

# JOB DESCRIPTIONS



*Presented by:*

NAME

TITLE

Texas Association of Counties

Personnel Assistance Section

1-800-456-5974

# **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

## **I. JOB DESCRIPTIONS - DEFINITION AND FUNCTION**

- A. Job descriptions are simply, as the name implies, written descriptions of the significant aspects of a job.
- B. Areas frequently covered by job descriptions include job identification, a job summary, a list of essential job functions, a description of the working conditions, a list of the minimum qualifications and requirements for performing the job, and information on the amount of contact with others.
- C. Job descriptions can be an extremely useful management tool by:
  - 1. Serving as a basis in determining the best qualified applicant to fill an open position and justifying the selection decision;
  - 2. Helping identifying training needs for employees;
  - 3. Setting performance expectations for employees; and
  - 4. Developing job classification and compensation programs.

## **II. JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND ADA**

- A. When the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed, the role of the job description became even more important.
- B. While job descriptions are not required under ADA, well written job descriptions can be a useful tool in helping ensure compliance.
  - 1. By identifying the essential job functions and specific physical requirements necessary for the job, the supervisor is in a better position to determine if an applicant meets the qualifications for the job.
  - 2. A well written job description can also help identify areas where accommodation may be necessary to assist an otherwise qualified disabled individual to perform the essential job functions.

## **III. IDENTIFYING THE JOB**

- A. Normally, the first section of a job description identifies the job and gives additional information pertinent to the job status.
- B. Information generally found in this section includes the department, job title, job number, title of supervisor, exempt or nonexempt status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), positions supervised, pay grade, and normal work schedule.

## **IV. JOB SUMMARY**

- A. Most job descriptions contain a job summary which is a brief overview of the scope of responsibility of the job.

#### **IV. JOB SUMMARY (continued)**

B. This section normally consists of a few sentences and is not intended to give an in-depth look at the job.

#### **V. ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS**

A. Traditionally, job descriptions included a list of duties that covered everything currently being done in the job, everything that had ever been done in the job, and anything that might ever be done in the job in the future.

B. Under ADA, however, these “all inclusive” lists should not be used and the essential job functions should be very obvious.

1. Basically, essential job functions are those duties for which the job exists and, if they weren't performed, there would be no need for the job.
2. Other duties, the performance of which might be desirable in the job but which are really not essential, are called marginal duties.
3. Under ADA, only the essential functions can be considered in determining if a person is qualified for a job. (While ADA does not prohibit the listing of marginal job functions on a job description, it is important that these not be represented as essential functions to applicants.)

C. In determining if a job duty is essential, the following should be considered:

1. Is the employee actually required to perform the duty?
2. Did former employees in this job actually perform the function?
3. Does the position exist to perform this specific task?
4. How many employees are available to perform the job function?
5. How much time is spent doing the function?
6. What would be the consequences if the function was not performed?

D. Each job duty should begin with an action verb followed by information which further describes the duty.

1. Examples of action verbs include types, repairs, reviews, drives, cleans, files, prepares and other similar verbs that tell specifically what is to be done.
2. The term “responsible for” should not be used in listing the essential job functions.
  - a. This is a vague term which does not give a real indication of what the duty entails.
  - b. For example, “Responsible for preparation of quarterly reports” could mean that the job involves actual preparation of the report, supervision

## **V. ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS (continued)**

of that preparation, or coordination of the preparation with other departments.

- E. Many job descriptions list an approximate percentage of time spent in performing each duty to give a clearer picture of the job.
- F. Listing the essential functions in order of importance, or assigning a value number to each function, is also frequently done to show which are the more important tasks. It should be noted that the tasks that take up the greatest amount of time in a job are not necessarily the most important ones.
- G. The catch all term “Other duties as assigned” is too broadly stated to meet current standards. A more acceptable term is “Other duties as assigned within the scope of responsibility and requirements of the job.”

## **VI. PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

- A. This section lists the actual physical actions necessary to perform the essential job functions.
- B. To help ensure compliance with ADA, this section should be stated in specific terms rather than broad, general terms.
  - 1. Actions should show exactly what is to be done such as, “Lifting 50 pound sacks of sand to a height of three feet” rather than just “Lifting.”
  - 2. In listing physical requirements, such things as amount of exertion involved, frequency of the action, length of time necessary to perform the action, and percentage of time spent performing it should all be taken into consideration.
- C. While all significant physical requirements for the job should be shown, it is important not to overstate or inflate them.

## **VII. WORKING CONDITIONS**

- A. Working conditions include the environmental and other conditions which might affect the desirability of the job.
- B. Such things as exposure to hazards, adverse weather conditions, odors and other unpleasant surroundings, frequent overtime, extensive travel, and other related factors should be included in this section.
- C. Being thorough and honest in this section can help prevent employees from saying that they did not know that an undesirable condition was part of the job when they apply for unemployment benefits after resigning.

## **VIII. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

A. This section is normally separated into several sections including education; experience; special skills, knowledge and abilities; and licenses and certifications.

### **VIII. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS** (continued)

1. “Education” means the minimum amount of education that is normally required to perform the essential job functions. This could include anything from the basic ability to read and fill out forms up to advanced college degrees or other specialized training.
  2. “Experience” should show the minimum amount of prior related work experience necessary to reasonably indicate that an individual has the skill necessary to perform the job.
  3. “Skills, knowledge and abilities” is a catch-all category used to list other requirements that do not reasonably fit another part of the job description.
    - a. Examples of items that might be included in this section are ability to operate specific pieces of equipment, proficiency levels in a skill such as word processing, or knowledge in a technical or professional field.
    - b. Some items listed in this section may be subjective such as the ability to interact effectively with individuals with differing backgrounds, or the ability to organize and prioritize work.
  4. “Licenses and certifications” is a listing of any license or other specific documentation required to prove that an individual is able and/or qualified to operate certain equipment or to perform certain job functions requiring such proof.
- B. In listing job qualifications, care should be taken to ensure that the qualification is a valid one and is not inflated.

### **IX. CONTACT WITH OTHERS**

- A. This section gives an overview of the nature, frequency, level, and importance of contact with others.
- B. This contact can be with outsiders, co-workers, employees supervised, or with employees in other departments.
- C. This section is especially important for jobs involving a great deal of contact with others where that contact is important for the effective operation of the department, or where that contact could have a significant impact on how the employer is perceived.

### **X. GATHERING INFORMATION**

- A. The most frequently used methods of gathering information include:
  1. Observation of the job by trained observers;

2. Input from the supervisor's knowledge of the job; or
3. Input from both the supervisor and the employees in the job.

**X. GATHERING INFORMATION (continued)**

- B. While using individuals who are trained in observing and gathering information about jobs will normally produce high quality job descriptions, it is a fairly costly process.
- C. Input from supervisors generally gives a good picture of a job but this process may miss some essential job duties.
- D. Gathering information from both supervisors and employees in the job is the most popular method of obtaining information and generally produces good results.

**XI. WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

- A. Once the information is gathered, the actual job descriptions should be written by someone familiar with the style and language of job descriptions.
- B. When the first drafts are completed, they should be reviewed both by the supervisor who oversees each job and the employee in that job prior to preparing a final draft. This can identify significant aspects of the job that may have been overlooked and help ensure a complete and thorough job description.
- C. Once adopted, the date of adoption should be shown on each job description.
- D. In addition to its initial preparation, a job description should be updated whenever there is a significant change in the duties or the requirements for the job.

**XII. PERIODIC REVIEW**

- A. A job description should be reviewed periodically to help ensure that there are no changes in the job that have not been updated.
- B. The date of the review or the date that updates are made to a job description should always be shown on the job description.

**XIII. PROBLEM AREAS**

- A. While well written job descriptions can be a tremendous tool for a manager, poorly written ones can create serious liability in some instances.
- B. Some of the more significant problem areas include:
  - 1. Inflated job titles;
  - 2. Failure to list all of the essential job functions;
  - 3. Listing marginal duties as essential functions;
  - 4. Failure to accurately show working conditions;

5. Not giving a complete and accurate listing of the physical requirements for the job; and
6. Inflating job requirements.

*NOTE: This paper is provided for informational purposes only. Nothing in this paper is intended to be, nor should it be construed as, legal advice or guidance. Where legal assistance is needed, the services of a qualified attorney should be sought.*

# **JOB DESCRIPTION EXERCISE**

**The next 5 pages contain two job descriptions that might be found in a county. After the presentation, we will analyze those descriptions to see what is wrong and what is right about each.**

# **JOB DESCRIPTION**

## **TEJAS COUNTY**

### **JOB IDENTIFICATION**

**Job Title:** Custodial Supervisor

**Department:** Courthouse Maintenance

**Positions Supervised:** Courthouse Custodians (Two positions)

**FLSA Status:** Exempt (Managerial)

### **JOB SUMMARY**

This responsible supervisory position involves overseeing the general cleaning and light maintenance of the Tejas County Courthouse. General duties include cleaning of the courthouse and supervision of the activities of two additional cleaning staff. Responsible for routine light maintenance and repair of courthouse facilities.

### **JOB DUTIES**

1. Sweeps courthouse floors.
2. Mops courthouse floors as needed.
3. Vacuums carpeted areas.
4. Responsible for seeing that adequate cleaning supplies are available.
5. Performs general repairs to restroom facilities.
6. Waxes and buffs tile floors periodically.
7. Empties waste baskets and trash cans in general and office areas.
8. Cleans restrooms and replenishes soap and towels as needed.
9. May drive pick-up truck if needed.
10. Supervises cleaning activities of two custodial staff.
11. Notifies supervisor of any special problems.

### **PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

This is a very demanding job requiring a lot of standing and hard work. Employees in this job must be in excellent physical condition.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **TEJAS COUNTY**

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

This job is mostly indoors. It involves handling a lot of chemicals and cleaning products. Overtime work may be involved.

## **EDUCATION REQUIRED**

Employee must have a high school diploma. Trade school or similar education beyond high school preferred.

## **EXPERIENCE**

Employee must have at least ten years experience in a custodial position. Direct experience in supervising others is required.

## **SPECIAL SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, OR ABILITIES**

Basic understanding of building cleaning techniques. Good oral and written communication skills. Knowledge of safe use of cleaning products and chemicals. Ability to operate mechanical cleaning devices. Basic understanding of simple plumbing repairs. Ability to supervise others.

## **LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS**

Employee must have a commercial driver's license (CDL).

## **CONTACT WITH OTHERS**

Daily significant contact with other custodians supervised. General light contact with elected officials, employees, and visitors in the courthouse.



## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **TEJAS COUNTY** (Page 2 of 3)

## **PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Position primarily involves sitting at a desk or other work station (75%). Employee moves throughout the courthouse in getting information from other departments (5%). Also drives to remote county sites to get information needed in preparing bid specifications and to investigate accidents (10%). Some physical exertion involved in unloading and unpacking county purchases (10%).

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

Work is primarily indoors in a climate controlled building. May have some exposure to adverse weather and other unpleasant conditions during accident investigations. During budget preparations and other time sensitive activities, work outside the normal work schedule will be required.

## **EDUCATION**

A bachelors degree in accounting is required.

## **EXPERIENCE**

A minimum of five (5) years progressively more responsible experience in a purchasing position is required. Experience in a government purchasing position is preferred.

## **SPECIAL SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES**

Ability to write concise and thorough bid specifications. General competence in computer operation. Knowledge of computer based spread sheet programs (EXCEL preferred). Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing. Ability to analyze and interpret data regarding bids. Knowledge of workplace safety programs is preferred.

## **LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS**

Current Texas driver's license. CPA preferred.

## **CONTACT WITH OTHERS**

Position involves daily contact at a significant level with county officials and employees in assisting with bid preparations Also involves important contact with the community in obtaining information

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**TEJAS COUNTY** (Page 3 of 3)

**CONTACT WITH OTHERS** (Continued)

concerning bids on various products and services. Employee must be able to relate well to individuals with a variety of backgrounds and positively represent the county in those contacts.

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