



Cubicle Etiquette: Being Mindful in an Open Workspace

Working in an open space can be challenging. Constant distractions, lack of privacy, and frequent interruptions can negatively impact your performance (and your sanity). While you cannot control your coworkers, the following guidelines can help you become a good neighbor and reduce stress in the environment for both you and your coworkers.

Your Space:

1. Follow your agency's policies – written and unwritten – about personal hygiene, dress codes, workspace decorating, and other professional expectations.
2. Keep hygiene at home...or at least in the bathroom. Don't floss, paint your nails, or do other grooming in your workspace.
3. Your workspace reflects your professional image. Project the image you want.
4. Decorate tastefully.
5. Don't decorate the outside of your cube or any other public space.
6. Respect your space. Keep it clean and organized.

Privacy:

1. Assume everything you say is heard by your coworkers. Take personal conversations elsewhere.
2. Get permission before entering another person's workspace.
3. Don't sneak up behind someone.
4. Don't loiter around another person's workspace while he or she is on the phone.
5. Don't pop up over the top of your cube to talk to coworkers.
6. Mind your own business! Never read someone's computer screen unless you are invited to do so or comment on something you overheard.
7. Be respectful of others and their things. Don't borrow things (even paper clips) from your coworker's space without permission.

Noise:

1. Answer your phone in one or two rings.
2. Be mindful of your volume when talking. Use your "library voice."
3. Set volume to low or off on all phones and electronic devices.
4. Use your ear buds or headphones when listening to music or other audio files.
5. Don't smack, pop, or crunch – gum, ice, etc.
6. Don't sing, hum, or whistle when working in an open space.
7. Don't talk through the walls of your cubicle.
8. Don't yell across the room.
9. Don't congregate outside, inside, or around someone's workspace.

Scents:

1. Be mindful of your personal odors.
2. Keep your shoes on!
3. Don't eat at your desk.
4. Dispose of your trash properly, especially if it may smell.
5. Don't choke your coworkers by wearing too much perfume or cologne.
6. Don't spray air fresheners in an open workspace.