

Table of Contents:

- [Policy Statement and Expectations](#)
- [Accommodation Statement](#)
- [Definitions](#)
- [Department Notification Procedure](#)
 - Report an unscheduled absence
 - Request time off
- [Progressive Discipline Process for Attendance](#)
- [Occurrences](#)
- [Pattern Absences](#)
- [No Call/No Show](#)
- [Absences with No Available Leave](#)
- [Making Up Missed Time](#)
- [Overtime](#)
- [New Hire Introductory Period](#)
- [Blackout Periods](#)
- [Essential Personnel](#)
- [Minimum Staffing](#)
- [Holidays](#)
- [Leadership Discretion](#)

Policy Statement and Expectations

Physical Plant (PP) employees provide important and valuable services to Illinois Wesleyan University. It would not be possible for the campus to operate efficiently without the timely and regular attendance of all PP employees. To ensure adequate staffing, positive employee morale, and to provide critical services to the University campus, PP employees are expected to adhere to their assigned work schedule. Additionally, PP relies on employees to:

- Arrive at work on time, and remain at work until their scheduled shift ends;
- Follow break times and meal times;
- Ensure there is sufficient leave available before requesting absences;
- Plan, request, and receive approval for scheduled absences in advance;
- Avoid excessive unscheduled absences, pattern absences, and tardies;
- Follow proper call-in procedures to report absences, tardies, or unexpected situations that arise;
- Clock-in and out accurately and on time.

This policy details how PP will count absences and tardiness for the purposes of maintaining excellent customer service to its IWU customers. The effective date of this policy is August 1, 2025.

Accommodation Statement

In implementing this attendance policy, it is the intent of Illinois Wesleyan University to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws as amended, including but not limited to:

- the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993,
- the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,
- the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act of 2023,
- the Violence Against Women Act of 1994,
- the Paid Leave for All Workers Act of 2024.

Employees who believe they may require and qualify for attendance flexibility and/or excused absences under FMLA or as a disability-related ADA/504 accommodation or any other accommodation are invited to communicate their need to Human Resources. Such requests for an exception to this attendance policy will be evaluated on an individual, case-by-case basis, and may require the employee to provide Human Resources with supporting documentation.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Attendance policy, the following definitions will apply:

- **Absence** - Time away from work for any reason, regardless of how the time is accounted for on the employee's timesheet.
- **Blackout period** - Certain days designated by Physical Plant (PP) leadership as critical times when all PP employees are expected to be in attendance to provide important services to the University campus.
- **No Call/No Show** - An absence for which an employee does not call in to report the absence.
- **Occurrence** - An unscheduled absence, tardy, or no call/no show.
- **Pattern Absences** - Repeated and predictable absences that may indicate a misuse or abuse of time. Examples may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Absences adjacent to scheduled days off, holidays, and/or paydays.
 - b. Absences when scheduled to work on weekends, holidays, overtime, or during blackout and other critical operations periods.
 - c. Inappropriate use of vacation, sick leave, PLAWA (e.g., leave time that is used as quickly as it is earned).
 - d. Requesting a vacation day, having the request denied, and then calling in absent.
- **Scheduled Absence** - A planned absence for which required advance notice is provided and approval is received prior to the absence occurring.
- **Tardy** - A failure to report for work at the assigned/scheduled time and place. This also includes failure to return from breaks and meal periods on time. Tardy is defined as arriving any time after the scheduled shift start time, up to 1 hour late.
- **Unscheduled Absence** - An absence for which an employee did not obtain the required approval prior to the absence occurring. Absences on consecutive workdays for the same reason will count as one occurrence under this policy. Examples may include, but are not limited to:
 - o Unexpected absence on the same day of a scheduled shift/during a scheduled shift, regardless of time (partial day)
 - o Exceeding scheduled break time(s), 60-minute meal break, 20-minute morning break.

Department Notification Procedure

PP employees are expected to notify their supervisor if they will not be at work, will be late, or are requesting planned time away from work.

To report **unscheduled absences**, employees must contact their supervisor via the designated call-in number, provided by their supervisor, at least one (1) hour before their scheduled shift begins or as soon as reasonably possible.

Employees reporting an unscheduled absence should be prepared to provide the following information in their message:

- Name
- Paid benefit time being used (vacation, sick, PLAWA)
 - Sick (must mention if it is approved FMLA)
 - Family Sick (must mention if it is approved FMLA)
 - Other (provide specific reason and/or mention if absence is related to an approved accommodation)
- Expected date and or time of return
- Any urgent items the supervisor or department should be aware of
- Number where they can be reached

Employees are expected to call in and report their absence each day they are absent unless they notify PP of their expected date of return.

The University may require supporting documentation if the employee uses paid sick time for more than 3 consecutive work days, to the maximum extent permitted by applicable law.

The employee will enter the unscheduled absence in TimeClock Plus, and the Supervisor will track occurrences associated with absences.

To request a **scheduled absence** (e.g., approval to arrive early, arrive late, or leave early from an assigned shift; request time off for a future medical or dental appointment; or request time off for personal day/vacation), employees must request and receive approval from their supervisor in advance by submitting a time off request through TimeClock Plus:

Amount of Time Requesting Off	Notice Required
One (1) day or less	One (1) working day prior (within the first 2 hours of the shift)
Two (2) to three (3) days	Two (2) working days prior to the first requested day off
Four (4) to five (5) days	One (1) week prior to the first requested day off
More than five (5) days	Two (2) weeks prior to the first requested day off

Employees must communicate directly with their supervisor, manager, or the director when the notice provided is less than the notice required in the table above.

Supervisors are encouraged to exercise judgment and discretion when determining whether to approve a request that falls outside of these guidelines.

Supervisors are expected to notify an employee if a leave request is approved or denied within 24 hours or as soon as reasonably possible. If an employee does not receive a timely response to a submitted leave request, he/she is expected to follow up with the supervisor and confirm the approval/denial of the leave request before taking the time off.

In the event a supervisor is out of the office and not available to evaluate a leave request, the leave request will be approved by the second-level supervisor. It will be the requesting employee's responsibility to notify the next-level supervisor in person.

Progressive Discipline Process for Attendance

Supervisors will monitor employees' attendance on a monthly and quarterly basis and will address concerns or violations in a timely and consistent manner. Violating this attendance policy will result in the employee accruing attendance occurrences.

PP leadership and Human Resources are available to advise supervisors and to clarify policy expectations for employees. Disciplinary action will not be taken without the direct involvement of the Director of PP and Human Resources. For situations involving a recommendation to terminate an employee, the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President **must** be consulted prior to implementing disciplinary action.

Occurrences

Each time an employee has an **unscheduled absence**, is tardy, or is a no-call/no-show, the employee will accrue one (1) occurrence. **Four (4)** or more occurrences **per quarter** is considered excessive and will subject the employee to disciplinary action.

Occurrences will be tracked on a quarterly basis. Supervisors are expected to notify employees as soon as an occurrence(s) has been accrued.

An absence of multiple days due to the same illness, injury, or other incident will be counted as one occurrence for the purpose of this policy.

No occurrences will be recorded for scheduled (pre-approved) absences or protected leave, such as:

- Vacation or personal day requests that are approved in advance
- Pre-approved sick days (e.g., medical or dental appointment scheduled and communicated to supervisor in advance)
- Occupational illness or injury (workers' compensation)
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) absences
- PLAWA
- Absences related to an approved accommodation
- Military leave
- Bereavement leave
- Jury duty

	Occurrence	Discipline Step and Action
One (1) occurrence is equal to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) tardy • (1) unscheduled absence • (1) no call/no show 	(4) occurrences per quarter	Verbal warning
	(6) occurrences per quarter	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
	(8) occurrences per quarter	Written Warning
	(10) occurrences per quarter	Recommended termination
Quarter	Months	
1	August, September, October	
2	November, December, January	
3	February, March, April	
4	May, June, July	

However, a suspected pattern absence (including suspected misuse of sick leave) or failure to provide timely notification may result in an absence being treated as an unscheduled absence.

Attendance-related discipline and occurrences will remain active for a 12-month period. The discipline step and action will drop a level 12 months after the last action.

If an employee has been previously disciplined for any reason, the totality of the circumstances will be assessed when determining further action.

Additionally, employees who have established a pattern of attendance-related concerns may be subject to discipline, even though 12-month old infractions have dropped a level, if they continue to incur occurrences.

Pattern Absences

A pattern absence(s) may result in the absence being counted as an unscheduled absence and may result in the accrual of an occurrence(s).

No Call / No Show

An employee who fails to call in and report to work as scheduled for three (3) consecutive scheduled work days will be viewed as having abandoned their position. Their employment will be terminated (considered a resignation) in accordance with the Non-Exempt Employee Handbook.

If the employee has already been disciplined for attendance/punctuality at the time a no call/no show occurs, the disciplinary process may be accelerated to the next or final step.

The Director of Physical Plant will consider extenuating circumstances when determining whether to issue an occurrence for a no-call/no-show (one possible example, if the employee is involved in a serious accident or medical emergency and is unable to call in).

Absences with No Available Leave

If an employee has no available vacation leave, sick leave, or available leave time to cover an unscheduled absence or a previously scheduled absence, he/she will accrue four (4) occurrences

and will be subject to disciplinary action. This does not include unpaid leaves of absence protected under any law or University policy, such as FMLA.

Making Up Missed Time

An employee who accrues an occurrence for an unscheduled absence or tardy will not be allowed to make up the missed time during the workweek in which the occurrence was accrued.

Depending on the time the employee arrives to work, he/she may be required to use vacation time or personal time (rounded to the nearest .25 hours increment) to cover the time missed. Sick leave should be used to cover the time missed if the unscheduled absence was due to an illness or a medical or dental appointment of the employee or an eligible family member, in accordance with the Employee Handbook; the time off will roll to vacation time or personal time, if available sick leave has been exhausted.

Overtime

An employee scheduled to work overtime who fails to report to the assigned area at the scheduled time, reports after the scheduled start time, or leaves early without approval will accrue an occurrence as noted in this policy.

Primary preference for overtime assignments will be made by work assignment. Custodial overtime assignment will be voluntary first, and then, for equity, consistency, and fairness, it will be mandatory according to the employee's seniority. Any Custodial employee interested in working overtime for planned events/assignments will voluntarily need to sign up **a week in advance. Two days** before the overtime assignment occurs, the management will mandate employees starting from the employee with the lowest seniority to the employee with the highest seniority. Employees who voluntarily sign up will be allowed to choose one to two shifts, but not exceed 8 hours of work in one day. Mandated employees will be assigned to any shift left for the assignment. If an employee is on vacation or absent, he will be skipped for the next employee and will be mandated on the next overtime assignment.

New Hire Introductory Period

Employment is on a trial or introductory basis for the first 90 days of employment. This period gives employees an opportunity to learn the business, their job duties, and responsibilities. During this introductory period, the University will have an opportunity to observe and evaluate the employee, and the employee can become familiar with their position and work environment. The introductory period may be extended as determined in the University's sole discretion. Completion of the introductory period does not guarantee continued employment and does not change the at-will nature of the employment relationship. A new employee who exceeds the acceptable number of occurrences during their 90-day introductory period may be recommended for termination of employment.

Blackout Periods

Physical Plant leadership may designate certain day(s) as blackout periods. Blackout periods typically coincide with special occasions and/or significant campus events that require certain PP employees to be in attendance. Examples of blackout periods may include:

- Commencement
- Homecoming
- Shutdown of steam and electrical systems
- Move-In Days
- Move-Out Days
- Summer Project (Quick building turnover and events coverage)
- Academic and sports events

Blackout periods are subject to change, and blackout periods may be added or deleted. Scheduled blackout periods and/or changes will be communicated as soon as reasonably possible, generally with a minimum of three (3) months' notice.

During blackout periods, requests for scheduled absences will generally not be permitted or authorized.

Any unscheduled absences that occur during a blackout period may be subject to verification and/or disciplinary action.

Essential Personnel

The Physical Plant defines essential personnel as *those vital to the operation of the facility, whose absence from duty could endanger the safety and well-being of the campus population and/or physical plant.*

Many PP employees are essential personnel. In the event of any cancellation, delayed opening, or campus closing (such as during inclement weather), essential personnel are expected to report to work (or remain at work, if a closure is announced during normal work hours). Additionally, essential personnel may be required to report for essential duty (e.g., report to work before the scheduled shift start time or stay after the scheduled shift end time) if inclement weather or another emergency is forecast, but there is no cancellation, delayed opening, or campus closing.

PP essential staff who are not on an approved leave are expected to answer calls or text messages and/or return them in a reasonable time frame. Supervisors are expected to maintain an updated contact list for essential employees; essential employees are responsible for communicating any changes to their contact information to the supervisor in a timely manner.

PP essential personnel who cannot be located or fail to report to work (or fail to remain at work) during a cancellation, delayed opening, campus closing, or other time where essential staff are required to report to work will be subject to four (4) occurrences for each incident.

For safety purposes, PP employees whose responsibilities may require them to work more than 12 consecutive hours in a 24-hour period must obtain approval from the Director of PP before exceeding 12 hours. While this primarily applies to essential personnel who may be required to

work significant overtime to ensure the safety of the campus or physical plant, this rule applies to all PP employees regardless of their essential designation.

Minimum Staffing

Physical Plant employees provide important and critical services to Illinois Wesleyan University. It is therefore important that PP departments operate with minimum staffing levels. In general, 2/3 of a department's total staff constitutes minimum staffing, and a supervisor is expected to be present.

Supervisors reserve the right to evaluate each call off situation on a case-by-case basis when minimum staffing has not/will not be met and determine whether any documentation is needed to support an absence.

If several employees request the same day(s) off, supervisors reserve the right to evaluate each leave request and determine which one(s) can be approved.

Criteria that may be considered when evaluating such leave requests include, but are not limited to:

- which request(s) was submitted first;
- whether the department will have minimum staffing numbers to operate effectively; and
- whether the employee followed the notice guidelines outlined in this policy

Holidays

The IWU Employee Handbook identifies the holidays that the University will observe.

A Physical Plant employee wishing to request the day before and/or after a University holiday off must request and receive approval for the absence at least **1 month** prior to the holiday.

If an employee calls in absent the day before, the day of, or the day after a holiday that they were otherwise scheduled to work, the supervisor will review the circumstances of the unscheduled absence and exercise discretion to determine whether documentation is required to excuse the absence.

For the purpose of this policy, designated Winter Break days are treated the same as University holidays.

Leadership Discretion

The PP Director has the discretion to work with supervisors and Human Resources to evaluate extraordinary circumstances of a tardy or absence and determine whether or not to count an incident as an occurrence. Such incidents must still be documented regardless of whether it is considered an occurrence.

Supervisors have the discretion to request that employees submit year-end and/or holiday leave requests in advance to allow ample time to review all requests and determine which ones can be approved based on minimum staffing levels. Supervisors will communicate any deadlines to submit leave requests that differ from those spelled out in this policy.

