

Management process for illness/accident and long-term absences

Human



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1. Introduction

Human Resources, in collaboration with the Occupational Health and Safety service (Security, Safety and Facilities Operations Domain) has defined a standard management process for illness and accident absences, including long-term absences (absences longue durée, ALD). An absence is considered long-term when it exceeds 30 days of incapacity for work, whether consecutive or not, for the same illness, and whether the incapacity is partial or complete.

This process defines the care and support offered to the employees concerned and clarifies the legal and administrative aspects, in accordance with the *OPers-EPF* and the *Ordonnance sur le corps professoral des EPF*.

As responsible employer, the objective is to improve the management of employees regarding illness or accident absences, facilitate their reintegration and/or support them in a career change or other alternative, in partnership with the Occupational Health and Safety service and other internal and external EPFL actors.

This process aims, on the one hand, to define, communicate and apply a standard process linked with the proactive management of absences and, on the other, to provide the tools for better management and detection in order to increase the reintegration of staff members in the same or another job.

The human resources managers are responsible for the application of the process. The process and tools described constitute the standard norm of HR management.



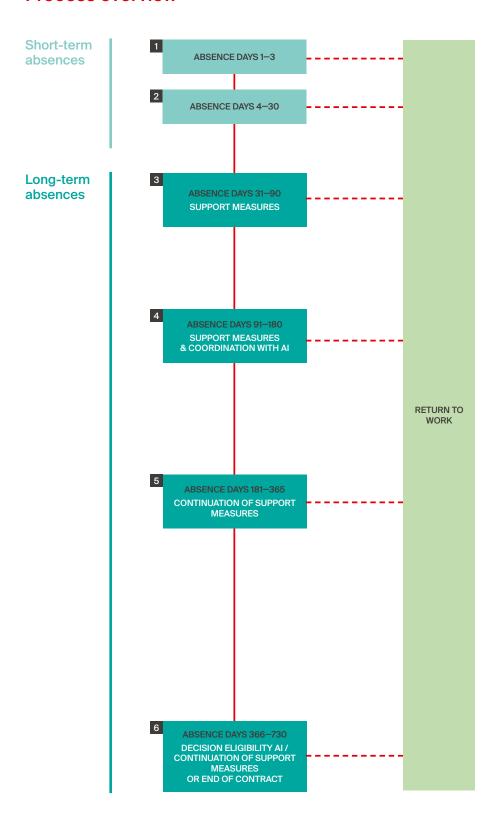
Goals	 Improve the management of employees absent due to illness or accident, including long-term absences
	 Improve communication and support regarding the employees concerned
	 Facilitate their reintegration and/or support them in career changes or other alternatives.
Scope	This process applies to all EPFL employees with employment contracts, including professors.
Tools	■ Guide • Information and support for employees – M
mandatory M	■ Guide • Information and support for line managers and professors – M
or optional O	■ Guide • Information and support for HR* – M
* HR	■ Guide • Return interview – M
internal use	■ Template • Repeated absence management – O
	■ Template • Information letter – M
	■ Template • Announcement to Occupational Health unit* – M
	■ Template • Letter to Occupational Health unit* – M
	 Template • Authorisation release of medical confidentiality, occupational health specialist* – M
	■ Template • Information feedback to HR* – M
	■ Template • Letter to general practitioners* – M
	■ Template • Letter end of salary entitlement or reduction to 90%* – M
	■ Template • Medical advisor mandate* – M
	 Template • Authorisation release of medical confidentiality, medical advisor* - M
	■ Template • Covering letter — draft termination* – M
	■ Template • Termination for certified disability* – M
	■ Form • Accident declaration – M
	■ Form • Al early detection announcement* – M
	■ Form • Disability announcement to Publica* – M
	■ File • Long-term absences (ALD)* – M
	■ Memorandum • Matmal fund * – M
Metric	Reduction of number of absences (<30 days; >30 days)
Implementation	May 2022. Version applicable from June 2024.

Human Resources will examine this process once a year in order to take into consideration best practices and incorporate lessons learned.

Review cycle



2. **Process overview**





EPFL standard procedure

Main roles and responsibilities

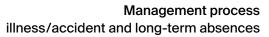
- The employee/professor informs their line manager of their illness or accident and keeps them regularly updated ·regarding the evolution of their incapacity for work and if possible the anticipated date of their return to work. They spontaneously provide medical certificate(s) throughout their absence and record them, plus the required documents, in the Working time and absence management (GTA) system. They receive internal and external support and cooperate with any actions taken.
- The line manager / dean (or representative) deals with the administrative, organisational and interpersonal follow-up in the event of absence and coordinates the actions to be taken with the HR manager (RRH) or HR Generalist (GRH). They ensure, with possible delegation, that the medical certificates are updated in the "Working time and absence management (GTA)" system.
- The HR manager (RRH) or HR Generalist (GRH) is responsible for proactive absence management with the line manager/dean and coordinates the necessary actions with all those involved (occupational health specialist, Suva, disability insurance AI, etc.) with a view to a return to work (coaching, rehabilitation, reintegration, etc.) or other alternative.
- The social insurance officer (GAS) creates and updates the long-term absences file
 with each new illness or accident absence or each change of situation and deals with
 the administrative follow-up of activities with those involved (internal or external).
- The occupational health specialist advises and supports employees/professors and the employer in the return to work. They define the aptitude for the post and any functional limitations, medically evaluates situations and defines professional constraints and exposures.
- The medical advisor determines the capacity for work required in the regular activity and in an adapted activity. They commission if necessary independent and neutral expert medical assessments and make a decision, if necessary, regarding aptitudes or inadequate capacity.

Human Resources



Management process illness/accident and long-term absences

Steps	Who/person responsible	How	Tools mandatory M or optional O
Absence days 1–3	Employee / professor	 Informs the line manager by telephone of the start of the absence, and the foreseeable duration of the absence (unless circumstances do not permit this). Enter their absence in the "Working time and absence management (GTA)" system. In the event of accident, announces it to the GAS using the accident declaration form. 	Form • Accident declaration – M Template • Repeated absence management – O
	GAS	 Sends the accident declaration form to the employee, if necessary, for them to fill it in. Announces the case to the Suva, manages the detailed accounts and ensures a follow-up of the case with Suva. 	
	Line manager / dean (or representa- tive)	 Takes note of absence and reorganises work. If employee has not called, phone them, if possible on the 2nd day and at the latest on the 3rd day of absence. If employee cannot be reached, contacts HR. As soon as employee returns to work, plans and conducts a return interview. In the event of repeated absences, conducts an interview 	
	RRH / GRH	with employee to identify causes and agree on ways to improve situation. If employee still cannot be reached, organises the necessary measures such as contacting the family to ascertain the employee's state of health.	



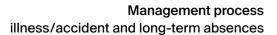


Steps	Who/person responsible	How	Tools mandatory M or optional O
Absence days 4–30	Employee / professor	 Calls the line manager to inform them of the probable duration of the absence. In the event of partial incapacity, agrees on days of presence with line manager. Enters their absence and downloads their medical certificate (CM) in the GTA system, as from the 4th day of absence for employees and the 8th day for professors. If this is not possible, the line manager / dean (or representative) enters the absence and downloads the medical certificate, if necessary. If necessary, asks the Occupational Health and Safety Service to envisage ergonomic measures or a visit to 	Template • Repeated absence management - O
	Line manager / dean (or representa- tive)	 the occupational health specialist. Takes note of the absence and reorganises work, to ensure continuity of services. Checks and confirms that medical certificate matches the recorded absence. Informs RRH/GRH if anticipated absence exceeds 30 days. Calls employee to see how they are. As soon as employee returns to work, plans and conducts a return interview. If employee refuses to collaborate, informs RRH in order to define next steps. In the event of repeated absences, conducts an interview with employee to identify causes and agree on ways to improve situation. In the event of repeated absences, can request a medical certificate as from first day of absence. Assists line manager / dean in preparation of "return" 	
Return to work	Line manager / dean (or representative) RRH / GRH Occupational health specialist GAS	 As soon as employee returns to work, plans and conducts a return interview in order to ensure good reintegration or a sustainable return to work. In the event of a gradual return to work, agree on a reintegration plan with HR's support. Supports the line manager / dean in preparation of the return interview, if the latter requests it. At the request of employee / professor or RRH/GRH, organises a medical consultation preferably before the return to work in order to review medical situation, coordinate return to work and if necessary carry out an analysis of the work station and necessary adaptations. In the event of the return of the employee / professor in accordance with their contractual scale of occupation, closes the file. Removes person from Matmal fund via Workflow, if appropriate. 	Guide • Return interview - O



Management process illness/accident and long-term absences

Steps	Who/person responsible	How	Tools mandatory M or optional O
Absence days 31–90 Support measures	Line manager / dean (or represent- ative)	 Contacts employee / professor regularly to see how they are, according to situations Consults the guide "Information and support for line managers and professors". Organizes the replacement of the line manager to ensure continuity of services. Organizes the replacement of the professor to ensure continuity of teaching, research, unit management and supervision of doctoral students. 	Template • Information letter – M Guide • Information and support for employees – M Guide • Information and support for line managers and professors – M
	RRH / GRH	 Consults the guide "Information and support for HR". Calls employee / professor in order to: answer any administrative questions and ask if they need any special support; remind them of possibility of contacting occupational health specialist; inform them that EPFL is obliged to send an early detection form to the AI with a view to reintegration in the workplace, proposing different measures such as coaching, training, adaptation to post; suggest they contact the AI directly for more information; inform them that they will receive the guide "Information and support for employees" with a letter. Contacts occupational health specialist to evaluate the case, if necessary. Reviews and analyses situations via the ALD file, discusses with line manager / dean (or representative) regarding follow-up and actions to be taken and determines frequency of necessary interactions. Asks GAS to send the early detection form. 	Guide • Information and support for HR* – M File • Long-term absence (ALD)* – M Form • Al early detection announcement* – M
	GAS	 Updates cases in ALD file, before 10th of the current month, including date of start of illness or accident, and determines number of days of absence based on monthly notification of absences. Comments on each absence and specifies cases that must be monitored. Opens an individual absence monitoring file. Sends the information letter with the guide "Information and support to employee". Prepares and sends the early detection announcement form to the AI. Organises the schedule of quarterly meetings (if relevant) at the beginning of the year with AI, RRH/GRH and occupational health specialist to discuss possible measures for maintaining employment and providing support (coaching, reintegration, readaptation). 	



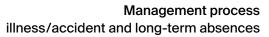


Steps	Who/person responsible	How	Tools mandatory M or optional O
Absence days 91–180 Support measures and coordination with Al	Employee / professor	 Is invited by the AI to an early detection interview in order to analyse their medical situation. Is informed by the AI that, either the person will receive a request for benefits form, or the latter is not necessary. Fills in, at the request of the AI, the request for AI benefits form at the latest 180 days after start of incapacity. In the event of the form not being returned, employee / professor runs the risk of losing their entitlement to the disability pension or having it postponed. The AI initiates the early detection phase for a maximum duration of 12 months in order to take intervention or reinsertion measures with a view to maintaining employment. 	Form • Disability announcement to Publica* - M Template • Announcement to Occupational Health unit* - M Template • Letter Occupational Health unit* - M Template • Authorisation for release of medical
	GAS	 Sends copy of Al letter to RRH/GRH for information and puts document under A3 in e-file. Sends the form "Disability announcement" for information to Publica. 	confidentiality, occupational health specialist* - M Template • Information feedback to HR* - O
	RRH / GRH	 As from 91st day, announces situation to the Occupational Health unit. Follows up situations in collaboration with GAS, occupational health specialist and line manger / dean (or representative) and seeks alternative solutions. 	Template • Letter to general practitioners* - M
	Occupa- tional health specialist	 Sends occupational health specialist information letter to employee / professor with request for authorisation to release medical confidentiality. If needed sends a letter to general practitioners after signing of the medical confidentiality release form in their favour. Organises consultations and if necessary a follow-up in the service until working capacity is restored. Sends, if possible after each consultation, the form "Information feedback to HR" to RRH/GRH. Participates if necessary in coordination sessions with RRH/GRH, Al and GAS. 	
	→ If employee re	eturns to work, see "Return to work" step.	



Management process illness/accident and long-term absences

Steps	Who/person responsible	How	Tools mandatory M or optional O
Absence days 181–365 Continuation of support measures	RRH / GRH	 Carries out follow-up of situations in collaboration with GAS, occupational health specialist and line manager / dean (or representative) and seeks alternative solutions. Contacts employee / professor and invites them to a discussion, if feasible, with the aim of: obtaining information on their state of health; evaluating support measures and possible return to work; answering any administrative questions and asking them if they need any special help; reminding them of possibility of contacting occupational health specialist; informing them, if applicable, that we are going to mandate the medical advisor and send them the request to authorise the release of medical confidentiality form in favour of the medical advisor for signature and return to RRH; in the event of incapacity to return to their post, proposing another suitable post or defining a plan of action with employee to facilitate their return to work. After consultation with occupational health specialist: mandates the medical advisor to draft a medical report in order to ascertain the evolution of the situation, possible return to work or confirmed incapacity; sends the "Medical advisor mandate" template, together with the request for authorisation to release medical confidentiality duly signed by employee / professor. 	Memorandum • Matmal fund* – M Template • Letter end of salary entitlement or reduction to 90%* – M Template • Authorisation for release of medical confidentiality, medical advisor* – M Template • Medical advisor mandate* – M
	GAS	 Contacts AI to ascertain the status of the dossier and organizes (if relevant) a meeting with AI, occupational health specialist and the RRH/GRH to discuss possible measures for maintaining employment and support measures (coaching, reintegration, readaptation, etc). If there is no return to work, as from 6th month transfers employee to Matmal fund, via workflow (WF) with copy to unit. During 9th month of incapacity sends letter informing employee of end of their entitlement to salary at 365 days if person has less than two years of service or of reduction of their gross salary to 90% during their second year of incapacity. 	





Steps	Who/person responsible	How	Tools mandatory M or optional O
Absence	Occupa- tional health specialist	In the event of partial incapacity, determines possible work capacity and adaptability of current post.	Template • Covering letter – draft termina-tion* – M
Decision eligibility Al / Continuation of support meas- ures or end of contract	RRH / GRH	 Continuation of support measures as defined in step 5. If no post can be found when employee is no longer entitled to continue to receive their salary and if complete or partial incapacity for work persists, coordinates with line manager / dean (or representative), GAS and AI the management of dossier. Initiates the partial termination of contract process with reduction of scale of occupation or complete termination of contract, if the disability pension or incapacity are 	for certified disability* - M
		 certified: In the event of less than two years of service, a draft termination letter is delivered to employee in person or sent by registered post as from 366th day of incapacity and, if necessary, the final termination decision, after observing the ten working days of employee's right to be heard; In the event of over two years of service, a draft termination letter is delivered to employee in person or sent by registered post as from 731st day of incapacity and, if necessary, the final termination decision, after observing the ten working days of employee's right to be heard. 	
		 For professors, the employment contract can be terminated by the ETH Board at the request of the EPF president on account of inadequate capacity, after 730 days of incapacity for work at the earliest (Art. 13a Ordonnance sur le corps professoral des EPF). Records cessation of activity in SAP in order to generate 	
		departure documents. Sends final certificate of employment.	
	GAS	 Continuation of measures as defined in step 5. Around 610 days of absence, sends the letter informing the employee of the end of salary entitlements at 730 days. Closing of ALD file. 	
	→ If employee r	eturns to work, see "Return to work" step.	



4. Tools

4.1 Guide • Information and support for employees – M

Download this document

Information and support guide for employees / professors in the event of illness or accident absence

1. Introduction

EPFL takes the health of its employees very seriously and we are committed to offering you as much support as we can during your illness or accident absence. Your return to work is our priority.

This guide contains useful information concerning this period of absence, answers your questions and advises you regarding persons and bodies that can support you and thus ensure good collaboration.

2. Support

→ I need to feel safe, supported and listened to and/or answers to my questions. Who can I ask?

Your line manager

It is important to stay in regular contact with your line manager and professional environment.

■ Your Human Resources team

As reliable partner, we are ready to help and can rapidly implement the first support measures adapted to your situation. Our teams will treat any information you give us in strict confidence.

Occupational health specialist

Their activity is regulated by Annexe 4 of the FMH Code of Ethics. They work in a totally neutral and professionally independent capacity and are bound by medical confidentiality (confidential data). Their aim is to promote and ensure the physical, mental and social wellbeing of employees. They define the aptitude for the job and any functional limitations, evaluate situations medically and define professional constraints and exposures. They advise and support employer and employees regarding the return to work. A confidential medical consultation can be organised, providing an analysis of your situation, guidance and advice. sante@epfl.ch

Occupational hygienists

In collaboration with the occupational health specialist, occupational hygienists focus their attention on the environment and visit the workplace, conduct risk analyses and if necessary propose an adaptation of the workplace to facilitate your reintegration. hygienetravail@epfl.ch

Medical advisor

They determine the work capability required in the regular activity and in an adapted activity. If necessary they arrange neutral and independent expert medical assessments and if appropriate make a decision regarding the causes of inadequate aptitudes or abilities.









4.2 Guide • Information and support for line managers and professors – M

Download this document

Guide for line managers and professors concerning the management of illness/accident absences



1. Introduction

The aim of this guide is to clarify certain aspects of the absence management process, define your role as line manager, and provide you with concrete tools to assist you in this type of situation.

2. Votre rôle

You deal with the administrative, organisational and interpersonal follow-up in cases of absence and coordinate the actions to be taken with the HR manager. You ensure, with possible delegation, that medical certificates are updated in the "Working time and absence management (GTA)" system.

We recommend that you should be active in the three phases of the illness/accident, namely:

- Before the illness: notice any warning signs and take preventative measures wherever possible.
- During the illness: support and assist your employee.
- On their return: ensure that your employee recommences work under the best possible conditions.

Remember your HR manager is always available if you need advice.

Before the absence

- Anticipate and monitor symptoms of probable absence (chronic fatigue, lack of attention, aggressiveness, repeatedly making mistakes, overinvestment, etc.).
- Adjust the workload if necessary and set priorities.
- Review the allocation of tasks within the team.
- Avoid overtime, plan holidays, encourage the compensation of extra hours.
- Give recognition to all your employees.

During the absence

- Stay in regular contact with your employee.
- Define with them the frequency and means of contact (mail, telephone, sms, etc.).
- Don't be afraid of asking how they are. Those who are absent generally appreciate it. If not, they will let you know.
- Ensure that you receive a medical certificate as from the 4th day of absence or 8th day for professors.
- If the unit administrator is absent/ill, contact your HR manager who will monitor this absence with you.
- Contact your HR manager if your employee fails to return when their medical certificate expires and they do not provide a new one.
- If you have any doubt regarding the authenticity of the medical certificate, discuss it with your HR manager.
- If a replacement must be organised, contact your HR manager. Please note that the replacement will only be made on the basis of a fixed-term contract.



4.3 Guide • Return interview – M

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Return interview guide

Objectif: Ensure a good reintegration or sustainable return to work

→ Good preparation of the interview is half the battle

When is a return interview necessary?

After an employee's absence due to illness, accident or maternity leave.

The form of the return interview

- Informal discussion
- Adapt the length and form of the interview according to the length of the absence
- One-to-one with the employee
- In a quiet place
- Show empathy but remain objective
- Avoid telephone calls during the interview

The content of the return interview

- Ask the employee how they are and wish them a good start back
- Listen to any fears or questions the employee may have about their return to work
- Reassure them if necessary about starting work again
- Briefly summarise the work in progress to bring the employee up to date
- If the return is only partial, reorganise their tasks

Follow-up of return to work

- Support the employee with concrete improvement measures, if necessary
- Ensure that all goes well in the short, medium or long term

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4.4 Template • Repeated absence management – O

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12. Management (appreciation | support | presence | etc.)

Work-life balance (multiple responsibilities)

Work atmosphere (team | fear)

Uncertainty regarding job

Others: to be specified

13.

14.

15.

16. 17.

18.

ΞΙ	PFL	Repeat	ed absend	ce mana	agement	If there is clinicity adopt or executed interaction smaller executed interaction smaller executed interaction of the contraction of the contractio	control control for biometric valving confidence party affect. We undertake to wisk together to control for the control for th
Date: Name						Baseline Baylogen's rigidate San	San Annuage's services and services are services and services are services and services are services and services are serv
Objec	ctive: Identify causes and agree on improvement measures						
•	ential causes	Influe	ence on al	bsences	S		
•		Influe strong	ence on al	bsences weak	S none		
•							
Pote	ential causes	strong	average	weak	none		
Pote	ential causes Work organisation (procedures processes etc.)	strong	average	weak	none		
1. 2.	ential causes Work organisation (procedures processes etc.) Pressure of deadlines	strong	average	weak	none		
1. 2. 3.	Work organisation (procedures processes etc.) Pressure of deadlines Work interruptions (dérangements)	strong	average	weak	none		
1. 2. 3. 4.	Work organisation (procedures processes etc.) Pressure of deadlines Work interruptions (dérangements) Flexibility required (planning compensation overtime etc.)	strong	average	weak	none		
1. 2. 3. 4.	Work organisation (procedures processes etc.) Pressure of deadlines Work interruptions (dérangements) Flexibility required (planning compensation overtime etc.) Work schedule (too early too late night weekend)	strong	average	weak	none		
1. 2. 3. 4. 5 6	Work organisation (procedures processes etc.) Pressure of deadlines Work interruptions (dérangements) Flexibility required (planning compensation overtime etc.) Work schedule (too early too late night weekend) Travel (place of work business trips etc.)	strong	average	weak	none		
1. 2. 3. 4. 5 6 7.	Work organisation (procedures processes etc.) Pressure of deadlines Work interruptions (dérangements) Flexibility required (planning compensation overtime etc.) Work schedule (too early too late night weekend) Travel (place of work business trips etc.) Demands (too high not high enough)	strong	average	weak	none		
1. 2. 3. 4. 5 6 7. 8.	Work organisation (procedures processes etc.) Pressure of deadlines Work interruptions (dérangements) Flexibility required (planning compensation overtime etc.) Work schedule (too early too late night weekend) Travel (place of work business trips etc.) Demands (too high not high enough) Environmental stress (noise air temperature light)	strong	average	weak	none		

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4.5 Template • Information letter – M

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Ms/Mr Name Surname Address n° ZIP City

Lausanne, XX Month 202X

AVS N° 756.XXXX.XXXX.XX

SAP

N/réf FV

Information and support guide in the event of illness/accident absence. Early detection announcement

Dear Madam/Sir,

We have taken note of your incapacity for work that commenced on XX Month 202X and we sincerely hope that you will get well soon.

We would like to assure you that we consider the health of our employees to be very important and we wish to support you as much as possible during this period of incapacity for work.

For this purpose, we are sending you the "Information and support guide for EPFL employees" in the event of an absence exceeding three months and we invite you to read it carefully. You will find the services and persons available to support you and also explanations regarding the return to work, absence management, duration of salary entitlement and entitlement to holidays and disability insurance.

Additionally, in accordance with the information communicated to you by your Human Resources manager, we confirm that initially an early detection announcement will be sent to the Assurance Invalidité (AI), in order to protect your rights regarding the latter.

Furthermore, your Human Resources manager has tried several times to contact you, without success. We therefore inform you that an early detection announcement will be sent to the Assurance Invalidité (AI) in order to protect your rights regarding the latter. For more information and in case of questions, please do not hesitate to contact your HR Manager, Ms/Mr Name Surname, at the following number 021 693 XX XX or by email to prenom.nom@epfl.ch.

We hope that you will find this Information and support guide useful and we will be happy to provide any other guidance you may require.

With our best wishes for a speedy recovery,

Yours sincerely.

Eric Vionnet

Social Insurance Officer

Human

EPFL RHO DRH BI A1 407, Station 7 1015 Lausanne rh@epfl.ch rh.epfl.ch



4.6 Form • Accident declaration – M

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Nom et prénom de l'assuré(e)			
Type d'accident	Non-Pro	ofessionnel -	
Date et heure de l'accident	Date:		Heure :
Lieu de l'accident			
Description de l'accident			
Dernier jour de travail avant l'acc (date et heure)	cident	Date:	Heure :
Partie du corps blessée (gauche/droite)	ind	éterminé	•
Nature de la blessure			
Nom, prénom, adresse complète	du médeci	in	
Suite du traitement chez			
Incapacité de travail depuis le			pas d'absence
Reprise du travail le			
Avez-vous besoin d'une feuille de ph	narmacie	Oui 🔘	Non 🔘
		~	