



19 October 2020

Major Sick Leave Breakthrough

The union has won changes to two sick leave arrangements of long-standing concern to members at least for the period of the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency.

Effective immediately:

- Reducing aggregate rate when sick on a weekend will cease; and
- A new 10-hour cap on sick leave debits even when sick for a 12-hour shift will be implemented.

While these issues have been of concern for some time, State Council responding to member feedback argued that in the middle of a health pandemic any disincentive to front-line health workers staying home if sick needed urgent review.

- [See our letter to the Health and Ambulance Services Minister here](#) [pdf]

It was argued these issues could not wait until the enterprise agreement is renegotiated in 2022.

We have succeeded.

Correspondence from the Director General of Health states:

“I appreciate that you, on behalf of the United Workers Union Ambulance State Council have taken the time to raise your concerns regarding possible unintended consequences arising from current sick leave arrangements within the Queensland Ambulance Service ... I have considered that, in the current environment where QAS staff need to focus on the essential work for our community and to ensure there is no disincentive for staff to stay at home when sick, it would be appropriate to consider a temporary application of amended sick leave provisions for QAS

operational employees.”

To change the provisions as outlined in the current Certified Agreement the Director General of Health has requested the QAS implement the following:

- the current provision to reduce the Aggregated Allowance by a set proportion for employees in receipt of the allowance and who are granted sick leave on either Saturday or Sunday during a fortnightly pay period is suspended.

To address issues around the rate sick leave accrues vs the manner in which it is deducted, the Director General has also requested the following

- in addition to the current entitlement for QAS operational employees at Level 1 to Level 5 being entitled to 96 hours sick leave, the sick leave taken is capped at a 10-hour deduction for each shift taken on sick leave.

The greatest number of hours that will be deducted from ambulance staff sick leave balances is 10 hours regardless of what length shift you are needing to access this leave for.

8-hour shift – 8 hours will be deducted

10-hour shift – 10 hours will be deducted

12-hour shift – 10 hours will be deducted

4 hours' partial shift – 4 hours will be deducted

- [See full copy of Director General correspondence here](#) [pdf]

It's due to the respect United Workers Union members have earned with this current state government that this outcome was able to be achieved. Paramedics, Patient Transport Officers and EMDs have been ready, willing and able to provide whatever services the Qld community has needed in this constantly changing environment dealing with COVID-19. This has not gone unnoticed and is a credit to all United Workers Union Ambulance members.

If you have a co-worker who would like to receive these updates or join the United Workers Union information can be obtained by emailing qldambulance@unitedworkers.org.au

In Unity,

United Workers Union

