What to Expect When Applying for Short-Term Disability Leave

Requesting Your Leave & Navigating the Claim Process

Foreseeable Leave

Provide at least 30 days advance notice to your supervisor and the Leave Coordinator in the Benefits Department

Unforeseeable Leave

Notify your supervisor and/or the Leave Coordinator as soon as possible, if advance notice is not feasible due to circumstances beyond your control

1 Initiate Your Claim with Lincoln Financial

- Contact Lincoln Financial to start your claim and authorize release of medical records
- Encourage your provider to respond promptly -- claims can only be evaluated once documentation is received

2 Pay & Time Tracking

Benefit Waiting Period/Deductible: Covered by your available PTO

Claim Pending: PTO used while awaiting approval

Claim Approved: PTO reversed, STD benefits applied

Claim Denied: Time remains coded as PTO

Note: *Standard 'off-work' doctor's notes are not sufficient to confirm disability status. Claims are not pre-approved.*

During Your Absence & Returning to Work

Stay Connected and Prepare for Your Return

Stay in Touch

Maintain communication with your supervisor about your leave status, anticipated return date, and any timeline changes -- Frequency will be tailored to your situation

Your Privacy Matters

You are not required to share details about your illness, diagnosis, or any protected health information (PHI) with your supervisor or coworkers

Network & Badge Access

For absences of 4+ weeks, network and badge access will be temporarily disabled so you can focus on recovery -- Access is restored upon your return

Returning to Work

- **Provide a return-to-work certification** completed by your healthcare provider to your supervisor and/or the Leave Coordinator before resuming any work, including remote work
- If your physician has placed temporary restrictions, notify your supervisor in advance so NorthWestern can evaluate accommodations
- Additional forms may be required depending on your occupation

Resources

More information available at:

https://northwesternenergy.com/leave-disability

How to File a Disability Claim/Leave Request

Employee Assistance Program

Confidential support at no cost to you and your dependents

Call: 888-881-5462 (24/7 availability)

supportlinc.com (*Code: northwesternenergy)*

Questions?

Jen Hoffenbacker, Leave Coordinator

Phone: (406) 497-2142

Return-to-Work or Accommodations Requests

Marisa Jacobs, HR Business Partner/ADA Coordinator

Phone: (406) 268-2347

