



Key Components of an Employee Handbook

Company Mission Statement

Listing the company mission statement ensures that every employee understands the purpose and standards that your company strives to achieve.

Conditions of Employment

It is extremely important to state that employment is “at will.” This means that you the employer are free to discharge individuals “for good cause, bad cause, or no cause at all” and the employee is equally free to quit, strike, or otherwise cease work.

Include information such as probationary employment; i.e. that you can terminate employment with any employee within the first 90 days without cause. In many states, employment can be terminated at any time, without cause. Oregon is an “at will” state.

Outline when employee benefits, such as health insurance, will start. This could be after a probation period or after a certain numbers of hours are worked.

State that you are an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any employee for race, gender, religion, disability, etc.

Include detailed information that pertains to any drug tests that are required and how often they will be performed. Explain that employment is subject to the findings of the drug test and outline the disciplinary actions that will be taken for failed tests, such as termination.

If your company performs criminal background checks, explain that employment is subject to the findings in that background check.

If your company checks your employees driving records, explain your driving record expectations. For example, not more than two tickets in the past three years. Explain that employment is conditional on the findings from your driving record and how often driving records will be checked. Outline the disciplinary actions that will be taken for poor driving, such as termination.

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Salary

Explain in detail how often employees will be paid and when. This could be weekly, bi-weekly, or semi-monthly..

Outline any bonus programs that your company offers, how the bonuses are earned and when they will be paid.

If you offer automatic deposit, explain the process for setting this up.

Benefits Offered

Describe what insurance coverage your company provides this may include health, dental, vision, etc.

If your company offers a retirement program, offer information on what program you offer and how to sign up.

Give a detailed list of any other benefits your company offers such as club or gym memberships, professional associations, continuing education, etc.

Company Hours and Overtime

State your companies operating hours and the hours that each employee is expected to be at work.

Describe your overtime policy including how it will be paid and if overtime hours need to be preapproved by a manager. Include an overview of state overtime provisions.

Leave

Explain what type of leave your company recognizes and the length the length of time that is given. Types of leave that are normally recognized are vacation time, sick leave, maternity, bereavement, and personal matters. Explain how leave time is accrued.

Outline the procedure for requesting time off.

If the Family medical leave act applies to your company, explain how to apply for it.

Absenteeism and Tardiness

State the hours that each employee is expected to work.

Explain how tardiness will be tallied and the disciplinary action that will be taken when it occurs.

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Explain the procedure for getting personal and medical appointments approved.

Explain the consequences of exceeding the allotted number of sick days.

Explain the consequences of leaving work early without approval.

Performance Reviews

Employees work better when they know if their performance is meeting expectations. Explain your company's review process and the time frame in which each review occurs, for example, quarterly or annually. Give information about who performs the review, if you are able to receive raises through the reviews, and the consequences of poor reviews. Also include what items are considered in the review such as attitude, performance, absenteeism and reaching specific goals.

Appearance

Give the general expectations of attire that are expected at your company.

Write a detailed list of what is not allowed. You should include expectations for hair color, nail polish, body odor, tattoos, revealing clothing, and piercings. This will ensure that every employee meets company standards.

Communication Standards

Outline when company letterhead should be used and if approval needs to be attained when using the company name.

Include a statement limiting employees from speaking to the media about your company without approval.

List your company's expectations when dealing with electronic communications. Electronic communications include e-mail and social networking. Companies can be held liable for statements made from these electronic platforms so guidelines need to be in place.

Discipline Policy

State your company's disciplinary policy. Outline the steps of action that will be taken for inappropriate behavior and the consequences.

Give detailed information on what constitutes immediate dismissal, such as theft, destroying company property, drug possession, etc.

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Outside Employment

Imposing restrictions on outside employment protects your trade secrets and ensures that your employees remain dedicated to their position. It is a good idea to require management approval for all positions that an employee would like to take outside of your company.

Job Descriptions

Write job descriptions clearly and outline the responsibilities that each position holds. Be specific and include other duties that an employee is expected to do such as covering a shift for another employee when they are sick, continued education, and treating everyone with respect.

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