



# Policy with Purpose: Building Employee Handbooks That Work

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# Today's Presenter



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# WHY HAVE AN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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# Framework & Compliance





# Key Benefits of a Comprehensive Handbook





# CREATING YOUR EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

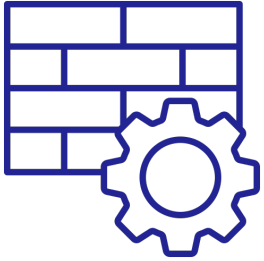
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# What should an employer include, and why?



- Outline employer culture, mission, core values
- Identify employer expectations with respect to employee conduct and business operations in one easily accessible document
- It ensures company policies and procedures are clearly communicated to employees
- It satisfies employer notice obligations with federal, state and local employment law, including various forms of leave
- It allows employer to enforce expectations by citing internal policies during disciplinary matters
- It mitigates potential exposure by outlining harassment and anti-violence policies that can be cited in EEOC, DHR or private litigation.

# Essential Handbook Components



## **Foundational Elements**

- Welcome statement and company values
- Employment-at-will statement
- Anti-discrimination policies
- Sexual harassment prevention



## **Operational Policies**

- Attendance and punctuality
- Dress code and professionalism
- Whistleblower protection
- Conflict of interest guidelines



## **Compensation & Benefits**

- Pay schedules and overtime policies
- Employee classification definitions
- PTO, vacation, and sick leave
- Benefits eligibility criteria

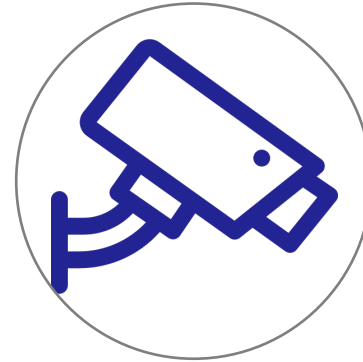


# Technology and Safety Considerations



## **IT Acceptable Use**

Define permitted technology usage and privacy expectations for company devices and networks.



## **Electronic Monitoring**

Disclose any workplace surveillance with acknowledgment forms as required by state law.



## **Social Media Guidelines**

Establish boundaries between personal and professional online presence to protect company reputation.



## **Industry-Specific Safety**

Detail protocols for injury reporting, hazardous materials, and emergency procedures relevant to your field.

# Recent Legal Developments

## Expanded Pregnancy Accommodations

Federal updates requiring more comprehensive pregnancy and lactation support policies in the workplace



## Paid Family Leave Expansion

State-level initiatives creating or expanding paid family leave programs and pregnancy-related accommodations

## Enhanced Harassment Prevention

Strengthened EEOC enforcement provisions for sexual harassment policies with expanded reporting options

## Industry-Specific Requirements

New state mandates for retail workplace safety policies and COVID-related provisions

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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# Most Important Part of Employee Handbook: Acknowledgements

## **Employee Acknowledgement**

It is critical to include an Employee Handbook Acknowledgement for employees to attest that they have read and agree to follow policies.

## **Additional Acknowledgments or Appendices**

Additional state requirements for Notice and Acknowledgment

# When Do I Need a State Addendum?

- When operating in multiple states, it is customary to have a main handbook that applies to all employees across states, which includes federal mandates and certain behavioral and/or performance policies
- There should also be a state addendum for each state in which an employer operates and/or has employees, which typically includes state-required policies around pay, benefits, leave, and IT
- Be sure to review and update the main handbook and addendums each year
- Distribute the correct handbook to employees







## THE RISKS OF MISSING OR OUTDATED HANDBOOKS

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# Risks of Outdated or Missing Handbooks



## **Compliance Violations**

Federal, state, and local law penalties



## **Weakened Risk Management**

Difficulty enforcing workplace standards



## **Financial Exposure**

Litigation costs and settlements

# What if I do not have an up-to-date Employee Handbook?

- It is difficult for employers to address performance and/or behavior issues
- Inability to take action for suspected substance abuse in the workplace
- Failure to defend certain employee classification and/or payroll disputes
- Having to obtain multiple acknowledgements for required notices and internal policies

# Implementation Best Practices

## Regular Review Schedule

Establish an annual review process to capture regulatory changes and organizational updates. Consider quarterly checks for states with active legislatures. Partner with legal counsel to ensure all jurisdictional requirements are met.

## Effective Distribution

Implement both digital and physical distribution methods. Use HR information systems to track employee acknowledgments and provide accessible electronic copies. Consider translated versions for diverse workforces.

## Manager Training

Educate supervisors on policy application and consistent enforcement. Develop targeted training on critical policies like harassment prevention, accommodation procedures, and disciplinary processes.

# GTM'S HR CONSULTING SERVICES

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# Employee Handbook Service

- An HR Consultant will work with you to create or update your handbook
- Depth of knowledge in workplace policies and best practices
- Compliant with state and federal laws
- Giving you peace of mind





# QUESTIONS

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# Continue the Conversation...



## **Questions about employee handbooks**

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## **Info on HR services**

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