Guidelines for Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are important, and when done properly, set the framework for how persons perform their work within the organisation. Despite fears, it is possible to write effective job descriptions that create value for both the employer and employee. Although the job description provides a list of duties, it must not be overly rigid, allowing employees enough flexibility to experiment, and determine the best way to perform their tasks. While it’s not necessary to list every task expected of an individual, the essential duties (those that absolutely must be done) must be included and labeled as such.

* Job descriptions show where the employee fits in.
* Job descriptions set clear expectations.
* Job descriptions help you cover your legal requirements.
* Job descriptions tell candidates what you are looking for.
* Job descriptions provide the basis for compensation decisions.

A good job description should include the following areas:

* **The main purpose of the job** - try to describe this in one sentence.
* **Main task of the job** - try to use words such as repairing, calculating, writing, instead of vague terms such as dealing with or in charge of.
* **Scope of the job -**expand on the main task and the importance of the job.

A template is attached for your use.

# Job Description

## Do’s and Don’ts

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| DO | |
| Give Specifics | performing routine maintenance on assembly machines, including adjusting settings; and dismantling and replacing defective parts  **NOT** keeps up equipment. |
| Focus the job description on the job not the incumbent | A good job description focuses purely on job expectations and outcomes, not how the job is handled by the person who happens to be in it. |
| Allow for flexibility | The job description should never restrict supervisors from assigning additional **related** duties not specified in the job description.  The following or similar wording should be included.  *This list is not exhaustive and you are required to follow any other instructions and to perform any other related duties as assigned.* |
| Keep job descriptions current | Job descriptions quickly become dated. Review descriptions regularly as part of your performance appraisal system. |
| DON’T | |
| Use subjective terms, opinions or recommendations | "Handles emergencies." This could range from simply calling 211 to being site coordinator for the entire emergency operation during a major meltdown. |
| Use words that raise a question of discrimination | Avoid language that would be questionable in an advertisement. For example, don’t use words such as "youthful" or "able-bodied." |
| Use vague, general wording or jargon or technical terms | Even if their meanings are well known to the jobholder and the supervisor, spell technical details out, so that those who might refer to the job description in the future, (including outside authorities), will know what it is saying. |