

Rules to Work By for the Office Employee...

Phone Calls:

Never give out anyone's personal information over the phone such as home phone numbers, home addresses, Social Insurance Numbers, names of spouses, etcetera.

Refrain from telling callers where others are if they are not in the office. Merely indicate, "I'm sorry, Bill is out of the office. Can I take a message?"

If you must put someone on hold, please ask them if you can do so. Do not leave them on hold for more than half a minute at a time. Remember that a minute on hold seems like an eternity. If no-one takes the call in 2 minutes, ask if you can take a message (you should have checked in with the caller twice in that period of time).

When taking a message, get the persons name, whom they are calling, and their phone number. It is a good idea to record the time and date of the call as well.

Never be gruff or indifferent to a caller. Be as helpful as you can.

Never give information to a caller about what type of equipment the business owns, who the suppliers are, etcetera. You will have solicitors telling you they have a great deal, or they are calling from Xerox and need the serial number of the photocopier, or any line they think will work. Be "mistrustful" of someone who asks questions that are unusual.

NEVER agree to be sent anything from a phone solicitation. Get their phone number, what company they are representing, and the company address.

If a Federal Government employee from Canada Revenue Agency calls, record their request as well as their name, phone number and fax number. If they are from Statistics Canada, the business has the legal right to mail or fax the necessary information.

Making personal calls on business time is unprofessional. If you must call on a personal matter, get permission from your supervisor.

Confidentiality:

Never discuss clients outside the office. If you must tell someone you've had a bad day, never give names or company names. Just don't.

If an outside party approaches your desk, ensure that you place client paperwork aside. Remember that people can read upside down, and often can't resist doing so. Don't assume that client confidentiality is protected.

Employee files must be locked up securely during non-business hours. No employee files are to leave the business premises without authorization from the internal Privacy Officer.

Computers:

When typing a letter, memo or spreadsheet, save the file **at least every 3 minutes**. You never know when your computer will freeze and lose all your hard work.

Perform a spell-check prior to printing a document. Spell-check may stop at items you have typed *correctly*. For instance, if you type: "All **parties** found on the site will be subject to a security check", the computer might think you should have typed **party's**. There are many instances where no change is necessary, especially when it comes to "tense" (past, present, future).

When entering financial info. into accounting programs or spreadsheets, save the data if you leave the computer for a break. Ensure that there are no files sitting idle on the computer when you are not in attendance.

Never leave a transaction partly done and walk away.

Never leave your computer printing unattended unless you are certain that it is running smoothly.

Never place computer disks close to magnets (this includes the paper clip dispenser). Magnets ERASE computer disks.

Back up your important files to external media throughout the day, especially before leaving for a break.

Backups must be performed at the end of the day on external media. Two backups is preferable.

If the backup system for the office is on-site, OFF-SITE BACKUPS must be maintained. Ensure that you or an authorized person takes off-site backups home every evening and brings them back every morning. If you forget a backup at home, make an interim backup.

Work habits:

A job isn't finished until it is done well. Always recheck your own work to ensure you are doing a thorough job.

Organizing your work is tantamount to getting the job done in the shortest possible time.

Leave your workspace neat and uncluttered at the end of each day.

Personalities and Behaviour:

If you don't know something, ASK. If you have an idea for improving something, LET IT BE KNOWN. If you are upset about something that was said to you, TELL THE PERSON WHO SAID IT and discuss the matter with them.

Tantrums, foul language and finger-pointing are unprofessional.

Gender Issues:

Do not encourage lewd jokes. Once a joke is told, it leads to a competition to see who can tell the "best" joke. Tolerance of sexually-coloured jokes encourages unwanted behavior. Just don't.

Dating coworkers is usually a recipe for one or both persons to have to quit their jobs. If you like your job, think twice before dating a coworker.

Flirting, sexual innuendos and pin-ups are unbecoming and unprofessional, regardless of the intent.

Personal Tidiness and Hygiene:

Don't let them become an issue.

Dress:

Low-cut blouses, strapless blouses, blouses that expose the waistline, spandex, blue jeans, sweat shirts, t-shirts, tank tops, tatoos, facial piercing, lip piercing, tongue piercing, faded, stained or untidy clothing are not professional attire. Clothing with text is not professional unless the text is a modest professional logo that relates to your business practices.

Perfume is not appreciated by everyone. Use it sparingly.

Security:

If you are the last person leaving for the day, ensure the premises (doors, windows, alarms) are secured.