

Take Control of Your **Employee Absences**

Employee Reporting Service

A Comprehensive Guide to
Managing Employee Absences for
Human Resources Professionals
and Operations Teams





**The results you
achieve will be in
direct proportion to
the effort you apply**

.....

Denis Waitley

Introduction

Employee absenteeism can have drastically negative effects on an organization. In fact, unscheduled absences from work cost \$3,600 per hourly employee per year, and \$2,650 per salaried employee per year, according to the report Absenteeism: **The Bottom-Line Killer from Circadian**. Take a look at the breakdown of costs:

Direct Costs:

- ✓ Wages paid to absent employees
- ✓ High-cost replacement workers (overtime pay for other employees and/ or temporary workers)
- ✓ Administrative costs of managing absenteeism

Indirect Costs:

- ✓ Poor quality of goods/services resulting from overtime fatigue or understaffing
- ✓ Excess manager time of discipline and finding replacements
- ✓ Reduced productivity
- ✓ Safety issues

Employee absenteeism, both planned and unscheduled, is a part of doing business—a certain amount of absences are inevitable. With that said, should you just throw your hands up and resign yourself to the negative effects of employee absenteeism?

For the productivity of your company (and your own sanity!) we highly suggest taking a more proactive approach. Lucky for you, this guide is all about how to manage employee absences efficiently and effectively. This guide is designed for human resources professionals, business owners, managers, operations specialists, and anyone who wants to manage their employees more effectively.

We'll finish the guide with a brief tour of the Employee Reporting Service from Ambs.

Enjoy!

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Problems That Absenteeism Causes

Employee absenteeism can have a snowball effect on the overall productivity and efficiency of an organization.

First, the company loses any work that was supposed to be done that day, which can create havoc for operations team members and managers who must adjust timelines or project deliverables. Clearly, there's little you can do about this at the time of the absence, but we'll discuss how you can reduce the impact of unscheduled absences in the next section.

Second, the unplanned absence can set off a chain reaction of events that involve one or more members of support staff, such as human resources. This is, of course, their job, but if your system for managing absences is flawed

(or nonexistent!) it can create much more work for them than it needs to.

Third, if there are any errors in recording and managing the absence, there will be more added time to fix the issue. For example, if the employee disputes the data recorded, this will require more attention to resolve.

Lastly, and this is important, if excessive employee absences go unchecked and become abused, you could have an issue on your hands that seriously affects the whole company.

There's no way around it—these issues must be proactively addressed for the overall health of the company. Once you correct the four issues named above, you'll receive the benefits outlined on the next page.



Benefits of Effective Employee Absence Management

To correct issues with employee absenteeism, you need to do two things:

1

Create an absence policy with rules, expectations, and discipline for non-compliance.

2

Implement a time tracking and reporting system to enforce the policy.

It really is that simple. Once you have those two pieces in place, several benefits will emerge—some you may not even have thought of yet!

Let's take a closer look at the benefits of proactively addressing employee absences.

Giving Your Employees a Clear Procedure to Follow

Does every employee know exactly what to do when they call in sick? When an employee realizes they're too sick to work, they may not know who to tell or how to make sure the right person gets the message, especially after hours which means you end up with communication all over the map.

Sick employees have been known to call co-workers, security guards, supervisors, or general voicemail boxes hoping that somehow a message will get through to the correct supervisor. If the absence is reported incorrectly, either because there's not a standard system or the employee failed to comply, they're likely to be frustrated with the resulting disciplinary action.

[Note: This is also a documentation nightmare for human resources trying to pull together accurate data from different sources. It's time consuming and the information is often incomplete.]

On the other hand, when an employee has no question about the correction procedure, these problems disappear. The procedure should be simple and easy to follow, such as calling a designated phone number. Ease of use ensures the procedure will be followed.

Boost Production Efficiency

The last thing you want from an operational standpoint is to begin a shift without workers in place to keep production rolling. Knowing after the fact can have a negative impact on production, efficiency and morale. When supervisors and operations managers have access to employee absence data in real time



(or prior knowledge) they can adjust schedules accordingly and cover any empty shifts to keep things on track.

Set Your Managers Free to Manage Their Team

Instead of your supervisors handling call offs or tracking down missing employees, they can get back to work on managing their team. This can have a profound effect on quality and productivity as well as job satisfaction. Having an up-to-the-minute dashboard of their absences gives more time to call in extra help or adjust daily workflow, giving your managers their time back so they can produce results.

Better Documentation = Better Compliance

Having someone available around the clock to handle all calls about illness makes it significantly harder for an employee to claim they tried to report the absence.

“I tried to call and couldn’t get through,” or “I left a message with someone but don’t remember who” doesn’t cut it if you have a clear system!

Additionally, a system can also eliminate people trying to use more than their legal number of hours if these kinds of abuses are taking place.

This also benefits the employee by offering usefulness and protection. Rather than hoping someone gets their message in time, the sick employee notifying the call off service will be assured that their message will reach the right person and receive a confirmation number. If a manager ever has questions or forgets that the employee called in sick, all the employee has to do is produce the number or search online.

Four federal laws critical to employee absence issues are: [the Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#), [the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#), [the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act \(USERRA\)](#) and [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 \(Title VII\)](#).

Increased Visibility

By having a system for sick days, data on employee absences collected from a call off service is able to stay together. This eliminates the confusion caused by various sticky notes, emails, texts or voicemails whenever an employee calls in sick. By aggregating this data over time your system can alert a manager about possible behavioral trends, chronic problems or even how they’re



doing on their annual allotment of sick leave hours. This also can provide details to any auditors, compliance officers or oversight organizations that everyone’s hours and benefits are being properly and clearly administered and documented.

As you can see by now, the implementation of an absence policy can not only minimize the negative effects of employee sick days, but also offer tremendous upside in the form of compliance, operations, and efficiency.

Having and enforcing an absence policy at work is essential, but so is the infrastructure to make sure the system works—you need an employee reporting system. In the next section we’ll discuss how to utilize an employee reporting service and give examples of how they can work.



What is an Employee Reporting Service?

As mentioned previously in this guide, your employees need a clear procedure to follow for calling in sick or excusing themselves for work. The operations and human resources departments need a way to track and report on those absences.

There are various methods and technologies that can help you accomplish this, but the simplest and most effective method is using a telephone-based system.

Here's how it works:

A telephone-based employee reporting service provides a dedicated phone number that employees can call 24/7 to report when

they will be late or absent for work. From the employee side of things, that's it. Hey, we said simple and we meant it! Employees can store this number in their mobile device and dial any time they need to report a sick day, notify of tardiness, or excuse themselves from work for some other reason. As you will recall from the previous section, making the system easy to use is essential for adoption and compliance.

The system is very simple, but things get really interesting when you look at the human resources and operations side of things.

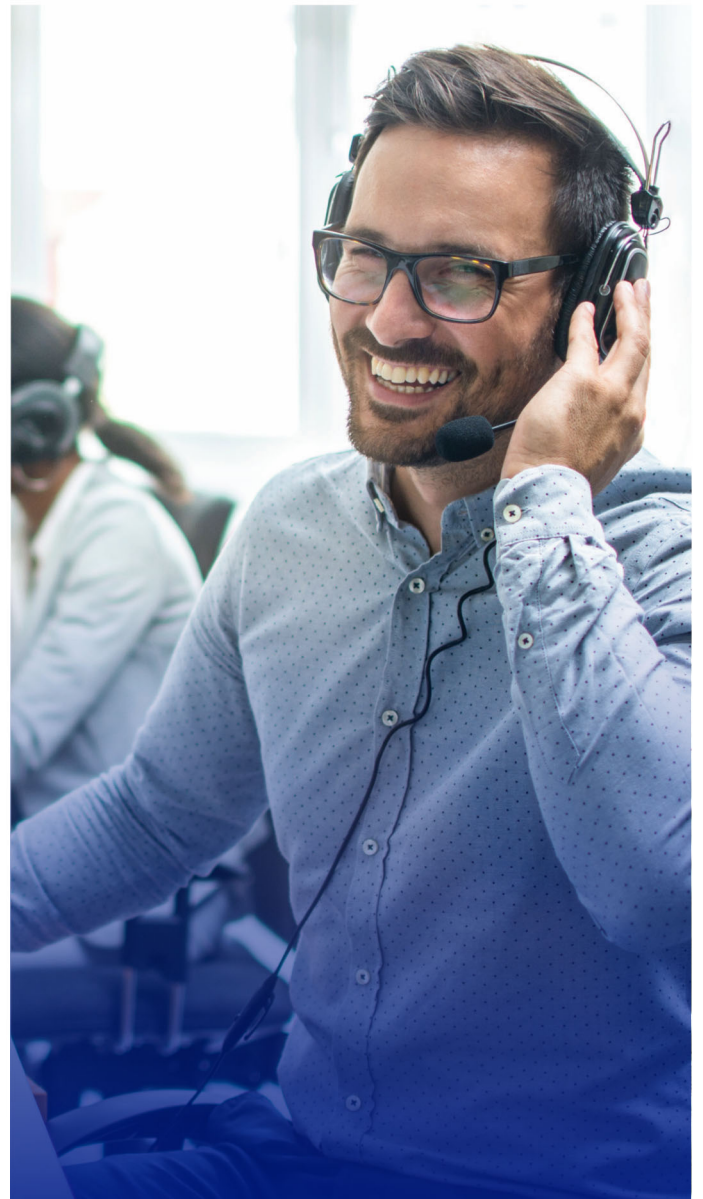
An employee reporting service also reduces HR issues when it comes to employee attendance problems. It eliminates any guesswork and provides a level of transparency that reassures employees that documentation is completely accurate. As an added bonus, it saves hours of legwork for your human resource team.

All of the data generated by employees calling the dedicated phone number is recorded and available in real time to a customizable list of people and departments. Having accurate and timely information in the hands of those who need it most pays huge dividends. The data that is gathered is customizable and can even include data feeds from time clock and payroll systems for uniformity of data. An employee reporting service gives you the real-time business intelligence that you need to manage your workforce in a dynamically changing environment. The ability to improve operational productivity and efficiency by giving operations real time visibility and notifications of staffing levels is paramount.

In addition to providing accurate data in the moment, the employee reporting system will also show trends over time for employee absences. When patterns of abuse are spotted by the system, it can alert managers and let them review the data and make an informed decision on any disciplinary action necessary.

As discussed earlier, there are a few different ways an employee reporting service can run on different technology platforms, but those are the basics of how the system works as a whole. In the next section, we'll give you examples and workflows from the Employee Reporting System from Ambs Call Center.

Employees can store this number in their mobile device and dial any time they need to report a sick day, notify of tardiness, or excuse themselves from work for some other reason.





Employee Reporting Service from Ambs Call Center

Now that you understand the issues with not having a system for reporting sick days and how to correct it, let's take a look at the Ambs Call Center system in action. The Employee Reporting Service is easy to implement and easily integrates into your current operations and workflows.

The Telephone Number

First, we'll give you a phone number to distribute to your employees to use to call in sick, late, or excuse themselves from work. The Employee Reporting line is answered 24/7/365 by a live person. Employees are greeted by a friendly call center agent who answers the phone using your company name and the phrasing you'd like us to use.

The Employee Reporting line is answered 24 / 7 / 365 by a live person.

A common example is "Good morning, ACME employee reporting service, this is Julie how may I help you?" No phone trees or automated messages that take a lot of time and effort to figure out.

Do you already have a phone number you'd like to use? If desired, an existing number that is already in use can be redirected or ported over to the call center. Easy.

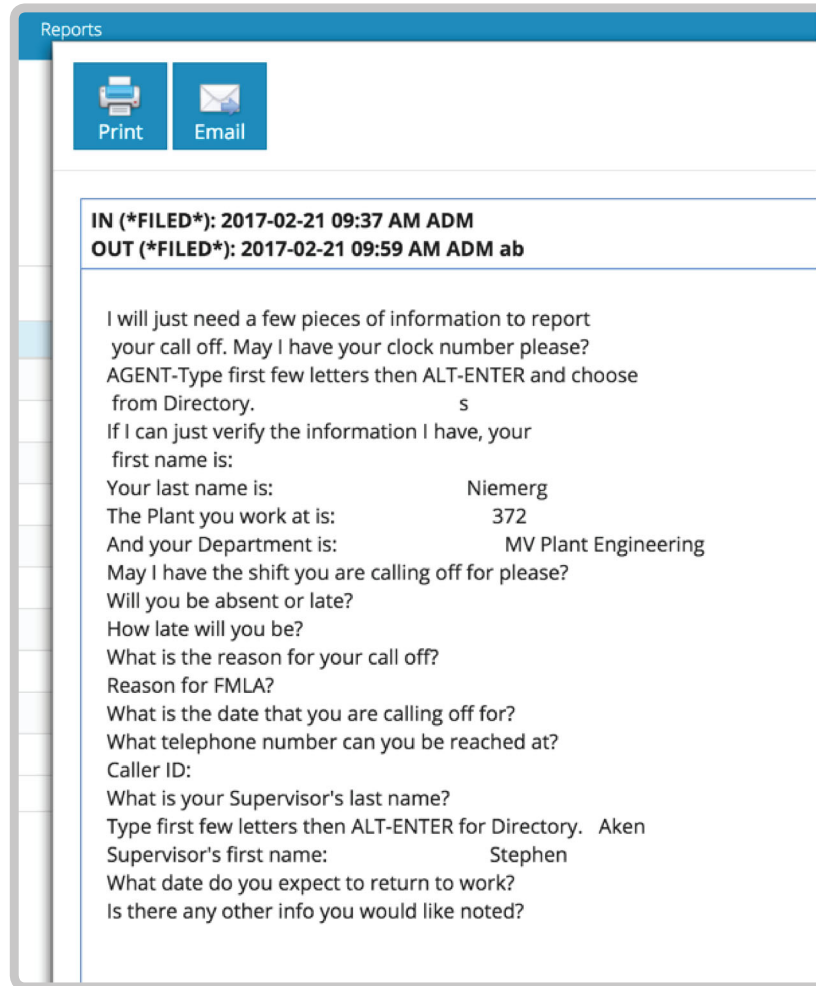
Documentation of Absence

If there is one thing that everyone knows in human resources, it is the importance of proper documentation.

This is especially true when it comes to employee attendance records. This is why every aspect of the employee call off is documented with the utmost precision. Employees are asked a series of questions that are customized to your specifications in the call center software. Based on responses, follow up questions can be asked to gather additional information. A good example are follow-up questions if the employee is requesting FMLA leave. Again, since this is all done via conversation, it will feel easy and natural for your employees.

In addition to the information gathered on the call, the audio of the conversation is also recorded. The recording can be accessed via our secure web portal. This added level of documentation eliminates any guesswork about what was said (or not said!) on the call. It's great to have that type of backup should there be any future dispute.

At the conclusion of the call, the employee is provided a confirmation number by the call center agent. This is a unique number that is tied to the specific absence. Employees and unions appreciate this assurance as does the team in HR. Everyone is on the same page and it eliminates disputes before they ever happen.



Common documentation of employee call offs includes:

- ✓ Employee name
- ✓ Phone/Textline
- ✓ Plant number
- ✓ Late/Absent
- ✓ Date of Absence
- ✓ Clock Number
- ✓ Shift
- ✓ Supervisor name
- ✓ Return to work date
- ✓ Reason for absence
- ✓ Are you requesting FMLA
- ✓ Additional comments

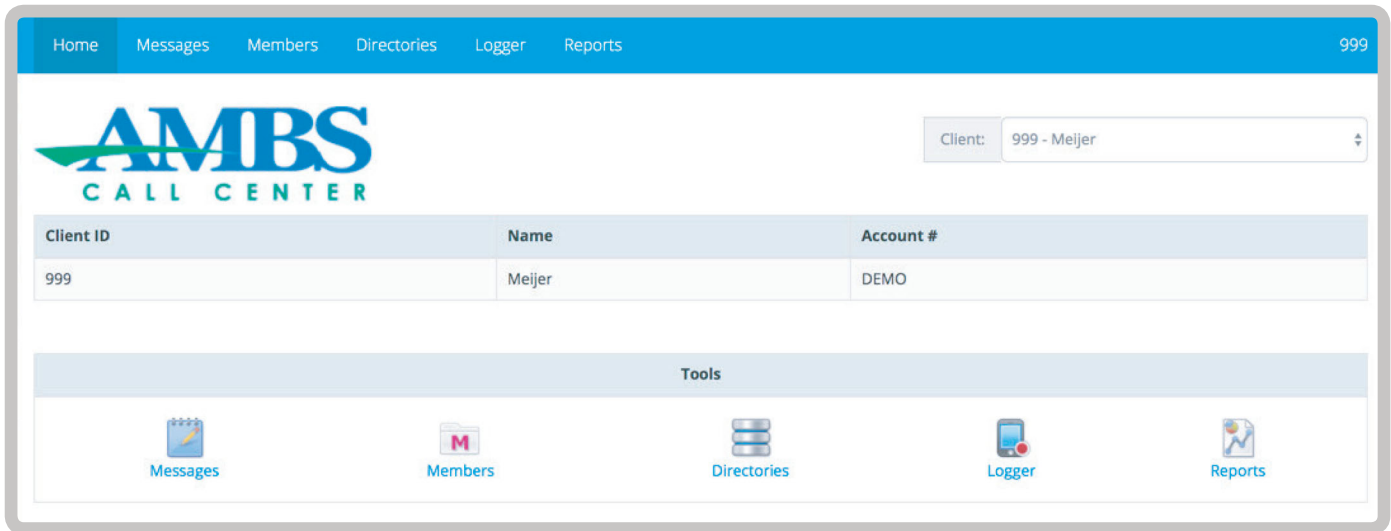
Again, this can be customized to suit the unique needs of your business.

Enhanced Employee Reporting Reports

This is the part that the HR department, supervisors and the operations team will love.

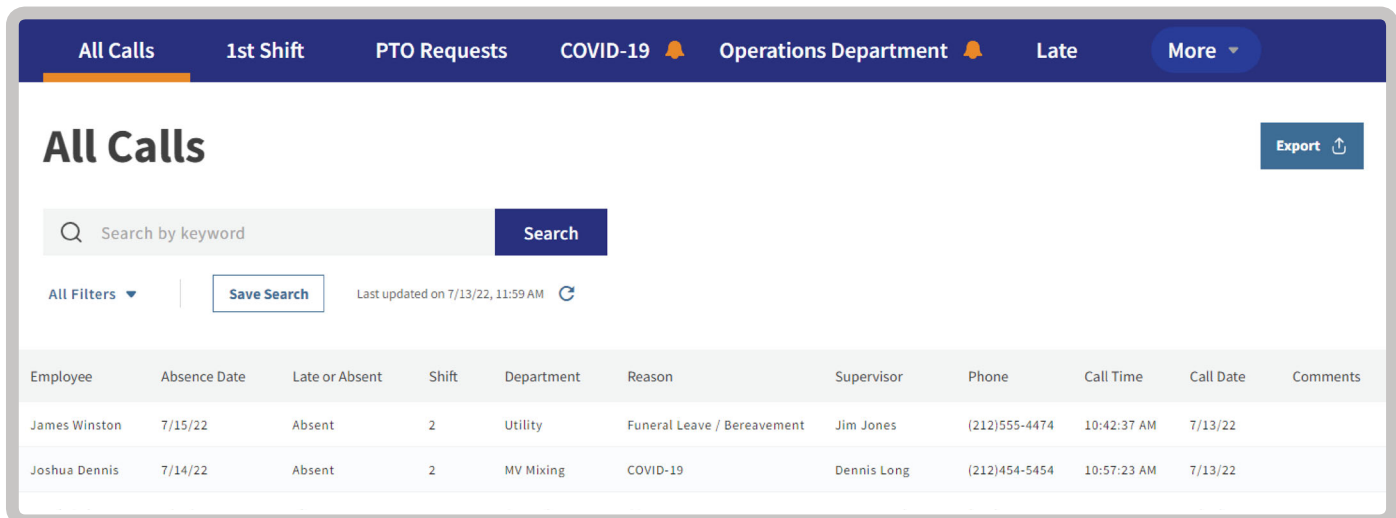
Documentation of the employee absence is only half of the story. Chances are your supervisors, team leads and floor managers need to know what their staffing looks like for the upcoming shifts. Real-time alerts and reports give them 360-degree visibility on absences by date, shift, department, and virtually any other data point.

Here's a snapshot of the myAmbs portal, which gives your team real-time access to absence information, call recording and reports.



Call Record Report

Need to see historical data for sick days and other absences? Pull up the Call Record Report, which is equipped with several filters to help you slice and dice the data you need. Search for call offs based on employee name, employee ID, confirmation, shift, absence date or call date.



Daily Employee Call Off Report

Search by employee name, employee id, shift or by absent date range.

Employee Call Report

Search for call offs by a specific employee.

Employee Total Report

Search by employee name, employee id, shift or by absent date range.

Absence Notification Alerts

In some cases, you need to know about an absence immediately. Employee Reporting Service provides immediate notification to supervisory staff and is imperative to ensure that production continues.

Call off information can be sent to the specific teams or departments where the absence occurred. The notification methods can be customized by facility needs—phone call, text, and email are examples. Whether it be by time of day, department or job type.

Here are the most popular methods of notification:

Secure Text Messaging – Our Startel Secure Messaging+ app offers encrypted text messaging along with support for audio and image attachments. You can also clear calls with our agents at the press of a button. This allows you to meet certain compliance requirements that your company may need to adhere to.

Standard Text Messaging – We can send a group text or send to individuals.

Standard and Encrypted E-mail – Absences can be sent to groups or individuals as received or at specified intervals. We also encrypt our email messages to provide you with peace of mind that your information is as secure as possible. It's also an absolute must for HIPAA compliance.

myAmbs Web Portal – You'll see real-time absence on our web portal. You can mark call offs as handled, forward via email as well as sort, filter and export information. The web portal is mobile-optimized for smartphones and tablets.

Online Audio Recordings – Our online voice logger lets you listen to and download the inbound and outbound calls that we make for you. We can also record the conversations after we do a direct connect call patch.

Pagers – We support both text and numeric paging to all carriers. We also offer a message assurance option, where messages are sent via pager and cell phone simultaneously if paging coverage is an issue.

Telephone – We can call you to relay information by phone. We'll provide a unique caller ID just for your account so you'll know it's us calling with important information. This is a good option if you don't wake up to a text message when you're sleeping.

Faxing – Absences can be faxed as received, or sent as a batch on the days and times that are most convenient for you.

Data Exchange

Employee Rosters – Our Employee Reporting Service also supports data feeds and integration from all popular payroll solutions. This allows for employee data to automatically import when an absence is being logged. Employee name, clock number, supervisor and department are common examples of information that can be linked to payroll software.

Employee call off information can also be exported, as well as support a real time data feed.

So there you have it—while the above section is not entirely exhaustive of the capabilities of the Employee Reporting Service from Ambs, it gives you a good idea of how you can tailor the service to the unique needs of your company.

About The Company

Ambs is a family-owned and operated US-based call center service with coverage for North America. Our company is built on a foundation of customer service, honesty, professionalism and efficiency.

While our company started in the Midwest with a telephone number with only 4 digits (seriously!) we have embraced technology to keep up the demand of the contemporary business environment.

We work with companies both large and small in a wide range of industries, but our goal is always the same: We create systems that let you avoid the necessary minutiae of business and let you focus on what's important for growing your organization.



Our telephone answering
and virtual receptionist
service helps companies
grow their business.

We'd Love To Do The Same For You!

[Talk To Us About Our Services](#)