

Maintain a healthy perspective on absenteeism

It's Friday morning and several employees have called in sick. The employee with migraines is out for the third time this week. The sick-leave report reveals that a number of employees, most of whom seem to miss work on Fridays and Mondays, have used up their sick leave for the year -- and it's only June.

These absences directly affect productivity, the morale of employees who have to cover and your ability to meet the needs of clients. What can you do?

Sick leave is a recognized part of most employer benefits, but it does not mean the employer is powerless to address its abuse.

Employers sometimes turn to "no-fault leave policies," meaning that if absences, for any reason, exceed the number outlined in an employer-determined formula, the employer may take disciplinary action. Employers need to address these issues with employees as soon as they become apparent.

People who run out of sick leave may be required to use vacation or unpaid leave, or they may be told they cannot be absent any more. Employees typically absent just before or after weekends can be told that any continuation of this pattern will lead to dismissal.

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