



U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Accountability – An Employee’s Guide

What Is Employee Accountability?

Employee accountability means taking responsibility for your actions, performance, and decisions in the workplace. It’s about doing what you say you’ll do — and owning the results, good or bad.

Why It Matters

- Builds trust and integrity
- Improves team performance
- Reduces errors and delays
- Encourages ownership and initiative
- Strengthens workplace culture

Core Principles

Principle	What It Looks Like
Responsibility	Understand and own your duties and deadlines
Transparency	Communicate clearly and honestly
Follow-Through	Deliver what’s expected, on time
Problem Ownership	Don’t blame — propose solutions when issues arise
Feedback Acceptance	Receive and act on feedback constructively

Best Practices

Task	Best Practices
Set Clear Expectations	Know your role, tasks, and key performance indicators
Document Commitments	Use calendars, task lists, and follow-ups
Track Your Progress	Regularly check your goals and deadlines
Ask Questions and Flag Problems Early	Don't wait until a deadline to raise concerns
Own Mistakes	Admit errors quickly and outline how you'll fix them
Customer Mindset	Identify your primary customer or stakeholder for your work task and communicate early and often about progress

Accountability Red Flags

- Blaming others
- Making excuses
- Missing deadlines without notice
- Withholding information
- Repeating the same mistakes without correction

Remember: Accountability Is a Two-Way Street

Both employees and leaders contribute to an accountable work culture through mutual respect, clarity, and consistent follow-through.