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Essential Skills Profiles



Introduction

Cashiers record and receive payment from customers in stores, restaurants, theatres, business offices and other retail and wholesale establishments for the purchase of goods, services and admission.

Note: Each Essential Skills task is followed by a number in brackets, e.g. (2), which is the estimated complexity level for that task. Tasks are assigned levels, ranging from Level 1 (basic task) to Levels 4 or 5 (advanced task), and are listed in increasing order of complexity. The complexity levels may vary based on the requirements of the workplace.



Reading

- Read reminders and short notes from co-workers, e.g. read short notes from supervisors to learn about upcoming meetings. (1)
- Read short instructions written on signs, labels and packaging, e.g. read instructions on labels to learn what to do in the event of cash register malfunctions. (1)
- Read short text entries on a variety of forms, such as cash-out slips and charge-control sheets. (1)
- Read information contained in a variety of recall, warranty and service bulletins, e.g. read recall bulletins to learn how returned products are to be processed. (2)
- Read a variety of memos to learn about changes to policies and procedures, such as new store hours. (2)
- Read instructions for the operation of point-of-sale equipment, such as scanners, scales, touch-screens and cash registers, e.g. read operating manuals to learn how to install printer cartridges and troubleshoot faulty touch-screens. (3)
- Read information contained in a variety of loss prevention, customer service and policy and procedure manuals, e.g. read theft prevention manuals to learn how to safeguard workplaces and merchandise. (3)



Document Use

- Locate data, such as dates, codes, costs and quantities, on price tags, receipts and monitors, e.g. locate product prices on cash register receipts. (1)
- Use basic assembly drawings to service point-of-sale equipment, e.g. refer to assembly drawings to learn how to replace printer toners. (1)
- Locate and enter data, such as identification numbers, temperatures, codes and quantities, in a variety of inventory control sheets and requisition forms, e.g. enter inventory counts on inventory and quality control forms. (2)
- Locate and enter dates, dollar values and quantities in a variety of cash-out sheets, deposit sheets, deposit envelopes and charge control sheets. (2)
- Complete a variety of entry forms, such as rain checks and credit and payment slips, e.g. complete rain check forms by entering data, such as names, dates, quantities and product codes. (2)



Writing

- Enter short text entries on a variety of forms, e.g. write comments on forms to explain why purchases were returned by customers. (1)
- Write short logbook entries and notes to inform co-workers of events that took place during shifts. (1)
- May write incident reports, e.g. write incident reports to describe events involving thefts and hostile customers. (2)



Numeracy

- Receive cash, debit, gift card and credit card payments and make change. (1)
- May measure and weigh products and goods, e.g. cashiers at building supply firms may measure the dimensions of building materials to determine their costs. (1)
- Compare price tags to billed amounts. (1)
- Compare cash-out values to cash register receipts to determine cash surpluses and shortfalls. (1)
- Estimate customer wait times. (1)
- Calculate amounts owed by customers using factors, such as discounts and currency exchange rates. (2)
- Count cash and calculate the value of credit and debit card transactions. (2)



Oral Communication

- May use public address systems to announce specials and page customers and co-workers. (1)
- May speak with suppliers to receive information about products and services. (2)
- Talk to co-workers to request and provide information on prices, codes or procedures and to co-ordinate activities. (2)
- Speak with customers to answer questions and provide information about products and services. (2)
- Talk to supervisors about topics, such as hours of work and training opportunities, and clarify job tasks and expectations. (2)
- Discuss work practices at staff meetings. (2)
- Talk to dissatisfied customers to learn about their complaints and discuss resolutions. (3)
- May provide detailed, step-by-step instructions to new employees. (3)
- May provide detailed descriptions of events and people, e.g. provide police officers and store security personnel with detailed accounts of events that occurred during robberies. (3)



Thinking

- Encounter equipment malfunctions, e.g. discover that their cash register's printer is jammed. They troubleshoot the fault and either fix the machine themselves or request the help of supervisors and equipment repairers. (1)
- Evaluate the performance of equipment, such as scales, scanners and touch-screens. (1)
- Decide to accept personal cheques, based on their company's guidelines. (1)
- Decide to ask customers to verify their ages prior to allowing them to purchase age-restricted goods, such as firearms, ammunition, cigarettes and alcohol. (1)
- Discover that their cash receipts do not balance. They search for keying errors, recount cash and double-check the value of transactions to locate the discrepancies. (2)
- Encounter dissatisfied customers. They seek solutions that are acceptable to customers and store managers. (2)
- Encounter people who are smoking, drinking or otherwise disobeying established policies. They ask them to stop disobeying the policies and seek assistance from co-workers and security personnel as required. (2)
- Evaluate the severity of workplace hazards and risks. (2)
- Decide to give discounts for damaged merchandise. They consider the degree of damage and their company's policies. (2)



Thinking

- Judge the condition of products being returned for refunds. They consider signs of wear and tear and the condition of packaging. (2)
- Locate prices and product codes by referring to paper-based and electronic catalogues and by seeking the assistance of co-workers, such as store clerks. (2)
- Locate product information by visiting manufacturer and supplier websites and by speaking with customers, co-workers and colleagues. (2)
- Locate information about the use of point-of-sale equipment by speaking with manufacturers' representatives and co-workers, watching training videos and reading manuals. (2)



Digital Technology

- May use calculators and personal digital assistants (PDAs) to calculate the value of sales and discounts. (1)
- Operate point-of-sale equipment, such as electronic cash registers, bar scanners, scales and touch-screens, to complete financial transactions, e.g. use electronic scales to weigh merchandise and enter product codes using keyboards. (1)
- May use word processing software to write short reports. (2)
- May use financial software to produce sales reports and transaction summaries. (2)
- May use databases to retrieve data, such as inventory levels, product numbers, descriptions and prices. (2)
- May use databases to retrieve and update customer information, e.g. use databases to update customers' contact information. (2)
- May use Internet browsers and search engines to locate product information, such as costs and specifications. (2)
- May use the Internet to access training courses and seminars offered by suppliers, employers and trainers. (2)



Additional Information

Other Essential Skills:

Working with Others

Cashiers usually work independently, providing help to co-workers or obtaining help from them as needed. They may co-ordinate their work with others to avoid overlapping break times. They may work with helpers during busy periods and may sometimes work alone when, for example, balancing the cash after closing.

Continuous Learning

Cashiers learn continuously in order to stay up-to-date on new point-of-sale technologies. They maintain current knowledge by reading operating manuals and by talking to co-workers and equipment manufacturers. They may take training provided by employers and equipment manufacturers.

Impact of Digital Technology



All Essential Skills are affected by the introduction of technology in the workplace. Cashiers' ability to adapt to new technologies is strongly related to their skill levels across the Essential Skills, including reading, writing, thinking and communication skills. Technologies are transforming the ways in which workers obtain, process and communicate information, and the types of skills needed to perform in their jobs. In particular, cashiers need digital skills in order to operate increasingly complex equipment, work with large amounts and diverse sources of data, and benefit from online learning and communication sources. For example, many workers use databases to retrieve inventory levels, product numbers, descriptions and prices. The use of electronic point-of-sale equipment is also commonplace throughout retail establishments, requiring higher skill levels in the use of digital technology.

Technology in the workplace further affects the complexity of tasks related to the Essential Skills required for this occupation. Many tasks are completed more quickly and accurately through electronic calculation, standardized formatting, efficient electronic databases, keyword search functions (e.g. for prices and inventory counts) and online sources. The use of these resources also increases the speed and precision of tasks, such as entering dates, times and amounts into bills. In addition, workers with keyboard skills benefit from spell check options and the use of standardized fonts. Software and hardware developers are also improving ease of use for workers through touch-screen technology, built-in self-help tutorials and more user-friendly software applications.



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