

Attendance Policy Scenarios

About

These scenarios were developed as part of an in-person training about the employee attendance policy. The characters in these scenarios were performed by HR staff, allowing the employees to role play different attendance-related scenarios.

Scenarios

Jan Frankel

Jan Frankel has missed three days of work due to illness. Jan called before her shift on Monday to say that she was sick and was not able to return to work until her shift on Thursday morning. She claimed to have a mild fever and head cold but her sickness was not severe enough to go to the doctor. She called out to avoid infecting her coworkers or customers.

Jan missed one day of work five weeks before this recent illness. At that time her car would not start and she was unable to find a ride. She called within an hour of the beginning of her shift and this was her first absence during her time with the company. Because this was her first attendance violation she was given a free pass for this absence since it seemed to be out of her control.

Jan has been with the company for four months and has been a great employee thus far. Aside from the two issues above she is never late and has not had any performance or attitude issues. How do you deal with Jan's most recent absence?

Jedediah Auerbach

Jedediah Auerbach is a great worker and can be counted on to perform his tasks quickly, efficiently, and with little guidance. However, Jedediah does not handle change gracefully. He tends to be cynical when a new policy or procedure is introduced in the store and expresses that by talking badly about the change to others. He often says that managers "don't know what they're doing" but doesn't believe he can approach anyone in the company with his specific issues.

The store managers are aware of this and have given him ample coaching during check-ins and one-on-one conversations. Jedediah's attitude has not improved and he continues to speak badly about management in less overt ways. Before coaching Jedediah was open about his displeasure, however, he now chooses to air his grievances to employees individually. This creates a bad impression on newer employees and prevents seasoned staff from performing their jobs properly.

Managers have been hesitant to start the corrective action process for his attitude since he still performs well in all other areas. How would you approach this situation? What steps do you take with Jedediah to prevent him from harmfully influencing other employees?

Sheila Bough

Sheila Bough is currently on her final warning. Sheila has a difficult time completing basic tasks related to her position and is distracted by side conversations. She received her first violation for using the internet for personal reasons during her shift, after first claiming she was assisting a customer with a product. Her second and third violations were for side conversations and gossip that prevented her from completing a list of tasks with a specific deadline.

Several customers have complained about Sheila. If she doesn't know where a product is she says "I don't know" and directs the customer to the Customer Service Desk. Customers have also had to interrupt her conversations, after politely attempting to get her attention.

Sheila understands that she is close to being let go and has vowed to improve her performance over the next few months to avoid being terminated. How long should Sheila remain in this probationary period?

Marcello Pressman

Marcello Pressman is a decent employee who can keep focused on his assigned tasks and is eager for new assignments. Despite his great performance, Marcello has a hard time arriving to work at the scheduled time. He says he understands how his lateness affects employees and customers but he hasn't expressed any interest in improving this aspect of his performance.

Because of this lateness, Marcello is on his second warning. He has arrived to work more than ten minutes late on two occasions, which resulted in the verbal and initial action plans. Since these two documented violations he continues to arrive late, but not late enough for a final warning.

Several managers have spoken with Marcello about his lateness but he continues to seem unaware of how his lateness affects coworkers and customers. Additionally, he still has not mentioned any external reasons he might be arriving late. How do you ask Marcello about any issues that may be preventing him from coming to work on time? If Marcello can fix these issues, how much time should pass before his last violation can be downgraded?

Carlos Jackson

Carlos Jackson received a written warning after showing up to work thirty minutes late without an explanation. Carlos was a little embarrassed about being so late and mentioned that he isn't normally late getting to any commitments but he was having a bad day. He has since been on time and can start working immediately after arrival.

Shortly thereafter, Carlos began making several cold stocking mistakes that sometimes create an unsafe work environment and frustrates other employees: stacking cases improperly, failing to clean up after himself when something leaks or spills, and not moving the back stock to its proper place in the cooler. He corrects himself once he has been warned or written up for the issue, but he has been coached on this repeatedly and doesn't seem to have the foresight to avoid future errors. Five weeks after the attendance violation, Carlos is on his final warning for issues with cold item storage.

Your most recent conversation with Carlos appeared effective, and he finally seems to understand that he needs to pay more attention when stocking cold items. When should he be downgraded if he makes any other mistakes?

Jenna Hughes

Jenna Hughes is on her second warning for an attendance violation. Her first violation was failing to check her schedule before she left the store. When she called to find when she was due in, she was told that she was supposed to work that day. She said she already made plans and would be unable to come in. She was given a verbal warning for this violation because she is a hard worker and has no prior violations. However, she became defensive when discussing her scheduling mix-up.

Three weeks after this incident, Jenna was 45 minutes late to her shift. She claimed her shift wasn't supposed to start for another hour and a half and she was planning to arrive a little early to eat lunch beforehand. She again became defensive during the conversation and claimed she was embarrassed that she made another mistake reading the schedule. This second violation was enough to start Jenna on a corrective action plan.

One month later (seven weeks after the first incident), Jenna was out sick for one day. She called in a few hours before her shift to say that she would be unable to make it due to a lingering sickness that started during her days off. She returned to work on time the following day but left her doctor's note at home. She still has not shown a doctor's note to store managers, after multiple requests.

Because she was defensive with her previous violations, you are concerned that she lied about having a doctor's note to excuse her most recent absence. However, it would be difficult to prove Jenna did not go to the doctor. How do you handle this situation?

Steve Jester

Steve Jester is a committed employee who goes above and beyond his responsibilities to make customers feel welcome at the store. He is the first person to volunteer to help with store events and wants to take on more responsibility in the store. His depth of product knowledge is an extremely valuable member of the staff and customers often ask for him on his days off.

Despite his strengths, Steve is currently on his second warning for improper cash handling and has shown little sign of improvement. Both violations involved having an inaccurate till total, indicating that Steve is not taking the time to properly count out change for customers. Because of his positive interactions with co-workers and customers, Steve has been allowed to improve before beginning the corrective action process. He has undergone a great deal of coaching, feedback, and additional training, but continues to show little improvement. Terminating Steve because of this issue would damage the overall morale of the store. How do you help Steve improve or otherwise avoid further corrective action?

Kira Tomlinson

Kira Tomlinson is a great employee who responds well to feedback and is open to learning and expanding her role in the store. She frequently approaches managers with questions about her job and loves researching various products she works on to the shelves to improve her knowledge.

Kira's main position is day stocker and is often called to help bag groceries. She performs most efficiently if she can spend a few hours doing one or the other but she is unable to focus on her stocking if she is regularly called to bag. For example, if she starts her day stocking shelves and is called to bag groceries, she forgets which shelf was finished and frequently has to backtrack to check expiration dates of products on the shelf to be sure she has covered that section.

There are no current violations on her file but her inability to switch between two tasks is beginning to affect her overall efficiency. How do you approach Kira about her speed and focus?