

First Day on the Job

Introduction: The first day in a new job can be pretty intimidating. New people! New rules! New environment! New people in charge! This could be really stressful. While you can't eliminate stress, you can reduce stress by being prepared to work. Below are some guidelines to help you prepare for your first day on the job.

Guidelines:

- A. **Appearance.** What is the appropriate dress? If you aren't sure of the proper dress, contact your new supervisor or personnel officer for information a day or two before you are scheduled to begin. When you show up for your interview, observe what other people are wearing. If you are still uncertain, err on the side of conservative dress. Prepare your clothes the night before. Make a point of asking about a dress code and special safety clothing.
- B. **Reporting to Work.** What date and time are you to report for your first day? To whom do you report and at what location (address, building, floor, room number, telephone number, etc.)? Set your alarm and allow yourself time to dress, eat breakfast and travel. Make sure you have reliable transportation.
- C. **Documents.** What documents do you need to bring with you (identification, social security card, birth certificate, health form, driver's license, etc.)? If you have assembled a Job or Career Portfolio, these documents should be in the portfolio. Remember to take any special equipment or tools that you are expected to furnish.
- D. **Lunch Plans.** What will you do for lunch? Until you find out the length of your lunch break and what facilities are available (such as microwave, refrigerator, cafeteria, etc.) you may want to make plans for eating somewhere close to work.
- E. **Other Considerations.** Will you need to take a physical examination? Will there be drug testing? If so, and if you are taking any prescription medication, you may want to notify the people administering the drug test.
- F. **Listen and Observe.** Pay particular attention to the organization's culture--the attitudes, dress, behavior, values and habits of a particular company. It will take a while to understand how you fit in. Sometimes a company will assign a mentor to help you adjust to the job. If they don't, look to experienced workers for advice. The most important thing you can bring to the job is your attitude--your willingness to learn and ask for advice about things you do not know.

G. Orientation. Most organizations provide some kind of orientation for new employees, some more formal than others. Some organizations provide a written handbook of company policies and procedures for new employees. This is where you will learn about the company's policies-- employer expectations, employer-provided benefits, payroll procedures, work schedule, sick and vacation leave, lunch hours, dress code, safety procedures, smoking policies, etc. You will probably be given other information, such as parking facilities, lunch and break facilities, use of telephone, copier, fax and e-mail, securing supplies and equipment, location of restrooms , etc. Your supervisor or another employee will explain your job duties. If you don't understand, ask questions, seek clarification. Generally, someone will show you around the work area and other parts of the facility. You will be introduced to people you need to know and other employees. Don't worry if you don't remember everyone's name at first--you aren't expected to. It might help if you repeat the name when you are introduced.

H. Forms Completion. Usually you will need to meet with the personnel or human resource officer and complete some forms. Common forms which may need to be completed include:

- **Form I-9 - Employment Eligibility Verification** (a federal government form which must be filled out by everyone who works; it proves that you have the right to work in the United States of America)
- **Form W-4 - Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate** (a federal government form which, when completed, helps the employer withhold the correct amount of federal and state taxes from your paycheck)
- **Other Forms** for benefits provided by the company, such as health and life insurance, payroll deductions, direct deposit for pay checks, etc, or other voluntary deductions, such as union dues or charitable contributions.

Information typically needed to complete these forms includes:

- **Name** (your official name, avoid nicknames)
- **Contact Information** (your address, phone number, etc.)
- **Social Security Number** (you will need your Social Security Card)
- **Emergency Notification** (person to be notified in case of illness or accident)
- **Identification** (Most employees use a driver's license and a Social Security Card, you may also use a School ID Card with a photo or a School Report Card instead of a drivers license, and you may use an original or certified copy of your birth certificate, or a tribal enrollment card instead of your Social Security Card. If you happen to have a valid passport, that is the only document you need)