

7 National Attendance Guidelines

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Australia Post Attendance Guidelines

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Australia Post Attendance Guidelines outline the key principles and processes that need to be applied to ensure managers and supervisors adopt a fair and consistent approach to dealing with attendance-related matters.

Attendance-related matters include not only sick leave but also all other forms of leave that have not been scheduled. Unscheduled leave covers any non-attendance for duty that has not been previously authorised by an employee's manager or delegated supervisor. Other types of unscheduled leave include carer's leave, miscellaneous leave, leave without pay and workers compensation leave.

These matters also include late attendance, failure to accurately record commencing and ceasing time, failure to notify absence and failure to follow a reasonable direction in relation to an attendance issue.

However, managing attendance effectively requires more than just a fair and consistent approach. Clause 8.6(a) of the Australia Post Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2004 (EBA6) specifies that Australia Post will not:

“identify individual employees for attendance improvement management based on specific trigger points in an arbitrary or automatic manner which does not have regard to circumstances of individual employees.”

It is therefore essential that managers and supervisors adopt an open-minded, supportive and sensitive approach when dealing with employees regarding attendance-related issues. This means that managers and supervisors need to develop an understanding that no two cases are the same and that all cases need to be treated individually and on their own merits.

These guidelines reinforce the need for managers and supervisors to have regard to the individual circumstances of their employees in respect of issues that may affect their attendance. They should be used with a view to fostering a positive attendance culture through supportive leadership behaviour.

The processes and procedures covered in these guidelines are designed to assist managers and supervisors in this regard, with the emphasis being on providing positive and constructive assistance to their employees while at the same time reinforcing the importance of all employees achieving and maintaining good attendance. This is also consistent with our commitment, both individually and collectively, to the following attendance-related standards in the Code of Ethics:

Attending work reliably and on time, consistent with the hours of duty arrangements and advising of inability to attend and absences during duty, in accordance with the correct procedures.

Successful attendance management relies strongly on building trust between management and employees. This is why the maintenance of confidentiality is so critical. Confidentiality covers not only what is discussed but also what is recorded. It is therefore essential that any records of meetings are filed in secure locations and that personal circumstances of individual employees are not divulged without their prior written permission.

Injury prevention and management, and the management of employees with non-work related medical restrictions are dealt with under separate policies and guidelines. Refer to Section 14.1 – “Accident Leave” and Section 15 – “Employee Compensation and Rehabilitation” of the HR Manual and Australia Post’s Policy on the *Management of Employees with Non-work Related Medical Restrictions* which may be found on the Postnet site: http://postnet/postnet/page/channel/articles/0,,a2663074_b2689572,00.html, or contact the Human Resources Adviser for a copy of the policy.

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

2.1 *Positive and supportive emphasis*

To successfully foster a positive attendance culture, managers and supervisors must be open and honest in communicating with their staff. The most effective approach to assisting employees who have attendance-related problems is to be supportive and work with them to address their individual circumstances.

The development of a positive culture can also be assisted by giving recognition to employees whose attendance is excellent. This not only serves as appreciation to the employee but also helps reinforce to all employees the importance of sustaining a good record of attendance.

2.2 *Fair and consistent application of the processes*

Any informal and/or formal processes dealing with attendance-related matters need to be handled with tact and sensitivity. The individual circumstances of each employee need to be taken into consideration before deciding on the appropriate action to be taken.

If an employee exhibits attendance-related behaviour that is inconsistent with the Code of Ethics standards, the employee's manager or supervisor should address the matters immediately. It is important that the manager always acts in accordance with the associated processes to ensure fairness and consistency. The emphasis should be on correcting the behaviour and positively reinforcing the importance of all employees complying with attendance policies and procedures.

If a manager or supervisor is unsure about the appropriate action to take in a specific case, he or she should seek guidance from the relevant Human Resources area.

2.3 *Promoting health and well-being in the workplace*

Managers and supervisors are required to actively promote health and well-being in the workplace, encouraging employees to participate in health and well-being programs and reinforcing harmonious workplace relationships.

To promote health and well-being in the workplace, a number of practices can be adopted, such as:

- promoting "Get a Balanced Life" health and well-being programs;
- promoting sick leave accruals as an "income protection insurance policy";
- promoting a workplace in which diversity of opinion, perspective and culture is valued and encouraged; and
- dealing with harassment and bullying behaviour.

3. THE PROCESSES

These Guidelines cover five separate attendance-related processes:

3.1 ATTENDANCE EDUCATION PROCESS (Section 4)

This process is directed at:

- (a) employees to:
 - educate them about the importance of maintaining their health and well-being; and
 - bring their attendance requirements in line with the relevant awards, agreements and Australia Post policies and procedures (refer to **Attachment 1**).

- (b) managers and supervisors to:
 - educate them about their responsibilities to fairly and consistently apply the steps that comprise the Attendance Management Process;
 - develop their skills in understanding and dealing with the individual circumstances of each employee to assist them in providing appropriate assistance; and
 - reinforce the importance of providing supportive leadership.

3.2 ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS (Section 5)

The Attendance Management Process covers both the informal and formal steps in addressing attendance-related issues, which may include behaviour which is inconsistent with the attendance standards in the Code of Ethics, and the attendance provisions of relevant awards, agreements and policies.

3.3 MANAGEMENT OF SPECIFIC ATTENDANCE ISSUES PROCESS (Section 6)

This process relates to managing the specific attendance issues of late attendance, failure to accurately record commencing and ceasing time, failure to notify absence and cases of “reasonable doubt”.

3.4 DIRECTION TO PROVIDE MEDICAL CERTIFICATES PROCESS (Section 7)

This process covers the steps in directing employees to produce supporting medical certificates for applications for sick leave pursuant to clauses 26.8.1 and 26.11 of the Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999.

3.5 LONG TERM ILLNESS MANAGEMENT PROCESS (Section 8)

This process relates to providing support to employees on long-term sick leave and arranging fitness for duty examinations as appropriate.

4. ATTENDANCE EDUCATION PROCESS

The Attendance Education Process is ongoing. It begins when employees go through induction and should continue through regular workplace briefings by managers and supervisors to remind and reinforce to employees the importance of adhering to attendance-related policies and procedures.

4.1 Mandatory Attendance-Related Requirements for Employees

It is essential that employees know what is expected of them in relation to all of the following attendance-related matters:

- attending work reliably and on time;
- accurately recording commencing and ceasing times in accordance with procedures determined by management at the work location, such as clocking on and off duty, completing a flex-sheet and signing an attendance book;
- being ready to start work at the scheduled commencement time of the shift;
- if unable to attend for duty, personally contacting the manager or supervisor specified by management at the work location prior to commencement of the shift, where practicable;
- lodging appropriate leave application forms promptly on returning to work after an absence;
- providing supporting documentation for leave applications as required;
- participating in an informal Welcome Back Discussion with their manager or supervisor on returning to work; and
- participating in Attendance Awareness Meetings with their manager or supervisor as required.

4.2 Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring that all their employees are fully informed of the mandatory attendance-related requirements as set out in Section 4.1 above and the consequences of not meeting the requirements;
- conducting regular briefings to positively reinforce related policies and procedures;
- providing employees with details of the names and contact numbers of delegated managers or supervisors whom they must notify when absent from duty;
- obtaining relevant information from employees when they inform that they will not be attending for duty, as set out in the “Absence Notification” form at **Attachment 2**; and
- acknowledging and recognising employees with good attendance.

5. ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

There are four steps in the attendance management process. In many cases, there will be no need for managers and supervisors to go beyond the first step because the employee has a good record of attendance. Beyond the first step, the purpose of the process is designed to provide supportive and positive assistance in dealing with issues affecting an employee's ability to reliably attend for work.

5.1 Step 1 – Informal welcome back procedure

Managers and supervisors must have an informal discussion with each employee upon their return to work from an absence, regardless of the duration of the employee's absence. The Welcome Back Checklist at **Attachment 3** is to be used when conducting the discussion.

The purpose of this discussion is to:

- welcome the employee back to work;
- show concern for the employee's wellbeing;
- ensure the employee is fit to return to work;
- pass on any relevant information the employee may have missed whilst on leave;
- ensure that by the end of the shift, the employee has completed all leave application forms, with relevant supporting documents attached (eg medical certificates);
- clarify, if necessary, whether further information or supporting documents are required before the leave applications are approved; and
- provide the employee with an opportunity to discuss any matters in relation to the absence.

Unless there is a reasonable cause to doubt that the absence was genuine, the leave form should be approved and immediately forwarded to Shared Services Division for processing. If there is any reasonable cause to doubt that the absence was genuine, managers and supervisors are not to authorise the leave and are to follow the procedures outlined in Section 14.12.15 of the HR Manual and seek guidance from the Human Resources Adviser for their operational area.

5.2 Step 2 – Absence monitoring procedure

Several reports are available to managers and supervisors for the purpose of monitoring and reviewing attendance records both for individual employees and for the work location as a whole.

The following reports can be generated from either PeopleMap or HRMS.

- High Leave Usage Report – QR186
- Leave Calendar Report – QR187
- Good Attendee Report – QR188
- Short Term Sick Leave Report – QR207
- Short Term Sick Leave Pattern Report – QR208
- PeopleMAP attendance reports

When analysing individual attendance records, it is important to look at all types of leave that have been taken. Examining sick leave in combination with recreation leave, leave without pay, unauthorised absences, carer's leave, and compensation leave will give a more complete picture of an employee's attendance performance. It may also assist in determining if there are any patterns in the leave they are taking.

Examples of "patterned" leave are taking sick leave with and/or without a supporting medical certificate on more than one occasion within a reasonable period:

- before or after a rostered day off;
- before or after a public holiday; or
- on a particular day of the week (eg Mondays and Fridays).

To comply with Clause 8.6(a) of EBA6, it is imperative that managers and supervisors do not use the employee's attendance information in an automatic or arbitrary manner. This means that before initiating the formal part of the process, managers and supervisors should not only assess the level or amount of leave taken by the employee but also consider any personal circumstances of that particular employee that may justify or explain the level of absence.

It is also important that managers and supervisors continually review the attendance performance of new employees during their probationary period and take appropriate action in accordance with Section 3.9: *Probation – Permanent Employment* of the HR Manual. This section states that a probationer may be terminated at any time during the three months probationary period for unsatisfactory conduct, diligence and efficiency, which would include unreliable attendance.

5.3 Step 3 – First Attendance Awareness Meeting

Using the information obtained from the attendance reports (refer Step 2) and having considered the employee's personal circumstances, managers and supervisors can initiate a First Attendance Awareness Meeting with the employee.

For the purposes of determining whether an employee may be considered for direction to an Attendance Awareness Meeting, managers may review individual attendance reports to assess whether the employee's attendance is below the attendance target for the facility or group, but shall not do so without taking account of their personnel files and records for the purpose of considering whether there are any personal circumstances that explain or justify their absence record.

It is mandatory for the employee to attend the Attendance Awareness Meeting with his or her manager or supervisor. It is a preliminary discussion aimed at exploring any issues that may be contributing to the employee's absences.

The purpose of the First Attendance Awareness Meeting is for the employee's manager or supervisor to:

- express concern to the employee about his or her absences;
- provide the opportunity for the employee to discuss any underlying issues or personal circumstances in relation to his or her absences;
- offer assistance as required. If the employee accepts the assistance offered, it is important that the assistance be provided;
- inform the employee of available internal and external resources such as *Employee Assistance Program*, *"Get a Balanced Life" programs*, *Mensline* and *National API Childcare Referral Services*, as appropriate;
- highlight the income protection insurance benefits of accumulated sick leave credits;
- discuss other leave options if appropriate, eg recreation leave, time in lieu etc, in the instance of personal or domestic problems;
- clarify the "Mandatory Attendance-related Requirements for Employees" set out in Section 4.1;
- increase the employee's understanding of the impact non-attendance has on business operations and team morale; and
- set a review date with the employee for 4 months after the First Attendance Awareness Meeting and explain to the employee that the purpose of the meeting will be to review progress in attendance made by the employee over the 4 month period. This review date may need to be brought forward if the employee's unscheduled leave continues to be excessive.

The outcomes of the First Attendance Awareness Meeting are to be recorded on the standard form at **Attachment 4** . This form can be found at the following link:

http://postnet/vgn/images/portal/cit_1425/52/42/2692326A4%20First%20Attendance%20Awareness%20Meeting%20template.xls

and you are required to complete areas shaded in yellow.

The 'no. of occurrences' refers to the number of occasions of absence for the specific leave type. For example an absence of one working week would be referred to as 1 absence for a total of 5 days or 36hrs 45mins.

The 'Facility Target Attendance Rate' refers to the target attendance rate for your work location.

The form is designed to automatically calculate the total unscheduled leave amounts and the current attendance rate.

When completed the date of interview and any scheduled reviews should be recorded on your local register. The form should be filed in a secure location for future reference.

If an employee refuses to attend an Attendance Awareness Meeting, the employee is to be directed to do so in writing, using the standard written advice at **Attachment 5**. The letter advises that continued refusal to attend the meeting represents a failure to comply with a reasonable direction in line with Australia Post policies and procedures, and as such, may result in the application of the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process.

Every effort should be made to encourage communication and cooperation. If an employee is unwilling to respond to questions or discuss the attendance-related issues, this should be recorded on the Record of Meeting form.

5.4 Step 4 – Attendance Awareness Review Meeting

Managers and supervisors must conduct a follow-up meeting with the employee 4 months after the First Attendance Awareness Meeting to review the progress in attendance made by the employee.

The objective of this Attendance Awareness Review Meeting will depend on whether or not there has been a significant improvement in the employee's attendance.

If there has been a significant improvement, the employee's manager or supervisor is to:

- acknowledge and compliment the employee on his or her improved attendance;
- explain the importance of sustaining the improved attendance; and
- positively reinforce that monitoring attendance for all employees is an ongoing activity.

If there has been no significant improvement, the employee's manager or supervisor is to:

- refer back to the recorded outcomes of the previous awareness meeting;

- explore attendance-related issues further to ascertain any underlying or personal reasons for the employee not achieving the expected attendance improvement and to offer assistance if necessary;
- reinforce and cover again the issues raised at the previous meeting; and
- set a further review date to assess the employee's progress over the next 2 months.

The outcomes of the Attendance Awareness Review Meeting are to be recorded on the standard form at **Attachment 6** . This form should be downloaded from

http://postnet/vgn/images/portal/cit_1425/41/39/2692347A6%20Attendance%20Awareness%20Review%20Meeting%20template.xls

and you are required to complete areas shaded in yellow.

The 'no. of occurrences' refers to the number of occasions of absence for the specific leave type. For example an absence of one working week would be referred to as 1 absence for a total of 5 days or 36hrs 45mins.

The 'Facility Target Attendance Rate' refers to the target attendance rate for your work location.

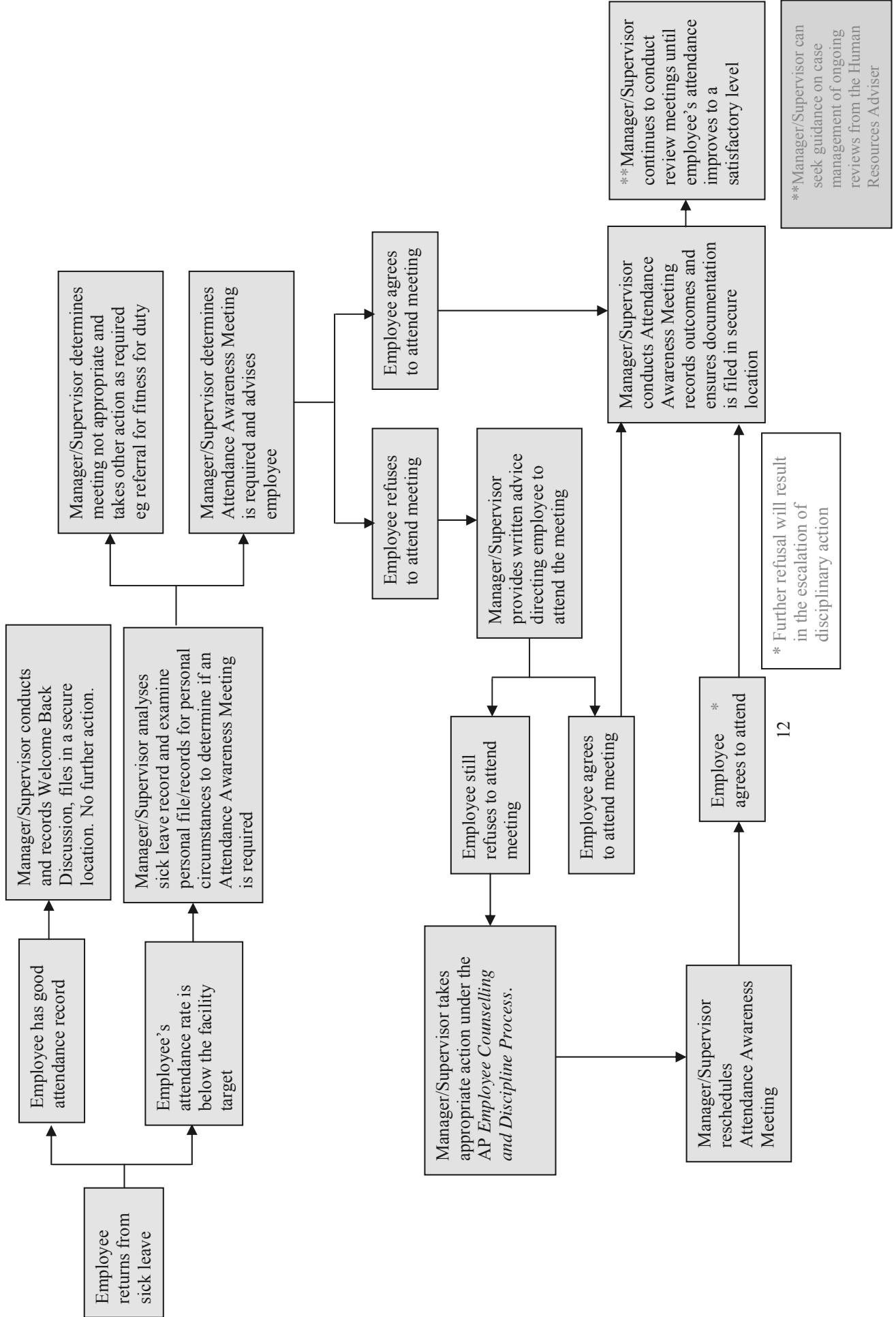
The 'Attendance Rate at Previous at Awareness Interview / Review' is to be taken from the 'Current attendance Rate' as recorded at the last Attendance Awareness meeting.

The form is designed to automatically calculate the total unscheduled leave amounts and the current attendance rate. It also calculates the 'Variance in Attendance' which represents any changes in the individual's attendance.

When completed the date of interview and any scheduled reviews should be recorded on your local register. The form should be filed in a secure location for future reference.

Since attendance management is an ongoing process, review meetings will continue to be conducted until the employee's attendance improves to a satisfactory level. Managers and supervisors can seek further guidance on case management of ongoing reviews from the Human Resources Adviser for their operational area.

5.5 Flowchart 1 - Attendance Management Process



6. MANAGEMENT OF SPECIFIC ATTENDANCE ISSUES PROCESS

6.1 Late Attendance

An employee is deemed late if he or she arrives for duty:

- (i) after his or her scheduled commencing time of the shift and/or after a meal break; or
- (ii) after the commencement of core-time if working flex-time.

Under these circumstances, an employee must report to his or her manager or supervisor and explain the reason(s) for late attendance.

The manager or supervisor will determine which of the following actions is appropriate based on consideration of the period of the absence from duty, the explanation provided by the employee for the late attendance and any other relevant circumstances/practical considerations:

- (a) waive the period of absence due to late attendance (ie the employee will not have their pay deducted or the incident recorded);
- (b) in accordance with clause 21.4 of the Award, invite the employee to elect to make up the period of time lost as a result of the employee's late attendance by working a corresponding period at a later time (such time worked will not be subject to any overtime payment and associated allowances);
- (c) advise the employee if the late attendance impacts on applicable shift penalty payments;
- (d) approve the period of absence from duty as authorised leave with deduction from approved leave credits;
- (e) approve the period of absence from duty as authorised leave without pay; or
- (f) determine the period of absence from duty as unauthorised absence.

If an employee continues to have a regular pattern of late attendance, appropriate action should be taken in accordance with the *Employee Counselling and Discipline Process*.

6.2 Failure to accurately record commencing and/or ceasing time

Every employee is required to accurately record the time they commence and cease duty in line with the prescribed procedures determined by management at the work location. The prescribed procedures can be, e.g.

- (i) clocking a time-card;
- (ii) signing an attendance book;
- (iii) maintaining a daily attendance record by completing a flex-sheet for each fortnightly pay period; or
- (iv) maintaining a diary, where (i)-(iii) are not appropriate because of varied day to day work locations.

Where an employee fails to accurately record his or her commencing and/or ceasing time, the employee's manager or supervisor will determine which of the following actions is appropriate based on consideration of the employee's explanation for failing to do so, together with any other relevant circumstances/practical considerations:

- (a) manual adjustment to the attendance report if the employee's explanation is acceptable;
- (b) further investigation in order to verify the employee's explanation; and/or
- (c) non-authorisation of payment for the unrecorded minutes or hours if the employee's explanation is unacceptable.

If an employee continues to fail to accurately record his or her commencing and/or ceasing times, appropriate action should be taken in accordance with the *Employee Counselling and Discipline Process*.

6.3 Failure to notify absences

When an employee fails to notify the manager or supervisor that he or she is unable to attend for work before the scheduled commencement time, the employee could be deemed to have failed to notify their absence.

The employee's manager or supervisor should therefore address any possible instance of failure to notify immediately after the employee returns to work by discussing the matter with the employee and seeking an explanation for the employee's failure to properly notify his or her absence.

If the explanation is satisfactory, the manager or supervisor may take the following action as appropriate:

- (a) approve the period of absence as authorised leave with deduction from approved leave credits; or
- (b) approve the period of absence from duty as authorised leave without pay; or
- (c) consider application of the actions relating to Late Attendance at Section 6.1.

If the explanation is not satisfactory, the manager or supervisor may take the following action:

- (a) determine the period of absence as unauthorised;
- (b) advise the employee that it is not to be counted as service for any purpose; and
- (c) apply the appropriate component of the *Employee Counselling and Discipline Process*, depending on the frequency and seriousness of the failure to notify his or her absences.

If an employee fails to notify his or her absence continuously, managers and supervisors are to seek advice from their Human Resources Adviser for appropriate actions to be taken.

6.4 Applying for “other leave” while on recreation leave

There are a number of different forms of leave employees can apply for while on recreation leave as detailed in the HR manual section 14.11.15. In the event employees become ill while on recreation leave and wish to apply for sick leave they are required to notify their manager or supervisor in accordance with the mandatory attendance requirements and provide a medical certificate at the time of becoming ill or as soon as possible afterwards.

The minimum period of sick leave to be used in these circumstances is one day.

6.5 Cases of “reasonable doubt”

Where there is “reasonable doubt” about the bona fides of a sick leave application (either with or without a supporting medical certificate), the procedures set out in Section 14.12.15 of the HR Manual should be followed.

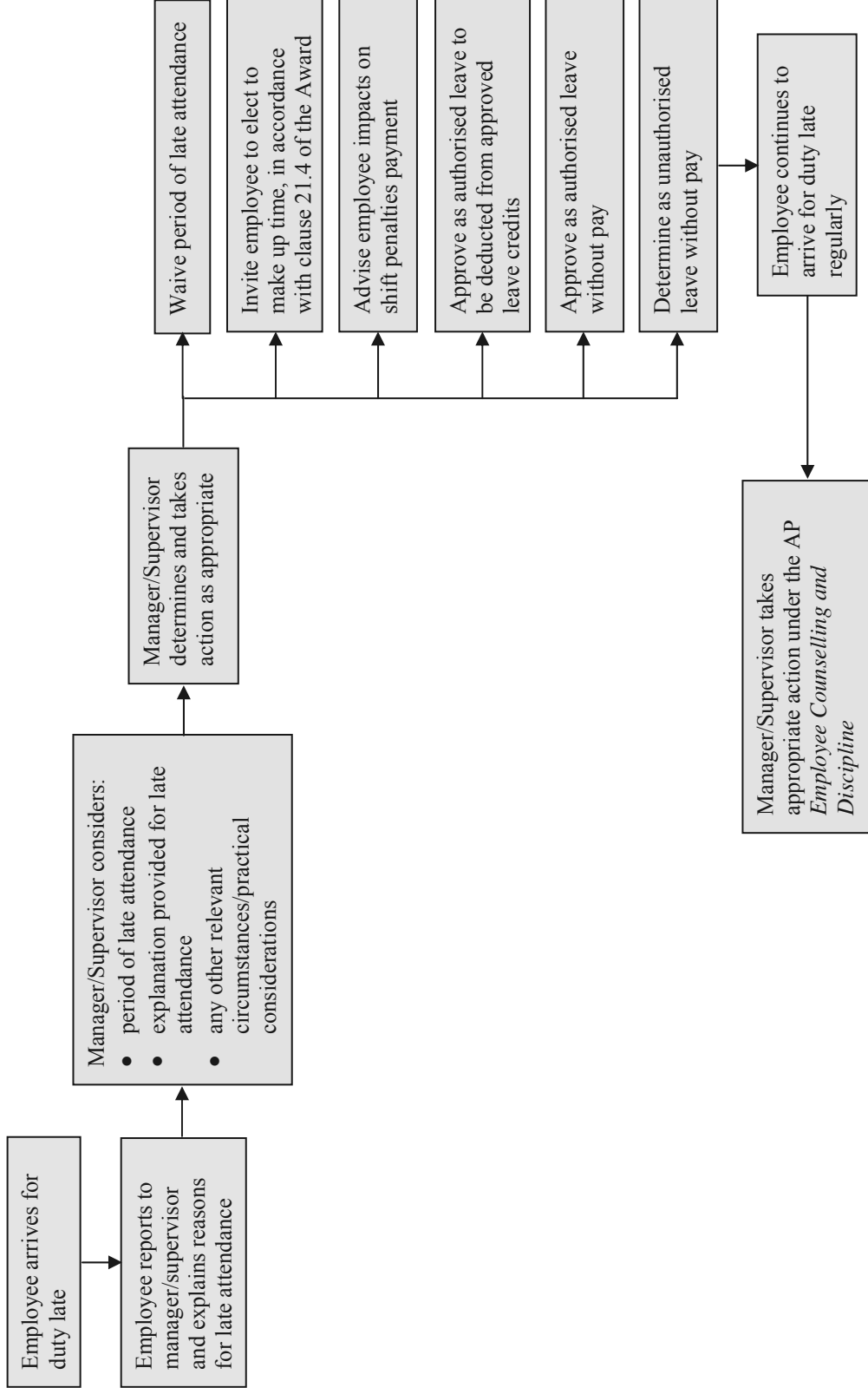
The sorts of circumstances that would constitute *reasonable doubt* include:

- (i) an employee, while absent on sick leave, being observed in an activity or participating in an activity/event that raises questions about the validity of the sick leave; and/or
- (ii) an employee giving advance notice to fellow worker/s and/or supervisor/s that he/she is going to take sick leave without, at that time, good cause **and** the person(s) hearing this statement being prepared to provide written confirmation; and/or
- (iii) an employee, having applied for time off/change of shift which cannot be granted or arranged for operational reasons, absenting him/herself and applying for sick leave to cover the absence.

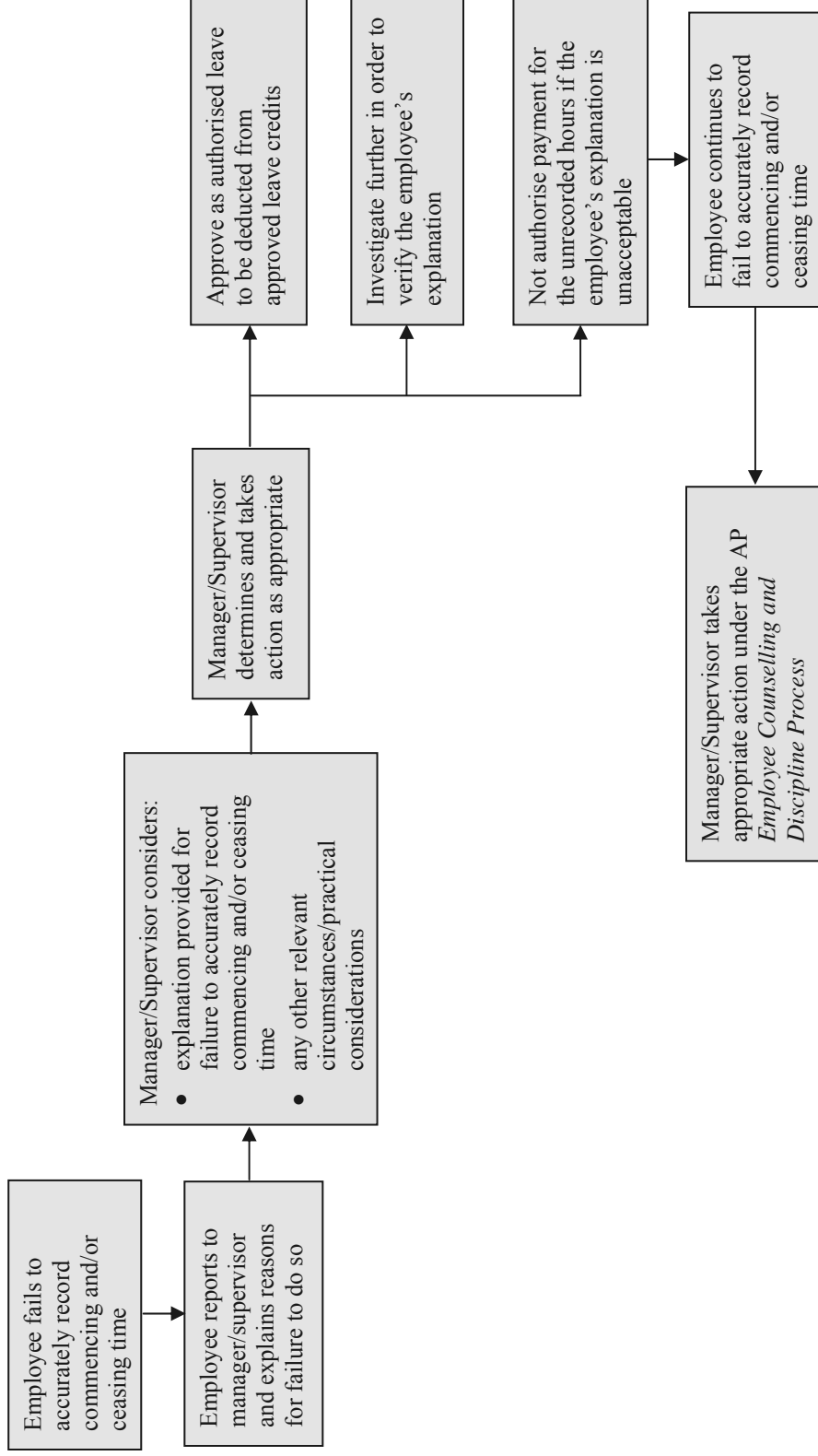
6.6 Medical Certificates from overseas medical practitioners

Where the employee produces a medical certificate from an overseas medical practitioner, the procedures set out in Section 14.12.13 of the HR Manual - *Medical Certificates – Cases of Doubt, Or From Overseas Medical Practitioners* - should be followed.

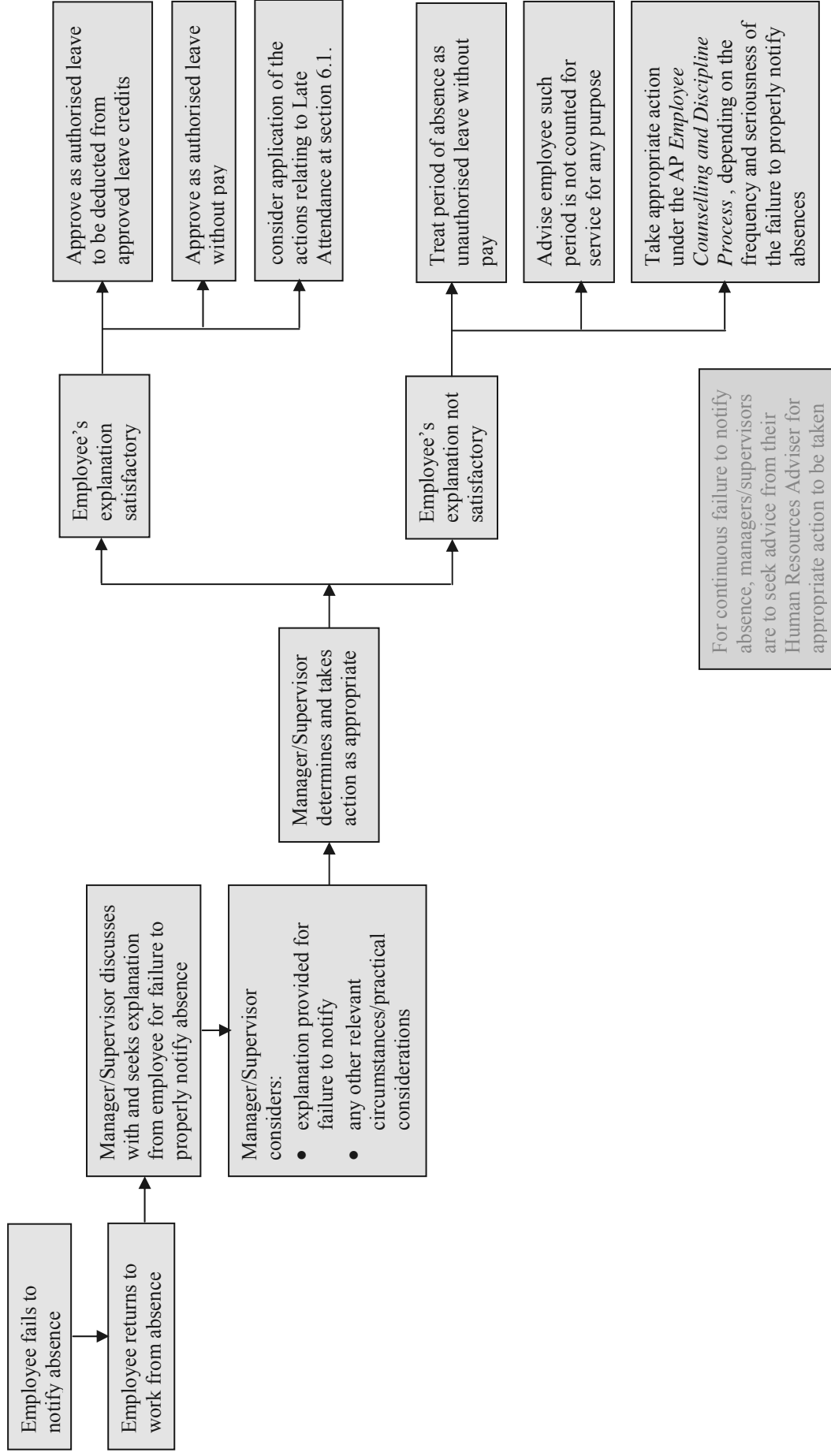
6.7 Flowchart 2 - Management of late attendance



6.8 Flowchart 3 - Management of failure to accurately record commencing and/or ceasing time



6.9 Flowchart 4 – Management of failure to notify absences



7. DIRECTION TO PROVIDE MEDICAL CERTIFICATES PROCESS

It is important to note that the processes set out below operate not only as an adjunct to the preceding Awareness Meeting process (Section 5). They may also act as stand alone processes invoked regardless of whether the employee's attendance has previously been the subject of discussion. However in respect of Section 7.2, such action may only be pursued with the prior authorisation of the Human Resources Adviser. The processes set out below are derived from provisions of the relevant Australia Post Awards and HR policies and can therefore be applied as necessary at any time.

7.1 Application of clause 26.8.1 of the *Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999* – Where use of sick leave without a medical certificate is in excess of maximum provision

- (A) Where an employee has been granted the full time equivalent of 5 days' sick leave without the production of a medical certificate in a sick leave year, as provided for in s26.8.1 of the *Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999* (the Award), the following will occur:
- (i) SSD will generate and forward a written advice in the form of a "5th day" letter to the employee's manager or supervisor. (Refer to **Attachment 7A (i) and (ii)**)
 - (ii) On receipt of the "5th day" letter from SSD, the employee's manager or supervisor will meet with the employee concerned and inform the employee that:
 - (a) he or she has used up their 'sick leave without a medical certificate' credits for the sick leave year as provided for in clause 26.8.1 of the Award; and
 - (b) a consequence of this last absence is that access to sick leave credits will now be restricted to leave supported by medical evidence until the next accrual date and that during the same period sick leave without pay will only be approved in those isolated cases where it has not been possible for the employee to attend a doctor to obtain a certificate; and
 - (c) further absence unsupported by medical evidence will lead to the following consequences (unless approval is given for sick leave without pay in accordance with the process outlined at Section 7.1 (B)(v) below):
 - such leave will be recorded as unauthorised leave;
 - application of Clause 26.11 of the Award to extend the period for which a medical certificate must be provided in support of an application for sick leave by 6 months beyond the current sick leave year; and
 - appropriate action being taken under the *Employee Counselling and Discipline Process*, ie, face to face feedback.

- (iii) The employee's manager or supervisor will also, at the abovementioned meeting:
 - (a) confirm the verbal advice given to the employee by giving the employee the "5th day" letter provided by SSD (refer to **Attachment 7A(ii)**);
 - (b) request the employee to sign that he or she has received the "5th day" letter (if the employee refuses to sign, keep a record of their refusal to do so);
 - (c) keep a record of the date the employee's sick leave year expires; and
 - (d) ensure that Clause 26.11 of the Award is applied to any subsequent unauthorised absences and the employee advised accordingly (refer to Section 7.1(B) and **Attachment 7B(i) and (ii)**).

- (B) If the employee takes further time off during the nominated period without producing a medical certificate, the manager/supervisor is to:
 - (i) advise the employee that the absence was unauthorised;
 - (ii) advise the employee that the period during which a medical certificate must be produced will be extended by 6 months beyond the next sick leave accrual date;
 - (iii) take appropriate action under the *Employee Counselling and Discipline Process*;
 - (iv) advise the employee that further unauthorised absences during the extended period will have the same consequences, ie further extension(s) of the period when medical certificates will be required and escalated application of the *Employee Counselling and Discipline Process*; and
 - (v) advise the employee that he/she can apply for the absence to be approved as sick leave without a medical certificate (without pay) if they have an acceptable reason why they could not attend a doctor to obtain a certificate. Such applications must be in writing, explaining the circumstances and be supported by appropriate evidence. The delegation for approving such applications rests with the relevant HR Department / Unit.
 - (vi) The employee's manager or supervisor will:
 - (a) confirm the verbal advice given to the employee by giving the employee the First Withdrawal Letter (**Attachment 7B(i)**);
 - (b) request the employee to sign that he or she has received the First Withdrawal Letter (if the employee refuses to sign, keep a record of their refusal to do so); and
 - (c) keep a record of the date of the extended withdrawal period.
 - (vii) Subsequent failure to follow the direction to produce a medical certificate will result in further extension(s) from the end date of the latest extension period and escalated application of the *Employee Counselling and Discipline Process*. (Refer to **Attachment 7B(ii)**)

7.2 Application of clause 26.11 of the *Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999* – In circumstances where there is reason to doubt an employee’s ability/willingness to meet attendance requirements, or an indication of a period of Patterned Leave

Where:

- (A) (a) there is reason to doubt the employee’s ability and/or willingness to meet Australia Post’s attendance requirements, or
- (b) the employee’s leave records clearly indicate a period of patterned leave (refer Section 5.2) in any period up to 12 months:
- (i) Unless prior authorisation has been provided by the Human Resources Adviser this course of action will only be considered in the event that there has been previous discussion with the employee to discuss the employee’s attendance performance and there has since been no subsequent significant improvement.
 - (ii) The employee’s manager or supervisor will in all instances consult with the Human Resources Adviser to discuss the reason to doubt and obtain authority to proceed to the next step. The manager or supervisor will only proceed to the next step provided the authority is provided.
 - (iii) The employee’s manager or supervisor will meet with and provide the employee with details of the leave taken over the identified period that have given rise to the concern on the manager’s or supervisor’s part regarding the employee’s ability and/or willingness to meet Australia Post’s attendance requirements;
 - (iv) In the absence of a satisfactory explanation or clarification from the employee regarding the sick leave usage, the manager or supervisor will advise the employee that :
 - The manager or supervisor will also provide the employee with a written direction confirming the requirement to provide a medical certificate for any future sick leave absences for a 6 month period with effect from the date of the discussion with the employee; (refer to **Attachment 7C(i)**).
 - failure on the employee’s part to provide the supporting medical certificate as provided for under clause 26.11 of the Award will result in the consequences/actions outlined in 7.1 (B) (iii) – (v);
 - (v) Should a subsequent “5th day” letter be received from SSD for this employee, it should not be provided to the employee during the specified period in light of the direction under clause 26.11 of the Award.
 - (vi) Arrangements are to be made for the case to be re-submitted for review by the employee’s manager or supervisor prior to the expiry of the period specified in the direction.

(B) If the employee takes further time off during the nominated period without producing a medical certificate, the manager/supervisor is to:

- advise the employee that the absence was unauthorised;
- advise the employee that the period during which a medical certificate must be produced will be extended by 6 months from the end of the current period;
- take appropriate action under the *Employee Counselling and Discipline Process*;
- advise the employee that further unauthorised absences during the extended period will have the same consequences, ie further extension(s) of the period when medical certificates will be required and escalated application of the *Employee Counselling and Discipline Process*; and
- advise the employee that he/she can apply for the absence to be approved as sick leave without a medical certificate (without pay) if they have an acceptable reason why they could not attend a doctor to obtain a certificate. Such applications must be in writing, explaining the circumstances and be supported by appropriate evidence. The delegation for approving such applications rests with the relevant HR Department / Unit.
- The employee's manager or supervisor will:
 1. confirm the verbal advice given to the employee by giving the employee the 26.11 Further Withdrawal Letter (**Attachment 7C(ii)**);
 2. request the employee to sign that he or she has received the 26.11 Further Withdrawal Letter (Attachment 7C (ii)) (if the employee refuses to sign, keep a record of their refusal to do so); and
 3. keep a record of the date of the extended withdrawal period.
- Subsequent failure to follow the direction to produce a medical certificate will result in further extension(s) from the end date of the latest extension period and escalated application of the *Employee Counselling and Discipline Process*. (Refer to **Attachment 7C(ii)**)

8. LONG TERM ILLNESS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

It is important that managers and supervisors provide regular communication and ongoing support to employees on long-term sick leave. If a manager or supervisor considers that it may be appropriate to take any of the following courses of action, he or she should firstly consult with the Human Resources Adviser for their operational area.

8.1 Fitness for duty examination

Clause 10(a) of the *Australia Post Principal Determination* provides that:

- (a) *Australia Post may direct an employee to:*
 - (i) *obtain and furnish to Australia Post a report from a registered medical practitioner concerning a medical assessment of the employee's fitness to perform all or part of his or her duties; and/or*
 - (ii) *submit to a medical examination by a registered medical practitioner determined by Australia Post, for the purpose of a medical assessment and a report to Australia Post concerning the employee's fitness to perform all or part of his or her duties.*

Also refer to the following sections of the HR Manual:
s14.12. 20– 'Medical Examination Following 13 Week Absence';
s14.12. 21 – 'Requirement to Undergo Medical Examination'; and
s14.12. 22 – 'Certificate of Fitness to Resume Duty'

In circumstances where it is believed that an employee constitutes a danger to other staff or the public due to their state of health, Clause 10(b) of the *Australia Post Principal Determination* provides that:

- (b) *If Australia Post considers that an employee is incapable of performing duty or constitutes a danger to other employees or the public due to the employee's state of health, Australia Post may direct the employee to:*
 - (i) *obtain and furnish to Australia Post a report from a registered medical practitioner; or*
 - (ii) *submit to a medical examination by a registered medical practitioner determined by Australia Post.*

Also refer to s14.12.29 of the HR Manual – 'Medical Examinations – Fitness for continued duty'.

8.2 Management of an Employee under the Non-Work Related Medical Restrictions Policy

Refer to Australia Post's Policy on the *Management of Employees with Non-Work Related Medical Restrictions* on the POSTnet site:
http://postnet/postnet/page/channel/articles/0,,a2663074_b2689572,00.html
or contact the Human Resources Adviser for a copy of the policy.

8.3 Retirement Invalidity or Incapacity

If retirement on the grounds of invalidity or incapacity needs to be considered, it should be referred to the relevant Human Resources area with appropriate legal advice as necessary.

Refer to the following sections of the HR Manual:

s14.12. 23 – ‘Maximum Period of Sick Leave (With and Without Pay)’;

s14.12. 24 – ‘Retirement Invalidity – Initiating action’;

s14.12. 25 – ‘Sick Leave Credits up to Retirement Invalidity’; and also Clause 3 of the *Australia Post Principal Determination – Inefficient/ Incompetent Employees*.

Attachment 1
AWARD/PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION/POLICIES
DEALING WITH ATTENDANCE-RELATED MATTERS

PROCESS	AUTHORITY/POLICY/PROCEDURES
A. Attendance Management Process (Refer to s5 of the Attendance Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Code of Ethics ▪ Australia Post's Employee Counselling and Discipline Process
B. Management of specific attendance issues	
1. Late Attendance (Refer to s6.1 of the Attendance Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Resources Manual Section 10 ▪ Code of Ethics ▪ Hours of duty specified in the relevant specific Awards ▪ Australia Post's Employee Counselling and Discipline Process
2. Failure to accurately record commencing and ceasing time (Refer to s6.2 of the Attendance Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Code of Ethics ▪ Australia Post's Employee Counselling and Discipline Process ▪ Human Resources Manual Section 10: Attendance Requirements
3. Failure to notify absence (Refer to s6.3 of the Attendance Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999 sub-clause 26.5 ▪ Code of Ethics ▪ Australia Post's Employee Counselling and Discipline Process ▪ Human Resources Manual Section 10: Attendance Requirements
4. Cases of "Reasonable Doubt" (Refer to s6.4 of the Attendance Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Resources Manual Section 14.12.15 ▪ Code of Ethics ▪ Australia Post's Employee Counselling and Discipline Process
C. Direction to Provide Medical Certificates	
1 Application of clause 26.8.1 of the <i>Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999</i> – Use of sick leave without a medical certificate in excess of maximum provision (Refer to s7.1 of the Attendance Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999 sub-clauses 26.8.1 ▪ Code of Ethics ▪ Australia Post's Employee Counselling and Discipline Process
2. Application of clause 26.11 of the <i>Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999</i> – In circumstances where there is reason to doubt employee's ability/willingness to meet attendance requirement or indication of a period of patterned leave (Refer to s7.2 of the Attendance Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999 sub-clauses 26.11 ▪ Code of Ethics ▪ Australia Post's Employee Counselling and Discipline Process
D. Long Term Illness Management	
1. Fitness for duty examination (Refer to s8.1 of the Attendance Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999 sub-clauses 26.13, 26.14 ▪ Human Resources Manual Section 14.12.20, 14.12.21, 14.12.22 & 14.12.29. ▪ Australia Post Principal Determination Clause 10.
2. Non work-related medical restrictions (Refer to s8.2 of the Attendance Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australia Post Policy on the Management of Employees with Non Work Related Medical Restrictions
3. Invalidity or Incapacity Retirement (Refer to s8.3 of the Attendance Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Resources Manual Section 14.12.23, 14.12.24, 14.12.25 ▪ Australia Post Principal Determination Clause 3
E. Work-related illness/injury Management	
1. Work-related sick leave absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 ▪ Human Resources Manual Section 15

Attachment 2

Absence Notification

Name of employee:	Rostered Shift: : am/pm
Date of Absences: From:..... To.....	Expected time off: days (If unknown, advise employee to notify on additional days)
Type of Leave applied: <input type="checkbox"/> Sick <input type="checkbox"/> Carer's <input type="checkbox"/> Compensation <input type="checkbox"/> Bereavement <input type="checkbox"/> LWOP <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Reason for absence: (If it is not sick leave, what is the specific reason/s for the leave)
Work related: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you seeing a doctor? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Time & Date notification received: Time:.....am/pm Date:...../...../.....	Manager/Supervisor's name: (Print name): Signed:

Attachment 3

Welcome Back Checklist

(To be completed when employee returns to work)

Name of Employee:

Name of Manager/Supervisor:.....

- Check local register for any direction issued to employee requiring medical evidence for all absences
- Welcome back employee on his/her return to work and ask about his/her well being (or other relevant inquiries if carer's leave).
- Pass on any relevant information employee missed whilst on leave.

Where employee advises he/she is well

Where employee wishes to discuss a matter(s)

- Request the leave form be completed and forwarded to Supervisor
- Forward leave application to SSD for processing.
- File Welcome Back Checklist when leave application received from employee.
- Ask about his/her welfare and offer assistance where necessary.
- Request the leave form to be completed and forwarded to Supervisor

Where staff requests carer's leave

- Forward leave application to SSD for processing.
- Follow up assistance offered.
- File Welcome Back Checklist.

- Has evidence been provided ie. MC or Stat Dec
- Was it caring for immediate family or household

Manager/Supervisor's signature:

Date:

Attachment 4

First Attendance Awareness Meeting template

This template is in excel format and can be found the following link:

http://postnet/vgn/images/portal/cit_1425/52/42/2692326A4%20First%20Attendance%20Awareness%20Meeting%20template.xls

Attachment 5
First Attendance Awareness Meeting Letter

Employee Name
Work Location

Dear

Re: Attendance Awareness Meeting

I refer to our discussion on when you declined to attend an Attendance Awareness Meeting. As you will be aware from briefings that have been provided to all staff, it is mandatory that employees attend these meetings with their manager or supervisor.

As you were informed at the time, the purpose of the meeting is to determine what might have contributed to the amount of unscheduled leave you have taken. We would then work together to find ways to help you improve your attendance.

I have enclosed a copy of your sick leave record and a calendar detailing your absences. These indicate that you have had instances of unscheduled leave, totalingdays in the past months. This amount of absence causes me concern regarding your health and well being and is inconsistent with the standards in the Code of Ethics relating to attendance. It is the reason for arranging the meeting with you.

I have rescheduled the Attendance Awareness Meeting to[time] am/pm, on[date] in(venue).

In the event that you continue to refuse to attend the meeting, it may be necessary to apply the *Australia Post Employee Counselling and Discipline Process* because of your failure to comply with a reasonable direction, in line with Australia Post policies and procedures.

Please confirm you will attend the meeting by signing the bottom of this letter and returning it to me by...(time and date).

Manager/Supervisor signature
Date

I confirm I will attend the Attendance Awareness Meeting on ...(date and time)

Employee's Signature.....date.....

Attachment 6

Attendance Awareness Review Meeting template

This template is in excel format and can be found at the following link:

http://postnet/vgn/images/portal/cit_1425/41/39/2692347A6%20Attendance%20Awareness%20Review%20Meeting%20template.xls

Attachment 7A (i)

**SICK LEAVE WITHOUT A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE ADVICE - COVERING LETTER TO MANAGER
(ISSUED FROM SSD)**

SICK LEAVE WITHOUT A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE ADVICE



Manager

«PAYPOINT»

«STREET»

«SUBURB»

Re: «FIRST_NAME» «SURNAME»

The attached letter notifies an employee at your work location that his/her entitlement to sick leave without the support of a medical certificate has been exhausted for the remainder of their sick leave accrual year. Please ensure that the following action is taken immediately:

1. Sign and date the letter where indicated.
2. Discuss the contents of the letter with the employee and ensure the employee fully understands the repercussions of failing to comply with the directions detailed in the letter.
3. Request the employee to acknowledge receipt of the letter by signing and dating it where indicated. If the employee refuses to sign, annotate the letter with the comment "employee refused to sign."
4. Issue the letter to the employee
5. Retain a copy of the letter and ensure a record is made of the expiry date of the employee's requirement to provide medical certificates for all sickness absences.

Employee SL Anniversary Date «ACCRUAL»

For Manager
Shared Services Division

Date

ATTACHMENT 7A(ii)
SICK LEAVE WITHOUT A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE ADVICE - LETTER TO THE EMPLOYEE
(Issued from SSD)



«FIRST_NAME» «SURNAME»
 «EMPLOYEE»
 «CLASSIFICATION»

Dear «FIRST_NAME»

Your leave records indicate that, in the period from «PERIOD» during your sick leave accrual year, you have availed of sick leave without a medical certificate on the following occasions:

DATE	AMOUNT OF TIME ABSENT
«EVENT_1»	«HOURS_1»
«EVENT_2»	«HOURS_2»
«EVENT_3»	«HOURS_3»
«EVENT_4»	«HOURS_4»
«EVENT_5»	«HOURS_5»
«EVENT_6»	«HOURS_6»
«EVENT_7»	«HOURS_7»
TOTAL ABSENCE:	«TOTAL»

As a result, you have used up your “sick leave without a medical certificate” credits for the sick leave year as provided for in clause 26.8.1 of the Award:

Despite 26.6.1 and subject to the availability of credits, Australia Post may grant sick leave without production of a medical certificate for up to 36 ¾ hours in any sick leave year, subject to any such leave not exceeding 3 continuous days.

Part time employees are subject to this provision on a pro-rata basis.

Accordingly, you are advised that:

1. access to sick leave credits for the remainder of your accrual year will be limited to applications that are supported by medical evidence;
2. sick leave without pay will only be approved in those isolated cases where there is an acceptable reason for not seeing a doctor to obtain a medical certificate – such applications must be in writing, explaining the circumstances, and be supported by appropriate evidence;
3. if the absence is not approved as sick leave, it will be unauthorised and will attract the following consequences:
 - a deferral of further access to Sick Leave Without Medical Certificate credits by 6 months beyond your next sick leave accrual date, i.e. until «DEFERRAL» which is 6 months beyond the next sick leave accrual date.
 - appropriate action under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process.

Yours sincerely

Manager/Supervisor

Name: Job Title: Date.... /.... /....

I acknowledge that I have received this letter.

Employee’s Signature Date /.... /....

**Attachment 7B (i)
FIRST WITHDRAWAL LETTER**

Employee's Name
Job Title
Work Location

Dear

Further to my "Sick Leave Without Medical Certificate Advice" of (date) and my discussions with you on (insert date(s)) it is disappointing that you have further taken unauthorised leave.

Your leave records indicate that, in the period from..... to during your sick leave accrual year, you have availed of sick leave without a medical certificate on the following occasions:

[List the dates of all sick leave absences without a medical certificate over the nominated period.]

Accordingly, you are directed that all future sick leave applications must be supported by a medical certificate for the remainder of your sick leave accrual year **and** for a further extension of a period of 6 months, commencing from your next accrual date, until (insert end date of the extension period).

This direction is made pursuant to clause 26.11 of the *Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999* (the Award) which provides that:

Despite anything else contained in this clause, where an employee has failed to produce satisfactory evidence to support an application for sick leave, Australia Post may direct that employee, in writing, that all future applications for sick leave for such period as is specified in the direction must be supported by evidence in accordance with 26.6.1

Clause 26.6.1 of the Award provides that:

An application for sick leave must be supported by the certificate of a duly qualified medical practitioner or other evidence approved by Australia Post.

It is important that you be aware that failure on your part to comply with this direction will result in further extensions of the period when you must supply medical certificates to support sick leave absences and escalating action under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process.

Yours sincerely

Signature of employee's manager or supervisor
[Print name of Manager or supervisor]
Job Title
Date

I acknowledge that I have received this letter.

Employee's Signature **Date .../.../...**

Attachment 7B (ii)
FURTHER WITHDRAWAL LETTER

Employee's Name
Job Title
Work Location

Dear

Further to my letter of (*insert date of the latest Withdrawal Letter*) and my discussions with you on (*insert date(s)*), it is disappointing that you have further taken unauthorised leave.

In the letter of (*insert date of the latest Withdrawal Letter*), you were directed that all future sick leave applications must be supported by a medical certificate.

You were also advised that

“failure on your part to comply with this direction will result in further extensions of the period when you must supply medical certificates to support sick leave absences and escalating action under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process.”

Despite the direction given to you in the above letter, your leave records indicate that you have further availed of sick leave without a medical certificate on the following occasions since (*insert date of discussion/issue of the latest Withdrawal Letter*):

[*List the dates of all sick leave absences without a medical certificate since the discussion/the latest Withdrawal Letter was issued.*]

Accordingly, the period in which your future sick leave applications must be supported by a medical certificate is now extended for a further six months from the end date of the current extension period. You are directed that all future sick leave applications must be supported by a medical certificate until (*insert date which is 6 months from the end date of the current extension period*).

This direction is made pursuant to clause 26.11 of the *Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999* (the Award) which provides that:

Despite anything else contained in this clause, where an employee has failed to produce satisfactory evidence to support an application for sick leave, Australia Post may direct that employee, in writing, that all future applications for sick leave for such period as is specified in the direction must be supported by evidence in accordance with 26.6.1

Clause 26.6.1 of the Award provides that:

An application for sick leave must be supported by the certificate of a duly qualified medical practitioner or other evidence approved by Australia Post.

Failure on your part to comply with this direction will result in further extensions of the period when you must supply medical certificates to support sick leave absences and escalating action under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process.

Yours sincerely

Signature of employee's manager or supervisor
[Print name of Manager or supervisor]
Job Title
Date

I acknowledge that I have received this letter.

Employee's Signature **Date .../.../...**

Attachment 7C (i)

SAMPLE LETTER TO EMPLOYEE RE APPLICATION OF CLAUSE 26.11 OF THE AUSTRALIA POST GENERAL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AWARD 1999

Employee's Name
Job Title
Work Location

Dear

Your leave records indicate that, in the period from..... to, (*this period can be up to 12 months*) you have availed of sick leave on the following occasions:

Date	Amount of time absent	MC Provided y/n ?	Any specific concerns (<i>e.g. adjacent to weekend, day after pay day</i>)

[List the dates of all sick leave absences over the nominated period and specify in the case of each absence whether it was with or without a supporting medical certificate

[Provide the employee with the specific factors in relation to each of the sick leave absences over the nominated period that prompted you, as the employee's manager or supervisor, to write this letter.] [eg I note that (...) of the above (...) absences were not supported by a medical certificate. (...) sick leave absences immediately preceded a long weekend.]

I am of the opinion that the dates referred to above present a doubt regarding your ability/willingness to meet your attendance requirements, and/or an indication of a period of patterned leave [*specify which of these circumstances apply to the individual*].

I have discussed this issue with you on (*date(s) of discussions, include details of any Attendance Awareness Interviews/Reviews*) and it is disappointing that your attendance has shown no significant improvement.

Accordingly, you are directed that all future sick leave applications must be supported by a medical certificate for a period of 6 months, commencing from [*insert date*].

This direction is made pursuant to clause 26.11 of the *Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999* (the Award) which provides that:

Despite anything else contained in this clause, where an employee has failed to produce satisfactory evidence to support an application for sick leave, Australia Post may direct that employee, in writing, that all future applications for sick leave for such period as is specified in the direction must be supported by evidence in accordance with 26.6.1.

Clause 26.6.1 of the Award provides that:

An application for sick leave must be supported by the certificate of a duly qualified medical practitioner or other evidence approved by Australia Post.

It is important that you be aware that failure on your part to comply with this direction will result in the period of absence being unauthorised, further extensions of the period during which you must supply medical certificates to support sick leave absences, and action being taken under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process for your failure to follow a direction.

Yours sincerely

Signature of employee's manager or supervisor
[Print name of Manager or supervisor]
Job Title
Date

I acknowledge that I have received this letter.

Employee's Signature **Date .../.../...**

Attachment 7C (ii)

SAMPLE LETTER TO EMPLOYEE RE APPLICATION OF CLAUSE 26.11 OF THE AUSTRALIA POST GENERAL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AWARD 1999 – FURTHER WITHDRAWAL LETTER

Employee's Name
Job Title
Work Location

Dear

Further to my letter of *(insert date of the latest Withdrawal Letter application of Clause 26.11 letter, or, latest Further Withdrawal Letter)* and my discussions with you on *(insert date(s))*, it is disappointing that you have further taken unauthorised leave.

In the letter of *(insert date of the latest application of Clause 26.11 letter or, latest Further Withdrawal Letter) latest Withdrawal Letter*, you were directed that all future sick leave applications must be supported by a medical certificate.

You were also advised that

“failure on your part to comply with this direction will result in further extensions of the period when you must supply medical certificates to support sick leave absences and escalating action under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process.”

Despite the direction given to you in the above letter, your leave records indicate that you have further availed of sick leave without a medical certificate on the following occasions since *(insert date of discussion/issue of the latest application of Clause 26.11 letter) latest Withdrawal Letter*):

[List the dates of all sick leave absences without a medical certificate since the discussion/the latest application of Clause 26.11 letter was Withdrawal Letter was issued.]

Date of absence	Period of absence
Total	

Accordingly, the period in which your future sick leave applications must be supported by a medical certificate is now extended for a further six months from the end date of the current extension period. You are directed that all future sick leave applications must be supported by a medical certificate until *(insert date which is 6 months from the end date of the current extension period)*.

This direction is made pursuant to Clause 26.11 of the *Australia Post General Conditions of Employment Award 1999* (the Award) which provides that:

Despite anything else contained in this clause, where an employee has failed to produce satisfactory evidence to support an application for sick leave, Australia Post may direct that employee, in writing, that all future applications for sick leave for such

period as is specified in the direction must be supported by evidence in accordance with 26.6.1

Clause 26.6.1 of the Award provides that:

An application for sick leave must be supported by the certificate of a duly qualified medical practitioner or other evidence approved by Australia Post.

Failure on your part to comply with this direction will result in further extensions of the period when you must supply medical certificates to support sick leave absences and escalating action under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process.

Yours sincerely

Signature of employee's manager or supervisor
[Print name of Manager or supervisor]
Job Title
Date

I acknowledge that I have received this letter.

Employee's Signature **Date .../.../...**

Attachment 8

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What constitutes unscheduled leave?

If the leave was not authorised by the manager or supervisor prior to it being taken, the leave cannot be considered as being planned. Hence it is categorised as unscheduled leave. The most common form of unscheduled absence is sick leave. Other types include carer's leave, miscellaneous leave and leave resulting from workers compensation.

2. How to determine which employees may be considered for direction to an Attendance Awareness Meeting?

For the purposes of determining which employees may be considered for direction to an Attendance Awareness Meeting, managers may review individual attendance reports to assess which employee's attendance is below the attendance target for the facility or group, as well as their personnel file and records to reveal whether there are any personal circumstances that explain or justify their absenteeism.

At all times when assessing employees' sick leave records, their individual circumstances must be taken into consideration, in accordance with Clause 8.6 of EBA6.

3. Can staff refuse to attend Attendance Awareness Meetings?

Attending the meetings is mandatory. Failure to attend the Awareness Meetings may result in action being taken under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process for failure to comply with a direction in line with Australia Post policies and procedures.

Managers/supervisors should adopt a supportive approach at the meetings to foster two way communication and cooperation. If an employee is unwilling to respond to questions or discuss the attendance-related issues, this should be recorded on the Record of Meeting form.

4. What action can be taken if an employee's attendance does not improve after the Attendance Awareness Review Meeting?

If there is no improvement after the second meeting it will be necessary to conduct further review meetings. Attendance is just one of many indicators of an employee's performance. If employees have high levels of sick leave, they may also possibly be failing to notify, be regularly late or regularly fail to accurately record their commencing and ceasing time. They may also not be meeting work performance standards or exhibit other forms of inappropriate behaviour. If this is the case, consideration should be given to closer case management of the employee's performance. This matter should be discussed with the HR Adviser to determine the appropriate action.

5. If a certificate indicates only that an employee was “sick” or “unfit for duty”, can the employee be asked for more details?

Managers are at liberty to seek clarification but employees and their doctors are entirely within their rights not to give it. If employees refuse to provide further details about their illness, the matter will not be pursued further. If managers or supervisors believe an employee may be suffering from an illness that may be risking the health and safety of other employees, they should contact the Human Resources Adviser for their operational area.

6. What action can be taken if there is cause to doubt that an employee’s sick leave is genuine?

There may be occasions when there could be cause to question whether an application for sick leave is genuine. An example of this is where a medical certificate is provided which does not have detailed either the signature, name or qualifications of the treating doctor.

The action that may be taken is covered by Section 14.12.15 of the HR Policies and Procedures Manual. In the event there is a need to clarify whether it is appropriate to apply the associated action, managers should first contact their HR Advisers.

7. Under what circumstances can back dated certificates be accepted?

Back dated certificates are generally not acceptable. However there may be extreme cases where they will be accepted. In some circumstances, this would apply to employees suffering serious illnesses or injuries or where shift workers were unable to visit their treating doctor due to the surgery being closed.

8. Under what circumstances are certificates from overseas doctors acceptable?

The action that may be taken is covered by Section 14.12.13 of the HR Policies and Procedures Manual. If there is a need to clarify whether it is appropriate to apply the associated action, managers should first contact their HR Adviser.

9. What help other than EAP can be offered to staff with problems affecting their attendance?

This is dependent on the nature of the associated problems. If the factors affecting their attendance are operationally based, eg shift start/finish times, there may in some cases be opportunities make temporary changes to such arrangements to accommodate the needs of employees.

If personal problems are identified as the main contributing factors, there are a number of options that can be made available to employees. The employee assistance provider can provide advice as to specialists, agencies, government bodies etc that are best qualified/equipped to provide the required help. In addition managers/supervisors and staff can refer to Australia Post’s Work/Life Initiatives.

10. What is the acceptable process for notifying absence from duty?

Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all staff are fully aware that in the event they are unable to attend for duty that they personally contact the delegated manager or supervisor in the work location prior to the commencement of their shift, where practicable. (Refer to Section 10 of the HR Manual).

11. When is it acceptable for someone other than the employee to notify absence from duty?

This would only be acceptable in the event employees are physically incapable of contacting their manager or supervisor.

12. What type of action can be taken against an employee who fails to notify an absence for the first time?

This will depend on the circumstances surrounding the failure to notify. If the reasons provided by the employee are not satisfactory, action should be pursued under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process.

13. What if they fail to notify again?

Depending on the time lag between the instances, more serious action may be taken under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process. If employees continue not to notify absences without good reason, they may be subject to an Inquiry and potential dismissal. (Refer to Section 6.3 of the Attendance Guidelines)

14. When should the process for abandonment of employment be commenced?

If employees do not notify their absence, the manager or supervisor should attempt to contact the employee. If the absence continues without notification and contact can still not be made with the employee, contact the HR Adviser for your operational area for advice on appropriate action to be taken.

15. When is it appropriate for action to be taken against employees who are regularly late for work or fail to record their hours of duty?

If employees are regularly late for duty and/or fail to record their hours of duty as prescribed, they may be subject to action under the Employee Counselling and Discipline Process. This action may be escalated if employees continue to regularly be late and or fail to accurately record their hours. (Refer to Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of the Attendance Guidelines)

16. Under what circumstances can sick leave be deemed as unauthorised absence not to count as service?

When employees have exceeded their 5 days without a medical certificate in a sick leave year and fail to provide a medical certificate for subsequent absences in that period.

When employees fail to notify absence from duty in accordance with the correct procedures.

Where it has been determined that there is doubt about the genuine nature of the absence.

17. What is the advice that should be given to employees if they request sick leave while on recreation leave?

They are to be advised to provide a medical certificate as soon as possible covering the specific period of time that they were sick and would have been unfit for duty had they not been on recreation leave.

For further information on the Attendance Guidelines, please contact the Human Resources area in your Division.

A copy of the Guidelines can be found on POSTnet under

People at Post>Tools & Resources>Policies, Guidelines & Strategies>National Attendance Guidelines