

STAFF REPORT  
TO THE MBTA ADVISORY BOARD

Absenteeism Trends at the MBTA

Updated 3/2/06

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The Finance Committee of the MBTA Advisory Board began looking at absenteeism in detail during the FY2003 Budget Review Process. At the time absences of operating personnel averaged 20 days per year, a high level compared to past MBTA absenteeism levels as well as that of other business operations. Statistics from previous years had shown a dramatic increase from an average of 15 to 16 days during the period of 1997 – 2000 to more than 20 days in 2001. Recent trends show a reversal bringing the average number of days absent down to less than 16, but the numbers are still too high. Due to the labor intensity of transit operations, absenteeism, particularly unscheduled absences, translates into significant costs for the agency. In order to ensure reliable service, absences have to be covered by employing additional operators (called extraboard or cover list). These employees get paid, whether they are used to cover absent employees or not. Coverage is particularly critical for train and bus operators, which is reflected in the high cover list percentage of 8% - 20% depending on the line<sup>1</sup>.

Absenteeism is defined as absent for any reason, including paid sick leave, unpaid sick leave, industrial accident leave, and absence without leave, but not including scheduled vacation. A certain number of excused absences is expected, planned for and considered a normal cost of doing business. Excessive absenteeism, however, unnecessarily drives up the Authority’s costs and hinders its ability to provide reliable transit service. The MBTA acknowledges that current absenteeism levels, despite a recent drop to an average of 15.76 days a year, strain the Authority’s ability to provide quality service within budgetary constraints.

Due to differences in measurements and the lack of a national reporting system it is difficult to compare absenteeism levels across organizations, even within the transit industry. Any comparisons in this report are therefore limited to historic absenteeism numbers reported by the MBTA and to its own attendance standards. Standards of acceptable absenteeism levels are set forth in the MBTA’s Attendance Policy, last revised in January of 2006 (Appendix A). The new policy supersedes a policy put in place in May of 2005. Below is a quick summary of the policy and recent changes.

***MBTA Attendance Policy***

The latest changes to the attendance policy were conceived to specifically target abuse of the policy while allowing for legitimate absences.

Absences are counted in either days or instances absent whereas instances can be as short as a fraction of a day and as long as several consecutive scheduled work days. In previous policies absences were counted in days only. For the purpose of calculating excessive absenteeism, instances are determined as follows:

Tardiness/Miss	1 Instance
Unexcused absence (incl. sick)	1 Instance/1 Day
Red Miss	2 Instances
Red Miss/Unexcused Absence (incl. sick) <sup>2</sup>	3 Instances + 1 Day
AWOL	Suspension + 3 Instances + 1 Day

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<sup>1</sup> The percentage for green line and bus operators runs around 8%, the red and orange line run at over 20%, while the blue line runs at approximately 18%. The total cover percentage for all subway employees has been steady at 7.6% since FY2000.

<sup>2</sup> For Operations personnel only!

A Red Miss is the failure of an employee to report for work promptly without giving the supervisor at least 1 hour notification and then reporting within 2 hours of the scheduled start time.

Excessive absenteeism is defined as:

- 5 days or 3 instances within 3 months
- 7 days or 4 instances within 6 months
- 8 days or 5 instances within 9 months
- 9 days or 7 instances within 12 months
- 12 days or 8 instances within 16 months
- 15 days or 9 instances within 20 months
- 18 days or 12 instances within 24 months

Introducing instances in addition to days allows for the harsher punishment of unexcused absences and tardiness, particularly those without notification (red miss) and for punishment of repeated one-day absences even if they do not add up to the threshold set as number of days. The new policy allows more total days over 20 and 24 months than the previous policy (from 14 to 15 in a 20-month period and 16 to 18 in a 24-month period).

Disciplinary progression was changed by adding a clause that prevents employees at step 3 and 4 from working overtime. The new progression looks as follows:

- Step 1: Written Warning
- Step 2: 1 Day Administrative Suspension<sup>3</sup>
- Step 3: 3 Day Administrative Suspension and **not allowed to work overtime for 45 calendar days**
- Step 4: 5 Day Time-Served Suspension<sup>4</sup> and final warning and **not allowed to work overtime for 90 calendar days. Employee will be referred to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for participation.**
- Step 5: 30 Day Suspension and recommendation for discharge

Rules for long-term leave of absence were relaxed slightly. The previous policy stated that an employee would generally be terminated after 6 months of leave regardless of reason, unless additional leave would be requested as a reasonable accommodation pursuant to the ADA federal and state law. The new policy allows the employee to request additional leave provided that he/she will return to duty within an additional 6 months (no more than 1 year of the initial date of absence).

Additional procedural changes were anchored in the policy. The following points were added:

- *If an employee has a 12-month period free of attendance discipline from the date of the last discipline under this policy, the employee shall revert to a discipline free attendance record for purposes of future progressive discipline.*
- *Attendance policy discipline shall be a separate track of discipline not to be used with any other disciplinary process.*

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<sup>3</sup> Administrative Suspension: record in employee service record. Employee reports to work and gets paid

<sup>4</sup> Time-Served Suspension: recorded in employee service record. Employee shall not work and not get paid.

## ***Union contracts***

Paid sick leave, vacation and other paid and unpaid leave are determined through collective bargaining with the respective unions. The leave of absence terms are valid for all union contracts, whereas sick leave varies by contract. Highlights are provided below.

### ***Sick Leave***

Members of the Carmen's Union (Local 589) representing bus & subway operators (generally among the groups with the highest incidences of absenteeism) accrue 1 paid sick day per month, but have a waiting period of 1 day before getting paid (this can be waived for two occasions per year for employees with more than 5 years of service). Machinists are eligible for a total of 10 days/year with the same waiting period. Police officers accrue 12 days per year and are not subject to a waiting period. Most unions require 1 year of service before the member becomes eligible for paid sick leave.

### ***Leave of Absence***

The MBTA grants the following leave of absence terms to all full-time union members:

- Bereavement: up to 3 days
- Personal Leave: most unions 1 day, executives, captains, lieutenants 3 days, police officers & sergeants receive no personal leave
- Family & Medical Leave: 5 days paid for Local 6, 10 days paid for Executives, Local 453, Captains and Lieutenants. Unpaid leave for all other unions (no limit specified)
- Small Necessities Leave Act: up to 24 hours unpaid leave, eligibility starts after 1 year of service
- Jury duty
- Military service: regular pay for up to 15 days for Armed Forces Reservists and 17 days for National Guard

The MBTA is currently in negotiations over new union contracts as the current contract expires June 30, 2006. Some of the terms listed above may be up for negotiation.

## ***MBTA Absenteeism Trends***

The MBTA has made measurable progress in reducing absenteeism during calendar years 2004 and 2005 compared to recent years. Average days absent (for any reason, paid & unpaid) decreased from 21.62 in CY2003 to 15.76 in CY2005. Despite this progress, in CY 2005, 13.8% of the workforce was absent for more than 30 days and 35.6% of the workforce fell into the category of excessive absenteeism, defined as absent for 9 days a year or more under the new policy. As any average, the average number of absences at the MBTA is skewed by legitimate cases of long-term absenteeism due, for example, to severe illnesses or maternity leaves. However, the MBTA's high percentage of the work force that has been absent for more than 30 days, suggests that abuse might not be out of the question.

Despite recent improvements, the MBTA has an opportunity to realize significant savings by aggressively enforcing the attendance policy and reducing absenteeism. A study by Watson Wyatt conducted in 2001 suggested that the Authority could incur direct and indirect cost savings of \$2.5 million by implementing an absence management program. Average days absent today are similar to the levels at the time the study was conducted. Below is a history of absenteeism levels for the last nine years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average days absent</b>
1997	15.95
1998	15.24
1999	15.42
2000	16.47
2001	20.50
2002	21.44
2003	21.62
2004	17.34
2005	15.76

*Types of Absences*

For the last three calendar years, the total absences break out as follows:

	<b>Average</b>			<b>Total # of Days</b>		
	<b>CY2005</b>	<b>CY2004</b>	<b>CY2003</b>	<b>CY2005</b>	<b>CY2004</b>	<b>CY2003</b>
<b>All Employees</b>						
Sick Paid:	2.98	3.3	3.51	19,855.05	22,231	23,773
Sick Unpaid:	8.34	8.81	10.54	55,588.21	59,388	71,353
Industrial:	4.11	4.97	7.09	27,390.28	33,486	48,010
Absence without Official Leave and Non-authorized Absence:	0.33	0.26	0.47	2192.49	1,746	3,184
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.76</b>	<b>17.34</b>	<b>21.61</b>	<b>105,026</b>	<b>116,850</b>	<b>146,320</b>

In CY2004 the Bus and Subway divisions comprised 69% of the workforce and made up 84% of all absences. In CY2005 we have seen some improvements. The divisions make up 70% of the workforce and 76% of all absences. All categories improved, with the exception of a slight increase in absences without official leave (AWOL) and non-authorized absences (NAA).

	<b>Average</b>			<b>Total # of Days</b>		
	<b>CY2005</b>	<b>CY2004</b>	<b>CY2003</b>	<b>CY2005</b>	<b>CY2004</b>	<b>CY2003</b>
<b>Bus and Subway</b>						
Sick Paid:	1.69	2.18	2.19	7,871.86	13,016	9,502
Sick Unpaid:	10.71	11.19	12.95	49,893.44	55,008	56,158
Industrial:	4.44	5.72	8.3	20,670.76	28,926	35,976
Absence without Official Leave and Non-authorized Absence:	0.36	0.31	0.66	1,682.55	1,620	2,877
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>19.39</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>80118.61</b>	<b>98,569</b>	<b>104,512</b>

The year by year comparison illustrates major improvements in industrial absences and a decrease of unpaid sick absences, the latter nevertheless remaining at high levels. The decrease in industrial absences can largely be attributed to the MBTA's Absence Management Initiative put into place in the winter of 2004/05, particularly efforts to target long-term absenteeism and detect and deal with abuse. As of March 1, 2005 a total of 113 employees were "suspended 30 days with a recommendation for discharge" as having been absent for one year or more. Of those, 54 employees retired, 49 were discharged, 1 resigned and 8 employees returned to work. The continuing positive trend appears to be a result of ongoing efforts within the MBTA to curb absenteeism, such as the May 2005 policy changes and an increased focus on enforcement.

The relatively higher number of unpaid sick days and lower number of paid sick days in the bus and subway division is a function of union contracts, which call for a waiting period of one day before sick pay goes into effect. At the same time, it is an area in which improvements should be possible.

### ***Service and Financial Implications***

We have always assumed that excessive absenteeism has a negative effect on service quality and reliability. In an effort to substantiate that claim we performed a simple analysis of the records kept for missed bus runs. A look at 7 months worth of recent weekday data (150 days total from June 2005 through December 2005) revealed the following:

- .70% of scheduled bus runs were missed: almost half (47%) of those were due to operator non-availability while 27% were due to the vehicle being not available or disabled and the remaining 26% due to miscellaneous causes.
- These runs were missed despite an 8% extraboard which exists to fill in for missing operators.
- Missed runs due to operator non-availability was 2.2 times higher on the days before or after the weekend or holidays than on other weekdays (Tue – Thu). That translates into an average of 51.28 runs missed per day on Fridays, Mondays or the day before and after holidays compared to an average of 23.29 missed runs on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays. The data were consistent for seven of the nine bus garages. This suggests the possibility that abuse is taking place and that tighter enforcement of the attendance policy is necessary.

Although the total percentage of missed runs does not appear to be alarmingly high and about 1/3 of the missed runs were compensated for by added runs, sometimes from different bus facilities, the net result is a decrease in service that could potentially be avoided by stricter enforcement of the attendance policy.

On the financial side it is difficult to predict with any kind of certainty what the impacts of reducing absenteeism levels would be. As mentioned earlier in this report, an independent consultant projected potential cost savings to be \$2.5 million in 2000, when absenteeism levels were similar to today. Wages have increased significantly since then, which suggests that the current number would be higher. We tried to create a rough estimate based on the assumption that reducing absences will decrease overtime and/or headcount.

Assuming that every day of absence, at least in the bus and subway division, needs to be covered either by employing additional operators and technicians or paying employees overtime to work extra shifts, the high absenteeism levels translate into significant costs for the Authority. We

estimate that a reduction of the average number of days in the bus and subway division by one additional day (from 17.38 and 16.96 days average respectively) could yield \$484,640 in savings by avoiding overtime or the need to hire additional employees (based on an annual salary of \$50,000, 240 work days and a premium of 50% either for overtime worked or for benefits paid to additional employees)<sup>5</sup>.

Cutting the average days absent in half for both divisions consequently could lead to more than \$3.8 million in savings. While there are additional costs involved in monitoring and enforcing attendance policy as well as creating incentive programs, the projected savings far outweigh the cost of the programs and could contribute to closing the projected shortfalls in the FY2007 budget.

### ***Reasons for excessive absenteeism***

Contrary to popular belief, there is no proven correlation between the availability of overtime and absenteeism. Many people believe that employees are more likely to take an unpaid sick day, if they have the opportunity to work overtime and more than make up for the lost pay of the sick day. However, academic studies have shown no conclusive relationship<sup>6</sup> and the MBTA's own data do not support this belief<sup>7</sup>.

Transit authorities surveyed in the TCRP Synthesis 33 "Practices in Insuring Employee Availability" cite the following reasons apart from legitimate illness, injury or family leave: lax attendance policy or inconsistent application and enforcement thereof, poor work ethic, undesirable or inflexible work shifts or days off, feelings of alienation/unimportance, low morale due to cancelled leave, lack of systematic attendance tracking and abuse of leave policies.

### ***What has been done?***

The MBTA Advisory Board has been focusing on absenteeism since the FY2003 budget review and has repeatedly urged the MBTA to take aggressive action to reduce excessive absenteeism and the costs associated with it. The Authority has managed to reduce the average days absent from a high of 21.62 in 2003 to 17.34 days in CY2004 and 15.76 days in CY2005 and continues to address this issue in order to increase operating efficiencies and cut down on over-time costs. An updated attendance policy presented to MBTA employees in April 2005 contained few major changes, but it signaled a renewed commitment to enforcing existing policies. Since then, the Authority has introduced hand scanners for attendance tracking and worked on educating managers and the work force. Based on feedback from union officials, employees, supervisors and managers, the attendance policy was refined again as described above in order to effectively target attendance abusers. The new policy went into effect on 1/9/06.

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<sup>5</sup> Number of employees and absence statistics based on MBTA CY2005 absenteeism report. For the sake of simplification the calculation assumes that the only costs associated with absenteeism is a 50% premium paid by the MBTA in overtime or benefits to additional employees.

<sup>6</sup> Yoram Shiftan reviewed 4 studies on the relationship between overtime and absence in his doctoral thesis "Transportation Workforce Planning in the Transit Industry: Incorporating Absence, Overtime, and Reliability Relationships" (MIT, 1991). 2 studies found no such relationship, 2 found some relationship, however, it is questionable whether the results can be generalized based on the authors' use of aggregate or weak absence and overtime measures.

<sup>7</sup> Report on Overtime and Absenteeism received during the Budget FY2006 review from the MBTA.

For the second time in less than a year employees are granted the opportunity of a fresh start, with the exception of employees who were discharged for attendance violations since May 23, 2005 or those who are on a return to work agreement. All discipline resulting from absences since May 23, 2005 will be removed from the employee records and employees will be reimbursed for any regular day's pay lost as a result of a disciplinary suspension. Absences incurred between May 23, 2005 and January 8, 2006 will not be used for future disciplinary action unless the employee's future absence results in violation of step three or greater on the disciplinary progression.

***What else needs to be done?***

The MBTA is in the process of working with managers and forepersons on implementation strategies for the new attendance policy. In addition, incentive and reward programs can be successful tools for reducing absenteeism further. The MBTA has not committed to implementing such programs.

To ensure the success of all programs aimed at decreasing absenteeism, the MBTA must place the utmost importance on enforcement and continuous monitoring at all management levels. This involves extensive training of managers, examining and altering business processes and practices, and changing the company culture with regards to acceptable absence levels. The Authority needs to be consistent in both the commitment to the new policy and the enforcement of the new absenteeism standard.

Battling excessive absenteeism requires a shift in the MBTA's management culture along with dedication, commitment and hard work. The Advisory Board compliments the Authority for working very closely with employees, union officials and all levels of management in developing the January 2006 policy. As the next step, it is important for all parties to understand that this new standard will be enforced uniformly and fairly and that it is here to stay. Given the current fiscal crisis the impact of excessive absenteeism on operations and the budget can no longer be tolerated.

## Attendance Policy – FINAL

<b><u>SUBJECT:</u></b> Attendance Policy	<b><u>DATE OF ISSUE:</u></b> January 9, 2006	<b><u>POLICY/PROCEDURE #</u></b>

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth rules and guidelines with respect to attendance, absenteeism and tardiness.

### II. POLICY

All employees are required to report for duty on time and complete their respective work schedule.

### III. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Authority employees, affiliated and unaffiliated, full-time and part-time.

### IV. DEFINITIONS

**Absent from Duty:** Failure to be present at assigned location during scheduled work hours, regardless of reason.

**Instance:** An unexcused Absence from Duty for either an entire day or a Fraction of one or more consecutive scheduled work days (including misses, red misses, AWOLs).

**Fraction:** A Fraction is any portion of a scheduled work day less than a complete day.

**Excused Absence:** An authorized Absence from Duty as a result of one of the following types of leaves: bereavement, compensatory/in lieu of days, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), jury duty, military, personal leave, Small Necessities Leave Act (SNLA), parental leave, vacation, union business, or court ordered appearance with acceptable documentation. Any excused absence shall not be deemed an Instance.

**Unexcused Absence:** Any period of time an employee is Absent from Duty that is not an Excused Absence.

**AWOL:**

When an employee fails to appear at his/her scheduled starting/reporting time and fails to notify his/her immediate supervisor or designee before the employee's scheduled starting/reporting time that he/she will be absent or late for work.

When an employee notifies his/her supervisor before the scheduled starting/reporting time that he/she will be late for work, but fails to report to work within two (2) hours of the scheduled start time.

In addition, an employee is considered AWOL if the employee leaves work without proper authorization of their immediate supervisor or designee.

**Tardiness/Miss:**

When an employee fails to report for work as scheduled, but notifies his/her supervisor at least one (1) hour in advance, and reports for work within two (2) hours of his/her scheduled starting/reporting time.

**Red Miss:**

When an employee gives less than one (1) hour notification to his/her supervisor before the scheduled starting/reporting time that he/she will be late for work and reports for work within two (2) hours of his/her scheduled starting/reporting time.

**Excessive Absenteeism:**

Any absenteeism that is in violation of the standards set forth in this policy.

**Pattern Absenteeism:**

Three (3) instances/days of Absence from Duty before or after scheduled days off, vacations or holidays. Pattern absenteeism may include, but is not limited to, instances/days of absenteeism that occur on the same day of week and/or at a certain time of year (e.g., summer, holiday season, etc.).

**Administrative Suspension:**

Recorded entry in the employee's service record. Employee is required to report to work and the employee shall be paid.

**Time Served Suspension:**

Recorded entry in the employee's service record. Employee shall not report to work and shall not be paid.

**Sick:**

Absence as a result of an employee's own illness and/or injury or where otherwise authorized by collective bargaining agreements or policy.

## V. GENERAL RULES AND GUIDELINES

### A. Reporting for and Remaining on Duty

Every employee is required to report for duty on time at their assigned location, and remain on duty for his/her full shift, unless he/she has received advance authorization from his/her respective supervisor.

### B. Personal Notification to Supervisor

An employee is required to notify his/her immediate supervisor personally at least one (1) hour before the start of his/her scheduled shift if he/she is going to be late or Absent from Duty. Please note that pursuant to this policy, repeated absences may still subject an employee to progressive discipline.

If an employee is unable to contact his/her supervisor, he/she shall report an absence or tardiness to the supervisor's designee, the designee shall state their name, position, and badge number. The employee shall note the name, position, badge number of designee, date and time of contact.

If an employee is absent for more than one (1) day, the employee must inform his/her respective supervisor of the employee's expected return to work date.

Employees are required to contact their supervisor every two (2) weeks during an absence, failure to do so will result in progressive discipline, up to and including discharge.

### C. Job Abandonment

Any employee who is absent from duty for more than five (5) consecutive scheduled workdays without notification to Authority officials as to the reason for the absence will be considered to have abandoned his/her position, and will also be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

### D. Long-Term Leave of Absence

1. **Continuation of Employment:** An employee who has been on an approved leave of absence for no more than six (6) months within a rolling twelve (12) month period may be entitled to return to the same or similar position held prior to the employee's long term leave of absence if the employee is able to return to full duty at same or similar position within six (6) months.

2. **Termination of Employment:** At the end of a six (6) month leave of absence, an employee's employment will be terminated, regardless of reason, unless: 1) a request for additional leave as a reasonable accommodation pursuant to applicable federal and state law; or 2) medical documentation stating that the employee will return to duty within an additional six (6) month period provided it is within one (1) year of the date of the initial absence.

## VI. DISCIPLINARY PROGRESSION

Excessive absenteeism, pattern absenteeism, red misses, tardiness/misses, and/or AWOLs may subject employees to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. AWOL is a particularly serious attendance related violation. It will not be tolerated and will trigger a disciplinary suspension as a first response. Supervisors are advised to follow the progressive disciplinary steps where appropriate, as shown below.

- **Step 1 –** Written Warning
- **Step 2 –** One (1) Day Administrative Suspension
- **Step 3 –** Three (3) Day Administrative Suspension and Not Allowed to Work Any Overtime for Forty-Five (45) Calendar Days.
- **Step 4 –** Five (5) day Time-Served Suspension and Final Warning and Not Allowed to Work Any Overtime for Ninety (90) Calendar Days. Employee will be referred to EAP for participation.
- **Step 5 –** Thirty (30) Day - Suspension and -Recommendation for Discharge.

**NOTE: \* All overtime restrictions will commence on the date of discipline.**

**\*The Authority may require an employee to work overtime during this period of overtime restriction based on operational needs.**

Each absence is to be evaluated by supervisors. Supervisors and employees are advised that the following rates of absenteeism are unacceptable and may result in the application of progressive discipline. Each Department Head or a designee for that Department, shall determine during the Interview hearing whether absences are Excused Absences as defined in this Policy. In addition-, in exceptional circumstances, a Supervisor may request authorization to waive discipline. In such cases, Supervisors must obtain the written approval/authorization of the Director of their Department via the Attendance Discipline Waiver Form. Note that this schedule uses "days/instances."

**A. Excessive Absenteeism – Sick, Tardiness/Miss, Red Misses, AWOL, and Unexcused Absences**

**Any violation in excess of - the number of days/instances within the chart below shall require an interview and may result in progressive discipline.**

1. 5 days or 3 instances within 3 months.
2. 7 days or 4 instances within 6 months.
3. 8 days or 5 instances within 9 months.
4. 9 days or 7 instances within 12 months.
5. 12 days or 8 instances within 16 months.
6. 15 days or 9 instances within 20 months.
7. 18 days or 12 instances within 24 months.

AWOL - will not be tolerated and will result in a disciplinary suspension even in the first instance.

Tardiness/Miss - shall be considered one (1) instance.

Red Miss - shall be considered two (2) instances.

Red Miss/Unexcused Absence – shall be considered three (3) instances when an employee gives less than one (1) hour notification to his/her supervisor before the scheduled starting/reporting time that he/she will be absent from duty. (Red Miss = two (2) instances/Sick = one (1) instance/one (1) day).

**ABSENCE ACTION**

Tardiness/Miss	One (1) Instance
Unexcused Absence (including Sick)	One (1) Day/One (1) Instance
Red Miss	Two (2) Instances
Red Miss/Unexcused Absence (including Sick)	Three (3) Instances + One (1) Day
AWOL	Suspension + Three (3) Instances + One (1) Day

**Note:** An employee may be disciplined for **pattern absenteeism** irrespective of whether he/she has met the criteria listed above. For purposes of the above chart, consecutive sick days will be counted as one (1) instance. For example, an employee who informs his/her supervisor at least one hour before their scheduled starting/reporting time that they will be out for three days, will be counted as one instance and three (3) days. In addition, Red Miss/Unexcused Absence shall only apply to Operations personnel.

**B. Procedures**

1. Employee attendance records will be reviewed no less frequently than monthly by

area supervisors.

2. When a supervisor identifies one of the situations listed above (A-1 through A-7) on an employee's attendance record, or has other reasons to suspect that an employee is abusing sick leave or in violation of any section of this policy, an interview hearing shall be conducted.
3. In determining whether an employee's attendance record meets the criteria listed above, supervisors shall not include excused absences as defined in this Policy.
4. If a Workers' Compensation claim is pending, supervisors must count the associated absence, and determine whether an employee's attendance record meets the criteria above. If discipline results and the Workers' Compensation claim is later approved, the Supervisor is to expunge the discipline from the employee's record.
5. Employee attendance records will be reviewed going back twenty-four (24) calendar months.
6. When an employee is warned or disciplined for Excessive Absenteeism as listed above, in A1 through A7 or in violation of any section of this policy, he/she is "Locked-In" to the attendance record within the conditions remaining in the two years or twenty-four (24) calendar month period.  
  
Example: When an employee has six (6) days, which resulted in a Written Warning (Step 1), then has an additional two (2) day Absence from Duty within six (6) months from the initial absence, the employee has eight (8) absences and will be subject to Step 2 – One Day Suspension.
7. **If an employee has a twelve-month period free of attendance discipline from the date of last discipline under this policy, the employee shall revert to a discipline free attendance record for purposes of future progressive discipline.**
8. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring employees for excessive absenteeism, pattern absenteeism, AWOLs, and/or excessive tardiness/misses. Moreover, supervisors are responsible for ensuring that such discipline is being applied on a fair and consistent basis. -

**Note: Attendance Policy discipline shall be a separate track of discipline not to be used with any other disciplinary process.**