



HOW TO

Update Your Employee Handbook

A free resource from





Protect yourself by keeping your handbook up to date.

Employee handbooks are road maps for organizations that help them get where they want to go by setting them on a course away from time-consuming lawsuits.

A well-written employee manual plays a number of important roles for your company, and can create positive outcomes for employees and the company when clear policies are followed. It also sets expectations for employee conduct and serve as a safeguard for the company when employees do not meet those expectations.

On the other hand, a poorly written manual creates confusion. It may hinder your ability to respond effectively and consistently to critical situations at the workplace, and can open you up to liabilities that could have been prevented. A handbook usually has a long shelf life, and when legal issues arise, mistakes, misstatements and ambiguity may come back to haunt a company. Because of this, maintaining your employee handbook is a worthwhile task.

**Here's what to look for
when updating your
employee handbook...**



Check for new policies

Employers often develop new policies as legislation changes and new situations arise in the workplace. **If these new policies are important enough to be put in writing, they need to be included in the employee manual.** Employees shouldn't have to review the break room bulletin board, scour old emails, and collect memos, in addition to the employee manual, in order to learn the policies of the company.



Add applicable disclaimers

All employee handbooks should include a disclaimer that nothing in the handbook constitutes an employment contract or changes the at-will relationship with the worker. You should also include a warning that the handbook is unable to address every problem that might occur in the workplace, and that managers have some flexibility to address unique situations. **Have employment law experts review the handbook on a periodic basis to keep it up-to-date and compliant.**



Clarify fraternization policies

Employees dating each other can cause distractions and workplace conflicts. A formal fraternization policy can help your managers handle these sticky situations with confidence. Make it clear that the company isn't interested in controlling your employees' personal lives or inhibiting their interactions. The purpose of the policy is to avoid misunderstandings, conflicts of interest, complaints of favoritism, and potential claims of sexual harassment.

Common Employee Dating Policies:

- Discourage workplace romances
- Require disclosure of workplace relationships
- If employees do become involved, they can't report to one another, be of significantly different rank, or work in the same department
- Couples must be professional at work – no PDA or fighting





Define flexible work options

Including a flexible work policy in your employee handbook will prepare you to manage requests for remote work, flextime, etc. These policies will also ensure everyone is treated fairly.

A well-written flexible work policy defines

- ❑ **Types of job flexibility available to employees** – These could include (or exclude) telecommuting, remote working, condensed workweeks, customized working hours, part-time positions, job sharing, or flexible vacation time.
- ❑ **Employee eligibility** – Eligibility should be based on business needs. Who can take advantage of these options, and when?
- ❑ **Request and review process** – Step by step, how does an employee ask for and receive approval on flexible job options?





Complaint-Resolution Policy

An employee complaint resolution policy provides your employees with a constructive way to voice their concerns, allowing you to diffuse workplace distractions sooner and with less disruption. A written complaint-resolution policy that employees acknowledge with a signature can also help your company defend itself from legal ramifications should an issue erupt.

An Effective Employee Complaint-Resolution Policy

- ❑ Identifies key points of contact
- ❑ Outlines the steps an employee should take to file a complaint
- ❑ Explains the investigation and resolution process





Here's your task list for updating your employee handbooks

- ☐ Include any new policy changes and regulatory updates
- ☐ Define a fraternization policy if one does not exist
- ☐ Specify flexible work options
- ☐ Include an internal complaint resolution process
- ☐ Add disclaimers and run past legal
- ☐ Distribute and collect signatures on revised handbook

Important note: Each time you make a change, be sure to alert employees to any updates and have them sign an acknowledgment that they received a revised copy of the handbook.

If your company is growing or you're experiencing management challenges, a starter handbook is not enough. You need a handbook that is up to date with changing regulations, new internal policies, or anything else that might evolve over time. Want a proactive HR business partner to help you stay compliant and reduce liabilities?

Connect with our team.



STAFF LEASING

(315) 641-3600

149 Northern Concourse,
North Syracuse, NY 13212

staffleasing-peo.com