

Forty-Three Percent of Workers Called in Sick With Fake Excuses in the Last 12 Months, CareerBuilder.com's Annual Survey Finds

- Hiring Managers Reveal This Year's Most Bizarre Reasons Employees Gave for Missing Work -

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CareerBuilder.com's annual survey of absenteeism at the office revealed an increase in the number of workers who have called in sick with bogus excuses. Forty-three percent of workers said they called in sick when they felt well at least once during the last year, up from 35 percent in the 2004 survey. The survey also revealed that some hiring managers were less tolerant of workers playing hooky with 23 percent stating they had fired an employee for missing work without a legitimate reason. The CareerBuilder.com survey, "Out of the Office 2005," was conducted from August 10 to August 22, 2005 of more than 2,450 workers, including 875 hiring managers.

The most popular day for calling in sick when feeling well was Wednesday with 27 percent of workers getting over the mid-week hump by fabricating an excuse. While extended weekend absences were also popular with 26 percent of workers calling in sick on Monday and 14 percent on Friday, those partaking may have put themselves at more risk of scrutiny. Sixty-three percent of hiring managers said they are more suspicious of employees calling in sick on a Monday or Friday.

"Thirty-eight percent of workers said they feel sick days are equivalent to vacation days," said Rosemary Haefner, Vice President of Human Resources at CareerBuilder.com. "While the definition of a sick day has evolved with more employers including mental health and special circumstances in the description, workers need to be respectful of company policies and their responsibilities as an employee."

The most popular motivator for missing work was the desire to relax and catch up on sleep as cited by 23 percent of workers. Seventeen percent said they just didn't feel like going in, 16 attributed it to a doctor's appointment and 9 percent said they had to catch up on housework and run personal errands.

When asked to share the most unusual excuses workers gave for missing work, hiring managers quoted the following examples:

- "I'm too drunk to drive to work."
- "I accidentally flushed my keys down the toilet."
- "I had to help deliver a baby on my way to work." (employee was not in the medical profession)
- "I accidentally drove through the automatic garage door before it opened."
- "My boyfriend's snake got loose and I am afraid to leave the bedroom until he gets home."
- "I'm too fat to get into my work pants."
- "God didn't wake me." (employee didn't believe in alarm clocks and thought a higher power would wake her when she was ready)
- "I cut my fingernails too short, they're bleeding and I have to go to the doctor."
- "The ghosts in my house kept me up all night."
- "I forgot I was getting married today."
- "My cow bit me."
- "My son accidentally fell asleep next to wet cement in our backyard. His foot fell in and we can't get it out."
- "I was watching a guy fixing a septic pump, fell in the hole and hurt myself."
- "I was walking my dog and slipped on a toad in my driveway and hurt my back."
- "My house lock jammed and I'm locked in."

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