



Dear Chief

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COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: I own a recycling company and have been told to hire Veterans. I’ve done that a few times and have regretted it. They were the laziest employees I ever had. Why does everyone make such a big deal about hiring Veterans?

DONE WITH VETS



DEAR DONE WITH VETS: First and foremost, we all should be thankful for those who stepped up at one point in their life and served. Regardless of the end result of their individual service, we should respect those who sacrificed something to make our way of life possible and sustainable.

A common misperception about people who wore the uniform is that everyone is the same. They’re not. Other than wearing the same colors the same way, each person has a unique personality with different character traits among the ranks. People leave military service with varying degrees of experience, education, and effectiveness. Not every one of them provided meritorious service; in fact, some were discharged due to criminal acts.

When considering hiring a Veteran, you can ask them what type of discharge

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they received but you cannot demand that information. It is considered to be private information and therefore not a matter of public record. However, you can require the verification of discharge information as prerequisite criteria for the hiring process of jobs where a security clearance or background check is required. A Veteran’s Form DD-214 will display the type of discharge the Veteran received, and to learn more about the different types of discharges go online to www.military-law.lawyers.com/veterans-benefits/discharges-and-their-effect-on-veteran-benefits.html.

Some places hire Veterans as a token of appreciation or reward for their service to our country. Other places do it to receive tax benefits. And there are even some places that don’t hire any Veterans at all based on false stereotypes. Regardless, I recommend you hire the most “right” and “qualified” person for the job whether they are a Veteran or not. Notice I said “right” and “qualified.” Hire people who have the right attitude, character, integrity, demeanor, personality, or qualifications you’re looking for. If you hire based only on “qualifications” or “quotas,” you could end up bringing in people who are a bad fit for your company or organization. With good systemic training practices in place (if feasible), you can always hire

the right person and then get him or her trained and qualified after the fact.

I will say this though: a great many Veterans are truly exceptional in their abilities to perform under pressure and with purpose. If you want someone who understands the concept of teamwork, discipline, and preparation, then target our finest men and women in uniform for employment. If you want someone capable of being a leader, then they’re great candidates for that too. The leadership training they’ve received is among the best offered anywhere. And their leadership experience? Well, let’s just say they’ve led others during some of the most stressful, demanding, and dangerous situations.

So don’t have a blanket perception of Veterans’ capabilities in the civilian workforce. Evaluate each Veteran’s application and résumé in the same manner as you would for all others. Then hire the most “right” and “qualified” person for the job.



For an opportunity to have your question, issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to www.DearChiefAdvice.com and submit your comments or email them to Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com.