



## CONVERTING YOUR APPLICATION TO AN ELECTRONIC FORMAT

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If you've ever cut-and-pasted a Microsoft Word document into AVUE or USAJOBS (or any other automated hiring system), you know the frustration that comes when you discover that all of your "•" bullets have mysteriously changed into an "□" or "?" and for some reason your formatting and lines are all jumbled.

Here is a solution to your frustration: Follow these instructions and you'll find that your application converts into an electronic automated hiring system format without a problem.

Use these steps when you are ready to "Cut and Paste" your information into your electronic application and/or AVUE Profile. This process is bit tedious, but necessary.

### CONVERSION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Open your document (résumé /application) in Microsoft Word. Save a backup copy for safe keeping. To save a copy, click on: File | Save As | then rename the document and save it in an appropriate file.
2. Close the backup copy in Microsoft Word and reopen the original document. Click on the ¶ symbol in the toolbar of your Microsoft Word window. This will show the hidden formatting elements in your document. You'll be able to see the tabs (in the form of "→"), the spaces (in the form of "·"), the paragraph returns (the "¶" symbol at the end of a line), etc.  
*(Hint: If the ¶ symbol is not in your toolbar, click on: View | Toolbars | Standard. Checking Standard will make the symbol appear.)*
3. Next, remove all of your tabs and any places where you have more than one space – especially at the end of a line/paragraph. This step is important because systems like AVUE count spaces as characters when they enforce character allotments. In other words, having a bunch of extra spaces at the end of your lines can add up and put you over the character limit.
4. Click on File and then Save As. In the Save As window, scroll down in the "Save as Type" drop-box until you see Plain Text. Click on Plain Text and then click Save.
5. You will now see a File Conversion window. Click on the box that says, "Allow Character Substitution." This will change most of your bullet points into " \* ".
6. Next, close out of MS Word and go back to your files and open the Plaintext copy (.txt file). This will open the document in Notepad (or Wordpad).
7. Notepad will convert your résumé/application into ASCII text (Plain Text) - that is, it will change any characters that are not recognized by AVUE or other automated hiring systems. Notepad will also eliminate any unusual margin/formatted settings you may have created in your original document. It won't be pretty, but with a little work, it'll be effective.
8. To organize your information make sure that you use a blank line between sections. You can also use all capitals to highlight your name and category headings.

9. Once you have made all of your edits and the format looks good, Save your Notepad document.
10. To check character allotment of specific blocks: Copy and Paste your work experience blocks into a NEW Microsoft Word document. Under Tools, click on Word Count and check to see if the Characters (with spaces) respects the allotment.  
*(Hint: AVUE work experience blocks limit the entries to 4000 characters with spaces / USAJOBS only allows 3000. If you have too many characters, you'll have to cut information out or condense information down. Otherwise, the automated hiring system will simply cut off your entry at the character limit mark regardless of whether that mark happens to be mid-sentence.)*
11. After checking your character allotment, your document is now ready to Copy and Paste from your Notepad file into AVUE, Quickhire, etc.  
*(Hint: In AVUE, after you've inserted and saved your newly formatted information, click on "View This Application" in the left-hand links bar – this will help to double-check that your information transferred correctly and that it was not cut off during the conversion.)*

**Example of ASCII / Plain Text Formatting:****SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:**

Accomplished wildland firefighter with broad experience in both initial and extended attack fire suppression activities, pre-suppression efforts and prescribed fire operations. Energetic, goal-focused, and willing to take on challenges and responsibility. Personable with natural teaching and relationship-building qualities. Demonstrated ability to make good decisions during emergency situations. Attested ability to assess and tackle critical situations and achieve the best outcomes.

**CORE PROFESSIONAL STRENGTHS:**

- > Outstanding communication skills
- > Well-organized and efficient
- > Solid tactical knowledge
- > Excellent problem-solving skills
- > Capable and engaging instructor
- > Exceptional interpersonal skills

**PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:****LEADERSHIP**

- \* Perform work directly related to wildland fire suppression and control activities, including: suppression, preparedness, prevention, hazard fuel reduction, and prescribed burning, in a supervisory capacity, as a Sr. Firefighter on the Sample Interagency Hotshot Crew.
- \* Assist with the management of a Hotshot module by providing leadership and direction both on and off the fireline. Able to provide leadership during All Risk emergency response situations.

**TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- \* Successful completion of the National Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program.
- \* Redcard Qualifications include: Helicopter Crewmember | Firefighter Type 1 and Type 2 | Incident Commander Type 5 | Crew Boss (trainee) | Faller B | Engine Operator (trainee) | Former Medical First Responder.