

How to keep your new job



The first few weeks in any new job can be awkward and can present you with new challenges. Observing and understanding your workplace requirements and your employer's expectations can increase your chances of maintaining long term employment and end your reliance on Centrelink benefits. You will be on probation for the first three months so here are some hints to help you succeed.

First impressions count

- On your first day, dress smartly and appropriately.
- Introduce yourself to reception or ask for the contact person provided by your Mission Australia Employment Solutions consultant.
- Present yourself as best you can.
- Don't wait for others to introduce themselves to you. Take the initiative and extend the hand of friendship from the beginning.
- Be positive and enthusiastic, and shake hands firmly with each person you meet.
- Personal hygiene is very important.
- Offer yourself for extra work if you run out of things to do.
- Keep your personal mobile phone calls or messages to a minimum. It is best practice to keep your phone switched off. If you have to use it switch it on in your breaks and make sure that is acceptable to your supervisor or employer.

Reliability is the key

Always be on time. Late comers can be considered uninterested and potentially unreliable.

- Find out before you start what time you are expected to be at work. You don't want to arrive at 9.00am if start time is 8.30am.
- Plan how you will get to work. Get hold of a train or bus timetable before your first day. Allow an extra 30 minutes to get to work in case anything goes wrong.
- If you know you will be late or if you are sick, phone your employer before starting time to let them know. A medical certificate also needs to be supplied if you are off sick for more than two days or sick the day following a public holiday.
- Don't miss work for unnecessary or unimportant reasons.
- Organise external appointments outside of working hours where possible. Eg: medical appointments, hairdressers, children's appointments etc.
- Ensure you have emergency childcare arrangements organised.
- Make sure your transportation is reliable eg: maintain your vehicle and ensure you always have enough petrol.
- If you have been unemployed for a long period of time you may find you might need to alter your social arrangements and adjust your sleep patterns. Make sure you check your roster and always be aware of any changes to your start and finish times.



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Following instructions is vital

- Find out who your direct supervisor is. You are usually responsible to only one person.
- Listen carefully, observe and follow instructions exactly as given. Usually things are done a certain way for a good reason.
- Ask questions if you are unsure of what you are expected to do or how to operate equipment.
- If you are a smoker, enquire about regulations or smoking arrangements and never take unauthorised or extended smoke breaks even if other staff members do.
- As a new employee your opinion may not always be considered. It takes time to earn the respect of employers and workmates. Once earned you may be given increased responsibility.
- Make sure to arrange for your lunch and other refreshments to be taken within the allocated periods.

Personal problems are not always unsolvable

Unfortunately we all have to deal with crises in our lives from time to time and we all have to deal with things which may not be work related.

- Resist burdening your workmates with your problems. They may already have enough of their own.
- Absences for insignificant reasons will not gain you the respect of your employer or your workmates.
- Remember that your client manager/employment mentor is a professional and will help you deal with any problems you may encounter and treat you with respect and maintain confidence. Quite often what you may see as a major problem may not be as serious as you think. Problems can be solved if identified early.

Recent school leavers

- You will find that your working hours may be longer and with fewer breaks and holidays.
- Pace yourself and you will get used to the longer hours.
- A new job can be a novelty and your friends may get excited too. Employers don't appreciate your friends hanging around the workplace and distracting you. Arrange to do your socialising outside of working hours.
- Mobile phones should not be used constantly while at work. (Use it to make your social arrangements outside working hours). Tell your friends to ring after work.

Tips for starting a new job

1. Arrive on time.
2. Dress smartly and professionally.
3. If you are going to be sick, or if you are running late, make sure you call and let your direct supervisor know.
4. Be positive and enthusiastic.
5. Watch, listen and learn.
6. Be sociable but not too pushy.
7. Look for common ground with colleagues.
8. Learn the names of your co-workers, especially the important ones.
9. If you are unsure about something, always ask questions.
10. Familiarise yourself with your new surroundings.
11. Contact your Mission Australia Employment Solutions consultant if you have any problems or issues with your new job.

Other things to remember

- A disagreement with someone in the workplace does not mean you have to leave work. Advise your client manager/employment mentor immediately.
- Be aware of swearing in the workplace. What may be appropriate language to use with friends might not be acceptable in the workplace.
- Sexual innuendo may be interpreted by some as harassment and you might be the subject of a complaint.
- If you have a medical problem that requires medication you should make your employer aware.
- It is not a good idea to criticise your employer to other work mates. They may pass it on.
- Don't be a clock watcher. Time will pass without your assistance.
- Racial slurs will not be tolerated in the workplace. It is also illegal.
- OH&S is a big issue to an employer. Observe safe work practises at all times and let your employer know of any potential risks (in a positive manner).

Contact

For more information, please contact your local Mission Australia Employment Solutions office on 13 11 24.



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