human Resources Policy 05 – Managing Health Related Absences

Last updated: April 12, 2016

This policy statement applies to all organizations within the BC Public Service and covers the management of injured or ill employees, including case management planning, return to work strategies, and workplace accommodations. The policy statement supports the core policy objective of ensuring “the public service promotes a safe and healthy workplace that supports the well-being of employees.”

Organizations will create and maintain an operational environment that promotes employee safety and health, and need to plan, operate, and act with employee safety and health in mind. For more information on occupational safety and health programs, see [HR Policy 04 – Occupational Safety and Health](#).

A healthy workforce is imperative to the operational effectiveness of organizations. It is in the mutual interest of the organization and employees to avoid or minimize workplace absences.

In the event of an absence, the goal is to return the employee to productive work in a safe, timely, and sustainable manner. To support this goal, management will work in cooperation with the BC Public Service Agency and use the integrated disability case management program.

When an injury does occur or an employee gets ill or has health problems, organizations will offer modified duties and workplace accommodations, including work assignments within alternative work units and/or locations that effectively avoid or minimize the duration of an employee’s absence.

Organizations are expected to communicate attendance expectations to employees, and take appropriate action if it becomes an issue.

Integrated Disability Case Management Program

The BC Public Service Agency assists organizations in helping employees return to work through its integrated disability case management program. As part of the program, disability case management teams are deployed early in the process to work with

employees and managers to develop comprehensive case management plans and return to work strategies.

Organizations will support the program and assist disability case management teams in the planning and the execution of return to work strategies. Supervisors will work directly with the disability case management teams on complex cases involving their employees.

They will actively assist with the development and support of case management plans, and communicate regularly with their employees.

Employees are expected to notify their supervisor immediately of any health-related absence, and as soon as possible provide their supervisor with the expected date they will be returning to work.

Employees are expected to provide any required information, and actively participate in developing and implementing return to work strategies, case management plans, and rehabilitation activities.

Accident or Injury Claims

All accidents or injuries sustained while on the job must be reported immediately to WorkSafeBC. For more information on accident/incident reporting, see [HR Policy 04 – Occupational Safety and Health](#).

Organizations will develop and maintain an effective process for managing workers' compensation claims that is consistent with the integrated disability case management program.

Organizations will keep accurate and timely records of all accidents, injuries, and illnesses.

Organizations will report any doubtful or questionable workers' compensation claims to the BC Public Service Agency. The Agency is solely responsible for representing the employer in any appeal proceedings with WorkSafeBC, pursuing opportunities for relief of cost under the 2 provisions of the [Workers Compensation Act](#) and recovering the organization's subrogated interest for short and long-term disability benefits paid.

Workplace Accommodations

Under the [Human Rights Code](#), organizations may have a duty to try to accommodate the limitations and restrictions of employees by modifying their job duties or making changes in the workplace. In some cases, this may require arranging for suitable employment within other BC Public Service organizations.

Supervisors will work closely with employees to design and implement effective accommodations, or to find suitable alternative employment until the employee is able to return to their original job.

Employees are expected to participate in designing effective accommodations, and to take reasonable alternative employment assignments when they are offered. For more information on the duty to accommodate, see the [Managers' Guide to Reasonable Accommodation](#).