

Absence & Disability Management Program

Focus Area: Transform Workforce
Strategic Objective: Place/Safety
Owner: Laura Southard, HR Director, Tim Ramsaur, Utility Support Director and Mary Cornelius, HR Ops Director

Summary of proposed action

SPU needs to develop and maintain a programmatic approach to absence and disability management, to help employees stay at work and return to work.

Description of the problem this action solves

SPU's current safety culture and processes are primarily reactive. This has led to:

Injuries, Accidents and Illness

- High rates of occurrence
- No comprehensive plan to reduce

Wellness

- No comprehensive wellness program
- No dedicated wellness resources

Absences

- Increasing leaves of absence
- High sick leave utilization
- No integrated case management for managing leaves, workers comp, return-to-work and ADA (disability)

Workers Compensation (WC)

- Claims, time loss and total costs high
- No comprehensive plan to reduce claims and re-injury
- High multiple claims
- Focus on processing of claims versus prevention of claims

More detailed description of the proposed action

SPU needs to develop and maintain an integrated absence and disability management program, to help employees stay at work and return to work. Components of a successful program include:

- Commitment from the top and across the utility to create and maintain of a culture of safety, accountability, and continuous improvement;
- Internal expertise in Safety, Health and Wellness, and a robust, pro-active, case management approach for SPU's Return-to-Work program, focused on getting staff back to work in a timely, mutually successful way and coordinating 'light' and modified duty;
- An integrated, real-time data system for all safety and absence related data, to use for tracking, monitoring, reporting accidents, injuries, close calls, and Return to Work, so incidents can be tracked from hazard to correction, and communicated across the utility;
- Shift of focus from lagging indicators (what has already occurred) to predictive indicators (proactive and preventative), and use a case management approach for staff who have multiple claims/accidents/health issues;
- A focus on proactive wellness and health program with the potential to reduce health care usage and non-occupational injuries and illnesses and encourage a healthier workforce, benchmarking with other similar companies;
- Develop and deploy training, processes and systems designed to encourage and reward desired safety, health, employee availability, and work behaviors.

Absence & Disability Management Program

Benefits of the proposed action

An effective absence and disability management program would:

- Ensure continued compliance with all Federal, State, and local worker safety regulations;
- Monitor, track and reduce absences, injury frequency and severity, health costs;
- Reduce costs associated with absences, occupational and non-occupational injuries, accidents and incidents;
- Increase the number of days employees are at work, productive, and engaged;
- Promote change in SPU's culture by encouraging employees to take responsibility for themselves and their co-workers health, wellness, and safety on the job.

Implementation plan and timeline

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Establish program management (matrix HR/Field Ops)	X					
Complete wellness assessment and transition ongoing Intalex safety software administration to HR Ops	X					
Develop program including improving SPU basic safety program and training, developing case management process and a basic wellness program. Establish continuous improvement processes and associated health and safety analytics.	X	X				
Implement identified programmatic changes	X	X				
Continuous improvement actions	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ongoing measurement – metrics & advanced analytics	X	X	X	X	X	X

Budget and FTE Changes (in \$000s)

Fund: All Three Funds - DW, DWW, SW

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
O&M Labor	200	200	200	200	200	200	\$1,200
O&M Non-Labor	150	150	150	150	150	150	\$900
<i>O&M Subtotal</i>	350	350	350	350	350	350	\$2,100
CIP							\$0
<i>Total O&M and CIP</i>	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$2,100
FTE	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	

- 1 FTE: Intalex (safety technology) system administrator and analyst for safety program data (HR Ops)
- 1 FTE: Wellness & Safety Specialist (Field Ops)
- \$150K/yr: to fund safety programmatic activities including Wellness assessments, proposal development and related activities, communications, online safety training licensing, lunch-learns, etc.

Plan for evaluating success or progress

This action plan will be evaluated through review of existing metrics including absences, leave utilization (sick leave, FML, etc.), safety incidents and accidents, Workers Compensation (WC) claims, re-injury rates and medical costs. It is expected to realize a reduction in incident rates, leave utilization rates and WC claims and medical costs.