



5 Dangers of Outdated Functional Job Descriptions

Can you recall the last time you updated your functional job descriptions (FJDs)? If you answered “no,” read on. Updated FJDs are the “preventive medicine” protecting companies from numerous liabilities. Let’s explore the top five reasons your company may be at risk:

Reason #1: OSHA Audits. Random and unexpected, OSHA audits can happen at any time. Are you ready? The FJDs must be current, or you will be deemed non-compliant and subject to fines. You need to eliminate your company’s exposure.

Reason #2: Litigation Liability. If you’re in court defending your company in a personal injury case where an employee blames your company for making them work outside of their job scope, you will be unable to prove your case without the benefit of an updated FJD. This document demonstrates the employee’s established physical requirements and job duties.

Reason #3: Invalidated Pre-Work Screenings and Post-Injury Tests. A lot of key employment decisions hinge upon the updated FJD. If your FJD is out of date, this has a two-fold repercussion. The first is that the pre-work screening results won’t be valid for your new hires, as they weren’t pre-screened for certain physical aspects to the job. In a post-injury situation, doctors and therapists will also use the FJD to test the employee and determine if they are ready to return to work.

Reason #4: Minimize Workers’ Compensation Risks. The physical requirements clearly stated in an FJD drive the skills and physical capabilities you seek when hiring new employees. Minus the refreshed FJD, the profile of the job’s physical needs may be a little off, or worse, incomplete, and result in making a poor hiring decision, which then results in a greater likelihood of a musculoskeletal injury, or soft tissue injury. The FJD protects a company from inadvertently setting up a new hire for failure in their role.

Reason #5: EEOC and ADA Compliance. An updated FJD protects your company from the exposure of noncompliance in the event that an employee with a disability files a discrimination grievance. For example, if an employee is colorblind and the ability to identify colors is a key part of their job in sorting widgets on an assembly line, that physical ability must be clearly outlined in their FJD. If that employee is fired for making too many errors, they can file a grievance with the EEOC if your FJD didn’t explicitly state that physical requirement.

If your FJDs are out of date and you are ready to mitigate your risk, contact WorkWell today.