

2.6.4 Extended Sick Leave

- a) This section of the leave provisions is applicable to permanent and fixed long-term contract workers and is not applicable to fixed short-term contract workers, trainees, or vacation workers.
- b) Employees may apply for Extended Sick Leave (ESL) independent from their normal sick leave provisioning in the following circumstances:
 - i) Serious Injuries;
 - ii) Severe Illnesses;
 - iii) Planned Surgery; and/or
 - iv) Hospitalisation for a severe chronic illness relapse or treatment.
- c) Extended sick leave is not a right and is awarded at the discretion of the Employer.
- d) The following criteria applies for ESL:
 - i) Hospitalisation and treatment for longer than twelve (12) consecutive calendar days, or twelve (12) days inclusive of post hospitalisation for recovery;
 - ii) Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, a medical Specialist report will be required;
 - iii) Emergency hospitalisation of the employee by a General Practitioner (GP) will be considered in the absence of a treating specialist or specialist facility. The corresponding ESL application must be supported by a medical report and medical evidence detailing the urgency of the hospitalisation and confirming the medical risk;
 - iv) A severe chronic disease which in general is managed effectively, yet occasionally demands short hospitalisation or clinic visit in terms of the treatment programme. Each hospital/clinic visit must be supported or motivated by a detailed doctor's report and a treatment plan; and
 - v) Emergency relapse for a chronic-illness which might pose a risk for the patient if left unattended and which demands hospitalisation by a treating GP in the absence of a medical specialist. A detailed medical report explaining the relevant symptoms, flagging risk, eventual prognosis and planned support intervention will be required.
- e) No ESL applications will be considered in cases of minor illnesses and elective surgeries. The normal sick leave provisioning should be applied.
- f) Applications for ESL must comply with all the stipulated criteria and supporting requirements as outlined in the ESL Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for it to be considered by the SARS Internal Panel.
- g) The SARS Internal Panel will serve as the decision-making body for ESL applications. The Panel will also provide advice and recommendations to the Line Manager on the capacity status of the employee.
- h) Employees will be expected to utilise their available sick or annual leave to cover their absences while their application for ESL is in the process of being considered. If their available leave has been exhausted, unpaid leave will be applied until the decision about the granting of ESL has been made.
- i) The SARS Internal Panel reserves the right to request the employee to provide additional specialist medical reports or medical evidence to enable the adjudication of the application.
- j) In the event of returning to work before the date as stipulated on the medical certificate, the employee must submit a medical report indicating functional competence and ability to fulfil the role.
- k) An employee may lodge an application for condonation of late submission or an appeal against the outcome of the ESL decision made by the SARS Internal Panel. The condonation and appeal procedure and requirements as stipulated in the SOP need to be met.
- l) The following will serve as grounds for a condonation of late application to be considered:
 - i) The degree of lateness of the ESL application;

- ii) The circumstances that led to the failure to submit the application within the prescribed timeframe;
 - iii) Any attempts made to notify the Employer or to submit the application or portion of the application; and/or
 - iv) The severity of the condition, mental state, and mobility to facilitate the completion of the application forms.
- m) The following will serve as grounds for an appeal application:
- i) If or when the employee claims that a breach of the application of the policy had occurred in considering the ESL application;
 - ii) If new or additional medical evidence emerged after the application was lodged which would have direct bearing on the ESL application outcome;
 - iii) If it becomes evident that crucial, applicable medical evidence had been omitted or ignored during the assessment of the application; and/or
 - iv) The outcome was unprecedented.
- n) The Employer shall continuously evaluate employees' sick leave profiles. The Employer reserves the right to invoke incapacity proceedings at any point during ESL leave and is not dependent on prior exhaustion of sick leave or ESL leave.