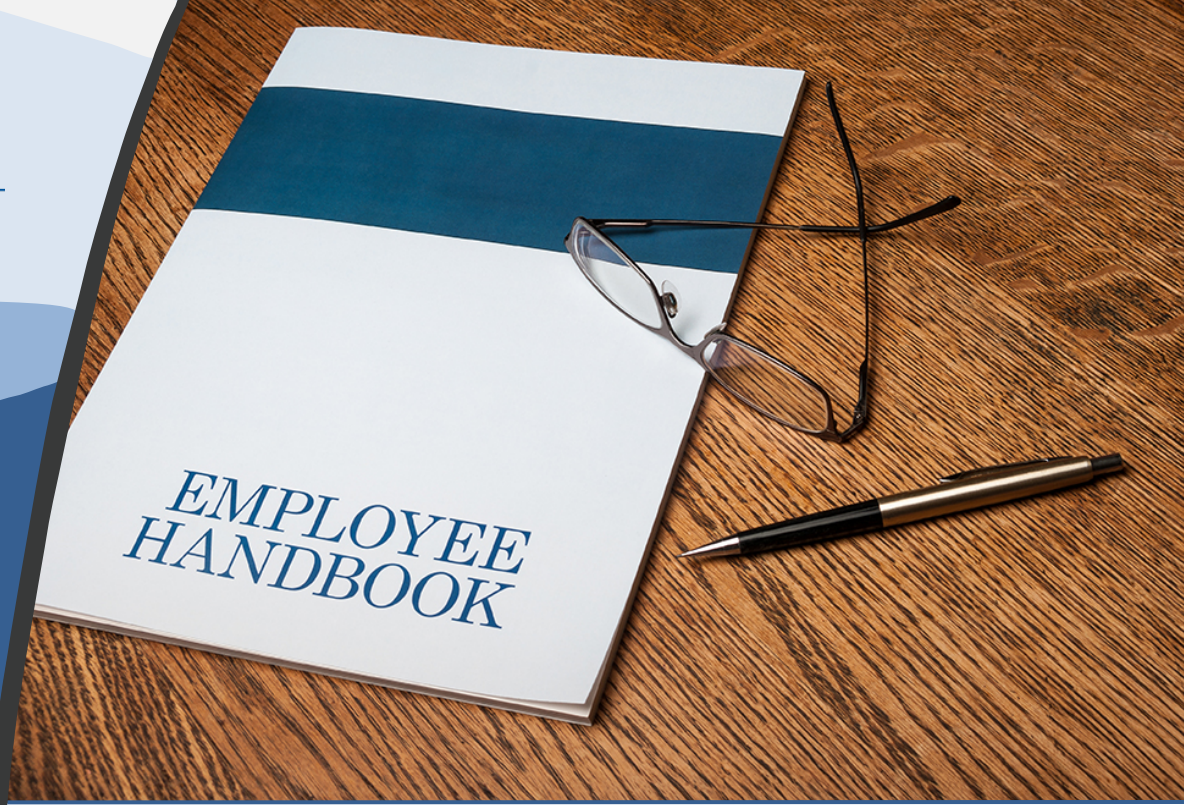


Simple.
Convenient.
Resourceful.



Essentials of an Efficient Employee Handbook

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The Purpose of an Employee Handbook



What is an employee handbook?

A comprehensive employee handbook is a necessity in today's business community.

An efficient employee handbook clearly communicates your **company's mission, values, policies, and rules** to your new and existing employees.

An employee handbook explains who you are as a company, how you function and what you expect from your employees.

One of the most important functions of an employee handbook is setting clear expectations for the employer and the employees. An employee handbook should clearly communicate what is expected from the company's employees regarding their **workplace behavior** and **performance** and what the employee can expect from the company in return.

Although employee handbooks are an effective tool for establishing workplace policies, if it is not written properly or the procedures are not followed consistently, an employer may be vulnerable to legal action. It is important to note handbooks which are too broad or too specific can be a liability if an employee is subject to disciplinary action based on policies which are unclear.

Why should you have an employee handbook?

Although you are **not legally obligated** to have an employee handbook, HR professionals agree it is a best practice to start regardless of what industry you are in or your company size.

An effective employee handbook clearly defines **policies, procedures, working conditions, and behavioral expectations** which guide employee actions at work and can help to protect you legally.

When should you distribute your employee handbook?

An employee handbook should be given to new employees on their first day at work - or even earlier! A good practice is to send an employee handbook along with a welcome letter or email to new employees as a part of their onboarding process.





**8 Ways
an Employee Handbook
Can Improve Your Workplace.**



1. Introduces your company's culture, mission, and core values.

An employee handbook is a powerful tool to communicate your organization's policies and practices, as well as its values, culture, and vision.

Studies show that properly introducing employees to your company culture and showing how they fit in helps create a sense of belonging, which in turn, helps employees become more productive.

2. Communicates to your employees what is expected of them.

A well-written handbook provides employees with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and creates a more harmonious workplace by offering guidance on expected behavior and conduct.

3. Lets employees know what they can expect from management.

An employee handbook provides objectives and management best practices which foster healthy management-employee relationships.

4. Helps ensure key company policies are clear and consistent.

A properly written employee handbook will help familiarize your employees with your organization's policies regarding employment, behavior, compensation, safety, and other policies and procedures you follow.

5. Showcases employee benefits.

Employees will be able to reference your employee handbook should they have questions regarding benefits such as paid time off (PTO), sick or holiday pay, health insurance and more.

6. Ensures compliance with federal and state law.

Your handbook not only communicates various entitlements and obligations to employees, but it also shows that your organization strives to be compliant with these regulations.

7. Helps defend you against employment claims.

Employee handbooks can protect employers by clearly stating policies and procedures which can prevent liability. Courts may also consider an employee handbook to be a binding contract, even if the employment relationship is at-will.

8. Offers option for conflict resolution.

An employee handbook should communicate how employees can get help to resolve conflicts, report workplace violations, get work-related assistance and answer any other questions they may have.





Essentials of an Employee Handbook

*What should be included in your employee
handbook?*



Your employee handbook should be designed to acquaint your employees with your company and to provide information about working conditions, employee benefits and some of the policies, rules and procedures affecting their employment.

Here a few components to help you get started:

1. Introduction

In this section, you should introduce the company and its culture.

The introduction should include:

- A welcome page which can include a letter from the founder of the company
- A brief history of your company
- The mission and vision of your company

2. Recruitment Guidelines

In this section, you should include:

- An Equal Employment Opportunity statement
- An At-Will Employment Notice
- Pre-employment background check procedures
- Duration of your introductory period (also referred to as a probationary period)
- Your Company's performance evaluation process

3. Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct is a written collection of the rules, principles, values, and employee expectations. This should include:

- General conduct guidelines
- An attendance and tardiness policy
- A dress code
- Policies on sexual harassment and other unlawful harassment
- Prohibition on abusive conduct
- A procedure for filing complaints
- Procedures for corrective disciplinary action
- Agreements such as non-compete, non-solicitation and/or non-disclosure agreements.

(Please note some agreements might not be enforceable depending on applicable federal or state laws. We recommend creating agreements with the assistance of a lawyer with the appropriate experience to give your documents the best chances of being enforceable.)

4. Compensation

This section is used to explain salary information and policies.

This should include:

- A description of your pay periods
- Your time and attendance tracking process
- A rest and meal breaks policy
- Your overtime pay policy
- A “Leave of Absence” policy
- An explanation of payroll deductions
- An expense report reimbursement policy

5. Benefits

Which benefits do you offer your employees? Which employees qualify? Explain this here. This can include:

- A holiday and PTO policy
- Additional benefits you offer such as medical insurance, wellness incentives, and more

6. Health, Safety and Security

This showcases your company's commitment to providing a healthy, safe and hazard-free workplace for your employees. This section can include:

- A Smoking Policy
- A drug-free workplace policy
- A policy for reasonable accommodations which are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Injury and accident response and reporting procedures

7. Employee Handbook Acknowledgement

Having your employees sign and acknowledge receipt of your employee handbook is important and may help to protect you should you have any issues with employees.

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Get Help with your Employee Handbook

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