

Attendance—the Basics

Navigating the World of the Coop Work Requirement

The Coop's Official Absenteeism Policy

If you are absent, you will owe two workslots to make up for the absence. After missing a shift you will go onto 'Alert Work' for four weeks, until your squad's next meeting. During those four weeks you should do all make-ups assigned to you. If you complete all assigned make-ups within four weeks, you will automatically go back to 'Active Work.' If you do not complete your make-ups within four weeks, you will automatically become 'Suspended Work' and will be unable to shop.

Squad Exceptions to the Double Make-Up Policy

Some Squads make an exception to the Coop's double make-up policy by assigning one make-up per absence under certain circumstances. If, when, and how this exception is offered varies from squad to squad. Please understand that calling the Squad Leader in advance of an absence does not guarantee one make-up. Reductions in the number of make-ups assigned can be made after the fact by the Squad Leader in the "Notes to Attendance Worker" section of the attendance book. These notes are easier than phone calls to the Membership Office and/or to your Squad Leader.

Being Suspended—the "Grace" Period

If you find that you are 'Suspended' you will be given a 10-day Grace Period at the entrance desk. During the grace period you may continue to shop while you resolve your suspension. Members who are suspended and have exceeded their 10-day grace period may not shop.

If You Know in Advance that You Will be Absent

It is your responsibility to try to find someone to substitute for you. Use the Committee Lists, the Switchboard, and the Website Switchboard (www.foodcoop.com) to locate names and phone numbers. If you find someone to trade, write down their name, member number, and phone number. Keep that information until you are certain the arrangement has been fulfilled on both sides. If your substitute does not complete their side of the deal you will not ultimately be held responsible for make-ups assigned to you. The office cannot assist you in re-assigning them the make-ups, though, unless you get and keep their information. If you can't find someone to substitute, call the Squad Leader to prepare them for your absence. Cashiers have additional responsibilities and should call both their Co-Cashier and the Membership Office if they cannot arrange coverage for an absence. Remember, when someone subs for you, you receive the work credit, not them.

How to Get Un-Suspended

1. Doing Your Make-Ups: Completing all make-ups before your next workshift is the preferred way to resolve work-related suspensions. Make-ups do not have to be done on your regular Committee, as long as the slot on which you want to do a make-up does not require special training. Most make-ups do not have to be scheduled in advance. The exceptions are Cashiers or Childcare workers: If a Cashier or Childcare worker wants to do make-ups in their normal positions they

must sign up in advance through the Membership Office. (Members on FTOP must schedule all of their workslots in advance through the membership office.)

Show up at the start of a scheduled shift and you will be guaranteed a make-up spot somewhere in the building. Showing up on time does guarantee that you can do a make-up, though not necessarily on your Committee of choice. You may be assigned elsewhere if the Coop has an excess or lack of workers in a particular area. Let the Squad Leader know you are there to do a make-up. Make sure you sign your name in the "Make-Ups" section of the attendance book. If you show up late to do a make-up, the Squad Leader has the right to turn you away if the shift is full.

2. Extensions: If you don't complete all your make-ups before your next scheduled shift, you can avoid becoming 'Suspended Work' by asking for an extension. The best way to ask for an extension is in person at your squad's next meeting. Although, if you are currently suspended you can contact the Membership Office. The Squad Leader can write in the "Notes to Attendance Workers" section of the attendance book "Please give _____ an extension". An extension gives you another four weeks to do any make-ups you owe.

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Unassigned

If you miss two shifts in a row and don't do any make-ups in between, you become unassigned and 'suspended work.' This means you no longer have a squad assignment, are not expected to attend future meeting dates of your former squad, and will not be able to shop.

If you've been unassigned, don't panic. There are two ways to get re-assigned to a squad and re-gain your shopping privileges:

1. Do a make-up within four weeks of becoming unassigned and you will automatically be returned to your squad. This does *not* apply if you are a Cashier, Monitor, Childcare, Outside or Independent-Office worker: You run the high risk of losing your squad the moment you become unassigned.

2. Contact the Membership Office: If you are on one of the restricted committees listed above and/or more than four weeks has passed since you got unassigned, contact the Membership Office to select a new squad assignment. You are not guaranteed a spot on your former squad, though if one is available you will be welcome to it. If the spot you want is filled, you may

select an interim assignment and get onto the waiting list for your preferred squad.

New Parents

If you are a new parent (due to the birth or adoption of a child) you may request 12 months of parental leave from your Coop workslot. That's 12 months per baby, not parent. Yes, if twins come into your life, your household will get 24 months of parental leave. The parents can split the parental leave between them, or one parent can take it all.

Extended Illness or Serious Injury

If you are ill and unable to work, or are the primary caregiver for someone who is ill or injured, you may request a Disability Work Exemption. Disability allows members to continue shopping during illnesses, etc. The Coop requires proof of disability and/or caregiver status: the Coop provides a form to be completed by your health care provider. Please contact the Membership Office for additional information.

Death in the Immediate Family

There is one exception to the Coop's make-up policy. If a member misses one workslot as a result of a

death in their immediate family, they will not owe any make-ups for that absence. Squad Leaders can communicate absences of this kind in the "Notes..." section of the attendance book. This exception covers only one workslot. If a member is primarily responsible for handling the deceased's affairs or simply needs additional time to absorb the loss, and will miss additional workslots, they should contact the Membership Office to inquire about a Bereavement Work Exemption.

Taking a Leave from the Coop

If you will be away from the Coop for at least eight weeks, you may take a Temporary Leave of Absence. A Temporary Leave must be arranged in advance with the Membership Office and puts your membership on hold while you are away. You can't shop or do make-ups while you are on Leave. If you know your definite date of return we will hold your workslot for you while you are away. ■

History: the Double Make-Up Policy

The Double Make-up Policy is the result of the Coop's rocky start in the early '70s when members were only required to do one make-up per absence. Through experience, our membership learned that by allowing members to do only one make-up for a missed shift we were making it just as easy to miss a scheduled shift as to do an unscheduled make-up. Scheduled work is invaluable to the Coop. We assign a certain number of workers to each squad because that is the number of people necessary to get the work done. When members don't show up for their scheduled shifts, the Coop is left short staffed. The Double Make-up Rule is not intended as a

punishment but as an incentive for members to show up for their regular shifts, when they are expected and needed, rather than do make-ups (whenever it is convenient and on short notice).

When people don't show up for a workslot, an additional and unfair burden is placed on the squad members who are present, and essential work goes undone. Members who come regularly to their workslots have the opportunity to get to know one another over time. We've learned that when Coop members get connected to each other they get more connected to the Coop, and that can only be a good thing for our longevity.