

Mystery Shopper FAQ

What is mystery shopping?

Mystery shopping is a tool used to provide the 18th Force Support Squadron with objective, unbiased accounts of our customers' experiences. These reports provide valuable information us to ensure we are meeting our customers' needs and correcting problem areas. A mystery shopper is someone who poses as a legitimate customer in order to provide his or her first-hand experience to the 18th Force Support Squadron. Individuals are trained to observe and evaluate the customer service processes. They do this by posing as a customer and undertaking a series of agreed tasks that monitors the service delivery and the effectiveness of staff training. Each visit is followed by an assessment using an evaluation form. Through the evaluation form, the mystery shoppers report on their experience in a detailed and objective way.

What are some of the requirements to be a mystery shopper?

Previous experience is not required. We are looking for reliable, detail-oriented shoppers with excellent written communication skills. Mystery shoppers can be a diverse group representing ages 13 and older: stay-at-home spouses, active duty members, retirees, civilians, contractors, or students. Mystery shoppers ages 13 – 17 require parental permission. There are assignments for shoppers of every age. Shoppers will need reliable transportation to visit the establishments you are shopping. You must be dependable and able to adhere to our submission deadline.

How long does an assignment take to complete?

In most cases, it will not take you longer than 30 minutes.

How much mystery shopping can I do?

As a mystery shopper, you can do as much or as little as you like. Unlike being an employee, you choose the assignments you want and the dates you want to do them, within the guidelines provided by the 18th Force Support Squadron. All we ask is that once you accept an assignment, you complete it on time and follow the instructions we provide.

How will I know of an assignment?

The 18th Force Support Squadron will alert you to assignments based on your interests and location.

Will my assignments need to be done at a certain time?

All assignments are due by no later than 3 pm the day after the assigned shop date if conducted during the workweek. All assignments are due by no later than 3 pm the following business day if the assigned shop date occurred on a weekend or Federal Holiday.

How do I complete my mystery shopping assignment?

Once you accept an assignment, we provide you with a set of written shopper instructions and a copy of the questionnaire that explain exactly what information you should gather while you are visiting the facility. Once you return from your shop, submit the completed questionnaire/evaluation form to the 18th Force Support Squadron Accounting Office.

Q. What makes a good report?

- Pay attention to detail. Make sure you visit the correct facility, purchase the required items, ask specific questions provided on your survey form and/or follow the scenario you were given to complete the shop correctly as noted in the shop instructions.
- If you cannot complete your assignment, notify your schedule immediately. They may be able to extend the due date or reschedule the shop to someone else.
- Read and follow the shop instructions, and review the evaluation/survey form BEFORE completing your shop.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Each sentence should begin with a capital letter, and make sure you write in complete sentences.
- Do not use abbreviations.
- Make sure all of your comments match your yes and no answers on the evaluation form. If you marked a question no, make sure to explain why.
- For summaries/narratives, be sure you have written a good report with plenty of details. This allows us to get a clear understanding of what took place during your visit.
- Be accurate, fair, and tell the truth. Please report both positive and negative experience in an objective manner.
- Do not give opinion; just state the facts as to what happened. Avoid such statements as "I felt" and "I think".
- Never cut and paste comments from another facility and just change names and a few details. All visits are unique and the reports must be written based on the individual experience.
- Never reveal yourself as a mystery shopper.
- Be discrete! Do not take notes or conduct yourself in a way that could identify you as a shopper.
- If you have a poor experience, the facility will be able to take note of this from your report. Please do not cause a scene with the employee or management.
- Do not take any paper work in with you to do a shop.
- Fill out the report immediately upon leaving the facility to ensure you do not forget any details.
- Submit your report on time and respond quickly if we have questions about your report.

How am I paid and when?

You receive cash reimbursement for services purchased. The 18th Force Support Squadron reimburses shoppers upon submission of the completed evaluation report and accompanying receipt from the facility at the Accounting office located in building 721.

Q. How do I sign up to be a mystery shopper?

Click on this link to sign up. The registration form requests demographic and interest information to ensure we can ensure a quality match.

Q. Once I am signed up, how soon will I receive a shop assignment?

The 18th Force Support Squadron will match shopper interests and targeted facilities each month. You may receive an email with a job posting when we have an appropriate match.

Q. What if I have to cancel my shop?

A. Occasionally, shoppers have emergencies that call for a shop cancellation. If that should occur, just e-mail your scheduler and explain your situation. There are times an extension can be granted. If a shopper accepts a shop and cancels numerous times, a note will be made in the shopper's profile each time and if this becomes a common occurrence, that shopper may be deactivated.