

New Employee Questions

Some of these questions will be relevant to your situation, the job and stage of the recruitment process, and some won't. Have a look through and make sure you know the answer to the ones which concern you.

Write these down so you don't forget, and add any other things you want to ask your employer.

If you already have an intended employment agreement, you could go through it and check that it contains all the things you want it to. If it doesn't, you should discuss these things with your employer. It can also be helpful for you to seek independent advice about your intended agreement and you could have a support person or representative with you when you discuss or negotiate your agreement with your employer. You can ask your employer to change the draft employment agreement so that it covers all the things you have agreed. They can do this by:

- retyping the agreement,
- just making the changes to the original agreement in pen (and you both put your initials by the changes to show you agree to them),
- crossing out any terms you have agreed won't apply (and you both put your initials by the deletions to show you both agree to them)
- adding another sheet at the back with the new things you have agreed (and both of you initial or sign the sheet).

Basic questions

- What is the main focus of the job? (ie what will I be spending most of my job doing?)
- Are there any aspects of the job that are more difficult? What are these?
- How big is the team I will be working with?
- Who will my manager/ supervisor/ charge-hand be?
- Will I always be doing the same mix of tasks or are the tasks rotated? If so, how long is each rotation and how many rotations are there?
- Will I ever be sole charge or alone on the work site?
- Can you tell me about the culture in the workplace, what it is like to work here?
- What does a typical work shift look like?
- Do I need a driver's licence, what class?
- How I will learn about the rules and procedures around health and safety? Is there anything relating to health and safety that I should know about before I accept the job?
- Where is the job based?
- Will I be required to travel for the job?

Type of agreement

- Is the job permanent?
- If it's being offered on a fixed term basis, how long is the fixed term and why is it fixed term, Is there a chance of becoming permanent?
- Is there a collective employment agreement which applies to the type of work I will be doing? What is the union, how do I contact them?
- I don't have a copy of the draft employment agreement to look at before I sign it. Can you please provide me with this (you must be given the opportunity to get independent advice on the employment agreement before you sign it).

Pay

- What is the salary range/ hourly rate for the job?
- What rate is overtime paid at?
- Are there any penal rates eg for working public holidays (the employment agreement must state that you are paid time and a half (at least) for working on a public holiday)?
- Are there any penal rates for working on particular days eg Sundays, or working six days a week etc?
- How will I be paid and how often?
- What is the process for reviewing pay?
- What is your default kiwisaver scheme?

Hours

- What are my usual working hours? What are the expected start and finish times each day?
- What are my guaranteed hours, do I have to be available to work outside my guaranteed hours. How much is my shift availability/ cancellation allowance?
- Do I need to clock in and out?
- Is there a roster? If so, how do I get the roster, how long in advance will I get it and how do I request changes?
- If I don't have any usual working hours or guaranteed hours, how will you let me know when you want me to work so I can tell you if I am available or not?
- Will there be overtime available? How often will you ask/ expect me to do overtime?
- When and how long are my breaks? Is there a break room? Is there a fridge I can store my meal in? Is there a microwave I can use? Where are the toilet facilities/ arrangements eg if I am working off site?
- Will I have to be on call? If so, how often and is there an on-call allowance? If I am on call on a public holiday will I get an alternative holiday?
- If I'm on call what sort of restrictions will there be on what can I do? Do I have to come in if I get a call out or can I turn down a call-out request?
- Will I have to work on any public holidays?
- Will I be required to work on restricted trading days eg Easter Sunday?

Training

- What training will I get?
- How long does it usually take before a new employee is fully trained?
- Will there be any opportunities for further training or development.

Dress

- What is the dress code?
- Is there a different code on Fridays?
- Will I be provided with a uniform?
- Do I get a laundry allowance for washing my uniform?
- What protective clothing will I need to wear and where I do I get/ store it

Important Relationships

- Who is my health and safety representative?
- Who is my union delegate?
- Will I get a buddy?
- Who do I talk to if I have a problem?
- How often will I have meetings with my manager?
- How often will I have meetings with my team?

Workplace rules

- Where do I find workplace policies and rules? How will I know if these change?

Transport

- Is there a car/ motorbike park/ bike rack I can use nearby
- Are there any showers?
- Where is the nearest bus stop?
- Do any of the other workers car pool?

Accommodation

- Is there any board or lodgings provided (may be relevant especially for agricultural jobs)
- How much is the cash value of this
- Is there a tenancy agreement that I sign

Performance

- What does good/ excellent performance look like in my job?
- How will I get feedback on my performance so I can improve?

Trial period

- Will I be on a trial period? How long will this be for? (You can't be on a trial period unless you agree to this in your employment agreement before you start work and you haven't worked for the employer before).
- How will I know if I'm doing ok on the trial?

Annual holidays

- How do I apply to take annual holidays?
- How many annual holidays do I get each year (must be at least four weeks)?
- What does four weeks annual holidays look like for me (especially if my hours are irregular)?
- If I work such irregular hours that it is impracticable to be given four weeks annual holidays, (or I'm on a fixed term contract of less than 12 months), will you offer me holiday pay on an 8% pay as you go basis? (You can't be paid holiday pay instead of holidays unless you are in one of the situations described, and you agree to this in your employment agreement and it is shown as a separate and identifiable component of your pay).
- Can I take annual holidays in advance of my entitlement (The law says that you are entitled to four weeks annual holidays after 12 months of continuous employment. However, some employers allow you to take annual holidays in advance)?
- Can I cash up any annual holidays if I need to? (You can only ever cash up 1 week of the minimum four weeks annual holidays entitlement each entitlement year. Your employer can have a policy preventing you from cashing up any annual holidays).

Public Holidays

- Will I be required to work on public holidays? (You can only be required to work on public holidays if you agree in your employment agreement)
- Are there any penal rates for working on public holidays? (If not, you must be paid at least time and a half. If there are, you must be paid the greater amount of time and a half or time including penal rates).

Sick leave

- How much sick leave do I get (you must get at least 10 days each year once you have been continuously employed for six months, and you can carry over unused sick leave from previous years up to a total of 10 days plus the current 10 days).
- How do I let you know if I'm sick or injured or I need to take sick leave to look after a sick or injured family member? Will I need to provide a medical certificate? (The employer can only require you to pay for the costs of getting proof that you are ill or injured if you have been sick for three consecutive days or more).

Closedown

- Does the workplace have a regular annual closedown or any other type of closedown period? If so, how many weeks or days each year is the closedown for and when is it?

Flexible working

- Do you have any policies on flexible working or working from home? (You have a right to request flexible working at any time once you are employed, and your employer can only refuse on specific grounds. Your employer must reply to your request by 1 month).
- Is it possible to work at home sometimes? (Some employers allow this if it practical for you to do so, if it helps you balance your responsibilities at home and at work, or if weather or transport-related disruptions make it difficult for you to come in).

End of employment

- How long is my notice period?
- Will I get a redundancy payment if the business changes and my job is disestablished?

Organisation

- How big is the organisation?
- Are there any other places it is located?
- What is the organisation's main focus?
- Is the organisation publicly listed, privately owned, state owned or a not-for-profit organisation?
- Do people get promoted from within the organisation?

Process

- What is the process from here? When can I expect to hear from you? Will you ring me to let me know either way or send through an offer? etc
- Will you let me know in advance if you want to contact my referees?
- How many other people are you interviewing for the job?

Other questions

- Is there anything else you want to know about me?