

# How to reduce Absenteeism in the workplace

Forms of absenteeism could include:

- Absconion;
- Absence without leave;
- Time keeping offences;
- Abuse of sick leave;
- Recurring absence;
- Absenteeism as a result of substance abuse;
- Absence as a result of illness, incapacity or disability.

Managing absenteeism is therefore essential for any company's competitiveness, discipline and profitability.

## What Causes Employee Absenteeism?

### Don't just treat the symptoms, discover the cause.

Employees are sick from time to time, and some absences are unavoidable e.g., in case of an emergency. However habitual absenteeism result in loss of productivity due to both absenteeism (other than scheduled leave) and presenteeism. Presenteeism is where the employee comes into work but is unproductive, for example when they are sick but don't take the day off, or when they report for duty only to engage in their own personal work.

- The main causes of absenteeism and presenteeism are related to an employee's **psychological health and wellbeing**, and are due to stress or depression, and a lack of engagement.
- Disengagement** can be due to toxic and negative workplace culture with excessive conflict; a perception of an unfair workplace; or low morale due to lack of positive feedback, excessive demands, work pressure, insufficient support and job control. These factors can also lead to burn-out.
- Another reason for absenteeism may be as a result of an employee's personal **responsibilities and a lack of flexibility** within the business to accommodate these responsibilities and therefore a lack of employee work-life balance.

iv. More worryingly, absenteeism may be a symptom of workplace **bullying and harassment**.

v. **Alcohol or drug** related problems can be another factor of absenteeism.

vi. An employer may find out that there are **other factors outside of work**, i.e., personal issues, moonlighting that are impacting on the employee's attendance and leading to excessive absences.

### Mechanisms to deal with absenteeism effectively:

i. **Disciplinary action** is the most obvious way of addressing absenteeism. It may sometimes be difficult to decide whether persistent short-term absences are attributable to incapacity or as misconduct, or a combination of both.

Although employees have a right to paid sick leave, that right is open to abuse, which may be difficult to prove if a doctor issues medical certificates on request. However, this does not prevent the Employer from instituting incapacity processes for excessive sick leave and investigating any possible abuse thereof.

- ii. Keeping an **open line of communication** with employees can also help them feel comfortable discussing any issues that are affecting their attendance.
- iii. **Incentive reward systems**, bonus payment for attendance and also performance appraisals that incorporate attendance levels as a criteria in respect of performance.
- iv. Employers should keep attendance registers. Using **attendance registers and/or clocking systems to** monitor employees' attendance and record their time keeping identifying any trends or abuse.

A historic view of an employee's time keeping can be very useful to establish a pattern of abuse when the employee persists with time related offences.

The no work no pay rule also applies to employees who commits absenteeism or time related offences without valid reasons.

- v. Establish a **grievance procedure** that will ensure that employees' concerns are addressed. An employee's dissatisfaction because of unresolved grievances can lead to poor employee morale, which in turn, leads to absenteeism.

It is prudent to establish a culture where problems and grievances are addressed.

- vii. **Post absence interviews** can be conducted when an employee returns from leave, except annual or study leave, to check in with the employees' wellbeing and if support is needed.

- viii. **A wellness program or benefits** can help a business mitigate health-related absences, while simultaneously lowering health care costs and reducing employee stress. Further it can also help improve morale, workplace culture and increase productivity.

Conclusion:

Apex HR Solutions is the solution to address significant stumbling blocks of absenteeism to your business' productivity and performance.

Our services include absenteeism investigations by analyzing the data on record and interviewing persons to recommend HR strategies that will reduce absenteeism in your workplace.

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