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Pros of a 4-day workweek

BY BRUCE WILSON

Many companies find it advantageous to switch to a workweek consisting of four 10-hour days rather than the traditional workweek. Some advantages are fairly obvious, while others are subtler.

- ▶ By working a regular schedule of four 10-hour days starting on Monday, if you encounter a bad weather day you still have Friday and Saturday to make up the day or days.
- ▶ You eliminate one day of travel time, morning loading and afternoon unloading. This converts that time to production time from being unapplied time.
- ▶ If you do residential maintenance, you can eliminate Monday and get more jobs done at the end of the week, which most homeowners prefer.
- ▶ You can work crews on different schedules (some Monday—Thursday and others Tuesday—Friday) and get better utilization of your equipment.
- ▶ Some companies find it advantageous to have equipment in the yard one day for preventive maintenance scheduling.
- ▶ You most likely will save fuel, as well as, wear

and tear on vehicles because they're on the road four days not five.

- ▶ Management employees have a workday when crews are not working freeing up time for customers and sales activities when they don't have to manage crews.
- ▶ It tends to reduce overtime since production people are already working 10 hours. If you need to work overtime there is an extra day to work the overtime, and it is better planned.

In one company, we determined that there would be a labor savings of approximately \$2,845/month in cost benefit through actual hours savings and conversion of unapplied labor to on-the-job labor with a 10-man work crew. So there are obvious benefits, but there are some drawbacks, too. In winter months, there are barely enough daylight hours. You have to start earlier than some customers may like. Some customers expect to have you work five days a week since they have to work a 5-day workweek.

From an employee perspective they get an additional day off in which to rest or work another part time job, so they usually like it. There are fewer days lost to weather, as the extra day is "make up day" and, of course, one less commute day (lower gas cost).

If you're considering changing to a 4-day week, run it by your attorney since some states have laws regulating the change. For instance, in most states you cannot work some crews four 10-hour days and others the 5-day schedule. It's all or nothing.

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