

**POLICY**



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**SUBJECT:** Attendance Management Program  
**APPROVED BY:** Director, Human Resources

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## **Introduction**

### **Purpose**

All Employees of Horizon Plastics are expected to be at work, on time, on each scheduled work day (this includes agreed upon overtime). While some measures of absence for various reasons are often beyond an Employee's control; Horizon Plastics does expect regular attendance. Employees are expected to make all necessary efforts to adhere to a reasonable timeliness and attendance standard.

### **Discretion**

This Program is not intended to be applied in a rigid or inflexible manner. In all cases and at each Step, the employee's particular circumstances must be considered, including the nature of and frequency of any absence.

### **Objectives**

Horizon Plastics' objectives of the Attendance Management Program are to:

- Promote regular and consistent attendance at work to achieve our business goals
- Reduce unnecessary absenteeism
- Provide a framework for responding to absenteeism
- Provide support to Employees who face challenges in maintaining regular attendance (those who are not already engaged in the formal disability management program)
- Ensure consistent and fair application of the program

### **The Benefits of the Attendance Management Program**

The Attendance Management Program will support Horizon Plastic's efforts to ensure that we are meeting our customers demand by producing a quality product. High levels of absenteeism can have a direct effect on productivity, cost, quality, service and Employee morale. The consistent application of an attendance management program can:

- Increase Employee morale
- Improve planning and scheduling of work
- Reduce overtime costs associated with absenteeism

### **Nature of Employment Relationship**

Employment relationships are contractual in nature, that is, in return for remuneration, the employee performs work assigned to them. If the employee is not able to live up to their end of the employment relationship, the contract may be terminated for frustration of contract. The point of frustration will be reached when the employee has consistently poor attendance without a reasonable prospect of reaching acceptable attendance in the foreseeable future. Before reaching the point of frustration the employer will provide the employee with coaching. This coaching may assist the employee in getting support (EAP), it may provide the impetus of the employee to seek medical attention or take more precautions to protect their health and it provides the employee with the understanding of the requirements and status of the employment relationship. Employees will be warned when their absenteeism is unacceptable and may be told that if their rate does not show a significant improvement, termination will result.

## **Types of Absences / Definitions**

### **Non-Culpable Absenteeism**

This type of absence can also be referred to as “innocent” absenteeism in which there is a legitimate illness/disability for absences from work. **Excessive “nonculpable” absenteeism may lead to non-disciplinary termination** with cause of employment based on “frustration” of the employment contract and not meeting the basic requirements of the job. Examples of Non-Culpable Absenteeism may include:

a) Innocent Absenteeism - situations in which an employee is away from work frequently and yet has genuine and documented reasons for the absences. Examples include:

- Excessive sick leave, with or without pay (even where medical documentation is provided)
- Excessive outside appointments during working hours
- Excessive absences from work to deal with ongoing family problems

b) Patterned Absenteeism – situations that appear suspicious, but where a legitimate explanation for the absence is possible are presumed to be non-culpable, unless there is evidence to the contrary. However, if after investigating the situation, it can be confirmed that the absenteeism pattern indicates abuse (i.e. no reasonable explanation is given for the absences and the absences are not substantiated by acceptable medical documentation) the absences may be considered culpable. Pattern absenteeism may take the form of absences that occur:

- Adjacent to scheduled days off and/or weekends
- On particular days of the week each week, month or year
- On days after performance related matters are addressed
- On days on or after work assignments that the employee finds non-agreeable

### **Culpable Absenteeism**

Absence from work due to factors within the Employee’s control can be treated like other types of unacceptable behaviour and performance, where corrective action may be applied. Examples of Culpable Absenteeism may include:

- Excessive lateness, early departures, overstaying a meal or rest break
- No reason is provided for an absence (absence without leave) unsubstantiated absence, where evidence is required
- The reason for the absence is not legitimate
- Leaving work without permission
- Failure to provide adequate notice of lateness/absence as per the collective agreement (No Call/No show)
- False explanation of absence
- Suspicious or fraudulent absences (e.g. opinion of medical professional hired by the company refutes previously provided information)

### **Documentation**

Absences of three (3) consecutive days or greater require documentary evidence and such documentation is to be provided to the Supervisor/ Manager prior to return to work. Where there is reasonable cause an Employee may be requested to provide medical documentation to

substantiate an absence upon the request of the Supervisor/Manager. For greater clarity, documentation requested will be in accordance with the Ontario *Employment Standards Act* (the “ESA”). In the event that medical or other documentation is required or requested, the cost of obtaining such documentation is the responsibility of the Employee. The intention of medical documentation may be to substantiate an illness or to provide a prognosis, medical restriction and/or estimated time off, and to identify if and when the employee is fit to return to work. Failure to provide acceptable medical or other documentation upon request may result in the absence being considered a culpable absence. Culpable absences are managed in the accordance with the performance management process.

**Definition** - Supervisor/Manager is the person to whom the Employee reports to directly.

### **Types of Excluded Approved/Protected Absences when Managing Absenteeism:**

- **Approved Absences** - Absences granted pursuant to legislation, such as the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, or pursuant to the terms of the collective agreement. Examples of approved absences include vacation, parental leave, personal emergency leave etc.
  - Approved absences will be administered in accordance with applicable legislation and/or the collective agreement.
- **Protected Absences** - Absences related to a protected ground under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, such as “disability” or “family status”.
  - Protected absences will be addressed in accordance with the duty on the Company, the employee, and the Union to search for reasonable accommodation up to the point of undue hardship.

Examples of approved/protected absences excluded from managing absenteeism include:

- Company Floater Days
- Vacation Days
- Bereavement Leave
- Personal Emergency Leave Days
- Jury Duty
- Pregnancy/Parental Leave
- Family Medical Leave (FMLA)
- Any other ESA leave
- Suspensions, if applicable
- A disability
- A requirement for accommodation under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*
- Any absence related to a workplace injury covered by the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*
- A Long Term Disability leave of absence

## **Absence Reporting Procedure**

It is an expectation that Employees report each absence verbally to their Supervisor/Manager at least **two (2) hours** in advance of their start time when working on afternoon and night shift and at least **one (1) hour** in advance of their start time when working on dayshift, as per the Collective Agreement Article 9.05., unless it is impossible to do so.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Employee**

1. The employee must contact the immediate Supervisor/ Manager. In cases where the Employee is unable to reach the Supervisor/Manager, the Employee is required to leave a message with the following information: a) the reason for the absence (whether it is occupational or non-occupational), b) an indication if able to perform modified work, c) anticipated date of return to work, d) a telephone number where the Employee can be contacted. If the appropriate information is not supplied, the Employee can expect a call back from the Supervisor/Manager.

### **Supervisor**

The Supervisor plays a critical role in Attendance Management as they are the closest point of contact to the Employees. The two critical responsibilities for the supervisor are:

#### **1. Communication**

- Maintain communication with absent Employees on a daily basis or otherwise agreed upon
- Maintain communication with Manager/HR during absences
- Raise awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- Communicate Horizon Plastics' attendance expectations

#### **2. Managing Attendance**

- Ensure unnecessary absences are minimized
- Ensure necessary absences are utilized
- Identify trends or patterns and concerns of absenteeism
- Timely management of attendance issues
- Maintain accurate payroll records in the online time and attendance system
- Monitor and assess attendance statistics
- Report and review attendance metrics on a regular basis

On a daily basis Supervisors are responsible for maintaining the time and attendance system online. In addition, Supervisors will be responsible to report on attendance Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and review with their Manager on a monthly basis. By reviewing the KPI's, this will aid in the consistent management and identification of concerns, patterns and trends within the work group on a consistent basis. This will be an additional tool in our business planning to achieve our objectives of productivity, cost, quality, service and optimizing Employee morale.

## **Manager/Director**

Managers are accountable for the attendance within their function/department(s) and will review attendance metrics on a monthly or quarterly basis as a team, within their department(s).

Managers will provide support and guidance to Employees and Supervisors in the various steps of the Attendance Management Program.

## **Human Resources**

Human Resources (HR) will provide support and guidance to Employees, Supervisors, Managers and Directors in the various steps of the Attendance Management Program. HR will also provide Supervisors/Managers with monthly reports and participate in the monthly meetings as required to aid in the consistency and fairness of the application of the program.

### **Steps for Managing Non-Culpable Attendance - Innocent Absenteeism**

If an issue has been identified, the Supervisor/Manager is to raise awareness to the Employee regarding the concern and that attention is required by the Employee. The following steps have been formed to act as a guideline for consistency when dealing with non-culpable attendance issues within Horizon Plastics. When it has been identified that there is an attendance issue, the Supervisor/Manager will meet with the individual Employee formally to address the issue. In most cases when attendance issues are identified and communicated to the Employee there will be an improvement in absenteeism or the associated behaviour. This Program is designed to assist Employees, and Supervisors/Managers when the attendance issue or behaviour does not improve.

The various Steps listed below are not to be viewed as disciplinary. The intent and purpose of the Program is to provide information and assistance to the employee regarding his/her attendance and responsibility to maintain an acceptable level of attendance. Ultimately, depending on the particular circumstances of the case, a non-disciplinary discharge may result as a final resort.

The following outlines a series of steps for Supervisors/Managers to follow. Movement through these steps will not be automatic and each case will be reviewed independently to ensure that each individual's situation and circumstances are assessed. When reviewing each case, it is important to analyze previous and current absences (trends or patterns), while considering reasons for each absence. It is also recommended that Supervisors/Managers work in consultation with Human Resources.

### **Attendance Tracking**

The attendance of all employees is monitored to determine whether employees are meeting the expectation of regular and consistent attendance at work. If an employee provides documentation acceptable to the Company, supporting an absence as a non-culpable absence, the absence will not be counted towards the employee's **culpable** absence record and will not be subject to the Steps for Managing **Culpable** Absenteeism. Further inquiry regarding documentation may be requested by the Company before being considered as valid documentation of a non-culpable absence. All documentation (i.e. medical, etc.) supporting a non-culpable absence must be submitted to the Company within forty-eight (48) hours of the employee's return to work. Documentation provided after forty-eight (48) hours will not be accepted, unless there are compelling circumstances to justify this. If no acceptable documentation is provided in support of

an absence, the absence will be treated as a culpable absence and will be addressed in accordance with Steps for Managing Culpable Absenteeism as set out later in this Program.

**Each absence will consist of;**

- Verbal contact initiated by an Employee on each absence
- Appropriate details provided being logged online within the time and attendance system
- Employee being welcomed back to work

**Non-Culpable absences greater than three (3) days will consist of;**

- Verbal contact made with an Employee on each absence
- Appropriate details logged online within the time and attendance system
- Supervisor/Manager facilitated meeting with an Employee to review the attendance record, outline concerns, expectations, and cause & effects of absences
- Schedule follow up meeting
- Document details of conversation in Time and Attendance system (Non-Culpable) Record of Discussion for reference (Copy provided to Employee)

**\* Medical documentation may be requested at any time in accordance with the ESA, providing there is “reasonable cause”.**

**Steps for Managing Culpable Absenteeism**

Absence from work due to factors within the Employee’s control may be treated like other types of unacceptable behaviour and performance in the workplace, and could result in corrective action depending on seriousness of the situation. When the Supervisor/Manager becomes aware of an Employee’s culpable absence the Supervisor/Manager should arrange to meet with the Employee upon the Employee’s return to work or after the culpable absence takes place. During this meeting, the Supervisor/Manager should advise the Employee that there is concern regarding the absence and gather further information in regards to the situation from the Employee. When it has been determined that the absence is culpable the Supervisor/Manager is responsible for entering the appropriate pay code in the online time and attendance system. After gathering and reviewing the facts, overall performance and behaviour will be reviewed and Discipline will be determined as per the Collective Agreement, progressive discipline record and in consultation with Human Resources.

**Disciplinary Steps** The following steps are intended to be used as a guideline only. In each instance, the facts and circumstances, including the employee’s disciplinary record and any

mitigating factors, will be considered and reasonably assessed with respect to the appropriate level of discipline and the Company reserves the right to repeat or skip a step where appropriate.

The discipline imposed for culpable absence, will be:

- Step 1: Verbal warning
- Step 2: Written warning
- Step 3: Suspension
- Step 4: Termination

If an Employee has already received a disciplinary action (regardless of the issue), the next step in the disciplinary procedure would be imposed. However, the nature and severity of any performance management concern, including culpable absenteeism may merit early advancement (i.e. skipping of a disciplinary step or steps) to a more severe disciplinary step, including termination in accordance with Horizon Plastics discipline policy.

The Employer will apply this Attendance Management Program in a manner consistent with the *Human Rights Code*, the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* and other applicable legislation in place to accommodate the individual needs of employees and assist them in the performance of their duties.