

Can You Quit a Contract Job? Here's What to Know

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Can you quit a contract job if you suddenly realize it's not a good fit? You might find yourself asking what options you have if you've actually signed a contract with an employer but want out.

In this article, I'll explain when you can quit a contract job, what to look for in your contract agreement, how to know if quitting is the right option, and lots more.

Can You Quit a Contract Job?

The simple answer is: Yes. You can always quit a contract job since no one can make you work for them without your willing participation.

But quitting a contract job may come with a few stipulations including termination fees, timing requirements and other details. We'll explore them all in this article.

What to look for in your contract

Whether you've already signed a contract and now you want to quit your contract job or you haven't signed yet and you want to make sure you keep your options open when signing, let's review what you should look for in your contract.

Clearly defined termination terms

First, you want to get really clear on the circumstances under which you can terminate a contract job. There can be a lot here, but watch for the following terms in your contract and [consult a lawyer](#) if you have questions.

Notice period – This is the period of time ahead of quitting that you must notify your client. Typically this is anywhere from 2 weeks to 30 days. So while you may be able to quit your contract job at any time, you may need to wait out the notice period before you're actually through with the job.

Grounds for termination – These are the circumstances under which it's appropriate for you to resign from a contract job. Examples include: client's failure to pay, client's failure to cooperate, abusive or inappropriate client behavior, etc.

Early termination fees – These are fees you have to pay your client for resigning early from a contract job. Alternatively, your client may have to pay you if they resign early.

Payment owed – These terms answer the question: what happens with any outstanding balance when I quit my contract job? Typically, you'll be entitled to payment for the work you've completed, but rarely more. Especially if you're the one to quit.

Deliverables – If you quit a contract job early, it's important to know what happens with completed or partially completed deliverables. Most often, you'll turn over any work the client has paid for.

IP rights – This is a question of ownership. If you resign from a contract position, who will own the completed or partially completed work done thus far?

There may be more terms you'll want to be aware of if you're considering quitting a contract job. Also, please keep in mind, I am not a lawyer. While I've researched these points extensively and do have some mild legal background, I recommend you [speak with an actual lawyer](#) anytime you need help with a contract.

Should you actually quit a contract job?

Just because a project isn't going smoothly, that doesn't necessarily mean resigning from a contract position is the best course of action.

Before jumping directly to "I quit," here are a few questions to ask yourself:

Is there any way to quickly resolve the issues I'm facing?

If the reason your quitting is easily resolvable, take that course of action first. If the reasons are inexcusable (like abuse or misconduct) then quitting is your best option.

Is there anyone else I could work with to solve the problem?

Perhaps the client you are working with has a supervisor and the only way to resolve the problem is to "go over their head" to their boss. While not the best move for the long-term relationship with this client, it might help get the project across the finish line.

Is there any way I can just hang on and see this project through?

Quitting a contract job means giving up work and revenue. If there's any chance you can resolve the issues you're facing and see the project through to the end, that's ideal. It doesn't mean you have to work with this client again, but it may be simpler to grit your teeth and power through.

Are there any other solutions?

It might be time to get creative. For example, could you sub-contract the rest of this job to another contractor? Can you put the project on pause while your client resolves issues on their end? Can the project scope be modified to complete the project more quickly?

How to formally quit a contract job

If you've reviewed your contract and feel comfortable moving forward, there are good and bad ways to resign from a contract job.

Here are a few ways to help it go more smoothly:

Try to resolve the issues and give fair warnings

Before just up-and-quitting your contract job, you may want to try and resolve the issues you have with your client and give them reasonable warning that you're preparing to resign.

You might say something like this over phone or email:

Hey, Tom. I'm still waiting on that copy you agreed to send me. Unfortunately, I can't move forward with your project until you send me all the assets. If I don't receive them by Friday, I may need to resign from this job.

SOURCE: [TheFreelanceFiles.com](https://thefreelancefiles.com)

Have an open conversation with your client

Any kind of resignation from a contract job should start with an open and honest conversation with your client.

Don't beat around the bush. Schedule a meeting (**don't do this over text or email**) and start with something like this:

Hey, Tom. Thanks for meeting with me today. I wanted to let you know that this project isn't working. As I mentioned before, I need the assets in order to complete the project on-time. Since you have repeatedly ignored my request for assets, I'm going to have to stop work on this project. I will send you all the work completed thus far and you can find another contractor to work with you.

SOURCE: TheFreelanceFiles.com

Tie up any loose ends and formalize your quitting

Finally, take time to send any files, updates, or other information your client may need moving forward. Then formalize your quitting with a formal resignation letter.

I've included 3 sample resignation letters below which you can send via email or paper mail.

Contract Job Resignation Letter Templates

Contract Job Resignation Letter (short)

Dear [Client Name],

I am writing to inform you that I am resigning from my position as [position title] on the [project name] project, effective [date]. Unfortunately, I am no longer able to continue working on this project due to [reasons for termination]. I appreciate the opportunity to work with you and your team. Please let me know if you need anything during this transition period.

Sincerely,

[Contractor Name]

SOURCE: [TheFreelanceFiles.com](https://www.thefreelancefiles.com)

Contract Job Resignation Letter (medium)

Dear [Client Name],

I am writing to inform you that I am resigning from my position as [position title] on the [project name] project, effective [date]. After careful consideration, I have decided that I can no longer continue in this role with your company.

Over the last [duration of project], I have enjoyed working with you and your team on [brief description of project]. Unfortunately, due to [reasons for termination], I feel I am no longer able to meet the requirements and expectations for this position.

I want to assure you that I will do everything I can to make this transition as smooth as possible. I will be available over the next [duration] to assist with handing off my work and responsibilities to others. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to aid with this process.

I appreciate the opportunity you gave me to work on this impactful project. It has been a pleasure collaborating with you and your skilled team. I wish you and [company name] all the best moving forward. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need anything during this transition period.

Sincerely,

[Contractor Name]

SOURCE: [TheFreelanceFiles.com](https://www.thefreelancefiles.com)

Contract Job Resignation Letter (long)

Dear [Client Name],

I am writing you this letter to formally notify you of my resignation from my role as [position title] on the [project name] project, effective [date]. This was not an easy decision to make, but after careful consideration, I have determined that I can no longer continue in this position with your company.

As you know, I was brought on [duration] ago to [summary of role and responsibilities]. In that time, I have enjoyed working closely with you and your team and am proud of what we have accomplished together on [project achievements].

However, due to [reasons for termination], I no longer feel I am able to meet the requirements and expectations for this role. I have found myself struggling with [challenges faced] which has affected my ability to complete the necessary work at the caliber you and your team deserve.

Please know that I remain committed to making this transition period as seamless as possible. Over the next [duration], I will be available to assist with handing off critical work and responsibilities to others. I am happy to train my potential replacement and provide any insight and information needed to get them up to speed. If there are any specific documents, data or summaries which would aid with this process, please let me know and I will prioritize completing those.

While I know my departure leaves you in a difficult position, I have the utmost confidence in your leadership and the skill of your team to continue driving this project forward. You have assembled an incredible group of professionals who I know will rise to the occasion.

I again want to thank you for the opportunity to be part of the team working on such an exciting and meaningful project. I wish you and [company name] the very best, and please reach out if I can assist in any way during this transition.

Sincerely,

[Contractor Name]

SOURCE: TheFreelanceFiles.com

To quit or not to quit?

After reading through this article, if you're still asking yourself whether or not to quit a contract job, I feel your pain. [Breaking up with a client](#) can be a painful process and certainly has financial ramifications too.

But remember, continuing to work with frustrating clients can also cause problems in your business. If it gets to the point where the project isn't profitable or your emotional health is suffering due to a poor client-contractor relationship, it's probably time to just quit.

Keep the conversation going...

Over 10,000 of us are having daily conversations over in our [free Facebook group](#) and we'd love to see you there. Join us!

https://millo.co/can-you-quit-a-contract-job-heres-what-to-know?utm_source=Millo&utm_medium=author_page