

## U.S. Workers Are Satisfied With Their PTO, But Don't Exhaust It

A new [Harris Poll survey](#) found that most employed Americans are satisfied with their company's paid time off (PTO) policy; however, 3 in 4 said they didn't use the maximum PTO permitted by their employer.

According to the survey, most U.S. workers get between 11 and 30 PTO days yearly. Last year, the average employed American took 15 paid days off despite many being allowed more. The top use cases were vacation and health and wellness (e.g., sick days and doctor appointments). Consider these additional key findings from the survey:

- Most Americans (83%) are satisfied with their company's PTO policy.
  - Over half (60%) are given more than 10 PTO days annually.
  - An additional 7% have an "unlimited vacation policy." Nearly one-third (32%) of American workers indicate that "unlimited vacation policy" means more than 30 days off.
- Most (78%) do not use the maximum PTO allowed by their employer. The average worker took 15 paid days off last year despite half (49%) being allowed more than that by their employer.
- The top barriers preventing workers from taking more time off are "pressure to always be available and responsive to demands" (31%) and "heavy workload" (30%).

Even when workers took time off, 60% reported struggling to fully disconnect from work. As such, 86% checked emails from their boss, and 56% took work-related calls during time off. Similarly, nearly

half of the workers said they felt guilty about taking the time off in the first place. Specifically, Millennials and Generation Z are nervous about requesting PTO due to employer reactions and career implications. As a result, many millennials admitted to workarounds, such as moving their mouse to maintain online messaging status or taking time off without telling their manager.

**According to the Harris Poll survey, 76% of workers say, "I wish my workplace culture placed a stronger emphasis on the value of taking regular breaks and utilizing PTO."**

### Employer Takeaway

Despite more employers expanding their PTO policies, workplace culture and workload pressures tend to dictate working Americans' benefit usage. Furthermore, many workers still check their email or feel guilty during their time off, which can cause them not to recharge as intended. To combat these behaviors and the potential for burnout, employers can foster a company culture focused on taking PTO, not just the policy itself. Today's workers find it increasingly challenging to balance their work commitments and personal time off, but employers may choose to work on building a culture that supports and encourages breaks.

Employers should continue to monitor trends to make the right employee benefits decisions for their respective organizations and employees.

Contact us today for more information.