

25 Off-limits Interview Questions

Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it is illegal for any employer with 15 or more workers to discriminate against an applicant on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or national origin. (Many state and local governments extend that prohibition to smaller companies.)

Avoid the appearance of discrimination during interviews by avoiding the following questions:

1. Are you married? Divorced?
2. If you're single, are you living with anyone?
3. How old are you?
4. Do you have children? If so, how many and how old are they?
5. Do you own or rent your home?
6. What church do you attend?
7. Do you have any debts?
8. Do you belong to any social or political groups?
9. How much and what kinds of insurance do you have?
10. Do you feel comfortable supervising men/women?
11. Is there any health-related reason you may not be able to perform the job you seek?
12. Have you ever had or been treated for any of these conditions or diseases? (followed by a checklist of various conditions)
13. Have you been hospitalized? What for?
14. Have you ever been treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist?
15. Have you had a major illness recently?
16. How many days were you absent from work because of illness last year?
17. Do you have any disabilities or impairments that might affect your performance in the job you seek?
18. Are you taking any prescribed drugs?
19. Have you ever been treated for drug addiction or alcoholism?

Many companies ask female applicants questions that they don't ask males. Some examples of questions to avoid:

1. Do you plan to get married?
2. Do you intend to start a family?
3. What are your day care plans?
4. What would you do if your husband were transferred?
5. Do you think you could perform the job as well as a man?
6. Are you likely to take time off under the Family and Medical Leave Act?

Off-limits questions on applications:

Limit questions on your written applications to information that will help you make a hiring decision.

Avoid questions relating to:

- * Names of relatives/friends
- * Citizenship or natural origin
- * Physical characteristics
- * Arrest records
- * Military discharge record
- * Credit standing
- * Transportation plans
- * Garnishment records
- * Organization memberships

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