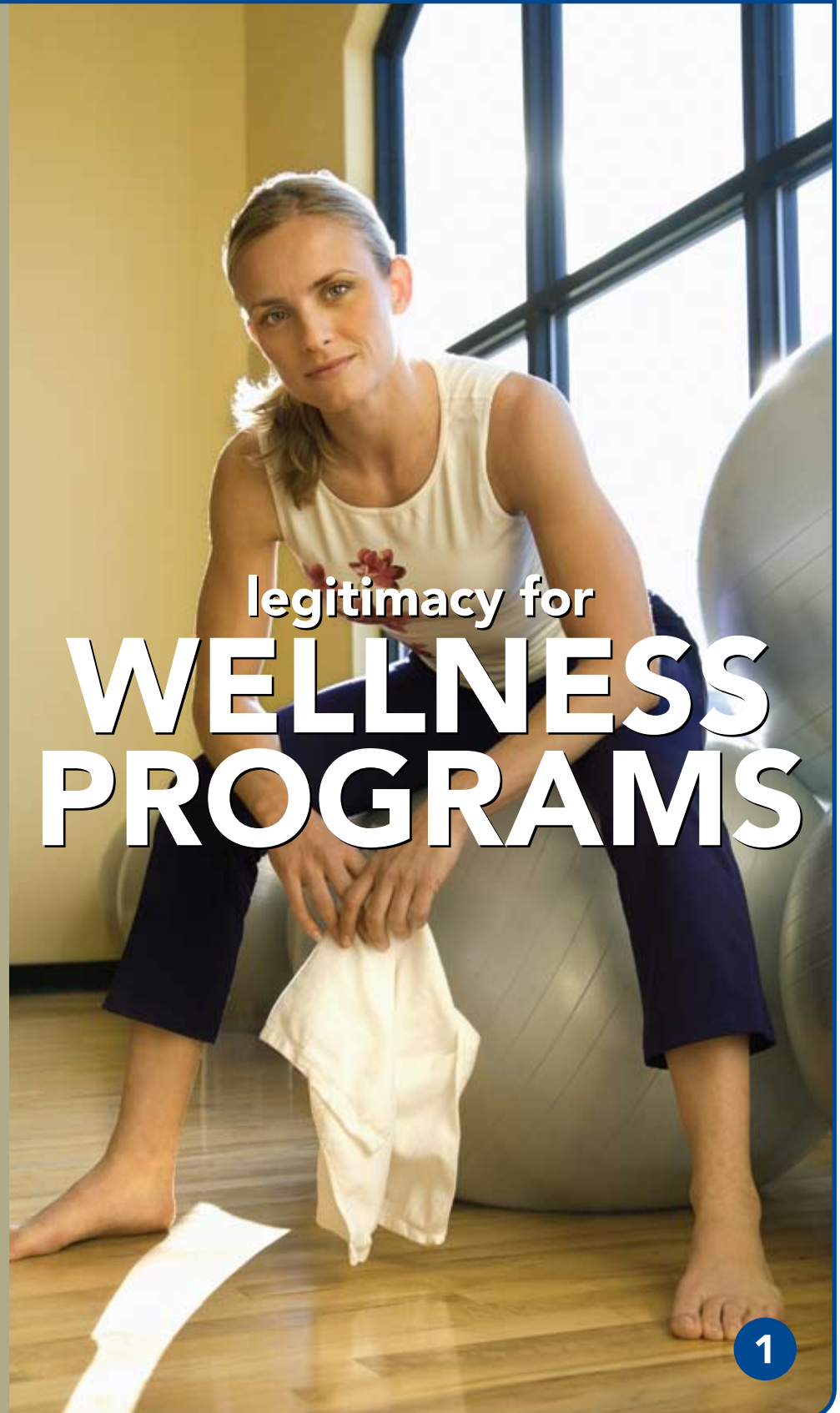


"If you've got a contagious illness, then it's a responsible decision to stay home so you won't infect your co-workers," says Linda Naimi, an assistant professor of organizational leadership and supervision. "But for those who always have an excuse to miss work, they should remember that we all get sick and tired. Part of being an adult is that you must think of those who depend on you being there to get the job done: your co-workers, your supervisors and the community you serve."

According to a recent study conducted by human resources consulting firm Mercer, the total cost of planned and unplanned absences in the workplace is at least 36 percent of the cost of payroll - or about twice as much as the cost of health care - to an organization.

Naimi, an attorney who teaches courses in ethical behavior in business settings, says employees who skip work when they don't have a valid reason hurt not just themselves but also those around them. "When you don't show, others must pick up the slack. What message are you sending? If you miss work frequently, your co-workers and supervisor may begin to think you simply don't care enough about your job or the work you do to be there," she says. "Trust and respect are earned. It can take months, even years, to build trust, but only moments to lose it. When you make excuses to be absent from work, you withdraw from your trust account." She says those who are frequently absent will have a difficult time getting sympathy and understanding when they do have a legitimate reason to miss work.

Naimi says chronic absenteeism also affects morale. "When co-workers see an employee abusing sick leave



legitimacy for
**WELLNESS
PROGRAMS**

RULES OF THE ROAD Incident Reporting and Driver Safety

DON'T PANIC! What to do if you are involved in an incident

- 1 STOP AT ONCE! Check for personal injuries and send for an ambulance, if needed. Do not leave the scene, but ask for the assistance of bystanders.
- 2 IF FIRE OR SMOKE OR SPILLED FUEL IS PRESENT, evacuate vehicle occupants to a safe location. Send for the fire department. Do not leave the scene; ask a bystander to call the fire department. If possible, use a spill kit to absorb the spill. If stalled on a railroad track, evacuate occupants to a safe location away and at a right angle from the tracks.
- 3 PROTECT THE SCENE. Set emergency warning devices to prevent further injury or damage. Secure your vehicle and its contents from theft.
- 4 SECURE ASSISTANCE of the police whenever possible. Record names and badge numbers.
- 5 RECORD NAMES, ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS of all witnesses and injured driver(s) and their passengers. Record vehicle license numbers.
- 6 DO NOT ARGUE! Make no statement except to the proper authorities. Sign only official police reports. Do not make statements regarding the operating condition of your vehicle and do not admit fault.
- 7 REPORT THE INCIDENT TO YOUR DISPATCHER/SUPERVISOR IMMEDIATELY after first aid has been given, authorities have been notified, the scene has been protected and you are able to do so.
- 8 COMPLETE THE INCIDENT REPORT at the scene as thoroughly as possible. Exchange insurance information only with other involved driver(s).
- 9 IF YOU STRIKE AN UNATTENDED VEHICLE and cannot locate the owner, leave a note with your name and the company's address and phone number, get the vehicle description, VIN number and license plate number.

The BEST practices for managing your commercial auto risks

- 1 DEVELOP A WRITTEN VEHICLE SAFETY POLICY - Tell employees what management expects of them when they're drivers or passengers. Employees should acknowledge in writing that they know what's expected of them.
- 2 CHECK WORKERS' DRIVING RECORDS - Check driving records before they get behind the wheel and annually thereafter. Premier offers free screening of your employees' Motor Vehicle Reports.
- 3 INVESTIGATE ACCIDENTS - Properly investigate all accidents and develop corrective actions to prevent the accidents from reoccurring.
- 4 KEEP VEHICLES SAFE - Develop procedures to ensure vehicles are properly maintained and safety inspections are completed. Ensure all vehicle deficiencies are reported immediately.
- 5 REWARD AND DISCIPLINE - Recognize employees with exemplary driving records. Discipline and retrain employees who violate safety policies.
- 6 INVEST IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING - Ensure employees understand your vehicle safety policies and the rules of the road. New hire training and annual training communicates to the employee you're serious about safety.
- 7 KNOW THE RULES - The driver's manual for your state can be found at: <http://www.dmv.org>

Calculating the HIDDEN costs of an accident

Experts say for each dollar spent on the direct costs of an accident (i.e. medical expenses, indemnity costs and property damage) there are 1.1 to 4.5 additional hidden costs. These costs may be added costs of production downtime or decreased quality, the expense of training new or replacement employees, the burden of renting replacement vehicles or equipment, decreased employee morale, loss of customers and customer goodwill, and higher insurance premiums.

The formula to determine the effects of the hidden costs of an accident:

Direct Cost of Accident		\$1.00
Hidden Cost Factor	x	4.5
Hidden Cost of Accident	=	\$4.50
Total Accident Cost		\$5.50
Profit Retention	/	3.00%
Sales Volume Represented	=	\$183.33
Avg. Cost of Product		\$1.00
Number of Products Represented		183

Accident Cost	Cost Multiplier
\$0-\$2,999	4.5
\$3,000-\$4,999	1.6
\$5,000-\$9,999	1.2
\$10,000 or more	1.1

WELLNESS cont. from 1

or vacation leave and getting away with this behavior, they may think, "If he can do it, so can I." This can be disastrous for any organization." Naimi says those who miss work frequently often don't see their value in a company, may be looking for attention or may have other personal issues that should be addressed. She says managers should meet with employees who are chronically absent and seek to understand what is causing the behavior.

Employee assistance programs and counseling services might be helpful, as they can make adjustments in work schedules and duties if warranted. Disciplinary actions may be used as a last resort, she says.

"Every employee should understand that he or she plays an important role in his or her organization," she says. "They need to know they're not just a cog in a wheel. When employees feel respected, when they work as part of a team and when they know that others count on them every day, they are more likely to enjoy coming to work."

Naimi says it's especially important that employees realize their worth in times of economic uncertainty and during the holidays, which is a time when people take vacation or are legitimately ill.



"We need you now more than ever," she says. "During a recession, jobs are hard to find, and everyone should remember that there are many people who would love to have your job. And if there are cuts looming at your business, perception often becomes reality. Those who act like they don't care about their job may be the first out the door." - Provided by Purdue University

- Corporate wellness statistics depict a savings of \$2.30 to \$10.10 for every \$1 spent on wellness initiatives.
- Coca-Cola's fitness program recouped \$500 per year per employee, despite the fact that only 60% of their staff was enrolled.
- A Ipsos-Reid corporate wellness statistics paper in 2004 found the three major preventable causes of staff absenteeism to be mental health (anxiety and/or depression), stress and a bad relationship with a supervisor.
- Corporate wellness statistics from Prudential Insurance reveal a benefit expense of \$312 per person enrolled in their wellness system, but \$574 per non-enrolled employee.
- At the Coors Brewing Co., corporate wellness statistics illuminate a savings of \$5.50 per \$1 spent on fitness, with a positive side-effect of participant absenteeism dropping by 18%.

From: <http://www.employeewellnessusa.com/>

Back to BACK BASICS: Start a program to prevent back injuries

Back injuries are the number one reason employees miss work, after the common cold. And when an employee misses work, undue stress is placed on other staff to complete necessary tasks. There's also the potential for decreased productivity, increased healthcare costs, decreased morale, increased potential for injuries for workers filling in for the injured employee and additional training necessary for the fill-in worker. Implementing a back safety program can educate employees so they don't get hurt on the job, thereby improving your profitability. The basic components of a back safety program include:

- 1) Employer Commitment
- 2) A Defined Administrative Structure (who does what)
- 3) System to Identify and Analyze Hazards
- 4) System to Identify and Implement Controls
- 5) Worker and Management Training
- 6) Medical Care for Injured Employees
- 7) Maintain Good Injury Records and an Evaluation of the Program's Effectiveness

Premier Insurance can help you set up a back safety or ergonomics program to reduce your losses, thereby improving your profitability.