Five Things To Do When Starting a New Job

Starting a new position often comes with a certain amount of reading and signing. While you're already in the groove of reviewing and executing documents – such as your new employer's company policies and procedures – use the transitional period to take stock of other areas in your life that might need attention.

1) Consider Your Health Insurance Coverage

This key piece to your benefits package will affect your day to day living a bit more than some of the other employment perks, such as insurance. You'll want to scrutinize your new plan to see if it has all the coverage you're looking for. You might discover that declining your new employer's plan and joining your spouse's employer plan might provide you with for more coverage, or vice versa. Reviewing the fine print as soon as possible will provide you with time to seek out coverage for missing services that might be important to your family, such as vision or dental insurance. Don't assume that the default insurance benefits are going to fit your needs perfectly; there might be a better balance between cost and services if you are willing to dig a little deeper.

2) Review Your Life Insurance

Your new employer might offer life insurance as a perk of employment, and if so, you might have a few things to consider. Is the policy offered by your employer enough coverage for you and your family? Do they offer spousal and/or children's life insurance? The answers to these questions might determine whether you'll want to seek out additional coverage outside of the employer package.

Even if your new employer does not offer life insurance as a benefit, it's important at this stage to review any existing policies you already have in place. Your income level will most likely change with your new position and your life insurance coverage should reflect that. As an example, many term life policies are meant to provide income replacement if a spouse were to unexpectedly pass away. However, if the policy only covers your income level from a decade ago (or longer), it might not be the cushion you had planned for your family when you first signed the contract.

3) Consolidate Your Retirement Plans

Long gone are the days when you could expect to hold one job for the majority of your career. Changing employers every few years is now the norm. As a result, many people have a handful of retirement accounts from past employers strewn over several different investment companies. But having multiple retirement accounts can lead to confusion and costs. Keeping track of multiple accounts at different companies might seem cumbersome enough, but keeping each of those accounts up to date is even more so. For example, if your mailing address changes, or if you'd like to update your beneficiary information, you'll have to contact each specific plan for the same request. Additionally, many investment firms collect an annual fee from each account to cover the company's management and service costs. It's possible that you might be paying such a service fee to each company. Consolidating your retirement accounts, therefore, can cut down on your costs while giving you the advantage of compounded interest.

4) Update Your Legal Documents

Some large employers offer basic legal services, such as a review of your current estate documents, or the creation of new ones. Even if your employer is small, though, a job change is still an excellent excuse to stop and review your will to see if it is out-of-date. Has your family size changed since your legal documents were first drawn up? Have there been major life changes, such as the birth of a child, a marriage or a divorce? If so, don't pass up this chance to review your estate documents. You might find that some information should be updated, or that you're missing a key piece, such as a Power of Attorney designation, all together.

5) Determine How Much Disability Insurance is Needed

Your new employer may provide disability insurance as part of their benefits package. Although a thorough review of all the intricate policy language can seem exhausting, it's important that you know just how much coverage you have - or don't have - as you start your new position. Many employers offer disability insurance coverage for up to 60% of your income, but then offer supplemental packages that you can take advantage of if you feel that extra coverage is needed. Again, don't assume that the default policy is the right fit for you – be sure to read the fine print and see just what your options are.