

TITLE: SICKNESS MONITORING & ABSENCE POLICY

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A. ABSENCE THROUGH SHORT-TERM SICKNESS

1. Introduction

It is acknowledged that the vast majority of employees at SETA maintain very good attendance records and sustain them over periods of time. Employees can be confident that all absence through sickness will be dealt with sympathetically and on a firm, fair and consistent basis.

2. Procedures

Detailed sickness procedures are available in the staff handbook. It is the responsibility of the employee to complete the necessary forms. Failure to report your sickness, provide a Doctor's statement when necessary or complete a self-certification form may result in loss of pay or sickness allowances for all or part of your absence from work.

All employees should notify SETA on their first day of absence through sickness and state the reason. It is extremely helpful if this is done as early as possible and by 8.50am at the latest. Employees must ensure they indicate when they intend to return to work as soon as this is known.

3. Sickness monitoring

SETA operates a sickness monitoring scheme for its own direct employees. This will be used for guidance, and a copy is available in the staff handbook. Absence is monitored in the Training Centre. All employees are required to report to the HR Manager on their return to

work and fill in the absence documentation. Details of individual absences are monitored.

B. LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR OTHER REASONS

1. Introduction

SETA has a sympathetic attitude towards urgent and necessary absences such as those following the death of a close relative, partner or friend, or caused by the sudden sickness of a young child. However, whilst respecting the circumstances of individual members of staff, it is not possible because of budget restrictions, to sanction paid absence for other than 'good and urgent reasons'. Guidelines on leave of absence for staff are available in the staff handbook. These guidelines will apply to all staff.

2. Procedures

- All requests for leave of absence should be made in writing to the Human Resources Manager in good time.
- Doctors and dental appointments etc. should be made outside working hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, e.g. in an emergency, please ensure time out of work is kept to a minimum.
- The sudden sickness of a child will obviously be treated sympathetically but it is expected that arrangements will then be made for the child's care.
- Driving tests should be arranged outside work hours.

SICKNESS MONITORING

- a) If the number of occasions of absence through sickness per quarter is 4 or more **or** the total number of days of absence through sickness is 15 or more the records will be considered in greater detail.
- b) Where the Human Resources Manager and General Manager is aware of a clear and underlying reason for the absence, for example, a broken leg or maternity complications, no further action is necessary.
- c) If the total number of days of absence is the result of several absences each with a different reason the Human Resources Manager and General Manager will establish clearly through discussion with the employee what the reasons are. In particular, the Personnel Manager will ensure that employees have the opportunity to discuss any relevant personal circumstances. In any discussion the employee should have the opportunity to be accompanied by his / her association representative or friend.
- d) The Human Resources Manager and General Manager are not a doctor, and will at all times act in accordance with the appropriate procedures. If SETA wants a medical opinion SETA will refer the employee to occupational Health department at Stepping Hill Hospital who are specialists in occupational health. An employee may be **required** to attend such an examination. The employee's own doctor may be present at their request. Following this examination a written report will be made. SETA's occupational health specialists are also competent to advise on the likely duration of any sickness and / or offer a long term prognosis.
- e) Where (having followed the above procedures) there is no clear evidence (including medical evidence) that the employees absence through sickness was anything other than genuine no action will be taken.
- f) When there is clear evidence (including medical evidence) of abuse of the sickness scheme or of fraudulent claims, disciplinary action for misconduct may be initiated.
- g) If at the end of a consecutive term there has been no improvement or the improvement is unsatisfactory, reasonable grounds exist for questioning the employee's capability / suitability for the job. Even if the absences are all 'medically genuine', it would not be unreasonable for SETA to **consider** action. A wide variety of responses to such action is possible ranging from further discussion with the employee, medical redeployment, retirement or part- time work. It may also be necessary to contemplate such action on grounds of capability.

- h) The appropriate response will depend entirely upon the circumstances of the case and in this situation and the advice of SETA's medical adviser obtained **before any action is taken.**

ABSENCE

INCAPACITY FOR WORK DUE TO SICKNESS OR INJURY

All staff need to notify SETA on the first day of absence as early as possible and indicate when they intend to return to work as soon as this is known.

- a) On the first day of absence you should inform your manager or Personnel Manager at the earliest opportunity or by 10.00 am and report your circumstances.
- b) You are asked to keep your Manager informed regarding your return to work date.
- c) In the case of sickness you will be required to complete a self-certification note if your absence is seven days or less. For any sickness of less than seven days duration, employees **MUST** complete the SETA Absence Record Form (copy appended) and return it to the Human Resources Manager.
- d) A medical certificate will be required from the eighth day of absence or as soon as possible if your sickness is expected to last more than seven days.
- e) You must be fit to resume work after a period of sickness or injury. A return to work interview shall be conducted by your line manager at a mutually agreed time (form RTW appended).
- f) The company reserves the right to seek medical guidance concerning employees who have prolonged or repeated periods of sickness.
- g) Employees concerned will be expected to co-operate in any such enquiry or medical examination.
- h) During authorised absence from work, payments will be made of your full pay for a period of six months. Any prolonged absence beyond this period will be covered via the company PHI scheme.

On return to work

Please see Julie Bums, fill in the RTW form and also let your Manager know you are back in at SETA.