

Management Instruction



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Originating Organization & OCC Code Employee & Labor Relations Group LR 100	
Signature <i>Joseph F. Morris</i>	

Title ATTENDANCE CONTROL

I. Purpose

To provide management with guidelines for analyzing employee absences to identify potential and continuous attendance problems; and to provide information concerning the identification and monitoring of absences and to introduce the Absence Information Management System (AIMS) for PSDS offices.

Absence, Form 3972, Absence Analysis, and related documents submitted in support of a leave request, such as medical documentation required by Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) 513.36. (Also see EL-806, Section 214, Health and Medical Services.)

II. Responsibility

A. Installation heads are responsible for establishing a central monitoring point to review selected absence data and ensure that proper action is taken by supervisors to correct employee deficiencies relative to attendance. In facilities with a Director or Manager, Employee and Labor Relations/Support, this responsibility will be assigned to that person. In other facilities, the installation head may designate a manager to be responsible for administering this activity or assumes this responsibility personally.

B. Location

Files must be in convenient locations and available at all times to managers and supervisors responsible for attendance control. Locations are determined locally, based on security, accessibility, and space.

B. Each supervisor continues to have direct responsibility for ensuring the regular and dependable attendance of his subordinate employees.

C. Security

Because of the sensitive nature of this file, it must be made available only to authorized personnel. To maintain proper control, any record withdrawn must be accounted for by inserting a charge record in the file. This charge record must show the name of the person whose record is withdrawn, the type of record, and the name of the individual withdrawing the record. Upon return of the record(s) to the file, the charge record is removed.

III. Absence File

D. Arrangement of File

A. Contents

This file consists of all Forms 3971, Request for, Or Notification Of,

Files must be arranged alphabetically by employee name. Forms for each employee must be in chronological order with the most recent form in front. Depending on local conditions, it may be desirable for the primary

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arrangement of the file to be by groups or categories of employees, by sub-units (e.g., pay location or tour) within the organizational unit.

employee will not have to come to work. In any event, the determination of whether an absence is scheduled or unscheduled must be made by the supervisor.

E. Retention Period

The absence file is maintained on a calendar year basis. All forms prepared during the calendar year are retained for two years after the end of that year. When any documents in the file become part of a disciplinary or administrative proceeding, the document(s) will be retained in accordance with Administrative Support Manual Appendix B (p. 57-58), USPS 120.190.

IV. Absences

A. Management Responsibility

Each supervisor is responsible for controlling absences, both scheduled and unscheduled. However, because of the effect that unscheduled absences (and sometimes scheduled absences) have on the operational efficiency of the Postal Service, as well as the financial implications that result (i.e., overtime and replacement costs), it is essential that supervisors exercise their responsibility in this area. This instruction should be used in conjunction with EL-501, Supervisor's Guide to Attendance Improvement.

B. Definition

An unscheduled absence is defined as: An absence from work which is not requested and approved in advance. (ELM 511.41)

C. Scheduled vs. Unscheduled

All absences are either unscheduled as defined above or scheduled. A scheduled absence usually involves the completion, submission, and approval of PS 3971 prior to the actual absence; however there could be situations, as indicated in the examples below where it is not possible to have a 3971 submitted in advance -- yet the absence could be "scheduled." In these situations, there still must be a request in advance, and it must be the supervisor who decides that the

EXAMPLE 1 - An employee scheduled to report for duty at 0700 calls his supervisor at 0600 and requests annual leave for personal business. The supervisor reviews the operation and after considering other relevant factors, determines that he can operate without the services of the employee on that day. He approves the request. This is a scheduled absence because it was requested and approved in advance. While a PS 3971 was not submitted in advance, there was an advance request and the supervisor decided the employee need not come to work.

EXAMPLE 2 - An employee scheduled to report for duty at 0700 calls his supervisor at 0600 and informs him that he is unable to report for duty because of illness and is requesting sick leave. This is an unscheduled absence because, although requested in advance, and while the supervisor was made aware that the absence was going to occur, it was not approved in advance. The call from the employee merely alerted the supervisor that the employee would not be coming to work, but the supervisor did not decide that the employee need not come to work. Instead, it was the employee who decided he was not coming to work, and the call to the supervisor simply advised of this decision. In accordance with procedures, the supervisor does not approve or disapprove this request for sick leave until the employee returns to work.

EXAMPLE 3 - Because mail volume is light, a supervisor asks her clerks who are on their regular scheduled workday, if any of

them would like to go home early - using annual leave or leave without pay. Two clerks take 2 hours annual leave with the supervisor's approval. These are scheduled absences because the supervisor solicited the requests and approved the absences in advance.

EXAMPLE 4 - An employee scheduled to report for duty at 0700 calls his supervisor at 0630 and states that he will be late due to car problems. He reports at 0800. After a discussion with the employee, the supervisor approves 1 hour of annual leave. This is an unscheduled absence because the request was not approved in advance.

EXAMPLE 5 - An employee requests 2 hours sick leave to attend a dental appointment 2 days from now. The supervisor approves the request and notes it on the schedule. This is a scheduled absence because it was requested and approved in advance.

EXAMPLE 6 - Extended Illness - An employee suffers a heart attack and provides documentation from his physician indicating that the employee will need 2 months to recover. Once valid documentation is received and accepted consistent with ELM 513.363, the remainder of the absence should be recorded as scheduled.

D. Recording Scheduled and Unscheduled Absences

Form 3971, Request For, Or Notification Of Absence, (Exhibit 1) has been modified to document information concerning scheduled and unscheduled absences. Every supervisor who approves or disapproves a request for leave is also responsible for determining whether the absence is scheduled or unscheduled (see IV.C). Once a decision has been made, the supervisor must check the appropriate block on Form 3971 showing the absence as either scheduled or unscheduled. When a single leave request includes

both scheduled and unscheduled absences, allocation of hours should be made as indicated in Exhibit 3. Personnel completing Form 3972 or inputting leave information thru PSDS, will assume that the unscheduled portion occurred at the beginning of the period of absence unless directed by the supervisor to record it otherwise.

Remember -- the determination to approve or disapprove a leave request is independent of determining if an absence is scheduled or unscheduled. Supervisors must be very careful to apply established principles and regulations when acting upon leave requests.

V. Review Procedures

The manager selected as the central monitoring point has the overall responsibility for reviewing the attendance control performance of supervisors and managers.

A. Organizational Unit Reviews

The installation head or designated manager (central monitoring point), reviews the appropriate documents (e.g., Quarterly listing, PSDS Sick Leave Report, PS 3972) and/or the AIMS Reports (see VII), to determine possible problem areas. The reviewing manager makes appropriate comments on the overall performance of each work unit, to provide guidance to supervisors. Such comments will not indicate any corrective or disciplinary action for specific employees.

B. Detailed Review

1. Upon receipt of the Quarterly Listing, (or AIMS Reports), each supervisor reviews the attendance record of each employee listed to determine the reason for the individual's absences.
2. It is important that the employee's immediate supervisor conduct these reviews, since that particular supervisor has first-hand knowledge of the employee.
3. A low sick leave balance or high

number of absences does not automatically indicate abuse (e.g., long-term illness, etc.). Line out the name of any employee for whom you know there was valid reason to be absent unless such absences, while legitimate, are nonetheless excessive and warrant further attention or corrective action.

4. Names remaining on the list are included in a memorandum to the central monitoring point, requesting that a Form 3972, Absence Analysis, (Exhibit 2) be prepared for each employee. If the request is approved, it must be forwarded to the Director of Finance or other official responsible for custody of the timekeeping records for completion. Using the codes listed in Section VI, Form 3972 must be completed using timekeeping records, PSDS clock ring history microfiche, AIMS report microfiche, and/or Forms 3971. Post all leave charged for the current and preceding quarter, beginning the current quarter with the most recent 3971, timecards, or PSDS information as available. Post additional quarters if conditions warrant. If Form 3972 is maintained on an ongoing basis for each employee, the procedures in this section may be deleted.

5. Forward the completed Form 3972 thru the central monitoring point to the requesting supervisor, who reviews the form and takes appropriate action. The action taken is recorded on the reverse of the Form 3972, which is returned to the central monitoring point for inclusion in the absence file. (n.b., Records of discussions must be maintained consistent with the various collective-bargaining agreements.) For maximum benefit, reviews and recommendations should be completed as quickly as possible and each installation head should establish an appropriate schedule to ensure timely analysis.

VI. Absence Codes.

Use the codes indicated below to post absences on Form 3972. If the absence has been reported as unscheduled on Form 3971 or PSDS clock-ring histories, a "U" should precede the applicable code

code identifying the specific type of absence.

Absence Code **

Annual Leave	AL
Annual Leave in Lieu of Sick	SAL*
Sick Leave	SL
LWOP In Lieu of Sick	SWOP*
Emergency Annual Leave	EAL*
Holiday Leave	H
Leave Without Pay	LWOP
Military Leave	ML
Court Leave	CL
Absence Without Leave	AWOL*
Administrative Leave	ADL
Absence from Scheduled Overtime 1/	AOT*
Continuation of Pay	COP*
Late Reporting	L*

** Absence codes are listed on PS 3972 for easy reference.

* These are not separate categories of leave. The distinction is made for Form 3972 analysis purposes only.

1/ Supervisors should complete a Form 3971 for those employees who are absent from scheduled overtime. The remarks section of Form 3971 should be annotated accordingly. The completion of this form is not an official request for leave (employee's signature is not required) but is for recordkeeping purposes only.


VII. Absence Information Management System(AIMS)

A. Data Entry

A future Transmittal Letter to Handbook F-22, PSDS, Time and Attendance, will provide instructions concerning data entry of unscheduled absence information into the PSDS system.

B. AIMS Reports

1. The Postal Data Centers will provide AIMS reports each pay period to all PSDS offices. These reports show leave usage information in terms of scheduled and unscheduled absences. Leave usage information is provided by type of leave for the current and prior periods, year-to-date and same period last year. The information provided is in greater detail and is



identifying and controlling absences which have a negative impact on Postal operations. The frequency of these reports provides management the opportunity to more quickly identify potential problems and prevent them from occurring.

2. Because of the frequency and detail of these reports, MSCs may determine the review procedures listed in Section V need not be conducted upon receipt of each report. MSCs may establish a lesser frequency of review based on local needs, but it is not to be less than once every third report. In any event, all reports should be distributed upon receipt even when review procedures are not required.