In this edition, we will share with you examples of acts of misconduct which

are related to unauthorised absence from duty. The cases below are just examples of acts of misconduct for staff’s reference and do not refer to particular staff or particular departments.

Unauthorised Absence from Duty

All civil servants are expected to attend to work punctually and to remain in

their place of work during working hours. Any absence from duty must be covered by leave or permission. They should comply with departmental rules or instructions pertaining to working hours and procedures in obtaining leave for their absence.Habitual lateness of subordinates must not be tolerated.Some examples of unauthorised absence/unpunctuality that have resulted in formal disciplinary action (including a case of serious nature resulting in removal of the officer from service) are given below.

Case 1

An offi cer applied for urgent leave on many occasions, sometimes by leaving a leave application form on the desk of his supervisor, and sometimes by calling his offi ce in the morning. His supervisor instructed him that whenever he wished to take leave, he must seek permission from his supervisor direct, and as far as possible,his application should be made well in advance to allow re-deployment of work.Despite the instruction, the offi cer called a colleague one morning informing him that he would take urgent leave on that day. His application for leave was rejected and

his absence was treated as unauthorised absence

Case 2

An officer obtained his supervisor's permission to leave the office for seeking medical treatment.It was later found out that he had not attended

any medical treatment and had gone to the bank to deal with his

personal matters instead. As his absence was not for the approved

purpose, it was regarded as unauthorised absence.

Case 3

An officer left his duty earlier than the normal duty time on the ground that he had already completed all his work. The reason given to account for the absence is not acceptable. Staff must remain in their place of work throughout their working hours, even though they may have completed the duties assigned to them. Early departure from the office without permission

from his supervisor will be regarded as unauthorized absence.

Case 4

An officer did not report duty after his vacation leave and phoned his

supervisor claiming that he was feeling unwell and applied for covering leave.Despite the supervisor's instruction that he should report for duty immediately and that approval would not be granted unless he could produce a medical certificate or a reasonable justification for his absence, the officer did not show up for duty until 10 days later. The officer claimed that he had consulted a Chinese medical practitioner in Hong Kong, but had in fact gone to the Mainland during the period according to the Immigration Department's movement records. Although the officer

subsequently produced two medical certificates issued by a medical practitioner in Shenzhen, he had not provided an acceptable explanation for the belated submission, the refusal to comply with his supervisor's instruction on sick leave application and the submission of false information. Formal disciplinary action was taken against the officer and he was punished by compulsory retirement.