

## Policy Statement and Expectations

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

- Arrive at work on time, and remain at work until their scheduled shift ends;
- Respect 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, personal emergencies, and tardies;
- Follow proper call-in procedures to report absences, tardies, or unexpected situations that arise;
- Report time accurately on timesheets.

This policy details how FOP will count absences and tardiness for the purposes of maintaining excellent customer service to its USI customers. The effective date of this policy is January 1, 2018, and the current revisions take effect January 1, 2019.

## Accommodation Statement

In implementing this attendance policy, it is the intent of the University of Southern Indiana 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. 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 Facility Operations and Planning (FOP) leadership as critical times when all FOP employees are expected to be in attendance to provide important services to the University campus.

**No Call / No Show** – An absence in which an employee does not call in to report an absence, and/or does not show up within one hour of his/her scheduled start time.

**Occurrence** – An unscheduled absence, tardy, or failure to report to work.

**Pattern Absences** – Repeated and predictable absences that 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 or sick leave (e.g., sick leave that is used as quickly as it is earned).
- d. Requesting a vacation day, having the request denied, and then calling in absent.

**Personal Emergency** – An unscheduled absence based on an event that is unforeseen, requires immediate action, and is beyond the employee's control.

**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.

## Department Notification Procedure

FOP employees are expected to notify their department supervisor if they will not be at work, will be late, or are requesting planned time away from work. Employees are also personally responsible for accurately reporting their time on their timesheet.

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

The FOP call-in number is **812-464-1766**. After calling this number, employees should list to the options, select the option for their department, and then leave a message. The options are:

- Option 1: Campus Maintenance (all shifts)
- Option 2: Housing Maintenance
- Option 3: HVAC
- Option 4: Custodial (all shifts)
- Option 5: Grounds
- Option 6: Distribution Services
- Option 7: Storeroom
- Option 8: all other departments

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

- Name
- Reason for absence
  - Sick (must mention if it is FMLA)
  - Family Sick (must mention if it is FMLA)
  - Other (provide specific reason and/or mention if absence is related to an approved accommodation)
- Expected date 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 FOP of their expected date of return.

HVAC employees scheduled to work in the Control Room are required to contact the FOP attendance line **and** the Control Room to report an unscheduled absence to the operator on duty.

The Lead or Supervisor will complete an Absence Report Form to document the information provided by the employee reporting the absence, **and 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; request to use earned comp time, or request time off for personal reasons/vacation), employees must request and receive approval from their supervisor in advance by submitting an Absence Request Form (or an email) to the supervisor according to the following guidelines:

Amount of Time Requesting Off	Notice Required
One (1) day or less	<b>Within the first 2 hours of the shift</b> one (1) working day prior to the day requested off
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

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

Exception: If an employee is scheduled to work in the Physical Plant Control Room or on a weekend day, a request for a scheduled absence must be submitted and approved at least five (5) working days prior to the first day requested off.

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 second level supervisor should be consulted.

### **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.

FOP 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 Associate Director (and/or Director) of FOP and Human Resources. For situations involving a recommendation to suspend or terminate an employee, the Executive Director of Human Resources and the appropriate Vice President **must** be consulted prior to implementing disciplinary action.

### **Occurrences**

Each time an employee has an unscheduled absence, is tardy, or fails to report to work, the employee will accrue a minimum of one (1) occurrence. Four (4) or more occurrences per quarter is considered excessive and will subject the employee to disciplinary action.

Although 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 comp time 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
- Absences related to an approved accommodation
- Military leave
- Bereavement leave
- Jury duty

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.

	<b>Occurrence</b>	<b>Discipline Step and Action</b>
One (1) occurrence is equal to:	4 occurrences per quarter	Verbal Counseling
- 1 tardy	6 occurrences per quarter	Written Warning
- 1 unscheduled absence	8 occurrences per quarter	Last & Final Warning
	10 occurrences per quarter	Recommend Termination

Attendance-related discipline 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 under the University’s Progressive Discipline policy 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 he/she continues 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) consecutively scheduled work days will be viewed as having abandoned their position and their employment will be terminated, in accordance with the University’s Voluntary Resignation policy.

When an FOP employee is a no call / no show, the Lead and/or supervisor is expected to reach out to the employee as soon as practical if he/she does not report to work within one (1) hour of the scheduled shift start time. Our primary objective is to ensure the employee’s safety and well-being. If contact is made with the employee, the supervisor should inquire if the employee plans to report to work and, if so, by when.

An FOP employee who is a no call / no show and then reports to work within the first four (4) hours of their scheduled shift will accrue two (2) occurrences. An FOP employee who is a no call / no show, and either does not report to work or reports to work anytime after the first four (4) hours of their scheduled shift will accrue four (4) occurrences.

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 Associate Director of Facility Operations and Planning will consider extenuating circumstances when determining whether to issue an occurrence for a no call/no show (for instance, 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 comp 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 FOP employee that 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 comp 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 University Handbook.

An employee who has a pre-approved, scheduled medical or dental appointment may request to make up a maximum of two (2) hours of work time during the same workweek as the medical or dental appointment. Make-up time must be approved by the supervisor in advance, the make-up time must be completed during the same workweek as the appointment, and there must be available work that the employee can perform.

### **Overtime**

An employee scheduled to work overtime that 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.

### **New Hire Introductory Period**

A new employee that accrues two (2) occurrences within the Introductory period will be issued a Written Warning. If the employee has greater than two (2) occurrences within the Introductory period, termination of employment may be recommended. If the Introductory period is extended beyond the initial 90-days, these guidelines still apply.

### **Blackout Periods**

Facility Operations and Planning leadership may designate certain day(s) as *blackout periods*. Blackout periods typically coincide with special occasions and/or significant campus events that require certain FOP employees to be in attendance. Examples of blackout periods may include Commencement, Move-In Day and Move-Out Day. 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 or a minimum of three (3) months in advance.

During blackout periods, requests for scheduled absences will not be permitted or authorized. If an employee has an extremely rare, extenuating circumstance that requires absence from work during a blackout period, he/she may submit a written request for an exception. Exception requests are

subject to review and approval by the Director (or Associate Director) of Facility Operations and Planning in collaboration with the employee's Supervisor.

An unscheduled absence that occurs during a blackout periods may be subject to verification and/or disciplinary action.

### Essential Personnel

The University Handbook 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 FOP 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.

FOP essential staff who are not on an approved leave are expected to answer calls or text messages and/or return them in a reasonable timeframe. 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.

FOP 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, FOP 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 FOP 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 FOP employees regardless of their essential designation.

### Minimum Staffing

Facility Operations and Planning employees provide important and critical services to the University of Southern Indiana. It is therefore important that FOP departments operate with minimum staffing levels. In general, 2/3 of a department's total staff constitutes minimum staffing, and a Lead or Supervisor is expected to be present daily.

If several employees call in absent on the same day, supervisors reserve the right to evaluate each situation on a case-by-case basis 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 includes, but is 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.

If a department's staffing will fall below minimum staffing levels, the supervisor must notify and obtain permission from the Associate Director or Director of FOP before operating below minimum staffing.

## Holidays

The USI University Handbook identifies the holidays that the University observes and states that an employee must be in "pay status" to be paid for the University holidays. The University Handbook defines "pay status" as:

- a. Having worked the approved scheduled work days before and after the holiday, or
- b. Being on an approved absence with pay.

A Facility Operations and Planning employee wishing to request the day before and/or after a University holiday off must request and receive approval for the absence at least **two (2) days** 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 Recess days are treated the same as University holidays.

## Leadership Discretion

The FOP Associate 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 on the Absence Report Form 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.



### Review or Revision of Policy

Facility Operations and Planning will schedule regular reviews of policies. FOP will also review particular policies when there are changes in applicable law or University policy that could affect provisions of this policy.

### Policy Approval



---

James E. Wolfe  
Director of Facility Operations and Planning

---

Date