



GUIDELINES under the *Disability Management and Accommodating Employees with Disabilities Framework*

Section of Framework Document:	3.0. Disability Management and Accommodation
	3.1 Disability Case Management
	3.1.2 Identification and Initiation
Name of Guideline:	<i>EARLY IDENTIFICATION</i>

Definitions

- Definitions from *Policy 3.59, Accommodating Employees with Disabilities* and the *Disability Management and Accommodating Employees with Disabilities Policy Framework* apply to this guideline as appropriate.

Preamble

Yukon government (YG) departments and unions have worked in partnership to develop and implement a new corporate disability management, return to work and accommodation program for YG employees. The program provides a consistent approach that considers the needs of individual employees.

Purpose of Guideline

Timely awareness and response when an employee is ill or injured or has a disability is a win-win situation for the employee and employer. Early engagement benefits the employee by helping them to stay at work or return to work early and safely, positively impacting the employee’s health and welfare. Evidence is unequivocal that prolonged absence from work has a detrimental impact on an individual’s overall wellbeing. Timely awareness and action benefits the employer by reducing time lost and allowing the employer to retain skilled and experienced employees.

Early identification and intervention ensures that case management services are identified and offered in a timely way, that there are no unnecessary delays in benefit entitlements and that the accommodation process is started as needed. It offers the best outcomes for the employee and the employer by supporting the employee remaining at work, by preventing health related absences as appropriate, by assisting in early and safe return to work and by supporting the supervisor in maintaining a healthy and productive workforce.

This guideline outlines the process for early reporting and identification of situations where an employee with an illness, injury or a disability requires support and a

reasonable, flexible and creative workplace accommodation to enable the employee to stay at work or return to work in an early and safe manner.

Early Identification Process [to support “Early Intervention” section 3.1.2 – Identification and Initiation]

Employee Reports Illness, Injury or Disability

- Where an employee has an illness, injury or a disability that may require a workplace accommodation they should communicate this to their employer as soon as possible.
- The employee is encouraged to contact his or her supervisor directly in order to ensure timely response and action, but the employee may also approach their department Human Resources Branch or the Disability Management Unit.
- The employee may also choose to contact their union representative, and the union representative, on behalf of the employee, may contact the employer about the employee’s injury or illness.
- Where the employee notifies their department Human Resources Branch or the Disability Management Unit that they may require an accommodation because of an injury, illness or disability; the employee’s supervisor will be notified as soon as possible to initiate timely action.

Supervisor Identifies Need for Support or Accommodation

- There may be cases where a supervisor becomes concerned that an employee may have an illness, injury or disability that is affecting his or her ability to perform his or her work duties.

- Where a supervisor has a reasonable concern that an employee has an illness, injury or disability that is affecting his or her ability to work, the supervisor should approach the employee and in an open and supportive manner inquire about the situation.

Possible signs of an underlying health issue:

- an employee has recurrent, repeated or chronic pattern of absences;
- an employee has recently returned from a prolonged absence and is having difficulty remaining at work;
- the employee indicates that he or she will be absent from work on sick leave for an extended period of time;
- information that the employee has provided, causes concern about the employee’s ability to safely perform the duties of his or her job;
- there is an unexpected change in the employee’s behavior, appearance or job performance.

- The supervisor may seek advice from their department Human Resources Branch or the Disability Management Unit in how to approach the employee.

Sick Leave Monitoring and Management

To assist in identifying and following up on situations where an employee has an illness, injury or disability that may be affecting his or her ability to work and potentially requiring accommodation, the Disability Management Unit (DMU) will run 'Sick Leave Usage Reports' at least monthly. The departmental leave reports show employees in each Yukon Government (YG) department who meet set thresholds including:

- a) 75 hours of sick leave in the previous 150 hours of work time (or prorated for reduced work weeks); or
- b) 37.5 hours of sick leave in the previous 150 hours of work time and with less than 100 hours of accrued sick leave remaining in their bank.

DMU will distribute these sick leave threshold reports to Directors of Human Resources (HR) in all YG departments.

The DMU Consultants will follow up with their designated Departmental HR Lead to determine the reason for absence and if any employees are candidates for the Early Referral Services or if there is a need for any DMU assistance. This includes facilitating clarification of medical information (may include Independent Medical Examinations, Functional Capacity Evaluations), access to appropriate resources, and to help employees stay at work or return to work early and safely.

Good Practice Tips:

- Sick leave is about short term disability "insurance" and not an entitlement.
- Careful management of sick leave will ensure each employee has enough to cover the 13 week eligibility period for LTD in the event of a serious illness, injury or disability.
- To ensure seamless and continuous support while away on sick leave, the employee should keep track of his or her available sick leave, with the assistance of the supervisor and department human resources staff as the employee may request. In situations where the employee is still unable to return to work prior to their sick leave being exhausted, the supervisor, with advice from the department human resource branch, should provide information to the employee on other leave and benefit entitlement options.
- The employee, supervisor, department human resource branch, and PSC employee compensation staff should ensure that all forms are processed in a timely and efficient way to prevent an interruption in the employee's benefits, and to prevent overpayment situations when the employee's sick leave credits have been exhausted.

Employee Assistance

The supervisor should also make the employee aware of other workplace options, services and programs available to assist the employee with non-health related issues, such as flexible work arrangements (shortened work day or week; flex time; compressed work week), leave alternatives and the Employee Assistance Program.

Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a professional counseling and consulting service designed to assist employees and their immediate family members to deal with problems that are affecting their workplace and/or personal lives. Information about the EAP can be found at <http://www.psc.gov.yk.ca/eap.html>.

Disability Case Management

When a situation is identified where an employee has an injury, illness or disability that may require case management support and accommodation in order to stay at work or return to work, the employee and his or her supervisor may access the services and advice provided by the department Human Resources Branch, the Disability Management Unit and the employee's union representative.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employee

- An employee should communicate with his or her supervisor as soon as possible about an illness or injury or disability that may require a workplace accommodation.
- Employee will actively participate in the process to provide the necessary medical restrictions and limitations and prognosis to provide adequate information to facilitate an accommodation.

Supervisor

- The supervisor should inquire and follow up with an employee when the supervisor has a concern that an employee has an illness or injury or disability that affects his or her ability to perform his or her work duties.

Department Human Resource Branch

- Review 'Sick Leave Usage Reports' with supervisors to identify patterns of leave usage that may indicate an underlying health concern and address the issue immediately.
- Collaborate with Disability Management in identifying situations that may meet the criteria for Early Referral Services (ERS)

- Department Human Resources staff are available to provide advice to employees and supervisors in situations when an employee reports to the supervisor that he or she has an illness or injury or disability that affects his or her ability to work, or when the supervisor has a concern that an employee has an illness or injury or disability that is impacting him or her at work.
- Where an employee contacts the department Human Resources Branch directly about an illness, injury or disability, the branch will inform the supervisor as soon as possible.

Disability Management Unit

- The Disability Management Unit is available to provide advice to employees, supervisors and department human resources staff in situations when an employee has an illness or injury or disability that affects his or her ability to perform his or her work duties.
- Refer employees to Early Intervention or Early Referral Services to facilitate clarification of medical information (may include Independent Medical Examinations, Functional Capacity Evaluations) and access appropriate resources, to help employees stay at work or return to work early and safely.
- Where an employee contacts the Disability Management Unit directly about an illness or injury or disability, the unit will inform the supervisor and department human resources staff as soon as possible.

Union

- The employee's union representative is available to provide advice and assistance to the employee in communicating with their employer that the employee has an illness, injury or disability and may, on the request of the employee, act as the employee's representative in contacting the employer about the employee's injury or illness.

Accompanying Materials

- Guide and Instructions – 'Sick Leave Usage Report'