

Overview for Families: Household and Domestic Employees Essentials

To achieve the goal of a long-lasting and safe relationship between family members and employees, families should follow the same rigorous hiring and management procedures that are used in the business world. Here is a quick guide on best-in-class hiring essentials.

Job description

The job should be described in written detail, including all responsibilities to be performed by the employee, the work schedule, and the specific requirements of the job, such as international travel or lifting heavy objects.

Required documents and permissions

The family should collect a resume, references, ID documents, and a signed permission and release to perform a background investigation.

Interviews

The family should use the job description to structure the interview questions about the experience of the candidates. They should pay attention to the applicant's demeanor, especially clues that may indicate a personality disorder or character flaw. Instead of "yes/no" questions, the family should ask open-ended questions that reveal how the applicant thinks and communicates. They should not ask about age, religion, race, and other topics prohibited by federal law.

Background checks

Thorough background checks should be conducted by a professional security firm experienced in working with household employees. The firm should have the ability to investigate criminal and DUI records both out of state and out of the country, as well as any charges without conviction.

References

Families should contact all references via telephone and ask questions that will provide a better understanding of the candidate's moral character and actual work history. Personal conversations reveal more than exchanging emails or text messages. A good rule is to obtain four professional references and four personal references (other than family members).

Signed employment agreement

When extending an offer, families should have the applicant sign an agreement that clearly outlines:

- Detailed scope of duties and responsibilities
- Compensation level and payroll frequency
- Tax treatment
- Work schedule and hours
- Employment requirements, such as maintaining an excellent driving record

Employee manual

Staff should also receive a customized manual to reflect their individual work environment and expectations. At a minimum, it should address:

- General employment information
- HR directives and employment policies, e.g. use of prepaid debit cards for work-related duties or parking in a certain spot
- Payroll documentation
- Evaluations and performance expectations
- Causes and procedures for termination
- Benefits
- Monitoring in the workplace, if any
- Non-disclosure agreements

Tracking hours worked deserves special attention because unpaid overtime represents one of the more popular claims of mistreatment made by disgruntled or former employees. Strong practices include posting a time schedule clearly in the home, having weekly time sheets signed and submitted by employees, and using an expert such as a CPA to manage the payroll and records.

Nondisclosure or confidentiality agreement

The importance of a confidentiality agreement cannot be emphasized enough, especially in these days of social media exposure. Even during job interviews, a prospective employee can gather sensitive information about the family. The last thing parents want is a picture of their children on vacation or images from a private event at their home posted on Facebook or Instagram.

Reach out to Chubb to learn more about our risk protection and advisory services. Our experts can help ensure that your hiring process goes smoothly and protects you from any unnecessary vulnerabilities.

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