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# GUIDELINES AND TIPS

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Through thoughtful analysis of the job, the supervisor can align the functions and duties of the job to the needs of the department and the institution. When communicated to the employee, the description helps the employee know what is expected of them, and how they will be evaluated. It does not necessary contain all of the work that will be done, but should concisely and accurately describe the permanent and essential functions and requirements assigned to the job.

## A THOROUGH AND ACCURATE POSITION DESCRIPTION:

- a. Serves as a recruiting tool for posting the position and developing interview question
- b. Allows for analysis of work and work efficiency
- c. Assists in accurate job classification and exempt/non-exempt determination
- d. Helps to identify training needs, career progression and performance goal
- e. Provides a defensible tool for legal compliance
- f. Provides a defensible too for documenting employee performance issue
- g. Assists in determining Worker's Compensation Return to Work

## COMPONENTS OF THE POSITION DESCRIPTION

### 1) CODING SECTION (COMPLETED BY HUMAN RESOURCES)

- a. Employee Details
- b. Classification Details
- c. Position Details

### 2) JOB PURPOSE (2 OR 3 SENTENCE SUMMARY OF THE JOB)

- a. Start with an action verb such as: "Manages, Coordinates etc."
- b. Answer 1 question
  - i. Why the position exists?
  - ii. What is the primary goal of the position?

**Example of Job Purpose:** Performs carpentry work (*primary goal*) including repairs, maintenance or construction of buildings and equipment to ensure that buildings and equipment stay in good working condition (*why position exists*).

**IMPORTANT:** Do **not** restate all job duties. It is a summary - main **focus** of the job and **scope** of the job.

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### 3) JOB DUTIES

a. **Step I:** List Tasks

- i. Make a list of all the job tasks that the position will be performing

**Example: Job Tasks**

- Responsible for signing in and out of all office equipment and maintaining maintenance logs.
- Monitors office equipment and calls appropriate source to fix and maintain equipment when needed.

b. **Step II:** Group Tasks

- i. Combine like tasks into Job Duty Function (after grouping you will generally end up with 4-6 job duty functions).
- ii. Begin the statement with an [action verb](#)
- iii. Answer the following questions to assist in developing the job duty function statements:
  1. What is the action? (Instructs, coordinates, manages, etc.)
  2. What is the action being done? (What is being instructed, coordinated, managed, etc.?)
  3. How is the action being done?
  4. Quantitative measures if applicable?

**Examples: Job Functions**

Poor Statement:

Trains subordinate employees (this is more of a task)

Better Statement:

Instructs (*action*) employees in agency policies, office procedures, state and federal laws, and report preparation (*what is being done*). This is done by distributing manuals and other reading materials, scheduling in-service workshops, designing and delivering training courses, and leading team meetings (*how action being done*). Each semester it delivers six training courses to 200 students (*quantitative*).

**Step III** on next page

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## JOB DUTIES continued

- c. **Step III** – Determine if Each Job Function is Essential or Marginal\*
- i. Essential job functions are those fixed parts of a job that cannot be easily reassigned to other workers.
  - ii. The percentage of time spent on a particular duty does not necessarily determine whether it is an essential or marginal function.
  - iii. Marginal functions are defined as those duties that do not determine the classification of a position.

\*Note: Effective July 26, 1992, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) encouraged employers to identify the essential duties of a position. ADA requires an employer to make reasonable accommodations to allow someone with a disability to perform a job. To read more about the ADA [click here](#).

- d. **Step IV** – Determine Percentage of Time Employee will Spend Performing Job Duty Function
- i. An estimate of the amount of time an employee will spend performing a job function (be as accurate as possible, but this is an estimate).
  - ii. The percentage of time for both the essential and marginal job functions should total 100%.

## 4) SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES (IF APPLICABLE)

- a. Information to be completed for this section:
  - i. Classification titles of three highest level subordinates.
  - ii. Number of employees directly supervised by the three highest level subordinates.
- b. Total number of employees supervised
  - i. Number of permanent employees directly supervised.
  - ii. Total number indirectly supervised or responsible for (to include temps, student workers, graduate students, interns, volunteers)

## 5) MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- a. General Information:
  - i. The State establishes minimum education and experience requirements for each job classification. The State's minimum requirements are listed in the State classification specifications. [View the State classification specifications](#).
  - ii. A class specification is a generic position description that provides examples of the kind of work and level of responsibility normally assigned to positions that may be allocated to a job classification. *NOTE: A class specification should only be used as a guide and not copied word for word for the purposes of writing a position description.*
  - iii. The minimum requirements should be based on what combination of experience and/or education it takes to successfully perform the job. We must not list requirements below the State's minimum requirements.

### Important Note:

Be careful not to set the minimums too high. If the minimum requirements are set as a college degree and you find a person who is perfect for the job but does not have the degree, that person will not meet the minimum requirements.

Minimum Requirements continued on page 4

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## Minimum Requirements continued

- b. Steps to establishing minimum requirements
  - i. Review the job functions of the position to determine the level of complexity of the position.
  - ii. Review the state's class specifications for the state's minimum requirements
  - iii. Ask if it is appropriate considering the level of complexity of the job
  - iv. Consider the typical training period for this position
  - v. Consider if an employee learn and perform this job, without a degree, through on-the-job training?

### Example:

Minimum requirements for Administrative Assistant may look something like:

A high school diploma with two years of administrative support experience in an accounting setting.

## 6) KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- a. Definitions:
  - i. Knowledge: theoretical or practical understanding of a subject.
  - ii. Skills: proficiencies developed through training or experience
  - iii. Abilities: qualities for being able to do something
  - iv. Further explanation: [youtube](#)

### Examples:

- **Knowledge** of standard office practices and procedures
- **Knowledge** of electrical and plumbing
- **Skill** in operation of a motor vehicle
- **Skill** in the use of various trade tools and equipment
- **Ability** to use judgment and initiative to complete work without constant supervision
- **Ability** to perform heavy manual labor

Note: PeopleAdmin Training Workflows, Quick Guides and Screenshot Guides may be accessed through the [Supervisor's Toolkit](#)