

LOUISIANA OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Office of the Assistant Secretary

CONTENT:	<i>Guidelines for all employees, supervisors, and managers that govern the processes and requirements for absence reporting.</i>
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POLICY SECTIONS:	<i>Policy Statement Policy Purpose Special Circumstances Responsibilities Procedures References</i>
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:	<i>All references to Civil Service and LDH Policies are listed.</i>
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APPROVED BY:  , Assistant Secretary **DATE:** *9/23/19*

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy statement outlines the process, requirements, and responsibilities of all employees, supervisors, and managers of the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Office of Public Health (OPH) for reporting absences. The language provided is pursuant to the ***Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Policy 125.1, Work Schedules, Attendance and Punctuality.***

This policy shall apply to all OPH employees, supervisors, and managers. Employee is defined as any staff who is employed or contracted by OPH, including contracted, job appointment, WAE, student worker and unclassified positions. All individuals who are employed directly by the State are required to use the Cross Application Time Sheet (CATS) to document their leave requests and usage (*LDH Policy 77.2, Time Administration and Time Entry; pg. 2*).

This policy shall remain in effect until the policy is revised, abolished, or the law is repealed.

POLICY PURPOSE

The ***LDH Policy 125.1, Work Schedules, Attendance, and Punctuality*** provides governance for attendance, work schedules, and punctuality for LDH classified employees, supervisors, and managers. It should be noted that OPH will comply with the aforementioned policy, and ***Civil Service Rule 15.2, Certification of Payroll and Attendance***, and all other regulations regarding time and attendance.

In addition to LDH Policy 125.1, the **OPH Absence Reporting Policy** has been adopted by the agency to provide guidance to all employees of OPH, to provide a communication process, and to ensure employees are held accountable for their work schedules in a consistent manner.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Exemptions to this policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must be approved by the Appointing Authority. The Assistant Secretary shall render final approval on all exemptions. Each exemption request must be accompanied by a detailed explanation as to why the guidelines of the OPH Absence Reporting Policy are not feasible.

This policy shall adhere to all ADA provisions set forth by Louisiana Department of Health Policy, 81.2 - Americans with Disabilities Act, as Amended.

RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Employees

Employees are responsible for reading and acknowledging the receipt of this policy. Employees, which includes all staff employed by OPH, are responsible for adhering to their assigned work schedules and complying with the absence reporting guidelines outlined in this policy.

B. Supervisors

Supervisors are held strictly accountable for documenting employee work time and for implementing a productive work schedule for each employee. For their direct reports, supervisors are responsible for making their employees aware of the policy, obtaining signature from each employee that they acknowledge receipt of the policy, and monitoring all aspects of their employees' attendance and punctuality. They must ensure that each employee under their supervision is made aware of the attendance procedures and the consequences of non-compliance. Supervisors are required to address attendance problems promptly and effectively and should obtain assistance from the Human Resources office when addressing attendance problems.

Supervisors are also accountable for ensuring that time and attendance is recorded accurately in LaGov HCM (computer-based integrated Human Resources/Payroll system).

Any supervisor who fails to adequately monitor his/her employees' attendance shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment (*LDH Policy 125.1, Work Schedules, Attendance and Punctuality; pg. 2*).

C. Appointing Authorities

Appointing authorities are responsible for ensuring that each employee under his/her jurisdiction has received this policy, and acknowledged receipt of this policy, and each employee has an assigned work schedule that is documented. Appointing authorities are also responsible for fulfilling the supervisory responsibilities for employees who report directly to them.

PROCEDURES

Reporting Absences (Calling In)

Calling In is the act in which an employee provides notice to his supervisor, next level supervisor, or designee to inform that he cannot report to work by the assigned arrival time or must leave work before the assigned departure time.

- A. **Procedures** - Each supervisor, next level supervisor, or designee shall ensure all employees under his/her supervision sign an acknowledgment form confirming receipt of the policy and procedures to be followed when an employee cannot report to work by his/her assigned arrival time or must leave work before his/her assigned departure time.

**Policy Acknowledgment Form can be found as an attachment.*

Such procedures include the following items:

1. The employee must contact his/her immediate supervisor, in writing, to report the absence. Text and e-mail are the allowable methods of contact; as well as entry of the absence time in CATS (for all State employees) for any leave that is being requested in the future. Entry into CATS should not be the only communication or notice provided to the supervisor when the absence is occurring the same day as the notification. If phone notice is provided, the employee should follow-up with documentation (e-mail or text) and all absences should be entered into CATS as soon as possible.
2. If the employee does not receive a response from the immediate supervisor after providing communication by text, e-mail, or telephone, the employee must notify the designee or next level supervisor to report the absence.
3. The notice of absence must give an indication of the expected duration of the employee's absence and the type of leave he/she is requesting (annual, sick, FMLA, etc.).

The supervisor shall notify Human Resources when an employee has been absent more than three consecutive days due to their own illness. The employee shall be tentatively placed on FMLA at the beginning of the fourth day of absence.

Per Federal Regulations, the employer has the responsibility to determine when an employee's absence is eligible for FMLA even if the employee does not specifically request FMLA leave. In LDH, Human Resources makes the determination in consultation with the supervisor. The determination that an absence is FMLA eligible must be based only on information the employer solicits from the employee or the employee's spokesperson. The employee must respond to the employer's questions that are posed to determine if the absence is FMLA-qualifying. Failure to respond to such inquiries may result in denial of FMLA protection if Human Resources is unable to determine that the leave is qualifying (*LDH Policy 29.2-Family and Medical Leave; pg. 10*).

4. Upon notice of absence, the supervisor may allow an employee the option to temporarily work remotely, if the nature of the employee's work is conducive to

remote working. **Remote working** is when work is completed away from the employee's regular worksite, following all LDH rules and regulations regarding working from home.

An employee may be allowed to work remotely for a limited period no greater than three days. If the need to work from home is greater than the three day allotment, teleworking forms must be executed for the employee before the start of the next applicable pay period.

The employee shall itemize in writing the tasks he/she performed while working at home and the number of hours and minutes devoted to each task. The employee shall then submit this written documentation to his/her supervisor no later than the last day of the applicable pay period. Documentation of tasks performed and hours worked at home shall be kept on file by the unit's Time Administrator for audit purposes.

This option is at the discretion of the supervisor and is intended to promote progress and prevent work delays. (*LDH Policy 125.1, Work Schedules, Attendance and Punctuality; pg. 7*).

NOTE: *The call in procedure has no bearing on whether the absence is considered unscheduled in accordance with **Civil Service Rule 12.6 (a) 2**. For information, regarding unscheduled absences please refer to **LDH Policy #28 – Leave Policy for Classified LDH Employees**.*

- B. Employees who have access to CATS should submit the leave request in advance of the leave date if leave is foreseeable. These requests are considered scheduled.

If leave is unforeseeable, the employee shall input the leave request into CATS within 24 hours after the date the employee returns to work.

The on-line leave request is not a substitute for calling in the absence as required by the OPH Absence Reporting policy procedures.

- C. **Non-Compliance** – Paid leave shall not be approved for any employee failing to comply with the OPH Absence Reporting procedures. In such cases the employee shall be placed on leave without pay (LWOP) for the time he/she is out of compliance.

If the appointing authority or designee determines that the employee failed to comply through no fault of his/her own, paid leave may be approved at the discretion of the appointing authority or designee (*LDH Policy 125.1, Work Schedules, Attendance and Punctuality, pg. 6*).

REFERENCES

1. *Civil Service Rule 15.2, Certification of Payroll and Attendance*
2. *Civil Service Rule 12.6 (a) 2, Non-Disciplinary Removals*
3. *Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Policy 28: Leave Policy for Classified LDH Employees*
4. *Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Policy 29.2: Family and Medical Leave Act Policy*
5. *Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Policy 77.2: Time Administration and Time Entry*
6. *Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Policy, 81.2: Americans with Disabilities Act, as Amended*
7. *Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Policy 82: Teleworking*
8. *Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Policy 125.1: Work Schedules, Attendance and Punctuality*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How soon should an employee contact an immediate supervisor to report an absence?

A: *An employee should contact his/her immediate supervisor as soon as they know they will be absent, if possible.*

Q: Whom should an employee contact if the immediate supervisor cannot be reached?

A: *The employee should make contact with the next level supervisor to report an absence if the immediate supervisor cannot be reached. The employee should also include the immediate supervisor on the notice to the next level supervisor or designee to ensure visibility.*

Q: If the employee cannot submit his/her absence hours in CATS within the 24-hour requirement, what should the employee do?

A: *The employee should notify the immediate supervisor that the absence hours have not been submitted within the required time; and the employee should submit the absence hours as soon as possible upon their return to the office.*

Q: If the absence hours are not recorded or reported, how should the immediate supervisor acknowledge the omission?

A: *The immediate supervisor should provide a request to the employee immediately upon knowing that the hours have not been recorded. The employee should then submit hours into CATS, or if necessary the supervisor, employee, and time administrator should complete a Prior Payroll Adjustment (PPA) to correct the omission.*

Q: Can supervisors include failure to adhere to absence reporting policy and procedures in an employee's PES?

A: *Supervisors may reference compliance to this policy when evaluating employee performance.*