



# What Lab & Diagnostics Teams Should Look for in Employee Scheduling Software

*A practical guide for diagnostic labs, imaging centers, and pathology groups that are ready to make the right investment.*



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# Introduction

## **Imagine this: It's 8:05 a.m. in your diagnostic lab.**

A full slate of blood draws is lined up for the morning, patients are already checking in, and you just learned your lead phlebotomist called out sick. The phones are ringing with last-minute reschedules, and your front desk team is scrambling to keep patients updated. Every minute counts — and each gap or overlap creates a ripple effect of delays in test results and appointments.

Or picture the same morning in an outpatient imaging center.

Your MRI machine is booked solid until lunch, but the credentialed technologist needed to run it isn't on-site. Patients are already arriving for their scans, the phones are ringing with reschedules, and your team is trying to manage expectations. Again, every gap or overlap creates costly downtime, delayed results, and unhappy patients.

When you treat scheduling like an office task, you're missing out on how you fully serve patients, control labor costs, and keep staff from burning out.

If you're reading this, you're likely evaluating employee scheduling software and want to choose a solution that will actually work in your lab or imaging department. This guide breaks down the core capabilities to look for when selecting employee scheduling software and how to evaluate vendors before you buy.

Whether you manage a regional lab, outpatient imaging center, or pathology practice, this guide will put you down the right path in diagnostics scheduling.

# Why scheduling is different in labs & diagnostics

Diagnostic teams may not run 24/7 like hospitals, but your scheduling challenges are uniquely intense. A missed shift, a late-running scan, or a double-booked modality can throw off the entire day.

Let’s explore what makes scheduling for diagnostic labs and imaging centers so complex.

1

**Tight appointment windows**

Unlike hospitals with rotating shifts, diagnostics teams run back-to-back patient visits with little margin for delay. Yet [lab vacancy rates range from 7-11%](#), going as high as 25% in some areas, creating scheduling risk points.

2

**Burnout risk**

In lab and imaging suites, losing even one technologist to vacation or illness (or worse, quitting) stresses the rest. Fatigue can cause errors, frustrate patients, and leave your staff stretched thin — for imaging professionals alone, 24.8% said [burnout was the reason they left](#) their previous role.

3

**Cost balancing**

Overstaffing inflates payroll, while understaffing leads to patient dissatisfaction, idle equipment, and longer turnaround times. Smart scheduling in diagnostics helps you find the balance.

4

**Role- and credential-specific coverage**

Diagnostics requires flexibility of various roles, which can lead to workforce fatigue and inefficiencies if the right staff isn’t aligned in the schedule. A CT scan can’t happen without both the right technologist and the right machine available. Coverage must align with credentials and modality requirements, not just availability.

5

**Compliance pressures**

Even smaller diagnostic settings must track labor laws alongside credential expirations and certification days for technologists and phlebotomists. Without automation, these details slip through the cracks, creating risks for compliance fines, patient safety, and costly downtime.

Core capabilities every  
employee scheduling  
software should have

You're not looking for any generic scheduling tools at this point. You need capabilities built for lab and diagnostics teams' operations.

These five essentials are adapted from proven best practices in healthcare scheduling and tailored for labs and imaging departments.

1. Align staffing with patient and provider schedules
2. Maintain compliance and coverage
3. Enable staff flexibility and communication
4. Plan for the unexpected
5. Centralize and simplify scheduling



## 1. Align staffing with patient demand and provider schedules

Of course, you need the core capability — scheduling — to work at its best. To keep operations running smoothly, your scheduling approach should reflect actual patient volume trends and provider availability.

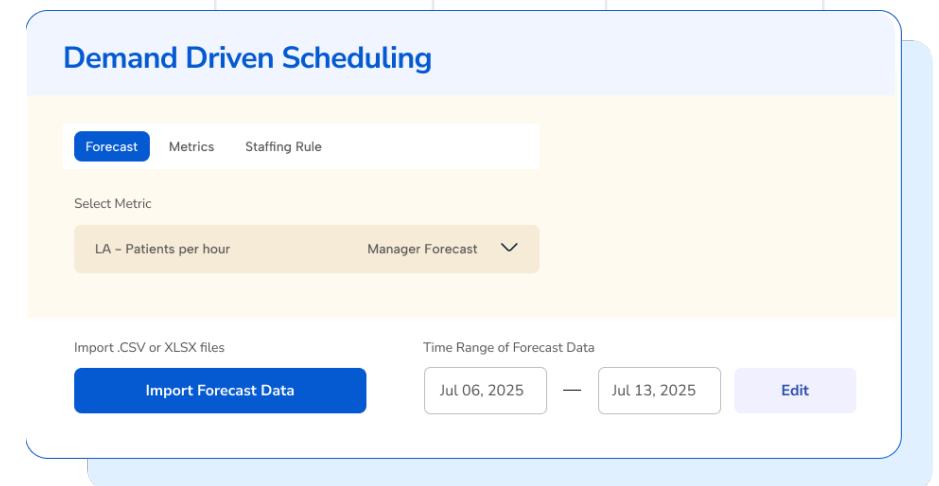
By looking at past patterns, seasonal trends, and even outside factors like weather, you can plan ahead for busy times and reduce last-minute changes that disrupt the day.

That means shorter wait times, machines running at full capacity, and the right number of on-site staff when patients need them most.

### SCENARIO

In an imaging center, demand spikes in the weeks following Thanksgiving with patients scheduling scans before the end of the year often because they've met their deductible and want to maximize their benefits.

By tracking these volume patterns, managers can schedule extra coverage so patients aren't left with long waits and machines don't sit idle.



## 2. Maintain compliance and coverage

Your scheduling system should have your back. This means automatically flagging when a technologist or phlebotomist approaches overtime, required breaks, or is scheduled outside agreed-upon hours.

Just as important, it should help you coordinate breaks so that critical roles aren't all off the floor at once. This verifies techs and specialists get the rest they're entitled to without leaving patients waiting.

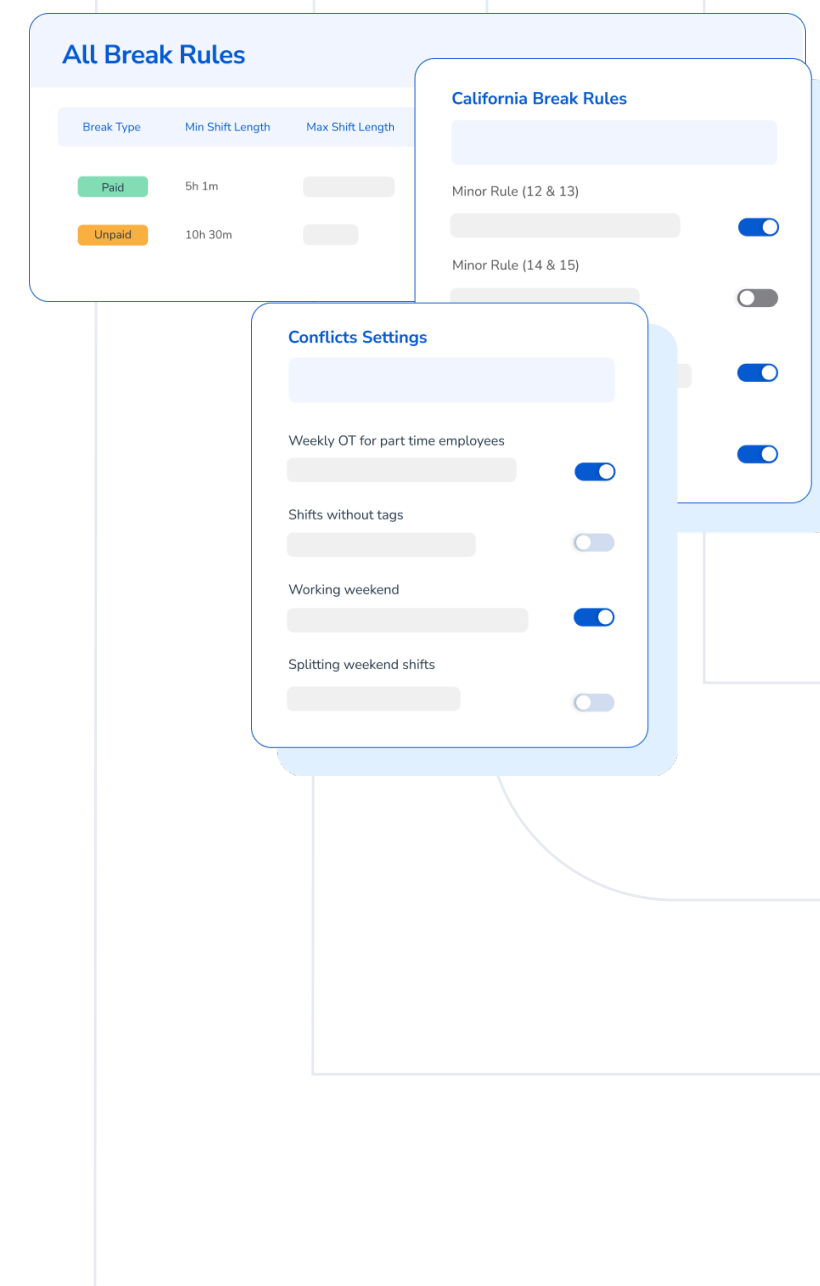
Automated scheduling helps evenly distribute shifts among staff members to create fair and compliant scheduling. Diagnostics teams that adopt these systems report higher staff satisfaction and retention rates — a critical advantage in a field where [vacancies have surged](#).

Additionally, automating compliance tracking helps:

- Avoid [payroll errors](#)
- Confirm labor law adherence is met
- Reduce your penalty risk from excessive overtime or inadequate break periods
- Balance workloads so no one feels stuck with the least desirable assignments
- Plan breaks in a way that supports compliance and continuous coverage

### SCENARIO

A lab schedules a technologist for consecutive shifts without a required meal break. With automated compliance tracking, the system alerts and helps rotate assignments to protect staff and avoid state labor law violations.



### 3. Enable staff flexibility and communication

Mobile self-service is a non-negotiable.

Your team should be able to swap shifts, request PTO, and adjust availability from anywhere. And you should be able to approve changes without the manual guesswork.

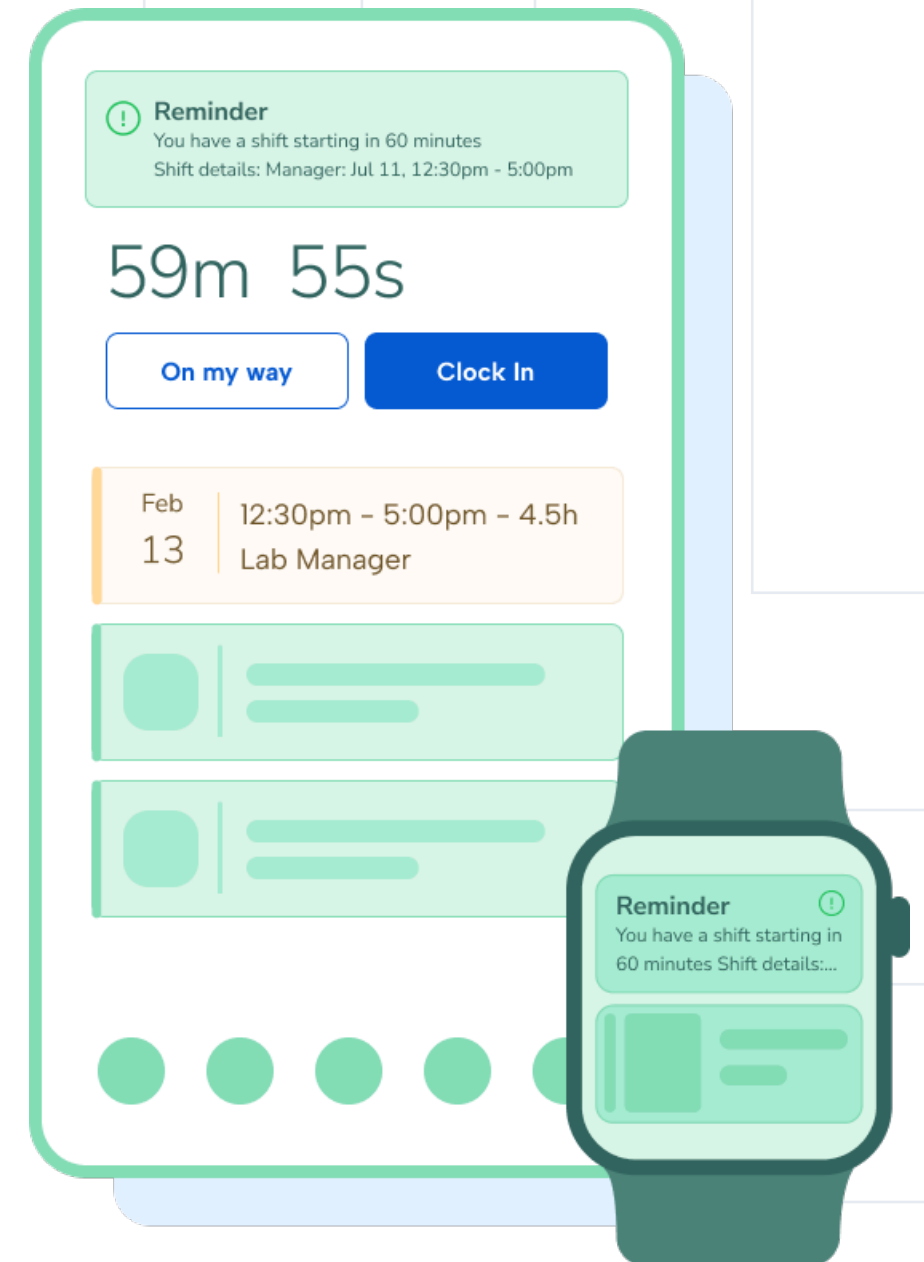
A self-scheduling system lets staff choose their preferred shifts based on availability, which can help limit last-minute call-offs.

Supervisors and managers then get real-time updates so they can quickly address unexpected absences and reassign shifts.

#### SCENARIO

In an imaging department, a CT technologist swaps a shift with an X-ray tech to accommodate a personal need.

Instead of creating a back-and-forth with the supervisor, the system handles the change in-app without phone calls or delays.



## 4. Plan for the unexpected

A smaller diagnostic setting doesn't always mean smaller emergencies.

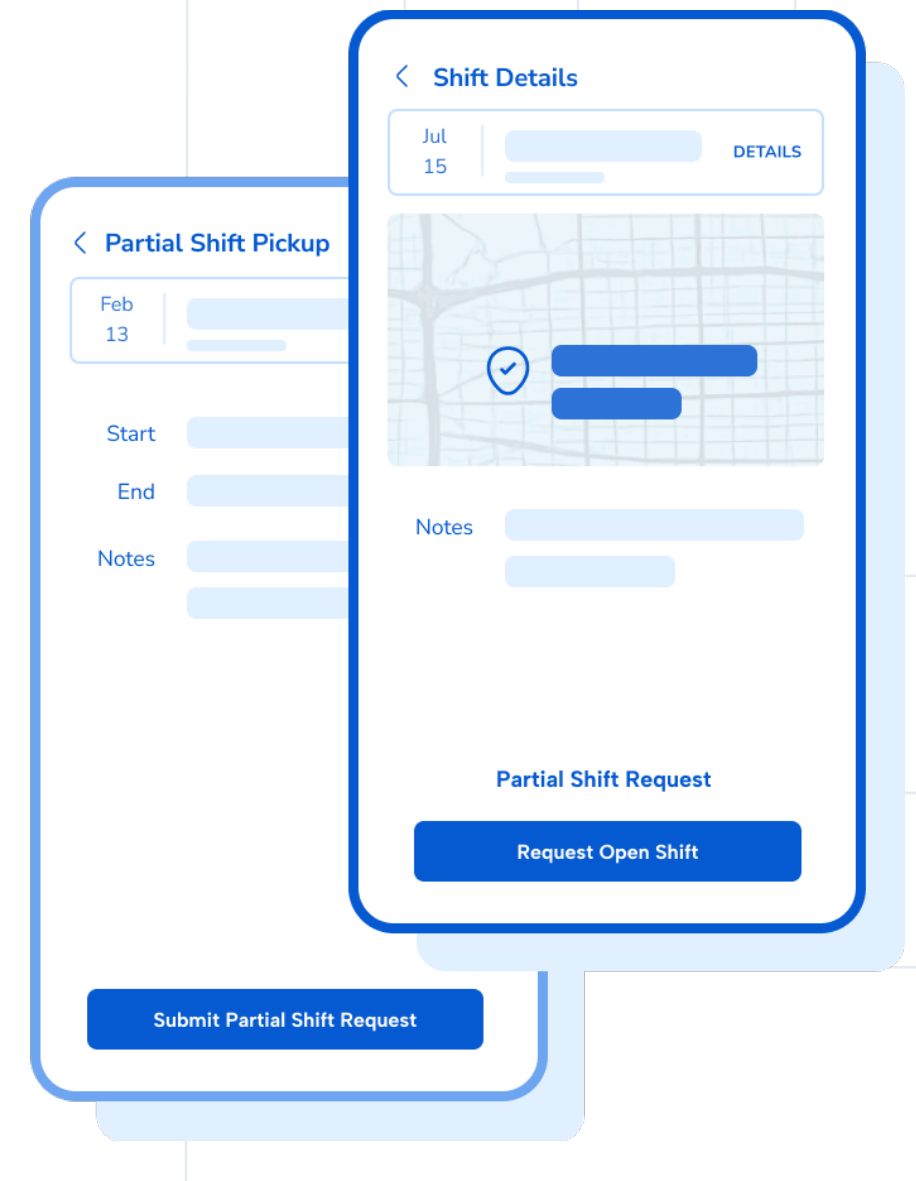
No matter how small your center is, you'll have last-minute absences or urgent test needs. And if patients are delayed because of it, the impact can be significant.

Your scheduling software should have a float pool list or on-call roster and send instant alerts when a shift needs coverage

### SCENARIO

In a lab, a phlebotomist calls out right before a full morning of blood draws.

The system pings all qualified staff in seconds — first to accept gets the shift.



## 5. Centralize and simplify scheduling

One central schedule visible to everyone prevents the “I didn’t see the schedule” problem.

Changes happen in one place, so updates should be available everywhere, reducing confusion. The right solution verifies that all staff members have real-time access to their schedules with the ability to confirm shifts, request time off, and receive reminders so they don’t miss any updates.

### SCENARIO

A regional diagnostic center uses one shared digital schedule across lab and imaging teams, so the front desk, technologists, and support staff are always in sync.

Patients aren’t left waiting because the right staff weren’t available, and equipment downtime is minimized.



# How to evaluate employee scheduling vendors before you buy

By the time you're sitting through demos, every solution sounds like it has the magic fix.

*"It's efficient." "It's easy." "It will simplify scheduling."*

But the real question is whether any of that will hold up in the daily reality of your diagnostic team — when patients are rescheduling scans, a technologist calls out, and a pathology supervisor covers multiple departments.

The right vendor is already anticipating your workforce's curveballs before they happen, making your team's life easier from day one.

## Here are some key evaluation points to consider:

### Healthcare experience

- Do you currently have labs, imaging centers, or pathology groups?
- Can you provide references or case studies from labs, centers, or groups like ours?

### Integration ability

- Which payroll and HR systems do you integrate with today?
- Can you show me a live example of how that integration works?

### HIPAA compliance

- Do you sign a Business Associate Agreement (BAA)?
- How do you handle data security, access permissions, and encrypted communications?

### Onboarding & support

- How long does implementation take for a team of our size?
- What's your typical support response time if something breaks during office hours?

### Scalability and growth

- If we add a new modality or expand to another location, how does the system scale?
- Are there additional fees for growth or added users?

### Ease of use for staff

- What adoption rates have you seen among technologists and lab staff in diagnostics groups like ours?
- Can staff request coverage swaps or vacation time off or PTO directly in the app without manager intervention?



# ROI and total cost of ownership

The right solution pays for itself through:

### **Fewer overtime hours**

Automated scheduling rules prevent accidental overscheduling, keeping labor costs predictable and eliminating unnecessary overtime payouts. Even a small reduction in overtime adds up quickly in lean diagnostics teams.

### **Less time spent on manual scheduling**

Lab supervisors and imaging managers often spend hours per week building, editing, and communicating schedules. With digital solutions, those hours shrink to minutes, freeing up time for patient-facing work.

### **Lower turnover from reduced burnout**

When staff feel scheduling is fair and flexible, they're less likely to leave. Avoiding even one resignation saves tens of thousands in recruiting, onboarding, and lost productivity — the turnover cost of a radiology tech, for example, can sometimes exceed \$60,000.

### **Higher patient throughput without extra payroll**

Smarter alignment of technologists, pathologists, and support staff reduces bottlenecks. So, more tests and scans are completed each day without adding to payroll costs.

And when schedules aren't aligned, the stakes are high — an idle MRI machine can mean more than \$1,000 an hour in lost revenue. Better scheduling keeps the right staff in place so patients move through faster, results are delivered sooner, and expensive equipment doesn't sit unused.

### **Compliance error prevention**

The financial risk of labor law violations, penalties, or lost reimbursements tied to credential lapses, state staffing rules, or privacy violations can outweigh software fees. A compliant system protects you from penalties and reputational harm.

The cost of scheduling software is the smallest slice of the pie.

The *bigger, costlier slice* comes from inefficiencies you're already paying for, which shrink when you choose the right scheduling solution.

# Questions to ask before you buy

When you're comparing options, these questions cut through the sales pitch:

- ✓ How quickly can schedules update in real time across all devices?
- ✓ Can the software integrate with our payroll or HR systems today?
- ✓ How does it handle compliance with our state's labor laws?
- ✓ What happens when someone calls out at the last minute?
- ✓ How is sensitive patient and staff data secured?

If the vendor can't answer these clearly or show you in a live demo, keep looking.

Transform your lab &  
diagnostics team with  
better employee scheduling

You've already put in the work to define your challenges and research your options. Now it's about choosing a scheduling solution that solves the problems you see every day — fewer open shifts, reduced overtime, credentialed staff on every modality, and smoother days across labs and imaging suites.

With the right system, your diagnostic teams spend less time fixing schedules and more time focusing on patient care, faster results, and a better experience for everyone who walks through your doors. You get all of this while keeping labor costs in check and costly equipment running at peak capacity.

And if you're ready to see how TCP can help improve your scheduling, check out our [Humanity Schedule](#) solution or [book time with our team](#).

TCP Software's employee scheduling and time and attendance solutions have the flexibility and scalability to suit your business and your employees, now and as you grow.

From TimeClock Plus, which automates even the most complex payroll calculations and leave management requests, to Humanity Schedule for dynamic employee scheduling that saves you time and money, we have everything you need to meet your organization's needs, no matter how unique. Plus, with Aladtec, we offer 24/7 public safety scheduling solutions for your hometown heroes.

Ready to learn how TCP Software takes the pain out of employee scheduling and time tracking? Speak with an expert today.



Want to learn more? Let's chat.  
[tcpsoftware.com](https://tcpsoftware.com)