

Absences from work revisited

Ernest B. Akyeampong

Absenteeism remains a growing and costly problem for Canadian companies. A comprehensive study on the subject, produced by this author several years ago, revealed a rising trend in work absences from 1977 to 1987 ([Akyeampong](#)). Since then, the problem has gotten worse. For example, workdays missed among full-time paid workers for personal reasons (that is, "illness or disability" and "personal or family responsibilities") rose by almost a full day, from 8.6 days per worker in 1987 to 9.4 days in 1990. And like the 1977 to 1987 period, almost all of the increase in work time lost since 1987 resulted from personal and family demands.

This study will update the data on the levels and variations of work absences for personal reasons, and highlight any significant departures from the earlier findings. As such, the concepts, definitions, measurements and worker coverage remain the same as those used in the earlier study (see [Data source, coverage, definitions and measurements](#)).

Recent trends

Estimates from the Labour Force Survey reveal an upward drift in absences from work for personal reasons among full-time paid workers in recent years. Not only has the frequency of such work absences grown in the last four years, but the resulting time lost has also increased.

In an average week in 1990, about 6.4% (558,000) of all full-time paid workers holding one job were absent from work for all or part of the week for personal reasons. This was considerably higher than the 1987 level of 5.8% (483,000). Total work time missed also rose from 3.4% of all weekly scheduled work time to 3.7%. Extrapolated over the full year, work time lost for personal reasons increased from the equivalent of 8.6 days per worker in 1987 to 9.4 days in 1990 ([Table 1](#)).



Table 1 Absence rates of full-time paid workers by sex, 1977-1990.*

Source: *Labour Force Survey*

* *Incidence = (no of workers absent ÷ total employed) x 100. Inactivity rate = (no. of hours absent ÷ no. of hours usually worked) x 100. Days lost per worker = inactivity rate x no. of working days in year (250 in this study).*

Between 1987 and 1990, time lost per worker due to illness or disability increased by a third of a day to 6.7 days, while time lost on account of personal or family responsibilities rose by an extra half day to 2.7 days.

Time lost for personal reasons averaged 7.3 days for men in 1990, hardly different from the 1987 rate of 7.2 days. Among women, however, the picture was different. Work absences for personal reasons rose to 12.4 days on average in 1990, a day and a half increase from 1987. Most of this increase was due to personal or family obligations (up almost a full workday to 5.2 days). The increased presence of women with preschool children in the workforce is largely responsible for the continuing growth in work absences for personal reasons.



Chart A Absence rates of full-time paid workers.

Source: *Labour Force Survey*

Over the past 14 years, work days lost due to illness or disability among full-time paid workers have oscillated around 6.5 days a year for men and 7 days a year for women. But between 1977 and 1990, absences due to personal or family obligations among full-time paid women workers almost tripled from 1.9 days to 5.2 days a year. In contrast, time lost by male workers inched up slowly from 0.7 days in 1977 to a shade under one full day 13 years later.

Variations in absence levels

Several factors affect the level and mix of absences from work for personal reasons. Principal among these are: the working conditions (for example, the physical work environment, the degree of job stress, employer-employee relations, collective agreement provisions, work schedules); the adequacy and/or affordability of community facilities such as child-care centres and public transportation; family circumstances, especially the presence of preschool children and other dependent family members; and the physical health of the worker, a factor closely related to age. Measuring the impact of these and other

contributing factors is not easy, but a comparison of personal absence levels and patterns by selected demographic characteristics, occupation and industry offers some useful insights.

Differences by selected demographic characteristics

The propensity to miss work for personal reasons increases with age. This is true for both the frequency of absences, and the number of days lost per worker. It applies equally to men and women, though, there are important differences in the underlying factors, especially in the 20 to 54 age group.

In 1990, the proportion of workers reporting some absence for personal reasons in any given week ranged from a low of 5.0% among teenage workers, to a high of 7.1% among those aged 55 and over. Health problems are mainly responsible for higher absence levels among older workers. In 1990, about 6% of this group reported an absence from work due to illness or disability in any given week; the comparable figure for teenage workers was over half that level (3.4%). However, the corresponding inactivity rate (namely, the proportion of scheduled work time that was lost as a result of these absences) between older and teenage workers was relatively greater (5.2% versus 2.3%). This is due to the fact that absences from work, because of illness or disability, generally last longer among older workers. Workdays lost due to illness or disability amounted to 12 days among workers 55 years or older in 1990, and only 4.2 days among teenage workers. In all age groups though, the proportion of workers reporting some absence and the time lost each week was higher in 1990 than in 1987.

The presence of children appears to exert a strong and growing upward pressure on absence levels among mothers working full time in paid jobs, but has very little influence upon fathers. Working mothers missed 7.9 days of work on average in 1990 (6.5 days in 1987) to attend to personal or family demands. In families with at least one preschool child, workdays missed for personal or family demands were much higher, averaging 25.1 days (20.5 days in 1987). Conversely, working women with no children lost only 2.3 workdays in 1990. For full-time paid working men, time lost due to personal or family obligations hardly changed over the period (averaging around one day lost in 1990 among families with children, and only 0.8 days among those without children).⁽¹⁾



Chart B Average days lost by full-time paid workers, 1990.

Source: *Labour Force Survey*

Among the reasons for the higher absence levels among working mothers, the persistence of traditional practices appears to be important. Years ago, when few women held jobs outside of the home, they generally handled most family responsibilities, such as caring for a sick child or other dependant, or taking a child to see a doctor or dentist. It appears that this division of parental responsibilities has not

changed over the years in spite of the shift towards equality in responsibility for family financial support.

Variations by industry

There are significant differences among the major industries with respect to the percentage of workers reporting a personal absence during an average week, as well as differences in the mix of reasons for these absences. The nature and demands of the job, and the sex composition of the industry workforce are two important factors accounting for these variations.

In 1990, absence levels in the goods-producing sector were only marginally higher than in the service-producing sector. For example, 6.6% of full-time workers reported some absence in any given week in the goods-producing sector, resulting in an average of 9.8 days lost, compared with 6.4% in the service-producing sector, and 9.1 days lost ([Table 2](#)). However, workdays missed due to illness or disability featured prominently in the more hazardous and physically demanding goods-producing industries. Absences for these reasons accounted for 82% (8 days) of total time missed by employees in the goods sector, compared with about 67% (6.1 days) in the service industries. By contrast, in the service sector, which has a larger proportion of women workers, more work time was missed as a result of personal or family responsibilities (3.1 days versus 1.9 days in the goods sector).



Table 2 Absence rates of full-time paid workers by province, industry and occupation, 1990.*

Source: *Labour Force Survey*

* $Incidence = (no\ of\ workers\ absent \div total\ employed) \times 100$. $Inactivity\ rate = (no.\ of\ hours\ absent \div no.\ of\ hours\ usually\ worked) \times 100$. $Days\ lost\ per\ worker = inactivity\ rate \times no.\ of\ working\ days\ in\ year\ (250\ in\ this\ study)$.

Among industry groups, absences were highest in public administration, followed closely by manufacturing. A full 8% of public servants were absent from work for personal reasons for all or part of any given week in 1990, averaging 10.8 days off the job during the year. In manufacturing, 7% were absent for an average of 10.5 days. The large proportion of women in public administration no doubt contributes to the higher absence levels in that industry. High absence rates in the manufacturing industry may partly be traced to the hazards of the job, and to the generally older age levels of the workforce. In addition, both industries are highly unionized.

The lowest incidence of worker absence for personal reasons was in agriculture, where only 4.2% reported some absence in any given week in 1990 for an average of only 5.8 days lost during the year. The same reason that drives paid agriculture workers to work long workweeks (See [G.L. Cohen's](#), "Hard

at work," in this issue), also appears to underlie the low levels of absences in this industry. The seasonal nature of agricultural work, and the limited periods in the year during which paid workers are employed on a full-time basis in the industry, no doubt contribute to these exceptionally low results.



Chart C Average days lost by full-time paid workers for personal and family reasons, 1990.

Source: *Labour Force Survey*

At a more detailed industry level, the highest number of workdays lost were recorded by employees in health and social services (14.3 days per worker in 1990) and in banks and other financial institutions (11.7 days). This reflects the predominance of women in these industries. Absences related to personal or family responsibilities averaged 5.9 days in banks and other financial institutions, and 5.3 days in health and social services. In these two industries, about twice as many days were lost for these reasons on average in 1990 as in all industries combined (2.7 days). In health and social services, the stresses associated with the jobs and the peculiarities of the working arrangements, such as extended hours, shift work, and greater exposure to illness may also have contributed to raise the number of days lost due to illness or disability (8.9 days per worker in 1990).

Compared with 1987, every major industry, except transportation, communication and other utilities, recorded a greater incidence of personal absence in 1990, as well as a higher inactivity rate and an increase in the number of days lost per worker. In transportation, communication and other utilities, these absence indicators remained unchanged from 1987.

Variations by occupation

Workers in "white-collar" occupations, as a group, continued to report lower absence levels than "blue-collar" workers in 1990 ([Table 2](#)). Workers in both groups saw their absence levels rise between 1987 and 1990, but the gap narrowed due to a greater number of absences related to personal or family responsibilities among white-collar workers.

In 1990, about 6.3% of white-collar workers missed work for personal reasons for all or part of a typical week, for an average of 8.8 days lost per worker per year. In contrast, 6.7% of blue-collar workers reported an absence each week, and the resulting workdays lost amounted to 10.6 days per worker during the year. Not surprisingly, 85% of days lost among blue-collar workers resulted from illness or disability, compared with only 63% among white-collar workers.

Among white-collar workers, the lowest number of days lost in 1990 was in sales occupations (6.9 days)

followed by managerial and professional occupations (7.9 days per worker). Workers in clerical jobs reported the greatest number of days lost (16.4 days). For blue-collar workers, the lowest number was found in primary occupations (7.7 days), while workers in processing, machining and fabricating had the highest (11.6 days).

Variations by province

Absence levels vary by province. The tendency to miss work, as well as the amount of work time lost for personal reasons increased in all provinces between 1987 and 1990, except British Columbia where they fell. Full-time paid workers in Manitoba continued to exhibit the highest work absence incidence in 1990 (7.6%), while workers in the province of Saskatchewan (5.8%) showed the least tendency to miss work. In terms of time lost, however, Quebec workers remained the most likely to miss workdays for personal reasons (10.5 days in 1990 versus 9.8 days in 1987), with virtually all the growth in days lost caused by absences due to personal or family responsibilities. Workers in Alberta and Saskatchewan continued to record the lowest number of workdays missed (7.3 and 8.0 days respectively in 1990).

Conclusion

Over the years, workers across the country have negotiated contract clauses improving their leave entitlements for personal reasons. At the same time, more women with children have entered the labour force. It is therefore difficult to estimate how much of the overall rise in absence levels is due to better entitlements or greater usage, and how much is due to the increased presence of dual-earner families and single parents in the workforce.

Time lost from work on account of illness or disability has changed very little over the past 14 years (oscillating around 6.5 days per year among full-time paid men workers, and around 7 days among women workers). Several factors may have contributed to slow the growth of work absences due to illness or disability. Notable changes include corporate programs designed to improve health (such as drug and alcohol abuse control programs, and the provision of smoke-free working environments), government regulations relating to working conditions, and a growing awareness on the part of workers, and the population at large, of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Days lost from work for personal or family-related responsibilities, however, have almost tripled over the same period. But this increase appears to largely reflect the fact that more and more mothers (especially with preschool children) are joining the paid workforce. For many working couples and single parents, the challenge of effectively balancing work and family responsibilities remains a problem. But even if there was a more equitable sharing of family responsibilities between working parents, the reduction of overall absenteeism would require the combined efforts of employers, employees and society at large.



Table Update for 1991: Absence rates of full-time paid workers by sex, industry and occupation.*

Source: *Labour Force Survey*

* *Incidence = (no of workers absent ÷ total employed) x 100. Inactivity rate = (no. of hours absent ÷ no. of hours usually worked) x 100. Days lost per worker = inactivity rate x no. of working days in year (250 in this study).*

Data source, coverage, definitions and measurements

Data source

This study is based on Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) annual average data.

Coverage

Covered in this study are the 8.7 million **full-time paid workers** holding one job in any given week in 1990. Excluded are part-time paid workers, because their work schedules generally permit more opportunity to attend to personal or family demands than full-time workers. Self-employed and unpaid family workers are also excluded because they generally control their work schedules. Multiple jobholders are excluded because, using LFS data it is technically impossible to allocate time lost, and the reason, to the various jobs.

Definitions

Absences from work for **personal reasons** are split into two components in the LFS: "absences due to own illness or disability," and absences due to "personal or family responsibilities." These two types of absences represented about a third of all work time lost every week in 1990 among full-time paid workers. Vacations are not counted.

Measures

Three measures of absence are used in this study.

- The **incidence** is the percentage of full-time paid workers reporting some absence in any given week of the year. In this measure, the length of work absence - whether an hour, a day, or the full week - is irrelevant.
- The **inactivity rate** shows the hours lost as a proportion of the scheduled or "usual" weekly hours of all full-time paid workers. It takes into account both the frequency and length of absence.
- **Days lost per worker** in the year is derived from the second measure, and is calculated by multiplying the inactivity rate by the estimated number of working days in the year (250 in this study).

Note

A data set containing national and provincial results spanning the 1979-1991 period can be obtained either on paper or IBM-compatible computer diskette at a cost of \$50. Requests should be addressed to the author.

Note 1

The inclusion of maternity leave (certainly not an absenteeism factor) in the LFS "personal or family responsibilities" category no doubt contributes to the very high absence levels found among working women with preschool children. However, limiting the analysis to only short-term (part-week) absences also revealed that working women with preschool children lost more than twice as many work days due to "personal or family responsibilities" than working women without preschool children.

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Source

Perspectives on Labour and Income, Spring 1992, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Statistics Canada, Catalogue 75-001E).
This is the fifth of five articles in the issue.

 HIGHLIGHTS

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Table 1

Absence rates of full-time paid workers by sex, 1977-1990*

	Incidence			Inactivity rate			Days lost per worker in year		
	Total	Illness or disability	Personal or family responsibilities	Total	Illness or disability	Personal or family responsibilities	Total	Illness or disability	Personal or family responsibilities
	%			%			days		
Both sexes									
1990	6.4	4.3	2.2	3.7	2.7	1.1	9.4	6.7	2.7
1989	6.6	4.4	2.2	3.8	2.7	1.0	9.4	6.8	2.6
1988	6.4	4.4	2.0	3.7	2.7	1.0	9.2	6.8	2.4
1987	5.8	4.0	1.7	3.4	2.6	0.9	8.6	6.4	2.2
1986	6.1	4.3	1.8	3.5	2.6	0.9	8.8	6.6	2.1
1985	6.1	4.3	1.8	3.4	2.6	0.8	8.6	6.6	2.1
1984	6.2	4.4	1.8	3.5	2.7	0.8	8.8	6.7	2.1
1983	6.0	4.3	1.7	3.4	2.7	0.8	8.6	6.7	1.9
1982	5.8	4.3	1.5	3.3	2.6	0.6	8.1	6.5	1.6
1981	5.7	4.2	1.5	3.2	2.6	0.6	8.0	6.4	1.6
1980	6.0	4.5	1.5	3.3	2.7	0.6	8.2	6.7	1.5
1979	6.1	4.5	1.5	3.2	2.6	0.6	8.0	6.5	1.5
1978	5.9	4.6	1.3	3.1	2.7	0.5	7.8	6.7	1.2
1977	5.5	4.3	1.3	3.0	2.5	0.5	7.4	6.3	1.1
Men									
1990	5.2	3.9	1.3	2.9	2.5	0.4	7.3	6.3	0.9
1989	5.4	4.1	1.4	3.0	2.6	0.4	7.5	6.5	0.9
1988	5.3	4.0	1.3	2.9	2.6	0.4	7.3	6.4	0.9
1987	4.9	3.8	1.1	2.9	2.5	0.3	7.2	6.4	0.8
1986	5.2	4.1	1.2	2.9	2.6	0.3	7.3	6.6	0.8
1985	5.1	3.9	1.1	2.8	2.5	0.3	7.0	6.3	0.8
1984	5.3	4.1	1.2	2.9	2.6	0.3	7.3	6.5	0.8
1983	5.2	4.0	1.2	2.9	2.6	0.3	7.3	6.5	0.8
1982	5.1	4.1	1.1	2.9	2.6	0.3	7.2	6.5	0.7

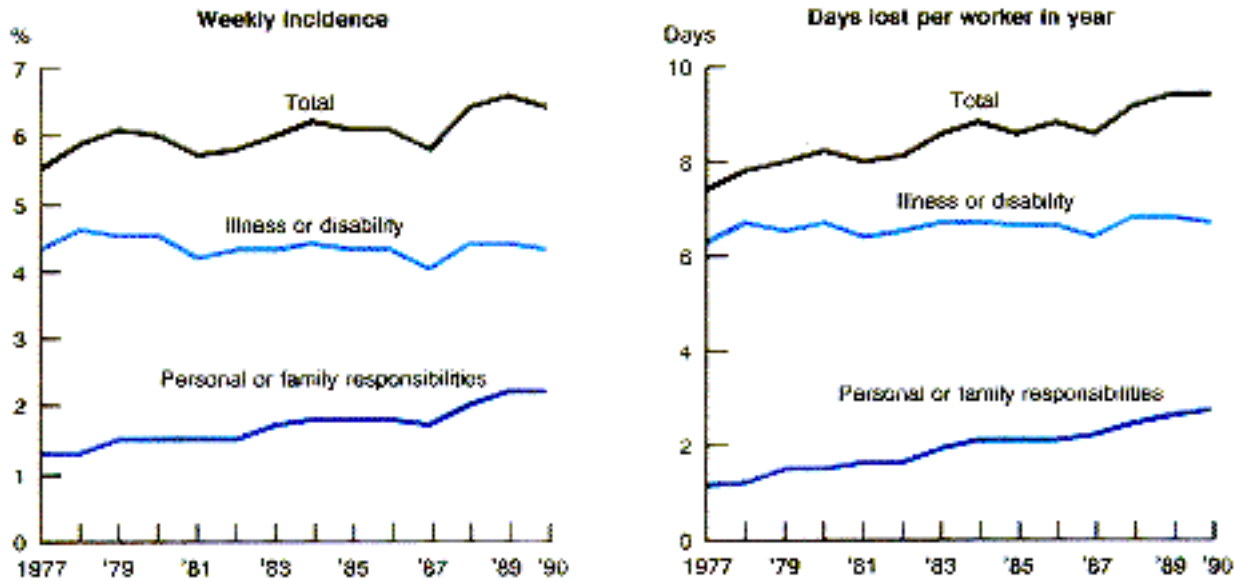
1981	5.0	3.9	1.1	2.8	2.5	0.3	6.9	6.2	0.7
1980	5.3	4.2	1.1	2.9	2.6	0.3	7.3	6.6	0.7
1979	5.4	4.2	1.2	2.8	2.5	0.3	7.1	6.3	0.8
1978	5.4	4.3	1.1	2.9	2.6	0.3	7.2	6.5	0.7
1977	5.0	4.0	1.0	2.7	2.4	0.3	6.8	6.1	0.7
Women									
1990	8.1	4.8	3.3	5.0	2.9	2.1	12.4	7.1	5.2
1989	8.3	5.0	3.3	4.9	2.9	2.1	12.3	7.2	5.1
1988	7.9	4.9	3.0	4.8	2.9	1.9	12.0	7.3	4.7
1987	7.0	4.3	2.7	4.3	2.6	1.7	10.8	6.5	4.3
1986	7.4	4.7	2.7	4.4	2.7	1.7	11.0	6.7	4.4
1985	7.6	4.9	2.8	4.5	2.8	1.7	11.2	7.0	4.2
1984	7.7	4.9	2.7	4.5	2.8	1.7	11.3	7.1	4.2
1983	7.3	4.8	2.5	4.3	2.8	1.5	10.8	7.0	3.8
1982	6.8	4.7	2.2	3.9	2.6	1.2	9.6	6.6	3.1
1981	7.0	4.8	2.2	4.0	2.7	1.3	10.0	6.8	3.2
1980	7.1	5.0	2.1	4.0	2.8	1.2	9.9	7.0	2.9
1979	7.2	5.0	2.1	3.8	2.7	1.1	9.6	6.8	2.8
1978	6.8	5.1	1.7	3.6	2.8	0.8	9.0	7.1	2.0
1977	6.5	4.8	1.6	3.4	2.7	0.8	8.6	6.7	1.9

Source: Labour Force Survey

* Incidence = (no. of workers absent / total employed) x 100. Inactivity rate = (no. of hours absent / no. of hours usually worked) x 100. Days lost per worker = inactivity rate x no. of working days in year (250 in this study).

Absence rates of full-time paid workers

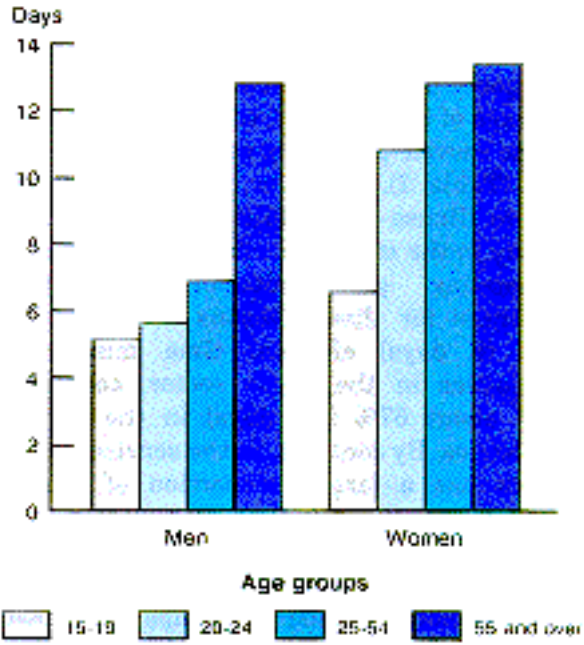
Work absences increased over the period. Almost all of the growth was due to personal or family demands.



Source: Labour Force Survey

Average days lost by full-time paid workers, 1990

Days lost per worker for personal reasons increases with advancing age.



Source: Labour Force Survey

Table 2

Absence rates of full-time paid workers by province, industry and occupation, 1990*

	Incidence			Inactivity rate			Days lost per worker in year		
	Total	Illness or disability	Personal or family responsibilities	Total	Illness or disability	Personal or family responsibilities	Total	Illness or disability	Personal or family responsibilities
	%			%			days		
Canada	6.4	4.3	2.2	3.7	2.7	1.1	9.4	6.7	2.7
Province									
Newfoundland	5.9	4.4	1.5	4.0	3.1	0.9	10.1	7.8	2.3
Prince Edward Island	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nova Scotia	6.1	4.0	2.1	3.6	2.6	1.0	9.1	6.5	2.6
New Brunswick	6.6	4.4	2.2	3.7	2.7	1.0	9.3	6.8	2.5
Quebec	6.5	4.2	2.3	4.2	2.9	1.3	10.5	7.2	3.2
Ontario	6.7	4.4	2.2	3.8	2.8	1.1	9.5	6.9	2.7
Manitoba	7.6	4.9	2.7	3.6	2.6	1.0	9.0	6.4	2.6
Saskatchewan	5.8	3.6	2.2	3.2	2.0	1.2	8.0	5.1	2.9
Alberta	5.9	3.9	2.1	2.9	2.0	0.9	7.3	5.0	2.2
British Columbia	5.8	4.1	1.7	3.4	2.6	0.8	8.5	6.4	2.1
Industry									
Goods industries	6.6	4.7	1.9	3.9	3.2	0.7	9.8	8.0	1.9
Agriculture	4.2	...	...	2.3	...	...	5.8	...	...
Other primary	5.8	4.4	1.5	3.6	3.1	0.5	9.1	7.8	1.3
Manufacturing	7.0	5.0	2.0	4.2	3.4	0.9	10.5	8.4	2.1
Construction	5.6	4.0	1.6	3.4	2.9	0.5	8.5	7.3	1.2
Service industries	6.4	4.1	2.3	3.7	2.4	1.2	9.1	6.1	3.1
Transportation, communications and other utilities	5.8	4.2	1.7	3.6	2.8	0.8	9.0	7.1	1.9
Trade	5.4	3.5	2.0	2.9	2.0	0.9	7.4	5.0	2.4
Finance, insurance and real estate	6.4	3.7	2.8	3.7	2.0	1.7	9.3	5.1	4.2

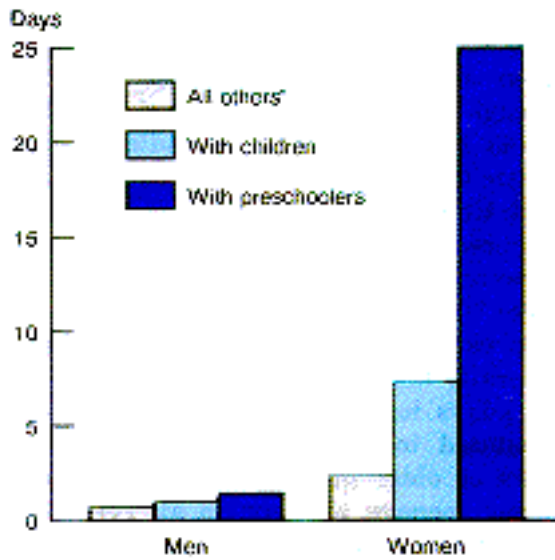
Services	6.6	4.1	2.5	3.8	2.4	1.4	9.6	6.1	3.5
Public administration	8.0	5.5	2.5	4.3	3.1	1.2	10.8	7.8	3.0
Occupation									
White-collar workers	6.3	3.9	2.4	3.5	2.2	1.3	8.8	5.5	3.3
Managerial and professional	5.9	3.5	2.4	3.2	1.9	1.3	7.9	4.7	3.2
Clerical	7.5	4.5	3.0	4.2	2.4	1.8	10.4	6.0	4.4
Sales	4.9	3.1	1.8	2.7	1.8	0.9	6.9	4.6	2.3
Service	6.1	4.5	1.7	4.0	3.1	0.9	10.0	7.8	2.2
Blue-collar workers	6.7	5.1	1.7	4.2	3.6	0.6	10.6	9.0	1.5
Primary	5.0	3.6	...	3.1	2.6	...	7.7	6.6	...
Processing, machining and fabricating	7.4	5.6	1.9	4.6	3.9	0.7	11.6	9.8	1.8
Construction trades	5.9	4.4	1.5	3.7	3.3	0.4	9.3	8.2	1.1
Transport	5.7	4.3	1.4	3.9	3.3	0.6	9.8	8.3	1.5
Material handling and other crafts	7.4	5.7	1.7	4.5	3.9	0.6	11.2	9.7	1.5

Source: Labour Force Survey

* Incidence = (no. of workers absent / total employed) x 100. Inactivity rate = (no. of hours absent / no. of hours usually worked) x 100. Days lost per worker = inactivity rate x no. of working days in year (250 in this study).

Average days lost by full-time paid workers for personal and family reasons, 1990

The presence of children greatly increases the absence levels for working women, but has little effect on men.



Source: Labour Force Survey

* Includes unattached individuals and persons living in families with no children.

Update for 1991

Absence rates of full-time paid workers by sex, industry and occupation*

	Incidence			Inactivity rate			Days lost per worker in year		
	Total	Illness or disability	Personal or family responsibilities	Total	Illness or disability	Personal or family responsibilities	Total	Illness or disability	Personal or family responsibilities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	days		
Canada	6.2	4.1	2.0	3.8	2.6	1.1	9.4	6.6	2.8
Men	4.8	3.7	1.1	2.8	2.4	0.4	7.0	6.1	0.9
Women	7.9	4.7	3.3	5.1	2.9	2.2	12.8	7.2	5.6
In families:									
With children	9.2	4.5	4.7	6.4	2.8	3.6	16.0	7.1	9.0
With preschoolers	17.9	4.7	13.2	14.4	2.9	11.6	36.1	7.2	28.9
All others**	6.5	4.9	1.6	3.7	2.9	0.7	9.2	7.3	1.9
Industry									
Goods industries	6.2	4.4	1.7	3.9	3.1	0.8	9.7	7.7	2.0
Agriculture	3.9	...	...	2.1	...	...	5.3	...	...
Other primary	5.7	4.2	1.5	3.7	3.1	0.7	9.3	7.6	1.6
Manufacturing	6.7	4.8	1.9	4.2	3.3	0.9	10.5	8.3	2.2
Construction	4.9	3.7	1.2	3.1	2.6	0.5	7.8	6.6	1.2
Service industries	6.2	4.0	2.2	3.7	2.4	1.3	9.3	6.1	3.2
Transportation, communication and other utilities	6.0	4.4	1.6	3.9	3.0	0.8	9.7	7.6	2.1
Trade	5.2	3.4	1.9	3.0	2.0	1.0	7.4	5.0	2.4
Finance, insurance and real estate	5.8	3.2	2.6	3.4	1.7	1.6	8.4	4.4	4.1
Services	6.4	4.1	2.3	4.0	2.5	1.5	9.9	6.2	3.7
Public administration	7.4	5.0	2.4	4.2	2.9	1.3	10.5	7.3	3.2
Occupation									
White-collar workers	6.0	3.7	2.3	3.5	2.2	1.4	8.8	5.4	3.4

Managerial and professional	5.8	3.5	2.2	3.3	1.9	1.3	8.1	4.9	3.3
Clerical	7.3	4.2	3.0	4.3	2.4	1.9	10.8	6.0	4.8
Sales	4.7	3.0	1.7	2.7	1.8	0.9	6.8	4.5	2.3
Service	5.8	4.1	1.7	3.8	2.8	1.0	9.5	7.0	2.5
Blue-collar workers	6.5	5.0	1.5	4.2	3.6	0.6	10.6	9.1	1.5
Primary	4.7	3.3	1.4	3.0	2.3	0.6	7.5	5.9	1.6
Processing, machining and fabricating	7.2	5.5	1.7	4.6	3.9	0.7	11.5	9.8	1.7
Construction trades	5.5	4.4	1.1	3.7	3.3	0.4	9.2	8.2	1.0
Transport	5.9	4.9	1.0	4.2	3.8	0.4	10.5	9.4	1.1
Material handling and other crafts	6.8	5.3	1.5	4.6	3.9	0.7	11.5	9.9	1.6

Source: Labour Force Survey

** Incidence = (no. of workers absent / total employed) x 100. Inactivity rate = (no. of hours absent / no. of hours usually worked) x 100. Days lost per worker = inactivity rate x no. of working days in year (250 in this study).*

*** Includes unattached individuals and persons living in families with no children.*