

What's Your Employee Damage Policy?



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Not every employee will want to admit to making a mistake and taking the time to fix it. Employees are working long, stressful hours during a snow storm and sometimes mistakes happen. Some company owners put a policy in place to keep employees on track and repair any damages from their mistakes. See what these www.expired-link.com members recommend as a policy for keeping mistakes and damage while on the job at a minimum.

GimmeSnow!!!: I had a guy hit three mailboxes in one night a few years ago. He kept telling me he was going to go out and fix them but never showed up. Finally, I had another employee go fix the boxes and it took him 20 hours to figure it all out. I had to pay him \$400 plus \$200 in materials. I made a rule after that: I will pay for the mailbox but you have to fix it on your own time which I think is fair.

One of my drivers hit a mailbox the other night and I told him he would have to go fix it on his own time after he gets sleep. Then he called me when he was on a commercial property and asked me where to put the snow. I was explaining it to him but he wasn't getting it. I told him to go in and talk to the manager, as I knew him well. The employee put two medium sized piles of snow in front of their loading bays. The customer called me the next day and said he needed it fixed ASAP. I got a hold of the employee and told him he needed to go to the customer and fix the problem. It took him 10 hours to dig the bay out. Now he wants me to pay him \$240 to fix a mistake that could have been prevented in the first place and then he wants me to send another person with him to help fix the mailbox.

I was starting to suspect the employee of milking the clock mid-summer and kept making comments that the times are too long and he needs to get back on track. If I pay him his plowing wage to go fix all his mistakes after all the snow is done, that just means that he gets more money and I feel like there is no incentive for him to not be careless. I'm curious to see what everyone else's policy is on this.

ktfbgb: I would never pay them their time to fix the mistakes. Period. Yes, paying for materials yourself seems OK but would be dependent on if I found that it was because of negligence on the driver's part. Hitting three mailboxes in a single night seems pretty negligent to me, bordering on intentional. But I'm tough to work for and don't let any of my guys take advantage of me. I am, however, more than fair according to my long-time employees who have a good work ethic and common sense. And I wouldn't pay him to move the snow from the loading bay either. I give everyone a copy of the satellite image of the property with the owners/managers notes on exactly where they want snow piled. So, no excuses with me. If you're not doing that, you may want to consider it. My customers really appreciate that I hand them the satellite image and ask them to mark approved locations. It makes sure everyone is on the same page before the first snow flies.

Randall Ave: As far as the first guy hitting three mailboxes, he'd have been fired right then. Legally you have to pay them for all their time, unless you have a previous agreement on such matters. Before he got to the commercial lot, the specifics on where the snow was plowed to, etc. should have been gone over. But any person should know not to dump the snow in front of the loading dock. When I had the town bid contract, I swear the one year it always snowed on recycle night. If it's in the road its fair game.

lolddogtwo: A point system needs to be put in place.

Jeep_thing: Guess it depends on the supply/demand of plow operators in your area. Is it hard to find a decent guy? Or do you have to settle for a warm body?

kimber750: You are probably not going like this but here it goes: Where is the management? Employee asks a question and you tell him to talk to someone else? Old saying, "Don't let the employees run the company." You are the one letting them milk the clock. Twenty hours to fix three mailboxes is absurd. To me it sounds you have let the employees get away with everything and anything, and now you want to change it, well good luck. Remember employees are only as good as the training you give them. Yes, some can't be trained, I have dealt with my fair share of them, and those are the ones you need to replace.



Mr.Markus: My father used to say: "There are no bad employees, just bad managers." I think what the saying means is that as a good manager, you fire the bad employees which makes you a good manager. Keep them around, and you're a bad manager.

Mark Oomkes: So, you're going to fire a guy that screwed up and not pay him for the time on the clock. He gets pissed, goes to Labor Department and you get an audit of everything. Then you get fined and pay the employee for his time anyway. You cannot withhold pay for mistakes unless you have an agreement signed by them, and their pay cannot go below minimum wage. You must pay them for the time on the clock. Like it or not, it's the law. And it's your fault for the pile being in the wrong place, not his.

iceyman: We print out full-size pictures of every lot and draw exact spots where snow can and can't go. Not his fault at all for not knowing where to put piles. And for \$200, I'll fix your mailboxes in two hours.

JustJeff: Managing mistakes or not, anybody that pushes snow in front of loading docks ought to be fired.

FredG: We all know the employees we hire need a chief, but to knock down a mailbox and then repeat it, I don't think I need him. As far as fixing it, he won't have the brains if he knocked it down. A guy that's sent to a job and doesn't know where to put the snow should never have been turned loose. I understand some need some degree of training. I will say this again, the laid-off heavy highway guys, laborers, operators, etc. are the guys to catch. They know about traffic and running trucks and equipment in small areas with Jersey barriers separating them from traffic. All are safety minded or they'd probably be dead or have had killed somebody else. You may need some creative payroll.

BUFF: My policy with employees is that damage caused by negligence is their problem. This is only if it's a continual problem over a three-month period, each time they are talked to and the incident documented. The third time they have the choice of being fired or making it right. They know this policy going into the job and I figured if they're signing on after knowing that, they'll be good employees and it weeds out the bad ones. I've only had to do this once and he quit.

It's making sure the employee understands company policy and expectations. When you consider the resources and money involved in training an employee, it's foolish to invest in a warm body that creates rework along with not hitting the quoted labor/equipment budgets. Everyone has their own protocol and approach. I've found what I'm doing works well for me.

Foybles: Driver's meetings, site maps and even walk-throughs on more demanding properties is essential to reducing expenses from mistakes and other types of rework. With that said, I personally have inadvertently pulled up a 6-foot section of curb. It happens.

GimmeSnow!!: I had an HR firm write my handbook and there is a clause in it for neglect and carelessness (although I do not remember the exact wording or what it entails). My shop manager is going to cement the post in a bucket and set it out and I will pay someone to put it back in the ground. I will pay the employee \$10 per hour for digging the snow out of the bays. I was angry when I wrote the original post, but since then I have hired two more drivers and took him out of the salt rotation. He will be on residential only from now on and as soon as we are caught up, I will send someone to the back end of his route. If he picks his times up and doesn't have any accidents, he can earn some more hours. Any more accidents and he will be moved to the walk crew. This guy has been with me for three years and has been trained on a different contract. The contract that he was on decided to go through a re-bid process on Dec. 12, so it was either he sits at home and I let my subs work, or the subs sit at home and he works. The subs will be back next week anyway because we will be back on the contract. The lot is a container

factory and there are truck trailers and containers everywhere and they shift things constantly so the map is irrelevant. He was being lazy and did not want to move the snow twice to get it where it needed to go. The thing that pissed me off was that he was playing dumb on the phone, which is why I told him to talk to the manager.