

# Taking Absenteeism Seriously

Hi. I'm Sonya Dixon from Auburn University's Human Resources. This video is part of our QuickDive learning series. Our goal is to help you as a supervisor and as a leader. Today's QuickDive is about taking absenteeism seriously. By the end of this short video, you should be able to identify five ways to communicate the importance of attendance to your staff.

## Let People Know You Take Absenteeism Seriously

First, let people know you take absenteeism seriously. Remember, people will take their cues from you. If they know they can get away with an inch, they'll be more likely to take a mile the next time. Clearly communicate your attendance policies and expectations. Make sure your employees know how many sick days they are entitled to, or when they are coming close to using all of their sick time. Be sure they know what disciplinary actions they could face when a questionable attendance record puts them on thin ice.

## Make Sure Your Employees Know and Follow Procedures

Next, make sure your employees know and follow procedures for notifying you of any absence. Always encourage employees to give as much notice as possible. If they're phoning from home, encourage them to talk to you directly rather than leave a message. If there are any requirements to validate illness, such as a doctor's certificate or note, the phone call is a good time to remind them of this. When an employee returns to work, ask how they're doing and gently review the reason for their absence. Knowing that they'll be accountable, even in this informal manner, may cause an employee to think twice before calling in sick. This contact also gives you the opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of attendance.

## Always Look for Positive Ways to Encourage Attendance

Third, always look for positive ways to encourage attendance and reduce avoidable absences. One of the best things you can do as a supervisor is to create a climate of open communications and trust. Make sure employees know they can come to you with problems. Talk out the problems before they fester and don't give the employee an excuse to hit the snooze button and stay in bed.

## Positive Motivation Produces Results

Next, positive motivation produces results. Let employees know they play a valuable role on the team, that other team members count on them, and that attendance is critical.

## Know Your Employees

Lastly, know your employees. Without prying, try to show an interest in their personal lives. This type of contact can help you get an early read on problems before they become full-blown.

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