

Making It Official: Writing a Letter of Resignation

By Brooke Heath

Perhaps you have already given your notice of resignation verbally, but most companies require that you submit a formal letter of resignation to keep on file. It is also to your benefit to give your employer and your company's human resources department a letter of resignation because it covers your end of the deal. It ensures that the date you are leaving and the date you informed your employer of your resignation are officially documented. In most cases, it is ideal to have a letter of resignation ready when you go to give your resignation in person.

Keep It Simple.

When writing your letter of resignation, it's important to keep it as simple, brief, and focused as possible. To begin the letter, use a formal letter format with the company title, date, etc. Including the date is especially important because it documents the date on which you are providing your employer with your notice. Remember that the sole purpose of the letter is to officially provide your employer with information about your resignation.

You should also address the letter directly to your immediate supervisor and copy the HR department.

Keep It Polite and Professional!

The body of the letter should be polite and professional. Now is not the time to vent your frustrations with the company or your supervisor. You are leaving, so let it go. Also, keep in mind that because this letter will be in your file, it could potentially be shown to prospective employers. (The professional world isn't as big as you may think, and you never know when something you say or do will come back to affect a new job.) Refrain from defending yourself, criticizing your employer, or attempting to settle scores.

Tell your employer that you appreciate the opportunity that you had to work for the company and that you value the experience you have gained. You do not need to explain why you are leaving or give a reason for your resignation.

What to Include

Be sure to include the following in your letter:

- The position from which you are resigning or your title.
- What your last day of work will be. (Remember that the standard is to give two weeks' notice. However, if you have a contract, be sure to honor it and stay as long as required.)

Before You Submit the Letter

After you finish typing the letter (oh, by the way, it should *absolutely* be typed), make sure that you proofread it and fix any errors. Nothing throws credibility out the window like a nice spelling or grammatical error! Also, be sure to sign it. This makes it official.

Make several copies of the letter, and keep one for your own records. Also, before you turn in the letter, ensure that you have removed all personal items from your desk and that there is nothing left on your computer. Sometimes when employees give their resignation, their companies immediately ask them to leave. So be prepared!

Submitting the Letter

When submitting the letter, take it directly to your immediate supervisor. Do not allow coworkers or others to read the letter. They may already know that you are leaving, but it should be treated professionally. Again, you may also opt to take an additional copy of the letter to your company's HR department.