

Hiring for safety:

Job descriptions

Well-written job descriptions can help you hire the right people, train employees, set expectations, and accommodate workers with temporary or permanent disabilities. This handout can help you get started. You should also consult with legal counsel or a human resource professional as you create job descriptions.

Follow these steps to prepare a **job analysis/position summary**. Gather input from those already performing the job to make sure you capture all duties, and have it reviewed by a supervisor or manager for accuracy.

1. **List the major job duties and describe their key elements.** You don't need every possible detail; however, you should include enough information that anyone reading it would understand the job requirements. Simple language is best. List one task per line or group similar tasks. (For instance, "administrative duties" could include typing, filing, answering phones.)
2. **Estimate the percent of time spent performing each job duty.** This can be based on weekly or monthly totals—whichever works best for the job flow. Round to the nearest 5%; the total should add up to 100. If there are small duties that make up the last 5%, they can be grouped together under "other duties and responsibilities."
3. **Rank each job duty by priority.** Priority ranking reflects the importance of the duty to the overall job. Even if a duty requires a small percentage of time, it can still be a high priority.

4. **Designate "essential functions."** Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations help employers determine whether a job duty is an essential function, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). You can find additional information at bit.ly/3TbVtw7.

A job duty is generally considered an essential function if:

- The job exists to perform that duty.
- A large percentage of work time is spent doing it.
- There are no (or a limited number of) other employees able to do it.
- The work is highly specialized, and the person filling the job was hired for that expertise.
- The employer judges the job duties to be essential to the job.
- Inability to perform the job duty would result in serious consequences.
- Collective bargaining agreement requires the job duty.
- There is a history of other individuals in that job performing that job duty.

Document essential functions in:

- Written job descriptions prepared before advertising or interviewing applicants. (Employers should ensure the duties listed as essential have been properly reviewed.)
- Measurements of the percentage of time spent performing the job duty
- Collective bargaining agreements

Additional tools

The ADA: Your responsibilities as an employer (EEOC)

bit.ly/3TbVtw7

Reasonable accommodation policy tips (EEOC)

bit.ly/3Tfisqp

Job descriptions (Job Accommodation Network)

bit.ly/48w8sNy