

**Q. Provide details of attendance management and wellness programs. Provide copies of any policies regarding these programs.**

A. Attachment A is a copy of Newfoundland Power's Attendance Management Strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that employees are healthy and able to perform their duties. Attendance management is an important aspect of human resource management. Absenteeism can have a significant impact on individual employees, their immediate work group, and the overall organization. The Company recognizes employees with strong attendance, supports employees during their absences, and encourages them to return to work as quickly as reasonably possible.

Attachment B is a copy of Newfoundland Power's Wellness Strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to:

- a. Provide tools and initiatives that improve employee and organization wellness;
- b. Identify and deal with issues that affect the well-being of employees, their families, and the Company as a whole; and,
- c. Build on corporate success by fostering a healthy workforce and work environment.

## **Newfoundland Power's Attendance Management Strategy**

**Newfoundland Power**

**Attendance Management Strategy**

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# Attendance Management Strategy

## Policy

Newfoundland Power is committed to a high attendance performance and awareness standard. We will achieve and maintain this standard in a positive proactive manner that emphasizes the value of a healthy, safe and productive workplace.

The immediate **work group** may experience difficulties in maintaining the flow and level of work. The absence of a key person can significantly hamper the ongoing operation of a work unit. On occasion, animosity may develop as co-workers experience difficulty coping with increased workloads.

## Why Attendance Management?

We believe in the management of attendance to ensure that employees are healthy and able to perform their duties. We will recognize strong attendance, support people during their absences, and encourage them to return to work as quickly as reasonably possible after an absence.

**Supervisors** have to reorganize and reschedule, face missed deadlines, and deal with the uncertainty surrounding an employee's return to work.

The **organization's** overall level of productivity is impacted and labour replacement costs increase. These consequences, coupled with reduced customer service levels and quality of work, can be significant.

Attendance management is simply an extension of the ongoing supervisory role. It is important because work absences can have a significant impact on employees, the immediate work group, and the overall organization.

For the **employee**, workplace absence may aggravate stress related to workload and assignments not being completed on time.

There are other components of attendance management, such as disability management and wellness programs. An employee may have serious short or long-term health concerns that are substantiated by physicians' reports. These issues may require job rotation, rehabilitation efforts or other strategies as possible long-term solutions. While these aspects are beyond the scope of this manual, they are part of the overall attendance management strategy.

This strategy focuses on attendance awareness, the impact of absences, and support and concern for the wellness of employees. It does not focus on the legitimacy of absences.

## Statistics

The following information provides an overview of the Newfoundland Power attendance picture.

### Sick Days Per Full Time Equivalent

Year	Sick Days Per FTE
1992	7.99
1993	7.28
1994	7.19
1995	6.99
1996	6.55
1997	6.90
1998	5.70
1999	8.10
2000	8.00
2001	7.40
2002 Target	8.30

- A small proportion of employees account for a significant portion of sick days taken. Just 15% of employees use approximately two-thirds of the total annual sick days. Widening the scope slightly, just 34% of employees use 85% of the total annual sick days. At the other end of the scale, approximately 25% of employees take less than one sick day annually, most of these charging no time to personal illness.
- Sick day utilization varies on a departmental and sectional basis, and has a seasonal pattern. Typically the highest absenteeism is in the January to April time period and the least absenteeism during July and August.

## **Supervisor & Employee Responsibilities**

**S**uccessful attendance management is a team effort. It requires the support and cooperation of employees and their supervisors.

### *Employees*

Employees must be able to fulfil the requirements of their jobs on a regular basis. All employees are required to be on the job, on time, in a fit condition for work, every scheduled workday or shift, except for reasonable and unavoidable cause. Employees are responsible to:

- Attend to personal affairs and obligations outside normal working hours, whenever possible.
- Schedule medical appointments outside working hours, whenever possible.
- Inform their supervisor on the first day of an absence and provide an indication of the expected length of the absence.

### *Supervisors*

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Administration of the Attendance Management Strategy, including regular attendance monitoring and initiation of employee meetings where appropriate.
- Promotion of two way communications with employees on attendance standards and expectations, based on a relationship of mutual respect and understanding.

- Identification of situations that may require an employee referral to other corporate services (e.g., EAP, Company designated physician).
- Familiarity with the clauses of our collective agreements that pertain to attendance management. Articles of most importance include management rights, insurance and benefit plans, sick leave, medical examinations, and no discrimination. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to consult with the Human Resources Department on these matters.
- Awareness of Human Rights Legislation. An employee's absenteeism could be the result of a disability or a handicap and if this is the case the Company will be required to consider whether we have reasonably accommodated the employee. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to consult with the Human Resources Department on these matters.

"Reasonable accommodation" means that the Company will make every reasonable effort to assist injured or ill employees to return to meaningful and productive employment within the Company. With respect to the physical working environment, the Company will attempt to reasonably accommodate employees who may need workplace modifications or special devices, such as ergonomic chairs, workstation modifications, or other types of workplace adjustments.



## The Process

**T**he Attendance Management Strategy is designed to manage situations involving individual employees. This involves supervisory awareness, communication between the supervisor and employee on a regular basis, target-setting and regular follow-up. In particular, this process engages employees once they have surpassed an unacceptable level of absenteeism.

### *Flexibility*

It is important that this process be structured but not rigid. An employee's attendance record should be reviewed after five sick days, however this number has been established as an awareness trigger only.

### ***Corporate Standard***

*The attendance awareness meeting process will be initiated when an employee has 5 or more sick days per year.*

This strategy works! It has demonstrated significant attendance improvement as a pilot project within Newfoundland Power, and with a number of other utilities and agencies.

### *Monitoring*

Attendance will be tracked using the ATTN system. Each Manager will ensure that attendance issues are addressed by following this attendance management strategy. Employees who achieve outstanding attendance should be recognized using the reward and recognition guidelines.

Supervisory discretion should determine whether an awareness meeting is required. For example, if the employee involved has seldom missed a day and then is absent for five days due to an off-the-job injury, an awareness meeting may or may not be necessary. **The corporate standard serves as a guideline only.**

Employees want time off for various reasons. To prevent abuse of sick days, supervisors should try to grant requests for vacation and time off in lieu of overtime, as long as the request does not unduly affect the smooth operation of the Company's business.

## *Verbal Discussion*

A Verbal Discussion will be held if an employee has 5 or more sick days during the year and the Supervisor determines that an awareness discussion is required.

This is a one-on-one private discussion between the employee and the supervisor. The objectives of this verbal discussion are to:

### **Verbal Discussion Objectives**

- Review the Company's absenteeism policy with the employee.
- Identify the impact absenteeism has on the work unit and the Company.
- Explain that the legitimacy of the illness is not being questioned, only that the Company wants to provide any assistance it can to help prevent further absences.
- Express the Company's concern over the employee's absenteeism level.

When reviewing the employee's absenteeism record the supervisor should:

- provide last year's record and review the employee's previous history. Improvement from prior years should be emphasized as a positive to build on.
- discuss any known reasons for absenteeism and health problems that the employee may wish to disclose.
- discuss any pronounced patterns.

Supervisors should ask for the employee's input and should focus on:

- whether there is a problem with the job or environment which can be addressed.
- whether there is a problem the Company can help with.
- making the employee aware of the EAP and arranging a visit to the Company designated physician by contacting Human Resources, if required.
- setting mutually acceptable targets for the next six months. The Supervisor and employee will verbally agree on a target explaining to the employee that his or her progress will be monitored and that there will be a meeting in six months to discuss progress.

## *1<sup>st</sup> Meeting*

A 1<sup>st</sup> meeting should take place after six months with any employee who has required a verbal discussion. Attainment of the target level should be recognized and reinforced. If the employee has made no improvement or has not attained the target level, further action is required. This meeting should take place earlier than the end of the six month period if, through the supervisor's monitoring, it is apparent that no improvement is being made.

This is a one-on-one private discussion between the employee and the supervisor. The objectives of this 1<sup>st</sup> meeting are to:

### **1<sup>st</sup> Meeting Objectives**

- Review the verbal discussion.
- Provide the employee with an opportunity for input on the lack of progress.
- State that the Company cannot operate efficiently with this level of absenteeism.
- Make the employee aware of the EAP and if required, arrange a visit to the Company designated physician.
- Explain the ramifications of the employee's absenteeism level, including the possibility that the employee could be making himself or herself unemployable, or that continued absenteeism could result in transfer to a position where such absenteeism may have a lower impact on operations.
- Set mutually acceptable targets for the next six months.
- Advise the employee that his/her attendance will be monitored and a meeting will take place in six months.
- Follow up with a non-disciplinary letter to confirm the meeting.

The supervisor will prepare a written summary of the meeting.

Again, when reviewing the employee's absenteeism record the supervisor should:

- discuss any known reasons for absenteeism and health problems that the employee may wish to disclose.
- discuss any pronounced patterns.

Supervisors should ask for the employee's input and should focus on:

- whether there is a problem with the job or environment which can be addressed.
- whether there is a problem the Company can help with.
- making the employee aware of the EAP and arranging a visit to the Company designated physician by contacting Human Resources, if required.
- setting mutually acceptable targets for the next six months. The Supervisor and employee will set a target explaining to the employee that his or her progress will be monitored and that there will be a meeting in six months to discuss progress.

## *2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting*

A meeting should take place after six months with any employee who has required a first meeting. Attainment of the target level should be recognized and reinforced. If the employee has made no improvement or has not attained the target level, further action is required. This meeting should take place earlier than the end of the six month period if, through the supervisor's monitoring, it is apparent that no improvement is being made.

This is a one-on-one private meeting between the employee and the supervisor. The objectives of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting are to:

### **2nd Meeting Objectives**

- Review the previous meeting's discussion, using the written summary.
- Provide the employee with an opportunity for input on the lack of progress.
- State that the Company cannot operate efficiently with this level of absenteeism.
- Make the employee aware of the EAP and if required, arrange a visit to the Company designated physician.
- Explain the ramifications of the employee's absenteeism level, including the possibility that the employee could be making himself or herself unemployable, or that continued absenteeism could result in transfer to a position where such absenteeism may have a lower impact on operations.
- Set mutually acceptable targets for the next three months.
- Advise the employee that his/her attendance will be monitored and a meeting will take place in three months.
- Follow up with a non-disciplinary letter to confirm the conversation.

The supervisor will prepare a written summary of the meeting.

If there is no improvement in the three months after the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, a 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting with the employee is warranted.

### *3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting will include two levels of supervision.

The verbal discussion and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> meetings should be reviewed and the written summary evaluated. The targets that were established and not attained should be discussed.

#### **3rd Meeting Objectives**

- The employee should be given an opportunity to offer any input.
- The employee will be required to visit the Company designated physician and will be formally referred to the EAP Coordinator. The Company's assistance should be offered if anything that can be done to help the employee bring attendance to an acceptable level.
- Set mutually acceptable targets for the next three months.
- Explain to the employee that not meeting the attendance goal will result in a serious situation that cannot continue to be tolerated.
- Follow up with a non-disciplinary letter confirming the conversation.

The supervisor will prepare a written summary of the meeting, and set another date for follow-up. If the problem continues, there should be shorter terms set between meetings. As well, it would be beneficial to include Managers and/or Human Resources representatives to emphasize the importance the Company places on this issue. This process has to be continuous as long as a problem persists. Of course, recognition for improvement as defined above is also a critical factor.

## Meeting Tips and Techniques

- Approach initial attendance discussions from a viewpoint of concern for the employee.
- Any concerns with the interpretation of collective agreement clauses should be referred to the Director of Employee Relations and Development.
- Any indication that an employee's absenteeism is related to a disability or handicap, should be immediately discussed with Human Resources who will, in conjunction with the supervisor and department, investigate any human rights legislation implications.
- It is **NOT** permissible to ask an employee about the specific nature of an illness. (E.g., What is wrong with you?) It is permissible to ask about the expected duration of an illness and to request documentation from a physician.

## Recognition and Reward

**A**ll employees with perfect attendance in any 12 month period should be sent a letter of recognition and congratulations from their Manager. Perfect attendance achievements should be celebrated and are to be given particular attention during annual performance evaluations.

# **Appendix I**

## **Examples**

## **Attendance Achievement Letter**

DATE

EMPLOYEE

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

Dear EMPLOYEE:

I want to thank you for achieving a very high level of attendance this past year. You were fortunate not to have been sick, but I also recognize you are a conscientious individual to use our sick leave benefits responsibly.

Employees who miss very little time can be more productive overall and support our goals of increasing shareholder and customer value. I am sure, as well, that fellow employees appreciate those who make the effort to be at work each day and share in the workload.

I encourage you to continue to achieve good attendance. In recognition of your past achievement, please accept this gift as a small token of appreciation. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE



## **Attendance Achievement Letter**

DATE

EMPLOYEE  
EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

Dear EMPLOYEE:

Over the TIME PERIOD, the absenteeism rate for the AREA has been well below the industry standard. This accomplishment is attributed to the interest and dedication of all AREA employees who consider regular attendance an important part of their overall responsibility.

Our records indicate that you have made a significant contribution to the AREA by working through YEAR without a single day of absenteeism.

I wish to thank you for this accomplishment and to wish you success and continuing good health in the future.

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

## **1<sup>st</sup> Meeting Action Sheet**

DATE

EMPLOYEE

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

Dear EMPLOYEE:

This letter is a follow-up and action sheet resulting from our meeting on DATE. At the meeting we discussed the Company's absenteeism policy, your attendance record, and the implications of your absence on the Department.

During the period from DATE to DATE you were absent for DOCUMENT ABSENTEEISM RECORD.

Such absenteeism places additional burdens on other employees and alters the quality and continuity of service we are able to provide. Newfoundland Power is concerned about your absenteeism level and would like to provide any assistance we can to prevent further absences.

At our meeting, we set the following attendance objectives for the next six months:

LIST THE OBJECTIVES SET

I look forward to an improvement in your attendance. We will get together in SIX MONTHS LATER, to review the results.

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

## **1<sup>st</sup> Meeting Summary**

DATE

On MEETING DATE I held an attendance awareness meeting with EMPLOYEE. This meeting was triggered by EMPLOYEE's attendance record of DOCUMENT ABSENTEEISM RECORD.

DOCUMENT THE MEETING INCLUDING:

EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE

PROBLEMS/CONCERNS/ISSUES DISCUSSED IN THE MEETING

TARGETS SET FOR NEXT SIX MONTHS

I will be monitoring EMPLOYEE's attendance over the next six months and will be meeting with EMPLOYEE in SIX MONTHS LATER, to review the results.

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting Achievement Letter**

DATE

EMPLOYEE

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

Dear EMPLOYEE:

This letter is a follow-up resulting from our meeting on DATE. I would like to congratulate you for your successful achievement of the attendance targets we established in SIX MONTHS AGO. This achievement represents a significant improvement and I look forward to continued improvement in and maintenance of your attendance performance.

Please let me know if Newfoundland Power can provide any assistance to prevent further absences.

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting Non-disciplinary Letter**

DATE

EMPLOYEE

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

Dear EMPLOYEE:

This letter is a follow-up and action sheet resulting from our meeting on DATE. At the meeting we discussed your attendance targets for the last six months and your lack of progress in achieving these targets.

During the period from DATE to DATE you were absent for DOCUMENT ABSENTEEISM RECORD. Newfoundland Power cannot operate efficiently with this level of absenteeism, and we would like to see improvement in your attendance performance.

We would like to provide any assistance we can to prevent further absences, and have made you aware of the Employee Assistance Program in case you would like to use its services. INCLUDE NOTE OF REFERRAL TO COMPANY DESIGNATED PHYSICIAN IF MADE.

At our meeting, we set the following attendance objectives for the next three months:

LIST THE OBJECTIVES SET

I look forward to an improvement in your attendance. We will get together in THREE MONTHS LATER, to review the results.

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting Summary**

DATE

On MEETING DATE I held an attendance awareness meeting with EMPLOYEE. This meeting was held as a result of EMPLOYEE's attendance record of DOCUMENT ABSENTEEISM RECORD. Specifically, EMPLOYEE did not meet the attendance target of LIST THE OBJECTIVES, which were set at our meeting on MEETING DATE SIX MONTHS AGO.

DOCUMENT THE MEETING INCLUDING:

EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE  
PROBLEMS/CONCERNS/ISSUES DISCUSSED IN THE MEETING  
TARGETS SET FOR NEXT THREE MONTHS

I will be monitoring EMPLOYEE's attendance over the next three months and will be meeting with EMPLOYEE in THREE MONTHS LATER, to review the results.

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting Non-disciplinary Letter**

DATE

EMPLOYEE

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

Dear EMPLOYEE:

This letter is a follow-up and action sheet resulting from our meetings on 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING DATE and 2<sup>ND</sup> MEETING DATE. At these meetings we discussed your attendance level and your lack of progress in improving on it.

During the period from DATE to DATE you were absent for DOCUMENT ABSENTEEISM RECORD. As previously expressed to you, Newfoundland Power cannot operate efficiently with this level of absenteeism, and we would like to see improvement in your attendance performance.

We would like to provide any assistance we can to prevent further absences, and are referring you to the Employee Assistance Program. In addition, you will be required to visit the Company designated physician, which I will be arranging shortly.

At our meeting, we set the following attendance objectives for the next three months:

LIST THE OBJECTIVES SET

I look forward to an improvement in your attendance. We will get together in THREE MONTHS LATER, to review the results.

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

Copy: 2<sup>ND</sup> LEVEL OF SUPERVISION

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting Summary**

DATE

On MEETING DATE I and NAME OF 2<sup>ND</sup> LEVEL OF SUPERVISION held an attendance awareness meeting with EMPLOYEE. This meeting was held as a result of EMPLOYEE's attendance record of DOCUMENT ABSENTEEISM RECORD. Specifically, EMPLOYEE did not meet the attendance target of LIST THE OBJECTIVES, which were set at our meetings on MEETING DATE SIX MONTHS AGO and MEETING DATE THREE MONTHS AGO.

DOCUMENT THE MEETING INCLUDING:

EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE

PROBLEMS/CONCERNS/ISSUES DISCUSSED IN THE MEETING

TARGETS SET FOR NEXT THREE MONTHS

I will be monitoring EMPLOYEE's attendance over the next three months and will be meeting with EMPLOYEE in THREE MONTHS LATER, to review the results.

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE



## **Newfoundland Power's Wellness Strategy**

# **Newfoundland Power**

## **Wellness Strategy**



**September 30, 2001**

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most important elements contributing to employee success and, in turn, corporate success, is the health and wellness of employees. By fostering a healthy workforce and environment, we will enhance employee satisfaction and corporate success. The Wellness Strategy will provide the long-term direction for delivering effective wellness and employee support initiatives that suitably address individual and organizational needs.

A group of employees (Noel Flynn, Elaina Janes, Flora Seymour and Chari Bishop) were asked to facilitate the creation of a Wellness Strategy for the Company. They initiated an employee survey on health and wellness issues, evaluated Great West Life and Company statistics (e.g. vacation utilization and sick time) and researched external benchmark data.

### ***i) Vision***

The Company recognizes the inherent value of creating and maintaining a healthy workplace. This includes, but is by no means limited to, the safety and physical well being of employees. In today's environment, continued business success is contingent on employees having their emotional needs satisfied as well. Our corporate wellness vision addresses this broader concept of wellness, and the Wellness Strategy itself reflects this multidimensional approach to wellness.

Our Corporate Wellness vision is: *"Newfoundland Power will enhance employee satisfaction and build on corporate success by fostering a healthy workforce and environment."*

Our definition of "Wellness" is: *"Wellness is harmony in one's physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs that permits an individual to cope successfully with challenges at home and in the workplace."*

### ***ii) Responsibilities***

The responsibilities of the Company, in conjunction with the Wellness Strategy, include the provision of a safe and healthy work environment that fosters a healthy work/personal life balance, the development and promotion of programs and initiatives that support and enable employee wellness, and the enhancement of employee performance, development and productivity.

The responsibilities of Employees, in conjunction with the Wellness Strategy, include taking an active interest in their own personal health, striving for a healthy work/personal life balance, and being aware and taking advantage of available programs.

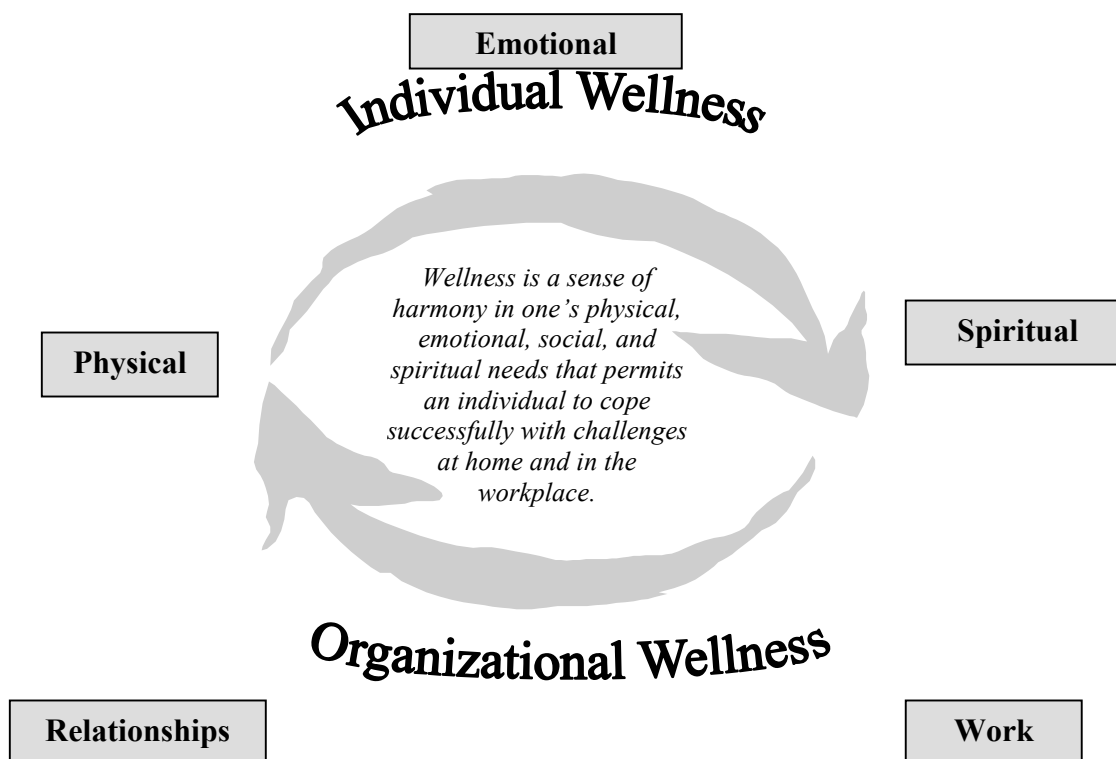
It is through the involvement of both the Company and Employees that we will achieve individual and corporate wellness.

### **iii) Wellness Influencers**

The wellness of an organization and its employees is dependant on the influence and impact of a number of external and internal factors. Most wellness models identify good health in the following five areas as being the foundation of wellness:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Spiritual
- Work
- Relationships

The following wellness wheel identifies these organizational and personal influences. All five are interconnected and occurrences in one area impact other areas.



**iv) Wellness Indicators**

The following are measurable indicators of wellness of the organization. Monitoring each of these will provide the Company with an overall indication of the present level of employee and organizational wellness. We will continue to monitor these indicators over the next three years to identify changes in overall wellness and incorporate any necessary adjustments to the Wellness Strategy.

- Absenteeism rates and causes
- Employee workplace satisfaction
- Drug utilization and cost
- Vacation utilization
- Stress related leaves
- EAP referrals
- Overtime

## **SUMMARY FINDINGS**

An assessment of individual and organizational wellness was carried out to determine the status of overall wellness. Information on drug usage from Great West Life, and Company data including absenteeism rates, LTD, family leave and vacation utilization, all wellness indicators, were considered in determining our current position. An Employee Wellness Survey was also sent out to employees to understand employee opinions on the current position of individual and organizational wellness. Three hundred and sixty-nine employees (57.2% of the total employee population) responded.

As a result of the analysis of this information, there are three main areas of opportunity for the Company to improve individual and organizational wellness. They are Fitness and Employee Health, Hours of Work and Stress Management. Continued emphasis in these areas will have significant impact on wellness in the immediate and long-term future. Specific initiatives will be implemented at various stages over a three year period beginning September, 2001. Action dates for all initiatives are summarized on page 18.

The following is an outline of each of these areas:

### **i. Fitness and Employee Health**

- a) Heart Health
- b) Physical Activity
- c) Back Care
- d) Smoking

### **ii. Hours of Work**

- a) Overtime
- b) Vacation Utilization
- c) Family Leave

### **iii. Stress Management**

- a) Stress Management
- b) Alternate Work Arrangements
- c) Eldercare

## **i. *Fitness and Employee Health***

The results of the Employee Wellness Survey, Company and Great West Life data suggest that physical health is one of the three major issues confronting Newfoundland Power employees at this time. The average age of our employees is 43.8 years with the largest group being between the ages of 40 and 50. There is also a significant number of employees entering this high risk age demographic during the next 5 years. Given this information and the fact that Newfoundlanders have the highest rate of death from heart disease in the country, our focus on employee physical health will be directed initially at establishing and maintaining heart health.

The generally accepted risk factors for heart disease are:

- Physical inactivity
- Stress
- Poor nutrition
- Smoking
- Genetics
- Obesity

All of these factors, with the exception of genetics, are addressed in the Wellness Strategy Action Plan.

### **a) *Heart Health***

#### **Findings:**

The Employee Wellness Survey indicates that heart disease is the most prevalent chronic illness among employees and their families. This is further supported by Great West Life drug usage reports that indicate that heart related drugs are the single largest drug expense (\$317,000, or 36% of the total spent on drugs during 1999-2000). Attendance statistics for the year 2000 show heart related problems to be the third highest cause of lost days within the Company (7 incidents resulting in 357 lost days). Almost all heart related incidents involved employees near 50 years of age.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Provide Personal Health Risk Assessments for all employees, on a voluntary basis. The employee answers a questionnaire and in turn it identifies their risk factors for various illnesses. A counselor then counsels the employee on the “to-do’s” the employee can focus on to reduce their risks for disease. (April/May 2002, 2003, 2004)



- Provide regular blood pressure and cholesterol checks. (February 2002, 2003, 2004)
- Provide Nutrition education sessions that include family members. (September 2002, 2004)
- Explore a corporate connection with the Newfoundland and Labrador Heart Health Program. (October, 2001)
- Provide blood pressure monitors for all Areas/Departments. (October 2001)
- Provide an on-site Weight Watchers program. (February 2002, 2003, 2004)

### **Justification:**

These programs have the potential to:

- Increase health and wellness of employees
- Decrease absenteeism
- Reduce drug premiums and out-of pocket drug expenses

### ***b) Physical Activity***

### **Findings:**

According to the Employee Wellness Survey, many employees are not physically active enough to maintain a healthy lifestyle. 41% of all employees exercise less than two times per week and 50% of the less active employees are between the ages of 35 and 45. The most common reasons cited for physical inactivity in rank order are: (1) too expensive (2) too busy with the kids, or (3) too busy at work. The latter reason has a direct connection with hours of work and achieving a healthy work and personal life balance, which are discussed later in the Strategy. The topic of fitness generated the highest number of supplementary comments from employees on the survey indicating a strong interest in this issue.

Three of the top five programs employees indicated they would like the Company to promote are fitness related: (i) on-site-fitness (#2), (ii) fitness advice (#4), (iii) sponsorship for fitness membership (#5). These findings suggest that initiatives undertaken by the Company related to fitness would be well received and utilized by employees. Employees also indicated a desire to have more flexible work arrangements. Allowing extended lunch hours, where feasible, might enable parents with younger children to work out or exercise during lunch hour thus reducing time away from their families.

Based on the Employee Wellness Survey data the highest risk group within the Company are middle-aged (35-45 years) managerial employees working at Head Office. They are the least physically active, work the longest hours, and feel the least able to balance work and personal life. This scenario reflects at least two of the recognized heart disease risk factors (physically inactive and stress).

## **Recommendations:**

- Offer an interest free loan, repayable through payroll deduction, to cover fitness related expenses, e.g. the purchase of equipment or membership in a club. (January 2002)
- Explore arrangements with existing fitness facilities to make programs more accessible for employees, e.g. purchasing a number of slots in various programs that our employees can utilize. (October 2002)
- Conduct more research into onsite fitness programs that may be well received by those least active (35-45 years old) and implement those that are practical and reasonable. (October 2002)
- Actively promote fitness related offerings to encourage employee utilization. (March & October 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004)
- Explore joint use programs with other companies. (October 2002)
- Implement Get Movin' campaign. (June 2002, 2003, 2004)

## **Justification:**

Initiatives that encourage and enable employees to become more active will result in a healthier employee population that will:

- Result in less absenteeism
- Reduce stress levels
- Initiatives in this area have the added benefit of addressing issues related to heart disease, stress management and back problems.
- Employees should have ready access to on site or nearby fitness programs at a reasonable cost, and the Company should explore ways in which it can enable this to occur.

## **c) Back Care**

### **Findings:**

Back related problems are prevalent within the employee population, resulting in a high number of lost days.

According to 2000 corporate absenteeism data, there were 21 incidents and 757 lost work days due to back-related problems. This is the highest number of incidents, as well as the highest number of lost days, for a single area of wellness. Back injuries do not appear to be age related and are common for both inside and outside workers.

**Recommendations:**

- Assess the impact of the ergonomic education program implemented by the Safety Department and make adjustments where necessary. (April/May 2004)
- Institute a progressive back care program for employees at risk that is suitable for both field and office workers, focused on education and consultation, and which incorporates best practices from other successful back programs. (November 2004)

**Justification:**

These programs will aid in preventing back-related injuries to employees, which will result in a reduction of lost days for the Company.

***d) Smoking*****Findings:**

According to the Employee Wellness Survey, only 12% of employees smoke. However, 84% of them indicated they would like to quit.

Research clearly shows that smokers are more susceptible than non-smokers to various illnesses ranging from heart disease, cancer and asthma, to the common cold and flu. Recent research has also raised awareness of the serious damage caused by second hand smoke to both smokers and non-smokers alike.

**Recommendations:**

- Actively promote the existing smoking cessation program and expand it to include immediate family members, ie. spouses and children (January 2002, 2003, 2004).

**Justification:**

- Improved heart health
- Reduction in absenteeism by reducing the number of smokers in the Company
- Reduction in absenteeism by reducing the number of employees exposed to second hand smoke

## **ii. *Hours of Work***

The Employee Wellness Survey identified hours of work as a challenge for Newfoundland Power, consistent with most other organizations in today's business world. Recent research conducted by the Conference Board of Canada, the World Health Organization and the insurance industry, points to the growing problem of stress related absenteeism in Canada and the United States. Hours of work and workload are contributing factors to this stress.

In the same manner in which we are focusing on enhancing the wellness of the individual, we must also focus on enhancing the wellness of the organization. The Employee Wellness Survey identifies hours of work as a major issue for employees. Furthermore, it is one of several contributing factors to employee stress, the second major area of focus of the Wellness Strategy.

### **a) *Overtime***

#### **Findings:**

This topic generated the second highest number of supplementary comments from employees on the Employee Wellness Survey indicating that for some, it is an important issue. Forty-two percent of managerial employees are working more than 45 hours per week and more than 43% regularly work through their lunch breaks.

This may be owing to the fact that only half of managerial employees reported having a manageable workload. The Employee Wellness Survey also indicated that 21% of managerial employees work more than 300 hours of overtime per year (or more than an hour extra, every day) and over 1/3 of managerial employees indicated that they are working overtime hours on a frequent basis.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Ensure consideration of employee concerns for health and wellness are incorporated during the review of the managerial overtime policy. Input from the Wellness Strategy team will be solicited during the drafting of this policy. (December 2001)
- Ensure supervisors monitor the "health" of their employees and make sure that employees are taking needed rest breaks. Supervisors will consider that rest is a subjective matter and what one person needs to remain "healthy" differs from another. (Ongoing)

#### **Justification:**

- Improved employee morale, attitude and productivity
- Reduced absenteeism

## ***b) Vacation Utilization***

### **Findings:**

Upon examination of vacation utilization by managerial employees (i.e. Executive Group, Managers, Directors/Superintendents and all other managerial employees) over the past four years, the actual vacation leave taken by this group of employees has decreased by 13% since 1997. However the downward trend of the previous three years reversed in 2000. All four groups took more vacation time in 2000 than 1999 but still significantly less than in 1997.

This finding coincides with the views expressed in the survey by 50% of managerial employees who said they do not have a manageable workload and 39% of whom said they felt guilty taking paid time off

### **Recommendations:**

- Managers, Directors and Superintendents ensure their direct reports are taking ample vacation time off to refresh and re-energize. (Ongoing)
- Continue to monitor vacation utilization of managerial employees for each year. (January 2002, 2003, 2004)

### **Justification:**

Managerial Employees are the group who take the least family leave, sick leave and vacation. They are also the group who work the most hours, take the fewest coffee and lunch breaks away from their workplace and exercise the least. Consequently, this places them at higher risk to develop physical health problems and/or job burnout.

Compared to the company average of 53%, 69% of managerial employees and 68% of Head Office employees feel that there is a direct link between the number of extra hours they work and how well their performance is perceived.

Middle and lower management employees look to Senior Management for their cues of what is valued in the workplace. One of the challenges facing the Executive and Senior Management is to visibly demonstrate to employees that they, themselves, have established a healthy work/personal life balance. The recent reversal of the downward trend in vacation utilization by the Executive and Managers is a positive step in this direction.

### ***c) Family Leave Utilization***

#### **Findings:**

This is one of the more effectively utilized benefits provided by the Company, with 26% of employees using all three allotted days and 24% indicating they needed more. According to the Employee Wellness Survey, only 4% of employees use family leave for matters other than those typically accepted for family leave. Leave in excess of three days for family reasons is usually recorded as vacation.

Most family leave is used to attend to a sick child or to take a family member to a medical appointment. Age is clearly correlated with employees attending to a sick child, since 45% of these occurrences were reported by employees between the ages 35 and 45 years.

Worthy of note is that 90% of employees feel that their supervisor was very flexible in co-operating with the arrangement of time off to attend to family matters. This feedback is very positive and it is important to maintain this practice.

#### **Recommendations:**

Family leave allotment and utilization seems to be working well with little abuse. We should also continue with our practice of providing flexibility for exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis.

### **iii. Stress Management**

In addressing the issue of stress, there are two components to be considered. The first is the origin of the stress and the second is how one deals with the stress, irrespective of its origin. The three sources of stress which individuals encounter most are from their social life (including their families), their work environment, and their own behaviors and beliefs (physically and emotionally).

The existing Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides help for employees in all three of these areas. In addition to the EAP, there are specific initiatives such as the parenting and stress management courses that help employees and their families address concerns or problems they might have.

As described in the Hours of Work section, one of the challenges facing most organizations today is finding effective ways to identify the origins of corporate stress and to take appropriate action to reduce it.

## **a) Stress Management**

### **Findings:**

According to 2000 corporate absenteeism statistics, there were 10 incidents and 624 lost work days due to stress related problems. This is the second highest number of incidents, as well as the second highest number of lost days for a single area of wellness. Stress related absenteeism has the highest number of average days per incident (62 days per incident).

It is also well known that stress can foster the emergence of other physical ailments (e.g. heart problems, anxiety, depression and asthma); so addressing stress appropriately may also reduce non-stress specific absenteeism.

The Employee Wellness Survey showed that Stress Management is the number one program/initiative (16%) that employees want the Company to promote, with a particularly strong interest in the Western Region (25%) and Customer Service (19%).

From a preventive perspective, elements that are likely to impact stress related absenteeism include family leave provisions, vacation utilization, alternate work arrangements, overtime, work breaks and limited physical inactivity. While directly addressing Stress Management itself is important, many of these elements overlap with Fitness and Employee Health and Hours of Work. Dealing with these other elements will reduce the need for Stress Management by preventing high levels of stress from developing in the first place.

### **Recommendations:**

- Every eighteen months, conduct a random employee survey to gain an understanding of employee opinion of individual and organizational wellness. Questions on family leave provisions, alternate work arrangements, over time, work breaks etc. will be included to identify the presence of organizational stress. Based upon any issues identified, develop initiatives to effectively respond to them. (September 2002, March 2004).
- Through management interaction with employees, continue to monitor the "stress levels" of employees and respond to any identified areas of concern. (Ongoing)
- Provide optional stress management seminars to employees and their families. (September/October 2002, 2003).
- Provide parenting courses to employees and their families. (Spring/Fall 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004).

**Justification:**

- Improved employee attitude, morale (productivity)
- Reduced absenteeism (both stress and non-stress related)

***b) Alternate Work Arrangements*****Findings:**

When employees were asked what program they would most like to see the Company promote, "Alternate Work Arrangements" ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> of 23 (behind stress management and fitness advice). Within Head Office and Customer Service it ranked higher, as second most important. While the Company currently has informal Alternate Work Arrangement guidelines, the awareness of the program among employees may be low or standard arrangements may not be flexible enough to meet employee needs.

**Recommendations:**

- Review, revise and promote the Alternate Work Arrangements guidelines. Promote with Supervisors an understanding of arrangements that will have a positive impact on employees. Much of this support can come from giving employees the choice and control over the hours they work where possible, thus giving them a sense of balance. (Campaigns - June 2002, 2003, 2004)

**Justification**

- In many cases Alternate Work Arrangements provide large benefits to employees with no real down side for the Company. Having a more satisfied employee will in turn result in improved productivity to the Company.

***c) Eldercare*****Findings:**

The Employee Wellness Survey indicated that a moderate number of employees (17%) are tasked with eldercare. There is a clear correlation with employee age, as 28% of these employees are over the age of 45 years. Of those employees providing eldercare, 21% spend a significant amount of time (over 10 hours a week) in this capacity and 17 % of them have the person receiving the care in their household.

As our employee population ages, the number of employees challenged in this capacity will grow. Concerns for employees in this area will likely range from time management (work/home responsibility balance) to understanding the needs and



expectations around eldercare (e.g. understanding how much care is appropriate, what kind of care is appropriate, methods of coping with elder care responsibilities, and available community resources).

**Recommendations:**

- Offer to employees and their spouses, after hour informational sessions on understanding and coping with elder care. (May 2002)
- Develop a resource manual with information on community resources and services available. (May 2002)

**Justification:**

- Employees who are currently tasked with elder care will become more informed and therefore better able to cope with the responsibility
- The Company will gain insight in an area that will affect more employees as the employee population base ages

## **ACTION PLAN**

This Action Plan takes into account the geographic composition of the Company. Promotional and administrative support at the local level will be critical for the success of any Wellness Strategy. As a result, the appointment of Area Wellness Co-ordinators, with a strong commitment to the concept of wellness and its promotion, is an integral part of the delivery of the Strategy.

The following themes will be the main focus of the Wellness Strategy over the next three years. In addition to these themes, the Wellness Strategy Action Plan will include a number of existing programs that have proven their effectiveness and elicited positive responses from employees (e.g. EAP, flu vaccinations, cancer presentations and blood samples at work). Each year a new theme will be emphasized, while building on the themes incorporated in the previous years.

### **2001**

- **Introduction and Promotion of Wellness Strategy**
- **Heart Health**

### **2002**

- **Heart Health (continued)**
- **Stress Management**

### **2003**

- **Heart Health (continued)**
- **Stress Management (continued)**
- **Hours of Work**

### **2004**

- **Heart Health (continued)**
- **Stress Management (continued)**
- **Hours of Work (continued)**
- **Backcare**

## **i) Wellness Initiatives by Category**

<b>Fitness and Employee Health</b>	<b>Completion Dates</b>
<b>1) Heart Health</b>	
• Personal Health Risk Assessments	May 2002 <sup>1</sup>
• Cholesterol/BP Checks	Sept 2002 <sup>1</sup>
• Nutrition Presentations	Sept 2002 <sup>1</sup>
• Explore Corporate Connection with Newfoundland and Labrador Heart Health Program	Oct 2001
• Blood Pressure Monitors made accessible in Areas	Oct 2001
• Weight Watchers	Feb 2002 <sup>1</sup>
<b>2) Physical Activity</b>	
• Interest free loan and deduction plan for fitness memberships and equipment	Jan 2002 <sup>2</sup>
• Explore arrangements with fitness facilities to make programs that are more accessible to employees	Oct 2002
• Identify onsite fitness programs and implement where practical.	Oct 2002
• Promote fitness related programs	Oct 2001 <sup>3</sup>
• Explore joint use programs with other companies.	Oct 2002
• Get Movin'	Jun 2002 <sup>1</sup>
<b>3) Back Care</b>	
• Assess effectiveness of Ergonomics Education Program	May 2004
• Implement back care program for high risk employees	Nov 2004
<b>4) Smoking</b>	
• Provide smoking cessation programs	Jan 2002 <sup>1</sup>
<b>5) Flu Vaccinations</b>	
• Offered in workplace and extended to family	Nov 2001 <sup>1</sup>
<b>6) Wellness Fair</b>	
• Various Health & Wellness display booths	Nov 2002 & 2003

1. Annually thereafter

2. Available for a period of four months from January to April 2002

3. Semi-annually thereafter

## **Fitness and Employee Health (cont.)**

## **Completion Dates**

### **7) Cancer Presentations**

- Workplace safety meetings

Apr 2002 <sup>1</sup>

### **8) Blood Samples at Work**

Ongoing

## **Hours of Work**

## **Completion Dates**

### **1) Overtime**

- Involvement of health and wellness team in policy revision
- Management ensure rest breaks taken are adequate

Dec 2001

Ongoing

### **2) Vacation Utilization**

- Management ensure adequate vacation time taken off
- Monitor utilization rates

Ongoing

Jan 2002 <sup>1</sup>

## **Stress Management**

## **Completion Dates**

### **1) Stress Management**

- Random Employee Surveys
- Management monitoring of “stress levels”
- Optional stress management seminars
- Parenting courses

Sept 2002, March 2004

Ongoing

Sept 2002, Sept 2003

Oct 2001 <sup>2</sup>

### **2) Eldercare**

- Optional information sessions
- Resource Booklet

May 2002

May 2002

### **3) Alternate Work Arrangements**

- Information Campaign

June 2002 <sup>1</sup>

1. Annually thereafter

2. Semi-annually thereafter