

**Global Renewables Lancashire Operations Ltd**  
**Business Operating Management System (BOMS)**  
**Standard Operating Procedure**

**ABSENCE**

**SOP-TL-HR-000-6013**

**LEVEL 3**



**GLOBAL RENEWABLES™**

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## 1. REVISION STATUS

Issue No	Date	Revision Description	Prepared By	Approved
1	8/11/2012	Initial Revision	T Whittaker/T Robinson	T. WHITTAKER
2	14/11/2013	Transfer data into new SOP format	Jill Bryce	T. WHITTAKER
3	20/10/2014	Revised	T. Whittaker	T. WHITTAKER
4	21/12/2016	Amended	T. Whittaker	

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This document (Standard Operating Procedure) details the process to be undertaken to perform the tasks to be completed.

## 3. PURPOSE & SCOPE

The objective of this procedure is to ensure that employees when they are absent are managed and treated fairly when interacting with managers and that absence is managed to ensure people attend for work regularly.

It is the responsibility of managers with whom their remit covers to ensure that they act in accordance with the Absence Policy at all times. The Business and Finance Administrator shall maintain all records. The relevant manager shall manage the process.

## 4. PROCEDURE

GRLOL understands and appreciates that employees shall, from time-to-time become ill and are therefore absent from work. These episodes of absence may take the form of short-term conditions such as flu, bronchitis, and colds etc. but may and more unusually take the form of more long term conditions.

GRLOL is committed to assisting employees return to work and supporting them throughout their absence and illness. To that end GRLOL shall aim to provide a culture which encourages and supports mechanisms and rehabilitation processes where necessary.

GRLOL, in order to remain competitive and efficient, must also manage absence by providing a robust absence management process.

Absence can have a detrimental effect on the operation and listed below are some of the concerns that management face:

- Cost in terms of agency and/or overtime costs
- Re-allocating work
- Getting cover
- Managing the process
- Reduction in productivity
- Reduction in customer satisfaction
- Reduction in service levels

This document explains how issues regarding absence should be dealt with to ensure the fair and consistent treatment of all employees. It outlines the employee's and employer's responsibilities and also what actions may be taken by GRLOL should the employee's record fall below the level which is considered to be acceptable to GRLOL.

### **Definitions:**

Sickness Absence is any period of non-attendance due to medical reason which is either self-certificated or subject to a Doctor's certificate.

Absence: Any reason of non-attendance due to any other reason other than sickness.

Unauthorised Absence: any full or part shift when an employee is absent without prior approval from relevant line manager and is not for reason of sickness. This would include lateness. This period is normally unpaid.

Authorise Absence: is where GRLOL grants a period of absence which is not holiday but where an individual is given permission to be absent. This period is normally unpaid.

Emergency Holiday: is granted where a colleague has an exceptional circumstance which is unforeseen and out of the ordinary control of the colleague. It is not to be used for covering periods of sickness and should not be used as a matter of course. It is for exceptional domestic circumstances. Emergency Holiday would need to be authorised by a member of the management team.

Short Term Absence: any period of absence that is less than four consecutive working weeks.

Long Term Absence: any period of absence in excess of four working weeks.

Lateness: could include late to shift, late returning from breaks etc.

Rolling Year: Commences in the month when the absence occurred going back over the previous 12 months.

### **Sick Pay**

Sick pay entitlements are outlined in employee contracts and are not detailed in this procedure.

GRLOL is committed to maintaining a good sick pay scheme for the benefit of those employees who are genuinely sick. Accordingly GRLOL reserves the right not to pay Company sick pay, the sick pay scheme and the payments made are subject wholly and unreservedly to management discretion.

## Notification of Absence

It is important for the smooth running of the business that we plan cover for absence as early as possible. It is therefore essential that employees follow the correct procedure when absent from work.

- **On the first day of absence**

The employee must notify their manager that they are unable to attend for their normal shift at least **one hour** prior to their normal starting time.

The employee must state the reason for absence and likely duration. It is the employee's responsibility not that of the employee relatives or partner etc. to ensure GRLOL are made aware of the employee sickness absence.

In the event the employee does not notify the manager of their sickness absence, the employee's absence shall be recorded as unauthorised.

Where an employee is deemed to be absent and that absence is unauthorised GRLOL may take disciplinary action as a conduct related matter, separate to this procedure.

It is important to note that a person must be sick. It is not appropriate for an employee to telephone in sick because they are unable to get child care, their child is ill, the car won't start etc. There are separate policies and procedures to cover this type of absence.

As soon as the manager is advised of the employee absence a form shall be completed (First Contact Form) with the following details recorded:

- Date and time of call.
- Reason for the absence.
- When they are likely to return to work.
- Name/signature of manager.

It should be the employee who makes the telephone call. Only under exceptional circumstances i.e. the employee has been hospitalised, should a representative telephone the employee's manager.

Upon the employee's return to work a 'Return to Work Form' shall be completed and stored in the employee's personnel file.

- **In the event of the employee absence continuing for more than 7 days**

The employee is required to complete a self-certification form for the first seven days and send this to the Business and Finance Administrator.

The employee must keep GRLOL informed as to their progress. All periods must be accounted for with no gaps. It may be appropriate for a fit note to be provided from the employee's GP to sign the employee as fit to return to work. Such circumstances where this may be deemed appropriate would be for e.g. a back related problem, stress/depression, head injury, etc.

For absences longer than 7 days, a doctor's certificate is required.

- **On the employee return to work**

The employee is required to ring their Line Manager as follows:

- **Days** ~ 2pm the previous day before the employee intends to come back to confirm their return.
- **Nights** ~ by 2pm the day the employee is due to re-commence their shift.

This avoids any unnecessary arrangements and expenses being incurred for covering the employee job.

Wherever possible the employee shall be seen at the commencement of the employee shift but before the employee commences work. On occasions however the employee may be requested to come in outside of the employee shift or during the course of the employee shift to ensure the employee are fit and able to re-start work.

GRLOL cannot allow the employee to return to work unless the employee has been signed fit to do so by the employee's GP.

If GRLOL believes the employee is now fit to resume work the employee shall be able to continue on the shift or attend for the employee next scheduled day.

If GRLOL believes the employee is still not able to resume work, the employee shall be advised of this, the reasons and request the employee attends an appointment with their GP. GRLOL may also refer the employee to be seen by the occupational health advisor.

A return to work interview shall be completed for all absences. For absences relating to lateness the reasons for the employee lateness shall be discussed with the employee during their absence review.

Where there is an unauthorised absence, an interview shall take place to determine the reason for the absence following which a decision shall be made as to what actions, if any need to be taken.

- **When Company sick pay may be stopped**

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for GRLOL to withhold the payment of Company sick pay. Company sick pay is solely at the discretion of Management. Managers who are authorised to withhold the payment of sick pay are the General Manager in conjunction with the Business and Finance Manager. The following provides guidance, but is not exhaustive, when this could be the case:

- When an employee is shown to have persistent absence.
- Where GRLOL is of the genuine belief that the employee is not sick.
- When an employee has not followed the absence procedure.
- When an employee is absent due to an injury at work which is considered to be wholly or partially their fault.
- Where a pattern of absence occurs e.g. odd days, Monday/Fridays, birthdays, anniversaries.
- Where sickness absence immediately precedes or follows for e.g. a holiday, bank holiday, birthday or anniversary, where a holiday has been declined.
- When an employee is on any stage of the absence procedure. See table.

*All sickness absences should be certificated and accounted for.*

***Whilst Absent from Work***

During the period of time that an employee is absent from work they may be requested to attend a medical review with either a company Doctor/specialist or an Occupational Health professional. The subsequent medical assessment report would remain confidential to Health & Safety and Human Resources, although the implications on the individual's ability to perform their normal duties may need to be advised by Health & Safety to the line manager.

GRLOL shall approach an employee's GP (in accordance with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988) when it is felt to be beneficial for the purpose of receiving an up to date medical report outlining an employee's state of health and fitness for employment. Information requested could also include an assessment on the possible duration of absence and likely return to work date. Where a refusal is given by the employee for GRLOL to obtain medical information relating to the absence or medical condition, GRLOL shall be obliged to draw a conclusion based on the information within its possession at that time. This could ultimately mean the employee may be dismissed due to capability.

In addition, the employee could be asked to attend the site to discuss their absence, or alternatively to be visited at home or a mutually agreed venue.

If an employee has been on sick leave for more than 4 weeks, it may be necessary for them to attend a medical conducted by a qualified medical / occupational health practitioner before being allowed to return to the workplace. Having been declared fit to return to work by their GP it shall only be under exceptional circumstances where GRLOL may express concern and refer the employee back to the GP.

The employee must contact their line manager the day before they are to return to work so that a suitable time can be scheduled for the RTW interview. Prior to commencing work a 'Return to Work' interview shall then be conducted. The objective of this interview is to establish the reasons for absence and the employee's fitness to return to work and schedule any further action.

***Industrial Injury***

It is essential that all industrial injuries are investigated immediately and every effort made to ensure a safe working environment for all employees. When any employee has an industrial injury, the following procedure should apply:

- Any person who has an industrial injury that may result in time away from work must be referred to hospital or for a medical review with a Company appointed specialist/doctor. Depending on the severity of the injury it may be necessary to take the employee to a hospital, by ambulance or shall be transported by a competent person i.e. a driver and/or first aider. Under no circumstances should an employee be allowed to go to hospital unaccompanied, nor should they be allowed to go home on the pretext of attending a hospital or their GP.
- The competent person who takes the injured employee to hospital must ensure that they are taken into the casualty department, after which they should ring the line manager for instructions. GRLOL should notify next of kin immediately so that they can attend hospital and potentially relieve the first aider.
- The manager / supervisor shall telephone the hospital to establish the facts regarding the injured employee. However, it is also the responsibility of the employee to inform GRLOL at the earliest opportunity of their condition.
- Certification procedures are the same for Industrial Injury as for any other type of sickness absence.



- Employees with a persistent record of Industrial Injury (whether lost time accidents or not) shall be interviewed to assess the situation, and every effort shall be made to resolve any problem that may arise from this investigation. Individuals who do have a persistent record of industrial injuries may find themselves liable for disciplinary action if it is felt that they are not taking reasonable care of their welfare and/or that of others.
- Where it is felt that an employee has wholly or partially contributed to an injury, GRLOL may withdraw the payment of Company sick pay.

**The Monitoring and Control of Absence**

GRLOL accepts that employees may be absent from time to time and all incidents of absence shall be considered on an individual basis. The purpose of this procedure is to reduce absence and to remain cost effective.

The review procedure shall be as detailed below.

These trigger points cover both absence and lateness which is also considered unauthorised absence.

Periods of lateness will also include late return from breaks for example.

All reviews shall be confirmed in writing. Where it is believed that someone is ‘playing the system’ then the employee may be liable to disciplinary action which could result in dismissal.

Employees with periods of sporadic absence may also be referred to their own GP and/or a Company appointed medical expert to determine reasons for absence, likelihood of further absences, how attendance can be improved etc.

**Short term and/or Repeated Absence**

<b>TRIGGER POINTS</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1. 2 occasions of absence or lateness in a rolling 12 month period	<b>Pre-Stage</b> ~ A period of review.
2. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Occasion of absence and/or 3 <sup>rd</sup> occasion of lateness	<b>Absence Review</b> 6 month review + 6 month cessation of Company sick pay
3. 2 further occasions of absence and/or lateness whilst on Absence Review	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Stage</b> Verbal Warning (First written warning) on file ~ 6 month review period + 6 month cessation of Company sick pay – effective from date of warning
4. 2 further occasions of absence and/or lateness whilst on Stage 1	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Stage</b> absence review - 9 month review period + cessation of Company sick pay for additional 9 months – from date of warning (Second written warning)
5. 2 further occasions of absence and/or lateness whilst on Stage 2	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> stage</b> absence review – duration 12 months ~ cessation of Company sick pay for 12 months – from date of warning (Final written warning)



6. 1 further occasion of absence or lateness whilst on Stage 3	Could lead to dismissal.
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The pre-stage review is a documented process which could be done during the RTW process but is meant as a method of improvement in order to avoid the potential of a more formalised route and to remind employees of their obligations and likelihood of further action should their attendance not improve.

The absence review process shall be administered and managed by the Supervisor or their designate. At the Final Stage, a Senior Manager shall Chair the process, advised by Human Resources, where deemed appropriate.

Where an employee has had several periods of absence but has never fallen into any of the categories outlined above, or who has had previous disciplinary action taken against him/her it may be necessary to interview the individual regarding their level of absence and their conduct relative to this, since GRLOL may form the genuine belief that the employee is "working the system". It is important to note that although the trigger points are set as above this does not give an employee the right to take that time as "extra holiday". Where it is genuinely believed that this is the case, disciplinary action may be considered.

At the sickness absence review, absences periods may include those that have been previously discussed but the warning that is live shall take priority not the number of occasions in the rolling year.

It is expected that individuals should not be absent for more than 2 or 3 occasions in any one rolling year.

Excessive absence shall not be tolerated by GRLOL and all employees have the obligation to be available for work.

## **Long Term Absence**

### ***Stage One Review***

If it seems likely that the absence shall be prolonged or repeated, then a meeting shall be arranged between the relevant Manager, the employee and a member of the business and finance team / human resources. The review meeting would take place as soon after the 4 week criteria has been reached whereupon the following outcomes may be agreed as a result of this meeting.

- a) A date for the employee to return to work
- b) A further medical report from the employee's GP/Specialist with a view for a date to return to work may be requested. If the employee's own GP/Specialist is unwilling or unable to give a prognosis on a return to work, then the employee may be asked to undergo an examination by a third party, which would be arranged by Occupational Health.
- c) Arrangements for a medical examination by a Company nominated doctor/health advisor.

- d) Depending on the circumstances prevailing at the time, and at the discretion of the Manager/Department Manager, it may be possible to consider:
- Alternative employment within GRLOL, and/or
  - A rehabilitation period to help facilitate the employee back to work

### ***Stage Two Review***

A stage two review meeting shall be organised when the information has been reviewed following the first meeting. This shall occur as soon after the receipt of the relevant information. This meeting shall again be in the presence of a Senior Manager and a member of the business and finance team / HR. The employee has the right to be accompanied by trade union representative or work colleague. All relevant documentation to be discussed at the meeting will be shared in advance with the Senior Manager, the employee and a member of the Business and Finance Team / HR.

The purpose of this meeting shall be to reach one of the following outcomes:

- a) A date agreed for the employee to return to work in his/her original/alternative job, where available and suitable. This may include some rehabilitation period, if practicable. If the employee fails to return to work on the agreed date, then a further stage 2 review meeting would take place.
- b) A decision may be taken to terminate the employment of the individual based on medical grounds. The employee would be informed of the reasons for the decision and would be given the appropriate notice and right of appeal. The fact that the employee may still be in receipt of sick pay under GRLOL Pay Scheme does not preclude GRLOL from terminating employment, if this is appropriate.
- c) If the employee refuses to participate with the Company on the above, the Company may take the decision to go ahead with the stage 2 review meeting as planned and make their decisions based on the information they have received. One of the decisions they have available to them is to terminate the employee on medical grounds.

The outcome may be to postpone the final decision. This would only be the case when further medical evidence is required to enable a decision to be reached and where it is reasonable for GRLOL to await this information.