

Absence Policy & Procedure



1. PURPOSE

The Synaco Group is committed to the provision of quality services and recognises that it is the capability, knowledge and professionalism of its people, which drive the success of the business. Absence, therefore, by any employee has a direct effect on the success of the Synaco Group's business performance, company image and on the wellbeing of other colleagues. The company aims to secure the attendance of all employees throughout the working week, however, it recognises that a certain level of absence may be incurred for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, injury and/or sickness absence and absence related to family leave. It is the company's policy to offer security of employment during such periods, subject to operational requirements and where stipulated within the terms and conditions of employment, to provide financial support by the provision of sick pay as stated in the Fair Work Act 2009.

2. SCOPE

The procedure applies to all employees at host employer sites and all employees of the Synaco Group which includes Synaco Global Recruitment, Synaco Resources Pty Ltd and at all locations.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Company Director to ensure that all personnel are made aware of this policy and procedure.
- 3.2 All managers must ensure they manage absence in line with this policy and procedure.
- 3.3 Employees who are absent from work must conform to this policy and procedure.

4. RELATED DOCUMENTATION

100-0002 – Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
100-0004 – Leave Policy & Procedure
100-0006 – Maternity Policy & Procedure
100-0036 – Performance Management Policy & Procedure
300-0003 – Cyclone Policy & Procedure

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Notifying your Manager

If you are absent from work for any reason without prior agreement you must contact the Company by telephone and speak to your manager at the earliest opportunity possible, but no later than 1 hour after your normal start time. E-mail and text message contact is unacceptable. You should provide your line manager with details of the nature of your illness and, if the illness is of a minor nature, indicate when you think you that you will be fit

to return to work. If there is a genuine reason why you are physically unable to telephone yourself, you must ask someone else to do this on your behalf. At the earliest opportunity that you are physically able to telephone yourself, you must contact your manager to update them on your circumstances.

You (or someone on your behalf if you are physically unable to do so), must inform your manager as soon as possible of any change in the date of your anticipated return to work. Contacting your manager by text message or e-mail is also unacceptable, save other than in exceptional circumstances. If you have been diagnosed as having contracted an infectious or contagious disease, such as measles or chicken pox, or a pandemic virus, you must inform your manager as soon as possible. If you have been suffering from an infectious or contagious disease such as measles or chicken pox, or a pandemic virus, you must not report for work until you are medically fit to do so.

For an absence of seven consecutive days (including weekends) or less, you are required to telephone your manager on a daily basis in accordance with the reporting procedure as set out above. However, the Company may relax this requirement in exceptional circumstances, for example, in the case of a pandemic virus affecting a large percentage of the Company's employees. You will be advised about any modified sickness absence reporting requirements at the appropriate time. Should your sickness absence be for a period of seven calendar days (including weekends), you are required, as an absolute minimum, to contact your manager on a weekly basis in order to provide an update on your illness or injury.

The Company reserves the right to send an employee home if, for any reason, they appear to be unfit for work or appear to present a risk to themselves, the workplace, other staff members or third parties. These are precautionary measures designed to prevent the spread of disease in the workplace and/or further harm the employee or others. Under such circumstances, sick pay will be made in line with clause 5.2.3 of this policy.

On being fit to return to work, you must contact your manager and let them know as far in advance as possible of the proposed date of your return.

5.2 Periods of Absence Resulting from Sickness and/or Injury

5.2.1 Medical Certificates (Fit Notes)

Should your sickness absence be for a period in excess of two consecutive calendar days (including weekends), on the third day of your absence a medical certificate (fit note) signed by a doctor, must be provided to your manager. Thereafter, you must continue to send medical certificates at weekly intervals unless your medical certificate covers you for a longer period of absence. Your name must be clearly written on any medical certificates you send to the company. Failure to send the appropriate medical certificate will result in sick pay being withheld (if eligible as per the terms and conditions of your employment).

You must always provide medical certificates to cover an entire period of your sickness absence. The Company reserves the right to not allow you to return to work whilst you have a medical certificate stating you are not fit for work.

The Company reserves the right to request a medical certificate for any period of sickness absence even though this may be less than three calendar days.

Where a medical certificate indicates that you may be fit for work and the doctor has suggested ways of helping you back to work, such as a phased return to work, altered hours, amended duties or workplace adaptations, your manager will discuss the advice on the doctor's certificate with you and will consider any functional comments made by the doctor, and any other action that could help you return to work despite your illness. The various options will be discussed with you and if a return to work is possible, your manager will agree with you a return-to-work date, any temporary adaptations or adjustments that are to be made and for how long, and will set a date for review. If you disagree with the Company's proposals to support your return to work, you will be asked to confirm why you believe you cannot return to work despite your doctor's suggestions. The Company reserves the right to obtain further medical evidence, as necessary, such as a medical report. If the Company is not able to make any adaptations or adjustments to help you return to work, your manager will explain the reasons for this to you and will set a date for review. You may then use the doctor's certificate as if the doctor had advised "not fit for work".

5.2.2 Payment

5.2.2.1 Unless an appropriate medical certificate to cover the entire period of your sickness absence is provided, then payment of any sick pay will be withheld until such time when you have complied with the Company's requirements (exceptions to this will be made in cases of long term sickness absence whereby only receipt of an appropriate medical certificate is required to ensure payment of sick pay (if eligible) until such time that the employee returns to work).

5.2.2.2 All workers employed at a host employer site, on a casual contract, are not eligible for paid sick leave as stated in the Fair Work Act 2009. A medical certificate will still be required to ensure the employee is fit for work.

5.2.3 Ineligibility and Disqualification

You may either be ineligible for, or disqualified from, receiving sick pay if you:

- Wilfully conceal any medical conditions on joining us or in any way deceive us in respect of sickness;
- Render yourself unfit for work through wilfully contracted illness or injury;
- Behave in a manner likely to hinder your recovery;
- While absent, carry out work for which remuneration is, or would be, ordinarily payable;
- Fail to submit a valid medical certificate and any relevant details in accordance with these rules;

- Mislead us in any way whatsoever in an attempt to receive sick pay to which you are not properly entitled;
- Refuse to submit yourself for medical examination at the request of the Company;
- Are in receipt of a final written warning in respect of a Company Absence Management Procedure;
- Are considered to be abusing the scheme in any way.

If an employee abuses his or her eligibility for sickness pay/leave or the absence management system, for example giving false reasons for absence from work, this will be considered gross misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

5.2.4 Long Term or Repeated Sickness Absence

5.2.4.1 Home Visits

Where an employee has been absent from work for a period in excess for 8 weeks, we may visit these employees at their home or a mutually agreeable meeting place. The primary purpose of the home visit is to offer assistance and support to the employee, keeping the employee in touch with events in the workplace and maintaining team cohesiveness. Where appropriate, possible methods to assist a speedy return to work may be discussed, including the possibility of temporary alternative duties.

5.2.4.2 Incapability due to medical reasons

The Synaco Group accepts that on occasion there will be employees who, due to ill health, are unable to attend for extended periods or consistently as required. There is no wish to put pressure on those who are genuinely not fit to return to work. The Synaco Group does not consider it to be in its own or the employee's best interests to ignore indefinitely the issue of whether and, if so, under what circumstances the employee will return to work.

Where repeated or long-term absence(s) relating to an underlying medical reason are unlikely to show any improvement over a reasonable period, the Synaco Group will consider whether it is reasonable in all circumstances to continue the individual's employment. This will be done fairly and consistently with the guidance and support of the Company Director, by taking the following steps and considerations where appropriate:

- Discuss the matter with the employee;
- If appropriate, request a medical report/evidence from the employee's GP/Specialist;
- Consider when the employee is likely to be fully fit and able to return to his/her job;
- Consider when the employee is likely to return to his/her job with restrictions/adjustments;
- Consider whether the employee is fit enough to do any job, with or without restrictions/adjustments, and whether any appropriate job is available or likely to be available in the future;
- Discuss the matter with the employee once all the options are known.

The Synaco Group will always take advice from relevant medical practitioners, including the employee's GP/Specialist, where appropriate, about the type and range of work for which the employee is suitable. If a medical report is required, under the Privacy Act 1988, the employee has the right to:

- Withhold consent to the request for medical information;
- Have access to the report before it is given to the company;
- Withhold consent to the report being sent to the company;

Where an employee refuses to cooperate by providing written consent for a medical report or to attend a medical examination arranged by the company, any decision regarding the individual's employment will be based on the information available to the company at the time.

If an employee cannot continue to carry out his or her current role, a reasonable alternative role that meets the needs of the business will be considered. This search will take into account the capability of the employee, as determined by the nominated medical practitioner, location, travel requirements, hours of work, etc.

If an employee is not likely to be able to return to work or, due to an employee's specific restrictions, no suitable vacancy can be found within a reasonable period (3 months), the Synaco Group may consider termination of an employee's employment on the grounds of incapability.

The Performance Management procedure may be referred to in situation where an employee's capability is affected by ill health.

5.3 Annual Leave

Your individual leave entitlement is provided within the terms and conditions of your employment, as detailed within the contract of employment which you signed upon commencement of your employment. The Company Director will be able to provide confirmation of entitlement if required.

Employees must agree all holiday arrangements with their manager in advance. The Company will make every effort to meet individual requests within the constraints of the operational requirements of the business. In order to facilitate this process, employees should request and agree their holiday dates with their manager as early as possible. Employees are not permitted to take holidays without prior authorisation from their manager and unauthorised holidays may be classed as an unauthorised absence and will be unpaid.

5.3.1 Sickness during Annual Leave

Should you be incapacitated for work due to sickness or injury during any period of pre-booked annual leave (whether whole or in part), you must immediately notify the Company in accordance with its sickness absence reporting procedure set out in the sickness absence

policy. The Company will then reimburse the period of annual leave entitlement lost due to your incapacity and instead pay you sick pay for your period of sickness absence, provided you meet the qualifying conditions for payment, you fully comply with your obligations relating to sickness absence reporting and your absence is properly certified. You must therefore deliver to the Company a medical certificate covering the entire period of your incapacity for these provisions to apply.

5.3.2 Taking Annual Leave during Sickness Absence

Should you wish to utilise annual leave whilst absent from work due to sickness, a written request should be submitted to the Company Director in order that this request can be processed. It should be noted, that whilst payment for annual leave will be made, the absence will still be managed and recorded as sickness and all requirements outlined in this policy (specifically notification and certification) must be fully adhered to.

5.3.3 Annual Leave and Long Term Absence

Only statutory annual leave entitlement provided for in the Fair Work Act 2009 will accrue during a period of long-term sickness absence. Any additional contractual annual leave provided for in your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment that is over and above the statutory minimum annual leave entitlement will not accrue during a period of long-term sickness absence, except at the absolute discretion of the Company.

If you are absent due to long-term incapacity, you are encouraged to apply to take your accrued holiday entitlement before the end of the calendar year. However, in exceptional cases of long-term incapacity, you may be permitted to carry forward some or all of your accrued holiday entitlement into the next calendar year if either you are still off sick at the end of the calendar year or there is insufficient time remaining on your return to work in the calendar year to take your full accrued entitlement. The Company may also, at its absolute discretion, request you to take your accrued annual holiday entitlement during a period of long-term sickness absence before the end of the calendar year and the Company will not be obliged to give you any minimum period of notice to request you to take your annual leave in this case. However, if you do not wish to take annual leave during your sickness absence, you may notify the Company in writing that you decline the request, provided that you do so before the period of annual leave commences. At the end of the period of annual leave, if you do take it, you will revert back to long-term sickness absence unless you are medically fit to return to work.

5.4 Authorised Leave

There may be times when you require a period of unpaid absence from work. This should be agreed with your Manager in advance, and will be recorded on your attendance record as an authorised unpaid absence.

5.5 Unauthorised Leave

Unauthorised absence occurs when an employee is absent from his/her place of work, without prior agreement from their manager and/or the employee has failed to notify their manager of their non-attendance in the workplace. Unauthorised absence may also occur when certification arrangements, such as providing documentation relating to absence have not been carried out and/or a non-genuine period of sickness absence has been taken. Any period of unauthorised absence will be fully investigated and depending upon the circumstances may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, being taken against the employee. The period of unauthorised absence will not be paid.

5.6 Other Periods of Absence

5.6.1 Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Dependants/Compassionate Leave

Please see the Maternity Leave Policy (100-0006) and Paternity Leave Policy (100-0009) for full details.

5.6.2 Absence due to Adverse Weather Conditions

Employees are obliged to attend work in the terms of their contracts. This applies even in extreme weather conditions. Employees are therefore expected to make reasonable efforts to get in to work and an employee will be expected to report to their normal place of work in adverse weather conditions if:

- a) Public transport is operating between their home and workplace and/or;
- b) It would be reasonable, having regard to personal health and the distance involved, to walk to the normal workplace.

If an employee is unable to report to the normal workplace, they will be expected to contact their manager by telephone at the earliest opportunity, and, subject to (a) and/or (b) above may be required to report to an alternative workplace within the Synaco Group to undertake any alternative duties that may reasonably be required or if operationally viable, work from their home.

If an employee is unable to report to the normal place of work during adverse weather conditions due to the unavailability of public transport or it being unreasonable to walk and is unable, for the same reasons, to report to an alternative workplace and is unable to work from their home location, then they will have the option to take either unpaid leave or annual leave. The Synaco Group is not obliged to pay employees for periods of absence related to adverse weather conditions.

In the event of a Cyclone, please refer to the company's Cyclone Policy & Procedure (300-0003).

5.6.3 Jury Service

The Company recognises that from time to time, an employee may be asked to do jury service. Employees must advise their manager as soon as possible when they receive notice to attend jury duty and what expected period of leave is required to attend.

Full time and part time employees are entitled to 'make-up pay' for the first 10 days of jury selection, as per the Fair Work Act 2009. The Company may request evidence that the employee has either taken the necessary steps to receive jury duty pay and/or the total amount of jury duty pay received. If the employee cannot provide this evidence, they are not entitled to make-up pay.

5.7 Personal Welfare

Wherever possible, employees should make appointments for health and/or medical screening outside of their normal working hours. If this is not possible, an employee is eligible to have reasonable paid time off to attend:

- Antenatal appointments (evidence of the appointment may be required);
- Health screening clinics (e.g. cytology or breast screening);
- Rehabilitation, assessment or treatment in relation to a disability;
- Out-patient clinics;
- Doctor and dental appointments.

In all of these cases supporting evidence of appointment, such as appointment card, doctor's referral etc. may be required.

5.8 Absence Management

Every one of our employees is needed at work, and absence has an immediate adverse effect upon the department or group from which the employee is absent. Continuous absence can have a detrimental effect on productivity and company profitability and as such we have put in place measures to monitor absence levels/patterns across the organisation.

In addition to this, managers will carry out reviews of the individual absence records within their departments. This will be when an employee returns to work, or at any other time on an ongoing basis. Employees whose level of absence is deemed unacceptable will be subject to the company disciplinary procedure.