



Employee Handbook

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Employment basics template

This template is for organizations who have hired - or are hiring - their first employee, and are looking to level up their employee experience. Read it or download the template below to get started.



A great way to start becoming a better employer is to codify your values into an employee handbook. There's no magic trick to this - you can do it in a few simple steps.

To start off your employee handbook, write down the basics down first. Once employees are familiar with your company's mission, it's important that they understand your values and policies. Educating your employees can help you in many ways, whether that's improving employee satisfaction, growing your customer base, or recruiting new talent.

In this post, we've written a template to kick off your employee handbook that you can use as a guide to writing your own.

Note that we have specified in **[brackets]** areas that you should change yourself, such as inserting your company name.

Note: this template is not a legal document and does not consider local, state-specific, national, or international laws. Please consult a lawyer in your state to approve your final employee handbook.

In this article:

- Types of employees
- Equal employment opportunity (EEO) statement
- Recruitment and hiring process
- Attendance

Types of employees

If you’re looking to establish a benefits program for your employees, it’s important to make the distinction between full-time or part-time employees, as they often receive different benefits.

The main two different types of employees are full-time or part-time employees.

Here are the key differences:

	Full-time	Part-time
Hours	Over 30 hours per week or 130 hours per month (on average)	Under 30 hours per week
Contract length	Contract or salary	Contract or salary
Benefits	Full company benefits package if a salaried employee	Don’t typically qualify for benefits but may have a partial benefits package if salaried

There are also other sub-categories such as temporary employees or seasonal employees. Temporary employees typically are hired to work for a set length of time or a project with a specific duration. And seasonal employees are typically hired for holidays or summer months. Both of these types of employees are typically given unemployment and Social Security benefits.

You may also work with or be hired as an independent contractor. Independent contractors are classified as 1099 (or as T4A in Canada). [Here are the IRS guidelines around contractors](#), including how to determine whether you are working as - or hiring - an independent contractor.

Equal employment opportunity (EEO) statement

If you’re looking to attract and retain great talent, it’s critical to have an equal opportunity policy.

The below is a statement that covers how your company values diversity and inclusion, and that you’re a fair employer who doesn’t discriminate based on someone’s background. Here’s the statement:

[Company Name] is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace. We do not tolerate discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, sexual orientation or expression, nationality, ethnicity, religion, disability, veteran status, background, or creed. We value all employees and mandate that every employee demonstrates respect to and works professionally with others.

At [Company Name], we:

- Hire and promote based on merit and potential, including through skills, experience, and accomplishments*
- Reduce or eliminate bias at every stage of our hiring process, including by conducting unconscious bias training for all hiring managers*
- Value accessibility and we make our premises, products, and services accessible to people living with disabilities*
- Use inclusive language in official documents and advertisements for jobs.*

We also take strict disciplinary action on every infraction of these policies or any inappropriate behaviour. To report on the behaviour of another employee, please report any discriminatory action to your manager. Our company has a policy of non-retaliation if you file a complaint or a lawsuit.

Recruitment and hiring process

If you're looking to hire new employees – or to source your talent from within your company – there are some common processes that you could follow.

At *[Company Name]*, we look to hire top talent and we have a fair and thorough recruitment process.

Here are the high level steps that we typically follow when hiring for a new role:

1. We identify the new role that we need to hire for.
2. Craft a job description
3. Post on relevant sites e.g. LinkedIn, Indeed.com and post internally, including to ask for referrals
4. Review and shortlist applicants from job sites and from internal sources
5. Screen and interview candidates (various stages based on job role)
6. Run background checks and check references of top candidates
7. Make an offer to the top candidate

Throughout the hiring process, we keep candidates well-informed of what to expect next. And if you are the one hiring, please know that you can ask your direct manager for help if you need help to write a job description. And further to this, please work directly with your manager when considering salary ranges and planning offers to candidates.

Referrals

If you want employees to refer great candidates to your company, consider offering an incentive policy. Note: if you don't have strong cash flow, you'll want to use more affordable incentives or simply a non-monetary bonus or gift that you can give to employees.

We encourage employees to refer known candidates for our open roles. We offer incentives for successful referrals *[e.g. \$1000 for a successful hire after 3 months of probation] or [a gift card to Starbucks]*. So if you know someone who would be a good fit, please refer them.

Key rules for referrals

- Referrals are only for full-time or part-time employees, not contractors
- Referral rewards will be paid out typically past the probationary period of 3 months.
- First come, first serve for referrals (for the same candidate)
- Note: you'll still have to pay regular taxes on these rewards.

If you have any questions about the above, please contact your manager for more guidance.

Background checks

In general, it's good to practice due diligence on who you choose to hire. And particularly if your employees are handling sensitive data or clients, it's better to be safe than sorry.

We want to ensure that our employees meet high standards of behaviour. At minimum, this might be a close scan of a prospective employee's resume, contacting their references (more on that below), or scanning any public social media profiles for any red flags or offensive content.

Sometimes, depending on the role, this can include a criminal background check for candidates. For more details on requesting a criminal background check, please ask your manager or consult a lawyer for guidance, as this is a process with strict legal guidelines. You can read more about those guidelines at a high-level [here](#).

References

If you are in the hiring process and want to get additional validation on a prospective hire, it's often worth reaching out a reference, such as a former boss.

We consider it important to ask for references for our employees, and will reach out to past employers whom a potential employee directly reported to, in order to verify the credibility of their work record or to gain more information about them. Please ask your manager for guidance and also only do this with the candidate's consent and permission.

Attendance policy

If you're finding that employees are coming in late or inconsistently, it might be time to implement an attendance policy.

You should be present at work during your scheduled work hours. Typically, for salaried full-time employees, that's from 9am-5pm, for an 8-hour day, however this varies from company to company.

If you face an emergency or illness that prevents you from coming to work, please contact your manager as soon as you can. If for some reason you can't make contact, we will excuse serious accidents and emergencies. But in general, please let us know if you won't be coming into work, and do what you can to ensure that work is still completed in your absence.

Workplace policies 101

You want a safe and respectful workplace that allows your employees to shine. So start by creating workplace policies for important factors like health, privacy, safety, and anti-discrimination.



When a conflict arises, it can be a life-saver to already have policies that you can rely on. But even more than handling a problem or a crisis, proactively creating solid workplace policies can help you to foster a better, more inclusive, and transparent culture.

This document is a template for you to create your own workplace policies as part of your employee handbook.

Note we have specified in **[brackets]** the areas that you should change yourself, such as inserting your company name or adding more detail.

Legal Note: this template is not a legal document and does not consider local, state-specific, national, or international laws. Each state and locality may have very different laws and policies. So please consult an employment lawyer in your state to approve your final workplace policies and employee handbook. Also, often in the context of policies it's important to sign an employee acknowledgement document. Please also consult your lawyer regarding this to ensure it is binding.

What's included in this article:

Safety and health

- Safety standards
- Anti-discrimination and harassment
- Workplace violence
- Emergency situations
- Drug-free workplace

Data and privacy

- Company confidentiality
- Data controls
- Personal privacy

Safety & Health

Our company is committed to providing a safe place to work. We make investments in ensuring safety standards, a workplace free of discrimination, and having clear policies for handling any conflicts or emergencies that could arise.

Safety standards

We have high safety standards in our workplace that we take to minimize the risk of injury or illness. We set minimum standards that are regularly assessed. And we proactively seek to provide training, equipment, and guidelines to ensure the maximum standard of safety for our employees.

Key safety standards include:

- *Employee training workshops on workplace safety and relevant procedures*
- *Regular building and site inspections*
- *Quality control / compliance of equipment*
- *[Optional for physical environments, e.g. construction or interior design Providing company equipment, including protective attire such as uniforms, gloves, and goggles]*

Please always follow the provided safety guidelines and use the equipment supplied. A lack of compliance may result in disciplinary action or termination.

Non-discrimination and anti-harassment

Our anti-discrimination and harassment policy is just as important as that of physical safety standards. Psychological safety is regarded as perhaps the most important element of a team working productively and happily.

Harassment is very serious and dealt with proportionally. And it can include significant offences such as:

- Mistreating someone based on a person's background, including gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or heritage.*
- Making unwanted sexual advances or comments of any kind*
- Gossip or rumour spreading about another employee*
- Abusing management or authority by demeaning another employee or requiring them to do menial tasks outside of their job description*
- Undermining someone else's work or refusing to cooperate with another employee*

In particular, racism and sexual harassment are illegal. Anyone found indicted for illegal offenses will be suspended without pay and if any employee is found guilty of sexual harassment or racism they will be terminated.

How to get help and take action

If you are being harassed, whether by a superior, a colleague, customer, partner, vendor, or anyone related to the company, please consider the following options:

- Talk to the offender directly: we believe in having adult conversations, and it is possible that the offender may not realize they are harassing you. If you feel confident enough, you could talk to them directly and tell them this is wrong and you are offended, and request an apology. We only recommend this for minor cases, such as an inappropriate comment or joke. For more serious infractions, please escalate and talk to one of the following people.*

- *Your manager: your manager should be your go-to person in these situations. If it's a more complex harassment situation in particular, such as with customers or colleagues, your manager can help you assess the situation. And ultimately, they can assist you directly. [Or if you're in a bigger company, they could help you by contacting HR and escalating as necessary.]*
- *[HR: it may always be good to talk to HR, no matter what the situation is. That way, you can begin to build a file. The sooner you bring something up with HR, the quicker you might find resolution. Particularly for your safety, if something serious happens, or if your manager is involved in your claim, it's essential that you speak to them.]*
- *CEO/Executives: And if you have spoken to your manager [or HR] and feel like your complaint still has not been heard, please escalate directly to an executive or the CEO. We are here for you.*

We are also providing the contact details of RAINN which is a national anti-sexual violence hotline if for some reason you are unable to escalate the issue. Please visit <https://www.rainn.org/> or call +1-800-656-4673(HOPE), open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Workplace violence

Violence can include physical or sexual assault, or even destruction of property. Any threats to someone else's life or livelihood are considered violence. Violence can also include severe verbal or psychological abuse that damages someone else. We treat physical violence with zero tolerance and we treat verbal threats as high risk and those will be dealt with appropriately.

If you are another person are experiencing violence at work, please:

- *Immediately contact your manager [or HR] and let them know about the situation. It will be investigated thoroughly.*
- *Call security if you witness violence, whether that's the security of the building or our company.*
- *If someone has a weapon or severe physical violence is underway, please call police at 911 [or insert your local emergency line here].*

If our company finds that an employee has committed an act of violence, that employee will be terminated and potentially face criminal charges. Employees who intentionally damage company or personal property will be responsible for paying for the damage as well as facing an appropriate penalty, which could include termination.

Emergency situations

For situations of violence, please refer to the notes above. But if you find yourself in a dangerous situation such as a fire, or worse, a natural disaster such as a flood, explosion, or tornado, we have set out emergency procedures and equipment.

- We have working smoke detectors and alarms as well as sprinklers. They are regularly inspected.*
- We have fire extinguishers and other equipment that are accessible in these locations **[insert locations]***
- We have emergency exit doors located **[insert locations]***
- We have an evacuation plan that is posted **[insert locations]***
- We have technicians on call that can repair equipment issues.*

If you have any questions about our workplace evacuation or emergency management plans, please contact your manager.

Drug-free workplace

We are a drug-free workplace. What that means is that

- 1. Nobody is allowed to bring, use, distribute, or sell any illegal drugs on our premises*
- 2. No one is allowed to abuse alcohol or legal/prescription drugs at work*
- 3. No one is allowed to be under the influence of substances*

The penalty for any of these infractions may include disciplinary action, termination, or even pressing charges.

A list of prohibited drugs and substances includes substances from the federal DEA guidelines:

<https://www.dea.gov/drug-scheduling>

If recreational marijuana is legal in your state or you have a medical prescription, it is accepted - to the point that it does not influence your senses. Again, if it is suspected to negatively influence your performance or the way you treat others, you could face disciplinary action. And you must follow the same guidelines as smoking listed below.

Alcohol

Alcohol is forbidden from being consumed during work hours, unless it is at an approved company event.

Smoking

We are a smoke-free workplace. You can smoke in designated areas or open air spaces, but anywhere inside of the building, including restrooms, lobby, elevators, or offices are all restricted.

We also assist on cleanliness, professionalism, and safety.

- *When disposing of your cigarettes, please put them out and then discard them, preferably outside in ashtrays.*
- *Avoid smoking around clients or vendors*
- *Do not smoke near areas or objects with flammable material*
- *Do not set off fire alarms or cause fires – doing so will involve disciplinary action.*

Prescription drugs

We understand that many people take prescription drugs. However, if any medication is having unplanned effects, such as disrupting your thinking or movement, please contact your manager so that you can take a sick day.

On the other hand, if you are suspected of abusing prescription drugs, such as opioids, you may face disciplinary actions. We also have a note on dealing with addiction below.

If your role involves handling machines or driving, you must be fully alert, capable, and focussed on fulfilling your duties at all times. If prescription drug use creates any sort of safety risk, we reserve the right to terminate you. If your prescription drug use is for a limited time period and it may impair your ability to complete your job, we may suggest that you use your sick leave or vacation time until you are better.

In any case with prescription drugs, we will do our best to accommodate you, as long as they do not harm your ability to do your job.

Getting help with addiction

While we won't tolerate addiction that manifests as violence or other violations, we recognize the modern issues of addiction and we are here to help. [\[We offer EAPs – Employee Assistance Programs – that can help you to deal with addiction and potentially seek rehabilitation.\]](#) Please contact us to get help.

Data & privacy

Company confidentiality

We protect private information, including customers, employees, partners, and our company. We recognize that data can be very personal - and important for competitive reasons - and so we treat it with the highest level of respect and care.

Confidential data could include:

- *Personal records of employees and performance reviews*
- *Internal financial information*
- *Company goals, forecasts, predictions, initiatives, and project plans*

- *PII - personally identifiable information of customers including customer lists or customer contact details*
- *Data from partners and vendors*

In general, practise discretion with data and do not publish it online, share it with media, competitors, or the public. Effectively, don't distribute it outside the company.

When handling confidential information, do not:

- *Use it for your personal benefit*
- *Share it with anyone outside the company*
- *Download or transfer confidential files to your own devices*

Depending on your role, we may ask you to sign a non-compete or non-disclosure agreement (NDA), to ensure the protection of our sensitive data and any knowledge that could be compromising or useful to competitors.

Any employee found in violation of the confidentiality policy will face appropriate disciplinary action, up to or including termination, and could face charges for being in violation of an NDA.

Data controls

As part of our thorough controls on data, we invest in measures to:

- *Employ data protection such as encryption and security locks*
- *Regularly backup data to secure locations*
- *Use secure networks to transfer our data and protect ourselves from cyberattacks*

Breaches of data controls may result in disciplinary action. Consistent breaches of policy can result in termination.

Personal privacy

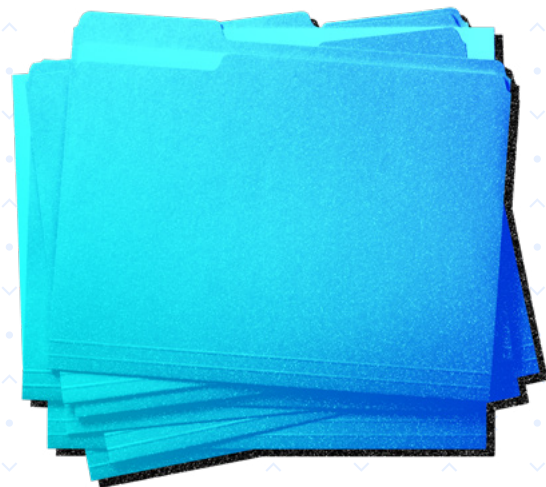
We believe in ensuring our company's privacy, as well as your personal privacy. To that, we provide:

- *Secure digital file storage*
- *Secure storage for important physical documents*
- *Guidelines for when and when not to disclose information to other employees*
- *[Secured devices and up-to-date systems and technologies]*
- *[Workshops to train employees in data privacy and how to use online tools for maximum security]*
- *[Document shredders to ensure destruction of confidential documents]*

Ensuring privacy instills trust in our workplace and also that our company's legal status and reputation is upheld.

Code of conduct

The code of conduct is about how you expect your employees to act and behave at work. It holds them to a set of workplace standards and helps you communicate those standards directly.



This document is a template for you to create your own code of conduct as part of your employee handbook.

Note that we have specified in **[brackets]** areas that you should change yourself, such as inserting your company name or adding more detail.

Note: this template is not a legal document and does not consider local, state-specific, national, or international laws. Each state and locality may have very different laws and policies. So please consult an employment lawyer in your state to approve your final code of conduct and employee handbook.

What’s included in this article:

Professionalism

- Dress code
- Company events

Digital and online

- Email
- Internet
- Social media
- Mobile devices

Relationships and people

- Relationships with colleagues
- Visitors to the office
- Nepotism

Outside and personal interests

- Solicitation or distribution
- Conflicts of interest

Professionalism

This first section is about ensuring that you look and act professionally, whether at the workplace or when at events.

Dress Code

[Note: this section may change significantly depending on your workplace. For example, many workplaces do have a set uniform or supplied safety clothes, so please change this as you might need to.]

At our company, we don't have a uniform, but we do ask that in an office or workplace setting you dress in business-friendly attire. Depending on your role, for example you are often meeting with clients, which could mean formal business wear.

In the end, we expect you to look smart and clean when coming to work. If you aren't coming in workout clothes, sweatpants or pajamas, we aren't going to tell you specifically what to wear. We also acknowledge different hair and grooming styles, clothing, and other items which might be related to religion, background, or different physical abilities.

Company Events

We may also occasionally have company events, for example social events at a restaurant, or we may host or attend other events. In this case, please keep in mind the standards above. When you're outside of work, you're representing our company with your appearance and your behavior.

Please remember to:

- *Show up early or on time*
- *Adhere to the dress code above or specific to the event*
- *Be respectful to others*
- *Don't share offensive ideas or make derogatory comments*
- *If alcohol is being consumed, please consume in moderation*

Ultimately, remember that people will reflect your actions on the company as a whole, so be on your best behavior.

Digital and online

This section concerns the computers, phones, apps, and uses of internet and social media within our company. The goal of this part of the code of conduct is to ensure the secure and productive use of digital devices and platforms.

Email

Your email is one of your main tools at work and so it should be mainly used for work. You may use your company email for personal use, but as a general rule of thumb your personal email should be your first go-to.

Examples of using email for work purposes include sending and receiving emails from team members and customers or clients, or even signing up for and using relevant online services.

Examples of personal use that are accepted could include sending emails to friends and family. The real rule is that if you don't spam, and don't reveal any confidential information outside the company, it should be fine to use your work email for personal reasons.

Email do nots

Please avoid:

- *Signing up for any unknown, illegal, or suspect looking websites or newsletter services*
- *Sending any content that is unprofessional or violates one of our workplace policies (link to other article)*
- *Repeatedly sending the same emails to another colleague*
- *Sending unapproved content to customers or clients*

Email dos

- *Use a strong password (typically containing 10+ characters with a mix of capital and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols. Avoid using any personal information that can be guessed by somebody else).*
- *Be critical of any email that you find suspicious as they can be phishing attempts that can look to compromise your computer.*
- *Do seek authorization for emails that are sent out to large lists or to important stakeholders such as customers, investors, or partners*

Internet

Internet is provided at work - so that you may work. You are of course able to use the connection for personal reasons and interests, as long as they do not interfere with your responsibilities at work.

Please do not:

- *Use the internet for high-bandwidth personal activities - such as downloading movies or uploading photos.*
- *Download illegal or offensive content*
- *Share confidential information about the company or an employee to people outside the company*
- *Visit unknown websites because they could be dangerous and give you malware or a virus that could endanger our network*
- *Commit any illegal actions such as fraud, hacking, phishing, or trafficking illegal goods*

Mobile devices and cell phones

Your cell phone is an important item for your day to day work. But don't let it become a tool for distraction.

*Please **don't** do the following:*

- *Take too many personal calls. Please keep them short and don't disturb your colleagues.*
- *Play games on your phone*
- *Constantly text others*
- *Use your phone while driving*
- *Record any conversations without the consent of the other party*
- *Record any confidential information*

Social media

The goal of our social media policy is to ensure that any use of social media is done responsibly, whether that's using personal social media accounts or acting under the name of our company using social media.

Personal accounts

- *Use a disclaimer. Please consider adding an "opinions are my own" note to your Twitter bio, for example.*
- *Be respectful. All the other policies apply to your social media use as well. Do not violate our non-discrimination and anti-harassment policy by posting offensive content.*
- *Maintain confidentiality. Please do not tweet or share out any company news that hasn't been officially announced. And don't post any internal information or predictions without permission from your manager.*

Company representation

The rules about being respectful and maintaining confidentiality above also apply if you are acting or speaking on behalf of the company. In addition, please:

- *Work with your manager **[or a member of the marketing team]** if you are posting important news*
- *Ensure that information is factual and accurate*
- *Respect laws of copyright and trademarks*
- *Please engage other users on social networks in a professional manner. Even if they comment with distasteful or negative comments, respond kindly and don't delete them. Of course, if you find illegal or offensive content, please report it to the social media site and block the user.*

Relationships and people

In general, you are encouraged to have positive and friendly relationships with your colleagues. Of course, socializing with your colleagues is allowed. But this section will outline what kind of relationships and behaviors are not acceptable in the workplace

Romantic relationships with colleagues

Romantic relationships with colleagues are accepted. However, to be specific, this means consensual romantic relationships. A non-consensual relationship is a form of sexual violence and this is treated with a no tolerance policy.

Some key points about what constitutes a consensual relationship:

- *Both parties equally consent*
- *Both people do not report directly to each other and/or work in different areas of the business*
- *Both individuals act professionally within the workplace and do not have personal discussions at work.*

And for non-consensual relationships, either of these may apply:

- *Relationships between a manager and a direct report are considered non-consensual due to the power dynamic*
- *One party is facing an abuse of authority or sexual harassment*

Nepotism

[Note: Family businesses will want to change or omit this section]

We run a workplace that hires on the basis of merit. If a hiring manager knows that a close relative – such as a spouse, child, parent, grandparent, or cousin (including by marriage) – is applying, then they must recuse themselves from the hiring process. That means they are not allowed to assess any candidates for that specific role and are not allowed to provide inside advice to the candidate in question.

As an employee, you can make a referral of a relative or a close friend to the company. But after that, you must step away from the hiring process. And a further restriction includes that you cannot be the supervisor of the role that is being hired for.

Visitors to the office

We love to have visitors in the office, whether that's for business reasons or to bring your family or friends closer to the work that we do. But there are some rules to ensure security.

The rules for visitors:

- Please always stay near your visitors, especially if they are children*
- If your visitors are being loud and disruptive to the work environment, please leave the workplace*
- Keep your visitors safe – away from any equipment*

- Protect our confidentiality – do not let them near important records*
- Do not distract colleagues. If your visitors are looking out for their own self-interests such as seeking donations, please ask that they refrain. For a kid's school drive, of course there are exceptions, but please be respectful of your colleagues, particularly if they decline.*

Outside and personal interests

This final section is about ensuring that you stay focused on the company and not looking to serve your own interests, for example through solicitation and by avoiding conflicts of interest.

Solicitation and distribution

Solicitation means offering other services or asking for help in the form of money, support, or time for products, services, and groups that are outside of the company. This could also include looking to promote a religion. If you're raising money to do a bike ride for cancer, you can of course ask once politely, but anything that requires a significant investment or a change in beliefs of another person is not prohibited.

Work is not the place for that. And distribution means sharing brochures and similar items that are related to these purposes.

Further, as connected to the visitor's policy above, we don't allow people outside our company to come and solicit.

Examples when solicitation is acceptable:

- *You are organizing for a company-sponsored cause or charity event.*
- *You are asking other employees to take part in legal employment groups such as a trade union.*
- *You are doing something nice for a colleague, such as a birthday, a promotion, or a positive development in their life.*
- *Ultimately, don't distract or annoy your colleagues, and you should likely be in alignment with this policy.*

Conflicts of interest

This is one of the most important parts of the code of conduct and is about respecting the fundamental ethics of our business. A conflict of interest can occur when what serves your personal interest, for example financial gain, and our company interest are not aligned. For example, if you had a large holding in a competitor's company or stood to gain by doing something not in our interest. Sometimes, a conflict of interest will involve a breach of ethics, such as an illegal bribe or the skirting of laws or regulations. You can face legal action for this.

The best way to avoid conflicts of interest is to be upfront and transparent. Please recuse yourself from situations that could find you in conflict and divest yourself from investments that conflict with our own.

Please try hard to spot potential conflicts, do your best to respect our policies, and do what is right for the company. If you believe that you have or that you might unknowingly - or knowingly - put yourself into a conflict of interest, please speak to your manager.

Compensation and talent development

Let's be real: no matter how important your organization's mission is, people work to get paid. So, we've crafted a template that enables you to explain your compensation structure and talent development plans.



This document is a template for you to create and explain your approach to compensation as part of your employee handbook.

Note that we have specified in **[brackets]** areas that you should change yourself, such as inserting your company name or adding more detail.

Note: this template is not a legal document and does not consider local, state-specific, national, or international laws. Each state and locality may have very different laws and policies. So please consult an employment lawyer in your state to approve your compensation structure and employee handbook.

What's included in this article:

Compensation structure

- Timesheets
- Overtime
- Pay days

Performance reviews and rewards

- Performance reviews
- Raises & promotions
- Rewards & bonuses

Training and talent development

Compensation structure

[Insert company name] follows the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of the United States. There are two types of employees defined in the guidelines of the act:

- **Non-exempt employees:** these employees at least receive a minimum wage and we compensate them for overtime as defined by FLSA's policies
- **Exempt employees:** are employees to whom the guidelines don't apply. Typically, they meet all three of the following criteria:

- Paid on a salary basis
- Paid at least \$23,600 per year or \$455 per week
- Performs exempt job duties, such as executive duties. A list of exemption tests is [here](#).

Timesheets

If you are an hourly employee, please record your time and clock in and out for your work.

[Our software is X. If you are unsure how to use it properly or have questions, please talk to your manager].

Further, if you are working overtime (as described below) whether you are a salary or an hourly employee, please record those hours too.

Overtime

Sometimes you may need to work more than your usual hours. If that's the case, you'll receive payment for your overtime hours according to the relevant laws.

If you are an exempt employee, the laws do not entitle you to overtime pay.

If you are a non-exempt employee, you will receive pay for your overtime hours at one and a half times your normal wage. Please record these hours so we can calculate your pay. Please get overtime approved by your manager if possible.

Pay days

We pay employees bi-weekly, so on the 15th and the 30th of every month through [\[direct deposit/cheques/cash\]](#).

If for any reason you have a dispute with your pay, please ask your manager.

Also, for any expenses that you incur personally for the business, you will receive reimbursement on your next pay day (once we review and approve the expenses). Please refer to our expense policy to ensure you record and submit those expenses correctly [\[link to expense policy\]](#).

Performance reviews and rewards

We have a formal performance review process that ensures employees receive proper feedback. We reward exceptional performance accordingly.

Performance reviews

First off, we give performance reviews [annually/bi-annually/quarterly]. In this process, your manager will write a brief report on your performance and then will meet with you to give you feedback in person. The performance review process looks to both acknowledge good performance and to provide constructive feedback to improve and grow.

Note: this will not be the only time that you receive feedback. You will meet with your manager on a regular basis and will receive feedback. Also, you can always request more formal feedback. That way, there will be no surprises come review time.

We expect that every manager:

- Gives clear and actionable feedback for their employees*
- Is regularly in contact with their team members*
- Has a record of their meetings and can track progress and feedback over time*

Raises and promotions

Part of the performance review process is to determine if an employee merits a raise or a promotion. A raise means permanently increasing your salary while remaining in the same role. A promotion means that you will move up in the company, typically accompanied by a job title change and a raise.

We believe in a merit-based raise and promotion process. While we can't guarantee a raise or a promotion on a defined timeline, we do believe in rewarding good performance and want to help people get what they deserve.

Rewards and bonuses

Another form of compensation that we may offer are rewards or bonuses.

You may get a one-time reward for various reasons, for example, a strong performance on a project or winning a company contest. Once confirmed, if it's a cash reward, you will receive it in your next paycheck. Sometimes, you will get a reward as a gift card within a reasonable amount of time.

A bonus is similar, but it is specifically for your performance towards a goal, such as the number of sales that you made. You may also receive a bonus based on overall company performance. Bonuses may be paid out at any time, but typically at the end of the quarter or at year-end.

Training and talent development

Our employees are the most important part of our business, so we actively provide on-the-job training and we also aim to provide other talent development opportunities.

We'll train you to the point that you feel confident to do what you need to. Our managers will deliver most of the training but if there are outside resources that you need to perform your responsibilities, we'll ensure that you get the support you need.

We also supply coaching and mentoring through our performance review and feedback process. We'll regularly provide feedback to you and ensure that you are able to improve and develop over time.

Also, if opportunities to attend training workshops, trade shows, or conferences come up, we'll look to give those opportunities to employees.

Benefits and Perks

Keeping track of various benefits and perks for a company can be tricky. But it can also be a strong tool to attract and retain talent.



This document is a template for you to create and explain your approach to benefits and perks as part of your employee handbook.

Note that we have specified in **[brackets]** areas that you should change yourself, such as inserting your company name or adding more detail.

Note: this template is not a legal document and does not consider local, state-specific, national, or international laws. Each state and locality may have very different laws and policies. So please consult an employment lawyer in your state to approve your benefits and perks, and your employee handbook as a whole.

What's included in this article:

- Health and wellness
- Accidents and compensation
- Using company equipment
- Expense policy and reporting
- Remote work and working from home
- Parking spots

Health and Wellness

Your health and well-being is our highest priority. We take every step that we can to ensure the best health possible for our employees. That helps us to be the best business that we can be.

We provide several benefits to ensure that you can maintain and improve your health including:

- A health insurance plan for employees
- A company policy on drug consumption and smoking
[\[link to past article on workplace policies\]](#)
- A healthy workplace

At [\[company name\]](#) we are also an equal opportunity employer [\[link to workplace policies again\]](#) which means that we don't discriminate based on disabilities or health conditions. If you are severely impaired and prevented from doing your job due to an accident, we will work with you the best that we can to ensure you can heal and get what you need.

Accidents and compensation

No matter how safe you are, there is always a possibility that accidents can happen at work. At [\[company name\]](#), we do everything that we can to provide a safe workplace, as detailed in our workplace policies [\[link to workplace policies under health and safety\]](#).

But if an accident does happen, you can count on continued wages and medical care provided according to US worker compensation laws and our employee healthcare plan. Please speak directly to your manager if you are injured so that you can submit the required paperwork.

Note that we follow the guidelines of our state [\[insert state\]](#), which includes the following provisions. [\[Mention any specific references or important laws from your state. You may also want to include the details of your state's worker compensation boards. You can find your state worker's compensation board here.\]](#)

Using company equipment

Depending on your role and job function, you may be given or required to use company equipment. The equipment could include a company phone, computer, or other devices. It could also include office stationery and furniture, or a wide variety of items.

In any case, if we give you something to use, it means that it belongs to the company and is not for your personal use or profit. Please do not sell or distribute items from our company without permission.

Please take care of company equipment. Do your best to follow provided instructions and to maintain its condition. If equipment is damaged, please tell your manager immediately.

If equipment is stolen, please tell your manager immediately. We may submit a statement to the police and may be able to find the equipment.

Also, a reminder to keep devices secure. You can find more about our policies on security from our [\[link to workplace policy\]](#) document.

Expense policy and reporting

In your day to day role, it's possible that you'll incur expenses on behalf of the company. In some cases, we may pay those expenses directly using our company funds or credit card. But in other cases, you may incur those expenses on your personal cards or using your own money.

If you personally pay for work-related expenses, please keep track of them and keep or scan the receipts.

We will reimburse expenses that are for work-related activities including:

- Travel
- Events and social outings
- Education
- Client meetings/needs
- Necessary office supplies

Note, we have strict guidelines on travel, such as taking a reasonably economic and direct route (typically economy seats on planes). And while travelling you are certainly free to pursue other activities as time permits, non-work related activities may not be expensed. And in general, alcohol is not to be expensed unless for a specific company event.

*You can submit expenses to your manager using our expense software **[insert software that you use]** within a month of making the expense. It should then be approved and received by your next paycheck.*

Remote work and working from home

Our company allows employees to work remotely or from home on an occasional basis. In a typical work week, that might be one or two days. Please discuss this with your manager.

While working remotely or from home, you are required to be:

- Accessible at all times by phone*
- Alert and focussed on work*
- Not unnecessarily distracted by other tasks or home activity*

- Have a strong, stable internet connection*
- Be using company equipment and/or a secure connection **[e.g. VPN, more below]***

If you are injured or suffering from a disability, you will be reasonably accommodated and this may include remote work. Please talk to your manager.

Outside of a usual arrangement, for example regularly working remotely on a Wednesday, please ask your manager at least 48 hours in advance if you are able to work remotely.

*All company policies apply while you are working remotely, including data protection, confidentiality, and our security policies. **[It is possible that you will be required to log in to a company VPN to secure your internet traffic while working remotely.]** Please contact your manager with any questions about this.*

Parking spots

You may be assigned a parking space as needed, though employees with disabilities will be prioritized. If you want a parking spot, please ask your manager.

Please only use your assigned parking spot.

The company is not responsible for and assumes no liability for the security of vehicles in the parking lot, including any accidents, damage, fires, or stolen items from employee vehicles

Working Hours, PTO, and Vacation

Every employee is going to wonder what flexibility they have around work hours, as well as how much PTO and vacation they have. It's important to make standards clear so that your employees can get the rest they need, and so that everyone's on the same page.



This document is a template for you to create your own document on working hours, PTO, and vacation as part of your employee handbook.

Note that we have specified in [brackets] areas that you should change yourself, such as inserting your company name or adding more detail.

Note: this template is not a legal document and does not consider local, state-specific, national, or international laws. Each state and locality may have very different laws and policies.

So please consult an employment lawyer in your state to approve your final working hours, PTO, and vacation document, as well as the whole employee handbook.

What’s included in this article:

Working hours

- Standard work day
- Overtime

Time off

- Vacation and paid time off (PTO)
- Statutory holidays
- Holiday pay/hours

Leave

- Sick leave
- Long-term disability
- Death in the family and grieving
- Jury duty
- Voting
- Paternity and maternity leave

Returning to work

- Remote working
- Childcare

Working hours

Standard work day

Typically, our company operates from **[9am to 5pm]** as standard work hours. You may be able to come in flexibly, for example at 8am and leave at 4pm, as long as you are at work for about 7-8 hours per day. That includes a 1 hour break for lunch. Please talk with your manager if you have a question or a request.

Overtime

You may, from time to time, be asked to work overtime hours, which means working more and outside of normal work hours. We cover how this is compensated for in our **[compensation policy - insert link to compensation and development article]**

Time off

Vacation and paid time off (PTO)

All full-time and part-time employees (not contractors) will receive **[10 days]** of vacation/paid time off.

You can take your PTO after your first 3 months with us. As part of promotions and raises, you may be given more PTO.

In order to take PTO, please email a request to your manager. You do not need to include a reason for taking time off but you will be responsible for ensuring that your work deliverables are met before taking leave and that your responsibilities are handed off during your absence.

You can transfer any remaining PTO to the next year, but we encourage you to use your PTO during the year.

If you leave or are laid off from the company, you will be paid out any remaining PTO to your final pay cheque. If you are terminated for cause, you will not be paid out PTO.

Statutory holidays

We respect federal and state holidays in the United States. A full list can be found [here](#).

You will be given the day off for any that fall on a weekday, and for any that fall on a day the business is not open, such as a Sunday, you will be given a holiday on the closest business day.

If you wish to take a religious holiday, please let us know in advance, and you can either take PTO or unpaid time off.

Holiday pay/hours

You will receive pay on holidays.

It is possible that the company will ask you to work on a holiday and will make the request at least one week in advance.

If you are required to work on a holiday, if you are an employee, you will receive one substitute day of PTO, or if you are an hourly employee, you will be paid at higher than your hourly rate.

Taking leave

Sick leave

All employees receive one paid week of sick leave – or more, as required by the state or country that you live in.

An example of a sickness is a cold, flu, migraine, or a minor injury.

We request that employees who are sick take their sick days. If you show up at work sick and contagious, you will be asked to leave and to go home and get better.

If you have not yet arrived at work, please contact your manager and let them know you are taking a sick day. If you are already at work and need to go home, please contact your manager or leave them a note that you are coming home sick.

Long-term sick leave

If you have a serious illness, you may be able to request a long-term leave. For this, or for any illness lasting more than a week, we will ask you to submit a doctor's note. If you have worked for us more than 12 months for at least 1250 hours, you are eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period, without losing your job. This can also be used to assist a family member who is afflicted with a severe health issue.

Bereavement/grief leave

If you lose a family member or a loved one, you are able to take leave. We are sorry for your loss and will do what we can to help.

We offer 3 days of paid bereavement leave so that you can attend funerals and memorials, deal with the administration of a death, support family members, and begin the mourning process.

If you need to take more time away, you are able to take unpaid days off or to use your PTO.

Jury duty

Jury duty is a civic duty and we will follow the law around it. If you are given extended jury duty leave, you will receive pay in accordance with the law and your responsibilities will be assigned elsewhere.

Please give us a copy of your jury duty summons and a confirmation document that you served your time.

Voting

On municipal, state, and national election days, you can take three hours off to vote. We encourage you to do this in the early morning or late afternoon so that it doesn't interrupt the majority of the work day.

Paternity and maternity leave

We value families and will do what we can to support you on paternity or maternity leave. We encourage you to take the time to spend with your child and we'll do what we can to ease your transition back to the company after (more below).

*We offer **[3 months]** of paid maternity or paternity leave. We also offer an additional 12 weeks of unpaid leave in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act, if you have worked for the company for more than 12 months and worked at least 1250 hours.*

Please give notice to your manager 3 months before you intend to take leave, as we may need to hire someone to fill in for you while you are away.

If you are a pregnant woman, you may be able to commence your leave before your labour. Please speak with your manager.

If you experience severe labour complications, you may request a long-term illness leave, as described in the section above.

Returning from leave

If you are returning from an extended leave, whether that's due to a pregnancy or a long-term illness, we will do everything that we can to make your transition back to work happy and productive.

Remote working

As above, in accordance with our remote working policy, you will be able to have flexible hours. If you are returning from extended leave, you may be allowed to work fully or mostly remote until you feel well enough to return. Please discuss with your manager.

Childcare

While our company does not offer direct funding towards childcare, we are happy to do what we can to find suitable childcare so that you can stay focussed on work knowing your children are safe. Please discuss with your manager.

Resignation, Discipline, and Termination

It's often hard to lose or let go of an employee. But adding this section to your handbook can ensure that both you and your employees are on the same page if and when a resignation or termination occurs.



This document is a template for you to create and explain your approach to resignations and terminations as part of your employee handbook.

Note that we have specified in **[brackets]** areas that you should change yourself, such as inserting your company name or adding more detail.

Note: this template is not a legal document and does not consider local, state-specific, national, or international laws. Each state and locality may have very different laws and policies. So please consult

an employment lawyer in your state to approve your resignation and termination policy, and your employee handbook as a whole.

What’s included in this article:

Resignation

- Resignation under duress
- Reimbursement for tuition or other costs

Disciplinary action

Termination

- With cause
- Without cause
- Compensation and severance pay
- Unemployment insurance

References

Resignation from your job

If you wish to resign from the company, you should first have a conversation with your manager and then let them know of your final decision. We would ask that you also send a written communication to your manager, which can be a simple email saying that you plan to resign and the date that you will do so.

You are under no obligation to provide advance notice, but for courtesy's sake, we ask that you give us as much notice as possible. For the average employee, that should be at least two weeks, and for an executive position - or another critical role - we ask for at least 4 weeks.

Also if you decide to resign, it's possible that we will ask you to help in hiring or interviewing your replacement.

Please ask your manager if you wish to share your resignation with the rest of your team in advance.

Resignation under duress

A resignation should occur with your full consent and intention. If instead of exercising your own choice you are being forced to resign, please contact your manager or an executive.

If you are facing a hostile work environment, being retaliated against, or being pushed out of the company such as through facing demotions or an unattainable workload, please contact your manager or an executive.

Reimbursement for tuition or other costs

If the company has paid for you to undergo tuition or training, it is typically required of you to remain with the company for at least [two years]. If you resign before completing your time, you may have to repay part or all of the fee, prorated to the amount of time that you spent with the company after your program.

Similarly, if the company has paid significant fees such as a relocation fee or other expenses to secure your employment and you resign prematurely, you may be required to repay part or all off those fees.

Disciplinary action

Before considering termination, there are different forms of discipline or feedback that we may provide, as an opportunity to learn and improve. Depending on the nature and severity of an infraction, or the quality of performance, we want to assist when possible. However, we will deal with serious offenses harshly.

Our forms of disciplinary action or feedback may include:

- *Verbal warnings*
- *Discussion with manager*
- *A formal, written warning*
- *A formal meeting to discuss disciplinary action and possible action*

- *Penalties, including demotions or loss of responsibilities, bonuses, or suspension*
- *Termination*

If you commit a minor workplace violation, you're only likely to get a warning. However, repeated infractions may result in more serious action.

For more serious cases, we will directly communicate to you that you are receiving disciplinary action. If you receive negative feedback, it may not necessarily be disciplinary action. If you are ever unsure of where you stand, please ask your manager.

We commit to acting fairly, with high ethical standards, and within the law in our disciplinary process. Further, we will document each step.

For a reminder of what may constitute an inappropriate action or offense, please review the [workplace policy document here](#).

Termination of employment

Sometimes, the priorities or realities of the business will require the termination of an employee. We know that this can be difficult, so we aim to act with the highest level of responsibility and follow the law.

Before we begin, it's important to note that the United States has "at-will" employment, which means that you can be fired without cause, for almost any reason, without warning, as long as that reason is not illegal, for example workplace discrimination. We will not go into the full details in this policy, but you can read more about at-will employment [here](#) as well as some of the exceptions.

Ultimately, regardless of at-will employment, we have laid out clear policies to define how we deal with employee terminations.

There are two different types of termination: with cause and without cause.

For cause termination

An employee terminated for cause will be because of a violation of contract, duty, or ethical standards of conduct. For example:

- *Poor performance below expectations*
- *Causing financial losses for the company*
- *Harassing or intimidating colleagues*
- *Creating a hostile work environment*
- *Engaging in illegal conduct*

Other possible violations are covered in our [workplace policies](#), and many of these may result in termination depending on the severity of the infraction.

Managers are responsible for providing evidence and documentation of an employee's termination for cause.

If you believe you are being wrongly terminated, without cause, please contact the executive team.

In order to stand up for yourself in these types of situations, we recommend that you keep secure records of important communications, and also that you keep a detailed calendar/schedule to ensure you have a clear accounting of your time and contributions.

Without cause

In the unfortunate event that the business experiences a shift in direction or financial situation, there is always a possibility for layoffs or down-sizing. Sometimes, it's simply the nature of the business and we are sorry for this.

In the case of a termination without cause, you will be served with a termination notice. However, you may also be eligible for severance pay and/or unemployment benefits, as detailed below.

Compensation and severance pay

If you are terminated, you may be eligible to receive severance pay. And if you are terminated without cause, we will do our best to help you find work elsewhere and provide references.

You may also receive severance pay for unused vacation and sick days, if you are terminated without cause. This may be subject to different state laws.

Unemployment insurance

If you become unemployed, particularly if you are terminated without cause, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits, which could be up to \$450 per week.

It is recommended that you contact your State Unemployment Insurance agency as soon as you become unemployed, so that you can file your claim.

Note that there are often filing requirements to accessing unemployment insurance, and you can be required to be actively looking for work during that period.

You can read more about unemployment benefits on the US Department of Labor website [here](#).

References for new work

As mentioned above, we will provide a reference for you if you are terminated without cause and if you have acceptable or strong performance. Please ask your manager if they are able to do this for you.

In the case of a resignation, we may also provide references, but are under no obligation to do so.

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