

SUPERVISOR TIPS

Sick Leave Usage

As you're aware, District AP VII-3 (Sick Leave Monitoring/Control Program) provides guidelines for all employees regarding sick leave usage. Sometimes, when a supervisor follows up on sick leave usage with an employee per AP VII-3, the employee insists that sick leave is a benefit and an entitlement. How should a supervisor respond?

Sick leave is intended to help prevent loss of wages due to short-term personal injury or illness. It's a common misconception that just because you have a certain amount of sick leave hours accrued you are entitled to take those hours. Sick leave can only be used for very specific reasons, including doctor's appointments, dental visits, and absences due to illness or injury. After an employee exceeds the established 48+ hour sick leave threshold, a supervisor should discuss the matter with the employee. This does not mean the supervisor has concluded that an employee using more than 48 hours is abusing sick leave. Rather, it's the supervisor's responsibility and opportunity to advise the employee that:

- **There's an impact to operations** whenever someone is out of the work environment – regardless of the reason. While someone may have been legitimately sick for say 50 hours, it doesn't take away from the fact that significant levels of absences negatively impact operations.
- **There may be a serious health condition or personal crisis** – By talking with the employee, the supervisor may be able to provide them with some resources, such as the District's Family Medical Leave Policy (FMLA) or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), that the employee may not have been aware of or considered. These issues are private, but if an employee chooses to make the supervisor aware of what's going on, it gives the supervisor the chance to support the employee and refer them to Human Resources for additional assistance. FMLA leave is not counted for purposes of sick leave monitoring, so this could result in hours being mitigated and the employee falling below the 48 hour threshold.
- **The importance of using sick leave judiciously** – The discussion is an opportunity to remind the employee that it's important to have a sufficient balance of sick leave available in case they experience a serious illness or injury at some point in the future.....you want to use your sick leave appropriately, but also judiciously, so it's there when you need it, almost like an insurance policy.

Where else can I find more information on how to handle absenteeism?

You can find detailed informational materials, taking you through the process step by step, including a template discussion record and Written Reprimand, at the employee website (www.ccwd-staff.com) under the HR page, Supervisor Tips section. Also, don't hesitate to contact Human Resources at ext. 8002 for additional support.

