

How to Resign

The procedure for resigning is simple enough: give notice, preferably in advance. But if you don't want to burn any bridges, thereby creating obstacles to future opportunities, you must be especially careful and considerate. The following is a guideline for making the resignation process as smooth and painless as possible.

1. **Keep it to yourself.** Once you've made the decision, don't discuss your decision with your co-workers until you have notified your immediate supervisor. Give your manager time to absorb and process the information.
2. **Always give notice.** If you want to leave under the best possible terms, offer the customary two weeks notice, but be prepared. Many employers will not require you to work a notice. Have a contingency plan in place. For instance, you could start your new position sooner, or take some personal time before starting with your new employer.
3. **Give your resignation in person.** Never email your resignation and never resign over the phone. Be a professional and give your manager the respect you would want.
4. **Put it in writing.** Always write a resignation letter and bring it into your meeting. The letter should be typed with your signature at the bottom. There is something final and permanent about putting your decision in writing. Also, your manager may need something in writing for the files. Having a letter written out beforehand may reduce any paperwork associated with your exiting the company.
5. **Be prepared, direct, and polite.** Rehearsing privately will help you be ready for your resignation meeting. Most managers are extremely busy and they will appreciate a direct approach, forgoing the temptation to "cushion the blow," "find the right way to say this," or otherwise beat around the bush. You might say something like:

"I've been considering my options here for some time, and I've decided it's time for me to move on. I am grateful for the opportunities I've found here, but I must give my two weeks' notice."

OR

"I need to let you know that I have been offered a new position at another company. I have really enjoyed working here, but I need to give you my two weeks' notice as of today. Does it work for you if my last day is [whatever two weeks from then is...?]"

6. **Beware of the Counter-Offer.** Although it can be flattering and a bit tempting, never accept a counter-offer. Studies have shown that the vast majority of employees that accept a counter-offer end up being terminated or resigning within 12 months. Your manager may come to resent the deal they offer once the immediate crisis is over. Also, if money was not the problem, it is rarely the solution. The bottom line is you should attempt to resolve any issues or better your situation before you resign.