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#### **PURPOSE:**

To establish a standardized procedure for the reporting and handling of absences in order to ensure the consistent and equitable treatment of employees.

#### **POLICY:**

In order to ensure quality patient care and to fulfill your job responsibilities, it is important that all employees are present at work at scheduled times and are able to perform the duties required of their job(s). In declared emergencies/disasters at the local, State, and National levels, healthcare providers are considered disaster service workers and are required to report to work. Exceptions must be approved by Human Resources.

#### DEFINITIONS:

1. **Absence Occurrence** is a failure to report to work on a scheduled day and time due to personal reasons, illness and/or family matter. Absences related to sick leave, bereavement leave, family or medical leave of absence, disability leave of absence or worker's compensation will not be counted as an absence occurrence. Extra shifts are considered part of the regular schedule and will have the same attendance expectations under this policy.

If the absence is not to be considered an absence occurrence, employees must have prior written/verbal supervisory approval within a consistent time frame as determined by each Department. Approval is granted by the Department Director and is based on factors such as staffing needs, workload and the employee's attendance history.

During times of declared emergencies/disasters or other extenuating circumstances involving emergency situations exceptions will be considered and reviewed on a case-by-case basis by Human Resources to determine if the absence(s) will be considered an absence occurrence.

2. **Partial Absence Occurrence (arriving late/leaving early)** – is arriving at work late or leaving work early without written or verbal supervisory approval.

Tardy is defined as clocking in eight (8) or more minutes after the employee's scheduled start of shift and/or after the employee's 30 minute meal break, are considered a partial absence occurrence. Leaving work early is defined as clocking out eight (8) or more minutes before the end of the employee's scheduled shift and is considered a partial absence occurrence. Employees are expected to be at their workstation at the start/end time of their shift. Continued patterns of clocking in after the start time of a scheduled shift (one or more minutes late) and/or not remaining in their workstation until the end of the employee's scheduled shift (one or more minutes early) may result in disciplinary action.

Two (2) partial absences (arriving late/leaving early) will be counted as one absence occurrence.

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3. **Consecutive Days** – is an absence occurrence of one or more consecutively scheduled workdays missed due to the same illness.

In a declared emergency/disaster related to a medical situation like a pandemic, a physician’s note will be required after the third day of work missed.

4. **Non-Consecutive Days** – Non-consecutive days are considered separate and unrelated absence occurrences, except for interrupted workdays missed due to the same illness, i.e. staff who are absent two (2) days of work, return to work and are still too sick to work and go home mid-shift.
5. **Catastrophic Injury or Illness** – (Heart attack, trauma, stroke, major broken bones, etc.) A catastrophic injury or illness will not be considered as an absence occurrence in this policy

**PROTECTED TIME OFF:**

1. **Sick Leave** - An employee may be absent by use of available sick leave hours for the purposes noted in the Sick Leave policy and not have it count as an absence occurrence. If an employee’s available sick leave hours do not cover the full time absence, the remainder of such time not covered by available sick leave will be considered a partial absence occurrence. If an employee does not have any available sick leave hours for their absence, the absence is not considered a sick leave absence and will count as a full absence occurrence.

If the employee believes that any of the absences should not be counted as an occurrence because the absence is protected by law governing time off from work, the employee must provide information at that time, prior to the implementation of the corrective plan of action.

2. **Chronic Medical Condition** – If an employee has been identified as having a chronic medical condition as exemplified by the federal Americans with Disability Act (ADA) or the California Fair Employment Housing Act (FEHA) that at intermittent times keeps the employee from work, these times may not count toward an absence occurrence. It is required that an employee with a chronic illness work with both Employee Health and their health care provider to minimize, as much as possible, the impact the absences may have on the department. The employee is required to provide reasonable advance notice when she or he is able, but not when the absence is emergent. The employee is required to comply with the Hospital’s normal attendance call-in and notification procedures. Employee Health, in collaboration with Human Resources, will be responsible for determining if any modifications to the employee’s work schedule or duties need to be made. Where appropriate, Sierra View Medical Center shall grant the employee intermittent leave under the provisions of the applicable statutory family/medical leave acts.

**AFFECTED PERSONNEL/AREAS: ALL EMPLOYEES**

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**PROCEDURE:**

**GUIDELINES FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION**

The following guidelines are to be followed for absence occurrences excluding Sick Leave and other absences protected by law governing time off from work:

5 occurrences	Employee receives a Verbal, Documented
6 occurrences	Employee receives a Written Warning.
7 occurrences	Employee receives a Final Written Warning with possible demotion and reduction in pay if in a lead position or above
8 occurrences	Employee is Terminated.

To be considered for disciplinary action, the absence occurrence must have occurred during the last rolling 12-month period. Any occurrences prior to this time frame will not be considered.

In a declared emergency/disaster, Human Resources will assess occurrences on a case-by-case basis. Any employee requiring written corrective action will meet with their department head and a corrective plan of action will be determined, i.e. not allowed to sign-up for extra shifts or call time, change in status to part-time, leave of absence, etc.

**Pattern Absenteeism:**

Employees will be considered to have a pattern of unscheduled absences if their absences tend to occur immediately before or after previously approved scheduled days off, immediately before or after a holiday(s), the weekend, occur at regular intervals or on consistent days, occur immediately following disciplinary action, or occur on days previously requested off but not approved/or denied such request. Patterns of absences will be considered misconduct and maybe subject to disciplinary action.

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Where there are parallel or overlapping incidents of absenteeism, tardiness and/or no call/no shows, the disciplinary action may be accelerated.

During the introductory period of a new employee, absenteeism or incidents of tardiness may result in disciplinary action up to and including separation of employment.

However, nothing in this policy alters the employee’s at-will employment status and SVMC’s ability to terminate an employee’s at-will employment with or without cause at any time.

When employees are unable to report to work for the beginning of their shift, they must call their supervisor (2) two-hours before their scheduled shift. Exceptions will be considered based on how emergent the situation was that prevented the 2-hour notification.

It is the responsibility of the Department Director or Designee to track and review absence patterns of all employees in his/her department(s). Prior to final corrective action, the appropriate Vice-President and Human Resources Department must review attendance history and performance.

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Directors/Managers must notify Human Resources when employees are absent for more than 3 days, as they may qualify for a protected Leave of Absence.

### MAKE-UP POLICY

If the employee called off on their scheduled weekend days, they will automatically be scheduled to work the following weekend, one or both days, depending upon which one(s) they called off. *The employee may be required to work a number of weekends in a row if the employee has missed more than one weekend commitment. Exception: Those employees who regularly work every weekend and call in sick will be required to complete their “make-up day” at the discretion of the Department Director.*

*If the absence is covered with the Sick leave bank or Intermittent FMLA, the employee will not be required to make up the shift.*

Failure to actually work on the following scheduled weekend will result in disciplinary action. Exceptions may be pre-authorized only by the appropriate Vice-President.

### REPETITIVE WRITTEN WARNINGS

Upon receiving the third corrective action for attendance within a rolling twelve (12) month period, the employee will be subject to termination of employment.

### NO CALL/NO SHOW - FAILURE TO REPORT TO WORK AS SCHEDULED

It is the employee’s responsibility to follow the notification procedure as designated by his/her department when reporting an unscheduled absence. Failure to report to work as scheduled is a serious offense.

A No Call/No Show will result when one of the following occurs:

- Employee fails to call in within the first fifteen (15) minutes of the start of an assigned shift
- Employee fails to call and reports to work fifteen (15) minutes or more after the start of an assigned shift
- Employee fails to report to work for assigned shift.
- First No Call/No Show is a Final Written Warning
- Second No Call/No Show is termination.

A single incident of a No/Call/No Show may escalate the disciplinary process up to and including termination when there is a documented record of occurrences for attendance. When reviewing action to be taken as a result of an employee’s failure to report to work or provide appropriate notification, consideration will be given to the length of time between occurrences, as well as the number of occurrences within the rolling twelve month calendar for attendance occurrences purposes.

### UNAUTHORIZED LEAVE DURING A SHIFT

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Employees who report to work and leave the facility early without communication and authorization from their supervisor will receive a final written notice for leaving their shift early without prior notification and/or approval. If a second incident occurs within the rolling twelve month calendar, it would result in separation of employment.

A single incident of an incomplete shift due to an unauthorized leave may escalate the disciplinary process up to and including termination when there is a documented record of occurrences for attendance. When reviewing action to be taken consideration will be given to the length of time between occurrences and the number of occurrences.

#### ABANDONMENT OF POSITION

Three (3) Consecutive Days of failure to report to work without notification to the hospital will be considered job abandonment and a voluntary resignation.

#### **REFERENCES:**

- Barsook, B., Platten, C., Vendrilo, C. (2017). California Public Sector Employment Law. Retrieved from [www.lexisnexis.com](http://www.lexisnexis.com)

#### **CROSS REFERENCES:**

- [Recording Hours Worked policy](#)
- [Sick Leave Policy](#)