

Guidelines on Sabbath Observance and Work

Andrews University as an entity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church values the importance of a Sabbath day of rest. According to the Adventist Church's official website, "the Sabbath is God's gift to us, a time of rest and restoration of our connection to God and others. It reminds us of God's creation and Jesus' grace." The Seventh-day Adventist Church honors the Sabbath from sundown Friday evening to sundown Saturday evening. These hours are considered to be holy hours and should be treated as such.

As Seventh-day Adventists we value the fourth commandment and the importance it has in setting apart a special day each week to commune with our Creator (Genesis 2:1–3, Exodus 20: 8–11, Deuteronomy 5:12–15, Isaiah 58:13,14, Matthew 12:1–12, Hebrews 4:1–11). Setting apart a day of rest and worship allows individuals to refocus and reconnect, while not needing to concentrate on their daily responsibilities and work. Recent studies have found physical benefits for individuals who regularly practice a day of rest consistent with the biblical principles that are accepted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

While the University respects each individual's personal journey, the standard for Sabbath-keeping remains consistent with the doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The way in which each individual honors the Sabbath will be in accordance with their personal relationship with God. Andrews University values this individuality. Consequently, we are able to grow stronger collectively in a better understanding of God's will. At the same time, we learn to respect differences within our colleagues in the way they celebrate this important day of rest. Andrews University is a full-time operation, hosting students, employees and visitors on its campus year-round, including during the Sabbath hours. Some students are also dependent on housing and meals throughout the year. This requires a support staff who is available 24/7 to assist in sustenance, health and safety, emergencies and other operational functions. Some areas that regularly require Sabbath work include Dining Services, Campus Safety, Transportation, Plant Services, Custodial Services, Howard Performing Arts Center and others. It is the expectation of the University that all efforts are made to assist in an employee's ability to celebrate the Sabbath day of rest. To accomplish this, the University recommends that events that impact the Sabbath hours be kept to a minimum, whenever possible. All affected departments must explicitly identify the potential of Sabbath work in the applicable job description and should include discussion about potential Sabbath work in the interview process to clarify what type of work or expectations are held in the given area. It is also suggested that, in order to minimize Sabbath work, departments providing weekend coverage rotate their staff to ensure the same staff are not on duty every weekend.

In addition, departments should limit their work to what is absolutely necessary to be completed on the Sabbath day, such as essential food preparation and cleanup, life safety, imminent loss of infrastructure, or other actions as may be needed to prevent injury or damage to persons or property. Departments can also deliberately limit the work that needs to be done on Sabbath by fulfilling certain tasks prior to the Sabbath hours (i.e., cooking for Sabbath meals on a previous day, setting up for a Sabbath evening concert prior to the Sabbath hours). Other tasks may be left to be accomplished after the Sabbath hours.

In the event that an employee feels their Sabbath convictions have been compromised, they should work with their supervisor, or the director of their area, to resolve the issue. If no solution can be found, the employee is encouraged to visit the Office of Human Resources and, as a final option, one of the campus ombudspersons.