

✓ Easy Reading

Keep Your Job

A workbook to help you keep your job

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Alberta Government

Career Advisors and Tutors

Easy Reading Keep Your Job encourages adults with low literacy skills or English as a Second Language to seek the support of a career advisor or tutor to assist them in understanding the information within this resource. This publication, written at a Grade 4 reading level, will cover important topics such as

- what employers want
- building good work skills
- building good work attitudes
- workplace rights and responsibilities
- making sure your job is a good fit

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- duties and working conditions
- educational and certification requirements
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Let's start

Everybody works. People work at home when they wash the dishes. They work at school when they study. And they work at their jobs.

Jobs are important. A job lets you use the **skills** you have. It lets you learn new skills. It also makes you feel good about yourself because you are doing something useful. You can feel proud of yourself.



TIP: Some words in this book are in **bold**. For example, **skills**. You can look up these words in our Easy Reading Dictionary. Use a computer to find the dictionary at alis.alberta.ca/ERdictionary.

A job lets you meet people. Some of these people can become friends. Some of these people can help you get a better job.

A job is also important because you earn money. Money is useful!

It's good to have a job. But some people can't keep their jobs. They don't know what their employers want. They don't know what skills and **attitudes** they need. They don't know how to keep their jobs.



TIP: Some words in this book are in **colour**. For example, **attitudes**. This book will tell you what the words in colour mean.



Attitude: An attitude is a way to think or feel about something. Attitudes can change the way a person acts. Attitudes can change the way other people act. For example, people like to be around someone with a happy attitude.

What you'll find in this book

This book is called *Keep Your Job*. It will tell you how to keep your job. It will tell you what employers want from a worker. And it will tell you about the skills you need.

Keep Your Job has information about your rights as a worker. It also has information about the duties, or responsibilities, of workers. It is important for you to know about both your rights and your responsibilities.

Keep Your Job also has information about finding a job that is a good fit for you. If you need more information, your **career advisor** or tutor can help you.

Keep Your Job has stories about workers who have job problems. You will see how these workers solve their problems so they can keep their jobs.

Keep Your Job also has many exercises. These exercises will help you think about your work skills and attitudes. You can ask your career advisor or tutor to help you with these exercises.

Now it's time to learn how to keep your job!





What do employers want?

Employers want good workers who help their workplace run well.

How do good workers do this?

- Good workers understand workplace culture. They understand what is normal at their workplace.
 - Good workers learn to fix problems.
 - Good workers build good work skills.
 - Good workers have good attitudes.
- Let's look at each point more closely.

Workers who understand workplace culture

When you travel to a different country, you are in a different culture. For example, in some countries, it is normal to eat dinner at 9 p.m. In other countries, this is too late. It is not normal.

In some countries, it is normal for girls and boys to play hockey. In other countries, playing hockey is not normal. This is not part of their culture.

When people do something together that they think is normal, it is part of their culture. Different countries have different cultures. Different workplaces also have different cultures. For example, in some workplaces, everyone must wear a clean uniform. A worker with a dirty, messy uniform does not fit into the

workplace culture. But in some workplaces, it might be OK to have a dirty uniform. For example, if you work as a mechanic, having grease and oil on your uniform might be OK in your workplace culture.

Here is another example. Sometimes, when a worker has a birthday, a **co-worker** might bring a birthday card for everyone to sign. Then everyone sings "Happy Birthday." This does not happen at every company. But if it happens at your workplace, it is a nice part of your workplace culture.

It is important to understand your workplace culture. You will learn more about workplace culture when you look at the examples in this book.

Workers who learn to fix problems

Problems are part of life. Everyone has problems.

Some people hide from their problems. Some people try to fix or solve problems. Employers want workers who can fix problems.

The exercises in this book will help you think about ways to solve problems. Problem solving is a good skill to have. It will help you keep your job.

Sometimes it is easy to fix a problem at work. For example, there may be a day at your workplace when your co-workers have lots of work to do. If you are not very busy on that day, you can help. Your co-workers will be glad that you can help fix their problem. Your employer will be glad that you work at this company.

Sometimes it's not easy to fix problems.

It can take lots of time. It can mean you have to change. It can mean you must learn new things. Fixing problems can be hard.

Often there is more than one way to fix a problem. You may need to think of what works best for you. But it's a good idea to think about your problems and try to fix them. Fixing problems will help you keep your job. Fixing problems can also mean more money or a better job at your company.

Fixing problems can make your work life easier!

Workers who build good work skills

Good work skills help you do your job well. They help you keep your job. You can use these skills in any job.

Employers want workers who are good at these skills:

- **Body-language skills:** Good workers know what their body is saying. Some things are not said with words. Some things are said with actions. People can say a lot with their eyes. They can also say a lot with how they sit or stand or move.
 - **Speaking skills:** Good workers can say what they need to say. They say the right things. Saying the right things does NOT mean they must speak perfect English. It means that they ask questions when they are not sure of something. It means that they are polite.
 - **Teamwork skills:** Good workers can work with other people. They listen carefully when co-workers speak. They look for ways to help their co-workers and their employer. Good workers are good team players.
 - **Time-management skills:** Good workers can manage their time. They are on time for work. They come back from breaks on time. They finish their work on time.
- In this book, you will learn more about building good work skills. You can do exercises to help you build your work skills. These exercises start on page 9.



Workers who have good work attitudes

Remember that attitudes are ways of feeling or thinking about something. Good work attitudes make workplaces work better. They are useful at any job. They will help you keep your job.

Employers want workers who have these attitudes:

- A flexible attitude: Good workers are flexible. They can change when they need to change. They can learn new things. They can try different ways to do things.
- An honest attitude: Good workers are honest. They try their best. They tell the truth. They do not steal from their employer or their co-workers. They do not cheat their employer.
- A professional attitude: Good workers are professional. They are proud of their work and do it well. They dress properly for their job. They are clean and tidy when they come to work.
- A responsible attitude: Good workers are responsible. Their employer and co-workers can trust them. Responsible workers do what they say they will do. They do not blame others if they make a mistake. They make sure their workplace is safe.



In this book, you will learn more about these work attitudes. You can do exercises to help you think about your work attitudes. These exercises start on page 33.

Building good work skills

Body-language skills

We speak with words. But we also speak with our bodies. A smile says, “I am happy.” A frown says, “I am worried” or “I am unhappy.” When you roll your eyes, you might be saying, “I think the person talking is silly.”

Sometimes people don’t know they are sending a message with their body language. Sometimes people’s words send one message and their body sends a different message. This is hard for others to understand. Employers and co-workers don’t like to work with people who aren’t clear. It makes work unpleasant.

Let’s look at Grace and Terry’s story.



TIP: A good handshake is an important part of workplace culture. Here’s how to do it:

1. Use your right hand.
2. Keep your thumb up as you reach for the other person’s right hand.
3. Slide your hand into the other person’s hand until the thumbs cannot go further.
4. Look into the eyes of the other person.
5. Squeeze the other person’s hand firmly for about 2 seconds. Don’t crush the other person’s hand.
6. You can “pump” or move your arm up and down 1 or 2 times.

The story of Grace and Terry

My name is Grace. I am a housekeeper. I have worked in this hotel for 10 years. Last week a new housekeeper started work. Her name is Terry. Our employer said Terry must work with me.

I’m not sure Terry likes me. On the first day, I tried to shake her hand to say hello. But Terry’s hand was limp.

When I try to tell Terry about the job, she looks away. I am not sure she is listening to me. Sometimes she yawns. Or she looks at her watch. Maybe I am too boring?

When Terry works, she frowns. Did I tell her the wrong thing? Maybe she doesn’t like my work?

My old co-worker made me laugh. Terry never smiles. It is not fun to come to work anymore.



EXERCISE

Let's look at Terry's body-language skills

Terry has problems with her body-language skills. What is Terry doing? In the box below, write down some of Terry's poor body-language skills. Next to each skill, write down why it is a problem for the workplace. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Terry's body-language skills	Why are Terry's body-language skills a problem for the workplace?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	



Grace does not like Terry's body language. It's a problem for Grace. She wants to fix the problem. Grace decides to speak to Terry.

Grace uses good body language. Here is how Grace acts while she speaks to Terry:

- Grace faces Terry.
- Grace looks into Terry's eyes.
- Grace speaks in a polite, friendly voice.
- Grace smiles and nods when she can.

Here is what Grace and Terry say:

Grace: Terry, I don't think you are happy here. You are always frowning.

Terry: Oh. But I am happy! I am just worried that I won't do things right.

Grace: You are doing a good job! You don't need to worry. But I don't think you like working with me. You don't look at me when I talk to you.

Terry: I do like working with you! You are a good teacher. But in the culture of my country, it is rude to look in the eyes of someone older. It is not respectful.



Grace: Oh. Here, it can mean you don't want to listen to me. But then why do you yawn so much? Or look at your watch? I must be boring you.

Terry: No. No. I am still working at my old job. I don't want to be late. And I am tired. This will stop when my old job ends next week. I am so sorry.

Grace: OK! Now I understand!

Should Terry keep her job? Tell your career advisor or tutor what you think and why.



EXERCISE

How are your body-language skills?

Put a check mark [✓] in the circle that describes you.

1. I look into the eyes of the person who speaks to me.

Always Sometimes Never

2. I try to look friendly and interested when others speak to me.
I don't sigh or roll my eyes.

Always Sometimes Never

3. I use a polite voice when I speak to others.

Always Sometimes Never

4. I keep my arms at my sides and not crossed in front of me.

Always Sometimes Never

5. I shake hands firmly.

Always Sometimes Never

6. I nod my head when I understand what the person is saying.

Always Sometimes Never

Are you happy with your answers? Even if you answered "Always" for all the questions, it's a good idea for you to do the next exercise. You may learn something new.

EXERCISE

Let's work on your body-language skills

Do you think you can improve your body-language skills? This exercise will help you get started. First, here is an example of a body-language problem and also some ways to fix it:

Problem	Ways to fix the problem
My employer says I have a bad attitude. She says I don't listen. But I am listening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can sit up or stand straight and face the person.• I can look the person in the eye.• I can nod to show that I understand.• I can smile.

Now it's your turn. Think about a problem you have with your body language. On the left side of the box below, write down your problem. Then write down ways to fix the problem on the right side of the box. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Problem	Ways to fix the problem

Speaking skills

People use many words every day. People with good speaking skills use words to be helpful. They use words to ask questions. They use words to get information.

Employers want workers with good speaking skills. These workers say the right things. They make their co-workers, customers and employer feel good.

Workers with poor speaking skills can be seen as rude. They make other people uncomfortable.

Workers with poor speaking skills don't ask for information. Not asking questions causes problems at work.

Let's look at Abdul and Jim's story.

The story of Abdul and Jim

My name is Abdul. I am a shelf stocker. This is my first job. I have worked at this grocery store for almost 3 months. I like my job. But I am not sure I can stay. I have only one friend here. His name is Jim. We started work at the same time.

Jim tells funny jokes. He says them in a loud voice so everyone can hear. But the women at work don't like Jim's jokes. Even the other men don't laugh. I think they're just too old to understand. Now Jim and I sit by ourselves at lunch.

Jim is funny. When customers want to know where to find something, Jim sends them to the wrong place!

Yesterday Jim put too many boxes on the **forklift**. I tried to tell Jim. But he didn't listen. Boxes of jam fell off. They made a big mess. Jim was mad. He swore so loud that everyone heard him.

Our manager wants to speak to us today.



Forklift: A machine used to move heavy loads. The 2 metal bars that slide under the load look like a fork.



EXERCISE

Let's look at Jim's speaking skills

Jim has problems with his speaking skills. What is Jim doing? In the box below, write down some of Jim's poor speaking skills. Next to each skill, write down why it is a problem for the workplace. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.



Jim's speaking skills	Why are Jim's speaking skills a problem for the workplace?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	



Jim's manager does not like Jim's poor speaking skills. The manager has already warned Jim 2 times about his poor speaking skills. Jim's jokes and swearing do not fit with

the workplace culture of this grocery store. One morning, the manager fires Jim. Then she calls Abdul into the office.

Here is what Abdul and his manager say:

Manager: Abdul, you do good work here. But I'm not sure you want to work here.

Abdul: Yes! I like my work. But the other people who work here are not friendly. They don't like me.

Manager: Your co-workers did not like Jim's jokes. They felt those jokes were rude. But you laughed at those jokes. Would you tell Jim's jokes at home to your family?

Abdul (more quietly): No. I would not want my family to hear those jokes or those swear words.

Manager: I didn't think so. I have watched you around your co-workers and our customers. You are polite to them. And you cared about Jim's safety. I think you'll find new friends here.

Abdul: Yes! I think you are right. I will try.

Should Abdul keep his job? Tell your career advisor or tutor what you think and why.



EXERCISE

How are your speaking skills?

Put a check mark [✓] in the circle that describes you.

1. I use polite, helpful words such as “please,” “thank you” and “excuse me.”

Always Sometimes Never

2. I avoid rude stories or jokes that may upset someone.

Always Sometimes Never

3. I ask questions when I’m not sure what I need to do.

Always Sometimes Never

4. I think before I speak.

Always Sometimes Never

5. I speak slowly and loudly enough so other people can hear me.

Always Sometimes Never

6. I tell my employer if I see something unsafe.

Always Sometimes Never

Are you happy with your answers? Even if you answered “Always” for all the questions, it’s a good idea for you to do the next exercise. You may learn something new.

EXERCISE

Let's work on your speaking skills

Do you think you can improve your speaking skills? This exercise will help you get started. First, here is an example of a speaking problem and also some ways to fix it:

Problem	Ways to fix the problem
<p>Sometimes I get angry too quickly. When I get angry, I swear or say mean things. These words get me in trouble.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can take a deep breath.• I can think of something that makes me feel calm. For example, a quiet lake or a mountain stream.• I can think about the words that will come out of my mouth before I say them. I can change the words if they aren't right.• I can avoid words such as "never" and "always." If I say, "You never clean the lunchroom microwave," that does not help to fix the problem of the dirty microwave.• I can avoid blaming someone else for a problem. Instead, I can ask for help to fix the problem.• If I can't control my anger, I can find a counsellor to help me with my anger.• I can call Health Link Alberta for free by dialing 811. They can tell me about courses I can take to help me deal with my anger.

Now it's your turn. Think about a problem you have with your speaking skills. On the left side of the box below, write down your problem. Then write down ways to fix the problem on the right side of the box. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Problem	Ways to fix the problem

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Teamwork skills

Many people play team sports. They play on a hockey team or a soccer team. Players on a team need to play together. If they don't, they will not score any goals.

It is the same at work. People must work together as a team. For workers, the goal is to finish **tasks** well so that their company can be successful.



Task: A piece of work.
For example, a janitor may have 4 tasks in a **shift**:

1. Empty the wastebaskets.
2. Dust the furniture.
3. Vacuum the carpets.
4. Wash the floors.

Employers want workers with good teamwork skills. If a worker does not know how to work with other people on the team, it can cause problems.

Let's look at René and Anna's story.



The story of René and Anna

My name is René. I have a daycare centre. I just hired Anna to be a daycare worker. Anna is 42 years old. Before starting this job, she raised her children at home. But now she needs a job that pays a wage.

I'm not sure Anna fits in at my daycare centre. The other workers think Anna is unfriendly. She doesn't chat with them. She doesn't help them when her tasks are done.

Anna doesn't do things the way we do things here. Last night she told one parent that her child was untidy. The child did not put away his toys.

But here we sing a song when we want the children to clean up. The other workers tried to teach Anna the song. But she didn't listen. Now the parent is unhappy.



EXERCISE

Let's look at Anna's teamwork skills

Anna has problems with her teamwork skills. What is Anna doing wrong? In the box below, write down some of Anna's poor teamwork skills. Next to each skill, write down why these skills are a problem for the workplace. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Anna's teamwork skills	Why are Anna's teamwork skills a problem for the workplace?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	



René wonders if Anna is a good fit for this job. She worries that Anna doesn't understand the workplace culture of her daycare centre. René wants her workers to work as a team. René's goal is to have happy workers, children and parents.

René decides to speak to Anna. Here is what René and Anna say:

René: Anna, I want to talk about the way our children clean up their toys.

Anna: Yes, yes, I'm sorry. But I can't make these children listen to me.

René: But they will listen. They know our cleanup song.

Anna: You have a song?

René: Yes. I think some of the other workers tried to sing it for you.

Anna: Oh. Yes. I didn't know. Oh dear. I guess I didn't listen either. I am sorry. I will sing it from now on.

René: Good. Your co-workers can help. You only have to ask. And when you have time, you can help them. This is a friendly, helpful place.

Anna: Umm. Yes. But I don't want to get too friendly.

René: Why? These are good people.

Anna: I don't like to make small talk. I don't want them to gossip and tell stories about my private life.

René: They know nothing about your private life. There are so many other things to talk about. For example, you could talk about last week's storm or how to clean the paint off this blouse. You could even talk about where to find the cheapest groceries.

Anna: That's easy. It's the market downtown, just on the corner of Main Street and 107.

René: See? You can make small talk! Let's join the others.

Should Anna keep her job? Tell your career advisor or tutor what you think and why.



EXERCISE

How are your teamwork skills?

Put a check mark [✓] in the circle that describes you.

<p>1. I get along with my co-workers.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>6. I make small talk with my co-workers. For example, I talk about the weather or holiday plans.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>2. I help my co-workers.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>7. I am glad to see how different my co-workers are. For example, we may have different religions and backgrounds.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>3. I ask for help when I need it.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>8. I am respectful when others say they have a problem with my work or my actions.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>4. I listen carefully to my co-workers.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>9. I look at problems or tasks from the other person's point of view or through another person's eyes.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>5. I avoid gossiping about my co-workers.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>10. I can disagree with someone, but I do it in a respectful way.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>

Are you happy with your answers? Even if you answered “Always” for all the questions, it’s a good idea for you to do the next exercise. You may learn something new.

EXERCISE

Let's work on your teamwork skills

Do you think you can improve your teamwork skills? This exercise will help you get started. First, here is an example of a teamwork problem and also some ways to fix it:

Problem	Ways to fix the problem
I work with Julie, who uses a wheelchair. Julie complains about me all the time. She says I put my bag and my chair in her way. She says I put our tools away where she can't reach them. I am tired of Julie's complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can think about what it is like to move around in a wheelchair all day.• I can ask Julie how I can help.• I can put my bag on a shelf out of the way.• I can put our tools on a shelf that Julie can reach.• I can try to find a seat when I talk to Julie. This way we can talk eye to eye.

Now it's your turn. Think about a problem you have with your teamwork skills. On the left side of the box below, write down your problem. Then write down ways to fix the problem on the right side of the box. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Problem	Ways to fix the problem

Time-management skills

Business people like to say that time is money. They need to open the doors of their business on time. They need to serve their customers on time. They need to send out their products on time.

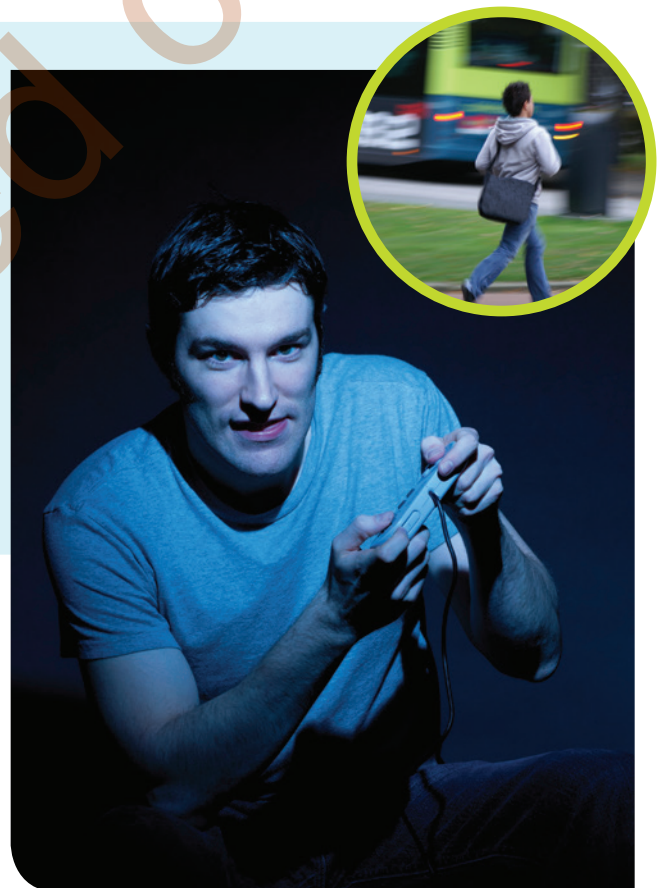
If they are late, they will lose business. If their workers are late, they will lose business. Employers don't want workers who cannot manage their time.

Let's look at Nelson and Emma's story.

The story of Nelson and Emma

My name is Nelson. I am 20 years old. I am a production worker at a **processing plant**. I operate machines. After work, I like to meet my friends. I also like to stay up late and play video games.

I like my job. I want to buy a car so I don't have to take the bus. But now I think I have a problem. I think my employer will fire me.



Last week I was really tired. I forgot to move some boxes from the production line. When the line started, there was a big mess. We couldn't start work for an hour.

Last night I played video games until 2 a.m., even though my sister Emma reminded me that I had to work in the morning. This morning my alarm clock didn't work again. I slept in. The bus was just leaving when I got to the bus stop. Now I'm late. It's hopeless. I think I'll just go back to bed.



EXERCISE

Let's look at Nelson's time-management skills

Nelson has problems with his time-management skills. What is he doing wrong? In the box below, write down some of Nelson's poor time-management skills. Next to each skill, write down what Nelson can do to fix his time-management problems. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.



Nelson's time-management skills	Why are Nelson's time-management skills a problem? What can he do to fix his problem?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	



When Nelson gets home, his sister Emma asks him what's wrong. Here is what Nelson and Emma say:

Nelson: I missed the bus.

Emma: Did you let your manager know?

Nelson: No. Why?

Emma: That way he can plan. That way other workers don't have to wait.

Nelson: I don't know his phone number.

Emma: He never gave you a business card? Or an **employee handbook**?

Nelson: Wait a minute! I think it's in my bedroom.

Emma: Put the number in your cellphone, right now! Then call and say you will catch the next bus!



Employee handbook: Some companies give new workers a small book full of information. For example, a handbook can have important phone numbers. It can also have information about holidays, safety and more.

Should Nelson keep his job? Tell your career advisor or tutor what you think and why.



TIP: It's a good idea to know how to reach your employer. Write down your employer's phone number here: _____ . Now put it in your wallet or in your cellphone.

EXERCISE

How are your time-management skills?

Put a check mark [✓] in the circle that describes you.

<p>1. I come to work on time.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>5. I plan how I use my time.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>2. I tell my employer if I will be late. But I am not late too often!</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>6. I do what I need to do to finish my tasks.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>3. I tell my employer if I am sick and cannot come to work.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>7. I look at how I use my time. If I see a way to do things better, I change how I work.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>4. I come back from breaks on time.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	

Are you happy with your answers? Even if you answered “Always” for all the questions, it’s a good idea for you to do the next exercise. You may learn something new.

EXERCISE

Let's work on your time-management skills

Do you think you can improve your time-management skills? This exercise will help you get started. First, here is an example of a time-management problem and also some ways to fix it:

Problem	Ways to fix the problem
My kids take too long to get ready in the morning, so I am often late for work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My kids and I can make all our lunches the night before.• I can get the kids up earlier, so they have more time to get ready.• My kids and I can choose our clothes the night before.• I can promise my kids a treat if they get their backpacks ready the night before.• I can make sure my kids don't have cellphones and computers in their bedrooms. That way they won't stay up late talking to friends.



Now it's your turn. Think about a problem you have with your time-management skills. On the left side of the box below, write down your problem. Then write down ways to fix the problem on the right side of the box. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Problem	Ways to fix the problem

Building good work attitudes

A flexible attitude

In a big storm, some trees bend with the wind. Other trees break. The trees that bend are flexible. They can change so that they will not break.

Our world is always changing. For example, we have new ideas, new laws and new products. Companies have to change too. That's why employers want workers who can change.

Let's look at Oscar's story.

Oscar's story

My name is Oscar. I am a security guard at the hospital. I have worked here for 12 years. I have to make sure everyone is safe. It's a good job. I like to talk to people.

But my job is changing. Last week my manager said I must write down everything that happens at work. I must write these reports on a computer!

My kids know about computers. But I don't know anything! I'm scared of computers.

My employer wants these reports today. I am so stressed! I can't sleep. I don't know what to do!



EXERCISE

Let's look at how flexible Oscar is

Oscar's job is changing. The change is causing a problem for Oscar. In the box below, describe Oscar's reaction to the change. Think about why Oscar's reaction is a problem for the workplace. Then write down what Oscar can do to fix the problem. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.



Oscar's reaction

Why is Oscar's reaction a problem for the workplace? What can he do to fix the problem?

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Learning new skills is a good way to keep your job. It shows your employer that you can grow with your job. It shows that you want to know about your world.

You can feel proud of yourself for learning new skills.

Oscar decides he must tell his manager about his problem. Oscar's manager sends Oscar to a computer course.

Oscar works on the computer each night. He is slow but he is getting better every day. And now Oscar can play games on the computer with his kids!



Should Oscar keep his job? Tell your career advisor or tutor what you think and why.



EXERCISE

Ways to think about being flexible

Put a check mark [✓] in the circle that describes you.

<p>1. I try new ways to do things.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>4. I listen openly to workplace feedback.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>2. I try to learn new things so that I can do my job better.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>5. I know that change can cause stress.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>3. I make plans in case something doesn't work out.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>6. I know how to deal with stress.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>



Feedback: Feedback is information from your employer or co-worker about what you are doing well (or not so well). It is a chance for you to learn how to do something better.



TIP: Feedback is normal at a workplace. Remember that feedback will help you do your job better. It is not a complaint about you as a person.

Are you happy with your answers? Even if you answered “Always” for all the questions, it’s a good idea for you to do the next exercise. You may learn something new.

EXERCISE

Let's think about being flexible at your job

Do you think you can be more flexible about something? This exercise will help you get started.

First, here is an example of how a flexible attitude can fix a problem:

Problem	Ways to fix the problem
I hate meetings with my employer. Last night I had no soap to wash the office floors. But I did not tell my employer. Now she wants to talk to me.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can think about my employer's feedback as a way to learn.• I can remember that my employer is NOT saying bad things about who I am. She just wants to help me do my job better.• I can think about ways to make sure I always have soap.• I can make a plan in case there is no soap. For example, I can call my employer as soon as I find out.

Now it's your turn. Think about a problem you have with being flexible. On the left side of the box below, write down the problem. Then write down ways to fix the problem on the right side of the box. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Problem	Ways to fix the problem

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An honest attitude

Being honest means more than not lying, cheating or stealing. When people are honest, they want to do the right thing. They care about their work and the people at work.

It's hard to work with someone who is not honest. It causes too many problems.

Let's look at Kari and Sue's story.

The story of Kari and Sue

My name is Kari. I am a landscape gardener. I love working with flowers and trees. But I do not like our new worker, Sue.

Sue makes more work for me. We use the company truck to drive to our work sites. That's where we cut the grass and plant the flowers and trees. But then Sue takes the company truck and stays away for hours. I have to do all the work by myself.

I used to keep my purse in the truck. But last week \$20 went missing from my wallet. I can't prove that Sue took the money. But now I have to carry everything with me.

Yesterday Sue said she watered the roses she planted. But when I looked at the roses today, they were all dried out. Sue just laughed when I told her. "I don't care," she said. "They're not my roses."

I don't think our employer will laugh. But I have to tell him.



EXERCISE

Let's look at how honest Sue is

Sue is not being honest in many ways. Her actions are causing problems at her workplace. In the box below, write down some of Sue's actions. Next to each action, write down why it is a problem for the workplace. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Sue's actions	Why are Sue's actions a problem for the workplace?
1.	
2.	
3.	

Kari doesn't like to say bad things about her co-workers. But Kari knows that Sue's actions are a problem. Kari tells her employer. Kari's employer is glad to know. Sue loses her job. Now Kari works with someone who loves flowers as much as she does.

Should Sue have kept her job? Tell your career advisor or tutor what you think and why.



EXERCISE

Ways to think about being honest

Put a check mark [✓] in the circle that describes you.

1. I try my best.

Always Sometimes Never

2. I care about my work.

Always Sometimes Never

3. I keep personal information about customers and co-workers private.

Always Sometimes Never

4. I am truthful with my employer, co-workers and customers.

Always Sometimes Never

5. I tell my employer when I see something that may be dishonest.

Always Sometimes Never

6. I do not cheat or steal from my employer.

Always Sometimes Never

Are you happy with your answers? Even if you answered “Always” for all the questions, it’s a good idea for you to do the next exercise. You may learn something new.

EXERCISE

Let's think about being honest at your job

Do you think you can be more honest about something? This exercise will help you get started. First, here is an example of how an honest attitude can fix a problem:

Problem	Ways to fix the problem
<p>My partner lives in another city. They're coming to visit Friday morning just for one day. But I don't finish work until 4 p.m. I can call in sick on Friday so I can take the day off. But what if someone sees me out with my partner?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can ask my co-workers if I can change or switch shifts with one of them.• I can ask my employer if I can do Friday's work on Saturday or another day.• I can ask my employer if I can stay late next week. That way I can do the work I will miss on Friday.

Now it's your turn. Think about a problem you have with being honest. On the left side of the box below, write down the problem. Then write down ways to fix the problem on the right side of the box. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Problem	Ways to fix the problem

A professional attitude

Workers who are professional know what they're doing. They are proud of their work. They help customers feel good about their products.

Employers don't want workers who are not professional. Workers who are not professional can cause problems at a workplace.

Let's look at Hafid, Sara and Tom's story.



TIP: It's important to know the dress code at your company. It can be a problem if you come to work in shorts and your co-workers are more dressed up. Your employer will think you don't understand the workplace culture.

The story of Hafid, Sara and Tom

My name is Hafid. I own a restaurant with my wife, Sara. We are proud of our restaurant. Our customers come from all over the city. They love Sara's cooking. They love to ask Sara about the food she makes.

But Sara cannot cook all the time. That is why we hired a new cook last month. His name is Tom.

I'm not sure Tom will keep his job. Sara always makes sure the food looks nice when she puts it on the plate. But Tom just plops the food on the plate. He doesn't make it

look nice. And then he complains when I ask him to do better.

Also, our restaurant has a **dress code**. Sara always puts on a clean apron to meet customers. But Tom never remembers. He wears his dirty apron when he comes out from the kitchen.

Our customers love to talk about the food we cook here. What spices do we use? Where do we buy the vegetables? How do we cook the meat? But Tom just shrugs.

Tom acts like he doesn't want to be here.



Dress code: The way companies want workers to dress at work. Some companies want workers to dress in suits. At other companies, it's OK to wear jeans. Sometimes the company puts its dress code in its **employee handbook**.

EXERCISE

Let's look at how professional Tom is

Tom is not acting professionally in many ways. His actions are causing problems at his workplace. In the box below, write down some of Tom's actions. Think about why Tom's actions are a problem for the workplace. Next to each action, write down what Tom can do to fix the problem. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.



Tom's actions	Why are Tom's actions a problem for the workplace? What can he do to fix the problem?
1.	
2.	
3.	



Hafid speaks to Tom and gives Tom feedback. Tom says he will try to act more professionally.

Should Tom keep his job? Tell your career advisor or tutor what you think and why.

EXERCISE

Ways to think about being professional

Put a check mark [✓] in the circle that describes you.

1. I try to do my work as well as possible.

Always Sometimes Never

2. I am proud of my work.

Always Sometimes Never

3. I am positive about my work.

Always Sometimes Never

4. I dress properly for my job. I follow the company dress code.

Always Sometimes Never

5. I am clean and tidy when I come to work.

Always Sometimes Never

6. I know about my company. For example, I know what year it opened.

Always Sometimes Never

7. I try not to complain about work.

Always Sometimes Never

Are you happy with your answers? Even if you answered “Always” for all the questions, it’s a good idea for you to do the next exercise. You may learn something new.

EXERCISE

Let's think about being professional at your job

Do you think you can be more professional about something? This exercise will help you get started. First, here is an example of how a professional attitude can fix a problem:

Problem	Ways to fix the problem
<p>My employer says I am too negative. She says I complain too much. She says I don't like the ideas my co-workers have.</p> <p>But I just want to work to pay my bills. I have so many bills to pay. I know this makes me unhappy. I want to be more positive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can think about the good things that happen in my day. I can be thankful for them.• I can choose better words. I don't have to say, "That's a dumb idea." Instead, I can say, "That's a good idea. And let's do this too! Then it will be even better."• I can call Money Mentors at 1-888-294-0076. They can help me make a plan for free so that I can save money to pay all my bills.

Now it's your turn. Think about a problem you have with being professional. On the left side of the box below, write down the problem. Then write down ways to fix the problem on the right side of the box. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Problem	Ways to fix the problem

A responsible attitude

When parents look for a babysitter, they don't want someone who will leave their child alone in the park. They want someone they can trust with their child. They want someone who is responsible.

It's the same with employers. Employers want workers they can trust in the workplace. They don't want workers who are not responsible. Workers who are not responsible cause problems for everyone.

Let's look at Sharon and Tanya's story.

The story of Sharon and Tanya

My name is Sharon. I am a pet groomer. I have worked at a vet clinic for 3 years. I love working with all the different animals. I love meeting their owners.

Normally I love working with the other pet groomer, Tanya. But Tanya has changed. She is causing problems for me.

Last week we cleaned a big dog. Then Tanya put the dog back in its cage. But Tanya did not lock the cage. The dog ran out. It barked and jumped at a cat. Tanya said I did not lock the cage.

This morning the vet looked at our tools. The vet said I need to clean the tools better. The vet said it is not safe for the animals or for us to use dirty tools.

I tried to tell the vet that Tanya used the tools last night. But Tanya said it was me. Now I have to check everything Tanya does. I don't trust her work. It makes my work harder.

Tanya uses the office computer to chat with her friends. Today she left the computer on when she went for lunch. On the computer, Tanya wrote that our vet is lazy. Tanya also wrote that she hates her job. I am starting to hate my job too.

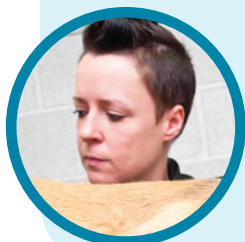


EXERCISE

Let's look at how responsible Tanya is

Tanya is not being responsible in many ways. Her actions are causing problems at her workplace. In the box below, write down some of Tanya's actions. Next to each action, write down why it causes problems for the workplace. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Tanya's actions	Why are Tanya's actions a problem for the workplace?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	



Sharon doesn't like to say bad things about her co-workers. But Sharon knows that Tanya's actions are a problem. Sharon

asks to meet with the vet. The vet says she will look more closely at Tanya's work.

Should Tanya keep her job? Tell your career advisor or tutor what you think and why.

EXERCISE

Ways to think about being responsible

Put a check mark [✓] in the circle that describes you.

<p>1. I come to work ready for work.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>5. I fix my mistakes as quickly as possible.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>2. I make sure I do my work the right way.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>6. I work hard at my job.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>3. I know and follow all the safety rules for my job.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>7. I use work equipment such as phones, computers and printers only for work.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>4. I don't blame others if I make a mistake.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>8. I am free from drugs and alcohol when I come to work.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>

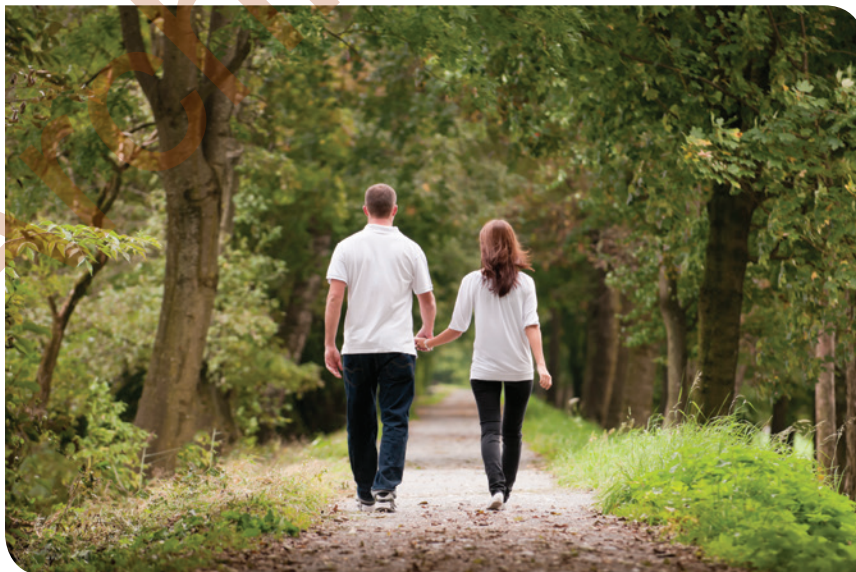
Are you happy with your answers? Even if you answered “Always” for all the questions, it’s a good idea for you to do the next exercise. You may learn something new.

EXERCISE

Let's think about being responsible at your job

Do you think you can be more responsible about something? This exercise will help you get started. First, here is an example of how a responsible attitude can fix a problem:

Problem	Ways to fix the problem
My job is stressful. When I come home from work, I like to drink beer to relax. Sometimes I drink lots of beer. If my shift is at night, I drink beer before my shift. My wife says this is unsafe for me and my co-workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can find other ways to relax. For example, I can walk with my wife or try some other exercise.• I can call the free 24-hour addiction helpline at Alberta Health Services at 1-866-332-2322. They can tell me where to find help to control my drinking.



Now it's your turn. Think about a problem you have with being responsible. On the left side of the box below, write down the problem. Then write down ways to fix the problem on the right side of the box. Your career advisor or tutor can help you.

Problem	Ways to fix the problem

Workplace rights and responsibilities

Workplace respect

Alberta has laws to make sure people are treated fairly and with respect. For example, the *Alberta Human Rights Act* makes it against the law to treat people unfairly because they are different.

Here are some examples that will help you think about your rights:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People cannot treat you differently because of your race or the colour of your skin.• People cannot treat you differently because of where you were born or what country your family has come from.• People cannot treat you differently because of your religion.• People cannot treat you differently because of what gender you are.• People cannot treat you differently because of a disability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People cannot treat you differently because of your age.• People cannot treat you differently because you are married or single.• People cannot treat you differently because you have children or are pregnant.• People cannot treat you differently because of how you get money, for example, through Income Support.• People cannot treat you differently because your sexual partner is a man or a woman. |
|--|--|

Employers must make sure that their employees are treated fairly. Employers must use fair rules when they hire, promote, pay or dismiss an employee. These rules that employers use must be applied equally to all people. If you have questions about how you are being treated, ask your career advisor or tutor to help you find the answers.



TIP: Do you have questions about workplace respect and human rights? You can call the Alberta Human Rights Commission in Edmonton at 780-427-7661. In Calgary, call 403-297-6571. If you live somewhere else in Alberta, you can call for free. First dial 310-0000 and then dial the Edmonton or Calgary number.

Workplace rights

Alberta has laws to protect workers and their rights. The Employment Standards Code protects most workers in Alberta. The code includes laws about different things, for example, wages, vacations, overtime pay and workplace safety.

Wages or pay

- Employers must pay no less than the minimum wage.
- Wages do not include tips or expense money.
- Workers must be paid at least once a month.
- Employers cannot charge workers for workplace mistakes, for example, replacing or fixing a broken tool.
- Each time workers are required to report to work, they must be paid at least 3 hours of pay at the minimum wage. Or they must be paid the actual hours worked at regular wage. Whichever is higher. They must be paid for 3 hours even if they are sent home after 1 or 2 hours.

Vacations or holidays

- Workers must have a vacation after they have worked for 1 employer for 12 months.
- Employers must pay workers vacation pay.
- Vacation pay is at least 4% of the worker's wage.

Overtime or extra hours

- Most employers pay overtime if workers work more than 8 hours a day OR 44 hours a week.
- Workers who work overtime must receive overtime pay OR time off with pay.



TIP: The Employment Standards Code has many laws to protect workers. If you have questions about your workplace rights, ask your career advisor or tutor to help you find the answers. Or call Alberta Employment Standards in Edmonton at 780-427-3731. If you live somewhere else in Alberta, you can call for free at 1-877-427-3731.

Workplace safety

Workplace safety is important in Alberta. Here are some facts to remember:

- It's against the law for anyone to force you to do work that you think is unsafe. You have the right to say no.
- It's against the law for an employer to have an unsafe business.
- Your employer must tell you about the **hazards** of your job before you start a new job.
- Your employer must also show you how to use safety equipment. They must train you what to do in an emergency.
- Your employer or a co-worker must contact you regularly while you are working alone.
- You can join health and safety talks at your job.



Hazard: Something that can be a danger to workers at a workplace. For example, loud machines or harmful liquids.



TIP: Do you have questions about workplace safety? You can call Alberta Occupational Health and Safety in Edmonton at 780-415-8690. If you live somewhere else in Alberta, you can call for free at 1-866-415-8690.

Making sure your job is a good fit

Finding a good fit

You know when a shirt fits you well. The sleeves reach your wrists. The buttons close in the right places. It feels good when you wear it.

It's the same for a job. If your job is a good fit, it feels good to go to work. What makes a job a good fit? The next exercise will help you find out.

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EXERCISE

Make sure your job is a good fit

Put a check mark [✓] in the circle that describes you.

<p>1. I know what I need to do.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>6. I can talk about work problems with my co-workers or my employer.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>2. I can use my skills at work.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>7. I respect the people at work and they respect me.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>3. I can learn new skills.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>8. I know my rights at work.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>4. My co-workers, my employer and I have the same attitudes.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>9. I feel safe at work.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>
<p>5. The workplace culture suits me.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	

If you said “Yes” to most of these points, then your job is a good fit. Sometimes you can change a “No” to a “Yes.” You can do this by thinking about new ways to do things. Ask your career advisor or tutor to help you.

Finding a better fit

Sometimes a job is just not a good fit for you. Maybe it was a bad fit right from the start. Maybe it was a good fit, but a new supervisor or a new shift turned it into a bad fit.

If you can't change the fit, it may be time to look for a new job that is a better fit.

Do you need to find a new job? These books can help:

- Easy Reading Work and You Book 1: Make Some Job Choices
- Easy Reading Work and You Book 2: Decide on a Job
- Easy Reading Find a Job

Ask your career advisor or tutor how to find these books. Or to order these books, look at this website: alis.alberta.ca/publications.

Living is learning

It's important to ask questions and keep learning. This is a good way to keep your job.

Just by living, we are learning. It's hard NOT to learn. We learn new things every day. Some people learn a new word. Some people meet a new person. Some people find out about a new idea. Some people hear about a new way to do something.

You can also learn about yourself. It's great when you can look at yourself and say, "Hey! I am really good at something! This is good for me to know!"

Finding help

Where can you find more answers about keeping your job? Here are some people who can help:

- your career advisor
- your counsellor
- your friends and family
- your tutor

You can also call advisors at the Alberta Supports Contact Centre at 1-877-644-9992.

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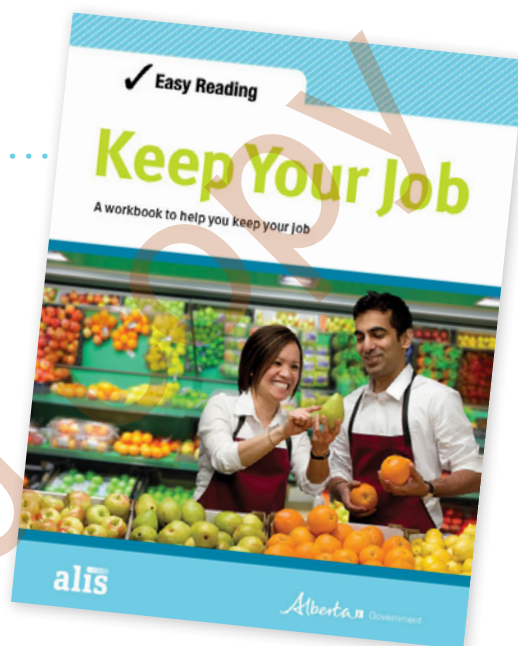
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Keep Your Job

This book will help you keep your job. In this book you will learn about important topics such as

- what employers want
- building good work skills
- building good work attitudes
- workplace rights and responsibilities
- making sure your job is a good fit

You can ask your career advisor or tutor to help you with this book.



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