

Administrative Procedures Manual	Administrative Procedure 409
	Employee and Family Assistance Program
Page 1 of 4	APPROVED: September 2013 AMENDED/REVIEWED: February 26, 2015, September 2019, August 2022
LEGAL REFERENCE:	Section 52, 53, 222 Education Act Employment Standards Code Labour Relations Act Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Personal Information Protection Act

Background

Employees are the Division's most valuable assets and the Division is desirous of retaining their services at an effective and acceptable level. Many of the human problems employees encounter, such as mental, emotional, social, physical or situational difficulties, can become serious enough to affect their well-being and job performance.

Where the employee's own efforts to resolve the problem does not succeed in restoring an acceptable level of performance or well-being, it is in the best interest of the employee, the employee's family, the community and the Division to provide a personal, confidential counselling and referral service to employees. Through the implementation of an Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), the Division seeks to assist the employee to resolve the problem and to allow a return to a normally acceptable level of job performance and state of well-being.

The program is designed to deal with but is not restricted to problem areas such as emotional or behavioural disorders, chemical dependency, job stress, marital and family, financial, legal, bereavement, retirement and other personal difficulties.

Procedures

1. Eligibility

- 1.1 Any employee, who is eligible to access health benefit coverage under the current Benefit Carrier is eligible to access EFAP.
- 1.2 The definition of eligible dependents shall be the same as that which applies under the current Benefit Carrier's dependent qualification requirements.

2. Confidentiality

- 2.1 When an employee enters the EFAP, the confidential nature of the problem, including the name of the employee, will be treated by the EFAP counselor with the utmost discretion.
- 2.2 The employee's program files or records are retained in the EFAP provider's office and access to their contents is restricted to EFAP personnel.
 - 2.2.1 Only with written consent of the employee will necessary information be discussed with the immediate supervisor or designated human resources department liaison.

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3. Recognition of Problem/Referral

3.1 Voluntary (Self) Referral

- 3.1.1 Each person is ultimately responsible for their own well-being; an employee who feels that they would benefit from the program is encouraged to independently seek help through the assistance of the EFAP service.
- 3.1.2 Voluntary referrals are strictly confidential.
- 3.1.3 Employees voluntarily requesting assistance through counselling, treatment or referral can do so with the full assurance that such action will in no way prejudice job security, promotional opportunities or reputation if adequate levels of job performance are maintained.

3.2 Suggested (Informal) Referral

- 3.2.1 A supervisor or colleague may suggest informally that an employee contact the EFAP counsellor for assistance with any issues that might be perceived as interfering with job performance. The responsibility for cooperating in any form of treatment, rehabilitation or other assistance rests solely with the employee.
- 3.2.2 Should the employee seek counselling, all case information is strictly confidential.

3.3 Administrative (Formal) Referral

- 3.3.1 If an employee's performance continues in an unsatisfactory manner after a verbal suggestion that the EFAP should be utilized, an employee may be strongly advised of the recommendation of performance improvement through the availability of EFAP services.
- 3.3.2 Referrals for behavioural health problems are not to interfere with normal discipline and, where possible, are to be made in conjunction with normal discipline.
- 3.3.3 To assist in the supervisor's decision as to whether a Formal Referral is warranted, supervisors are required to discuss the situation and employee with the Human Resources Department before a decision is made to initiate a formal referral.

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4. Sick Leave Benefits

- 4.1 The supervisor shall allow the employee to take the time from assigned duties in order to contact the EFAP counsellor for assessment and/or treatment.
- 4.2 Employees may access sick leave benefits in accordance with current Board policies, Division administrative procedures and/or applicable collective agreements for such time away from work.

5. Authority and Responsibility

- 5.1 The employer is required to:
 - 5.1.1 Support the philosophy of an Employee and Family Assistance Program;
 - 5.1.2 Maintain job and benefit protection for the employee undergoing treatment or accessing assistance.
- 5.2 The employee is required to:
 - 5.2.1 Accept responsibility for making efforts to maintain a positive state of well-being and acceptable job performance; and
 - 5.2.2 Continue in a prescribed treatment plan where a formal referral has been carried out.
- 5.3 The Employee and Family Assistance Program provider/counsellor is required to:
 - 5.3.1 Receive employees requesting service or referral in order to assess problems, and:
 - 5.3.1.1 Provide counselling as required;
 - 5.3.1.2 Make referrals as necessary;
 - 5.3.1.3 Recommend appropriate program of treatment;
 - 5.3.1.4 Monitor employee's progress;
 - 5.3.1.5 Communicate information to the Human Resources Manager where appropriate, while respecting confidentiality;
 - 5.3.1.6 Provide twenty-four (24) hour answering service to employees;
 - 5.3.1.7 Provide employee information and supervisory training sessions; and
 - 5.3.1.8 Provide statistical reports to the Human Resources Manager.

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- 5.4 The immediate supervisor is required to:
- 5.4.1 Monitor job performance in accordance with normal performance appraisal methods, and if work difficulties are noted to:
 - 5.4.1.1 Take early corrective action, and
 - 5.4.1.2 Offer employees the opportunity for referral to the EFAP provider.
 - 5.4.2 Keep abreast of the procedures for referral, assessment and treatment, and not to diagnose the reason for job performance difficulties; and
 - 5.4.3 Apply administrative and disciplinary measures in accordance with normal organizational procedures.
- 5.5 The Human Resources Department is required to:
- 5.5.1 Interpret Division administrative procedures as applicable to the program;
 - 5.5.2 Inform new employees of the program;
 - 5.5.3 Act as the Division's liaison officer; and
 - 5.5.4 In conjunction with the EFAP provider, produce an annual statistical report on the activities of the program.