City
of
Milwaukee

Department of Public Works
Administration

Jeffery Mantes
Commissioner of Public Works

James Purko
Director of Operations

August 27, 2007

TO: ALL UNIONS

RE: SICK LEAVE POLICY REVISION PROPOSAL

Sick Leave is a very important benefit for City employees. It is controlled by ordinance, policy and collective bargaining agreement language. It is intended to provide paid leave for absences that are *necessitated* by illness or injury that results in the employee being unable to work.

Department of Public Works is concerned that the utilization of sick leave has been increasing. The number of employees using sick leave per day has increased. The number of work days lost per employee per year has increased. This has an economic impact to the City because sick leave must be paid. However, the most important impact is to service delivery. The increased utilization of sick leave has resulted in scheduled jobs not being performed because of the lack of staff, due to sick leave. Review of sick leave records indicates a steady increase over the past 5 years; a greater incidence of "3-day" absences; and a greater usage of sick leave in conjunction with vacation or paid holidays. As described below, the policy changes proposed are not intended to limit use of a legitimate benefit, but to minimize abuse of the benefit. I believe that if indeed the statistics represent fully legitimate use of the sick leave benefit, the policy changes will still result in a healthier workforce by prompting those with excessive sick leave use history and patterns to develop a healthier lifestyle through use of the Health Insurance benefits in consulting with health professionals, changing unhealthy lifestyles, and perhaps being more cognizant of warning signs of health issues. The long term result should be a healthier, more productive and available workforce.

For these reasons the Department of Public Works is proposing a number of changes to the current sick leave policy.

The current sick leave policy limits management's ability to control the utilization of sick leave.

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT POLICY:

1. Four (4) occurrences of sick leave in six (6) months results in an action.
2. There are eight (8) steps in the current policy. The last step being discharge.

This is not effective for controlling the inappropriate utilization of sick leave and planning for staffing needs.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS PROPOSES THE FOLLOWING CHANGES:

1. Reducing the number of occurrences in a six month period that result in an action from 4 to 3.
2. Skipping the first step in the policy. Currently step one and two are both letters. The department is proposing that the first step be a warning letter that requires that future absences be excused by a doctor. The second step would be a written warning that includes a requirement that a doctor's excuse be submitted for all future absences.

3. Identifying and responding to "**patterns of abuse**", including but not limited to:

   A. Requiring a doctor's certificate for any employee who has taken two consecutive absences consisting of 3 days each.
   B. Requiring a doctor's certificate, on the third occasion, for any employee who has on two occasions taken sick leave in conjunction with a vacation **or** a holiday in any twelve month period.

4. Employees who have an action taken under #1 and #3 above will be placed on the HOME VISIT List and will be subject to visits for subsequent absences.

The Department of Public Works believes that by taking these actions, the utilization of sick leave and the cost to the City will decrease. It is also believed that by reducing sick leave, service delivery will improve as more employees will be available for assignments.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:

The Department of Public Works intends to implement these revisions on January 1, 2008. After January 1, 2008, any employee who has had three (3) or more occurrences within a six month period, or who was identified in the "**pattern of abuse**" review procedure would be subject to the revised policy and procedure.

COMMENT PERIOD:

The Department of Public Works is interested in feedback on the proposed revisions. It is in our "collective best interest" to manage sick leave in a judicious manner. If you have any comments, please submit them in writing to the attention of DPW Personnel Administrator, Dan Thomas at the address listed below. If you are interested in a meeting to discuss these issues, please contact Dan at (414) 286-3307. Please respond with your written comments or meeting requests no later than September 28, 2007.

Very truly yours,
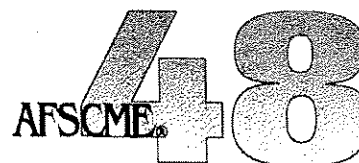
Jeffery J. Mantes
Commissioner of Public Works

JJM:DT:ph
c: J. Purko
     D. Thomas
     File

MILWAUKEE DISTRICT COUNCIL 48
3427 West St. Paul Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208
Telephone: (414) 344-6868
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American Federation of State County & Municipal Employees

!ICHARD W. ABELSON
Executive Director

PAULA DORSEY
President

September 12, 2007

Dan Thomas
DPW Personnel Administrator
841 N. Broadway, Room 501
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Re: Milwaukee District Council 48 and its affiliated Locals 33, 47, 423, 428, 550, 952, and
       1238 Response to August 27, 2007 Document Titled "Sick Leave Policy Revision
       Proposal"

Dear Mr. Thomas:

        Consider this letter as notice of Milwaukee District Council 48's and its affiliated Locals'
opposition to your August 27, 2007 document. We feel that the proposal is unreasonable,
violates our current Labor Agreement, and is a violation of Wisconsin State Statute 111.70. If
the City implements the proposed revisions, it is the Union's intention to file both a grievance
and a complaint with the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.

        The Union would suggest that if it really is in both parties' "collective best interest" as
the Commissioner portrays it, the appropriate City representatives be notified of the concern
and bring it to the collective bargaining table for full and complete discussion.

                                            Sincerely,

                                            John English
                                            Staff Representative

                                            William Mollenhauer
                                            Staff Representative

                                            Calvin A. Lee
                                            Staff Representative

JE:WM:CAL
mp/opeiu9afl-cio

cc: City Presidents
       Richard Abelson
       Jeffery Mantes
       Troy Hamblin