

Return To Work Guide

For Supervisors Assisting Employees With a Leave of Absence

This guide is developed to assist supervisors with managing a leave of absence for their employees and ensure there is a smooth transition during the leave process. This will cover items from the notification of a need for leave through returning an employee back to the workplace after being on a leave of absence.

CRITERIA & PROVISIONS

- Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid job protected time off of work for qualifying events or conditions for either themselves or a qualifying family member. Review the full [FMLA Policy](#).
- For leaves 10 days or more (continuous), or if there is an underlying health condition requiring ongoing care/treatment (intermittent).

SUPERVISOR & EMPLOYEE DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Discuss amount of time and dates the employee will be on leave.
- Make sure the employee has reached out to HR for process steps and necessary documentation that needs to be submitted, at least 30 days in advance of the leave start date if known.
- Discuss time reporting and reference leave communication from HR on Payroll, which includes leave dates and how compensation will be covered.
 - This includes who will be responsible for the entry for supervisor/employee items.
- For intermittent leave or reduced work schedule, reinforce call-out procedures and methods for communication.
- Discuss communication medium if outreach by supervisor is needed regarding critical business needs or return to work status.
 - Note this is not to perform work, but to ask where an item is to keep work moving in their absence.
- Review/discuss work coverage and business needs.
- Move critical, ongoing, or pending work products to a share drive or other accessible location/device.
- Email and phone out of office messages or forwarding.
- Calendar blocking for time out of office.
- Notification to coworkers and other key constituents regarding absence.
- Discuss return to work plan (see Return to Work section below).

RETURN TO WORK

- Update employee on policies and or procedures that might have changed since their absence in advance.
- Send a welcome back message on their first day returning to the office or a few days prior in anticipation of their return date.
- Set aside a time to meet with employee on their first day back to check in and remind them about updated polices and or procedures.

- Collect a copy of the return to work release (if applicable) from their provider and/or confirm Human Resources has received it as well.
 - If an employee has restrictions upon or prior to returning to work, the supervisor must connect with Human Resources to discuss/evaluate the restrictions.
 - The return to work note should be faxed to Human Resources at least two days prior to the employee's return to work.
 - If the employee does not return to work on the intended date, you must inform Human Resources immediately.
 - If ADA accommodations are needed/requested, Human Resources and Disability Support Resources will review and assist with follow-up accordingly.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- Supervisors **DO NOT** have the authority to contact healthcare providers with any questions related to the employee's absence. Direct any questions to Human Resources.
- Supervisors **DO** have the right to contact the employee while they are on leave to discuss critical business needs or to confirm return to work plan.
- Supervisors **DO** have the authority to request that employees on reduced work schedule or intermittent leave coordinate office visits and appointments with times that are least disruptive to departmental needs and operations.
- Supervisors **DO** have an obligation to hold an employee who is on reduced work schedule or intermittent leave accountable for meeting work goals and business objectives.