

SCENARIO

USE OF WORK RESOURCES

Misuse by routine

Roger has his daily work routine down to a fine art. Every day for the last 10 years he's been riding his bike into work. When he arrives, he has a shower, makes his breakfast and sits down to enjoy it in the staffroom as he reads the paper. Officially, everyone in the team has the same start time but Roger's colleagues are used to his morning ritual and greet him with 'good afternoon' when he settles down to work at least 20 minutes late every day. Even his boss Sarah knows that this is how he operates.

Recently, the agency has been cracking down on staff wasting time at work. In the last management meeting, managers were advised to bring staff in line if they are taking too long with lunches, getting in late or leaving early.

Sarah arranges a meeting with Roger to talk about his use of work time. When she points out that he in fact starts twenty minutes to half an hour after everyone else, Roger responds that he has been doing this for the 15 years he's worked at the agency and that his previous manager praised him for promoting a healthy lifestyle at work. He also names colleagues in other departments who have done the same thing for many years.

Sarah knows that everything he says is true and lets it go. Roger's work is still reasonable and she doesn't want to cause problems in the team by making an issue of it.


What are the ethical issues?

- Misuse of resources (time)
- Failure to act in the public interest
- Poor ethical culture
- A lack of accountability

Now that the agency is cracking down on use of work time, what are some of the procedures that could be implemented?

- Expectations of attendance need to be clearly outlined in position descriptions and discussed at performance reviews
- Use of work resources (including time) to be discussed at team meetings to ensure that staff realise the impact of wasting time at work



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- Flexible arrangements for staff who do need to start later or finish earlier to assist them in meeting their obligations in terms of work hours
 - Performance manage staff who misuse time, including the removal of flexible start and finish times for a certain period

What is the possible impact of Sarah not pulling Roger into line about starting late?

- Reduction in staff morale
- Other staff may become more relaxed in terms of how they use their work time (knowing that he gets away with starting late on a daily basis)
- Cumulative financial loss for the agency

Information used in this scenario is not based in fact, but has been created for the purpose of education and discussion. Any likeness to real persons or events is coincidental.

