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WORK FORCE

HOW TO GET AND KEEP A JOB

BE A RELIABLE WORKER

Your employer will expect you to behave in certain ways. If you follow these basic rules, you will get along well with your supervisor and fellow employees.

Be on the job every day

You are an important part of your employer's business. If you aren't there, parts of the job won't get done. Or someone else will have to do your job as well as their own. This will make your supervisor unhappy and you will be unpopular with your co-workers.

If you are very, very ill and absolutely unable to work, you must call your supervisor and let him or her know that you can't make it in to work. Then go to a doctor! If you have a headache, a slight cold, or stomach ache, you should take some over-the-counter medicine and go in to work. Your employer will be understanding if you are sick, but only if your illness is very serious.

Be on the job regardless of weather

Your employer expects you to show up to work regardless of weather — rain, sleet, or snow. It may be unpleasant getting to work in bad weather, but you need to be there just the same. If weather conditions are so bad that your company closes down for the day, your employer will call you or make an announcement on the radio or television.

Be at work on time

It's important for you to start your workday on time. When you are ready to work on time, your supervisor and co-workers will feel that you take your job seriously and that you respect them.

Stay at work all day

Your employer is paying you for a full day's work. Don't make any plans or appointments that will require you to leave work early. When you show up on time and work hard every day, your supervisor, co-workers, and employer will respect you. You will have opportunities to advance to better jobs in the company.

Dress appropriately for your job

When you are hired, ask for suggestions about what you should wear on the job. Some employers don't want women to wear slacks. Some employers will let you wear good casual clothes, but not jeans or sneakers. It's important to know how to dress so you will feel comfortable around your co-workers. If you don't have many clothes that are appropriate for your job, you can build your wardrobe gradually. Watch for store sales and buy a few pieces of clothing at a time.

USE YOUR SKILLS

The way you perform on the job is very important to your employer. You will be evaluated on a regular basis.

Your supervisor will have a list of things you need to do in your job. He or she will regularly check the list to see how well you are doing on each task. That way, your boss can keep track of how well you are doing and where you can improve. Whether or not you get a pay raise may depend on how well you perform the tasks related to your job. If you work hard and try to improve, you may be considered for a higher paying job in the company.

Here are some skill areas you need to consider if you want to do well on your job.

Reading skills

People read at different levels. Different jobs require specific reading skills. It's important to know how well you can read and where you might need to improve your skills. You may be able to read letters and stories, but you may have trouble with graphs or tables. You might need to improve your ability to read instruction manuals for the equipment you use on your job. If you'd like to find out how well you read, check with your local literacy council (see the Resources section at the back of this booklet). They can give you a test to check your reading level and suggest how you can improve. Some school districts, churches, and community agencies also provide help with reading for adults.

Math skills

Some jobs require only a little math. Other jobs require good math skills. Find out what math skills you will need to use on your job. If you need to improve, don't be afraid to ask for help. Check with your school district, community agencies, or the local literacy council for help with math skills.

Writing skills

Your job may require you to write in new ways. You may have to write messages to people in other departments. You may have to fill out forms or write reports about the work you are doing. Check with your school district, community agencies, or the local literacy council for help developing the kind of writing skills you may need on your job.

Computer skills

Many jobs today require some familiarity with computers. Often, efficiency on a key-board is important. Other jobs will require only simple computer skills that you can learn through basic instruction at work. Sometimes local schools and libraries offer computer classes. If you need more specific help, ask someone in your Human Resources Department to recommend computer training programs.

ACTIVITY

Put a notecard in your pocket or purse and for 5 workdays note when you are presented with a task where you should improve your skills. Note how you might do become better with this task. Include asking a coworker, family member or friend to teach you.

Looking in the community for a mentor or a mentoring program that will add to your skills. Finding classes in your community that teach the skills you need.

This may take some effort from you now but improving your skills will make your job easier.

Don't forget
to improve
your skills!

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