

Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education

WORK ETHICS ACTIVITIES



Georgia Department of Technical
and Adult Education

Module 1

ATTENDANCE

WORK ETHICS MODULES

LESSON TITLE: *Attendance*

INTRODUCTION: Upon completion of this lesson, students will understand the importance of attendance in the classroom and workplace. In addition, the objectives listed below should be met.

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the importance of punctuality/attendance
- Attend/leave class on time
- Notify instructor in advance of planned absences
- Make up assignments punctually

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS:

Module 1 Attendance

MODULE OVERVIEW

A student's attendance behaviors affect the success of that individual, the class, or business. Employer expectations, like that of an instructor, are simple – be present and on time. And should circumstances arise that cause one to be absent or late, call and let a supervisor/teacher know. This module examines instructor and employer expectations, student obligations, and the negative outcomes of poor attendance. In addition, the student will have an opportunity to focus on attendance behaviors by participating in various activities chosen by the instructor.

ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY

A student or employee's attendance and punctuality behavior affect the success of that individual, the class in which they are enrolled, and the business in which they work. At this institution, a student is expected to attend class every day of the quarter and to be on time for each class he or she attends. That is no more or no less than what an employer expects of an employee. This institution is training future employees; therefore, our standards are much the same as employers you may find yourself working for in the future.

A student's success is directly related to his or her attendance and punctuality. A student who is not in class cannot learn. No matter the career choice, skills and techniques to pass the course and be successful on the job are taught in the classroom or lab. A student who is late for class is disruptive to the instructor, to fellow classmates, and to his own learning ability. Excessive absences or tardiness shows poor planning and preparation, and lack of motivation and commitment on the part of the student. The attendance policy may be found in the student handbook.

An employer expects his or her employee to be at work and on time every day. An employee who is not at work costs the employer money in several areas. First, employees who are at work oftentimes must do their job and that of the absent employee. Second, the increased workload enhances the possibility of job-related accidents and deteriorates employee moral. Third, additional workload and paperwork is required by personnel departments to maintain sick leave hours, hours without pay, payroll deductions for the tardiness, and so on. Other costs may be associated with absenteeism and tardiness of employees depending on the nature of the business. Therefore, employers are concerned with the attendance and punctuality of you, the student, as it very well may indicate what they can expect of you, the employee. Your instructor will use your attendance and punctuality records as a reference for potential employers, should they ask for the information.

As a student, you have obligations to your instructor much like you will have to your employer. In an ideal world, no one becomes ill, the car always works perfectly, and babysitters can always be relied upon. However, this institution recognizes that situations may occur which will prevent a student from attending class each and every day of the quarter. In instances where you are going to be late or must be absent from class, you are obligated to inform your instructor of the situation – just as you would an employer. Most employers do not tolerate employees who simply do not show up for work and fail to call in prior to start of the workday. Many employees have been fired for just such behavior. Your instructor cannot fire you from class. However, he or she will follow the attendance policy and terminate you based on your attendance record if the situation so warrants.

Likewise, a student is not expected to leave class prior to the end of a class period. Each course requires a student to participate in classroom or laboratory assignments for a specific period of time, based on the credit hours earned. When a student leaves

class early, not only is he missing instruction or lab time, but also he may well miss out on future assignments, instructions, and important class information. The same is true of your future employers. Leaving work early may cause you to miss out on production or lose customers who dropped by at the end of the workday, depending on your career choice. Individuals with good work ethics leave work, or class, when their assignment is finished and not when they feel like leaving. Doctor visits, dentist visits, and so on, may occur during work or school hours. These should be spaced out; you should not have more than one routine appointment scheduled in one month's time at work. Please schedule all appointments on the days that you are not supposed to be at school. Regardless of the situation, you should always let your immediate supervisor or instructor know any dates in advance that you will be absent or tardy.

Work missed during times of absence should be made up in a timely manner. Each instructor has his or her own definition of timely so make sure you ask if he or she doesn't tell you. Some assignments may not be the type which can be made up if you are absent. Thus, it becomes increasingly important to advise your instructor of any known absences you will have as soon you know about them.

MODULE 1

Attendance Activities

Suggested Activities For Module 1 ATTENDANCE

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Activity: Maintaining Good Attendance

Materials Needed: Handouts/Transparency: Steps for Maintaining Good Attendance

Directions: Discuss the introduction to your students to heighten their interest and to form a common base of understanding. Give a copy of the "Steps for Maintaining Good Attendance" handout to each student.

**Time Required:
30 Minutes**

INTRODUCTION

Competent performance in the workplace requires good attendance. Employees who come to work whenever they are scheduled create a sense of comfort and security in their supervisors and co-workers who know that they are dependable. Individuals who demonstrate their reliability make themselves marketable. Such people should have less fear of losing or of not finding a job than others because they show by their actions that they value the opportunity to work.

Employees with a good track record of being in their workstation during all scheduled hours are more likely to be effective in the organization. These people have the respect of others who share the view that part of being a good worker is being on the job when assigned.

Maintaining good attendance is very important but is only the beginning of doing an effective job in the workplace. It is what employers expect and rarely brings with it any amount of applause. Yet it is a definite step toward the rewards that will come later from doing an effective job.

How do you maintain good attendance? Those who do utilize strict self-discipline and make good attendance their highest priority use the "Steps for Maintaining Good Attendance" (give students a copy of the handout so they can take notes):

Step 1: Make work attendance your highest priority. Place your job highest in importance among any activities you might do at a particular time. Make up your mind not to let anything short of a personal health problem or family emergency prevent you from going to work.

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Step 2: Know your schedule. Be sure that you are aware of exactly when you are expected to be at work. Never use the excuse, "I didn't know I was supposed to work." Take responsibility for knowing and for fulfilling your commitments.

Step 3: Make daily use of an alarm clock. Do not depend on your own ability to wake up to arrive at work scheduled. Take necessary measures to get yourself awake and ready to perform duties.

Step 4: Get enough sleep. Obtain the necessary rest to do your job well. Do not stay up late the night before you must work. Reserve this for nights that precede days off.

Step 5: Arrange your transportation ahead of time and have a contingency plan. Know how you plan to get to work the day or night before. Have a plan for an alternate ride, in case your car fails or your ride falls through. Saying, "I have no way to get there" is an unsuitable excuse for an employed adult to use.

Step 6: Inform your supervisor directly in plenty of time if you are unable to perform duties. In the case of illness, always telephone your supervisor yourself (unless you are too ill) and explain the situation. Never pass on a message to someone else.

Maintaining good attendance is crucial to every employee's career. It communicates a sense of respect for making a living. This important skill should become second nature to everyone who has a job.

HANDOUT

Steps for Maintaining Good Attendance

1. Make work attendance your highest priority.
2. Know your schedule.
3. Make daily use of an alarm clock.
4. Get enough sleep.
5. Arrange your transportation ahead of time and have a contingency plan.
6. Inform your supervisor directly in plenty of time if you are unable to perform duties.

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- Activity:** Group Brainstorming on Maintaining Good Attendance
- Materials Needed:** Paper, marking pens, masking tape, and Steps for Maintaining Good Attendance handouts/transparency.
- Directions:** Divide students into groups of three. Explain that each group should brainstorm specific things that employees can do to accomplish the first five "Steps for Maintaining Good Attendance." The challenge is to come up with as many ways as possible to perform the steps. Have students write ideas on their paper so they can be shared with the large group after the brainstorming begins. Ask if there are any questions before the brainstorming begins. Allow students 10 minutes to complete this activity. After many ideas are generated, call time, and have students tape their completed sheets of paper on the walls. Ask each group to appoint a spokesperson that will explain the group's suggestions. Have each spokesperson report to the large group (2 minutes for each group). Encourage students to write down any suggestions that would be especially helpful to them in maintaining good attendance. After all reports have been given, review the "Steps for Maintaining Good Attendance."

**Time Required:
20 Minutes**

Activity: Attendance Action Plan

Materials Needed: Handouts/Transparency: Attendance Action Plan

Directions: Distribute to each student an "Attendance Action Plan." Ask each student to complete a personal "Attendance Action Plan." Allow 10 minutes. Encourage each student to display a copy of the completed plan where they can see it while preparing to go to work.

**Time Required:
10 Minutes**

HANDOUT**Attendance Action Plan**

Directions: Write the specific actions you will do to perform each step for maintaining good attendance.

1. Make work attendance your highest priority.

2. Know your schedule.

3. Make daily use of an alarm clock.

4. Get enough sleep.

5. Arrange your transportation ahead of time and have a contingency plan.

6. Inform your supervisor directly in plenty of time if you are unable to perform duties.

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Activity: Commitment to Maintain Good Attendance

Materials Needed: 3 x 5 card for each student

Directions: Write the following personal commitment on a large chart or whiteboard. Give each student a 3x5 card. Discuss the importance of making a personal commitment to maintain good attendance. Have students write a personal version of the commitment on the 3x5 card and encourage them to read it several times each day until it is memorized.

**Time Required:
5 Minutes**

COMMITMENT TO MAINTAIN GOOD ATTENDANCE

I come to work on time whenever scheduled. I make good attendance my highest priority, knowing that this is my way of making a living. I know when I am expected to work. I make daily use of an alarm clock. I get enough sleep. I know exactly how I will get to work and arrange an alternative plan in case my ride falls through. If I am sick, I call my supervisor personally to explain why I cannot be at work. I take pride in excellent attendance.

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Activity: Resource Speaker

Materials Needed: None

Directions: Invite a guest speaker from a local industry or business to discuss the importance of being at work each day. After the visit, ask students to discuss the importance of good attendance and the role attendance plays in a company.

**Time Required:
Varies**

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Activity: Industry Tour

Materials Needed: None

Directions: Arrange a field trip to a local industry or business. Observe the importance of an employee's being at work to help keep production high. Ask students to identify problems that would arise if individual employees were absent.

**Time Required:
Varies**

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Activity: Speaking of Attendance

Materials Needed: Pen and Paper

Directions: Say to students: You have been chosen as Employee of the Month. Your employer wants you to give a short speech to a group of new employees about the importance of good attendance and the effects attendance has on the company's success.

Write a 1-2 minute speech on attendance and be prepared to give your speech in class.

**Time Required:
5 Minutes**

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Activity: Human Relations Case Study -- Gary

Materials Needed: Handouts/Transparency: Human Relations Case Study

Directions: Divide the class into small groups. Distribute the case study. Direct students to read the situation and answer the question. When completed, have groups share and compare their answers.

**Time Required:
30 Minutes**

HANDOUT**Human Relations Case Study**

It didn't come as a surprise to Gary's friends when they heard he was in trouble with his company because of absenteeism and chronic lateness. It was the same pattern he had followed on campus--always missing classes and always showing up late. Of course, it was a little different on campus, because he could turn on his charm and manipulate teachers. With his immediate supervisor, personnel people, and other company managers, however, it was another matter.

Gary was called on the carpet for the third time three months after he started the management training program. Everybody was nice in his approach to the problem, but it was finally made clear that Gary should either start changing his habits or consider working elsewhere. The strange thing about it all was that Gary really wanted to be successful. It was a good job. It was a fine company.

Why had he permitted himself to build such a poor record? Here are three reasons: (1) he had underestimated how difficult it would be to change the habits he had developed in school, (2) he couldn't bluff as easily in the business world, and (3) he failed to understand that by being late or absent he was hurting his relationships with others because it put an extra burden on their shoulders.

At any rate, Gary admitted that he had started off on the wrong foot. He did have a poor record as far as absenteeism and lateness were concerned. He did have a reputation for being undependable. Now he had a very difficult decision to make. Should he stick with his company, try to change his habits, and work hard to live down the poor record? Or should he resign and start over with a new company?

What would you advise Gary to do?

INSTRUCTOR'S KEY**Human Relations Case Study**

What would you advise Gary to do?

- ◆ Gary should stay with the company. To change these bad habits will take a lot of hard work and self-discipline.
- ◆ If he resigns, he will probably have a hard time getting a job due to bad references.
- ◆ These habits need to be developed over a period of time such as time spent in school.

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Activity: Case Studies in Employer Expectations

Materials Needed: Handouts/Transparency: Case Studies in Employer Expectations

Directions: Divide the class into small groups. Distribute the handout, Case Studies in Employer Expectations. Direct students to read and follow handout instructions. Allow ten minutes for each scenario. When completed, have groups share and compare their answers.

**Time Required:
45 Minutes**

HANDOUT

Case Studies in Employer Expectations

Work on the following case studies by (1) defining the problem, and (2) describing how the problem could be, or could have been, resolved. Together come to a consensus on the problem and how it should be resolved. Prepare to discuss your conclusions with the class.

1. Millie will miss class on Monday to take her daughter to the hearing specialist in a nearby town. She told one of her fellow classmates where she would be in case she was needed. She didn't say anything to the instructor.
2. Quanella works with a close friend in the shopping department of a large store. The two of them are responsible for shipping out all merchandise that is ordered. For the past few weeks, Quanella's friend has been taking long, unscheduled coffee breaks when there was plenty of work left to do. Quanella has been doing the work for the two of them during these breaks. (If she didn't do the work, the orders would get backed up and other women could lose their jobs.) Quanella has tried to hint to her friend about the problem, but all the friend says is, "You worry too much. The job will get done."
3. Dewey's company requires that he sign in when he reports to work. His workday lasts from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. On Tuesday, the traffic was heavy and Dewey arrived at work at 8:07. He signed in for 8:00 and hoped that he wouldn't get caught. At the end of the day, Dewey's supervisor talked to him about reporting late for his job. Dewey argued that he had worked hard to make up for being late.

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Activity: Case Study—Sally and Jan

Materials Needed: Handouts: Sally and Jan
Sally and Jan Discussion form, pen or pencil

Directions: Divide the class into small groups. Distribute the handout “Sally and Jan.” Direct students to read the handout individually. Have the group answer the questions on the handout. After 20 minutes, ask the groups to report on their group answers and discuss how the answers differed or were the same and why.

**Time Required:
30 Minutes**

HANDOUT

Case Study Sally and Jan

A high rate of absenteeism destroys your dependability and other working factors. Depending on the fringe benefits your company offers, you may lose all of your pay for the time missed at work; therefore, you put a strain on your personal finances. Also, you put a strain on your co-workers. In the example listed below, pay close attention to how one person's being absent affects co-workers:

Sally and Jan work as the secretaries in a local plant. Sally's supervisor is Mr. Brown, Personnel Director. Jan's supervisor is Mrs. Smith, General Manager. Both of the secretaries perform independent tasks for their own supervisors. Sally handles most of the receptionist duties such as answering the telephone, greeting customers, and so on. Jan covers the front desk for Sally when she goes to lunch.

Sally's husband has an upcoming holiday (on a Friday) in which he will be off work; Sally has to work that day. They want to go to the beach for a long weekend and leave that Friday morning. After being told that she could not have the day off, Sally decides to call in sick so she can go on to the beach. After all, she can just catch up on her work that following Monday.

The day before, Jan prepared her daily work plan to prioritize her work for the day. Her tasks included all of her daily operations, typing a report for a 4:00 meeting that Mrs. Smith has this afternoon with the district managers, making meeting arrangements for the meeting, and taking minutes during the meeting.

To her dismay, when Jan comes into work that morning, she finds that Sally will not be coming to work. She immediately reorganizes her daily work plan to make sure that she will be able to cover the front entirely by herself. She also has to find a co-worker to cover the front desk while she attends lunch. Constantly throughout the day, she is interrupted by visitors, phone calls, and so on, all of which are usually not a part of her day. To add to her day, the personnel director is holding interviews that day for a production manager. Sally was supposed to sit in on the interviews and take notes; now Jan will have to complete this task which will take up three hours of her work time. Jan not only has to complete her tasks, but Sally's as well.

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Throughout the day, Jan is unable to complete all the tasks to the best of her ability. There just is not enough time in the day for one person to fulfill all of the tasks. As a result, Jan is seen as incompetent. Since Jan knew nothing about the interviews for the production manager, they were not organized, as they should have been; therefore, the interviews took longer than expected. Some of the interviewees saw an unorganized company, thus losing interest in the company. Mr. Brown was highly upset.

She did not get through typing Mrs. Smith's report until 3:55 p.m., leaving no time to proofread. Not only did the typographical errors make her look bad, but they embarrassed her supervisor as well. The district managers were upset at the lack of professionalism, as was Mrs. Smith.

Through this scenario, one person's absence has a domino affect on the entire company. Sally thought she could just make up her work on Monday; however, this confusion cannot be solved that easily. She cannot make up for the damage to Jan's professional reputation.

HANDOUT

Sally and Jan Discussion Form

1. Was Sally acting ethically by calling in sick when she really went to the beach? Why or why not?

2. What effects were caused by Sally's absenteeism? How was Jan and other employees affected?

3. How was the overall company affected?

4. On Monday, Sally let it slip that she was at the beach on Friday. If you were Jan, how would you feel? What would you say? What would you do? Would you report Sally?

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Activity: Excuses

Materials Needed: 2-page Handout, "Excuses"

Directions: Ask students to fill out first sheet about their excuses, then do Sheet 2. Discussion may follow if time permits.

**Time Required:
15 Minutes**

HANDOUT

**Excuses
Sheet 1**

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer the following questions in the space provided.

A. List five tasks you avoid doing by making excuses.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

B. List your five "favorite" excuses.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

C. List the ways you could avoid having to make excuses in the situations you listed in A.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

HANDOUT

**Excuses
Sheet 2**

INSTRUCTIONS: The sentences below deal with handling responsibility and making excuses. Write the words that best complete the sentences.

- _____ 1. Making excuses can become _____.
- _____ 2. Many times people begin to _____ their own excuses.
- _____ 3. People who always make excuses are usually _____ with themselves.
- _____ 4. Making excuses may be your way of avoiding _____.
- _____ 5. Constantly making excuses can cause an employer to avoid giving you _____.
- _____ 6. Bosses get fed up with excuses when they expect to see work _____.
- _____ 7. Not making excuses can lead to a _____.

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Activity: Getting to Work on Time

Materials Needed: Handouts/Transparency: Getting to Work on Time,
Case Studies 1 and 2

Directions: Have students read handout and answer Case Studies 1 & 2.
Discussion may follow if time permits.

**Time Required:
10 Minutes**

HANDOUT**Getting to Work on Time**

Tardiness causes similar problems for an employer as absenteeism. There are reasonable causes for being late; however, more than once a month or four or five times a year is considered excessive by some employers. You need to plan ahead to be on time. Here are some suggestions to help you accomplish this.

- ◆ **A Reliable Alarm Clock.** You must have a reliable alarm clock. If you have an electric clock, make sure it has a back-up power source or use a wind-up clock as well in case the electricity shuts off if you can't afford to lose a job because you don't get to work on time. Don't rely on someone else to get you up in time to get to work.
- ◆ **Get up Early.** Allow yourself enough time to get ready and get to work. Plan enough time to eat breakfast and for transportation delays. You should also plan to arrive at work eight to ten minutes early. This cushion will help you mentally prepare for work and reduce stress. It also shows your supervisor you are eager to work.
- ◆ **Plan for Special Conditions.** There will be times when you can anticipate special conditions in which you'll need more time to get to work. For example, poor weather conditions means traffic will be slower. Get up earlier so you arrive on time.
- ◆ **Notify Your Supervisor if You Are Delayed.** Unless you will be less than 15 minutes late, notify your supervisor. You should give the following information.

- _____ Tell why you are going to be late.
- _____ Explain what you are doing to get to work as soon as possible.
- _____ Estimate when you will arrive.
- _____ Assure your supervisor you will make up the time.

Case Study 1

What Do You Think?

Read the two situations described below. Explain how you would improve each situation.

Buster was absent for two days from his job as a production worker at a shoe factory. When he returned, his supervisor, Mr. Brown, was angry. "Why didn't you call to let me know you weren't coming in to work?" Buster was surprised and answered, "My father-in-law died, and we had to attend the funeral." Mr. Brown replied, "I'm sorry about your father-in-law, but I'm going to issue you a written warning. If this ever happens again, you'll be fired."

1. Why do you think Mr. Brown reacted this way?
2. How could Buster have avoided this problem?

Case Study 2

Vanessa went to a party on Thursday night even though she had to go to work at 7:30 a.m. the following morning. She overslept on Friday morning and got to work 45 minutes late. Two weeks earlier she had gone to a party on Sunday and gotten drunk. She skipped work the next day. One week ago she was 20 minutes late because she had to pick up a friend and take her to work. Her supervisor warned her then not to be late for work. When Vanessa got in the office on Friday, the receptionist told her that her supervisor wanted to see her immediately.

1. What do you think her supervisor will say?
2. What should Vanessa do to keep her job and avoid this situation in the future?

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Activity: Problems Caused by Absenteeism and Tardiness

Materials Needed: Handout/Transparency: Problems Caused by Absenteeism and Tardiness

Directions: Have students answer these questions. Then discuss as time permits.

**Time Required:
10 Minutes**

HANDOUT

Problems Caused by Absenteeism and Tardiness

The following exercise shows what can happen when employees are unreliable. Put yourself in George's place. He supervises the morning shift in a fast food restaurant. The phone rings at 6 a.m. It's Lee, who has worked in the restaurant for one month. "George, this is Lee. My car won't start so I won't be at work today." The breakfast crowd has started to arrive in the dining area. Several cars have pulled in to the drive-up window.

1. What problems did Lee create by not coming to work?
2. How does Lee's absence affect other workers at the restaurant?
3. How many times do you think George should allow Lee to be absent from work before taking some kind of action?

There are several problems you may have listed that were caused by Lee's absence. Below are some of the problems caused by workers who arrive late or do not come to work.

Problems for the Employer. Employee absence can cost an organization money in two ways:

1. **Reduced Productivity.** Fewer workers means the organization produces fewer goods or cannot serve as many customers. In some instances the amount of goods and services remains the same but the quality suffers. This costs the organization money.
2. **Customer Dissatisfaction.** Customers won't be served as well as they should be. For instance, if a worker in a production-related job is absent, a customer's shipment may not be made on time because there wasn't enough help. This also costs the organization money.

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Activity: Planning to Get to Work

Materials Needed: Handouts/Transparency: Planning to Get to Work

Directions: Discuss with students the importance of getting to work. Include in your discussion the use of a weekly planner or monthly calendar. Then have students apply what they learned by completing the check sheet.

**Time Required:
20 Minutes**

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.

Weekly Planner

MONDAY

Date: _____

Time

Appointment/Notes

TUESDAY

Date: _____

Time

Appointment/Notes

WEDNESDAY

Date: _____

Time

Appointment/Notes

Weekly Planner

THURSDAY

Date: _____

Time

Appointment/Notes

FRIDAY

Date: _____

Time

Appointment/Notes

SATURDAY

Date: _____

Time

Appointment/Notes

SUNDAY

Date: _____

Time

Appointment/Notes

Monthly Calendar

Month:

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun

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?

Module 1 ■ Activity 14 ■ 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.

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Activity: What's Your Excuse

Materials Needed: Handouts/Transparency: What's Your Excuse

Directions: Ask students to complete the check sheet on reasons for being absent or late. Discuss their answers.

**Time Required:
10 Minutes**

HANDOUT

What's Your Excuse?

There are many reasons workers are absent or tardy. Sometimes being absent or late is unavoidable. Read the following list. Place a check mark in the "A" column if that reason causes you to be absent frequently. Check "L" if it makes you late and "B" if that reason causes you to be both late and absent on different occasions. If you aren't currently employed, check those reasons you were late or absent from a former job or school.

Reason	Absent A	Late L	Both B
Overslept			
Missed the bus			
Personal illness			
Alarm didn't ring			
Children were sick			
Car didn't start			
Couldn't find a babysitter			
Someone borrowed the car			
Wanted to sleep in			
Didn't feel like going			
Family problems			
Wanted to do other things			
Weather was bad			
Forgot the work schedule			
No clean clothes			
Hangover			
Took a trip instead			
Needed a day off			

As you look over this list, be aware of what you need to do to reduce your personal absence and tardiness from work.