



The HR resource every business needs

The "TOTAL" Advisor

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Brought to you by: Total Insurance Services, Inc.

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How Can Your HR Library Improve?

We welcome your ideas and comments on how we can improve and invite you to take a [short survey](#) (4 questions) to let us know what you'd like to see in your HR library. Please take a few moments to complete this [short survey](#) to let us know what HR needs are most important to you so that we can continue to enhance our online HR library to support your business. [Click here](#) to

Interviewing Applicants: 5 Do's and Don'ts

Conducting effective interviews helps to ensure you are hiring the best-qualified candidate for the job. An interview should provide as much information as possible about an applicant's potential to perform the duties of a particular position. As an employer, it is also important to understand the types of questions and topics that should be avoided in an interview to prevent potential claims of discrimination. The most valuable interview is objective and permits the interviewer to determine the knowledge, skills, and all other qualifications of a prospective employee relevant to the position.



The following do's and don'ts can help you make the most of your interviews and stay in compliance with the law:

- **DO create a comfortable environment for interviewing.** Whether you conduct the interview in an office or conference room, make sure the area is neat and quiet. When the interview begins, be sure not to take any calls or respond to emails. Offering the candidate something to drink - water or coffee - is a small courtesy that demonstrates consideration and thoughtfulness.
- **DON'T ask personal questions.** Be especially careful of this at the beginning of the interview. Although it is important to have a friendly demeanor when you meet the candidate to help put him or her at ease, engaging in too much small talk may lead you to inadvertently ask a question that can border on areas that may potentially be considered discriminatory (such as questions relating to the applicant's marital status, political beliefs, etc.).
- **DON'T ask discriminatory questions.** Any questions regarding race, religion, age, ethnic group, national origin or ancestry, political affiliations, military service, disability or other sensitive topics may be discriminatory and should be

begin the survey.

Updated FMLA Model Forms Released

[Updated model forms](#) are now available for employers to use in connection with leave taken by employees under the federal [Family and Medical Leave Act](#) (FMLA). The updated forms reflect a new expiration date of February 28, 2015.

Family and Medical Leave

The [FMLA](#) entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for specified family and medical reasons. It also includes certain family military leave entitlements.

Employers who employ 50 or more employees for at least 20 workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year must comply with the FMLA. Employees must work at a location where the company employs 50 or more employees within 75 miles and meet certain other requirements with respect to time worked before they are entitled to take FMLA leave.

Updated Forms Available

The following model forms have been updated with the new expiration date:

- [WH-380-E](#) Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee's Serious

avoided. Also be careful not to ask any questions that could elicit such information (for example, questioning an applicant about the origin of an unusual surname). If an applicant volunteers irrelevant or inappropriate information during an interview, disregard the information and do not write it down.

- **DO keep the conversation focused on job-related information.** In reviewing your interview questions, ask yourself if the information you are seeking is really needed to evaluate the candidate's qualifications, skills, and ability to meet the challenges of the job. Ask only for information you intend to use in making a hiring decision and know how you will use the information to make that decision. You should also be prepared to discuss the responsibilities and functions of the job opening and your company. Avoid asking questions that are not relevant to the performance of the essential functions and responsibilities of the position.
- **DO provide the candidate with information regarding next steps.** After you have finished asking all of your questions, be sure to give the candidate an opportunity to ask any final questions. To close the interview, provide a general timeframe for getting back in touch with the candidate regarding any next steps and decisions. Be sure to also thank the candidate for his or her interest in the job and your company.

If you have specific questions regarding illegal interview questions or how to conduct a lawful interview, please consult with a knowledgeable employment law attorney. Additional tips and guidelines related to the interview process can be found in our section on [How to Interview](#).

New FAQs Address Summary of Benefits and Coverage (SBC) Notice Requirements

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has released a [new set of Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs) relating to the new summary of benefits and coverage (SBC) notice requirements under [Health Care Reform](#).



The 24 FAQs address various issues related to the [requirement that group health plans provide participants and beneficiaries with an SBC](#) containing specific information about the plan and coverage, at certain times during the enrollment process and upon request, including clarification relating to:

- Combining certain information with respect to different coverage tiers, different cost-sharing selections (such as levels of deductibles, copayments, and co-insurance), and different additions to major medical coverage that could affect

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