What's a Weekend?

By DAVID MANTEY, Editor, PD&D

The recession has broken the American workforce into two factions. The unemployed, who primarily loathe anyone with a current position (even if they may be collecting unemployment checks while working cash jobs off the books); and the gratefully, desperately employed [1] onto lean staffs.

While I'm angered by my peers who collect on my tax dime as they work under the table, I admire the effort. I'm consistently amazed by the tactics used by individuals to dodge legitimate work in an effort to collect two incomes while working one job.

This column, however, won't delve into such tactics. I'm more concerned with the graciously employed.

I'm concerned for employees working seven-days a week as the result of mandatory overtime, employees who work towards an inflated check for 14 straight days, only to unanimously shout, "Yes Sir, may I have another?" when the sign announcing mandatory overtime, which has simultaneously firebombed your weekend plans with the family, is posted above the time clock.

You walk up the hall to the time clock. As you're about to clock in, you note the newly posted sign and sigh before your boss, who is 20 years your junior and waiting by the clock, clipboard in hand, begins inspecting your attire to make sure that your ready to hit the floor as soon as you swipe that card.

"Hey lady, no hairnet, no punch. You have three minutes to fetch a net before I document this incident."

What is an incident anyways? What happened to tardy or the demerit? I hear horror

stories regarding new attendance policy pyramid schemes, and I understand why the HR departments are growing in number. It’s harder than keeping the books straight at a seedy horse track.

An incident (both personal and sick days are counted as incidents) lead to 90-day probation periods. If within the 90-day probation period you’re struck ill with a bad case of pneumonia, or plunge your car into a tree, you better drag you battered temple to the time clock (don’t forget the hairnet and smock) or limp into the emergency room; otherwise, it’s three days on the couch without pay.

In the event that you make it to the ER, have the Doc sign your note before he dresses the wound or you’re chasing flies away from the gash on the patio.

Given the 21-straight days that you’ve worked, you begin to appreciate the two black eyes caused by the rearview mirror’s right jab in exchange for 72 hours off of your feet.

Penalized for being sick. Written up because you need a personal day to attend your wedding. Suffering because the company is understaffed, holds the upper hand and, “I’m forever thankful to have a job in these trying times.”

A paycheck with two-days of overtime is a powerful bargaining chip. How long can your company ask you to give up weekend after weekend and deny requested vacations days before it puts another body on the floor … or the morgue?

Of course, this is entirely hypothetical, an imagined bag of wind quickly deflating. This in no way reflects honest and forthright testimonial submitted by readers, colleagues, family and friends.

What are your thoughts? I understand delayed responses; comments should be submitted from home email addresses on home computers. If they own the screen, they own your work on it. Email david.mantey@advantagemedia.com *[2].*

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