

A Guide to Resignation

When it comes to leaving your job, don't leave a note saying "stuff your lousy job" on your boss's desk. You should never let short-term satisfaction override your long term career objectives.

Resign at the moment of *your own* choosing. Be strong, professional and clear but above all be polite. Understand that your boss may not be able to influence your reasons for departure.

Even if you've won the "perfect" job now, you don't know whether your boss has won the one above and you don't know when and in what situation you'll meet again. It's better to leave friends behind than enemies.

Should I leave before I have another job?

Not unless you are supremely confident about your employability. Or you've planned a career break - in which case good luck! Otherwise only if life at work is unbearable!

If it's *really* that bad you may be in need of legal or medical advice. If you simply need a break - ask for one before resigning and check your employer's Health & Safety policy and Stress policy.

Remember it's easier for employed people to get new jobs. Understand what you're going to say to potential new employers before you resign.

What if I get a counter offer?

If your company offers you a pay rise to stay, ask why it took such a big move to extract it. Say "no" unless

- the counter offer includes a new job that is much bigger than the current one, or
- the security of staying outweighs the opportunity at the other company

If you do decide to stay, the people who know what's happened will see you differently. Be prepared to work hard to re-establish your image. Not only with your boss but also with your colleagues.

Only let promises change your decision if they're believable and in writing.

Remember that by staying you will have to turn down the job you have already accepted. This could be detrimental to any future moves with the people you've let down at that company.

The Do and Don't list

Don't:

- hand in your notice without sleeping on your decision and discussing it with people you trust
- just criticise your company when handing in your notice
- leave any nasty surprises for your successor

Do:

- tell your line manager face-to-face, before handing in a resignation letter
- offer to work hard (harder than you usually do) to ensure a clean handover
- listen carefully to any response or counter offer from your employer
- give constructive criticism if you think it will help
- remember that your colleagues might be good people to know later on
- brief your referees on why you think you are suitable for your next job
- and make sure they agree with you before giving their names

What should I say in my letter of resignation?

Just the facts - the position from which you are resigning and your intended leaving date. If you feel that you need to "say your piece", think again. If you still feel the need, keep it as positive as you can and do not make personal comments. Ask friends or colleagues to read it first and listen to their thoughts.

How long is my notice period?

Your notice period is usually in your contract of employment. Where the contract doesn't state one, use your payment frequency as a guide. If your pay is weekly it's likely that you have to give a week's notice. If your pay is monthly you probably need to give a month's notice. Sometimes you or your boss might want to agree to make it shorter.

Normally you have to work your notice period. If you want to leave sooner, ask in writing. Show your boss how you can complete your tasks in the time available. Then make sure you keep your promises.

If your boss wants you to leave sooner ask for written confirmation that you may work for someone else during your notice period.