



How to: 7

How to...

survive at work

if you are 13–19



What to expect

It's a big step moving from full-time education into a job. You may need some advice on how to deal with this change to your lifestyle – don't be afraid to ask for help. Everyone was new once; they'll understand.

There will be so many things to learn – people's names, your way around the building. Employers should provide you with a carefully planned induction programme so you can learn about the work, the organisation, what everyone else does, and health and safety issues. They may also explain about training options.

This leaflet will also help, but you could speak to your Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) too. They will be pleased you have found a job, and will be happy to offer advice.

Your first day

- Dress fairly formally – you can always find out what's acceptable by asking others. You may have to wear health and safety clothing or a uniform.
- Find out if colleagues and supervisors are happy for you to call them by their first names.
- If nobody is giving you any work, show initiative by asking politely for something to do or read up on the company – don't play games on the computer!
- Be friendly but not too pushy – you will be spending every day with these people. Respect the views and experience of those around you. Always be polite and courteous.
- If you make mistakes – and everyone does – admit to them, and ask for advice on putting things right. Learn to accept criticism and don't hold grudges.

Remember, this advice is not just for your first day but all your working life. You've worked hard to get your job so it's important to work hard to keep it.

Your rights

Over the years, a number of laws have been passed to protect people in the workplace. These cover:

- employment rights
- discrimination
- equal pay
- health and safety
- time off for study and training.

Your employer should know about these laws and may be able to give you more information. However, you could also speak to your PA or have a look at www.direct.gov.uk.





Your responsibilities

So now you know what your rights are, but it goes both ways! Arrive to work on time – if you are frequently late, absent, unhelpful or lazy, your employer has the right to discipline you. But they will have to follow certain procedures before you can be fired. For example, they will have to give you verbal and written warnings. However if you are running late, for whatever reason, then phone your employer to let them know.

If you are sick and need a day off make sure you ring your employer at the start of the day. Do not leave the phone call until later in the day or not bother until you return to work.

Employers usually have rules and procedures – make sure you know what they are and stick to them. For example, are you allowed to eat at your desk?

You also have certain responsibilities towards your fellow workers. You must not do anything that will affect their health and safety at work.

Your skills are important to the job so don't be afraid to use them. However, be willing to learn new skills as your duties may change over time and you will need to be flexible.

Problems at work

If you ever have any problems with your job or think you are being treated unfairly, the best thing to do is to speak to someone who works there. The best person is your supervisor or manager, but it could also be the human resources/personnel department, or someone else you trust, like your PA.

In some cases this may not help; you may have to speak to your trade union or local Citizens' Advice Bureau. Make sure you get sound advice on your rights before you do anything that may threaten your employment.

Additional sources of information

www.connexions-cd.org.uk
www.connexions-direct.com
www.direct.gov.uk

To get in touch...

with your PA or to find your nearest Connexions centre go online to www.connexions-cd.org.uk or give us a call on **0800 9755111**. Calls from a landline are free and you'll be connected to your nearest centre. Calls from a mobile may be subject to a network charge – you'll be connected to our head office, but we can redirect you to your nearest centre.

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