

Job Description Template

Policy · US · Updated 2026-07-13 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A job description is the written statement of what a job is for, the essential functions it exists to perform, the qualifications and physical requirements it genuinely demands, and where it sits in the organization. In the US it is not just a recruiting document — it is the reference point for two legal questions that arrive later: what this job's essential functions are under the ADA, and whether the role is exempt or non-exempt under the FLSA.

The essential-functions framing is the part most templates miss. When an employee or applicant with a disability asks for a reasonable accommodation, the analysis turns on which functions of the job are essential — and a job description written before the question arose, honestly separating the essential from the marginal, is evidence of what the job really requires. A description written after the dispute starts is worth much less.

This template gives you the full structure: job identification with an FLSA classification flag, a position summary, essential functions written as outcomes, marginal duties kept separate, physical requirements described honestly, and job-related qualifications — plus the acknowledgment and review routine that keeps descriptions matching reality.

Purpose and scope

This template is how [Your company] writes and maintains job descriptions. Every role has a current description, written [before the role is advertised], reviewed by [name/role], and re-acknowledged when it materially changes. Descriptions are used in recruiting, onboarding, performance reviews, accommodation discussions, and FLSA classification reviews — one document, five jobs.

Job identification

- Job title: [title] — descriptive, not inflated; titles carry no legal weight but set expectations.
- Department and reports to: [department], reporting to [title].
- Location and schedule: [site / remote / hybrid], [full-time/part-time, typical schedule].
- FLSA classification: [exempt / non-exempt] — review against current DOL duties and salary criteria before relying on this; the work as actually performed decides it, and misclassification is an expensive default to inherit.
- Pay range: [range — required in job postings in a growing number of states; check your state before omitting].
- Version and date: [version], approved by [name/role] on [date].

Position summary

[Two or three sentences: why the job exists, what it is accountable for, and the one result that defines success. Written for a candidate to understand in thirty seconds — the detail belongs in the functions below.]

The summary should describe the job, not the ideal occupant. "Keeps the kitchen inspection-ready and the line running through service" tells a candidate more than any list of adjectives.

Essential functions

Essential functions are the fundamental duties the job exists to perform — the ones that make it this job and not another. A function is likely essential if the position exists to perform it, if few other employees are available to absorb it, or if it requires special skill the role was hired for. List [5–8] functions, each starting with an action verb, each describing an outcome rather than a method, with the approximate portion of time where useful:

- [Function 1 — e.g. "Prepares menu items to spec during service, approximately X% of time."]
- [Function 2]
- [Function 3]
- [Function 4]
- [Function 5]
- Describe outcomes, not methods — "moves stock between storeroom and floor" rather than "carries boxes" — because outcome language leaves room for an accommodation to change the how without changing the what.

Marginal duties

Duties the role performs but does not exist for — coverage tasks, occasional projects, "other duties as assigned" — are listed here, separately. Keeping them out of the essential list is the point: padding essential functions with marginal duties weakens the description as ADA evidence, because a list where everything is essential shows that nothing was actually assessed.

[Marginal duty 1] · [Marginal duty 2] · Other duties as assigned by [manager title].

Physical requirements and work environment

- Physical demands: [lifting up to X lbs, frequency; standing/walking for X-hour periods; bending, reaching, climbing as applicable].
- Work environment: [kitchen heat, warehouse noise, outdoor exposure, office setting — as it actually is].
- Travel: [percentage or frequency, if any].
- Describe the job as performed, not worst-case boilerplate — "must lift 50 lbs" on a desk job is the line that gets a description dismissed as unreliable, and honest requirements are what make the later accommodation conversation workable.

Qualifications

- Required: [education, certification, license, experience genuinely necessary to perform the essential functions — nothing else].
- Preferred: [qualifications that help but are not necessary — kept clearly separate from required].
- Every requirement should be job-related and consistent with business necessity; "or equivalent experience" alongside education requirements keeps the pool wide and the requirement defensible.
- [Licenses/certifications required by law for this role: [list] — these are the only requirements that belong in "required" without debate.]

Acknowledgment, records and review

The employee and [manager title] sign the description at hire and whenever it materially changes; signed copies are filed at [system/location]. The signature acknowledges the duties — it does not create an employment contract, and employment at [Your company] remains at will.

Each description is reviewed [frequency, e.g. annually], before the role is advertised, and after any material change to duties — a description that no longer matches the job is worse than none in an ADA or FLSA dispute. Owner: [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Write the description with the people who do or supervise the job, before advertising it — a description written before the hiring decision is the one that carries evidentiary weight.
2. Sort every duty into essential or marginal honestly; if everything is essential, the sorting never happened and the document shows it.
3. Treat the FLSA field as a review trigger: check the role's actual duties and pay against current DOL criteria rather than copying last year's label.
4. Strip any qualification you cannot tie to an essential function — each unnecessary requirement narrows the pool and widens the legal exposure.
5. Check your state for pay-transparency rules before posting, and add the range if required.
6. Re-sign the description whenever the job materially changes, and diary the annual review.

Official guidance

- › [EEOC — Disability discrimination](#)
- › [DOL — Fair Labor Standards Act](#)
- › [EEOC — Prohibited employment policies/practices](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/job-description-template-us> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.