

# Illegal Interview Questions

It is illegal to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, or handicap in making personnel decisions. Questions regarding these areas are generally illegal. Most employers will not ask illegal questions. However, you may occasionally encounter such questions. Women are more likely to encounter them than men.

## Some Illegal Questions

How old are you?

Are you married, divorced, separated or single?

Do you attend church?

Do you own or rent your home?

Are you in debt?

Have you ever been arrested?

Are you a member of any political or social organizations?

Are you living with anyone?

What does your spouse think of your career?

How much do you weigh? How tall are you?

How much insurance do you have?

## How do you handle these questions?

You can point out that the question is illegal or inappropriate. You may not get the job, but principles are important.

You may decide to answer the question, even though it may be offensive, because you want the job. If you get the job, work to halt such interview practices in the future.

Another approach could be to respond tactfully and in a way that indicates the question may be inappropriate. For example:

**If asked:**

“Do you attend church?”

*You might reply by asking:*

*“Does church attendance have a direct bearing on the responsibilities of the job?”*

**If asked:**

“Are you planning on having children?”

*You might respond:*

*“I’m planning to devote my working hours to being an efficient, effective employee.” Then change the subject and focus on your positive attributes.*

How you respond to such difficult and illegal questions is up to you. It is easier to handle such situations if you have thought about them beforehand.