

"My Car Trunk Was Stolen:" The Most Bizarre Late-to-Work Excuses Revealed in New CareerBuilder Survey

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CHICAGO, Jan. 29, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Getting to work on time can be hard enough without the added obstacles imposed by car trunk thieves, gas station stick-ups and shower mishaps. Yet, these are exactly the types of incidents some workers claim prevented them from getting to work on time this year, according to a new survey from CareerBuilder.

More than 2,100 hiring and human resource managers and more than 3,000 workers across industries participated in the nationwide survey, conducted online by Harris Poll from November 4 to December 2, 2014.

When asked how often they come in late to work, more than 1 in 5 workers (23 percent) admitted they do it at least once a month, and 14 percent say it's a weekly occurrence for them.

Working 9-ish to 5

Of the workers who have admitted to being late for work in the past, 3 in 10 (30 percent) have lied about the reason for their tardiness. Perhaps they feel the need to lie because the repercussions of lateness could be serious: 41 percent of employers have actually fired an employee for being late.

Some employers are more lenient than others, however. One third of employers (33 percent) say they have no problem with the occasional late arrival, as long as it doesn't become a pattern, and 16 percent say they don't need employees to be punctual if they can still get their work done. (Indeed, 59 percent of workers who arrive late will stay later to make up for it.)

Why the Delay?

Traffic is the most common cause of tardiness among employees (50 percent), followed by lack of sleep (30 percent) and bad weather (26 percent). Trying to get the kids to school or daycare is a roadblock for 1 in 10 workers (12 percent), while public transportation and wardrobe issues get in the way of being on time for 7 percent and 6 percent of workers, respectively.

Employers Share the Most Bizarre Late-to-Work Excuses

For some workers, however, the blame belongs on less conventional culprits. When asked about the most outrageous excuses employees have given them for being late, employers shared the following:

- I knocked myself out in the shower.
- I was drunk and forgot which Waffle House I parked my car next to.
- I discovered my spouse was having an affair, so I followed him this morning to find out who he was having an affair with.
- Someone robbed the gas station I was at, and I didn't have enough gas to get to another station.
- I had to wait for the judge to set my bail.
- There was a stranger sleeping in my car.
- A deer herd that was moving through town made me late.
- I'm not late. I was thinking about work on the way in.
- I dreamed that I got fired.
- I went out to my car to drive to work, and the trunk had been stolen out of it. (In this case, the employee had [the photo to prove it.](#))*

*Example taken from internal CareerBuilder research.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,192 hiring managers and human resource professionals and 3,056 U.S. workers (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between November 4 and December 2, 2014 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With pure probability samples of 2,192 and 3,056, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have sampling errors of +/-2.09 and +/-1.77 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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