

STAFF REPORT

Report #SW2011-02

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of Council
From: Stacey Wilker, Accounting Clerk
Re: Sick Leave Utilization Update
Date: January 26, 2011

Background:

As part of overall year end procedures, a review is completed of sick leave usage. Staff believes it would be appropriate to update Council and the public on this issue with respect to the Township workforce on a yearly basis.

Discussion:

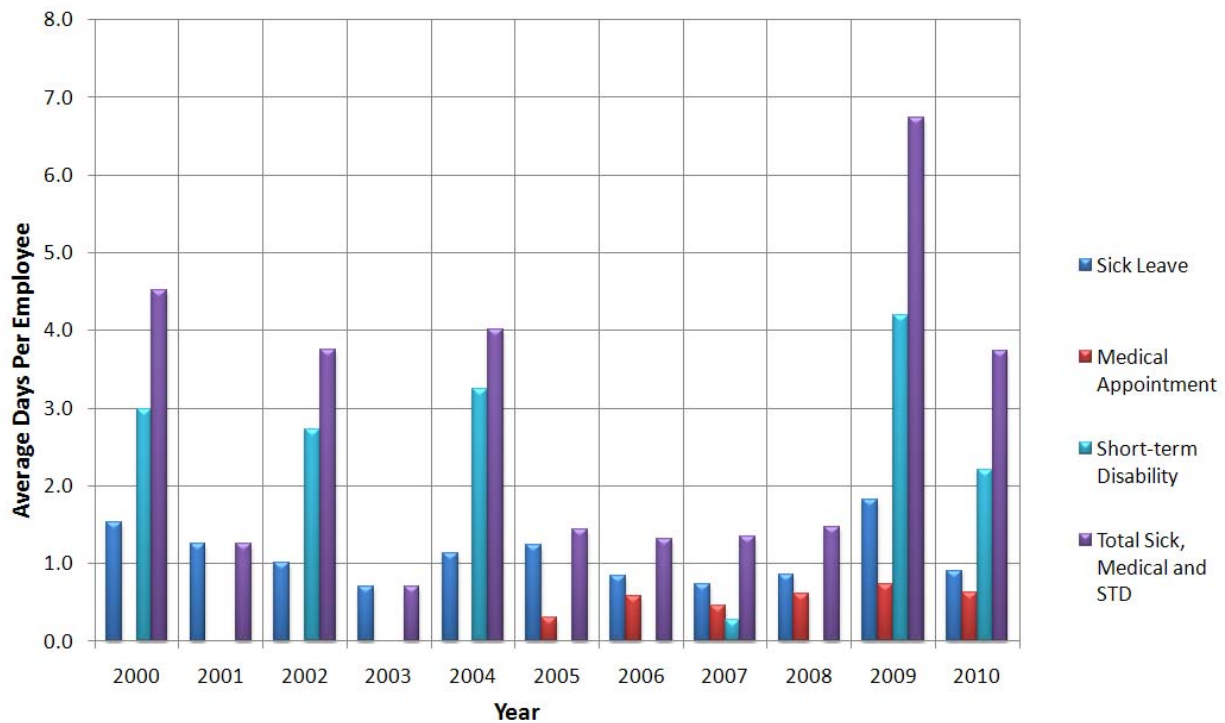
Sick leave is tracked for each employee on an hourly basis. Throughout the year sick leave usage is monitored and at the end of the year a report is generated that illustrates trends that could be emerging.

Staff is pleased to report, that overall utilization is down for 2010 and the overall utilization remains lower than what has been reported for the broader public sector. The Township provides employees with 5 sick leave days per year which are not accumulated year over year. The Township also provides Short Term Disability coverage starting on the 4th day of a prolonged illness up to 17 weeks. The rate ranges from 100% to 75% depending on the employees years of service. After 17 weeks, the employee would transition to Long Term Disability which is covered through Sun Life. Starting in 2005, the Township also provides 4 – 2 hour medical appointment leaves. This was adjusted slightly for the 2009 Employment Bylaw to 8 hours per year for personal medical appointments with no single allotment being more than 2 hours.

The following information only includes leave periods paid by the Township ie. Sick Leave, Short-term Disability and Medical Appointments. WSIB and Long-term Disability are not included as they are not directly paid by the Township, although there were not any LTD Claims or WSIB lost time claims in 2010.

The following chart illustrates average Sick Leave Usage since 2000. Details for Sick Leave, Medical Appointments and Total Leave are shown. The total leave usage tends to fluctuate drastically when there are Short-term Disability events.

Sick, Medical Appointment, Short-term Disability Leave Usage



While high rates of sick leave usage have been prevalent in the Canadian public service in recent years, the trend at the Township of East Zorra – Tavistock tends to be just the opposite. As you can see from the chart, the Township’s sick leave usage rate has remained low over the last several years. Recent information suggests the Canadian Average is 9.8 days / year (*Public Sector 12.6 and Private Sector 8.9*). As much as our average usage has been very low, it is equally important to note when looking at the detailed employee records there aren’t any specific issues that are of concern.

It should also be noted that while the average has been very low, the impact of a single Short-term Disability leave that extends for the full 17 weeks could drive the overall average up to 7.5 days based on the size of the Township’s workforce. The last couple of years have had Short-term Disability leaves and it is apparent how these can affect the overall average quite dramatically with a small workforce.

Staff believe the overall low average can be directly attributed to all employee's commitment to serve the community as effectively and cost efficiently as possible. Staff view the sick leave benefits provided as a form of "insurance", to be used only if needed and not an entitlement to be consumed fully throughout the year. The structure of the benefits and flexibility with items like time off are also no doubt beneficial in keeping employees productive and motivated.

Recommendation:

1. No recommendations. Information only.

C.A.O Comments

Good to see leave benefits being used appropriately. I believe this clearly indicates that Township employees do not fall into the stereotypical public sector stories and news articles about excessive sick leave use.



Jeff Carswell, AMCT
Chief Administrative Officer

Report prepared
and submitted by:



Stacey Wilker
Accounting Clerk