

**CITY OF HAMILTON
INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2014-08
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE - ABSENTEEISM
FOLLOW UP**

OBSERVATIONS OF EXISTING SYSTEM	RECOMMENDATION FOR STRENGTHENING SYSTEM	MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN	FOLLOW UP (MARCH 2018)
<p><u>Absenteeism Reporting</u> The figures reported to Council in the 2013 Employee Attendance Report relating to short term disability were verified as being accurate. However, this information only includes paid absences for eligible employees. The figures in the report do not include unpaid sick absences (i.e. penalty days) incurred for eligible employees equating to approximately 2870 (seven-hour) days by 680 employees. The report also excludes the absences of ineligible employees (e.g. part-time staff and temporary full-time staff not included in an income protection plan) which amount to 5300 lost days for 769 employees (per HRBIT reporting). Note that these numbers were not verified by Internal Audit. Although there may not be direct costs for some unpaid absences, there is an impact on service levels and/or additional costs to backfill the sick employee where needed. In some Sections, employees are often backfilled at overtime rates, increasing the overall costs of absenteeism to the organization. The amount of overtime incurred to fill positions due to absent employees cannot be determined as most current records do not distinguish why overtime was incurred.</p>	<p>1. That HR expand on the information provided in the annual Employee Attendance Report to Council. This report should include a complete picture of all lost hours to the organization from employee sick absences.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> HR will report on the non-paid penalty days incurred by employees who have an Income Protection Plan in future reports. Data for penalty days are to be a deterrent as well as a cost savings and are already collected by HR.</p> <p><u>SMT</u> SMT will review the recommendation to track all other non-paid absences and report back on its feasibility and value in the next absenteeism report at the end of 2015. This matter will also require conversations with various sections in Human Resources, specifically the HR Business Intelligence Team and Labour Relations staff to determine impact.</p>	<p>In Progress. The 2016 Employee Attendance Report has been updated. It provides a more complete picture of hours lost due to sick absences since it reports "Chronic Sick Absences", as well as "Lost Sick Hours" and "Lost Sick Days". The absence of part-time and temporary full-time employees continues not to be reported. The reporting of these absences will have to wait until Kronos technology will be implemented at a future undetermined time.</p>

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<p><u>Consultant's Report</u> External consultants (Mercer) prepared an "Assessment of Short Term Disability Management Program" report, dated May 26, 2014. The report assessed and compared the City's current situation to best practices and identified the areas of disability absence management that need to be improved, modified or added to current practices and processes in order to be a best practice leader. This report resulted in 15 recommendations. The report recommendations and HR's responses have been summarized and presented to the HR Leadership Team but have not yet been communicated to the Senior Management Team (SMT) or Council.</p>	<p>2. That a report be prepared and presented to the SMT and Council in order to gain support for the disability management approach and to ensure that the implementation of the recommendations is adequately followed up.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. The action plan prepared in response to the report will be shared with SMT in Q2, 2015. The actions arising from the report will be included in the Human Resources activity update that is included in the attendance reports presented to Council through the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee.</p>	<p>Completed. The external consultant's (Mercer) report regarding the assessment of short term disability management has been presented to SMT. Implementation of the report's recommendations is being followed up. Council has been indirectly apprised of the disability management approach via the updated Employee Attendance Report.</p>

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<p><u>Human Resources Business Intelligence Tool (HRBIT)</u> The HRBIT has currently been rolled out to General Managers and some Directors. However, Managers and Supervisors are often the ones managing the attendance of front line staff. HRBIT has the ability to provide detailed employee information to identify employee trends (e.g. absences by day of the week, month, quarter) but this information is only being provided on an ad hoc basis if requested by management.</p> <p>In performing structured interviews, management in seven Sections interviewed indicated that they were not aware of the HRBIT and the information available. Thus, more knowledge of a system providing valuable detailed reports and information by those responsible for monitoring and managing absences is required.</p>	<p>3. That HR communicate and increase the awareness of all "managers of attendance" as to the type information that is available to them upon request from HRBIT.</p> <p>4. That HR work with the Information Technology Division (IT) to develop reporting within the HRBIT that will allow for such "managers" to have self-service access to information identifying absence trends and patterns.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Human Resources will continue to work with IT to address current security, performance and data limitations that are preventing access to the tool for front-line supervisors. We anticipate the system will be fully accessible by the end of 2015.</p> <p><u>IT</u> Agreed. IT will work with HR to understand the full scope and business requirements. In collaboration with HR, the estimated completion date will be determined based on the priority assigned to this work by HR and the scope of the work.</p>	<p>Not Completed. HR has not communicated the type of attendance information available to "managers of attendance". HR management expects this information will be available with the roll out of the new Attendance Management program to begin Q3, 2018.</p> <p>Alternative Initiated. Reports identifying absence trends and patterns have been developed but are currently not regularly distributed to the "managers of attendance" overseeing these employees. HR management expects to identify these employees and notify their respective managers by the beginning of Q3, 2018. While "managers of attendance" will not have self-service access to the HRBIT, they will be provided with a report showing employee absence trends/patterns.</p>

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<p><u>Ineligible Employee Absence Reporting</u> The scope of the "Reporting an Absence" and "Returning from Absences" procedures indicates that these procedures apply to all <u>eligible</u> employees. The Procedures outline Supervisors' responsibilities for receiving calls, reporting absences to HR and notifying RTWS. The process to be followed for ineligible employees (those not paid for the sick time away from work (e.g. part-time / casual / temporary full-time employees not included in the Income Protection Plan)), is not clear. A review of other policies, procedures and documents did not clearly identify the requirement to manage and report on absences for ineligible employees.</p> <p>This increases the risk of absences for ineligible staff not being reported and inconsistencies in the handling of absences for all employees across the organization. In addition, if absences are not recorded, employees would not trigger into and be provided the appropriate support through the ASP.</p> <p>Two Sections interviewed indicated that absences for part-time staff and contract staff are not always reported in PeopleSoft HR.</p>	<p>5. That HR review and modify the "Reporting an Absence" and "Returning from Absences" procedures to ensure the scope includes all employees. Other policies, procedures and relevant documents should be reviewed and modified as required to ensure expectations in managing absenteeism for all employees are clearly defined and consistent.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. The change will be made to indicate that all employees (including part-time, temporary, etc.) are required to follow absence reporting and return-to-work procedures. Other policies will be reviewed and updated in Q2, 2015.</p>	<p>Completed. HR has reviewed and modified the "Reporting an Absence" procedure to include all employees. The "Returning from Absences" procedure has been incorporated into the updated "Reporting an Absence" procedure. Two other procedures have been developed regarding the processing of employee absences and both apply to all employees.</p>

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<p><u>Management Training</u> HR provides mandatory Disability Management and Attendance Management training to management. As of September 2014, 56% and 53% of management were identified as having completed the "Attendance Management" and "How to Manage Sick and WSIB Absences" courses respectively. These figures do not take into account management staff with no direct reports who do not require the training as this information was not available. The information available in PeopleSoft HR, based on direct reports only, was inaccurate.</p> <p>A number of staff responsible for managing employees and their attendance at work were identified as being omitted from these totals.</p>	<p>6. That HR obtain the appropriate information to determine the number of management with no direct reports from each Department to compile accurate training data.</p> <p>7. That HR set a target performance measure for the percentage of management trained in Disability & Attendance Management. HR should monitor and analyze training levels against this measure. This should be reviewed at least annually.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Human Resources will continue to work with IT to address current system limitations that hinder accurate reporting on position hierarchy. We anticipate the system will be fully functional by the end of 2015.</p> <p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Based on an accurate number of management staff who must complete the training, targets for completion are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% by the end of 2015 • 90% by the end of 2016 and • 95-100%* by the end of 2017. <p>*adjusting for normal staff turnover rates</p>	<p>Not Completed. HR has not yet obtained information to determine the number of management without direct reports from each Department to compile accurate training data. Such information is expected by the time the new Attendance Management program rolls out at the beginning of Q3, 2018.</p> <p>Initiated. HR has set target performance measures for the percentage of management trained in Disability & Attendance Management. HR reviews the training received at the end of each year. The targeted performance was not met. Management is considering making this training available on line at a future undetermined date.</p>

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<p><u>Contact with Absent Employees</u> When an employee calls in to report an absence, management is to determine the expected duration, when possible. Management is expected to continue regular contact with the employee and discuss a potential date of return to work throughout the absence. Management is responsible for monitoring and documenting all contacts with the employee and noting any revisions to the expected date of return to work. Structured interviews with management in 15 Sections (representing 4260 employees) identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees are not consistently contacted for all absences; • Employees are not always contacted for longer absences; • Contacts made with employees are not documented by some sections; • Contact related to unusual situations are not always identified; • Contact is not consistently maintained with absent employees; and • Some employees see continued contact as harassment. 	<p>8. That HR develop a contact log to ensure consistent information is captured for contact with employees regarding absences. This should be retained in management's employee working file. A contact log may not be required if similar information is captured in an automated system. Use of this log should be included in relevant procedure documents.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Instruction on when and how to contact employees is already covered in the disability management training. The log template will be developed by Human Resources and disseminated to people leaders in Q2, 2015 along with instructions on its use.</p>	<p>Initiated. HR has developed a contact log to capture information from absent employees consistently. Currently the contact log is not being used, and its use is not reflected in various procedure documents. At this time it is not known when use of the contact log will be implemented.</p>

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<p><u>Contact with Absent Employees (Cont.)</u> When management does not maintain contact with an absent employee, the length of the absence may be extended. Many employees have a 14 day 'grace' period to send in claim forms from the 6th day of the absence. If an employee is not contacted by management, he/she may be off for a period of up to 20 days before he/she is contacted by a RTWS Specialist.</p> <p>A recommendation to continue to train managers on approaches to contacting employees who are on short term disability was also included in the Mercer consultant's report (as further described above in #2).</p>			

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<p><u>Requesting Claim Forms from Day One of the Absence</u> Management has the ability to request claim forms on the first day of an absence when the absence is suspected to be for reasons other than illness or non-occupational injury. Only one Section (Fire) has documented policies and/or procedures on situations requiring Claim Forms / Doctor's Notes from day one of an absence. Suspect absences are not being adequately acted upon in a timely manner as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspect absences are not being acted upon until a pattern of suspicion arises; • Suspect absences are not consistently acted on in one Section due to uncertainty on how to proceed; and • Claim forms are very rarely or never requested from day one of an absence with situations where they are warranted. <p>In addition, upon requesting claim forms from day one, three Sections have handled these requests internally and do not notify or provide RTWS with the documentation. A listing of claim forms requested from day one, where RTWS had been notified, was obtained and only 11 forms were requested from day one between January 1 to July 31, 2014 from the 15 Sections tested.</p>	<p>9. That HR develop a procedure for requesting claim forms from day one of an absence. The procedure should include situations where management should strongly consider requesting a form. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sick day(s) occur(s) adjacent to scheduled vacation or lieu day(s); • The sick day(s) occur(s) adjacent to or on a statutory holiday; or • The sick day(s) occur(s) on a date when a vacation or lieu day has been denied. <p>The process for informing the employee of the request and the contact required with RTWS should also be included in this procedure.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. A written procedure will be developed and distributed to management staff in Q2, 2015.</p>	<p>Completed. A procedure has been developed for requesting claims forms from day one of an absence. The procedure outlines the circumstances where claim forms may be requested. It also indicates the steps that management is expected to follow when advising the employee and their contact with RTWS.</p>

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<p><u>Requesting Claim Forms from Day One of the Absence (Cont.)</u> When medical claim forms are not requested for suspect absences, there is no clear indication of management oversight in the workplace to stop employees from misusing sick absences. Management in six Sections also expressed concerns about the ease of employees obtaining completed claim forms.</p>	<p>10. That it be clearly communicated in the procedure and attendance training materials that a claim form can be requested for all suspect absences. Management does not need to wait until a pattern of suspicious behaviour arises.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Management is given this instruction during the training. Once a procedure is developed, it will be distributed to management staff in Q2, 2015. Human Resources staff will also advise the executive of all unionized staff.</p>	<p>Completed. HR has communicated in the procedures that a claim form can be requested for various absences. The procedure does not limit when claim forms may be requested. It can be used as training material for staff.</p>

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<p><u>Chronic or Episodic Disabilities</u> Where a health review determines the underlying cause of absences as a chronic or episodic medical condition, future absences are not counted as "triggering" events in the ASP. Supervisors in five Sections, participating in some form of the ASP, were not aware of this. This causes employees to unnecessarily remain in the ASP, continue triggering occurrences and take up resources in holding meetings.</p> <p>A memo was sent from HR to all management, informing them of the change to the procedure for chronic and episodic health conditions in May 2014.</p>	<p>11. That the ASP meeting checklist be updated to include discussions with employees regarding chronic or episodic conditions and, if identified, the requirement to contact the Occupational Health Nurse.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. This has been completed.</p>	<p>Completed. The ASP meeting checklist has been updated to include chronic or episodic conditions that may be contributing to an employee's absences. It also includes the requirement to contact the Occupational Health Nurse.</p>

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<p><u>ASP Limitations</u> Employees trigger into the ASP when they have sick absences of <i>more than</i> four occasions or seven days in a sliding 12 month period. There are four levels in the program and employees progress up or down the levels based on a 12 month monitoring period from the point of the trigger. The following concerns relating to the ASP were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ASP program can be confusing to employees. Some employees feel that meetings are disciplinary while others do not take the program seriously; • There is limited value in holding ASP meetings when employees have known medical conditions; • Management and Labour Relations staff are not privy to all of the medical information relating to the employee; • The administration of the ASP consumes significant resources -some employees are paid overtime rates to attend ASP meetings; and • Employees are triggering at level four of the ASP multiple times. • Employees were identified with up to 11 level four triggers in the previous three years. 	<p>12. That HR consider revising the ASP to focus on incidental absences of five days or less which do not require medical verification to be provided to RTWS. RTWS should offer employees the appropriate support for significant absences.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. The Attendance Support Program will be reviewed and revised in 2015 for re-launch in 2016.</p>	<p>Alternative Initiated. HR is in the process of implementing a new Attendance Management (AM) program whose focus is to identify employees with a high number of culpable absences and those whose absences show a recurring pattern. The new AM program is intended to replace the existing ASP rather than revising it. Meetings will only be held with employees showing a high number of culpable absences. The new AM program is expected to be in place by Q3, 2018</p>

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<p><u>ASP Limitations (Cont.)</u> When there are known medical conditions and the employee is already in contact with RTWS regarding the absence, there is limited value in holding ASP meetings for which significant resources are required to schedule, hold and document meetings. The credibility of the ASP is also diminished when employees continue to trigger at level four multiple times without any apparent consequences.</p>	<p>13. That the number of times employees are able to consecutively trigger at level four of the ASP be limited to one. Upon triggering at level four the second time, the employee should be moved out of the ASP into another stream led by Labour Relations (LR). The employee's future employment should be considered and a specific action plan with realistic goals and consequences agreed to (e.g. specific attendance targets to be met, last chance agreements signed, terminations).</p> <p>14. That significant absences be reviewed outside of the ASP by management in coordination with RTWS and LR for the purposes of determining the employee's future with the organization, as required.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. The review will consider focusing exclusively on incidental sick absences and the option of moving employees out of the program at level 4 if they trigger at that level a second time. Use of this option will be based on individual circumstances. Greater emphasis will be placed on managing incidental absenteeism with focus on culpable absenteeism, with disciplinary consequences.</p> <p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Human Resources will continue to support management in their review of significant absences and the potential impact on an individual's continued employment.</p>	<p>Alternative Initiated. Under the new AM program the employee's supervisor will be expected to meet with the employees once the employee showing the patterned absences has been identified and reported to the departmental manager. The number of times employees consecutively trigger at level four of the ASP will no longer be applicable. The new Attendance Procedure is expected to be in place by Q3, 2018</p> <p>Alternative Initiated. Under the new AM program the employee's supervisor will discuss attendance expectations with the employee and agree to an action plan for improvement. Labour Relations will be involved in cases where the attendance does not significantly improve. The new Attendance Procedure is expected to be in place by Q3, 2018.</p>

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<p><u>Potential Misuse of ASP</u> Results of the interviews conducted indicated that employees have the ability to arrange time off to avoid ASP trigger levels and absence detection. Management identified the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employees are able to use the ASP to take time off to their advantage around trigger levels; • employees are able to use lieu time or last minute vacation days to cover absences and avoid triggering into the ASP; and • employees using emergency leave days to cover personal illness. These absences are not counted as occurrences in the ASP and can be used by staff to avoid triggering an occurrence. <p>Sick absences for employees with more than one employee record (multiple jobs) with the City are treated separately for the purposes of triggering into the ASP rather than accumulating under one employee.</p>	<p>15. That management review all employees overall attendance at work, at least annually (e.g. at the time of the performance appraisal). Management should look for patterns along with addressing and documenting any concerns at this time.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Partially Agreed. Management should review attendance annually with employees to recognize good attendance and address poor attendance.</p> <p>Human Resources will standardize and automate a yearly attendance profile to be generated by HRBIT. Patterned and questionable absenteeism will be monitored and managed with potential for addressing as culpable absenteeism, having disciplinary consequences. The reports will be available in 2016 to coincide with changes to ASP.</p>	<p>Alternative Initiated. HR is in the process of implementing a new AM Program whose focus is to identify employees with a high number of culpable absences and those whose absences show a recurring pattern. Once the employees are identified, HR will notify their supervisor who will meet with them and map out action plans to improve their attendance. If their attendance does not improve, Labour Relations will become involved. This program is expected to be in place by Q3, 2018.</p>

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<p><u>Potential Misuse of ASP (Cont.)</u> When management is only notified to review sick absences based on a specified number of days taken and/or occasions, the risk of management not being aware of and acting upon unusual patterns increases. For example, staff may consistently take sick days each year to remain just under the ASP trigger levels, take five consecutive days (Monday – Friday) resulting in an extra week of time off or take emergency leave days when sick occurrences are no longer covered by their income protection plan (i.e. penalty days). Four Sections interviewed indicated that the ASP was their only means of monitoring absenteeism, which could result in the above situations going undetected.</p>		<p>However, management needs to be careful not to include discussion around any approved time off or absences related to statutory rights under the <u>Employment Standards Act</u> as these are considered non-culpable absences. Employees have a right to take unpaid emergency days for their own illness if they choose. If this is done to avoid triggering in the Attendance Support Program, there is little the employer can do other than requesting reasonable documentation to support the absence.</p> <p>Last minute vacation requests or use of lieu time to cover sick absences should not be allowed and it is within management's rights to deny these requests.</p>	

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<u>Potential Misuse of ASP (Cont.)</u>		<p>Where there is suspicion that an absence is not related to an illness and is being used for extra time off, management should address the incident directly by asking for a claim form from day one of the absence. They should also be contacting the employee as per recommendation #7 above.</p>	

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<p><u>ASP Meetings Not Occurring</u> All Sections interviewed were not fully participating in the ASP process in 2014. Three Sections included in the structured interviews were not holding ASP meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One has only very recently started participating in the ASP again due to other competing priorities; • One Section is providing letters at levels one and two with meetings only being held if requested by the employee. No action is being taken at level three and four triggers; and • One Section is holding meetings with employees based on patterns of absenteeism being identified by the Section. 	<p>16. That, upon consideration of the changes to the ASP program indicated in recommendation #9, all management staff be appropriately trained and the program adhered to.</p> <p>17. That management's use of the ASP and the management of attendance be evaluated as a part of overall performance at least annually (e.g. at the time of performance appraisals). Any deficiencies should be addressed and documented at this time.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Training will be updated to match any change to the Attendance Support Program when it is rolled out in 2016.</p> <p>Agreed. Management's use of the ASP can be monitored as part of performance appraisals. There are specific behaviors under the Health, Safety and Wellness section of the Performance Accountability tool that address using the ASP to support employees and holding meetings in a timely manner. If either of these is identified as an area for improvement, they would be included as an area to develop for the employee and the Leader would expect improvement before the next annual review.</p>	<p>Alternative Initiated. Management staff training on the new AM program is expected to occur in late May early June 2018.</p> <p>Alternative Initiated. The evaluation of management's use of the new AM program is not expected to occur until after it is introduced and has been running i.e. mid to late 2019.</p>

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<p><u>ASP Meetings Not Occurring (Cont'd.)</u> Of the remaining 12 Sections participating in the ASP process and holding meetings with employees, three were identified as not holding meetings in a timely manner and/or the meetings not being up to date. The expected time frame to perform ASP meetings is identified in training materials but is not documented in the City's actual ASP procedure. The balance of the Sections reviewed were conducting meetings in a timely manner.</p> <p>In addition, three Sections are not performing level two meetings, as required by the ASP procedure. HR has permitted these Sections to forego holding level two meetings which reinforces that the program is not strategically important to the organization and increases the perceived unfairness of the process.</p> <p>When management does not participate in the ASP process as required by corporate policies and procedures, it diminishes the credibility of the program. When management does not support the ASP, it decreases the value of the program and increases the likelihood of employees not taking the program seriously.</p>	<p>18. That HR establish and document in the ASP policy and/or procedure the expected time frame to perform ASP meetings.</p> <p>19. That HR review outstanding meeting reports to ensure that meetings are being held regularly and follow up with management, as required. All Sections should hold meetings per the ASP policy and/or procedure.</p>	<p>Agreed. The expectation that ASP meetings be held within 60 days will be added to the ASP Policy in Q2, 2015.</p> <p>Agreed. HR will monitor compliance and notify departments on a monthly basis through the General Managers when expectations are not being met.</p>	<p>Alternative Initiated. The four ASP meetings will be replaced by one AM meeting. There is no need to establish and document the expected time frame to perform ASP meetings.</p> <p>Alternative Initiated. Since the four ASP meetings will be replaced by one AM meeting between the Supervisor and the employee, HR will not need to review outstanding meeting reports to ensure that ASP type meetings are held regularly.</p>

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<p><u>ASP Meetings – Missed Meetings/ Documentation</u> Employees may trigger at the next level before an ASP meeting is held. For example, the employee may trigger at level three in June 2014, then again at level four in August 2014. If no meeting has been held for the level three trigger at the time the level four is triggered, the level three meeting should occur at this time as management did not take any action to work with the employee to improve his/her attendance or advise him/her of the issue. ASP levels and meetings must then be tracked internally. This expectation is not clearly identified in relevant policies, procedures and/or training materials.</p>	<p>20. That HR document the expected procedures for employees that have triggered at the next ASP level before a meeting is held.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed, provided current technology is able to provide the function. An employee's sick absences will not count as triggering events if they occur after 60 days or longer after a trigger if the meeting required by the previous trigger was not held within the 60 day expectation. This will not apply if the delay was due to the employee's own actions. This function will be added to PeopleSoft with the launch of a revised program in 2016.</p>	<p>Alternative Initiated. The new AM program does not have multiple ASP levels. Therefore, it does not rely on triggers to higher levels. The procedures for the new program have been developed, but are currently in draft form. They are expected to be finalized once the program begins in Q3, 2018.</p>

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<p><u>ASP Meetings – Missed Meetings/ Documentation (Cont.)</u> Management in ten Sections interviewed indicated that if meetings were not held before the employee triggered again at the next level, the lower level meeting was skipped or a combined meeting held. A review of 57 ASP letters identified six instances of combined or skipped meetings within four Sections.</p> <p>When meetings are not appropriately held, employees proceed through the ASP levels without appropriate support being offered by management. This conflicts with the program being supportive in nature and gives the perception that employees are penalized by proceeding to a higher level of the ASP when the necessary steps were not taken by management in a timely manner at the lower levels of the program.</p>	<p>21. That HR work with the IT Division to determine if sick absence days / occurrences can accumulate for triggering at the next level in PeopleSoft HR only after a meeting has been held for the previous triggering level. If possible, the previous recommendation would no longer be applicable.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Human Resources will work with the IT Division to understand the full scope and business requirements and ability to configure PeopleSoft for this purpose.</p> <p><u>IT</u> Agreed. IT will work with HR to understand the full scope and business requirements. In collaboration with HR, the estimated completion date will be determined based on the priority assigned to this work by HR and the scope of the work.</p>	<p>No Longer Applicable. The new AM program does not have multiple ASP levels. Therefore, it does not rely on triggers to higher levels. There is no need for HR to work with IT to determine whether sick absences accumulate to trigger at the next level.</p>

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<p><u>ASP Meetings – Missed Meetings/ Documentation (Cont.)</u> In addition, absence dates are not consistently documented in the ASP letters provided to the employee and retained in his/her personnel file. A review of 57 ASP letters identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 letters where the absence dates causing the trigger were not indicated; and • Nine letters reviewed did not clearly indicate the date from which future attendance would be monitored. <p>When employees are not made aware of the specific absences that result in their triggering into the ASP, the value of the meeting and discussions held is decreased. The following changes can assist with increasing compliance and providing value.</p>	<p>22. That all absences causing the trigger and any further occurrences between the trigger and meeting date be included in the letter provided to the employee and discussed in the meeting.</p> <p>23. That all ASP letter templates provided on the Enet be updated to require the absence dates and the date from which future attendance will be monitored (meeting date) as mandatory information.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Human Resources will modify the template letters in Q2, 2015 to include direction to include absence and monitoring dates.</p> <p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Human Resources will modify the template letters in Q2, 2015 to include direction to include absence and monitoring dates.</p>	<p>Alternative Initiated. Under the new AM program expected to begin in Q3, 2018, HR will produce a heat map showing the number and reason for the absences. This will determine whether the supervisor needs to interview the employee. Trigger dates and the recording of such dates on letters will not be needed.</p> <p>Alternative Initiated. Under the new AM program, the absence dates are shown on the HR produced heat maps. According to the draft procedure the heat maps are expected to be used by the supervisor when meeting with the employee to discuss absenteeism issues. ASP letter templates will not be required.</p>

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<p><u>ASP Letter Retention and Accuracy of Meeting Dates.</u> Completed ASP letters are to be forwarded to HR and filed in the employees' personnel files. Documentation as required by the ASP program was not always evident in the employee file. A review of 82 meetings and/or letters indicated as completed in PeopleSoft HR identified 25 letters (30% of the sample) missing from the employees' personnel files. Letters are filed as received by HR and no verification is performed to ensure letters have been received for meetings indicated as held. When information missing from the personnel files, there is no documentation to support meetings and discussions held and there is no evidence that any meetings actually took place. This situation limited the testing that could be performed to verify comments made by management throughout the structured interviews. Any discrepancies between comments in the structured interviews and the verification testing have been reflected in the figures provided throughout the report.</p>	<p>24. That HR work with IT to develop a field for tracking the receipt of ASP letters in PeopleSoft HR. This should be linked to the meeting date and be marked by HR staff when the ASP letter has been received. HR staff should verify the accuracy of the meeting date to the letter in PeopleSoft HR when marking the letter as received.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. HR will work with IT to understand the full scope and business requirements for this change. The tracking field and a procedure for accurately reporting information will be added with the launch of a revised program in 2016.</p> <p><u>IT</u> Agreed. IT will work with HR to understand the full scope and business requirements. In collaboration with HR, the estimated completion date will be determined based on the priority assigned to the work by HR and the scope of work.</p>	<p>Alternative implemented. Under the new AM program procedure, HR does not need to receive letters about action plans based on meeting discussions. These are retained by the employee's supervisor</p>

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<p><u>ASP Letter Retention and Accuracy of Meeting Dates (Cont.)</u> Letter or meeting dates were not accurately recorded in PeopleSoft HR for 15 of 57 (26% of the sample) letters available for review.</p> <p>Meeting dates inaccurately reported in PeopleSoft HR will cause errors for the purposes of triggering in the ASP, as noted above (#12).</p>	<p>25. That HR develop and run a monthly report highlighting situations where meetings have been held but letters have not been received. Discrepancies should be followed up with management.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. The report will be added with the launch of a revised program in 2016.</p>	<p>No Longer Applicable. Under the new AM program procedure, HR does not need to receive letters about action plans based on meeting discussions. Therefore, there is no need to develop or run a monthly report highlighting cases where ASP meetings have been held but letters have not been received.</p>

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<p><u>Customized ASP Letters</u> ASP letters should be customized to address individual circumstances and action plans based on meeting discussions. In seven applicable Sections currently holding ASP meetings, letters are not consistently tailored to the situation. Eight letters were noted as having only general information included (e.g. names, dates) and no indication of the discussions held. Administrative staff are preparing letters in some areas and may not have all relevant details available to them.</p> <p>When letters are not customized to specific situations, it cannot be confirmed that valuable discussions were held and the appropriate support was offered by management. This may create challenges in holding the employee accountable to action plans or expectations as there is no detailed record of the discussion held.</p>	<p>26. That HR communicate to management that all ASP letters must be tailored based on conversations with the employee. Administrative staff may assist in drafting letters and absence information, but all ASP letters (level two and above) are to be finalized by the management involved in the meeting.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Communication will be provided to supervisors and above to coincide with changes to the letter templates. The information will clarify what content can and cannot be customized. The information will also be added to the meeting checklist.</p>	<p>Alternative Initiated. The new AM program procedure expects supervisors will meet with employees identified as having outlying attendance patterns, and document the meeting actions and findings. However, the procedure does not provide any guidance as to how to tailor this documentation consistently.</p>

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<p><u>ASP Meeting Attendees</u> ASP meetings are not being staffed as required by the ASP Procedure. Of the 13 Sections sampled holding level three and four ASP meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Managers are not participating in level four ASP meetings and have delegated this responsibility to lower levels of management. Managers were holding level four meetings in six Sections with the balance being held by Directors/Administrators; • The appropriate level of management is not consistently holding level three meetings in four Sections interviewed. <p>The importance of the ASP and organizational commitment to the employee's attendance at work is not demonstrated when the appropriate levels of management are not involved in ASP meetings as the employee proceeds to higher levels. Management indicated in a number of areas that the employees do not take the ASP seriously. Having higher levels of management attend meetings may elevate employees' views of the ASP and raise the expectations regarding their attendance.</p>	<p>27. That HR take ownership of compliance with the ASP process. HR should regularly review a sample of ASP letters from various departments to ensure the appropriate levels of staff are attending meetings and letters are being appropriately completed and tailored to HR's expectations. Reviews should be documented and any discrepancies be followed up with management within a specified timeframe.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. Human Resources will randomly review ten letters each quarter to ensure the letters comply with ASP expectations. If discrepancies are found, Human Resources will discuss with the appropriate parties in the respective department within 30 days and/or take other steps to ensure expectations are met.</p>	<p>Not Completed. The new AM program does not require ASP meetings, but supervisors are expected to meet with employees identified as having outlying attendance patterns and document the meeting actions and findings. The current draft procedure for the new program does not require HR to review a sample of meeting documents from various departments to ensure that the appropriate level of staff have attended meetings, that the documentation is completed properly and tailored to HR's expectations.</p>

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<p><u>Emergency Leaves</u> Per the Employment Standards Act (ESA), employees can take up to ten unpaid emergency leave days per year for qualifying absences. Structured interviews identified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management does not consistently ask for the reasons for emergency leave days and is very rarely requesting verification to support the absence. Management raised concerns that emergency leave days are being used as extra vacation or to avoid triggering into the ASP; 	<p>28. That HR develop, approve and implement a corporate emergency leave policy and/or procedure. The procedure should be reviewed regularly by HR, be updated as required and bear evidence of such review (sign-off). The procedure should include information on qualifying absences and types of verification that can be done by management to support the absence.</p>	<p>Agreed. Human Resources will review and update current policies, procedures and guidelines. The review will include a legal analysis of the proposed recommendations. The update will include information on qualifying for emergency leave and the type of verification that will be required depending on the reasons provided for the leave. The review will be completed by the end of Q4, 2015.</p> <p>Currently, employees are guided by the Leave of Absences Guidelines for Management that provides direction on Emergency Leave eligibility and use.</p>	<p>In Progress. HR has developed, approved, and implemented a corporate emergency leave procedure. This procedure includes information on qualifying absences and the types of verification. However, there is no evidence that it's regularly reviewed and updated, nor does it bear evidence of review (i.e. sign off).</p>

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<p><u>Emergency Leaves (Cont.)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Sections indicated that there was no downside to their employee taking (unpaid) emergency leave days as the hours can usually be made up at overtime rates during another shift. Employees in these Sections were responsible for 63% of the emergency leave occurrences from January 1 to July 31, 2014 and 62% of 2013 totals; and Five Sections indicated that emergency leave days are commonly experienced. All five Sections identified employees as using emergency leave days to cover personal illness (this is a qualifying reason). These absences are not counted as occurrences in the ASP program and can be used by staff to avoid triggering, especially if the absence will be unpaid (e.g. penalty day) anyway. <p>There are no corporate policies or procedures that address emergency leave days. It is not clear what types of information should be requested from the employee to validate that the absence qualifies and the type of verification that may be done by management for the qualifying absence.</p>	<p>29. That management include emergency leave days when reviewing an employee's overall attendance (as recommended in #10) to ensure patterns are appropriately identified and addressed. This should be a priority for Sections covering these absences with other staff at overtime rates.</p> <p>30. That a PeopleSoft HR code be developed and implemented for emergency leave days related to personal illness. These days/ occurrences should count as triggering events in the ASP.</p> <p>31. That HR review patterns of staff with high usage of emergency leave days and high levels of overtime in hours to identify any usual patterns. Such instances should be forwarded to management and appropriately followed up.</p>	<p>Disagreed. Recommendations (#29, #30 and #31) are contrary to the <u>Employment Standards Act</u> which provides that employers cannot threaten, fire or penalize in any way, an employee who takes or plans on taking a personal emergency leave. We cannot count these days under an attendance support program nor take any action against an employee.</p> <p>However, Emergency Leave Day data can be shared on a macro basis with department leadership to identify areas that may need to develop strategies to control the usage of emergency leave. HR could work with IT to understand the full scope and business requirements for tracking emergency leave days and the reason codes associated with these absences where disclosed.</p>	<p>Completed. The new AM program includes personal emergency leave (PEL) days when reviewing overall employee attendance and absenteeism patterns.</p> <p>No Longer Applicable. The new AM program is expected to take effect by Q3, 2018. Triggering events related to ASP will no longer apply.</p> <p>Not Completed. The new AM program does not compare the usage of emergency leave days to high levels of overtime hours to identify patterns. Management indicated that this could be reviewed after the program has started. The expected completion is undetermined.</p>

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<p><u>Inefficiency of Manual Processing</u> Designated staff in ten Sections included in the structured interviews is completing the manual "Absence Form" and forwarding it to HR for input into PeopleSoft HR. In three Sections, designated staff completes the "Absence Form" and forwards it to Finance and Administration staff who print and fax the form to HR. In five Sections, Finance and Administration staff is preparing the "Absence Form" (upon notification), printing and faxing it to HR.</p> <p>HR staff are then entering the same absence information as reported on the "Absence Form" into PeopleSoft HR. Printing of the "Absence Form" multiple times throughout the process was identified as creating inefficiencies in the processing of these forms.</p> <p>In four Sections, delays were identified with information not being forwarded to HR for input the day of the absence. This increases the amount of effort required by HR staff to ensure all absences are entered before weekly processes are run.</p>	<p>32. That Finance and Administration staff (or other appropriately designated staff within each Section) be trained to record sick absences into PeopleSoft HR directly and immediately upon notification. Finance and Administration staff should continue to verify absences to PeopleSoft HR weekly.</p>	<p><u>F&A and HR</u> Partially agreed. In over half of the Sections interviewed, forms are sent directly from designated staff to HR for input. HR, IT and F&A staff is currently exploring a solution for the tracking and reporting of short term absence types (including but not limited to absence related to illness). Scope and requirements for this initiative are being defined. Following the documentation of functional requirements, a target implementation plan will be developed. Capital may be required.</p>	<p>In Progress. All absences are recorded into PeopleSoft HR by F&A staff. F&A staff verify absences to PeopleSoft HR each week. However, for some employees working in geographically distant locations, F&A staff are notified of the absence up to a week after its occurrence. It is undetermined at this time how such delays in can be shortened.</p>

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<p><u>ASP Letter Confidentiality</u> ASP letters should be tailored to include the details of discussions held with the employee regarding their attendance. The details of these conversations should remain confidential. In four Sections, Finance and Administration staff responsible for updating PeopleSoft HR with the meeting date are being forwarded a copy of the ASP letter on occasion. Finance and Administration staff do not require the letter for inputting purposes and should not have the details of the conversation with the employee made available to them.</p>	<p>33. That management be instructed to ensure only emails with the meeting date are forwarded to Finance and Administration staff for input into PeopleSoft in order to maintain confidentiality. A copy of the ASP letter should not be sent to the Finance and Administration Staff.</p>	<p><u>HR</u> Agreed. This will be communicated through a "Supervisor and Above" memo. It is already incorporated into the training program.</p>	<p>Alternative Initiated. The new AM program is expected to replace the old ASP program in Q3, 2018. ASP letters will no longer be used. Documentation and/or letters outlining new AM meeting discussions between supervisors and employees will not be forwarded to F&A staff or input into PeopleSoft HR by F&A staff.</p>