



3-minute masterclass: identifying periods of absence from the workplace

Since the global COVID-19 pandemic, HR Managers and business owners have been faced with some HR conundrums. The illness and the impact it's already had on businesses has been phenomenal. As the economy slows, more and more companies (except for the likes of Woolworths, Coles and Aldi) have no choice but to figure out how they'll survive the tough times ahead.

We've received thousands of calls in the past few weeks through our Telephone Advisory Service (TAS), where our clients have been asking a lot of questions about staff leave entitlements.

In the current environment, if you manage people, then you need to be able to quickly and accurately identify the types of leave to which your employees are entitled. We've created this easy-to-understand reference guide to help you make those decisions with ease and confidence. Don't forget, to print this guide and pin it to your notice board so you can quickly refer to it!

Scenario 1: Employee is sick or unfit for work due to personal illness or injury.

Leave entitlement(s) and options:

1. Paid personal leave for permanent employees until exhausted.
2. Unpaid leave for casual employees.
3. Unpaid personal leave for permanent employees who have exhausted paid personal leave.

Scenario 2: Employee is not sick but is required to self-isolate based on the Government's advice.

Leave entitlement/s and options:

1. Working from home (if practical).
2. Unpaid leave.
3. Annual leave by agreement.
4. Long service leave by agreement.

Scenario 3: Employee is not sick but is unable to return to Australia due to travel restrictions.

Leave entitlement/s and options:

1. Working remotely (if practicable).
2. Unpaid leave.
3. Annual leave by agreement.
4. Long service leave by agreement.



Scenario 4: Employee must provide care or support for a member of their immediate family or household who is sick.

Leave entitlement(s) and options:

1. Paid carer's leave for permanent employees until the leave is exhausted.
2. Unpaid carer's leave for casual employees.
3. Unpaid carer's leave for permanent employees who have exhausted their paid carer's leave entitlement.



Scenario 5: Employee is required to stay home to care for school-aged children due to school closures.

Leave entitlement(s) and options:

- If this arises in an emergency situation: carer's leave which is paid for permanent employees.
- If not considered an emergency (i.e. advanced notice of closure): consider annual leave or long-service leave by agreement or, if no agreement, unpaid leave.



Scenario 6: Employee decides to self-isolate as a precaution, but is not required to because of the Government's advice and is not otherwise unwell.

Leave entitlement(s) and options:

- Working from home (if practicable).
- Unpaid leave.
- Annual leave by agreement.
- Long-service leave by agreement.

Scenario 7: Employer directs an employee to self-isolate or remain at home as a precaution, but the employee is not required to self-isolate based on the Government's advice.

Leave entitlement(s) and options:

1. Consider working from home arrangements (if practicable).
2. Pay employees for the shifts they would have worked.

Scenario 8: The business is required to close temporarily due to an actual or suspected case of coronavirus.

Leave entitlement(s) and options:

1. Consider working from home arrangements (if practical).
2. If working from home or working at another location is not an option, the employer may be able to rely on the Stand Down provisions of the Fair Work Act 2009, which is unpaid. This can be a tricky area and source of potential claims. Seek expert advice first. For HR Assured clients, we recommend you seek advice from the Telephone Advisory Service before enacting a stand down.



For more information please contact us on our website: www.hrassured.com.au