

Sickness Absence Policy

July 2024



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Issue Control Sheet

Issue Record Sheet		
Issue	Amendment Date	Comment
03	18/07/2024	Updated to standardised templated.

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Document Approval		
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1. Purpose

We understand that during your employment, there may be unavoidable times where you need to take a period of sickness absence leave to look after your own health and wellbeing.

This policy applies to everyone employed by Speedy Hire and is designed to provide guidance and support when a colleague is too unwell to attend work. It is not to be confused with our Attendance Management Policy which sets out how we will manage levels of absence through our formal trigger procedure.

You will find additional information within our People Policies – Colleague Support Pack or you can contact a member of the People Team.

2. Understanding Sickness Absence

Short Term Sickness (STS) – is any period of continuous absence less than four weeks in duration. This would also include odd days. Short term absence is often sporadic and caused by minor illnesses that aren't usually connected, such as colds and viral infections.

Long Term Sickness (LTS) – is any period of continuous absence that lasts longer than four weeks in duration. These types of absences are usually covered by a medical certificate and are often related to an ongoing medical condition or period of recovery.

3. Notification & 'Sick Notes'

Whilst we understand contacting work may not be the highest priority when you feel unwell, you must let us know if you are unable to attend work. Failure to report your absence may be investigated and any unauthorised absence (AWOL) will be dealt with via the appropriate policies.

You should contact your manager by telephone on the first day you are absent, at least an hour before your shift start time. You should make every effort to contact your manager yourself, however we understand that in exceptional circumstances this may not be possible so we can allow a family member to contact on your behalf – as this is often better than not receiving any contact at all.

Please note that text messages, WhatsApp messages, emails and contact via social media are not acceptable and you should not pass messages on through other members of the team.

For the first seven calendar days of your absence, you will be required to submit a self-certification form. If your absence continues past seven days, you will be required to submit a medical certificate (fit note) to cover your period of absence (in the Republic of Ireland you should be certified as unable to work, from day 1 of your sick leave, to qualify for SSP). All medical certificates should be given to your manager who will upload and attach the document to the appropriate absence record on the HR system or forward these to the People Team.

4. Sickness Payments

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or Social Welfare Benefit will be paid in line with statutory requirements (Sick Leave Act 2022 in Republic of Ireland) and any eligibility to Company Sick Pay (CSP) will be paid in accordance with your terms and conditions.

There are occasions where we reserve the right to withhold CSP payments, please refer to the People Team for more information.

If you are working reduced hours because of a phased return and you have eligibility to CSP, you will be paid in full despite not working your full contractual hours. If you would not be eligible for CSP or you have

exhausted your entitlement, you will only be paid for the hours that you work. The remaining contractual hours can be taken as annual leave or authorised unpaid absence. If you arrive at work but leave early due to illness, you will be paid for the hours worked and the absence will be recorded.

There may be exceptional circumstances where it may be appropriate to extend eligibility for Company Sick Pay. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis and managers should discuss this discretionary arrangement with their People Business Partner.

5. Welfare Meetings

We recognise that long term sickness absence is often related to an underlying medical condition or disability and requires sensitive management on a case-by-case basis.

Your manager will invite you to attend a welfare meeting when your absence is deemed long-term (usually after four weeks), however this may be requested sooner in any of the following circumstances:

- Your first medical certificate received confirms that you are unfit to work for four weeks or more.
- You indicate that the reason for your absence is in any way linked to issues at work, at any stage during your period of absence.
- Where your medical certificate confirms that the reason for your absence is linked to stress at work or another similar reason.

Welfare meetings are usually at your place of work, however depending on the nature of your absence, they can be arranged to take place at your home address or a mutually agreeable location. This will be agreed with you in advance.

6. Workplace Adjustments

There may be occasions where we need to consider temporary, or in some cases, permanent workplace adjustments to help and support you. Often adjustments are recommendations by your GP or occupational health and may include a phased return to work, amended duties or changes to your working hours. Any recommendations will be considered against the needs of the business, and you may be invited to a meeting to discuss these prior to returning to work.

A phased return to work will not normally exceed four weeks although reasonable consideration will be given, depending on the circumstances.

From time to time and depending on the circumstances, we may decide to carry out a workplace health and safety risk assessment following your return to work.

7. Occupational Health

It may be necessary for us to seek independent medical advice from occupational health regarding your health and fitness at work as they can help us make informed decisions that are in everyone's best interests. An expert medical opinion helps us consider any measures that might support your safety and wellbeing at work or support your return to work if you are absent.

It is considered a condition of service that you attend a medical examination and/or consent to a medical enquiry by a medical practitioner nominated by the Company if reasonably required to do so by the Company and consent to the provision of medical reports to the Company when reasonably required by the Company and/or to the Company discussing the contents of any such report with the relevant medical practitioner.

If you decline a referral to a medical professional, decisions regarding your absence and/or continued employment may be made without the benefit of medical information. You may be considered to be in breach of your contract of employment.

8. Returning to Work

If you are well enough to return to work, you should let your manager know as soon as possible so they can make appropriate arrangements.

Following each period of absence, your manager will carry out a RTW interview with you. RTW interviews should be completed prior to a colleague commencing any type of work, especially if they are operational and out on the road. For office-based colleagues, if you are unable to conduct the RTW interview before they commence any type of duty, it must be completed before the end of their first day back at work.

These meetings are extremely important for both you and your manager in welcoming you back to work. They enable you to highlight any concerns you have regarding your health including medical issues that may impact your levels of attendance.

Your manager will check that you are well enough to be back at work, understand the reasons for your absence including any underlying health conditions they need to be aware of, and highlight if your levels of absence are becoming a concern in line with our Attendance Management Policy.

If your GP or other medical professional advises that you 'may be fit for work' subject to certain adjustments, your manager must be aware of and able to consider these before you return. If it is not possible for us to provide the support needed, or you feel unable to return, the advice will be used in the same way as if your GP advised that you are 'not fit for work'.

9. Disability Related Absence

We are aware that in some cases, periods of absence can occur due to a disability. We take our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 very seriously and are committed to supporting all colleagues who may be affected by a disability to ensure you are not disadvantaged. If you consider yourself to have a disability you should inform your manager as soon as possible.

For absences linked to a disability, we will carefully consider any reasonable adjustments in addition to recording any disability related absence separately for the purposes of considering absence trigger points in line with our Attendance Management Policy. Managers should contact the People Team for advice and support.

10. Medical Suspension

There may be occasions where we need to suspend you on medical grounds, if there are concerns regarding your fitness to be at work or we feel there is any potential risk

to you, your colleagues or our customers. Managers considering medical suspension will make this decision in conjunction with your People Business Partner.

Medical suspension will be on full pay and a referral to occupational health and/or a report from a medical professional may be requested. Welfare meetings will always be held during any period of medical suspension, up to and including any return to work.

11. Industrial Injury

If your absence is due to an industrial injury (an accident that occurred at work which was completely unavoidable), you must notify your manager immediately so it can be escalated to the HSSEQ Department. This is to ensure that the incident is recorded appropriately as we may be legally obliged to inform the relevant authorities (HSE) if you are absent due to an injury sustained at work.

Industrial injury absences do not automatically trigger the right to CSP, and this will be subject to your contractual entitlement. If you are not eligible for CSP but Speedy decide to pay you whilst absent from work, this does not mean that we are accepting liability for the injury caused.