

# How to Create a Great Employee Handbook

Categories : [EMPLOYER HOT TOPICS](#)

Date : July 12, 2015



Employee handbooks go by many different names – policy and procedure manuals, employee manuals, staff handbooks, etc. No matter the name, a well-written employee handbook is a necessity in today's workplace. An integral part of the onboarding process, it serves to:

- A primary communication device that informs new hires and existing employees of expectations.
- Provides a line of defense by disclosing important legal information (EEOC, harassment and safety policies).

Handbooks can be very comprehensive or very selective depending on the need. To get you started in writing the best employee handbook possible, here is a list of content items to include:

- **Welcome statement.** A welcome message / introduction sets the stage and explains the purpose of the document, especially for new hires. It also includes the vision and/or mission statement of the company as well as the goal(s) of the organization.
- **Lay out your policies and procedures.** Employees need to know what to do, what NOT to do and the proper way to do it. Create sections that highlight what to expect in terms of attendance, personal conduct, benefits and compensation, promotions / demotions and even office romances. In addition, lay out the procedures you have in place – for everything from reporting conflicts of interest to accessing personnel files to requesting departmental transfers. Employees need to know what they should do and what they shouldn't do – as clearly and concisely as possible.
- **Handling complaints.** Within your handbook, outline the process that employees should use to report harassment, discrimination, workplace safety issues, etc. By outlining these specific processes, it may give you an added measure of protection, should an employee skip straight to a lawsuit.
- **Employee signoff.** All employees should provide written acknowledgement signifying

receipt of the handbook and that they understand and will abide by the contents. File all signed acknowledgements in a secure area, limiting access to only those who absolutely need it.

When writing your employee handbook, remember:

- **No jargon.** Keep in mind that everyone – from new hires to veteran employees – should be able to easily understand your handbook. Whenever possible, skip the jargon and industry-speak. And when these terms are essential, provide plain-English definitions to avoid confusion. When in doubt, use the “grandmother test”. If your grandmother cannot read the handbook and understand it, then it needs to be modified.
- **Updates are necessary.** Your employee handbook is not a “once and done” document. Your company’s policies are likely to change. As they change, so should your handbook. Commit to updating it once a year. Review all information in your existing handbook, edit and rewrite as necessary. Most importantly, ask your legal counsel and/or HR department to review and sign off on the document, before you re-issue it to your employees.

As a value staffing partner, [Snelling](#) is here to help. We can provide you with your best-fit employees, and if you are looking for temporary workers, remember, we assume many of the risks associated with recruiting and employing people. So [contact us today](#), and let’s get started.