

SAFETY MATTERS



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Job Descriptions

A well-crafted job description is a written statement that describes the main objective of a job, its essential and nonessential functions, job qualifications, and other information about the job. A job description may include:

- Duties
- Effort
- Environmental and working conditions specific to the job
- Skills
- Responsibilities of the job
- Education and experience required

It may also list information on tools and equipment used and relationships with other jobs. A job description describes the job, not the person or persons who hold that job.

Why Are Job Descriptions Important?

Accurate job descriptions provide a basis for job evaluation, wage and salary comparisons, and a fair wage and salary structure. In particular, well-written job descriptions should:

- Clarify who is responsible for what within the company. They also help define relationships between individuals and between departments.
- Help the job holder understand the responsibilities of the position.
- Assist job applicants, employees, supervisors, and human resource professionals at every stage in the employment relationship, from recruitment to retirement.
- Help management analyze and improve the company's structure.
- Provide a basis from which to determine whether a disabled applicant is otherwise qualified for the job and, if so, to assist in determining what accommodation would be required for the applicant to be able to perform the essential functions of the position.

While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) doesn't require job descriptions, it does require that applicants and employees are able to

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IMPORTANT POINT

Clearly and accurately written position descriptions help in legal compliance. In addition to the ADA, laws that affect position descriptions include:

- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
- The Equal Pay Act
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act

Source – Business and Legal Resources (BLR) – www.blr.com

For more safety resources, visit
NFIB.com/safetymatters

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perform the “essential functions” of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has said that one of the things the agency will look at when determining essential functions are job descriptions written before an employer advertises to fill an opening. Therefore, most companies—whether they are rewriting old descriptions or developing them for the first time—want them to reflect essential functions, and a generic description is not the best way to do that.

A job description should begin with the essential functions of the job. The essential functions of a job are the key part of a job description, outlining specific tasks that the job entails. Identifying the essential functions in a job description will help lay the foundation of sound documentation to comply with ADA and EEOC guidelines.

A job description should also include:

- **Job Identification:** This includes the job title, name of department, name of supervisor, and date.
- **Job Summary:** This is a short summary of the job's basic purpose.
- **Accountabilities:** The employee is responsible for accomplishing the objectives and responsibilities outlined in the template.
- **Job Specifications:** Examples of job specifications are experience, education, complexity of duties, and supervision.

