

WS12

File: WAGE & SALARIES

WAGE AND SALARY ADMINISTRATION - JOB DESCRIPTIONS

No Single instrument is as important to effective wage and salary administration as the job description. However, there is evidence that it receives far less attention than it requires to assure that it's properly prepared or that its uses are properly understood or directed.

WHAT IS A JOB DESCRIPTION?

Often there is confusion as to what a job description really is. Simply stated, it is a narrative statement or a list of duties and responsibilities inherent in a job. Depending on its use, it may be incorporated into a more comprehensive document called job specifications. Typically job specifications include information about the tools, equipment, products or processes involved, amount of supervision received, responsibility for directing work of others and working conditions. If used in connection with job evaluation (see WS04), it provides evaluation-supporting information for determining the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform within a job.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS USED AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL

Properly developed job descriptions can be one of an organizations most vital human resource management tools, with vast potential for a wide variety of administrative applications. They include:

- **Recruiting:** a guide in assessing qualifications of applicants and explaining the job to them.
- **Placement:** matching qualifications of individuals to specific jobs involving promotion, demotion, lateral transfers or during workforce adjustments.
- **Training:** as a guide to new incumbents and supervisors in explaining job functions, processes, proce-

dures and standards and in developing action plans for incumbent worker development.

- **Compensation:** accurate job descriptions provide a comparative base for assigning equitable salary and wage ranges to different types of jobs.
- **Employee Evaluations:** for use in performance appraisals and establishment of performance standards and objectives.
- **Accounting Effort:** in establishing expense ratios, cost estimating and budget control.
- **Positive Employee Relations:** for improved employee morale, communication of responsibilities and reduced misunderstandings.
- **Personnel Statistics:** for various management planning and control purposes and governmental EEO/AA and ADA requirements (see below).
- **Quality:** serves as a basis for developing a competent workforce that demonstrates organizational commitment to improving product and manufacturing quality. An essential part of QS 9000 and ISO 9000 certification.

THE IMPACT OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities like those provided to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion. The Act guarantees equal opportunity for individuals in employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment against a qualified individual with a disability in all employment practices such as recruitment, hiring, promotion, training, lay-offs, firing, pay, job assignments, leave, benefits, and other employment-related activities.

The law took effect on July 26, 1992, for employers with 25 or more employees and July 26, 1994, for employers with 15 or more employees. Employers with fewer than 15 employees are permanently exempted.

Under the ADA, a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. The ADA also protects individuals who have a record of a substantially limiting impairment, and people who are regarded as having a substantially limiting impairment.

To be protected under ADA, an individual must have, or have a record of, or be regarded as having a substantial, as opposed to a minor, impairment. A substantial impairment is one that significantly limits or restricts a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, walking, caring for oneself, learning or working.

An individual with a disability must also be qualified to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation, in order to be protected by the ADA. This means that the applicant or employee must:

- Satisfy job requirements for education background, employment experience, skills, licenses and any other qualification standards that are job related; and
- Be able to perform those tasks that are essential to the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.

The ADA does not interfere with an employer's right to hire the best-qualified applicant. Nor does the ADA impose any affirmative action obligations. The ADA simply prohibits discrimination against a qualified applicant or employee because of his or her disability.

This means that the ADA does not require any changes to any job beforehand. It only comes into play when an applicant who meets all job qualifications requests reasonable accommodation.

Therefore, it is important that job descriptions be developed before taking any employment action, such as recruiting, advertising, hiring, promoting, or firing. The job descriptions should state which functions or tasks are essential to performance and list other job qualifications, such as licenses, training, experience, and physical capabilities.

To assist machine trade companies in developing job descriptions that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the National Tooling and Machining Association (NTMA) and the Tooling and Manufacturing Association (TMA) have jointly published a manual entitled "Guidelines for Developing Job Descriptions". The manual provides information about employment practices required by the ADA and details procedures for developing company specific job description essential to ADA compliance.

The manual is available for purchase from NTMA in both hardcover and computer disk format. For further information on how to order, contact NTMA's publications department at 1-800-832-7753.

**This BMA was written by James Wallbeoff,
Education Consultant for NTMA.**