



## Is the worker an independent contractor or employee?

Every year the IRS audits employers who use independent contractors to ensure contractors and employees are properly classified. When the IRS determines employers are using contractors that should be employees, the consequences can be severe. Employers will be responsible for additional liabilities such as payroll taxes, workers compensation, health insurance, etc. Interest and penalties due can also be costly depending on IRS rulings.

Determining if someone is an independent contractor or an employee is subjective. Here are 20 factors that may help understanding employee and independent contractor classifications. If you have any questions or would like further assistance, please [contact us](#) at [PCA](#).

1. A worker who is required to comply with other persons' **instructions** about when, where, and how he/she is to work is ordinarily an employee.
2. **Training** a worker by requiring an experienced employee to work with the worker, by corresponding with the worker, by requiring the worker to attend meetings, or by using other methods, indicates that the person(s) for whom the services are performed want the services performed in a particular method or manner.
3. **Integration** of the worker's services into the business operations generally shows that the worker is subject to direction and control. When the success or continuation of a business depends to an appreciable degree upon the performance of certain services, the workers who perform those services must necessarily be subject to a certain amount of control by the owner of the business.
4. If the **services must be rendered personally**, presumably the person or persons for whom the services are performed are interested in the methods used to accomplish the work as well as in the results.
5. If the person(s) for whom the services are performed **hire, supervise, and pay assistants**, that factor generally shows control over the workers on the job. However, if one worker hires, supervises, and pays the other assistants pursuant to a contract under which the worker agrees to provide materials and labor and under which the worker is responsible only for the attainment of a result, this factor indicates an independent contractor status.
6. A **continuing relationship** between the worker and the person(s) for whom the services are performed indicates that an employer-employee relationship exists. A continuing relationship may exist where work is performed at frequently recurring although irregular intervals.

7. The establishment of **set hours of work** by the person(s) for whom the services are performed is a factor indicating control.
8. If the worker must devote substantially **full time** to the business of the person(s) for whom the services are performed, such person(s) have control over the amount of time the worker spends working and impliedly restrict the worker from doing other gainful work. An independent contractor, on the other hand, is free to work when and for whom he or she chooses.
9. If the **work is performed on the premises** of the person(s) for whom the services are performed, that factor suggests control over the worker, especially if the work could be done elsewhere. Work done off the premises of the person(s) receiving the services, such as at the office of the worker, indicates some freedom from control. However, this fact by itself does not mean that the worker is not an employee. The importance of this factor depends on the nature of the service involved and the extent to which an employer generally would require that employees perform such services on the employer's premises. Control over the place of work is indicated when the person(s) for whom the services are performed have the right to compel the worker to travel a designated route, to canvass a territory within a certain time, or to work at specific places as required.
10. If a worker must perform services in the **order or sequence set** by the person(s) for whom the services are performed, that factor shows that the worker is not free to follow the worker's own pattern of work but must follow the established routines and schedules of the person(s) for whom the services are performed. Often, because of the nature of an occupation, the person(s) for whom the services are performed do not set the order of the services or set the order infrequently. It is sufficient to show control, however, if such person(s) retain the right to do so.
11. A requirement that the worker submit **regular or written reports** to the person(s) for whom the services are performed indicates a degree of control.
12. **Payment by the hour, week, or month** generally points to an employer-employee relationship, provided that this method of payment is not just a convenient way of paying a lump sum agreed upon as the cost of a job. Payment made by the job or on a straight commission generally indicates that the worker is an independent contractor.
13. If the person(s) for whom the services are performed ordinarily **pay the worker's business and/or traveling expenses**, the worker is ordinarily an employee. An employer, to be able to control expenses, generally retains the right to regulate and direct the worker's business activities.
14. The fact that the person(s) for whom the services are performed **furnish significant tools, materials, and other equipment** tends to show the existence of an employer- employee relationship.

15. If the worker **invests in facilities** that are used by the worker in performing services and are not typically maintained by employees (such as the maintenance of an office rented at fair value from an unrelated party), that factor tends to indicate that the worker is an independent contractor. On the other hand, lack of investment in facilities indicates dependence on the person(s) for whom the services are performed for such facilities and, accordingly, the existence of an employer-employee relationship.
16. A worker who can **realize a profit or suffer a loss** as a result of the worker's services (in addition to the profit or loss ordinarily realized by employees) is generally an independent contractor, but the worker who cannot is an employee. For example, if the worker is subject to a real risk of economic loss due to significant investments or a bona fide liability for expenses, such as salary payments to unrelated employees, that factor indicates that the worker is an independent contractor. The risk that a worker will not receive payment for his or her services, however, is common to both independent contractors and employees and thus does not constitute a sufficient economic risk to support treatment as an independent contractor.
17. If a worker performs more than de minimis services for a **multiple of unrelated persons or firms at the same time**, that factor generally indicates that the worker is an independent contractor. However, a worker who performs services for more than one person may be an employee of each of the persons, especially where such persons are part of the same service arrangement.
18. The fact that a worker **makes his or her services available to the general public** on a regular and consistent basis indicates an independent contractor relationship.
19. The **right to discharge** a worker is a factor indicating that the worker is an employee and the person possessing the right is an employer. An employer exercises control through the threat of dismissal, which causes the worker to obey the employer's instructions. An independent contractor, on the other hand, cannot be fired so long as the independent contractor produces a result that meets the contract specifications.
20. If the worker has the **right to end** his or her relationship with the person for whom the services are performed at any time he or she wishes without incurring liability, that factor indicates an employer-employee relationship.

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