

A New Firefighter – A New Job

A New You

A Long Term Career



List for Probationary Firefighters and other career positions

Respect the job. Firefighting is one of the most respected professions in our country. For every person who wears a firefighter uniform, there are at least 10 more who wish they could. As much of an honor as it is to become a firefighter, it is equally as much a dishonor to become complacent, and those who don't care about the job are disrespectful to both the profession and their coworkers. Respect the job, work hard, and be proud of the profession you have chosen.

Arrive early. Arrive at work at least 30 minutes before your shift begins. This will give you the opportunity to prepare by familiarizing yourself with the apparatus to which you are assigned. This is a habit you will want to keep for the duration of your career. Preparation for the big fire begins the moment you walk through the door, not the moment your shift begins.

Be social. Introduce yourself to everyone you meet. This is especially important on your first day. Greet other firefighters with a handshake, and simply say, "Hello, I'm Firefighter _____. It's nice to meet you." These are the men and women with whom and for whom you will be putting your life on the line. If you are meeting an officer, make sure you greet him/her by the proper title. It is imperative that you understand the ranking system and address the rank. A simple "Hello Captain," before you introduce yourself would suffice.

Find the senior firefighter. A good senior firefighter on your shift/station will be your greatest asset. Ask him/her all of those questions you have regarding your first day--questions like, "What housework should I do?" (See #5 and #6), or "Which bed/locker is mine?" The senior firefighter, not the officer, is there to answer those questions. The captain, for example, has greater responsibilities than to show you where the mop is.

Be proactive around the firehouse. Don't wait for someone to tell you what to do. As a probationary firefighter, you basically do everything. If the phone rings, answer it. If someone knocks on the door, see who it is. After lunch, volunteer to do the dishes. If you sit and watch the other firefighters doing these things, they will develop an unfavorable opinion of you early on. As a rule of thumb, if you think you are not doing enough, you probably aren't.

Be the first to rise and the last to sleep. Plan on being the last one to go to bed. This is the time to ensure that the firehouse is secured and tidy. This is also a great time to read up on fire related material. Wake up 30 minutes before the others; make coffee, and do whatever tasks are necessary around the firehouse. The others will respect you for it.

Find a mentor. This may not be easy to do on the first or second day, but in time you will find the person who impresses you with his/her knowledge and attitude, and is receptive to you. Most firefighters would be honored to share their knowledge and help mentor a probationary firefighter, but you will have to make it clear that you want their help. Align yourself with the right people, because every successful person will tell you that association is the key to success.

Know your riding position and responsibilities. You will be assigned a position by the officer, who will also instruct you on the responsibilities of the position. Everyone on an apparatus has specific duties and tasks that they are expected to know and accomplish to ensure success at an incident. Understand what is expected of you before you go out the door.

Check your equipment. This rule cannot be overstated. Check your personal protective equipment (PPE) and SCBA. Check nozzles, saws, tools, etc. Starting on day one, prepare yourself by checking to see where everything is located so that when the officer asks for a specific tool, you won't be foolishly running around the apparatus looking for it. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

Wear your safety gear. Contrary to what you might think, you are NOT indestructible. You have been issued protective clothing to ensure that you go home at the end of your shift. The clothing cannot protect you if it's sitting in your gear locker. Wear your hood, your gloves, and your mask! Button your collar. Give yourself every chance of getting back home in the same shape as when you left.

Ask. When you have a question, ask it. Not asking something for fear of looking foolish will only get you in trouble. You will be working with knowledgeable firefighters, but to benefit from their knowledge, you must be willing to make the first move. They can't answer your question if they don't know what that question is. We have a combined 50 years on the job, and we still ask questions. Twenty years from today, you will also be asking questions, if you're smart.

Talk to the off-going crew. Don't let your counterpart leave without giving you a report. Ask questions that will affect your readiness on what happened on their shift. Example: Has any equipment been moved, replaced, or sent out for repair? Conversely, don't rush out the door at the end of your shift. Share pertinent information with the crew (and person) relieving you. Give them the same courtesy others extended to you.

Lead by example. Yes, even a rookie can display the qualities of a leader. If you do your job well, every time--that's the first step. On the fireground, there is something we call "layered leadership." When an assignment is given, the person receiving the assignment is expected to complete that task. If you tackle assignments with professionalism and a "whatever it takes" attitude, others (even veteran firefighters) may try to reach the standard that you, the rookie, have set.

Don't try to force acceptance. Your actions both in the firehouse and on the fireground will be closely scrutinized. Trying to get comfortable too quickly will likely work against you. For

example, it is wise to bring in the newspaper, but your job is not to kick your feet up and read it. You can do that on your off time. When on duty, you should be reading about one thing-- your job.

Leave your ego at the door. Don't think, "Been there, done that." In this profession, celebrations are short lived. You (and your crew) are only as good as your next call. Don't be overconfident or cocky because you had a fire on your first day. Sure, the experience will help, but remember, there is a lot to learn in this business, and you will NEVER know it all. The day you think you do is the day you should consider another career.

Respect your elders. An extensive amount of experience and information is held in the minds of the senior members of most departments. To them, you're the "kid" who just got out of the academy; some of them may remind you of that from time to time. If so, consider that you may be showing them signs of disrespect. It's okay to share your opinion, but don't forget that these men and women paid their dues and have experience that exceeds yours. Respect that fact.

Stay physically fit. Firefighting is one of the most physically demanding jobs in the world. Consider the fact that a significant number of firefighters die each year because of stress-induced heart attacks. Some of those deaths may have been avoided if the firefighter ate more healthfully, worked out more consistently, and was proactive with regard to regular physicals and cardiovascular exams. In short, Stay Fit! Your life depends on it.

Stay mentally fit. The most important tool you have is the one under your helmet and between your ears. You have to exercise that tool daily by attending as many classes and reading as many books as you can. There is a limitless supply of educational materials out there. A smart firefighter will understand that the day you stop reading about the job is the day you retire. If you think you have run out of things to study and learn, you have greatly underestimated the complexity of the job.

If you feel stressed, tell your officer. While on duty, you will see and experience traumatic occurrences that exceed what the average person will see on television (multiple alarm fires, serious injuries, death, etc). In time, you will become partially immune to most of this, but you will always be affected to some degree. Some people are good at hiding their stress, but this will catch up to you and affect your personal life as well as your professional life. Don't be foolish enough to hesitate to ask for help if you need it.

Have fun. You may be saying, "Fun? Nothing I've read so far sounds like fun," but you will discover that life as a firefighter can be just that--if, of course, you learn how to take a joke. The fact is many firefighters like to test the sense of humor of probies early on. Don't take things too personally. Have fun. If you don't have a sense of humor, it would be wise to develop one. Survival in the firehouse depends on it.

Be a team player. Firefighting is the ultimate definition of the word TEAM. Individuals rarely get credit for a job well done, but your crew will be judged by how well you work together. Remember, when things go bad, all you have is your team. Crew continuity is built at the fire

station, but teamwork is fine-tuned on the training ground and at the fire scene. It also helps to get involved with off-duty, non-firefighting activities as well.

Be accountable. The only person responsible for your actions is you. If you make a mistake, own up to it. Your coworkers will respect you more for admitting you were wrong than if you try to hide it. Accountability is also important on the fireground. If your officer asks you to do something, do it; then immediately report back to him. Freelancing at a fire is a major problem that could end up costing someone their life.

Respect the public. Being a firefighter is an honor and a privilege. Being issued a badge doesn't mean you deserve special treatment. On the contrary, firefighting is a business of service. When people have problems, they call you for help. They let you in their homes because they trust you and believe that you are a professional. Treat them with the same respect you would want others to treat you and your family in a time of need.

Make safety your priority. No matter where you are or what you are doing, think safety. On the fireground especially, it is easy to get so caught up in the moment that you forget the basics. Take a moment to think about what you are doing before you do it. In that moment, think, "Is this the safest way I can accomplish this task?" The job is dangerous enough. There is no room for poor judgment and unsafe practices.

Pay it forward. As the years go by, you will move from probie to experienced firefighter. One day, you may be the senior firefighter or company officer. Don't ever forget what it feels like to be the rookie shaking in his boots. The probies of tomorrow deserve the same respect and tutelage that you will receive. If hazing and condescension were your tutors, then you be the one to break that destructive cycle. Be a dedicated firefighter and help out the rookie, even if you weren't helped. Individually, we can get better, but only as a whole can we become great.

Always have at least one pen on you at all times. You can't go wrong getting on of the pens and clipping it to your t-shirt collar. You'll need a pen for writing down information on calls and for taking notes. Nothing more embarrassing than having to ask someone to borrow a pen.

Always have a watch with a second hand and one that glows in the dark. Besides needing it for taking vital signs once you're on the line, it is not a nice-to-have, but a need-to-have. You'll never know when you will need it, but if you don't have one, it is pretty embarrassing having to tell the person asking you to time something or what time is it, "I don't have a watch." Go to Costco (or a similar store) and buy a heavy duty, waterproof watch. I still have the same one that I bought in my academy 10 years ago, it works great.

Be nice to EVERY ONE you meet, whether they are in uniform or not. You never know who they might be and it's just the right thing to do.

Start learning the names and positions/assignments of all of the chiefs, all of the officers and all of the firefighters that work in your new department. Why? Because it is the right thing to do and because you'll need to know them at some point anyway, why not start now? The sooner you start, the easier it will be, especially in larger departments. If you get hired by say LAFD,

with over 3,000 members, good luck. Do the best you can. Also start learning the names of the administrative personnel (secretaries, etc.) that you come in contact with during training, the hiring process, etc. They will assist you at some point in your career; start learning who they are, what they do, and how they can help you.

If you meet someone new for the first time (and there will be a lot of first times - you'll feel like an Alzheimer's patient for a while), take the time to extend your hand, shake their hand, and say something to the effect of "hello, my name is John Smith, I am one of the new probationary firefighters (or whatever your dept. calls you), I am pleased to meet you." Hopefully they will provide their name, if they don't, try to tactfully ask that question and then throw in something to the effect of "where do you work and what is your assignment." Some people might call that kissing butt, I think it is just common courtesy. Realize every department is different and this may not be accepted practice in some departments.

Realize that you will not have much (if any) available sick or vacation time. That said; try to keep the hobbies to a minimum that might injure you (skiing, motorcycling, snowboarding, etc.). If you don't have the time to use as sick leave, there is no requirement they have to keep your job. Wait the 12 to 18 months for probation to finish if you do something that has a high risk of injury.

Also, try not to plan any big trips. You won't have much vacation and some departments don't even allow trades or minimize trades for probes. In some departments, it is frowned upon for probes to take trades. Know your departments culture.

Learn as much as you can about your new department. Besides learning the names and ranks of personnel, learn about the history and about every possible thing you can. This information can be found out primarily just by showing interest and talking with the firefighters you work with. Most will love to talk about the history with you. Other good sources include department history books, yearbooks, the internet, a fire dept. museum (if they have one), each fire station itself, etc.

It seems to me that many probes don't seem to care about the history (or at least they don't seem aggressive in learning about the history) of a dept. these days. History is there for a reason - we can learn from history and it also helps you talk with and understand people since history is contained every day in our conversations in some form or fashion.

If it is appropriate in your dept., try to attend EVERY department function. These can include: Holiday parties, union meetings, barbeques, recognition dinners, retirement dinners, etc. This is a great way to meet more of the personnel you have not yet met, to meet some of the retirees, to learn more about how the department operates, and to just be more involved to your department.

When appropriate, get involved. Many departments don't allow (or like) probes to get involved on committees, etc., but that doesn't mean you can't start learning about the different committees so you can start planting the seeds for when you get off probation. We are all looking for our members to get involved in some form or fashion.

Always have a full set of spare street clothes in your car, as well as numerous pieces of dept. clothing. When I got hired, I purchased 10 t-shirts and 2 to 3 each of sweat shirts, sweat pants, sweat shorts, etc. You're going to get stinky and dirty, and you'll want a clean change of clothes since you might not be able to launder your clothes every night after the academy.

While you're driving to the academy each day, and going to lunch with your classmates (assuming your dept. allows that), don't drive with your blinders on. Start learning the streets, the target hazards, etc. What a great way to start learning your way around town. On that note, try to spend your money (food, gas, snacks, etc.) in the dept.'s jurisdiction. Besides having the money go back to the city (that you'll indirectly benefit from in the long run), you'll get to learn the areas. This will come in handy.

On the same lines of number 14, buy a street map of your new dept.'s jurisdictional boundaries. Mark each fire station on the map and include the assigned apparatus. What a great way to learn where each fire station is and what units are assigned to each station. This will be a necessity. The last thing you want to do is get your station assignment and say "can you tell me how to get there?" That doesn't make you look to good.

Also, take the time to highlight each main target hazard (schools, hospitals, shopping centers, large companies, major transit centers, city buildings, etc.). Besides having to respond to them on calls, you'll probably be tested on them as well.

Additionally, highlight the primary streets so you can start memorizing them. Then do the secondary streets, etc.

Keep this map with you at all times and then with you when you work at the stations to study.

Learn the address of each station (if you're hired by LAFD, good luck). This will teach you basic address schemes (such as odd numbers are on the north and east side of the street and even numbers are on the south and the west side of the street) of the city and will start you learning your streets (which most departments require and test you on). Once you learn the street name, learn the cross street as well. And then which way the numbers progress on the street.

Remember that it is tough to learn everything all at once. However, if you start small, at the time you get hired, and then think of it as "building blocks," you'll be surprised at how much you will learn and retain.

Always have spare money with you in case you forget your wallet. Try to keep a bunch of coins in your car, and also some small bills (in case you forget your wallet and need food, bridge toll, etc.). Go a step further and put some coins and money in a water tight container and carry it on your turnouts. This will be good once you get on line and are coming back from a 5 am run and you have just had your first trash fire and the captain tells you, "oh, your first trash fire? Perfect, you can buy us donuts." Instead of saying "can I borrow some money, my wallet is at the station?" You can say, no problem, I have money in my turnouts.

If you have extra uniforms, keep at least one shirt/pants in your vehicle in a secure space. Chances are you'll get the one you're wearing dirty at some point and need a clean set. Don't keep them visible because some thief would love to get their hands on it...

Always have a toiletries kit in your vehicle. I remember one probie asking me (when he was working at the station), "Cap, can I borrow your deodorant since I forgot mine?" I prefer the roll on deodorant and what do you think my answer was? NO!!! That's almost as bad as asking to borrow a toothbrush or towels.

Last, but not least (at least for now), if you are issued a probie binder to get things signed off in, make copies of it on a regular basis. One of our probes lost (actually his car was broken into and they took the book and some turnouts) his book a couple of years ago - the one that had almost 18 months of probie sign-offs completed. He did not have a copy in a secure location. He was dancing around for a while and quite nervous until he was told it was ok. This could have easily gone against him.

Be a geek about introducing yourself.

Take the initiative to meet people. Say hello in the elevator, kitchen or bathroom. It will pay off in the end. "It could be a fast-paced culture, and they don't have time to come to you," says Augustine. "Start with the group that's closest to you, the people you're directly working with." It will be in their best interest to get you started on the right foot, since your work will directly affect theirs.

Befriend a veteran who can help you navigate politics (and find the pencils).

Learn who the players are, and who's been at your company awhile, Augustine advises. Find the battered veteran who has a good handle on what works and doesn't and can show you around. "Companies have their own language and inside jokes," she says. "Look for the one person to help you decode the acronyms and office politics." Plus, you'll need someone to go to for the silly things. Asking your boss where to find the pencils is a bit below their pay grade.

Set expectations with your boss and employees.

"Get on your boss's calendar," says Augustine. Use that initial meeting to establish what they believe success will look like in the first week, month and three months. At the same time, if you're in a managerial position, it's important to begin setting expectations with your direct reports. From communication style to office hours, that first week sets the tone.

Figure out the coffee situation.

Learning where the coffee is will always be a good strategy for success. It's also important to figure out the unwritten rules of the office that, if violated, make people go ballistic. Who washes the dishes? Which shelves are communal? "In our office, there are several refrigerators,

and people get upset if you use the wrong one," says Augustine. "Be a sponge, and watch how people are doing things. There's nothing wrong with asking how to use the coffee maker."

Start demonstrating and documenting what you sold the company on.

"Whatever you sold them on in interview, make it your mission to demonstrate that you're going to do it," Augustine says. If you said you were a social media whiz or good with numbers, immediately start revamping the social accounts or making sense of the company's analytics. And start a brag sheet. Keep track of all your accomplishments, major contributions, and when you get positive feedback. You want to get in the habit early and have the information at the ready for future performance reviews and salary negotiations.

Get organized to set good habits.

Especially since a lot of new information is coming your way, setting good habits and getting organized from the start will make your life easier down the line. It's also a good time to improve your bad habits. "It's a great opportunity to overcome any challenges or weaknesses from your past," says Augustine. If you've struggled with time management, for example, use that first week to map out how you'll spend each day and begin putting it into practice.

Reinforce your new connections on social media.

Once you're officially on the job, it's important to update your title across your own social media platforms and also start following your new company and colleagues. As you meet new people, cement the relationships by finding them on Twitter or LinkedIn. Augustine advises identifying the platform that makes the most sense. Facebook, for instance, is viewed by many as personal, so use discretion.

Reconnect with former colleagues.

Perhaps counterintuitively, Augustine says the first week of a new job is the perfect time to reach out to colleagues from your previous jobs. "Go back and reconnect with people at your old company, and ask for LinkedIn recommendations," she suggests. The best time to get referrals is when you're *not* looking for a new job, she says.

Find your go-to pharmacy and take-out lunch spot.

Learn your new neighborhood. Do you know where the nearest CVS is? What about where to get a sandwich, take people for coffee or a nice business lunch? "Logistically, you need know where to go get a Band-Aid when you need one," Augustine says.

America, representing some 9.5 percent of the work force. In this ultra-tight employment market, you're darn lucky to get your resume read, let alone land a job. But if by some miracle you get your foot in the door, try not to immediately put it in your mouth.

The first day at a new job is critical for making the right impression. After all, no office needs another toxic co-worker: the know-it-all, the gossip hound, the death breath guy and the "hey, look at my underwear" lady. Instead, you want to ooze dependability, preparedness, politeness, good grooming and above all, normality.

Here are our top 10 tips for a successful first day on a new job, starting with something you should try to do away from your desk: sleep.

Get Two Weeks of Sleep Before the Big Day

Your mom was right when she told you to get a good night's sleep before your first day of work. You want to be sharp, clear-eyed and preferably awake while you meet dozens of new people, process loads of critical information, choose your network password and figure out the quickest route to the restroom.

But what mom didn't know was that one good night of sleep won't make up for three months (or more) of late nights and afternoon naps. You need to re-train your body to keep regular "working" hours. Experts say this requires two weeks of going to sleep at a reasonable time and waking up unreasonably early. Stick to this regimen, and soon your internal clock will jibe with the alarm clock -- give or take three smacks of the snooze button.

Whether you drive, bike, bus or walk to your new job, it's smart to test drive the route before that first important day. Google Maps doesn't have a "rush hour" button that will automatically double the time of your daily commute. Plus, traffic is a lousy excuse for being late, since the rest of the office had to battle the same gridlock but still managed to make it in before 9:37. If you take public transportation, have your train/bus arrival and departure times, as well as any transfers you need to make, down pat well before your first day. Do you have to drive to the train or bus station? Master that route as well. Have a back-up plan handy, just in case.

Once you know exactly how long it takes from your door to your desk during rush hour, tack on an extra 10 minutes for good measure. It never hurts to be early for your first day.

Every office has its own lunch culture. Only a lucky few cubicle slaves still get a leisurely lunch hour. The more common lunch ritual is of the e-mailing-with-one-hand-while-jamming-a-tuna-salad-sandwich-down-your-throat-with-the-other variety. If you're unsure of the lunch scene at the new job, better to brown bag it than get stuck with a vending machine lunch of peanut butter crackers and Mountain Dew. You may end up having lunch with the boss on your first day, but that's no guarantee -- and you may end your first day at work hungry.

Either way, start your day with a hearty breakfast. You'll need more than your usual coffee and Cap'n Crunch to sustain you through hours of orientation and hand-shaking.

A surefire way to impress your boss on the first day is to show up with a clear understanding of what the company does. Thanks to the Internet, this is a cinch. Read your company's Web site, its clients' Web sites and any recent news articles about them. You can even set up an e-mail alert through Google News to notify you when stories hit the press about your employer or

your industry in general. You don't have to spout out all this info at will, but it will keep you from saying something stupid in front of the higher-ups.

If your boss is an impressive figure, read up on him or her, too. But don't be creepy about it and throw odd facts back at them: "Hey, how are your two children named Michael and Anna, ages seven and five?" Now you're a stalker. Know the line -- and toe it carefully.

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Hit the Mall

Even at the most dressed-down workplaces, there is a line between office casual and college bum. It's time to put away your ironic T-shirts, hoodies and flip-flops and invest in some clothes that say, "I'm not the pizza guy."

Every office has its own definition of appropriate dress. Pay attention to what other people are wearing when you go in for an interview. If you don't remember, you can call the human resources representative at your company and get his or her opinion. You certainly don't want to appear too casual, but you can overdo it the other way as well. You don't want to hear, "Hey, who's the guy in the tux?"

Ladies should avoid wearing anything too revealing or sexy. Dress to flatter, not titillate. Unfortunately, this kind of thing does make a difference: There have been actual studies that show that women who dress provocatively at work are less likely to receive raises and promotions.

The first day is a whirlwind of introductions and meetings. You'll meet four different people named Dan, receive a phonebook-sized packet of information about your healthcare plan and be walked through the simple 30-step process for clearing a paper jam in the copy machine.

Take notes; you'll thank yourself later. If you're a whiz with your handheld, jot notes electronically. Otherwise, invest in a small notebook that you can stick in your pocket and pull out when your cubicle mates start explaining where all the good burrito joints are. Names and positions are probably the most important notes to take. People like to think they're memorable enough for you to remember their name, so indulge them.

The key word for your first day at work is restraint. If you're a naturally bubbly hyper-energetic type, tone it down a notch. You don't want to scare people. Likewise, if your default gear is low and slow, have an extra cup of coffee and practice your best fake smile.

Ease into your sense of humor as well. Even if everyone else is cracking jokes before the meeting starts, don't join the fray just yet. You're the new guy, which means you don't know which lines not to cross, particularly when your boss is involved.

And whatever you do, never act like an assignment or task is beneath you. If they have you making copies all day or updating the Outlook calendar, don't whine. Once you pay your dues, people will see your potential and let you tackle the more interesting stuff.

There's no such thing as a dumb question. All right, that's a lie, but the dumbest thing you can do on your first day is to screw up an assignment because you didn't fully understand the directions.

If your boss puts you on a task, try to get all of the details straight during that first meeting. You won't look stupid -- just attentive and thorough. If you're in the middle of the assignment and something still doesn't make sense, pop your head in the office and clear it up. Again, you look sincere, not slow. If you pop your head in every five minutes, though, you'll get annoying. Get it down as quickly as possible.

Here's a question that's music to a manager's ears: "Can I help you with anything?" If you suddenly find yourself without work on that first day, don't start updating your Facebook page. Actively seek out something helpful to do, either for your boss or your co-workers. You might even get a lunch invitation out of it.

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Shut Up and Listen

Sometimes your first day of work also serves as a declaration. Perhaps your boss hired you to make changes to the existing work culture or bring a fresh perspective and new ideas. Unfortunately, offices can be terribly insular places that resist change and deeply distrust

outsiders. So even if you have the best ideas in the world -- even if the higher-ups brought you on board specifically to shake things up -- keep them to yourself on the first day.

The best way to win people's trust is simply by listening to them [source. Show respect for their opinions and seek feedback on your ideas before presenting them as the new reality. When in doubt, bring doughnuts.

Managers aren't mind-readers and neither are you. Clear communication is essential to a successful working relationship.

If you feel comfortable -- particularly if you already have a few years of work experience under your belt -- request a one-on-one meeting with your direct supervisor to talk about communication and managerial style. Some managers like to be informed of everything: client contacts, project updates, problems that arise. Others take a more hands-off approach, preferring that you only bother them with the big news.

By understanding your boss's communication expectations and management style, you'll avoid some of the bumpy learning opportunities during the first weeks of a new job and jump straight into a smooth and productive relationship.

For more information about work life and office etiquette, look at the links on the next page.

What to Accomplish in the First Year of a New Job

The First Ninety Days

Since a 90-day probationary period is customary, you must create a positive impression. First impressions are lasting ones, and you must make sure that the ones you create are strong. There may be a honeymoon period, but if it still exists, it is much shorter. Set goals for yourself that are higher than the boss's expectations. Ask for and schedule regular one-on-one meetings with your boss. They need not be long -- just enough for you to be sure that you are on track and for your boss to see that you are committed to doing a first-rate job.

Establishing Good Habits

The good habits that you establish will serve you well in the days and years ahead. Make a point of being on time -- or better yet, being a few minutes early -- to work in the morning and to meetings. Learn other functions in the company besides what you and your department do. Not only will this make you more effective in your work, you will position yourself as an up-and-coming employee. The more you know, the more respect you will earn from co-workers and upper management. Learn why things work the way they do, not just how they work. Doing favors for others will create goodwill and bolster your reputation. Keep a journal of what you do -- it's a record of your professional growth and documentation of your achievements. It may be handy when evaluation time arrives.

Managing Your Boss

There is an unspoken bullet point in your job description, and that is to make your boss look good. He is the person who hired you and you want to demonstrate that he made a good decision. Do what you can do to make his job easier. Begin by learning his management style. He may delegate responsibility or he may micromanage. You need to understand his hot buttons -- those things that will set him off. Learn how he handles conflict management. As you work through the first year you will be defining your informal role in the company. Your good relationship with the boss will earn you good performance evaluations and advancement.

Network

Networking begins the first day on the job and continues for the rest of your professional life. Begin by getting to know others in your company, including management, co-workers -- those with some experience-- and your peers -- anyone else who is fairly new on the job. Your peers will be your contemporaries as you grow professionally, while the co-workers represent the establishment in the organization. You will find out who you can go to for answers and assistance. While you should network with all, be cautious about who you become close to. All types of personalities are around, and you will be known by the company you keep.

Let your boss know you're open to constructive criticism. Not everyone is responsive to hearing negative things about their performance—this is why some employers might shy away from giving you consistent feedback, saving much of the negatives for your formal performance review. But why would you want to wait?

Let your boss know that you want constructive criticism. Laying this out will encourage her to give you valuable feedback. And if you find that there is an issue with your performance, you can work to improve before your official review comes around.

Manage expectations. Don't lie about your expertise. The problem with the whole fake-it-until-you-make-it technique is that you risk skipping fundamentals. For instance, if you lie about your level of expertise in Photoshop, then all the tasks you have to do involving this program are going to be harder than you can handle. Let your employer take your learning curve into consideration. Or else you'll run out of steam in no time.

Observe the company culture. A huge part of integrating into your new work environment is showing that you're a good cultural fit. Now since you got the job, chances are your employers saw something in you that matched their company culture. Prove them right. One way to do this is to use the same communication style as others in your office. For instance, do your co-workers use instant messaging more than email? Follow suit.

Ask these three important questions about your goals. There are three key questions you need to ask your boss upon being hired, says Barry Maher, owner of the management sales consulting firm Barry Maher & Associates:

What does he or she absolutely need you to do within the first 90 days?

What would he or she like you to do beyond that during the first 90 days?

What would he or she consider world-class performance during that period?

"Then do everything you can to meet that standard, keeping your boss apprised of your progress. And if you're falling behind, don't be afraid to ask the boss what he or she would advise you to do to get back on track," Maher says.

"Follow that plan," he adds, "and no matter what you finally do end up achieving, the boss is going to be impressed by your drive."

Update your new role on LinkedIn. Broadcasting your new role to your professional network shows your enthusiasm and commitment to the job. It's signaling to all other hiring managers and recruiters that you've been swept up.

Know your office logistics. Make a conscious effort to learn all the office basics to show that you're savvy and resourceful. Rather than pestering your cubicle neighbor about little things (like where the copy machine is), try and figure these things out yourself. Some basic key players to look out for: the HR department, the IT/help desk, and the company directory.

Always say yes to lunch. Eating alone during the first three months on the job means you're missing a huge opportunity on key networking moments. Lunch is a great opportunity to build trust with your colleagues and let them get to know you a little better.

Avoid gossip. You're too new to get involved with who did what at the last holiday office party. More importantly, who cares? Your first three months should focus on proving your expertise. While it's important to be congenial and engage in small talk (No. 7), exit when the topic starts getting a little too gossipy.

Show enthusiasm. In all the craziness of this big transition, remember to smile. Maher says that the biggest pitfall during the first 90 days for employees is they forget that the adjustment is never going to be completely seamless—there will be "periods when you're confused, lost, flustered, or discouraged," Maher says. "Or even all four."

That's OK. Your new colleagues will pay more attention to the way you handle these pitfalls rather than the pitfalls themselves.

Being Late for Work

When you're trying to make a good impression with the bosses and co-workers, it all starts from the first hours of the working day. Being late never sits well with people in the office. That's why you should always factor in the extra time you might need in case of a traffic jam, an item accidentally left at home, parking woes, or at least until you are familiar with the route (and its alternatives) to the office. This way, you can turn up early for work when your travels

are smooth and when you get into unforeseen circumstances, you can still make it to work on time.

Being Arrogant or Cocky

Even if you hold a high position in your new job or wish to exert certain influence on your subordinates or peers, the first few month on your job isn't the right time to appear bossy. Take the time to learn and understand the work processes and culture of the new working environment, while giving your co-workers and subordinates to warm up to you. Besides, you will need this crucial and limited amount of time to figure out the norms of this office before implementing an appropriate management or work style you find suitable in the organization.

Posting About Work on Social Networking Sites

In this modern age, information spreads very easily, and yours could spread fairly quickly, and usually without you knowing about it. When you're at one of the more critical stages of your job, such information could make or break your career. There will always be differences in the working cultures and acceptable norms between the new working environment and the previous working environment. Refrain from posting any comments, positive or negative, on any of your social networking sites for fear of having the wrong person catch whiff of it.

Holding Your Silence and Feigning Ignorant

As the new person at your new workplace, you get more leeway when it comes to making silly mistakes or asking 'stupid questions'. You are *expected* to rummage around in the dark for a bit before you can find your way out of the chaos. So, go ahead and ask your colleagues even the most basic of questions, e.g. how to use the photostat machine. Making assumptions about how things work is always a risk, even if you already know how certain things work. There may be other procedures you need to complete first before moving on to the task ahead. Clear your doubts as you get to them to prevent them accumulating. People are not as helpful when they expect you to already know your way around the office.

Getting Involved in Gossip

Gossip is frowned upon in the workplace for good reasons: they carry incomplete, or sometimes completely wrong, information, also known as rumors. Gossip-peddlers sometimes spread these bits of info with personal agendas, which almost always implicate company morale, relationships across the office and vertically up the corporate ladder. One common characteristic of gossip and rumours are that they are hard to control. We'll never know how or when the simplest of a bit of rumor could escalate into something totally uncontrollable. Refrain from joining the rumour-monger crew before you become a victim yourself.

Being Judgmental or Close-minded

Every organization has its own issues and bottom-necks that may appear to be trivial or preposterous to you when you first learn of it. The solution may seem rather straightforward,

and you may wonder out loud why no one is doing anything about it. Well, one common reason is that people are generally averse to change, so they would rather stick with their old, conservative methods out of sheer comfort.

Pointing out their erroneous thinking or stupidity is the best way to get you noticed — and detested.

Also, the problems in your new company may be more than meets the eyes. You have yet to see the big picture of things in the organization and hence fail to take into account the office politics, culture and other work processes before you jump into that conclusion that the system is flawed, but with reason. Therefore, being a newbie withhold your judgments and understand everything better before you jump the gun and crusade for change.

Taking Sides

In any kind of environment, you'll discover that there will be cliques or groups that move together, think together, 'play together'. Such is the core of office politics that exists in pretty much every workplace you could ever find yourself in. 'Representatives' from one of those parties may try to befriend you and offer to orientate you in the office. On the outside they may be nice and friendly but soon enough you will find that they come with ulterior motives. They are recruiting.

Take sides with certain co-workers is fine, if you find that their values, ethics, working styles etc align with yours. It will be a risk nonetheless; taking sides means drawing up an invisible boundary, which makes asking favors from the other groups or cliques more difficult. This would seriously reduce the opportunities for you to learn as much as you can from as many people as you can find. The best way forward is to gather as much as you can from all of those groups but stay neutral and objective

Working the Floor like a Casanova

When you are new to the job, people have the tendency to judge you based on the kind of behaviors you show at the initial stage. Making the move on your co-workers during your probationary month may not be helpful with your 'report card', especially if someone already has an eye on your target first. You can be charming, or smooth, but be respectful to the ladies, don't be too stuck up with the men, and try not to be so aggressive with start-up relationships. Focus on making a good impression with the people who decides if you can keep your job first. There will be time for office romances if you think you are up to it later on.

Spoiling the 'Market'

I know most of you would be trying to impress your new bosses and colleagues, showcasing your skills, and exhibiting your passion and commitment to the organization's vision. However, sometimes it's best to just go with the norm. If you go the extra mile for every task that you do, you set the precedence that will be expected of for the other employees; this

'upsets the market', so to speak. It's best to not overdo things. Withhold your enthusiasm enough to not be seen as a threat but show enough to be a keeper.

Reveal Too Much About Yourself

Don't judge a book by its cover. As the new person in the workplace, you have no idea who you can trust until you spend more time mingling around. This means that it is not advisable for you to reveal too much about yourself no matter how likable or sociable your colleagues may be. You never know if he or she may use that information against you. Information is fodder for gossip. Nevertheless, be friendly and polite to everyone.

Keep an open mind and avoid being judgmental when it comes to people you've just met. Some people take a longer time to warm up to you, so don't take it personally when they appear distant at first. Have casual conversations with them. In time, you'll see who's trustworthy enough for you to share more about yourself, your strategies and your future plans.

Take the best from these and other examples and use what works best for your situation. All examples will not work for everyone. You are your own person.

Sources of Information – Many Sources from the Internet – We thank everyone that posted these many support tools for your use.

Sources are not from Firefighter's ABC's

Please take a moment to visit us at Firefighter's ABC's for a host of other tools that will support your effort to be a Firefighter or part of the Public Safety Family.

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