



Your Guide to Hiring Summer Help

The summer is a great time to get away and enjoy a relaxing holiday. Or maybe you would like to stay closer to home and tinker with a summer household project. However you choose to spend a glorious summer holiday, you might require an extra pair of hands to help you. Perhaps you need a part time babysitter to help watch the kids by the pool, or a handyman or master craftsman to put the finishing touches on a renovation.

Finding and managing summer help can seem overwhelming and certainly not worth the time involved. However a well thought out 'how to hire' plan and some expert assistance can help lower the potential of financial and legal liabilities and make the process easier and more carefree.



10 BEST-IN-CLASS HIRING GUIDELINES

Follow the guidelines below to assist with a successful hire:

- Write out a project outline and the goals you hope to accomplish during the time the person is working for you.
- Make a list of the skills required to do the job properly, e.g. if you have infant twins you should not take the time to interview babysitters without proper experience. It would be high risk and a waste of valuable time to interview those that do not meet your needs. Enlist help to create good interview questions to ensure your hire has the right skills for the job.
- Consult with an expert to understand the specific job compensation per your geographic location, plus the compensation schedule by the hour or by the project. Of course, no homeowner wants to overpay their workers, but it's just as important not to under compensate workers for a job well done; in doing so they are likely to leave and find better employment elsewhere.
- Ask trusted members of your friends and family if they know anyone who might be available to help you. Referrals are often the best way to find qualified help.
- Call candidates' references and speak with people they've done work for in the past. Even if the candidate was referred by someone you know, it's important to talk to others they've worked for; it's okay to ask for details of their work performance.
- The safety of your family is of utmost importance; a background investigation should be mandatory on all household help, even part time or temporary help.
- Be proactive and write out the rules of your household. This should include areas of the home/property that are off-limits, rules for computer or telephone usage, a no-borrowing policy, where workers should take meal breaks and which bathrooms they should use.

- Plan ahead and write out a brief job description including what is expected of the employee on a daily basis and any overall responsibilities and duties required of the position. This helps to ensure that both the employee and the employer understand what is expected.
- Before any agreement for compensation is made, it is very important to understand which classification the worker will be considered: an independent contractor or employee, according to IRS guidelines (see the next page for more information). Manage their compensation or payroll records accordingly.
- Ensure your household has the proper insurance coverage. If workers are employees, it is prudent (and sometimes required by state law) to carry workers compensation insurance.

KNOW THE RISKS

RISKY HIRE: Hiring a babysitter who is not well-versed in child safety or a handyman who does not know how to properly dispose of toxic materials can lead to a potentially dangerous environment for your family.

THEFT: Leaving workers unattended in your home lends itself to a risk of property theft and identity theft.

LAWSUIT: Disagreements about job responsibilities, compensation or an injury that occurred while on the job can lead to risk of being sued by workers.

EMPLOYMENT LAW OR IRS VIOLATIONS:

The IRS classifies household workers as either employees or independent contractors. It is imperative to know to which class your workers belong and how they should be treated according to federal and state employment law.