

## Chapter 4 Interviewing and Reviewing Applicants

### 4.03 Reference Checks

Individuals who are making hiring decisions should include reference checks as part of the selection process. Obtaining multiple references (at least two) allows the supervisor to look for consistency among comments and to demonstrate reasonable care was used in the hiring process. Information provided by references, whether through telephone calls or letters of recommendation, are likely to prove very useful in evaluating candidate's skills, training, and experience, and his/her ability to perform the duties of the position being filled.

Some candidates will ask their references to submit letters on their behalf; some will simply list the names and addresses of references willing to be contacted. Telephone references are the most effective means of obtaining information about a candidate because specific areas can be covered and follow-up questions can be asked. The best references generally come from former supervisors.

Specific job-related questions should be developed for the telephone reference check. You may not ask questions of a reference that you are not permitted to ask of the candidate at an interview. The interviewer/s may request general personal and work references not relating to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or age. All questions asked and issues raised must be job-related and similar for all candidates. Avoid questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no". Be sure that all questions relate directly to job performance and are open-ended in nature. A good question to ask the reference at the end of the discussion is, "Would you re-employ the applicant if given the opportunity? Why or why not".

Notes should be taken during the reference check may be placed in the candidate's folder.

The following are some typical questions that should be asked when doing reference checks:

- What were the beginning and ending employment dates for this individual?
- What position(s) did the individual hold? Salary history?
- How long have you worked with or supervised this individual?
- What were the individual's most recent job duties?
- What can you tell me about the quality and quantity of this individual's work?
- How would you describe this person's ability to meet deadlines?
- What kind of supervision did this person require?
- Did this individual get along well with management and peers?
- How is this individual a team player?
- How would you describe this individual's attitude toward work?
- How would you describe the individual's overall performance?
- How was this person's attendance? Was he/she punctual?
- Why did this individual leave your company?
- Would you reemploy this person if you had the opportunity?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

#### **Additional questions that might be asked for professionals, managers, or executives:**

- How would you describe this individual's leadership, managerial, or supervisory skills?
- Describe the quality of this individual's written and verbal communications skills.
- How do you rate this individual's ability to plan short-term? Long-term?
- Provide examples in which this individual had to make sound and timely decisions. What were the results?
- Did this person plan and administer a budget? If so, what was the size, and how did this person manage it?
- How would you describe this individual's technical skills?
- How well did this person manage crisis, pressure, or stress?
- How many people did this person directly supervise, for how long, and what were their levels (professional, blue collar, technical)?