MSS
The HR People

Leave Management in Ireland

Managing Sick Leave & Employee Absences



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Managing sick leave effectively helps support employee wellbeing, maintain business continuity, and ensures compliance with Irish employment legislation and company policy.

This practical checklist provides managers with a clear and consistent approach to managing employee absences, helping to ensure sick leave is:

- Managed fairly and consistently
- In line with company policy
- Compliant with Irish employment legislation
- Supportive of employee wellbeing
- Accurately documented and recorded

When an Employee Reports Sick

When an employee notifies you that they are unable to work due to illness:

- Acknowledge the absence and respond appropriately
- Follow the company's required absence notification process
- Confirm the expected duration of the absence, where known
- Establish when the employee should next make contact
- Record the absence through the appropriate HR or attendance system
- Avoid asking for unnecessary medical or personal information

Be supportive without making assumptions about the employee's condition.

What You Should & Shouldn't Ask

Managers may need to establish:

- When the employee became unwell
- Whether they are fit to work
- How long they expect to be absent, if known
- When they expect to provide an update
- Whether there are any immediate work-related matters that need to be addressed

*Managers **should not:***

- Press employees for detailed medical information
- Diagnose or question the legitimacy of an illness
- Discuss the employee's health with colleagues unnecessarily
- Make assumptions about when the employee will recover
- Request information that is not required under company policy or applicable law

The focus should be on managing the absence, not investigating the employee's medical condition.

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Medical Certificates & Documentation

Follow the company's policy regarding when medical certification is required.

*Managers **should:***

- Explain the documentation requirements clearly
- Check that required documentation is submitted through the correct process
- Record relevant absence information accurately
- Escalate questions or exceptions to HR
- Keep medical information confidential and appropriately restricted

Managers should follow company policy and current Irish legal requirements rather than creating their own documentation rules.

Keeping in Contact During Absence

Appropriate communication can help employees feel supported while also allowing managers to plan effectively.

Agree with the employee:

- How and when contact will take place
- Who will be their main point of contact
- When their next update is expected
- Whether there are any immediate work matters requiring attention

Contact should be supportive and respectful. Avoid unnecessary or excessive contact while the employee is recovering.



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Recording & Monitoring Absence

Accurate records help ensure consistency and support effective absence management.

Record, in line with company policy:

- Dates of absence
- Required notifications
- Relevant certification
- Agreed contact arrangements
- Return-to-work information
- Any formal absence-management steps taken

Managers should use the organisation's designated HR or absence-management system and avoid maintaining unnecessary personal records.

When Absence Continues

For longer or recurring absences, managers should follow the organisation's formal absence-management process.

This may involve:

- Regular agreed check-ins
- Reviewing available medical or occupational-health information where appropriate
- Considering reasonable workplace supports or adjustments where applicable
- Discussing a potential return-to-work plan
- Following formal company procedures where absence becomes prolonged or recurring

Supporting a Return to Work

Before the employee returns, consider:

- Whether their return date has been confirmed
- Whether any workplace support may be appropriate
- Whether temporary adjustments need to be considered
- Whether a return-to-work discussion is required under company policy
- Whether any workload or operational arrangements need to be updated

The objective is to support a safe and sustainable return while maintaining normal business operations.



HR Compliance Reminder

Apply the company's sick leave and absence procedures consistently, and ensure all records are accurate, confidential, and handled in line with current Irish employment legislation. You can always contact MSS The HR People for advice or guidance if you need support.



MSS Compliance Tip

Don't wait for an absence to become a problem before addressing it.

Agree clear communication expectations from the start, keep accurate records, and check in appropriately - this makes managing longer or recurring absences much easier.

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