

## HANDOUT

### Planning to Get to Work

Managing your life through good planning will help you avoid missing work. There are five major steps you can take to ensure a good work attendance record. Often people who are frequently absent from work have not considered these five steps.

1. **Reliable Transportation.** You need to plan for reliable transportation. It's not your employer's fault if your car won't start. You are still responsible for getting to work. Transportation problems can occur even if you own a new car. Here are a number of plans that you can make to ensure that you have reliable transportation.
  - ◆ **Regular Car Maintenance.** Keep your car in good operating condition. Maintain it regularly. If you suspect you might have car trouble, try starting it a couple of hours before work. This will give you time to use another method of transportation if you need to.
  - ◆ **Know Your Public Transportation System.** Keep a schedule of the public transportation available to you. Highlight the times you would need to use the bus, train, or subway to get to work.
  - ◆ **Call a Co-Worker for a Ride.** Make friends or advertise in the classifieds for someone who lives near you and has a reliable car. Make an agreement with them to share a ride if either of you has car trouble. You may want to carpool with other co-workers.
  - ◆ **Ride Sharing.** Check with friends or advertise in the classifieds for someone who can share a ride to work with you. This arrangement will work even when you don't work together. You just need to work in the same general area.
  - ◆ **Walk or Bicycle.** Find housing near your place of employment. Even if you live two to four miles from your job, you can still walk or ride a bike in good weather. If you don't want to move, find a job near your home.
  - ◆ **Taxis.** A taxi is costly, but it usually won't cost as much as losing a day's pay. It is even less costly than losing your job. You don't want to take a taxi to work every day, but you shouldn't hesitate to do so in an emergency.

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2. **Reliable Child Care.** If you are responsible for children, you need reliable child care. What happens if a baby-sitter lets you down? What if bad weather closes a day-care center? What if your child is ill? What if children can't get to school on the normal schedule? You can make successful plans for child care that can help you avoid missing work by doing some detective work first.
  - ◆ **Hire Good Baby-Sitters.** Select a reliable baby-sitter. You can check reliability by asking for the baby-sitter's references. These should be people who have employed the person as a babysitter for their children.
  - ◆ **Select Good Child Care Centers.** Check on the child care center. Ask for references. Learn about their policy for closing. What is their policy if your child is ill? There are now more centers which will care for children when they are ill.
  - ◆ **Investigate Health Care Programs.** In some cases, hospitals and specialized child care centers will take care of your children when they are ill. Many of these programs need to be used only when your child is sick. They cost more than normal child care. However, they are less costly than an unpaid day off work or losing your job.
  - ◆ **Have an Emergency Plan.** Find a friend or relative who is willing to take care of your child for one day in case of emergency. The best plan is to have at least two people who are willing to do this.
3. **Use a Calendar.** Have a calendar and use it to keep track of your work schedule. Record all assigned work days and any personal appointments that may conflict with work. Doctor and dental appointments can be noted in time to make arrangements with your employer. Whenever possible, schedule personal appointments outside regular work hours.
  - ◆ You may also want to note other personal business on your calendar. A calendar is one of the best tools to help you plan your work day.

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**Weekly Planner**

**MONDAY** Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Appointment/Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**TUESDAY** Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Appointment/Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**WEDNESDAY** Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Appointment/Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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**Weekly Planner**

**THURSDAY** Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Appointment/Notes

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**FRIDAY** Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Appointment/Notes

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SATURDAY** Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Appointment/Notes

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SUNDAY** Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Appointment/Notes

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Monthly Calendar</b>						
Month:						
<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tues</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thurs</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sun</b>

4. **Plan a Schedule With Your Supervisor.** You can plan for many events in your life--vacations, car maintenance, dental, doctor and lawyer appointments, to name a few. A supervisor can usually schedule a one-day absence with just a few weeks' notice. A vacation may require several months notice. Ask your supervisor how much notice is needed to schedule days off.

5. **Call the Employer.** Even the best planning can't cover all possible problems that could keep you from getting to work. Your employer will usually understand if you only miss work once in a while. Ask your supervisor how many days is considered reasonable to be absent from work each year. Most organizations will take disciplinary action for excessive or unexcused absences. Disciplinary action may be taken for weekly absences, one absence every two weeks, or on a day before or after a holiday, and for not calling in or taking off to do personal business. The discipline may range from a verbal warning for the first offense to immediate discharge. Call your supervisor as soon as you know it will not be possible to get to work. Use a pay phone or a neighbor's phone if you don't have your own phone. Be honest and plan what you will say.

1.     What will you tell your supervisor when you call?

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## Module 1 v Activity 14 v ATTENDANCE

### Notifying Your Supervisor

When you notify your supervisor that you can't be at work, follow these steps:

- ◆ Identify yourself and state that you can't come to work.
- ◆ Explain the reason you can't be at work. Don't lie.
- ◆ If you expect to be gone for more than one day, tell the supervisor how long you expect to be away from the job.
- ◆ Express your willingness to make up for the absence when you return by making up the hours you missed.

These are good and bad reasons for being absent from work. Review the following list. Check those reasons you think justify calling your supervisor to say you can't come to work.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a headache and don't feel like coming to work.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child is ill and I have to stay home.

\_\_\_\_\_ My car isn't working and I don't have a ride to work.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have an appointment with my attorney.

\_\_\_\_\_ There's been a death in my family.

\_\_\_\_\_ My brother asked me to baby-sit his children.

\_\_\_\_\_ I had a fight with my spouse and I am too upset to work.

\_\_\_\_\_ I sprained my ankle and need to keep it elevated.

\_\_\_\_\_ I need to visit a sick friend in the hospital.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our house was broken into last night.

\_\_\_\_\_ I need to get a new pair of glasses today.

\_\_\_\_\_ I had a car accident on the way to work.

\_\_\_\_\_ It was a long weekend and I have a hangover.

\_\_\_\_\_ This is a religious holiday for me.

You should always tell the truth when you report to your supervisor. It is the right thing to do. A lie may be discovered and cause you embarrassment. It will take a long time to regain your supervisor's trust in you when you are discovered in a lie concerning your absence.

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### **The Friday/Monday Syndrome**

Supervisors recognize a pattern that develops among some employees. It frequently appears in younger workers. This syndrome becomes apparent when people call with an excuse not to come to work on Friday or Monday. This problem worker is eager to start the weekend and when Monday rolls around is either too tired or needs time off to do personal business because they partied all weekend. Even when you have a legitimate excuse, supervisors will become irritated when most of your absences occur on Fridays and Mondays.