Department Resources – Department Policies & Procedures - Administrative:
POLICY - Attendance

Goal: The success of the Chemistry Department is dependent upon regular and prompt attendance of staff members. Staff are expected to maintain satisfactory attendance by reporting to work as scheduled and keeping unscheduled absences to a minimum. Failure to maintain satisfactory attendance constitutes insubordination and will result in corrective action up to and including dismissal. Supervisors and managers are responsible for distributing this procedure to all current and future staff members of their units.

APPLICABILITY
This procedure applies to all classified and contract-classified staff. It also will be used as a guideline for temporary, probationary, and professional staff. However, temporary, probationary, and professional staff are employed at will and nothing in this procedure creates a contract or promise that alters the “at will” status of these employees.

EXCEPTIONS
The following absences shall not be considered under this procedure. Documentation may be required.
- Single extended illness
- Serious medical conditions and other absences covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act
- In-patient hospitalizations
- Death of a family or household member
- Authorized absence due to job-related injury or illness
- Authorized leave of absence
- Pre-authorized and emergency medical/dental appointments
- Pre-authorized holidays and vacations
- Civil duty leave
- Military leave
- Mandated leave following exposure to contagious disease
- Disciplinary suspension days
- Administrative leave
- Suspended Operations/Inclement Weather
- Disability leave

SECTION I. UNSCHEDULED ABSENCE
A. Notice
Employees who do not report to work as scheduled must notify their supervisor in accordance with departmental procedures (see attached supervisor list). Barring extraordinary circumstances, failure to provide the required notification within 30 minutes of the scheduled start or return time constitutes an unauthorized absence. See Section II for further discussion.

B. Excessive Absenteeism
Staff members are expected to keep unscheduled absences to a minimum. Supervisors should discuss attendance expectations with all staff in their unit.
- Unscheduled absences are any unplanned absence excluding the listed exceptions
- Six (5) occurrences or nine (8) days of unscheduled absence in any twelve month period are a violation of this procedure
- Occurrences of unscheduled absence may be a single day or multiple consecutive days

An employee whose absences exceed the limit described above is subject to corrective action beginning at the 1st step as set forth below. Absences are counted in a rolling year as distinguishable from a calendar year or renewing year. The rolling year is any twelve-month period. Each absence starts a twelve-month counting period until the employee reaches five absences or eight days in twelve months. At that point, corrective action occurs for those absences and counting starts anew.
The next level of corrective/disciplinary action shall occur if the employee has another 5 occurrences or 8 days of unscheduled absence within any twelve month period during the two years following a violation. If a violation does not recur until after two years have expired, corrective action should repeat at the same step.

1st step  Letter of Counsel or Informal Verbal Counseling (CSA only) or Step A (1199 only)
2nd step  Written Reprimand or Informal Written Counseling (CSA only) or Step B (1199 only)
3rd step  Suspension/Salary Reduction or Formal Counseling (CSA only) or Step C (1199 only)
4th step  Suspension/Salary Reduction or Final Counseling (CSA only) or Step D (1199 only)
5th step  Dismissal

C. Sick Leave
Sick leave is a benefit provided to employees to cover wages during absences set forth in WAC 251-22-110 and Article 10.1(b) of the CSA bargaining agreement. Sick leave may ONLY be used for these specified purposes, many of which are included in the list of Exceptions set forth above. Full use of sick leave may not constitute acceptable attendance and under certain circumstances will constitute a violation of this procedure. Fraudulent use of sick leave is grounds for termination.

Verification of the appropriateness of sick leave use may be required. Failure to provide requested verification constitutes a separate violation of this procedure and may be subject to discipline. A request for verification related to sick leave is not discipline. Providing verification as requested does not preclude discipline; even with verification of sick leave, an employee who has excessive unscheduled absences will be subject to corrective action/discipline. Submission of altered or falsified documentation is grounds for dismissal.

D. Annual Leave, Compensatory Time, Leave Without Pay
Supervisors retain the discretion to approve or deny use of annual leave, compensatory time, and authorized leave without pay for unscheduled absences. Supervisory approval does not mean an unscheduled absence will not be considered under this procedure. Excessive unscheduled absences are not appropriate whether or not accrued time is available and approved.

SECTION II. UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE
Employees who do not report to work as scheduled must notify their supervisor (see attached supervisor list). Barrning extraordinary circumstances, failure to provide the required notification within 30 minutes of the scheduled start or return time constitutes an unauthorized absence. Additionally, failure to obtain supervisory approval for an unscheduled absence constitutes an unauthorized absence. Employees who are granted paid or authorized leave without pay (LWOP) for an unscheduled absence are not in violation of this section; an unauthorized absence should reflect unauthorized LWOP. (See department policy on requesting authorized leave)

An unauthorized absence is serious misconduct warranting a strong response. For the first occurrence of up to 2 days, employees will not be paid for time absent and disciplinary action will begin at the 4th step as set forth below. On the second occurrence or for an unauthorized absence that exceeds two days, dismissal is warranted.

It is recommended that supervisors attempt to contact employees who fail to notify management of their absence. During the first two days of absence, the supervisor should call the employee or emergency contact at the last known telephone number. If contact is not made by the third day, the supervisor should send a letter via certified mail to the employee’s last known address requesting that the employee return to work.

4th step  Suspension (2 day min.)/Salary Reduction or Final Counseling (CSA only) or Step D (1199 only)
5th step  Dismissal

SECTION III. LATENESS
Staff are expected to report to work and return from breaks as scheduled. Supervisors should clearly define the expected schedule and adopt a method of measuring compliance (e.g. time clock, log book). Employees
who are late more than once per pay period or a total of more than sixty minutes per calendar month are in violation of this procedure.

Lateness is defined as one minute after the designated start time or break. Our department however, has chosen to establish a five-minute grace period. Staff failing to report within the extended time frame will be considered late.

Employees in violation of this procedure should not be paid for time absent and are subject to corrective action. Corrective action will begin at the 1st step and progress through the higher steps for each successive violation. Barring extraordinary circumstances, employees who are more than 30 minutes late will be considered on unauthorized absence. See Section II for further discussion. If more than one year has passed between violations, corrective/disciplinary action will reissue at the same step.

1st step Letter of Counsel or Informal Verbal Counseling (CSA only) or Step A (1199 only)
2nd step Written Reprimand or Informal Written Counseling (CSA only) or Step B (1199 only)
3rd step Suspension/Salary Reduction or Formal Counseling (CSA only) or Step C (1199 only)
4th step Suspension/Salary Reduction or Final Counseling (CSA only) or Step D (1199 only)
5th step Dismissal

1 Positions excepted from overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Washington Minimum Wage Act are not subject to pay deductions for lateness. Please contact the Compensation Office (543-9404) to confirm whether a position is excepted from overtime requirements.