

# Professional Resource Associates

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## How to Say Good-Bye: The Resignation Letter

by Sylvia Ho for iVillage.com

It's not as emotional as writing a Dear John letter, but giving an employer the official kiss-off can be tricky. You have to break the news to your old boss, and tendering a resignation letter makes your notice official. Yet writing simply "I quit" seems terse. I'm often asked what these letters should say. Here, answers to questions on how to say goodbye.

Q. Do I have to turn in a formal resignation letter or do I just tell my boss I quit?

A. A resignation letter is just a document stating that you are leaving your job. A formal resignation letter is not usually necessary unless company policy or your employment contract requires it. If your employment contract requires it, it is best to read the requirements of the contract carefully. If there are other issues, such as payment of large bonuses or commissions that are important to you, you might want to have a lawyer review the contract before tendering your resignation letter so that you are sure to get everything due you.

Q. If I give my boss my resignation today, does it mean that I quit today or two weeks from now?

A. Generally companies consider the date of your resignation (sometimes referred to as the date of notice) the date that you quit, even if you are giving two weeks' notice. The company may give you two weeks' pay and tell you that your services are no longer required, effective immediately. This depends on company policy. To find out your company's policy, take a look at the employee handbook, which may have a section dealing with resignations.

Q. I hate my boss and I am leaving the company on bad terms. I really feel like writing a two-page singlespaced narrative on what's wrong with company management. Should I?

A. You really shouldn't, no matter how tempted you are. The resignation letter may have no effect on improving management, but it could antagonize enough people that you may never be able to get a positive reference from the company. If you have problems with management, the appropriate place to air your reasons for leaving is at the exit interview or in an exit interview survey. It is important to leave on good terms, at least with potential references for future job searches. You won't want to alienate these people.

Q. I'm leaving because I was forced to resign. My boss basically has made this job unbearable by constantly making sexual remarks about me. Why can't I say this in my resignation letter?

A. You may be able to say that in a resignation letter. However, if you are being forced to resign your job, you may not really be resigning at all. What's more, writing a resignation letter when you are forced to resign may hurt you when you attempt to collect unemployment benefits. If you are being forced to resign because of illegal harassment, your top priority is to seek legal

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advice to protect your rights. Don't worry about the resignation letter for now. A referral source of employment lawyers is the National Employment Lawyers Association.

Q. So, what is it that I say in a resignation letter, anyway? "I quit"?

A. Try this: "It is with regret that I am notifying you of my resignation from this company. My last date of work will be ..." If it is true, you can state that you will miss your colleagues or that you have learned something from your job.