

Resigning Successfully

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Clean Up Your Computer

Even if you give notice, your employer may decide to end your employment immediately and may show you out the door. Before you turn in your resignation, clean up your computer. Delete personal files and email messages. Make sure you have the contact information for everyone you need to keep in touch with after you're gone. That said, we caution you not to violate any non-compete or confidentiality agreements you have in place with your employer.

Write a Resignation Letter

It's a good idea to write a formal resignation letter for your employment file. You don't need to say much more than you're leaving and when your last day of work will be. Download our "Resignation Letters" PDF with more information on preparing content and formatting your resignation letter.

Give Notice

Unless the situation is untenable, giving two weeks' notice is standard practice when resigning. If you want to leave sooner, it's appropriate to ask if you can leave sooner. While two weeks' notice is standard, you may need to consider any upcoming deadlines that could put your employer in an undesirable situation that could potentially burn a bridge. If it's feasible, offer to help during the transition and afterwards. The offer may not be accepted, but it will be appreciated.

Ask for a Reference

Ask your boss and colleagues if they would be willing to give you a reference. If they agree, ask them to write you a LinkedIn recommendation as well as being available via email or phone. You'll have the reference as part of your LinkedIn profile, which is great for your future job search endeavors and helps build a more robust public profile for others to see.

Get the Details

When you tell your boss or Human Resources Department that you're leaving, be sure to get the details on the employee benefits and salary you are entitled to when you leave. If relevant, inquire about continuing health insurance coverage through COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act), collecting unused vacation and sick pay, and keeping, cashing in, or rolling over your 401K or other pension plan. Also, be sure to obtain a copy of any agreement you may have signed as part of your employment (i.e. non-disclosure, non-compete, stock options, etc.)

Focus on the Positive

Regardless of how much you dislike your job, your boss, or the company, don't communicate it. Even if quitting is the best career move you've made, to date, keep it to yourself. When you're talking about your resignation with co-workers, try to emphasize the positive and talk about how the company has benefited you, even though it's time to move on. Maintain the highest degree of

professionalism and be excited about the brighter opportunities ahead of you.

Say your Goodbyes

Before you leave, take the time to send a farewell message to co-workers and to let them know that you are moving on to a new position, starting a job search, retiring or doing something else with your life. It's appropriate to send an email farewell message. You can include contact information so you can stay in touch.

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