



# **Verizon New York Inc. Absence Control Plan**

## **1.0 Company Attendance Policy**

**1.1** The telecommunications industry has undergone tremendous changes since Verizon New York Inc. (“the Company”) first started its operations -- from the services that it offers its customers, to the fierce competition it faces. Through it all, the Company continues to hold a unique position in the communities it serves in that it is the primary source for telecommunication services 24 hours per day, to police and fire departments, the military, hospitals, etc. in emergency situations. Because of this public trust, we must provide outstanding customer service and be ready to meet the demands of all types of service, day and night. In order to meet this obligation, the Company needs everyone on duty every day on which s/he is scheduled to work. Our company is only as strong as its employees’ commitment. All employees, therefore, are expected to strive for perfect attendance by:

- Maintaining reasonable health standards
- Taking intelligent precautions against illness
- Making every effort to live and work safely
- Not permitting minor indispositions or inconveniences to keep them away from the job

**1.2** Good attendance is, therefore, an essential job requirement, and excessive absence seriously impedes Verizon’s ability to remain competitive and provide the outstanding service that our customers expect and deserve. In addition, employees are expected to report to work with regularity in return for the compensation they receive. The Company’s Absence Control Plan (ACP), which covers all regular full-time, regular part-time and temporary associates who are located in NY and are represented by either the CWA or IBEW, is designed to help employees maintain good attendance. The ACP does this by alerting employees to their poor attendance in order for them to modify their behavior. Failure to maintain good attendance will result in progressive discipline including suspension without pay and/or termination from the payroll as outlined in the ACP. Progressive discipline helps the employee understand the seriousness of the problem and take appropriate action to correct it. As detailed below, the ACP, which consists of five steps, does this by placing an employee with an attendance problem on a step of the ACP, but allows them to come off of the ACP (i.e. retrogress) by demonstrating good attendance. Employees will be stepped on the ACP only for chargeable absences as defined by the ACP. The details of the various steps and retrogression process are set forth below in sections 2 and 3.

The ACP describes the Company's policy regarding progressive discipline for employees who fail to maintain satisfactory attendance. Employees are cautioned, however, that under the Code of Conduct, misrepresenting one's health status or other reasons for absence continues to constitute independent grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination, regardless of an employee's overall attendance record.

### **1.3 Definitions**

**Incident:** Any occurrence of a chargeable absence. An incident is recorded without regard to the amount of time missed.

**Chargeable Absence:** Any absence of any duration, paid or unpaid, which is recorded and charged against an employee's record for the purpose of determining attendance performance (e.g. non-FMLA covered sickness and disability absences; absence due to transportation difficulties; unexcused time without pay; etc.).

**Non-Chargeable Absences:** Any absence, paid or unpaid, which is recorded but not charged against an employee's record for the purpose of determining attendance performance (e.g. jury duty; military duty; FMLA certified absence; death in immediate family; excused time without pay).

**Perfect Attendance:** Is any rolling 12 month period during which an employee - - who is not already on the ACP - - has not had a chargeable absence. If such employee has a period of perfect attendance, s/he will not be placed on Step 1 of the ACP for his/her next chargeable absence (regardless of the length of the absence). However, such absence is chargeable and any subsequent chargeable absence (regardless of the length of the absence) that occurs within six (6) months of this absence will result in the employee being placed on Step 1 of the ACP. (For example, an employee who is not on the ACP and whose last chargeable absence ended on September 30, 2005 was next absent from November 20, 2006 through November 22, 2006. Because the employee had over 12 rolling months without a chargeable absence (i.e. perfect attendance) this three-day absence that began on November 20<sup>th</sup> would not result in the employee being placed on step 1 on November 23, 2006. It would, however, count as a chargeable absence for which the employee could be stepped if the employee had another chargeable absence within the next six months.)

## **2.0 Steps of the Absence Control Plan (ACP):**

1st Step – First Discussion

2nd Step – Second Discussion

3rd Step – Warning / Suspension (suspension without pay – 5 days)

4th Step – Final Warning / Suspension (suspension without pay – 10 days)

5th Step – Termination

### **IMPORTANT POINTS THAT APPLY TO ALL STEPS:**

If an employee filed the appropriate form for an absence to be considered under the FMLA and a final determination of the request has not been received from the ARC Department (FMLA Administration), any action under the ACP will be delayed until a determination is received. The employee will be notified of whether the request was certified or not and of any action under the ACP.

The target date (end date of step) will be extended for any full days of an approved Leave of Absence (for example, FMLA, Educational). *This does not apply to Military Leave of Absence.*

The period that an employee is on a step begins on the calendar day following the last day of absence.

The period that an employee is on a step as referenced below in Sections 2.1 through 2.5 is 6 months. However, the steps may be increased to 12 months in the circumstances described below in Section 3.1A and 3.1B

The supervisor may decide that a consultation with VZLife / EAP would be helpful in assisting the employee to take remedial steps.

### **2.1 Step 1 – First Discussion:**

**An employee will be placed on Step 1 when,**

**(a) The employee has a chargeable absence of 3 or more consecutive scheduled work days; or**

**(b) Within 6 months from the calendar day following the last day of chargeable absence, the employee has a second incident of chargeable absence (regardless of the length of time of the absence).**

**Once on the ACP, the employee will remain on Step 1 for 6 months. If no chargeable absence occurs during this period, the employee will retrogress off of the ACP. If the employee has another chargeable absence (regardless of the length of time of the absence) within this period, he/she will progress to the next step.**

**Note: If an employee, who is not on the ACP, satisfies the criteria of Perfect Attendance, s/he will not be placed on Step 1 for their initial absence (See Sec. 1.3 “Perfect Attendance”).**

## **2.2 Step 2—Second Discussion:**

**An employee will be placed on Step 2 if within 6 months from the calendar day that the employee was placed on Step 1, the employee has another chargeable absence (regardless of the length of time of the absence).**

**Once on this step, the employee will remain on Step 2 for 6 months. If no chargeable absence occurs during this period, the employee will retrogress to Step 1 of the ACP. If the employee has another chargeable absence (regardless of the length of time of the absence) within this period, he/she will progress to the next step.**

## **2.3 Step 3—Warning / Suspension (suspension without pay – 5 days):**

**An employee will be placed on Step 3 if within 6 months from the calendar day that the employee was placed on Step 2, the employee has another chargeable absence (regardless of the length of time of the absence).**

**Once on this step, the employee will remain on Step 3 for 6 months. If no chargeable absence occurs during this period, the employee will retrogress to Step 2 of the ACP. If the employee has another chargeable absence (regardless of the length of time of the absence) within this period, he/she will progress to the next step.**

### **IMPORTANT POINT:**

An employee on Step 3 is now considered unsatisfactory in the category of Attendance and is therefore ineligible for positions under the SPV process.

At the time the warning/suspension is announced, a Union representative may be present if the employee so requests.

If an employee is on Step 3 or Step 4 at the end of a calendar year, the attendance rating and overall rating of the annual appraisal will be “Does Not Meet Requirements” (DN).

#### **2.4 Step 4—Final Warning / Suspension (suspension without pay – 10 days):**

**An employee will be placed on Step 4 if within 6 months from the calendar day that the employee was placed on Step 3, the employee has another chargeable absence (regardless of the length of time of the absence).**

**Once on this step, the employee will remain on Step 4 for 6 months. If no chargeable absence occurs during this period, the employee will retrogress to Step 3 of the ACP. If the employee has another chargeable absence (regardless of the length of time of the absence) within this period, he/she will progress to the next step.**

#### **IMPORTANT POINT:**

At the time the warning/suspension is announced, a Union representative may be present if the employee so requests.

#### **2.5 Step 5—Termination from the Payroll:**

**An employee will be placed on Step 5 and terminated if within 6 months from the calendar day that the employee was placed on Step 4, the employee has another chargeable absence (regardless of the length of time of the absence).**

At the time the termination is announced, a union representative may be present if the employee so requests.

#### **3.0 Retrogression:**

An employee who has an absence that places him/her on any step of the ACP can retrogress from that step to a lower step (or off the plan entirely if on step 1) and eventually come off of the ACP after s/he has demonstrated a period of improved attendance. This is called retrogression. In most circumstances, the period to retrogress from one step to a lower step is six (6) months without a chargeable absence. As described in Section 3.1, the duration at any step may be increased to 12 months if a poor attendance pattern and/or subject to disabilities warrants such treatment.

Example: If an employee who is not on the ACP had a 3-day absence which ended on November 29, 2006 he/she would be placed on Step 1 of the ACP from November 30, 2006 through May 30, 2007. If the employee does not have another chargeable absence within that six month period, he/she will retrogress off of the ACP the day after the six months on Step 1 (May 31, 2007). An employee on Step 2 can come off of the ACP entirely in 12 months if no further chargeable absences

occur from the time that the employee was placed on Step 2 (i.e. six months to come off Step 2, and then another six months to come off Step 1). The same format is followed for retrogression from any step, unless the period on a step is affected by circumstances described in Section 3.1A and 3.1B.

### **3.1 Exceptions to Normal Stepping and Retrogression Procedures:**

The ACP allows supervisors some discretion when applying the stepping and retrogression procedures. Some of those areas include:

#### **3.1A – Poor Attendance Patterns**

For employees who have certain absence patterns, the ACP includes exceptions to the normal time periods for stepping and retrogression. The ACP requires that a review be given to address an employee's individual pattern of absence when for example:

- It appears that an employee may be timing absences to circumvent the time elements of the ACP (e.g. there is a pattern of absence occurring within the six months following retrogression to an earlier step).
- An employee has demonstrated a pattern of multiple day absences (e.g. third occasion of three days or greater of chargeable absence within an 18 month period).
- Pattern of No Report or Monday and Friday absences.

In a situation where any of the above poor attendance patterns is evident to the supervisor, the retrogression period should be extended from six (6) months to twelve (12) months. Delayed retrogression is a rehabilitative stepping action that will be taken whenever any of the above patterns of poor attendance becomes apparent.

#### **3.1B – Subject to Disabilities**

If an employee has two disability absences (each defined as an absence of eight or more consecutive calendar days) within a 24 month period, the employee is deemed "subject to disability absences," for which the ACP includes exceptions to the normal time periods for stepping. As a result of a second disability absence within 24 months, the retrogression period will be extended to 12 months. If during that 12 month period the employee does not have any further absence, the employee retrogresses to the next lower numbered step. However, the employee must remain on that next lower step for an additional 12 months as well. Each subsequent retrogression period will then be for six (6) months, assuming no further chargeable absences occur during this period.

Example #1: Employee not on the ACP has 2 chargeable disability absences (eight (8) absence days or more) within a 24 month period (no other absences): December 4 – December 29, 2006 and August 6 – August 24, 2007. The December 2006 absence places the employee on Step 1 for 6 months as of December 30, 2006, s/he will retrogress off Step 1 on July 1, 2007 to Step 0 (i.e. s/he will come off of the ACP). The August 2007 disability absence, however, places the employee back on Step 1 as of August 25, 2007 and because it is his/her second disability absence, s/he remains on Step 1 for 12 months. The employee will retrogress off Step 1 on August 26, 2008 if s/he has no chargeable absence during this period.

Example #2: Employee not on the ACP has 1 chargeable incidental absence; and 2 chargeable disability absences within 24 month period: Incidental absence, December 6 – December 8, 2006 (3 days), Disability absences March 5 – March 23, 2007 and September 4 – September 28, 2007.

The December 6 – 8, 2006 absence places the employee on Step 1 for 6 months as of December 9, 2006, with an expected retrogression date to be June 10, 2007.

Because of the March 2007 disability absence, the employee is placed on Step 2 for 6 months as of March 24, 2007; with an expected Step 2 retrogression date of September 25, 2007.

The September 4 – 28, 2007 disability absence places the employee on Step 3 as of September 29, 2007 for 12 months because it is his/her 2<sup>nd</sup> disability within 24 months. Therefore, the employee will retrogress off Step 3 on September 30, 2008.

The employee will then retrogress off Step 2 after another 12 months which will be September 30, 2009. The employee will then retrogress off Step 1 after 6 months which would be March 30, 2010, assuming no further chargeable absences occur during this period.

### **3.1C – Very Short Service**

The ACP allows for omission or acceleration of steps in the case of a very short term employee (generally less than one year of service) as long as Step 1 – First Discussion and Step 4 – Final Warning/Suspension (10 days suspension) is not omitted. Retrogression for these employees is the same as all other employees; that is, one step at a time.

### **3.1D – On-the-Job Accidents**

In those cases where the On-the-Job accident appears separate from a pattern of absence, consideration may be given to not stepping the employee on the ACP for the initial period of absence. However, any subsequent absences for the same on the job accident will result in stepping the employee under the ACP.

## **4.0 Proof of Personal Illness for Incidental Absence**

The ACP does not restrict the Company's right to request proof of illness in the form of a doctor's note or other documentation. For example, a supervisor may use discretion in particular absence situations where poor attendance patterns are evident or circumstances raise questions that the absence may not be caused by an illness. Failure on the part of the employee to submit requested satisfactory proof of personal illness may result in denial of pay for the days in question.

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