Workplace Communication Basics

Clear. Timely. Respectful.

Good workplace communication is not about sounding perfect. It is about helping the right person understand what is happening, what you need, and what comes next.

How to use: Use the Step 1 checklist before you send a message. Borrow the phrases in Step 2, practice in Step 3, and use Step 4 to know who to contact.

STEP 1 Before you send the message

- ☐ **Who needs to know?** Your supervisor, HR or payroll, a coworker, or someone else?
- ☐ **What is the main point?** Say it early instead of making the person guess.
- ☐ **What do you need?** Be clear about the action or answer you are asking for.
- ☐ **Is this the right way to send it?** Follow your workplace rules for calls, texts, email, or reporting absences.
- ☐ **Is it respectful?** Say it kindly and leave out details that are not needed.

STEP 2 Useful phrases for real situations

Need clarification

"I want to make sure I understand. Do you want me to ___ first, and when is it due?"

Running late or absent

"I'm going to be late today. I expect to arrive at ___. I'm following the call-in process and will update you if anything changes."

Made a mistake

"I noticed I entered ___ incorrectly. I have corrected it (or can correct it). Is there anything else you need me to do?"

Too many priorities

"I have ___ and ___ due today. Which one should I finish first?"

> **Remember:** A text message may not count as properly reporting an absence. Always follow your employer's call-in and attendance policy.

Practice the Conversation

Keep it short, specific, and respectful.

STEP 3 What would you say?

Write what you would say in each situation.

1. You are confused about a task.

2. You realize you made an error.

3. You need to ask which assignment is the priority.

STEP 4 Who should I contact?

Supervisor or manager
Daily work questions, priorities, schedule issues, feedback, and routine work concerns.

HR or payroll
Pay or benefits questions, workplace policies, employee records, or when the normal path does not fit the issue.

Emergency or safety help
For immediate danger or an emergency, use your workplace emergency process or call emergency services.

Not sure?
Ask: “Who is the right person for this question?” It is okay not to know the system yet.

Tip: You can be professional and still ask questions, disagree respectfully, report a concern, or say you need clarification.

NEXT STEP: During your first week, learn your workplace’s call-in process and who to contact for what.

Up next: Resource 11 — Understanding Your Paycheck & Benefits

Educational resource only. Thrive Forward does not guarantee employment, interviews, job placement, or specific workplace outcomes.