

# Workers' Compensation Injury/Illness Reporting Policy and Procedures

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## I. Introductions/Objectives

This document outlines the procedures and responsibilities for reporting injuries, illnesses, accidents and medical emergencies at SUNY Cortland. Injury/illness reporting requirements are mandated under New York State Public Employees Safety and Health Rule, Part 801. Observing the requirements outlined in this document will ensure timely injury/illness reporting and investigation, and promote a safe and healthful work environment.

## II. Definitions

1. Accident – An unintended occurrence arising in the work environment that results in injuries, illnesses, or property damage.
2. Injury or Illness – According to the Department of Labor, an injury or illness is an abnormal condition or disorder. Injuries include burns, bruises, cuts, fractures, sprains or amputation. Illnesses include skin diseases, respiratory disorders or poisoning.
3. Unsafe Work Conditions – Situations or circumstances that might cause an accident, injury or illness.
4. Employee Injury, Illness, Medical Emergency Report (Form WC-1) – The document used to report occupational injuries and illnesses. This form can be found on the SUNY Cortland Human Resources website at <http://www.cortland.edu/hr/policies.html>
5. Incident Report – The form used by University Police to report fires, accidents, and other emergencies.

## III. Responsibilities

### A. Supervisors and Employees

All employees are responsible for promoting a safe and healthful work environment. To prevent injuries, illnesses, and accidents from occurring, unsafe work conditions or unsafe behavior must be reported to supervisors. Whereas supervisors should supply the appropriate corrective action for unsafe conditions or unsafe behavior whenever it is possible, Environmental Health and Safety (EH & S) should be contacted for situations that require special attention. To contact EH & S call 753-2508 (on campus ext. 2508)

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All injuries or illnesses, regardless of severity level, must be reported by using an Employee Injury, Illness, Medical Emergency Report (Form WC-1). This form can also be obtained from University Police, department secretaries, and the Office of Human Resources.

When an employee is involved in a work-related injury or illness, the following steps must be followed:

1. The employee must notify their supervisor immediately, or as soon as they are able. If this is not possible and a witness is on the scene, the witness can contact:

- The employee's supervisor if known;
- University Police at extension 2111; or
- The Office of Human Resources at extension 2302.

Note: Failure to immediately report an injury or illness can compromise the employee's occupational injury or illness claim, and can be a violation of this procedure.

2. Regardless of the severity level, Form WC-1 is to be completed in full for all injuries or illnesses by the injured employee. In instances where an employee is not capable of reporting an injury or an illness, the supervisor will complete the form. All completed (online or hardcopy) WC-1 forms should be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources, Miller Building, Room 301. If medical attention is required, or if the employee will miss time from work and the form cannot immediately be delivered to the Office of Human Resources, the supervisor should contact Human Resources at extension 2302.

Note: Incomplete WC-1 forms will be returned to the supervisor for further corrective action.

3. Employees must report an injury or illness to the NYS Accident Reporting System (ARS) at 1-888-800-0029. The employee will be given an ARS intake number that they will need to record. In instances where an employee is not capable of calling ARS, the supervisor will make the call on their behalf.

4. If applicable, the employee will also be notified of their rights under the Family Medical Leave Act.

5. For absences from work five (5) days or more due to a work-related injury or illness, CSEA employees must charge the first five (5) days of their absence to sick or vacation accruals. The employee is then placed on the workers' compensation payroll effective on day six (6). If the employee does not have any accruals to use, he/she will be placed on leave of absence without pay effective the first full day of absence (partial days do not count) and then on workers' compensation payroll effective day six (6). There is no way to avoid going on the workers' compensation payroll if an employee will be out of work for more than five (5) days.

6. Non-CSEA employees should contact the Office of Human Resources for specifics on their workers' compensation benefits.

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7. Injured employees must provide medical documentation to support all absences related to the work-related injury or illness. Documentation must include the following information in order for it to be acceptable:

- Diagnosis/prognosis; and
- Estimated period of absence

It is the responsibility of the employee to obtain appropriate medical documentation. All medical documentation is to be submitted to the Office of Human Resources. The doctor's office may fax the information to 607-753-5994. Medical documentation will remain confidential and the Office of Human Resources will in turn notify the employee's supervisor of his/her status. The employee may be asked by the Workers' Compensation Administrator to complete a Health Care Advocacy Form if advocacy on the employee's behalf will be required by a campus representative. This form is now required under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

8. Prior to returning to work, a medical certificate from the employee's physician must be submitted to the Office of Human Resources. The Office of Human Resources is responsible for reviewing return to work certification. This certificate must indicate the exact day the employee is able to return to work and if there are any restrictions. If there are restrictions, they must be specific and state when they can be lifted. Light duty may be considered when a person is considered 50% disabled or less, and full recovery is expected within 45-60 days. A Physical Capabilities form, which can be obtained from the Office of Human Resources, must also be completed by the employee's physician. Human Resources will discuss with the employee's supervisor the restrictions to determine if light duty is possible. An employee may be required by the college to undergo a medical examination by a New York State Civil Service doctor at any time during his/her workers' compensation leave.

9. It is critical that the employees remain in contact with the Office of Human Resources throughout their workers' compensation leave.

Note: Questions on workers' compensation procedures are to be directed to the Office of Human Resources at 753-2302.

## B. Office of Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources will post information related to occupational injury/illness, job safety, and health protection, and will maintain injury/illness records as required by the New York State Department of Labor. The Office of Human Resources will also assist in completing regulatory surveys involving injuries and illnesses.

The Employee Injury, Illness, Medical Emergency Report (Form WC-1) will be reviewed by the Office of Human Resources. The Office of Human Resources will forward copies of completed on-line forms to the office of Environmental Health and Safety.

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The Office of Human Resources is responsible for reviewing all return to work documentation (with or without restrictions/light duty). The Office of Human Resources will work in conjunction with the employee's supervisor to coordinate the return to work. Every effort will be made to accommodate the employee's return to work on light duty, however in some instances due to the nature of the job duties, this may not be feasible, and the return would be delayed until he/she was able to be released for full duty.

#### C. Environmental Health and Safety

The Office of Environmental Health and Safety will review all Employee Injury, Illness, and Medical Emergency Report forms (Form WC-1). All accidents, injuries, illnesses, and medical emergencies will be investigated in order to ascertain the root cause. Environmental Health & Safety will help to implement appropriate corrective action whenever trends, unsafe conditions, or unsafe behavior are identified. Unsafe behavior may be reported to the Supervisor and or Human Resources for further action. Environmental Health & Safety will also complete regulatory surveys involving injuries and illnesses.

In the event of a work-related fatality or a hospitalization event involving two or more employees, the Office of Environmental Health and Safety will report within eight (8) hours the relevant information to the New York State Department of Labor, Division of Safety and Health. Reporting requirements for fatalities and multiple hospitalization events are discussed further in Environmental Health and Safety's Policy #11.

#### D. University Police

University Police will supply hardcopy Employee Injury, Illness, Medical Emergency Report forms (Form WC-1) to employees to accommodate situations where a computer might not be available. University Police will forward the completed hardcopy forms to the Offices of Human Resources and Environmental Health and Safety.

University Police will use an Incident Report for fires, accidents, and other emergencies. A copy of every Incident report will be sent to Environmental Health and Safety.

#### E. Student Health Service

Student Health Service may treat injuries and illnesses involving students if they present to Student Health Service during hours of operation. Students may be referred to an emergency room or another healthcare source if deemed necessary. Injuries or illnesses caused by unsafe conditions or unsafe behavior will be reported to the Office of Environmental Health and Safety by calling extension 2508.

#### F. Students

While injuries and illnesses involving students are not covered under Worker's Compensation, students should report injuries and illnesses to Student Health Services by completing a report through University Police, and seek care at Student Health Service if necessary as in section E.

Injuries and illnesses of students occurring while participating in athletic events should be reported to athletic trainers. Situations on the campus that might cause an injury, illness, or an accident should be reported to the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at extension 2508.

Rev. 6/08