

# Your Road Through Probation.

LET ACSS GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE FIRST YEAR OF YOUR NEW JOB.



For questions or to determine your monthly dues, please contact us.



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## Probation: A Critical Juncture

First, join ACSS

Congratulations! You've been promoted. You're a supervisor or manager now, maybe in a job you've wanted for a long time. You are taking on new responsibilities, facing new challenges, learning new skills. You're excited, a little nervous, and you're determined to succeed. Most likely, you will.

For the next six months or year, you will be on probation. This trial period shouldn't scare you: You know you're qualified for your new job because you were hired through a rigorous, competitive process. You're expected to need time to learn your new responsibilities and discover whether you and your new position are a good match.

At the end of this year, most probationers are awarded permanent status in their new jobs — but not all. Sometimes, even for good employees, circumstances can go wrong.

It's wise to prepare for some bumps on the road that lies ahead. The Association of California State Supervisors has compiled these 10 commonsense suggestions to help keep you on the right track:

### **Join ACSS.**

Of course, our first tip is to join ACSS as soon as you promote.

ACSS is as indispensable as "roadside assistance." We have represented the interests of excluded state employees — workers who, like you, are no longer in a bargaining unit — for more than 25 years. We advocate before the Legislature and the governor's office — the entities empowered to give you raises and improve your benefits. Our labor relations professionals counsel and go to bat for you if you have job-related issues, even while you're on probation, and our publications keep you up to date on information you need. We also offer extra benefits to make your life more fun and your family more secure.

**Don't wait until you have a problem to join ACSS!** Then it may be too late. Only members can receive our services.

**Hint:** If you're an SEIU member, don't cancel your dues. They will automatically roll over into ACSS — at a much lower rate than your union dues — and you won't have a break in coverage.

For more information or a membership application and dues schedule, call us at 800-624-2137 or email us at [acss@calcsea.org](mailto:acss@calcsea.org).

For nine more tips, unfold this roadmap.



# As You Begin Your New Journey

Your road through probation may not always be smooth. Make ACSS your 'roadside' service.

## 2 Ask for a 'road map.'

The "road map" for your new job is your duty statement. This document explains your new duties, responsibilities and expectations. Discuss your duty statement with your supervisor so you know the standards you're expected to meet. Ask questions: What are your immediate priorities? How often does your supervisor want feedback? How will you be evaluated?

If there is no duty statement, ask your supervisor if the two of you can develop one together.

## 3 Observe the culture.

Part of the fun of traveling is experiencing new places. Your office is a new environment and you want to fit in with the established customs. Note how early your colleagues arrive, how late they leave, what they wear, how they communicate, how long they stay at lunch. Introduce yourself and get to know your fellow workers. It's important to show you're part of the team.

## 4 Get training.

You don't drive without hours of instruction first. As a new supervisor or manager, you are entitled to a minimum of 80 hours of training. Forty hours must be structured or taught by a qualified instructor. The rest is on the job by a higher-level supervisor or manager. Request this training in writing as soon as you can. The sooner you're trained, the more effective you will be.

## 5 Meet often with your supervisor.

You learn to drive with an instructor beside you. In your new job, when you have an issue to discuss, need feedback on your performance or want clarity about job expectations, ask your supervisor to meet with you. Don't wait for the supervisor to initiate the meeting. It is important to resolve problems and questions as soon as they arise.

## 6 Maintain good records.

Keep copies of all communications, including emails, that address your duties and activities. Document performance-related discussions and events as they occur — and be sure to include the positive feedback along with suggestions for improvement. Immediately respond, in writing, to any comments you feel are incorrect.



## 7 Drive defensively.

Every journey encounters potholes, detours and bad drivers. Prepare for them in advance to prevent mishaps along the way. Here are some to watch for:

- ⚠️ You and your supervisor have a personality clash. Your ACSS labor rep can help. Ask him or her to accompany you to a meeting to discuss the issues that are causing the conflict.
- ⚠️ You and your supervisor don't communicate. Don't just rely on emails to communicate. Take the initiative to make sure you and your supervisor meet frequently. Ask your supervisor for guidance, advice and feedback.
- ⚠️ You have an attitude. It's great to exude confidence, but you don't want to seem like a know-it-all. And you won't make a good impression if you appear negative or devil-may-care. Make sure your supervisors and coworkers know you take your job seriously, and show them your enthusiasm.
- ⚠️ You observe bias or discrimination in the office. By the time you discover this, you should already be a member of ACSS. Call your labor relations rep for guidance.

## 8 Expect to 'need improvement.'

You take many practice tests before you get your driver's license. You'll have similar opportunities as a probationer. During probation, you are entitled to a written evaluation every three months. If your supervisor misses an evaluation, request one. Don't be disheartened if your first evaluation, or even subsequent ones, show areas that need improvement. Probation is the time to learn your job, and it's not expected you will have mastered all your responsibilities at the start. Use each evaluation to map your journey for the next three months and work hard to correct any deficiencies.



## 9 What if the worst happens?

If you're rejected during probation, it's not the end of the world — or your career. Being rejected from probation is not considered an adverse action and is not noted in your file. You simply may have taken a wrong road.

If you held another state position before this one, you may have return rights. If you're interested in going back to your old job, contact your ACSS labor relations rep for guidance.

If you feel the rejection was unfair, you are entitled to appeal to the State Personnel Board. Just be aware that success is rare. The burden of proof — that there is no substantial evidence to support the rejection — is on you. Fewer than 5 percent of appellants successfully overturn a probation rejection. If you choose this route, your labor relations rep is available to counsel and represent you.

## 10 Join ACSS!

We're back where we started. But it's worth repeating: Only when you are an ACSS member are you eligible for our extra benefits and the services of our professional labor relations reps. Nonmembers and late-joiners (who sign up after their problems arise) would have to pay — often dearly — for these services that you, as an ACSS member, get for free. They can be worth far more than the price of your dues.

