



Tips On Making It On The Job

Unless you have a written employment contract, most employees in Connecticut are "at will" employees. "At will" means you can be fired for any reason--or no reason at all--unless the reason is illegal. For example, it would be illegal to discriminate against you because of your age, race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or national origin. *Even so, you can do certain things to help keep your job.*

Q. How do I prevent trouble on the job in the first place?

A. Both workers & employers have rights and responsibilities. You might be able to prevent trouble if you know and do what is expected of you. Here are some tips to help prevent trouble:

- ✓ **Get to work on time.**
- ✓ **Call in ahead of your shift** if you are sick or going to be late; **try to speak directly to your supervisor** or the person in charge.
- ✓ **Dress appropriately for your work.**
- ✓ **Treat coworkers and customers with respect and courtesy.**
- ✓ **Follow the health and safety rules.**
- ✓ **Tell your supervisor if you must leave.**
- ✓ **Know your supervisor's name** (last name, too).
- ✓ **Know your job duties.** If you don't get a job description, ask for one or take detailed notes as you are given instructions.
- ✓ **Read your company policies carefully.** Know what is expected of you. For example, the rules on smoking, lunch, personal phone calls. If you're not given a copy of company policies, ask your supervisor for a copy.

Q. Are there signs that my job is in trouble?

A. Here are a few signs: ● warnings or poor performance reviews ● changes in your job duties ● actions taken against you, such as cutting your hours or putting you on probation.



Q. What should I do if I see signs of trouble?

A. ♦ **Get legal advice.** It is very important to get legal advice *before* your problems on the job get serious enough to get you fired. Call Statewide Legal Services (SLS) for help.

♦ **Talk to your work friends.** Co-workers and supervisors who know and respect you might be able to give you advice. Remember, if you ask for advice, keep your attitude positive.

♦ **Get information.** Ask to look at your personnel file (it is your right). If you disagree with something in it, get a copy of it. If you receive a warning, you have the right to write your own version of what happened and to have it included in your personnel file. Call SLS for help.

♦ **Talk with your employer.** Try to clear up the problem by talking with your employer. If you don't find a solution, **do not quit** your job. Keep a record of what is happening.

*Your cash benefits, unemployment, and housing benefits can be affected by what happens on the job. **Before you quit or get fired, call Statewide Legal Services.***

Q. What can I do if I'm having trouble with a co-worker, my supervisor, or doing the job?

A. Talk to a supervisor or human resources person. Follow the "chain of command"; this means start with one supervisor, and if you can't resolve the problem, go to *that* person's supervisor, etc. If the company has policies on resolving problems, be sure to follow them.

Q. What if I get fired? What should I do when they tell me I'm fired?

A. It is very important to **stay calm**. Get as much information as you can about why you were fired. Listen carefully and take notes. **Do not sign** anything. As soon as the meeting is over, write down anything else you can remember about what happened at the meeting.

Questions? Call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380.

