

PSA LINK

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PSA SHOP STEWARD NEWSLETTER

All about ABSENTEEISM

Most people regard being “absent” from work as not showing up for work at all. Although not reporting to work is regarded as being absent, there are many other forms of absenteeism.

In order to perform the duties that the employee has been employed to do, the employee must remain at the workstation for the contracted number of hours per day in order to perform the required duties. If the employee does not do that, he or she cannot fulfill the contractual obligation, and is therefore in breach of contract. This obligation - to come to work and stay at work whilst at work - does not only come out of the Employment Contract. It arises also from three other sources, namely Common Law, Statutes, and Company Rules and Regulations.

Under circumstances where the employee does not turn up for work, the employee should notify the employer. Not notifying the employer of the absence is totally unacceptable and failure to do so only renders the absence more serious. If the reasons are deemed acceptable, the employer can authorise the leave.

Absent can also mean...

- **Arriving late** (or poor timekeeping, if you like). It is still equal to absence as long as the employee is not at work.
- **Leaving early** (again, if you like, poor time-keeping). It is still equal to absence if he or she is not at work).
- **Extended tea or lunch breaks** - the employee is not at the workstation, and is therefore absent.
- **Attending to private business during working hours** - the employee is at work, but is not attending to his or her duties in terms of the employment contract - and is therefore absent.

- **Feigned illness** - thus giving rise to unnecessary visits to the on-site clinic, or take time off to "visit the doctor", which they never do, because a medical certificate is not needed for less than two days off.
- **Undue length of time in fetching or carrying** (tools from the tool room, for example, or drawings from the drawing office, etc.).
- **Other unexplained absences from the workstation or from the premises.**

If the employee does not provide those services (because of absenteeism) then it is unfair for the employer to have to pay for something that is its contractual right to receive. It is equally unfair for the employee to benefit - by means of being paid - for something he or she did not do in terms of the Employment Contract. Put differently, it means very simply: no work - no pay.

Remember: The very basis of the employment contract (whether written or not) is that the employee has to come to work and be on time.

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