



Department of Nursing POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: 238
VERSION: 1

SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE

PURPOSE: To clearly delineate attendance standards for employees of the Department of Nursing. The policy addresses call-ins due to illness, personal leave, medical leave, and the employee's responsibility for communicating with the Nursing Office regarding absences.

POLICY: All employees shall be present on their assigned work unit at the start of the assigned work shift unless the appropriate personnel have been properly informed of an absence.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

1. Call-ins must be reported to the Nursing Office automated call line at least 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the scheduled shift or directly to the Nursing Office after 7:00 am. **Failure to comply with the time frame may result in the time card coding of 'AWOP' (absent without pay).** Situational review for exception to the AWOP coding must have the approval of the Chief Nursing Officer.
2. Employees who do not call in to report absences will be considered **"No call, no show."**
3. Call in must be made by the employee. If circumstances, i.e. medical emergency, hospitalization, or severe injury, prevent employee from calling in, a report will be accepted from a representative. However, employee must make personal contact with the Nursing Office as soon as possible.
4. For illness of less than three consecutive days, the employee must notify the Nursing Office of absence on a daily basis at least 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the scheduled work shift.
5. A physician's statement must be supplied when absence equals or exceeds three working days. **Failure to provide a physician's note will result in the use of AWOP time.**
6. Absence caused by illness that exceeds the number of accrued sick leave hours is **not** automatically covered with other types of accrued time. The employee must submit a written request to the Nurse Manager or designee requesting that other accrued time (vacation, holiday) be used in lieu of sick time.

7. **It is considered an abuse of sick leave when an employee sets a pattern of using unscheduled sick leave days in conjunction with scheduled days off, including weekends, holidays, and vacations. Such abuse will result in progressive corrective/disciplinary action.**
8. Absences due to illness may be considered excessive when the amount of sick leave used in a calendar year exceeds that which is earned in the same calendar year and may result in progressive corrective/disciplinary action.
9. Non-emergent time off to be covered by personal leave, holiday, vacation, or accrued overtime must be requested, in writing, a minimum of three days in advance of intended absence. Employee must have verification of approval from the Nurse Manager or designee prior to taking the time off.
10. It is unacceptable for an employee to schedule personal appointments which conflict with scheduled work hours, i.e. scheduling doctor's appointment on a scheduled workday. If the employee waits until the day of the appointment to inform the Nurse Manager/Supervisor, the request may be denied (unless an emergency exists), and the employee will be expected to remain on duty until the end of the scheduled work shift. If the employee leaves the work area when time off request is denied, the time card will be coded **AWOP** for the remainder of the work shift, and will result in disciplinary action. In the event of special circumstances, the decision to grant time off will be left to the discretion of the Nurse Manager/Supervisor based on the needs of the service.
11. When an employee calls in sick, time will be coded as **"011"** for sick time. The use of any other time to 'save' sick time is unacceptable.

Medical Certification

1. Employees placed on medical certification are required to provide "medical verification of cause" for unscheduled absences due to illness.
 - a. Employee will be required to submit a "Certification of Cause for Absence" completed by a physician for each unscheduled absence due to illness. This is the only form that will be accepted as validation of a physician visit. If any other than the stated form is submitted, the employee will be required to return to the physician's office for completion of the appropriate medical certification form. The employee will not be returned to duty, and the time card will be coded AWOP until this process is completed.
 - b. Employees are to submit Medical Certification forms to the Nurse Manager/Supervisor within the first hour on the first day returned to duty. If the Medical Certification is incomplete or lacking the required information, the employee will be requested to return to the physician and the time card will be coded AWOP until complete information is obtained.

2. Employees placed on Medical Certification as a remedial measure to correct attendance performance may first be given verbal notice of intent by the Nurse Manager or designee. This is to inform the employee of a potential problem and to help correct the problem before it becomes significant. The first occurrence after verbal notice will initiate the medical certification process.
3. Employees on medical certification will remain on that status for no less than six months. The Nurse Manager or designee will complete a three-month and six-month written review to determine the extent to which attendance was corrected. Employee will receive a copy of the review with further instructions as needed.
4. If after the six-month period sustained improvement has been demonstrated, medical certification will be discontinued. The employee will receive a memo stating that they are no longer on medical certification.
5. If after the six-month period sustained improvement has not been demonstrated, the Nurse Manager and the Office of Human Resource will initiate further corrective/disciplinary action.

REFERENCES:

High Desert Health System, Office of Human Resources Policy and Procedure Manual
 Los Angeles County Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 2015
 Department of Health Services Policy Manual, Attendance [Policy 751](#), June 30, 2013
 Los Angeles County Code, Personnel Administration Handbook, 2016, Section
 6.20.120: Proof of Absence

Approved By: Susan Knapp (CHIEF NURSING OFFICER I)	
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