



p-TIPS

Good manners make good neighbors (Rules for cubicle courtesy)

People working in modern offices share one thing in common: they spend most of their time in a cubicle or other partitioned-off space. Designed to maximize utility use and floorspace, cubicles undeniably lack privacy. A Web article contributed by the staffing firm Robert Hall International (careerbuilders.com/JobSeeker/caereerbytes/CBArticle/asp?articleID=247) urges cubicle denizens to show “a healthy respect for coworkers.” Ten tips were offered for fostering productive relationships at work, no matter how cramped your personal environment.

- 1) Be a courteous guest. Don’t invade colleagues’ work areas without a quick knock or “excuse me.” Show respect by letting them decide whether an interruption is possible at that time.
- 2) Use your “library voice.” Everybody is concentrating to meet deadlines, so keep your decibel level down when conversing.
- 3) Curb casual conversation. Office socializing builds useful friendships, but it’s not productive to spend very long hashing over the cricket scores or latest movie blockbuster. Save personal chat for lunch or after work.
- 4) Stay home with the sniffles. Do everyone a favor and take a sick day rather than infect the whole office with a cold, flu, or worse.

- 5) Have good scents. “Good scents” probably means “no scents.” Never wear heavy perfume or aftershave at work.
- 6) Ask before borrowing. Seek permission before raiding coworkers’ paperclip containers or borrowing a marker. Hopefully, they will then extend the same courtesy.
- 7) Avoid decor disasters. A few personal touches go a long way. Political posters, for example, may alienate those backing other parties.
- 8) Hit the right tune. You may work more productively to music; others experience it as a major distraction. Wear headphones and do not hum or sing along.
- 9) Avoid phone faux pas. If you need your cell phone during office hours, keep it nearby. Use a professional ringtone, since no one appreciates this week’s Top of the Pops blaring out every time you get a call.
- 10) Be friendly. Away from your cubicle, say hello to others whether you are acquainted or not. You may require their help someday, and anyway, “the roof constitutes an introduction.”