

PSA Members Bulletin – Sick Leave

PSA Delegates have raised concerns about directions and information by management to staff around the taking of sick leave and when evidence should be required.

The following is a short FAQ for members on some common issues around sick leave and a reminder to all PSA members that if you are unsure about what you are being asked to do that you should contact the PSA for support and advice.

Evidence of illness (Medical/Sick Certificates)

If you are sick for more than two consecutive days at any one time you will be required to provide evidence to support your sick leave application.

This is usually a medical certificate provided to you by a medical practitioner, or registered dentist, optometrist, chiropractor, osteopath, physiotherapist, oral and maxilla facial surgeon or, at the Agency Head's discretion, another registered health services provider.

Does the medical certificate need to state the nature of my illness?

The simple answer to this is yes, but in reality it is not that simple. Many health care providers for reasons of patient confidentiality will not want to specify on a medical certificate anything more than 'medical condition'.

It is at the employers' discretion as to whether they will accept that medical certificate, if they do require from you the nature of illness you may have to request your health care provider to amend the certificate.

What do I do if I do not want my immediate manager to know the nature of my illness?

If you feel uncomfortable about disclosing your medical information to your immediate supervisor, you can elect to have either a different manager within the workplace or have People and Culture through the Employee Safety and Wellbeing Directorate manage your application.

Monitoring of sick leave

It is a requirement of your employer to monitor all staff absences. Delegates have raised concerns though that some management practices are exceeding the Award and Policy directives.

Sick leave patterns

Sometimes we get sick on Mondays or Fridays or on days before or after public holidays. 'One-off' instances do not require evidence of illness. If, however, your employer deems that there is a pattern of such leave, that is, it is becoming a regular occurrence that you are taking sick leave on one of those days they can require you to provide medical certificates for all further absences for the remainder of that year.

The usual trigger for this is when you have had five (5) single days of total sick leave without providing any certificates within a calendar year.

Managing chronic health conditions

Staff who have chronic health conditions and will need to have regular sick leave from time to time are encouraged to discuss this with their manager.



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Arrangements can always be made in these instances outside of the usual Award conditions. For example, someone with a chronic condition may know that they will have to have on average up to two to three sick days a month.

There is probably, little to no benefit in managing their condition in having to on each of those occasions go to their medical practitioner to obtain a medical certificate for each and every instance.

In these circumstances, it should be sufficient to provide a medical certificate outlining the requirements so that the employer is aware and can manage it accordingly.

Sick leave and Overtime

It has been reported to the PSA that some staff have been told they cannot be allowed to work overtime if they have taken sick leave. This is incorrect. There is no link between the two and you should not have access to overtime denied to you because of having taken sick leave.

Ask for help

Issues around sick leave can be fairly complex. The most important thing to remember is that as a PSA member your union is here to assist. If you have any questions or concerns the best way forward is to contact the PSA's Member Support on 1300 772 679 or by email membersupport@psa.asn.au

