

Case Study

Employee has had multiple absences over the last six months, all for various medical related reasons (i.e. flu, bad back, sprained ankle, kids sick, sore throat, fatigue).

Job Information:

The Employee has a safety sensitive job that involves driving company vehicles and operating heavy machinery. They are a permanent full-time employee and have been employed for 1 year. They have been disciplined and are on probation for pattern absences, occurring mostly on Mondays and Fridays.

Medical information:

The employee has just provided medical documentation with the following information:

- Nature of the condition: "back pain"
- Restrictions and limitations: require 3 months off work, no working in any capacity
- Treatment: taking medication for pain and no work
- Prognosis: unknown, reassessment in 3 months

Follow up by HR/disability mgmt.

(via phone, in person meetings and medical inquiries)

The last update when HR spoke with the employee his speech was observed to be slurred and the conversation was disconnected. HR inquired about this and the employee advised they had just been sleeping. HR then requested the next meeting to be in- person and the employee did not show up. The employee has been working with his union and they have had a hard time reaching the employee as well, but he does communicate with them occasionally and advises that he is having pain and doesn't know when he can return to work.

Additional information: Through HR's follow up with his supervisor, they advised anecdotally they were told by other staff before he went off that he takes oxycontin to help with his back pain and it was rumored he has a history of staying out all night partying.

What are the next steps in the case management process and how would we assess for returning this employee to work?