



Employee Handbooks: The Why, How & What to Include

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Today's Agenda

1. Why you need an employee handbook
2. What should be included
3. How to effectively use your handbook
4. New and upcoming labor law changes
5. Questions



Today's Presenters



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**ARE YOU LEGALLY
REQUIRED TO HAVE A
HANDBOOK?**

Do I Legally Need an Employee Handbook?

There is no legal requirement that an employer maintains an employee handbook.....HOWEVER...

- There are several federal, state, and local laws that require employers to communicate certain information to employees in **writing**.
- There are also certain policies that are important for communicating company expectations and benefits.



WHY YOU NEED AN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Reasons for an Employee Handbook

- Introduces employees to your culture, mission, and values
- Communicates employee expectations
- Educates employees about what they can expect from the company
- Ensures company policies are clearly and consistently communicated

Reasons for an Employee Handbook

- Showcases your benefit offerings
- Ensures compliance with federal, state, and local laws
- Protects your organization against employee claims
- Provides information about where employees can go for assistance



HOW MANY EMPLOYEES
SHOULD I HAVE BEFORE I
CREATE MY FIRST
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK?

1



WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR HANDBOOK

Your Employee Handbook

- At-Will Statement
- Fair Treatment Policies
- General Business Policies
- Paid Time Off, Leaves of Absence, and Benefit Policies
- Technology and Communication Policies
- Acknowledgment and Disclaimers

At-Will Statement

- The at-will statement reiterates that either you or the employee can terminate the employment relationship at any time and for any reason, as long as the reason for termination is lawful.
- Every state in the United States is at-will except for the state of Montana.

Fair Treatment Policies

- Equal Employment Opportunity “EEO” Policy
- Affirmative Action
- Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities
- Lactation Accommodation
- Reproductive Health Decisions
- Cooperative Dialogue
- Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Policy
- Prohibition of Sexual & Other Forms of Harassment and Discrimination
- Workplace Bullying

General Policies

- Whistleblower Protection
- Confidentiality and Proprietary Information
- Employment Classifications
- Employee Conduct and Attendance policies
- Standard Operating Hours
- Pay Policies
 - Timekeeping
 - Pay Date
 - Deductions from Pay
 - Pay Errors
 - Meal Periods
 - Overtime
 - Business Expense Reimbursement
- Dress Code

Paid Time Off, Leaves of Absence, and Other Employee Benefits

- Paid time off
 - Holidays
 - Paid Time Off including vacation, personal leave, and sick leave.
 - Unpaid time off
- Employee Benefits Plans
- Other Leaves of Absence
 - FMLA and PFL
 - Military Leave
 - Bereavement Leave
 - Voting, Emergency Responder, Jury and Witness Leave, Domestic Violence Leave, etc.

Communication and Technology Policies

- Social Media Policy
- Electronic Monitoring Policies
 - with employee signature
- Communications and Technology policies
- Other applicable technology policies

Acknowledgement & Signature

- Disclaimers
 - Handbook isn't a guarantee of continuous employment
 - Policies can change at the employer's discretion
- Recommend acknowledgements for Employee Handbook, Technology Policies, and Anti-Harassment
- Employee signature
 - Acknowledgement that they have read the handbook and agree to the terms



USING YOUR EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Using an Employee Handbook



Keep all key company policies in one place

Easy reference for employees



Protection from employee claims

Clearly spell out legal obligations of company, employee



Treat it as a living document

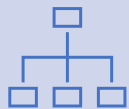
Consistently maintained
Reinforces business practices and policies

Using an Employee Handbook



Ensure consistent enforcement of company policies

Framework to guide managers, supervisors, leadership



Logical structure and organization

Easier to write, more useful for employees



Clearly written

Short sentences, simpler language
Avoid industry jargon, confusing wording

Using an Employee Handbook

- Published for easy access
 - Company intranet
 - PDF
 - Online
 - Print versions may become outdated/obsolete



RECENT & UPCOMING LABOR LAW CHANGES

Labor Law Changes

- NYS Notice of Electronic Monitoring
 - NY Civil Rights Law, effective May 2022 for all NY employers, regardless of size. Requires two parts, written notice, and acknowledgment, and posted notice.
- Amendment to Paid Family Leave
 - Expanded to add Siblings to the definition of family member effective January 2023.
- Paid vaccination leave extension
 - Extended to December 2023.
 - Still no guidance on the conclusion of Paid Emergency COVID 19 Sick Pay.
- Sexual harassment hotline
 - Should include the hotline number in the Sexual Harassment policy.



QUESTIONS

Complimentary Handbook Review

Special code for a complimentary review of your existing employee handbook:

Handbook23

We'll highlight any notable deficiencies and provide recommendations.

Additional questions?



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Thank you!

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