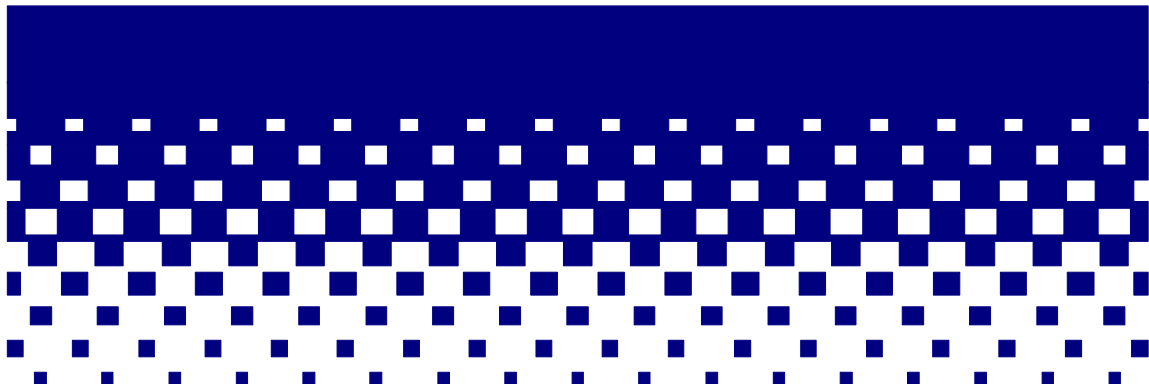


**ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT
&
ATTENDANCE SUPPORT AND
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**



Traditional Territories Acknowledgement

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority acknowledges that it provides health services in facilities located in Treaty One and Treaty Five territories, the homelands of the Métis Nation and the original lands of the Inuit people.

The WRHA respects and acknowledges harms and mistakes, and we dedicate ourselves to collaborate in partnership with First Nation, Métis and Inuit people in the spirit of reconciliation.

This educational material has been developed by WRHA Organization and Staff Development and is being made available through the resources of the WRHA Management & Leadership Development Program. Information has been drawn from a wide variety of sources, and then carefully compiled and adapted. Program facilitators' have also relied upon their own experiences, as a diverse group of health professionals and educators, in the creation of this material. It is specifically designed to support the continuing education needs of staff in the health care industry.

We are delighted to share these concepts and ideas with you. We hope that you will find the content to be helpful in your daily life. We respectfully request however, that you do not reproduce the materials without our permission.

Thank You

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BACKGROUND

This booklet begins with some general background information related to managing attendance including the importance of managing attendance, objectives, principles and the provision of relevant definitions.

Subsequent to this general background information, the booklet is split into the 2 components of managing attendance:

- 1) **Attendance Management:** Strategies and efforts focused at an entire staff group that encourage and support regular attendance – these strategies and efforts generally reflect good management practices that can be used for all staff regardless of site or sector; and
- 2) **Attendance Support and Assistance Program (ASAP):** Strategies and efforts focused on building a program specific to an individual staff person to assist that staff person in his/her efforts to **improve attendance** – this program is not disciplinary



ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

Why is Managing Attendance Important?

The WRHA and its integrated facilities are committed to providing excellence in health services. Well-trained and dedicated staff that fulfill their employment requirements through regular attendance are essential to the realization of this objective.

Managing attendance is important for a number of reasons:

- Regular attendance promotes higher staff morale, fair workload allocation, efficiency and a quality-service environment
- Causes of absence can be varied and complex and addressing the issues that result in absence through active management is critical to success
- Timely and effective supportive efforts focused on removing barriers to regular attendance not only improve attendance but are frequently linked to improved health, wellness and quality of work life for staff

Principles and Guidelines

The key elements of managing attendance are based on the following principles and guidelines:

- We hire dedicated staff that are committed to their jobs and the clients they serve
- All employees have a contractual obligation to attend work and will use sick leave only for its identified purpose.
- Staffing levels are based on the presence of staff as scheduled – client/patient care is affected by staff absence; additional workloads for co-workers result
- Without active management of attendance and communication of expectations for our staff, staff may not understand the importance of regular attendance
- Management of absence may reveal workplace variables that can be modified to improve attendance, staff wellness and improve productivity and patient care
- Management of absence may disclose opportunities to assist individual staff in their efforts to remove obstacles from their personal and/or work-lives that are acting to prevent regular attendance
- Absence from work results in substantial financial, operational and quality costs to the healthcare system
- Employees leaving our system due to an inability to improve attendance are a loss to the healthcare system
- The whole focus of managing attendance is on removing barriers to regular attendance and rewarding regular attendance
- Managing nonculpable absence is not a disciplinary process nor should it be geared toward termination of employment
- Each employee brings unique circumstances to the workplace and their attendance shall be looked upon individually and evaluated based on its own merits



- Efforts to manage attendance will only be successful if all parties fully engage and cooperate in the process
- Regular communication between managers and employees and setting of goals and expectations engages staff and enhances cooperation
- Managing attendance is the responsibility of all parties: the employer, the employee and the union
- Dealing with excess absence is an expectation for management personnel and failing to address excess absenteeism is not a positive message to staff especially to those who work hard at maintaining regular attendance
- On the occasion where regular attendance problems are unlikely to improve and where an appropriate level of intervention and counseling has occurred, non-disciplinary termination may occur due to the inability of the employee to fulfill his/her employment obligation
- Income protection should be viewed more as an insurance policy that is to be protected for situations when needed



MANAGERIAL TOOLS

Effective managers practice the following to encourage and motivate all staff to attend work regularly:

Management Practice	Description	Available Resources to Managers
Communicate Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no standard is communicated, staff will set their own standards • Develop and maintain dialogue with all staff on an individual basis to enable open discussion permitting issues to be addressed quickly and to enable offers of meaningful assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Services: www.wrha.mb.ca/osd or contact at 787-1582 Examples of available workshops are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance Management - Duty To Accommodate - Progressive Discipline - Reward & Recognition - Generational Differences • Peer Coach Program • EAP workshops (http://home.wrha.mb.ca/education/index.php)
Motivate Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions. Get to know your employees, and value their uniqueness. Help them to find meaning in the work they do every day. Find out what it is that is truly the cause of a person's inability to come to work and develop a plan with that individual to try and remove that barrier. • Make work meaningful – ensure that your staff understand how their individual efforts tie into the larger whole • Reward & Recognition – acknowledging staff for their efforts and dedication through kind words, encouragement is priceless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources Department • Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health Department • Library - Books on effective communications and crucial conversations (http://www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/units) • Manager Forums (offered at most Sites through HR) • StAR Wellness Library (http://home.wrha.mb.ca/star/) • Regular conversations or meetings with staff • Resources in Manual Appendix: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “How to Begin a Difficult Conversation” - Tips for Meeting With Employees Regarding Attendance” - Attendance Policy 20.50.060 - Template Letters for ASAP - ASAP Checklist
Consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently enforce expectations • Communication is only effective if acted upon and applied consistently 	

THE 3 R'S - ROLES, RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES

Any successful approach to attendance management requires an understanding of, and respect for, the roles, rights and responsibilities of employees, employers, occupational health and safety, human resources, and unions.

Employees

- Each employee has a contractual obligation to attend work regularly.
- Attending work for all scheduled shifts unless unable for legitimate reasons.
- Improving and maintaining personal health and adjusting lifestyle, where necessary, to enable regular attendance.
- Making every reasonable effort to attend to personal affairs and obligations (including medical appointments if possible), on their own personal time and not during normal working hours.
- Reporting all occurrences and/or absence from work in accordance with the employer's absence reporting procedure.
- Reporting work-related injuries and/or illness immediately as they occur directly to their manager and completing required forms.
- Providing appropriate and sufficient medical documentation
- Fully participating in early and safe return to work initiatives and workplace accommodations.
- To fully participate in efforts to identify and implement strategies to improve attendance.
- Maintaining regular communication with the manager and/or designate during absences and providing information on the expected duration of absence and possible return to work date. NOTE: Employees may be required to provide medical clearance stating restrictions, if any, prior to being permitted to return to work.



ROLES, RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES Continued...

Employer/Manager

- Managing attendance of staff reporting to them and communicating expectations.
- Informing employees about ASAP and addressing all employee questions and concerns or directing them to the appropriate department (e.g. Occupational Health and Safety, Human Resources, Employee/Labour Relations).
- Implementing appropriate steps under ASAP as required.
- Maintaining regular contact with and providing support to an employee who is absent from work.
- Ensuring that the provisions of the Collective Agreement(s) are followed.
- Respecting legislation related to employment e.g. Human Rights Code.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of employee information.

Human Resources

- Providing Managers and Employees with clear guidelines related to employee attendance.
- Providing training and advice to Managers as required, on Attendance Management and ASAP.
- Providing advice and support to managers and staff in the management of attendance.
- Ensuring that ASAP is administered consistently and equitably.
- Ensuring appropriate consultation with Unions.

Occupational Health and Safety

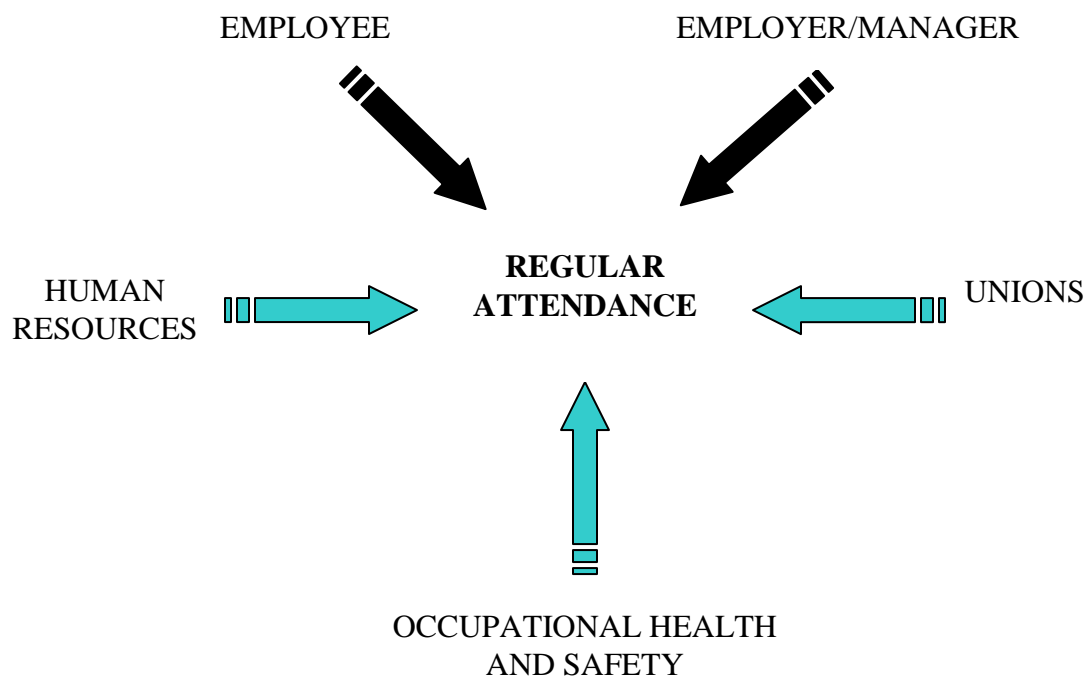
- Providing support to employees and managers.
- Providing advice on occupational safety and health issues as they relate to ASAP, as required.



- Acting as a resource and support when an identified or suspected medical problem prevents an employee from performing his/her regular duties.
- Conducting and facilitating the early and safe return to work process.
- Working collaboratively with managers, employees and unions in developing rehabilitation programs.
- Assessing employee for fitness to return to work where required and reporting functional abilities and recommendations to the employee's Manager.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of employee information.

Unions

- Educating and supporting members in relation to regular attendance.
- Identifying strategies to assist individual members in their efforts to improve attendance



Definitions

It is important to have a common understanding of some of the terms used when dealing with absenteeism. The following terms are those most frequently used when addressing attendance issues.

Absence

Any time an employee, who is scheduled or otherwise expected to be at work, is not at work. Absences due to compensable injuries within the meaning of *The Workers' Compensation Act* are excluded from this definition

Attendance

Attending at work, on time and remaining at work when scheduled including returning from breaks on time.

Culpable Absenteeism

Culpable absenteeism is an absence from work where the employee is at fault. Culpable absenteeism includes:

- Lateness/leaving work early including break times without approval or suitable justification
- Absence without approval or suitable justification

Culpable absence is dealt with through a **disciplinary response**. It does not form **part of the Attendance Management process nor does it form part of ASAP**.

Excess Absenteeism

Excess absenteeism is identified as being above the norm for the employee comparator group. The comparator group is determined by the employer and may be the average of the facility, unit, floor, sector, classification, etc. On occasion, an individual staff person's attendance record will reach a level of concern that necessitates direct, individual interaction with that staff person. There is no magic number of absences that triggers this concern but the average level of absenteeism within the employee's comparator group is usually a good indicator. Each facility will determine appropriate comparators and Human Resources should be consulted to obtain this information.

Non-culpable Absenteeism

Non-culpable, also called "Innocent Absenteeism", is an absence for which the employee is not at fault and may result from factors outside the direct control of the employee. **Such absences are never dealt with through a disciplinary response nor do they ever form part of the progressive discipline process or the disciplinary record. Rather, efforts to reduce these absences are dealt with through Attendance Management and/or ASAP.**

Pattern Absenteeism

Pattern absenteeism is absences that may appear to be non-culpable when viewed in isolation; however, upon review of overall absenteeism, a pattern of absenteeism appears that suggests possible culpability.

For example:

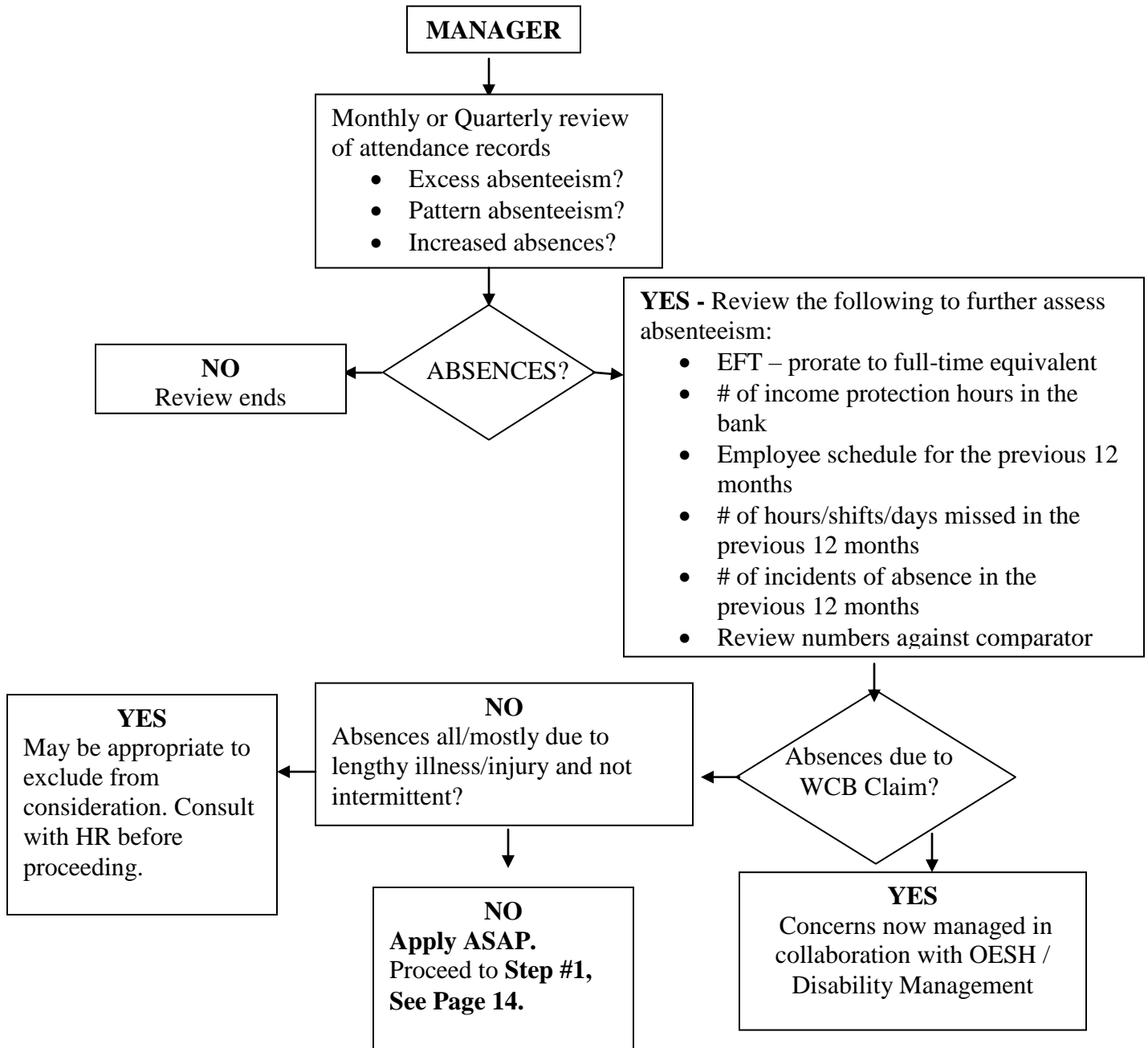
- Is the employee often absent the last two shifts of a stretch of seven?
- Is the employee often absent every third Thursday of the month?
- Are there sick calls before or after a scheduled day or stretch of days off (e.g. weekends, scheduled days off, vacations)
- Are there sick calls after requesting time off
- Are there sick calls after being counseled or disciplined
- Are there sick calls after uttering intention (i.e. if ... then I am going to call in sick)
- Are there sick calls on holidays (e.g. Christmas)

Attendance Management vs. Attendance Support and Assistance Program - What's the Difference?	
Attendance Management	Attendance Support and Assistance (ASAP)
<p>The broad managerial skill set required to ensure that all employees attend at work on time and remain at work when scheduled. The managerial skill set is outlined on the next page and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication of expectations • Motivating staff • Consistent enforcement of expectations <p>Attendance Management is on-going and a part of the daily management function</p>	<p>A program utilized by managers in their efforts to work with individual staff to address concerns relating to absenteeism.</p> <p>Once attendance improves to an acceptable level and it is maintained, the ASAP for the individual employee may cease</p> <p>NOTE: Culpable absenteeism is dealt with through a disciplinary process. It does not form part of Attendance Management or ASAP.</p>

ABSENCE TYPE	TOOL USED
INDIVIDUAL: CULPABLE	DISCIPLINE
INDIVIDUAL: NON-CULPABLE, EXCESSIVE	ASAP
INDIVIDUAL: PATTERN ABSENCE	UNCERTAIN UNTIL DETERMINED WHETHER FAULT OR NO-FAULT
HIGH STAFF UNIT AVERAGE	ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT



Identifying and Assessing Absenteeism



Medical Information

In all instances where the employer is contemplating the need for the provision of medical information, there is a need to strike a balance between the employer's right to know against the employee's right to privacy.

The majority of collective agreements in health care contain language that provide for some level of entitlement on behalf of the employer to request medical certificates to substantiate a claim for income protection and/or provide medical information in regard to fitness to return or medical restrictions. It is the managers' responsibility to become familiar with the language contained in collective agreements they are responsible for administering.

The law surrounding the right to request medical certificates and the content of same is constantly changing. Therefore, questions regarding the right to ask for certificates, additional particulars, etc. should be discussed with your Human Resources department.

NOTE: Generally speaking, the employer is entitled to medical information relating to prognosis of return, date of exam, temporary and permanent restrictions of relevance to the position and expected return date.

If considering asking for a medical certificate related to use of family related income protection benefits, contact human resources.



ATTENDANCE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ASAP)

ASAP has been developed by the WRHA HR Leadership Team to assist Managers in their efforts to work with individual staff to address concerns relating to absenteeism. **ASAP** is the acronym for Attendance Support and Assistance Program.

Following assessment of attendance pursuant to the Attendance Management process (See Page 11), situations for which ASAP has been identified as appropriate are to be addressed by proceeding through the following steps:

1. Communicate the Concern – Initial Meeting
2. Formal Attention to Attendance
3. Formal Attention to Attendance – Notice of Possible Termination
4. Formal Attendance Management: Assessment of On-Going Viability of Employment

The tasks to be completed at each step are set out in the following pages.

SOME KEY POINTS

- The timelines set out in this Program are guidelines only and can be adjusted for individual circumstances as warranted.
- Individualized plans are of key importance.
- Take into account individual circumstances when assessing whether or not to proceed to the next Step. Proceeding to the next step is not automatic in the ASAP process.
- The manager must maintain accurate documentation. This includes a written summary of all meetings with employees, whether informal or formal, as well as the supporting scheduling and payroll records. Ensure that copies for the employee's personnel file are provided to Human Resources as necessary.
- Where an employee's absence record can be attributed to a medical condition this may constitute a disability under the Manitoba Human Rights Code. As a result, reasonable accommodation may be required. Where a medical condition exists, consult with Human Resources / OESH Disability Management Coordinator.



Date: _____

Employee: _____

Present at Meeting: _____

Department: _____

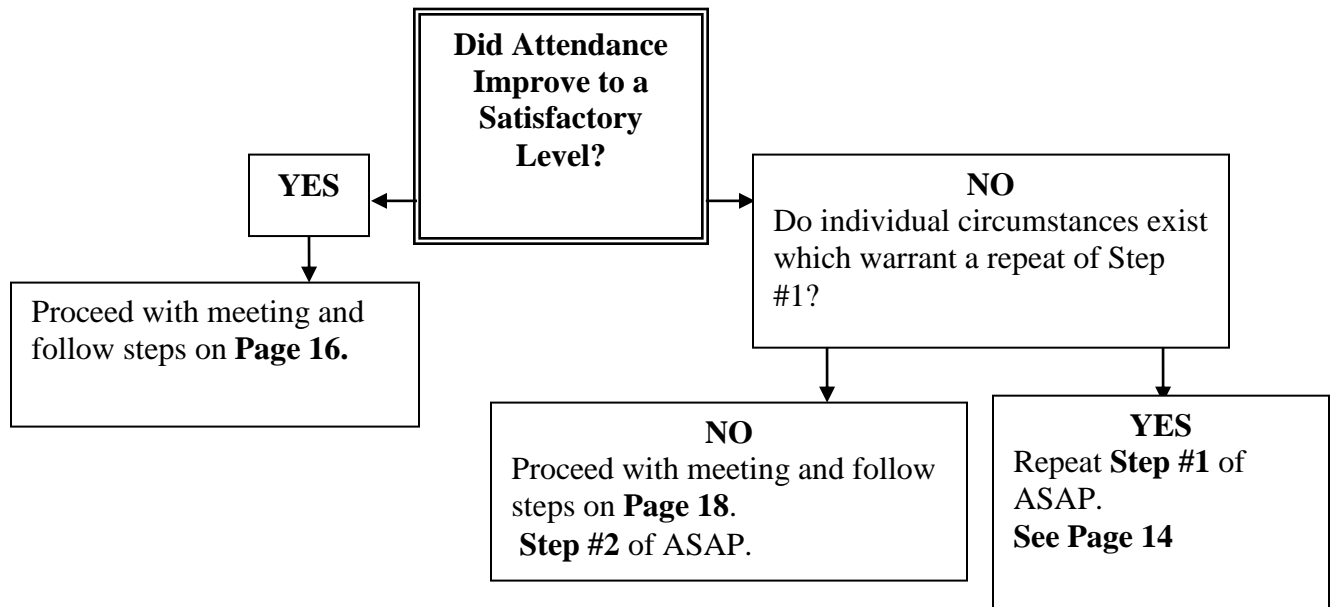
ASAP STEP 1 - Communicate the Concern: Initial Meeting

Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
Before the Meeting with the Employee:	
Review employee's attendance records to gather number of incidents and days missed relative to the comparator group.	
Check with Human Resources to determine whether union representation at the meeting is required/appropriate. Each site and each collective agreement may have a different practice/requirement in this regard.	
Advise the employee/union that the meeting is to discuss the employee's attendance.	
At the Meeting with the Employee (and Union)	
Inform the employee that this meeting as well as ASAP are non-disciplinary.	
Inform the employee that they are at Step 1 of ASAP.	
Share with the employee the information collected in regard to absences and the concern that results from such levels of absence.	
Discuss and identify the cause(s) for the absenteeism.	
Clearly communicate expectations in regard to attendance, i.e. a rate of attendance is required at or below the comparator group. Each and every employee has a contractual obligation to attend work.	
Encourage open dialogue with assurances of confidentiality with the expressed intent of identifying any causes of absence that may be mitigated by the efforts of the employee, the employer, the union or jointly by all of the parties and establish plans of how this will be accomplished.	
Offer assistance where possible - Remind the employee of the availability of confidential medical and counseling facilities (e.g. Employee Assistance Program, Occupational Health). Have these contact numbers available to give to the employee, if requested.	
Inform and educate the employee about ASAP. Provide the employee with written materials available regarding ASAP and the Attendance Policy and encourage them to take away and read. Ensure that ASAP is identified as a tool to improve attendance. It is not a disciplinary process , i.e. explain the difference between culpable and non-culpable absence and how they are treated differently.	
At the conclusion of the meeting, advise that a follow-up meeting will occur in approximately 8-10 weeks to continue the discussion and review progress.	
Agree to the date of the follow up meeting (should be at least 8 weeks after initial meeting but no later than 10 weeks): <i>INSERT DATE HERE</i>	



Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
Advise that if the required improvement in attendance is not achieved at that time, that the next step in the ASAP process may be implemented at the next meeting.	
After the Meeting:	
Document the meeting and discussion and keep in your management file. This documentation does not get copied to the Personnel file.	
2 Weeks Prior to Next Meeting:	
Assess whether there has been an improvement in the level of attendance to a satisfactory level (i.e. at or below average of comparator group).	

Your next steps depend on whether or not there was an improvement in the level of attendance and if improvement, to what degree:



Date: _____

Employee: _____

Present at Meeting: _____

Department: _____

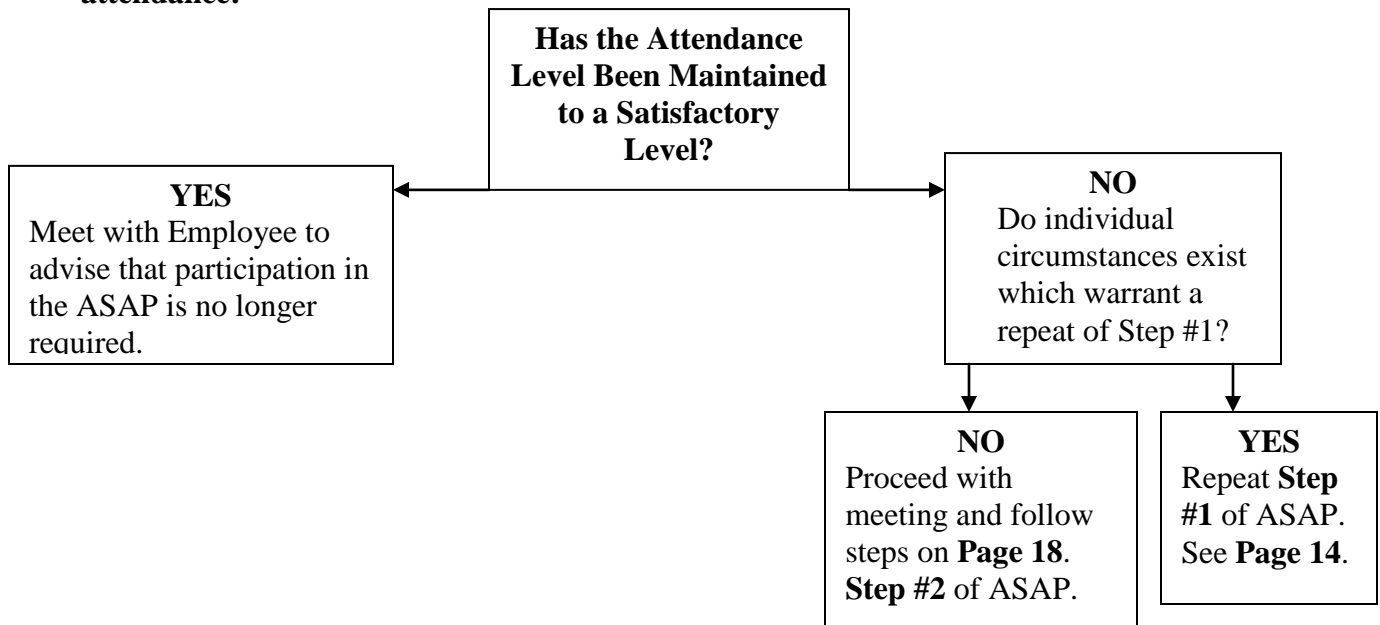
IF ATTENDANCE HAS IMPROVED TO A SATISFACTORY LEVEL, AFTER STEP #1 (i.e. at or below average of comparator group)

Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
Before the Meeting with the Employee:	
Review employee's attendance records.	
Consult with Human Resources identifying the nature of the situation and planning the next steps.	
If employee is unionized, inform the union rep of the meeting unless the employee specifically asks that the union not attend.	
At the Meeting with the Employee (and union):	
Meet with the Employee and review the attendance record since the meeting 8 - 10 weeks prior.	
Inform the employee that they are at Step 1 of ASAP.	
Acknowledge the improvement.	
Review and discuss the strategies discussed and implemented at the last meeting and how they may need to be supplemented/ revised to assist in maintaining regular attendance.	
Ask for the employee's commitment to continue in their efforts to improve his/her attendance.	
Inform the employee that their attendance will continue to be monitored and that a follow-up meeting 8 - 10 weeks hence will be held to review their attendance and that you trust the improvement will be maintained.	
Confirm follow-up meeting date with employee and union rep (8-10 weeks hence). <i>INSERT DATE HERE</i>	
Advise the employee that if improvement is maintained that an assessment will be made after the next meeting as to whether further meetings are required. If attendance is not maintained, then advise employee that they may be moving to Step #2 of ASAP at the next meeting.	
After the Meeting:	
Document the meeting and discussion and keep in your management file. This documentation does not get copied to the Personnel file.	



Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
2 Weeks Prior to Next Meeting:	
Assess whether level of attendance has been maintained to a satisfactory level (i.e. at or below average of comparator group).	

Your next steps depend on whether or not there was an improvement in the level of attendance:



Date: _____

Employee: _____

Present at Meeting: _____

Department: _____

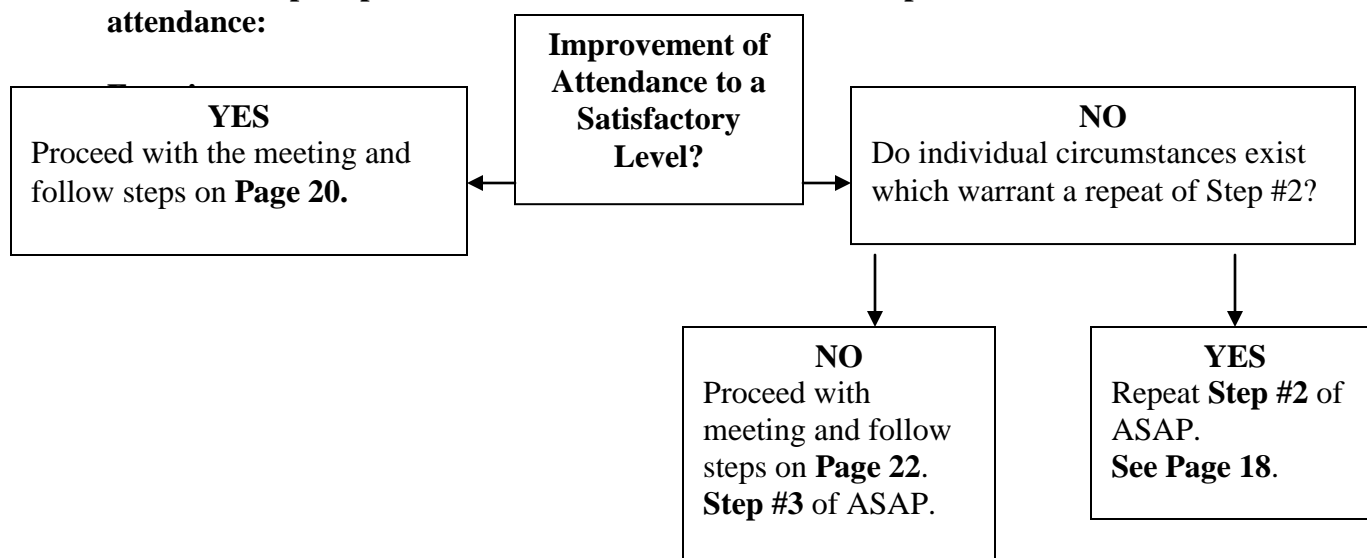
STEP 2 – Formal Attention to Attendance

Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
Before the Meeting with the Employee:	
Review employee's attendance records.	
Consult with Human Resources identifying the nature of the situation and planning the next steps.	
If employee is unionized inform the union rep of the meeting unless the employee specifically requests that the union not attend.	
At the Meeting with the Employee (and union):	
Meet with the Employee and review the attendance record since the meeting 8-10 weeks prior.	
Inform the employee that they are at Step 2 of ASAP.	
If some level of improvement has occurred, recognize this fact.	
Ask the employee if he/she has had an opportunity to review the ASAP information and policy and ask whether he/she has any questions or requires any clarification. Ensure that ASAP is identified as a tool to improve attendance. ASAP is not a disciplinary process.	
Discuss and identify the cause(s) for the absenteeism.	
Review and discuss the strategies previously developed and implemented at the last meeting and how they may need to be supplemented/revised to assist in achieving regular attendance.	
Offer assistance where possible - Remind the employee of the availability of confidential medical and counseling facilities (e.g. Employee Assistance Program, Occupational Health). Have these contact numbers available to give to the employee, if requested.	
If a medical condition is identified as a contributing factor to absence, in consultation with Human Resources , ask for medical verification and/or information in regard to medical restrictions [i.e. if appropriate (Modified Duty Form) and assess whether any accommodation for the employee may be required/appropriate (consult as appropriate with OESH / Disability Management Coordinator)].	
If appropriate or available, assess with the employee whether a (temporary or permanent) reduction in EFT, change in position, leave of absence, temporary suspension of picking up additional shifts, etc. may be appropriate to assist the employee in his/her efforts to improve attendance. Note: this option cannot be mandated by the Employer and can only be implemented if agreed to jointly by the employee, employer and the union.	



Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
Ask for the employee's commitment to continue in their efforts to try to improve his/her attendance.	
Inform the employee that their attendance will continue to be monitored and that a follow-up meeting 8 -10 weeks hence will be held to review their attendance and that you trust an improvement will be achieved. Acknowledge that a meeting may take place sooner if circumstances warrant.	
Confirm follow-up meeting date with employee and union rep (8-10 weeks hence). <i>INSERT DATE HERE</i>	
Advise the employee that a written record of this meeting will be produced and shared with the employee and maintained on the employee's Personnel File – written record shall be copied to the union if requested or required by the collective agreement. See Template Letter #1, Page 33. (If Step #2 is repeated, use Template Letter #2, Page 34)	
Advise the employee that if satisfactory improvement is not achieved/maintained by the next meeting, that we may be proceeding to Step #3 of ASAP.	
After the Meeting:	
Follow up on all actions items.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is sent to Human Resources for the Personnel File.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is provided to the employee.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is provided to the union rep if required or if the union rep. was at the meeting.	
2 Weeks Prior to Next Meeting:	
Assess whether there has been an improvement in the level of attendance to a satisfactory level (i.e. at or below average of comparator group).	

Your next steps depend on whether or not there was an improvement in the level of attendance:



Date: _____

Employee: _____

Present at Meeting: _____

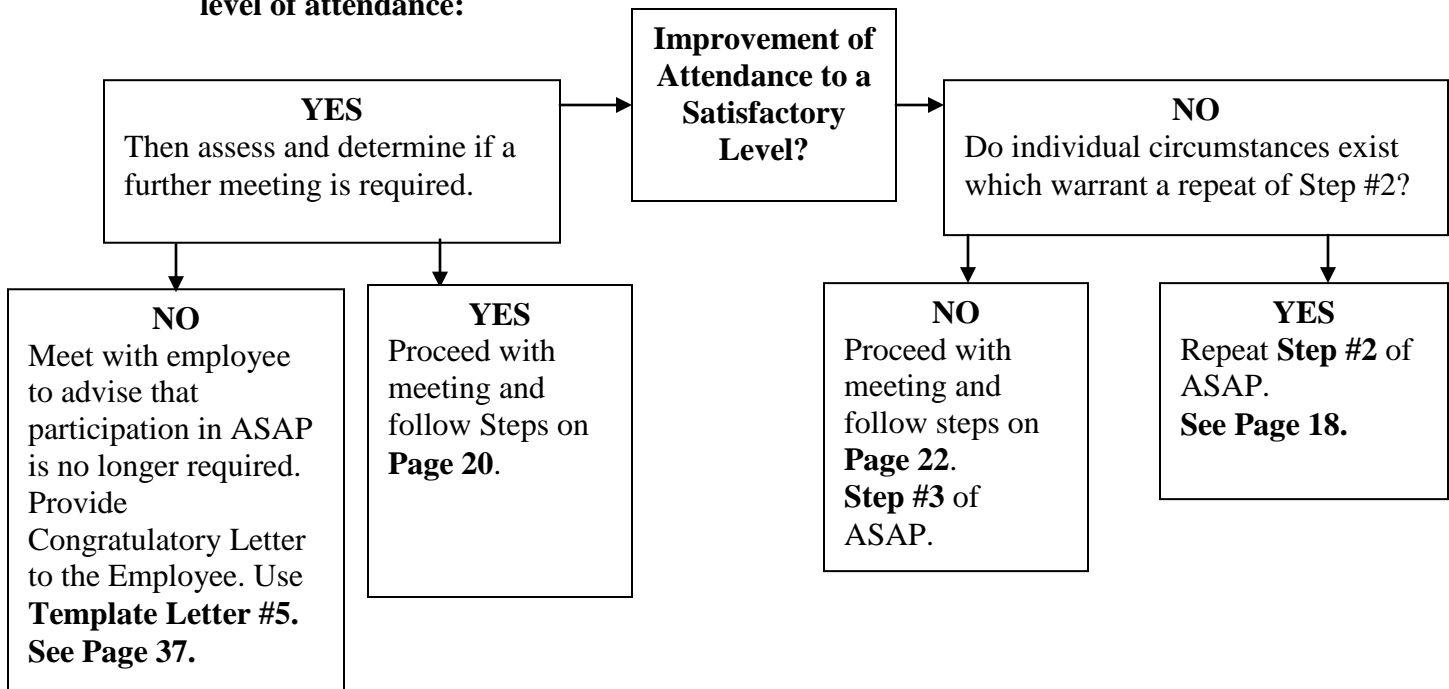
Department: _____

IF ATTENDANCE HAS IMPROVED TO A SATISFACTORY LEVEL, AFTER STEP #2 (i.e. at or below average of comparator group)

Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
Before the Meeting with the Employee:	
Review employee's attendance records.	
Consult with Human Resources identifying the nature of the situation and planning the next steps.	
If employee is unionized, inform the union rep of the meeting unless the employee specifically asks that the union not attend.	
At the Meeting with the Employee (and union):	
Meet with the Employee and review the attendance record since the Step #2 meeting 8 -10 weeks prior.	
Inform the employee that they are at Step #2 of ASAP.	
Acknowledge the improvement.	
Review and discuss the strategies discussed and implemented at the last meeting and how they may need to be supplemented/ revised to assist in maintaining regular attendance.	
Ask for the employee's commitment to continue in their efforts to improve his/her attendance.	
Inform the employee that their attendance will continue to be monitored and that a follow-up meeting 8 - 10 weeks hence will be held to review their attendance and that you trust the improvement will be maintained.	
Confirm follow-up meeting date with employee and union rep (8-10 weeks hence). <p style="text-align: right;"><i>INSERT DATE HERE</i></p>	
Advise the employee that a written record of this meeting will be produced and shared with the employee and maintained on the employee's Personnel File – written record shall be copied to the union if the union was present at the meeting or if required under the collective agreement. See Template Letter #2, Page 34.	
Advise the employee that if improvement is maintained that an assessment will be made after the next meeting as to whether further meetings are required. If attendance is not maintained, then advise employee that they may be moving to Step #3 of ASAP.	

Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
After the Meeting:	
Follow up on all actions items.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is sent to Human Resources for the Personnel File.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is provided to the employee.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is provided to the union rep, if they were in attendance or if required under the collective agreement	
2 Weeks Prior to Next Meeting:	
Assess whether an improvement in the level of attendance has been achieved to a satisfactory level (i.e. at or below average of comparator group).	

Your next steps depend on whether or not there was an improvement in the level of attendance:



Date: _____

Employee: _____

Present at Meeting: _____

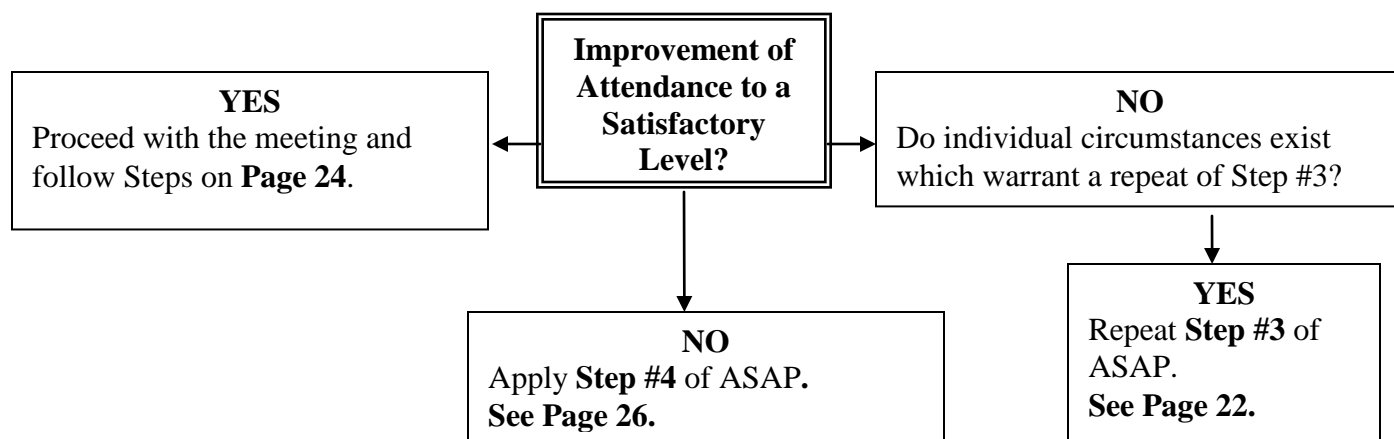
Department: _____

STEP 3 – Formal Attention to Attendance: Notice of Possible Termination

Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
Before the Meeting with the Employee:	
Review employee's attendance records.	
Consult with Human Resources identifying the nature of the situation and planning the next steps.	
If employee is unionized, inform the union rep of the meeting unless the employee specifically asks that the union not attend.	
At the Meeting with the Employee (and union):	
Meet with the Employee and review the attendance record since the meeting 8 - 10 weeks prior.	
Inform the employee that they are at Step 3 of ASAP.	
If some level of improvement has occurred, recognize this fact.	
Ask the employee if he/she has any questions or requires any clarification in regard to ASAP. Ensure that ASAP is identified as a tool to improve attendance. ASAP is not a disciplinary process.	
Discuss and identify the cause(s) for the absenteeism, if possible.	
Review and discuss the strategies discussed and implemented at the last meeting and how they may need to be supplemented/ revised to assist in achieving regular attendance.	
Offer assistance where possible - Remind the employee of the availability of confidential medical and counseling facilities (e.g. Employee Assistance Program, Occupational Health). Have these contact numbers available to give to the employee, if requested.	
If a medical condition is identified as a contributing factor to absence, in consultation with Human Resources , ask for medical verification and/or information in regard to medical restrictions [i.e. if appropriate (Modified Duty Form) and assess whether any accommodation for the employee may be required/appropriate (consult as appropriate with OESH / Disability Management Coordinator)].	
If appropriate and available, assess with the employee whether a (temporary or permanent) reduction in EFT, change in position, leave of absence, etc may be appropriate to assist the employee in his/her efforts. Note: this option cannot be mandated by the Employer and can only be implemented if agreed jointly to by the employee, employer and the union.	
Ask for the employee's continued commitment to trying to improve his/her attendance.	

Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
Inform the employee that their attendance will continue to be monitored and that a follow-up meeting 8-10 weeks hence will be held to review their attendance and that you trust an improvement will be achieved.	
Confirm follow-up meeting date with employee and union rep. (8-10 weeks hence. <i>INSERT DATE HERE</i>	
Advise the employee that a written record of this meeting will be produced and shared with the employee and maintained on the employee's personnel file – written record shall be copied to the union if the union was present at the meeting. See Template Letter #3, Page 35.	
Advise the employee that if satisfactory improvement is not achieved by the next meeting (i.e. at or below average for comparator group) that an assessment will be made by the Employer as to whether his/her employment will be continued or whether it will be terminated due to frustration of contract because of his/her inability to attend work on a regular basis. (Step #4)	
After the Meeting:	
Follow up on all actions items.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is sent to Human Resources for the Personnel File.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is provided to the employee.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is provided to the union rep, if they were in attendance or if required under the collective agreement.	
2 Weeks Prior to Next Meeting:	
Assess whether there has been an improvement in the level of attendance to a satisfactory level (i.e. at or below average of comparator group).	

Your next steps depend on whether or not there was an improvement in the level of attendance:



Date: _____

Employee: _____

Present at Meeting: _____

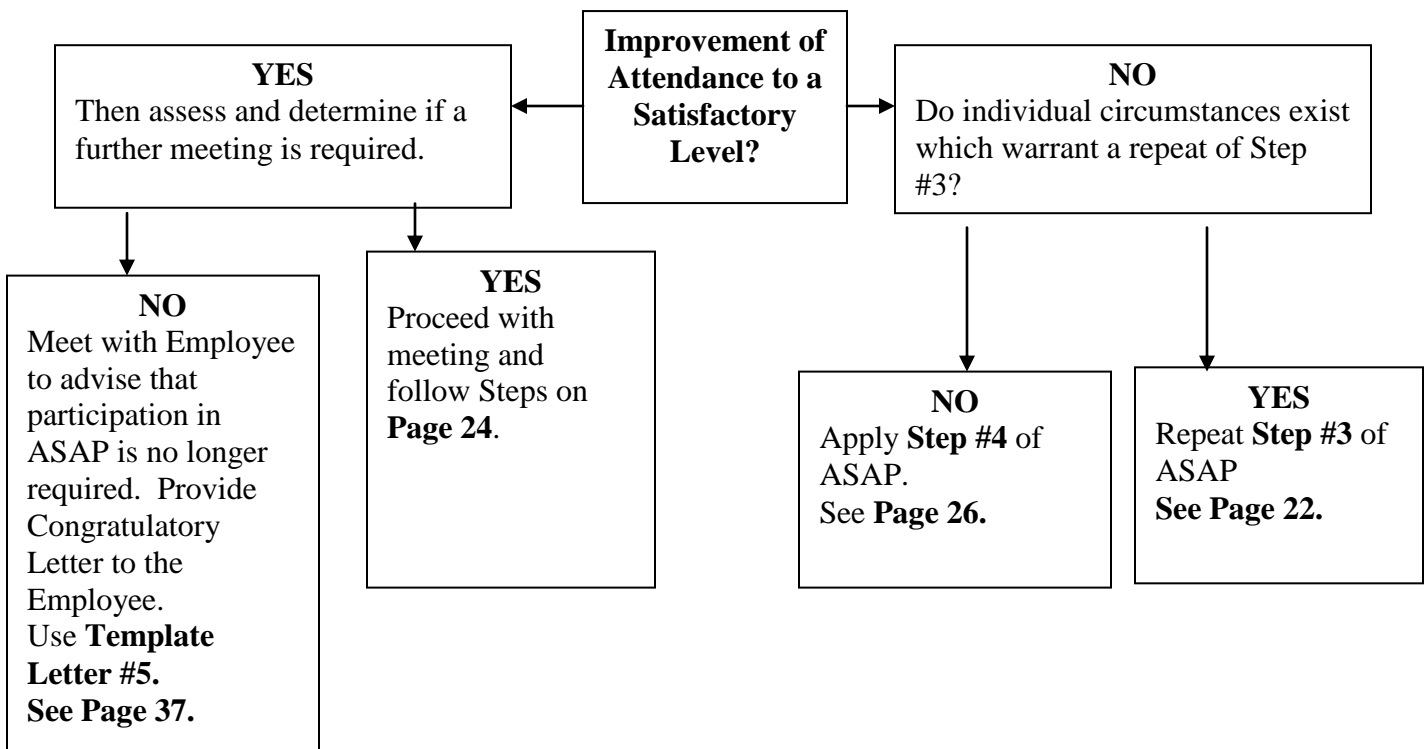
Department: _____

IF ATTENDANCE HAS IMPROVED TO A SATISFACTORY LEVEL AFTER STEP #3 (i.e. at or below average of comparator group):

Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
Before the Meeting with the Employee:	
Review employee's attendance records.	
Consult with Human Resources identifying the nature of the situation and planning the next steps.	
If employee is unionized, inform the union rep of the meeting unless the employee specifically asks that the union not attend.	
At the Meeting with the Employee (and union):	
Meet with the Employee and review the attendance record since the meeting 8 - 10 weeks prior.	
Inform the employee that they are at Step 3 of ASAP.	
Acknowledge the improvement.	
Review and discuss the strategies discussed and implemented at the last meeting and how they may need to be supplemented/ revised to assist in maintaining regular attendance.	
Ask for the employee's commitment to continue in their efforts to improve his/her attendance.	
Inform the employee that their attendance will continue to be monitored and that a follow-up meeting 8-10 weeks hence will be held to review their attendance and that you trust the improvement will be maintained.	
Confirm follow-up meeting date with employee and union rep (8-10 weeks hence). <i>INSERT DATE HERE</i>	
Advise the employee that a written record of this meeting will be produced and shared with the employee and maintained on the employee's Personnel File – written record shall be copied to the union if the union was present at the meeting. Template #3, See Page 35.	
Advise the employee that if improvement is maintained that an assessment will be made after the next meeting as to whether further meetings are required. If attendance is not maintained, then advise employee that an assessment will be made by the employer as to whether he/she may be moving into Step #4 of ASAP. (Termination of Employment)	
After the Meeting:	
Follow up on all actions items.	



Task to Be Completed by Manager	Done (√)
Ensure a written record of the meeting is sent to Human Resources for the Personnel File.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is provided to the employee.	
Ensure a written record of the meeting is provided to the union rep, if they were in attendance or if required under the collective agreement.	
2 Weeks Prior to Next Meeting:	
Assess whether there has been an improvement in the level of attendance has been achieved to a satisfactory level (i.e. at or below average of comparator group).	



Date: _____

Employee: _____

Present at Meeting: _____

Department: _____

STEP 4 – Formal Attendance Management: Assessment of Ongoing Viability of Employment

Task to Be Completed	Done (√)
Meet with HR prior to meeting with employee and determine based on the factual circumstances whether a further opportunity to improve should be afforded the employee (repeat of Step #3) or whether it is time to end the employment relationship.	
If employment is to be terminated, Human Resources must be present at the meeting. Human Resources will prepare the letter of termination and will conduct the meeting. See Letter Template #4, Page 36.	

KEY POINT

Before terminating for non-culpable or innocent absenteeism, two conditions must be satisfied before termination will be upheld:

1. That the employee has a history of excessive absenteeism, was aware of it and the need to improve it to a reasonable level; and
2. That the employee is incapable of maintaining regular and consistent attendance in the future, supported by medical prognosis or evidence of failed efforts to improve.

The onus of demonstrating frustration of contract in situations of termination as a result of absenteeism rests with the **employer** and must be demonstrated through **clearly documented** objective evidence.



APPENDICES



CASE #1

Tom has been a Nurse in your unit for 5 years. His attendance has been a concern. Tom's absence levels are not extreme but are above the norm. Your relationship with Tom has been strained in the past. You think he believes he has a right to take this time off, because he works hard.

What should you do?

CASE #2

Sally misses one Friday a month. You happen to know that Sally bowls on the third Thursday of each month, and it's the next day that she repeatedly calls in sick. You saw her in the bowling lounge at 1:00 a.m., and then she called in the next day and said she had a "migraine" headache. You think something else might be underlying the cause of the headache.

What should you do?

CASE #3

Josie tells you that she heard from a friend of hers at another Hospital that John was working there on the same day last week that John called in sick for his shift with you.
What should you do?

CASE #4

Emily had back surgery last year and was off work for 3 months. You just received a note from the Night Supervisor that Emily called and said she'll be off again for an extended period of time.
What should you do?



How to Begin a Difficult Conversation

Using the “POISED” principle means you are calm, confident and ready to “attend” to attendance. Try this approach when one of your employee’s experiences an absence from work:

P urpose	Explain your Purpose
O bservation	State your Observation
I nformation	Exchange Information
S olution	Discuss a Solution
E nd	End on a Positive Note
D ocument	Document your Discussion

Sample Conversation:

Manager: I’d like to spend a few minutes talking about your attendance. You’re an important member of this team and I’m concerned that the team/unit will be challenged to handle the workload if you are not able to regularly attend work. **[Purpose]**

Perhaps we could start with you telling me a bit about your recent absence from work? **[Observation]**

Employee: I haven’t missed that much work. Which time are you referring to?

Manager: The attendance records show that you’ve missed 3 Fridays over the past 6 weeks – January 6, 20 and February 3. We can discuss each day separately if that would make more sense, or if it’s easier for you, just discuss the absences in more general terms. **[Information]**

Employee: I won’t need to be away in the future. I’ll be able to get the work done, don’t worry.

Manager: I’m not solely concerned about your past absences but I want to make sure you are OK. I feel that you bring some great skills to the team and I want to make sure that things are OK for you to attend work here. About the absences over the past few weeks, what do you need or what can we do to help you attend work regularly? **[Information]**

Employee: I’ve been having some trouble with my day care and there have been a few days when I couldn’t find alternate day care for my kids. I’ve solved the problem and it won’t happen again.

Manager: I know that finding suitable day care can be very difficult in this city. I’m glad to here that you’ve found a solution. How did you do it? Were the arrangements fairly easy to make? **[Information & Solution]**

Employee: Yeah, I've moved my kids to a different day care that offers better hours for me.

Manager: Well, that's great. So, you're not expecting to have further absences because of day care issues?

Employee: No.

Manager: That's good. If you think you'll need to be absent again because of this issue, I'd like us to develop a plan for how we can deal with your absence. Is there anyway that you can anticipate future day care issues, perhaps in discussion with your new day care? **[Solution]**

Employee: I can speak to them just to make sure the hours will remain regular, and to see if they can accommodate all the shifts I might have to work over the next few months.

Manager: That would be excellent. So, we've agreed that you'll speak with your day care to help avoid any future scheduling issues, and call me in advance if you anticipate any absences due to day care issues? **[Solution]**

Employee: Yes.

Manager: Great! I'm glad we discussed this because you're a part of a really strong team we have here, and we'll be even stronger with everyone attending regularly. **[End]**

MANAGER'S ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- Will this person keep facing the same problem?
- Have we identified all of the root causes of the problem?
- Is there a clear action plan in place to avoid the root cause of the problem recurring?



Tips for Meeting with Employees Regarding Attendance

BE POSITIVE

- make sure you are feeling positive and resourceful at the time of the meeting
- know that your behavior will set the pace for the meeting
- don't expect the worse - or you might get it!

LISTEN ACTIVELY

- stop talking and really listen to the employee
- paraphrase what the employee says - state it back in your own words: "So what I hear you saying is..."
- empathize with the stated (or unstated) emotions: "I can see you are upset"
- confirm that you have clearly understood the employee's perspective

SEPARATE PERCEPTION FROM INTERPRETATION

- ask for specifics/examples. If the employee says something like: "You don't care about me!" Rather than responding with a defensive remark like: "I do so!" inquire about how the employee came to that conclusion (interpretation). Say something like: "Can you give me an example of something I have done or haven't done that has communicated to you that I don't respect your work?" (perception/behavior)

MANAGE YOUR OWN EMOTIONS

- let the employee 'own' his/her own emotions. Taking on an employee's destructive emotions can be debilitating and limit your effectiveness as a supervisor.
- take time out if you need it. It is better to call a 5 minute break - walk around the office to cool off, and then resume the meeting - than to risk losing credibility with your employee because you were not able to manage your own emotions.
- practice deep breathing. You can do this on the way to the meeting and during the meeting. This practice actually results in a physiological change that allows you to be more resourceful and in control when you need to be.

RESCHEDULE IF IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE

- ask employee to take some time to calm down.
- reschedule for another time.



WRHA Attendance Policy # 20.50.060

– Will be distributed.



ASAP Template Letter #1

[EMPLOYER]

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

DATE

NAME

POSITION

DEPARTMENT

Sample

Dear Employee:

RE: ATTENDANCE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

This will confirm our meeting of [date] which was held to discuss concerns regarding your attendance. In attendance at this meeting in addition to myself was [name(s)]. To confirm, the employer does not doubt the legitimacy of the absences. The purpose of this Step #2 meeting was to review in consultation with you whether opportunities exist through the development of a plan to reduce the number of future absences. This meeting and the discussion about your absences is not disciplinary and does not form part of nor create a disciplinary record.

The comparator group used by the employer for the purposes of assessing what is the average level of absence was the [insert comparator group] which has an average absence level of [__] days over the last [insert time period used] period of time. Your sick time utilization rate over that same period was [days].

Due to the number of absences experienced, the employer determined it appropriate as part of the plan to assist you in your efforts to reduce your levels of absence to enroll you in the Attendance Support and Assistance Program (ASAP). A written description of this program was shared with you and you are encouraged to review this material and to direct any questions to me. We appreciate your commitment to participate in this program and your personal commitment to improve your future attendance. At a minimum, you are required to establish and maintain attendance that is equal to or better than the comparator group. Failure to achieve this may result in moving to Step #3 of ASAP.

As part of the program, the following options/efforts will be pursued to assist in your efforts to reduce your level of absence:

- [List the actions/steps that were committed to during the meeting by any of the participating parties]

These actions as well as your number of absences will be reviewed at our next meeting scheduled for [insert date]. If you encounter any difficulties with matters affecting your attendance prior to the next meeting, you are encouraged to contact me, your union or, other supports available to assist you as quickly as possible in order that we can work together to address them.

We trust that our joint efforts will succeed in assisting you in your commitment to regular attendance in the future.

Sincerely,

cc: personnel file
[UNION REPRESENTATIVE]



ASAP Template Letter #2

[EMPLOYER]

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

DATE

NAME
POSITION
DEPARTMENT

Sample

Dear Employee:

RE: ATTENDANCE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

This will confirm our meeting of [date] which was held to discuss your attendance. In attendance at this meeting in addition to myself was [name(s)]. The purpose of this meeting was to review whether there has been success in reducing your level of absence since our last meeting of [insert date]. This Step #2 meeting and letter and the discussion about your absences is not disciplinary and does not form part of nor create a disciplinary record.

Since our last meeting, your rate of absence was [] and the rate of absence for your comparator group was [].

During the meeting, we reviewed your Attendance Support and Assistance Program (ASAP) as well as the options/efforts discussed at our last meeting to assist in your efforts to reduce your level of absence. Specifically, we discussed the following changes/additional steps that would be taken to assist you in your continued efforts:

[List the actions/steps that were committed to during the meeting by any of the participating parties]

[Insert following paragraph if improvement did not occur or was marginal] Your level of absence [despite some improvement] continues to be of substantial concern as in regard to the comparator group. Once again, you are encouraged to review the ASAP materials provided to you, to thin of any further opportunities to assist in the efforts to reduce your rate of absence and to raise any questions to my attention.

Your number of absences as well as the actions forming part of ASAP will be reviewed at our next meeting scheduled for [insert date]. If you encounter any difficulties with matters affecting your attendance prior to the next meeting, you are encouraged to contact me, your union or, other supports available to assist you as quickly as possible in order that we can work together to address them.

[Insert following paragraph if satisfactory attendance] Your efforts and accomplishments resulting in your achieving an acceptable level of absence are to be congratulated. We trust that you will be able to sustain your attendance into the future.

[Insert following paragraph if attendance not satisfactory] Your efforts are appreciated and it is hoped that you will achieve an attendance level better then or in keeping with your comparator group. Failure to achieve this may result in moving to Step #3 of ASAP. Achieving regular attendance is very important to your continued employment with us and your commitment to achieving this is the key to success.

Sincerely,

cc: personnel file
[union representative]



ASAP Template Letter #3

[EMPLOYER]

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

DATE

NAME

POSITION

DEPARTMENT

Sample

Dear Employee:

RE: ATTENDANCE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

This will confirm our meeting of [date] which was held to discuss your attendance. In attendance at this meeting in addition to myself was [name(s)]. The purpose of this meeting was to review whether there has been success in reducing your level of absence since our last meeting of [insert date]. This Step #3 meeting and letter and the discussion about your absences is not disciplinary and does not form part of nor create a disciplinary record.

Since our last meeting, your rate of absence was [] and the rate of absence for your comparator group was [].

During the meeting, we reviewed your Attendance Support and Assistance Program (ASAP) as well as the options/efforts discussed at our last meeting to assist in your efforts to reduce your level of absence. Specifically, we discussed the following changes/additional steps that would be taken to assist you in your continued efforts:

[List the actions/steps that were committed to during the meeting by any of the participating parties]

[Insert following paragraph if improvement did not occur or was marginal] Your level of absence [despite some improvement] continues to be of substantial concern as in regard to the comparator group. Once again, you are encouraged to review the ASAP materials provided to you, to identify any further opportunities to assist in efforts to reduce your rate of absence and to raise any questions to my attention.

Your number of absences as well as the actions forming part of ASAP will be reviewed at our next meeting scheduled for [insert date]. If you encounter any difficulties with matters affecting your attendance prior to the next meeting, you are encouraged to contact me, your union or, other supports available to assist you as quickly as possible in order that we can work together to address them.

[Insert following paragraph if satisfactory attendance] Your efforts and accomplishments resulting in your achieving an acceptable level of absence are to be congratulated. We trust that you will be able to sustain your attendance into the future.

[Insert following paragraph if attendance not satisfactory] We must reinforce that it is extremely important that you will achieve an attendance level better than or in keeping with your comparator group. Should you not be able to achieve a rate of attendance at or below the absence rate of your comparator group before our next meeting, the employer will need to decide whether to continue or terminate (Step #4) your employment in light of your inability to attend work on a regular basis. We trust that you will immediately take the necessary steps and actions to reduce and maintain your absence to an acceptable level.

Sincerely,

cc: personnel file
[union representative]



ASAP Template Letter #4

[EMPLOYER]

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

DATE

NAME

POSITION

DEPARTMENT

Sample

Dear Employee:

RE: ATTENDANCE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

This will confirm our meeting of [date] which was held to discuss your attendance. In attendance at this meeting in addition to myself was [name(s)]. The purpose of this meeting was to review whether there has been success in reducing your level of absence since our last meeting of [insert date]. This meeting and letter and the discussion about your absences is not disciplinary and does not form part of nor create a disciplinary record.

Your attendance has not shown improvement since our last meeting. Over this time, your rate of absence was [] and the rate of absence for your comparator group was [].

Every reasonable effort has been made to offer you assistance and work cooperatively with you to improve your attendance. Unfortunately, your attendance has not improved since the last meeting on [date] and there is no evidence available to support a foreseeable improvement in the future.

Due to the demonstrated inability to attend work on a regular basis and the lack of any foreseeable improvement, the employment contract has been frustrated. Effective immediately, your services as an employee of the Employer are being terminated. All earned wages, other monies and necessary documents will be processed and forwarded to you by registered mail within five (5) working days.

Thank you for your service. We wish you the best with your future endeavors and encourage you, should your circumstances change such that you can attend work regularly in the future, to contact us in regard to potential employment.

Sincerely,

cc: personnel file
[union representative]



ASAP Template Letter #5

[EMPLOYER]

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

DATE

NAME

POSITION

DEPARTMENT

Dear Employee:

Sample

RE: ATTENDANCE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

This will confirm our meeting of [date] which was held to discuss your attendance. In attendance at this meeting in addition to myself was [name(s)]. The purpose of this meeting was to review whether there has been success in maintaining a satisfactory level of attendance since our last meeting of [insert date]. This meeting and letter and the discussion about your absences is not disciplinary and does not form part of nor create a disciplinary record.

I am pleased to note that your attendance has been maintained at a satisfactory level. In light of your demonstrated ability and commitment to maintain an acceptable level of attendance over an extended period, I am very pleased to advise that you will no longer be required to participate in the Attendance Support and Assistance Program. Please continue to access your manager, human resources and/or union for continued support as required in the future.

We applaud your hard work and efforts to achieve this result. Congratulations and thank you for being a valuable member of our staff.

Sincerely,

cc: personnel file
[union representative]



ASAP – CASE EXERCISE #1

January 1, 2008

Cathy has been absent 15 days in the last 3 months as compared to an average absence of 2 days in her sector. 3 days of absence were related to a WCB injury.

March 15, 2008

Cathy has been absent 12 days in the last 3 months as compared to an average of 2.5 days in her sector. Cathy suspects she may have a sleeping disorder causing her to be absent.

June 1, 2008

Cathy has been absent 4 days in the last 3 months as compared to an average of 2 days in her sector. Cathy has been following the medical advice of her physician and has been working hard at improving her attendance.

August 15, 2008

Cathy has been absent 1 day in the last 3 months as compared to an average of 2 days in her sector.

November 1, 2008

Cathy has been absent 1 day in the last 3 months as compared to an average of 2 days in her sector.

ASAP – CASE EXERCISE #2

January 1, 2008

Terri has been absent 21 days in the last 3 months as compared to an average absence of 3 days in his sector. 18 days of absence related to one incident of absence related to surgery.

March 15, 2008

Terri has been absent 10 days in the last 3 months as compared to an average absence of 2 days in his sector. It is unclear whether the absences are linked to the prior surgery.

July 1, 2008

Terri has been absent 12 days in the last 3 months as compared to an average absence of 2 days in his sector.

August 15, 2008

Terri has been absent 2 days in the last 3 months as compared to an average absence of 2 days in his sector.

November 1, 2008

Terri has been absent 11 days in the last 3 months as compared to an average absence of 2 days in his sector.



For additional development opportunities visit:

WRHA Education Portal

- To access it, go to INSITE, click on “E” and click “Education Portal”.

Learning Management System (LMS)

- To access it, go to INSITE, click on “L” and click “Learning Management System”.

For additional resources, visit:

Employee Engagement Toolkit

- The toolkit offers articles, videos, TedTalks, success stories and best practices that support leaders in fostering effective and engaged teams. To access it, go to INSITE, click “E” and click “Engagement Toolkit”.

Leadership Development Resource Guide

- The guide is a practical tool to support you in planning and managing your professional development for performance success and career growth. To access it, go to INSITE, click on “L” and click “Leadership Development Resource Guide”.

Leaders Learning Hub

- The Hub is designed to support leaders as they support their teams. It is a collection of articles, videos, job aids and other resources to answer questions and provide tools when the needs arise. Each topic includes an Information section (articles, videos, etc.) and a Tools section (group activities, self-assessments, etc.). To access it, go to INSITE, click on “E” and click “Education Portal”, click on the square entitled “the HUB”.

