

Absence Due to Non-Occupational Illness/ Injury

When an employee is **absent due to non-occupational illness/injury**, sick leave is payable when there is identifiable, verifiable medical evidence. Acceptable medical must be provided after an absence of five (5) working days in order to protect your income continuance benefit, part of which is provided through an external insurance carrier; however, the manager may require these forms be completed for any absence. Acceptable medical should indicate first day absent, nature of condition, expected return to work date and any limitations or restrictions.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the **employee** to actively engage in the return to work process:

- Be available for phone calls/meeting requests by the Disability Advisor or Occupational Health Nurse (unless alternative arrangements have been made). Failure to be available may result in disruption of sick leave benefits
- Maintain regular contact with his/her manager/supervisor regarding the possible return to work date which may include modified work and/or other accommodations, unless otherwise arranged by the Disability Advisor
- Inform his/her doctor that early and safe return to work opportunities are available to accommodate your functional abilities
- Provide the Disability Advisor or Occupational Health Nurse with identifiable/verifiable **medical*** information supporting absence from work (medical should indicate first day absent, nature of condition, expected return to work date and any limitations or restrictions). Forms are located at: http://www.hr.uwaterloo.ca/forms/phys_release.pdf
- Provide the Disability Advisor or Occupational Health Nurse (as soon as possible) with medical information on limitations/capabilities
- Contribute to the development of a suitable Return to Work (RTW) plan
- Participate in discussions leading to a safe, early return to work
- Report any concerns with his/her return to work to your supervisor and Disability Advisor or Occupational Health
- Consult with the available Waterloo Resources as needed

It is the responsibility of the **supervisor/manager/department head** to:

- Provide a safe work environment
- Notify Disability Advisor of absences which are 5 days or longer or pattern absences
- Maintain regular contact with the Disability Advisor
- Actively engage in the return to work process as explained by the Disability Advisor
- Forward any medical forms received directly to the Disability Advisor
- Maintain the confidentiality of any **medical*** information which is shared by the employee
- Understand and respect the employee's right to not share medical information with manager/department head
- Participate in discussions leading to a safe, early return to work
- Identify transitional work options that could assist with the Return to Work plan

- Facilitate appropriate accommodation where necessary which may include modified work and other accommodations (In most cases these accommodations will be temporary).
- Document the expectation of duties/hours in the return to work
- Facilitate and promote a supportive return to work environment including the employee's co-workers. Monitor the progress of the employee, meet with him/her regularly to ensure the return to work plan is progressing towards a successful, safe return.
- Consult with the available Waterloo Resources as needed

It is the responsibility of the **Disability Advisor** to:

- Maintain regular contact with the employee and the manager regarding receipt of medical, progress and possible return to work date
- Maintain the confidentiality of the employee's **medical*** information
- Ensure the employee is aware of sick leave/LTD benefits. In some cases within the early weeks of absence, Early Referral Forms from our carrier Great West Life Assurance Company may be sent to the employee for completion. These must be returned in a timely manner
- Ensure the employee is provided with the LTD application forms if required
- Coordinate a safe, early return to work by working with the employee, manager/supervisor and Occupational Health Nurse
- Facilitate/promote/support the return of the employee to his/her department with any required accommodation of duties/hours.

It is the responsibility of the **Occupational Health Nurse** to:

- Maintain regular contact with the employee regarding his/her health condition
- Maintain the confidentiality of the employee's **medical*** information
- Manage the employee's **medical*** documentation/file including clarifying health information through the employee's health care providers
- Refer the employee to Waterloo Resources as needed and recommend appropriate off campus community resources
- Evaluate, in consultation with the employee's health care providers, when necessary, the employee's readiness to return to work
- Plan and implement nursing interventions to help minimize effects of injury, illness or disability
- Advise Human Resources if subsequent investigation does not find the delayed return to work and /or lack of communication is justified; this may include departmental decision to discipline, withhold pay and/or possible dismissal.

NOTE:

In some situations, a performance issue may be present. In these situations the manager is expected to address performance issues with the employee using progressive, corrective actions in a timely manner. This action would include verbal counseling, corrective warning letters and offering help such as providing accommodation – as long as improvement is occurring.

*** The University of Waterloo adheres to PHIPA (Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004) and all other relevant legislation including the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 and Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990. All medical information provided is confidential. The employee is not obligated to share medical information with his/her manager/department head. However the employee must provide appropriate medical to the Occupational Health Nurse, Health Services and/or Disability Advisor, Human Resources in order to support payment of sick leave and application for long-term disability.**