

Job Retention

**Adapted from EMPLOY Employment Assistance Program: A division of MINNCOR INDUSTRIES*

Your First Day on the Job

Talk with your supervisor or personnel department before your first day on the job. Know exactly when you are to arrive, where to go and who to contact. At some companies, you will report at a different time and location on the first day than you will on other work days. The questions in the following checklist can help you make sure you know how to report properly for your first day of work.

First Day Checklist Check off each item as you answer the question.

- What time should I arrive? _____
- Where should I report? _____
- To whom should I report? _____
- What documentation should I bring? _____
- What special equipment do I need? _____
- What will I be expected to do? _____
- Where can I store my lunch? _____

Orientation Several important issues may be discussed during orientation including the following subjects:

Introductions You need to know what the organization does, how it is structured and who the key people are.

Payroll & Personnel Information You must complete certain forms for payroll withholdings. You must also prove that you are a US citizen or if you are an immigrant, you must prove that you can legally work in this country. Be prepared to provide this information when asked.

Policies & Practices Review You will be informed about the important policies and practices of your employer. This includes information about vacations, holiday and other days approved for excused absences.

Benefits & Services You will have a chance to discuss company benefits.

Employer Expectations Review You will be told what the employer expects.

Breaks There are several different types of breaks that you might take throughout the work day. Many organizations prohibit smoking on the job or restrict it to a smoking area outside of building. If you intend to smoke during your break, you need to know where it is allowed. Below are the most common reasons people take work breaks:

- **Rest Room Breaks** In some jobs, it is necessary to find a replacement to do your job before taking such a break.
- **Rest Breaks** Employers must provide a 15 minute break in the first and second period if you work a full eight hours. Find out when you should take your breaks and if there is a break room.
- **Meal Breaks** You are allowed a meal break around the middle of your work period if you work a full eight hours. Make sure you know when to take a meal break and how much time is allowed.

Sample Attendance Policy

Employees are expected to report to work at their scheduled starting times on each scheduled work day. Excessive absenteeism shall result in discipline which can include discharge.

Of course, there are occasions when employees cannot report to work. In those circumstances, the employee must call the supervisor before the schedule start time if he/she is to be absent from work or more that 15 minutes late. If the supervisor or Human Resources cannot be reached, a message should be left with the person answering the phone. Employee must give the reason for the anticipated tardiness or absence, where they can be reached and their anticipated time away from work.

Employees must either call the supervisor on each consecutive day of absence or give an anticipated returned date based on medical advice. Notification to a fellow employee is not proper notice. The supervisor may require a physician's certificate.

An employee who is absent from work two consecutive days without notification to the company is considered a voluntary quit and will be terminated from the payroll.

Employees are encouraged to avoid scheduling medical or other personal appointments which conflict with normal working hours. However, when such conflicts cannot be avoided, employees should advise their supervisor at the earliest time possible. Such time for non-exempt employees will be taken as sick leave for medical appointments and vacation leave for personal appointments, assuming the employee has such time available. Otherwise, the time will be unpaid.

Source: Todd Raphael, Online Editor and other Workforce staff, April 2000

Job Keeping Skills

If you have work habits such as these, you will have no trouble keeping your job!

1. **Be Flexible.** Employer needs can change often. If you are willing to do the work that your employer needs you to do, you will be well liked and a lot happier, too.
2. **Be Reliable.** Do what you say you will do. This means getting to work on time and doing the job that you said you would.
3. **Go to Work Every Day.** No employer will put up with a worker who comes to work only when and if they feel like it. If you are really sick, be sure to telephone your boss as soon as possible.
4. **Be Cooperative with Others.** You must be able to work with other people. This includes both co-workers and supervisors.
5. **Work on your Own.** Once you have completed training, learn to work without being told what to do next. If you have finished your work and are not sure what to do, ask your supervisor.
6. **Keep a Good Attitude.** Accept your share of work without complaining or slowing down. If someone offers suggestions on how to do a better job, learn from what was said and improve your performance. A smile and friendly attitude will work wonders for you and for those working around you.
7. **Be Honest.** Do not steal materials or time from the employer. The worker who comes in late, leaves early, or works too slowly on purpose, is a time stealer because they are getting paid for work not done.
8. **Work While on the Job.** Too much talk or play on the job will get you in trouble. Personal phone calls should be made or received only when absolutely necessary. Also, leave personal problems and time for romantic relationships at home.
9. **Obey Work Rules.** Follow the rules concerning work hours, safety laws, dress code and any others the employer has. Breaking these rules could cost you your job.
10. **Follow Company Customs.** These are the rules of the company that may not be written in any employee handbook, but everyone follows them anyway. Such customs might include dressing the way other workers do or coming to work 15 minutes early each day. Not following these unwritten rules may mean you will never “fit in” at work.

Guaranteed Ways to Make a Good Impression on the Job

- Be on time to work each day--15 minutes early is even better--it shows you are eager to work.
- Leave for break and lunch on time and return on time--it shows you are dependable.
- Leave a little bit late at the end of the day--it shows you are hardworking.
- Listen carefully, follow directions, and ask questions when you need help--it shows you care about your work.
- Work carefully and take pride in doing the best you can--it shows you would be a good person to promote to jobs with more responsibilities.
- Accept constructive criticism and try to learn from it instead of getting upset.
- Be friendly and considerate of others--stay away from those who are not.
- Finally, if you decide to quit your job, be sure to give at least two weeks notice--it shows you are responsible.
- Getting along with others will help you on the job and could open up opportunities for future employment.

Some of the Most Common Problems Employers Have With Workers

- ✓ Absent from work
- ✓ Angry or hostile personality
- ✓ Lack of confidence
- ✓ Lack of training
- ✓ Late to work
- ✓ Leaving the work area
- ✓ Low quality work
- ✓ Not doing share of work
- ✓ Not getting along with co-workers
- ✓ Not having necessary tools
- ✓ Not motivated
- ✓ Not self-starter
- ✓ Not skilled enough to do the job
- ✓ Personal problems
- ✓ Poor appearance and grooming
- ✓ Problems with supervisors
- ✓ Problems with the law
- ✓ Stealing or cheating
- ✓ Unreliable transportation
- ✓ Using alcohol or drugs

Common Reasons Employers Give for Firing Workers

1. Being late for work
2. Not showing up for work
3. Not listening to or respecting employer/supervisor
4. Not getting along with co-workers
5. Proved to be dishonest/untrustworthy (lied or stole things)
6. Did not have acceptable appearance or grooming
7. Was unreliable, too many days absent or late
8. Used work time for personal business
9. Worked too slowly, made too many mistakes
10. Refused to follow orders
11. Misrepresented skills or experiences
12. Did not follow safety rules

- ✓ **Example:** A survey showed that 10% of college graduates are either fired or “strongly encouraged to resign” within the first year they enter the work force. The most common reasons listed were: “Failure to fit in”
- ✓ “Misunderstanding of the applicant’s qualifications”
- ✓ “Bad chemistry with the boss”
- ✓ “Office politics”

Your Lifestyle and Stress

A moderate lifestyle will serve you well throughout your life. Moderation is avoiding excess. Rate your lifestyle using the following checklist. Check each statement that is true for you. Then score your answers to see how you measure up to good lifestyle habits that can make you a better worker.

- I do something really fun on a regular basis
- I rarely drink in excess
- I exercise regularly
- I have friends I can rely on
- I gain strength from my religious beliefs
- I avoid eating lots of junk food
- I don't smoke
- I average 6-8 hours of sleep on work nights
- I do not use illegal drugs
- I eat at least one well-balanced meal daily
- Total your number of statements checked. Score yourself using the following guidelines:

- 8 or more Reflects a positive lifestyle, effective on the job.
- 6-7 Reflects moderate lifestyle, will assist you on the job.
- 5 or fewer Reflects a vulnerable lifestyle, you may find your lifestyle creates some job problems

What can you do to improve your lifestyle?

Are you willing to do this for 60 days? Yes No

What is Your Excuse?

There are many reasons why workers are absent or tardy. Sometimes being absent or late is unavoidable. Read the following list. Place a check mark in the “absent” column if that reason causes you to be absent frequently. Check the “late” column if it makes you late. You can check both columns. If you aren’t currently employed, check those reasons you were late or absent from your former job.

Reason	Absent	Late	Strategy
Overslept			
Missed the Bus			
Personal Illness			
Alarm didn't ring			
Children were sick			
Car didn't start			
Couldn't find a babysitter			
Someone borrowed my car			
Wanted to sleep in			
Traffic was bad			
Didn't feel like going			
Family problems			
Wanted to do other things			
Weather was bad			
Forgot the work schedule			
No clean clothes			
Needed a day off			
Problems with Boss			

What do you need to do to reduce your personal absences and tardiness from work?

Is My Timing Off?

You should give your employer as much notice as possible if you have to miss work. If there is an emergency, call ASAP. Even in an emergency, you can often give your employer three hours or more notice. This will give him/her a chance to find someone to replace you. If there is some type of special occasion, you will usually know about it in advance. Your employer will expect you to give notice of this kind of absence before the work schedule is prepared. Some employers require to be informed one or two weeks notice for coverage purposes. Check to see how much notice your employer requires. Look at the following reasons and decide if you could call in your reason the day of your absence or if you would be expected to tell your boss one to two weeks in advance.

I called in and told my employer:	Same day	1-2 weeks notice
We're going on vacation		
I have a dentist appointment		
I'm sick in bed with the flu		
My child is sick		
I have to help my brother move		
I broke my leg		
We have relatives coming in from out of town		
My brother came in unexpectedly last night. I haven't seen him in a year. He's leaving tomorrow.		
I have to go to my daughter's graduation		
There's a death in my family. I have to go to the funeral.		
My dad was just taken to the hospital.		
I have a family get-together		
I have to pick up a friend at the airport		

Employer Training Options

Talk to your supervisor about training options available within the company. Here is a checklist to use to identify the training resources at your job.

Resources Available to you on the Job

Place an **X** next to the resources that your employer offers to new employees

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job Description | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching other employee or work groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working with assigned co-worker | <input type="checkbox"/> In-service training sessions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Formal training with a manager supervisor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New employee orientation | <input type="checkbox"/> Outside training or education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy and procedure manual | |

You can avoid making many mistakes by simply finding out what resources your employer has available to you. If there is money available for outside training and you will benefit for it, tell your employer how it will help you do a better job. Let the employer know that you will share the information learned with your co-workers.

Find out about the people you work with

Being the new person on the job could make you feel out of place. You don't know how things are done and don't really know your new co-workers. Here are some tips to help you start to connect with your co-workers and learn how things operate:

- Don't be afraid to introduce yourself to people you don't know
- Tell others that you are new on the job
- Ask other people about what they do and how your job relates to theirs
- Observe others carefully. Pay attention to how they do their work; how they relate to their supervisor, co-workers and other people they come in contact with on the job; and their attitude

Most people want to help, don't be afraid to ask for help.

Check Your Attitude

Place a checkmark in front of the following attitude you know you have.

- Arrive early and stay late
- Be Defensive
- Smile and be friendly
- Complain
- Ask for more responsibility
- Interrupt others
- Volunteer to help other
- Make promises that cannot be kept
- Learn on your own time
- Gossip
- Ask for more training
- Blame others
- Accept new assignments willing
- Ignore others
- Encourage others' ideas
- Act like a know-it-all
- Accept help from others
- Put tasks off to the last minute

Be sure you have the attitude that will help you move forward in the company

Getting Along With Your Supervisor

Every supervisor will have their own style when it comes to managing their own staff. It is up to you to adjust to their management style. Once you understand how your supervisor operates, you will be able to function as an effective team member.

Here are some rules to help you to get along with your supervisor:

1. Don't blame the supervisor
2. Do your homework
3. Don't fight the supervisor
4. Be willing to implement the suggestions you make
5. Use initiative
6. Keep the boss informed
7. Accept responsibility
8. Fix problems as they occur
9. Tell the truth and don't quibble
10. Put in an honest day's work

By following these rules, you will have less friction between you and your supervisor.

Taking Direction with an Open Mind

In order to get an understanding of what is expected of you, your co-workers and supervisor will play an important part in you learning the job expectations. There was a system in place prior to you starting the job. During times, it may feel like you are being told what to do. You may not understand why they do things the way do, but learn from what they say. You need to fit into the job; don't try to make the job fit you.

Be sure to ask questions. Having open communication will give you the help and understanding you need to learn your job, co-workers and supervisor. Later, once you have learned how to do the job their way, you can introduce new ideas to the team.

Don't get defensive. You don't know how they do things, so there is nothing for you to get mad about. You were hired for a reason. No one is questioning your skills and experience. You just have to fit what you already know into how things are done on your new job.

Be a Team Player

Test your team player attributes. For each of the following questions, check “Yes” or “No”.

Do you	Yes	No
1. Refuse to take part in workplace social activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Share secrets others have told you in confidence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Always try to smile and be friendly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Leave your work area a mess because that’s how you like it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Listen when others talk without interrupting them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Offer to take on extra work when a co-worker gets called away by a family emergency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Offer a ride when someone is having car trouble?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Tell the supervisor when someone has helped you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Talk constantly about how things were at another job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Arrive at work on time so that others don’t have to cover for you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Frequently try to sell something to co-workers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Work as carefully, efficiently and cheerfully as you can?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Tell off-color jokes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Invite co-workers to lunch?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Brag about good performance reviews and raises you received?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What are the areas you need to Change?

By what date will you be ready to make that change?

Your Reputation

Building a good reputation at work comes from making good choices. Your reputation is something that is earned whether it is “good” or “bad”. Everything you do reflects the type of person / worker you are. Whatever you do, people will notice and begin to form opinions about you. The choices you make will determine if people can or cannot rely on you or expect positive things from you, and whether or not you are recognized in a positive manner.

Your actions mean a lot in the workplace. You decide how you want people to perceive you. Give a little more than what is normally expected of you. Share new ideas with your co-workers and get their input. Come in earlier than your start time and stay a little later at the end of the day. It will show that you are a hard worker.

Offer to help your co-workers with projects and give honest and positive input when asked. Take time to complete projects instead of checking out at the end of your shift. Relay necessary information to the next shift workers to help them complete the rest of the job. Before you leave, straighten up your work area, it does make a difference.

Take some time to check the status of your reputation

Check the statements that you are willing to do to improve you work reputation

- Arrive a few minutes early
- Give project or work updates to those on your team
- Share the responsibility of organizing social events
- Turn on equipment
- Straighten a central work area
- Help decorate for the Holidays
- Stay a few minutes late to finish an important project

What are some other things you could do to build your reputation?

Expand your imagination to think like a supervisor. You must begin to think about more than just yourself. Complete the checklist below to identify whether you are meeting the expectations you would place on your supervisees:

Your Supervisor's Expectations

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have an ability to analyze | <input type="checkbox"/> Operate the computer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Model dependability | <input type="checkbox"/> Show professionalism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be a team player | <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and organize work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Show flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Have self-confidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate effectively | <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize customer service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice honesty | <input type="checkbox"/> Be willing to learn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lead and manage others | <input type="checkbox"/> Solve problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Show openness to new ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> Show dedication to the job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manage priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> Work well with others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a positive attitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Work without supervision |

Below are some tips to consider whether you need to work on any of the necessary skills.

- Think about how you act everyday at work
- Look closely at how you do your job and ask yourself whether there is more you could learn in order to do your job better
- Think about whether there are skills you need or want to improve. Is there anything you need to change?
- Think about ways your work connects to the work of other people or other departments
- Think about what you want to do next. Decide how your current job can help you get ready for the next step.
- Look for gaps in your training or experience that need to be filled. What actions do you need to take?

9 Steps to Build Job Security

- 1. Do good work.** Although this may not guarantee a spot on your current employer's payroll, it has other advantages:
 - It will make you feel better about yourself if you have to re-enter the job market.
 - It will improve your marketable skills.
 - It will motivate others to help you.
 - There is no substitute for a good reputation.
- 2. Practice kaizen.** This is a Japanese term for a continuous learning mentality. Work hard to grow your skills and expand your expertise.
- 3. Be a team player.** Although the term "team player" has become a cliché in today's workplace, it still carries meaning when it refers to the process of collaboration and the ability to work well with others.
- 4. Never get too comfortable.** For people who like the work life orderly and predictable, the current workplace climate is a real challenge. Without becoming paranoid, keep in mind that nothing lasts forever and approach each workday with as much energy, commitment and enthusiasm as you can muster.
- 5. Develop a spirit of creativity and innovation.** With so much emphasis on gaining the competitive edge, organizations increasingly value the work of people who are always on the lookout for new and better ways to help the organization maintain its competitive edge.
- 6. Know how to job-hunt.** Job searching is a skill set that can be learned and refined. You should feel more secure knowing that you can find another job when you need it.
- 7. Feed your Rolodex.** Although the actual Rolodex may be going the way of the dinosaur, the concept of expanding your network of contacts is alive and well. Rather than rest on your social laurels, take the initiative to meet new people both within and outside of your current organization.
- 8. Develop supplemental revenue** streams through 401(k) or 403(b) plans, prudent investments, side businesses and lucrative hobbies. Then, if something does happen to your job, you will still have income.
- 9. Know yourself.** Realize what you like, what you are good at, what you need in order to be successful, etc. Then direct your energies toward the kind of activities and environments that are most energizing and comfortable for you.¹

¹ Job Search and Career Checklist, Arlene S. Hirsch

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