

CHECKLIST:

What to Include in Your Operations Handbook

If you're away from your business, your employees need to run the company without you. Your operations handbook should enable them to handle any situation that arises. What to include in your operations handbook depends on your industry and business. However, the following checklist is a general guideline to help you get started.

I. TABLE OF CONTENTS

II. COMPANY INFORMATION

This section includes information that employees throughout the company may need.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Company description and history | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact information for: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mission statement | <input type="checkbox"/> All employees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vision statement | <input type="checkbox"/> Vendors/suppliers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Company contact information (address, phone, fax, website URL, email addresses for key departments) | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance companies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hours of operation | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank accounts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational chart | <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job descriptions for each job in the company | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Password lists or where to find them | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Location of critical items/information (such as keys and routers) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster recovery plan | <input type="checkbox"/> HR policies (refer readers to your Employee Manual to avoid duplicating information) |
| | Other _____ |

III. DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS

Next, create sections explaining the policies and procedures of each functional area or department of the business. Policies are rules (what to do and what not to do). Procedures are step-by-step explanations of tasks. For example if you own a retail store, you might have a policy of accepting returns within 30 days with a receipt and procedures for processing returns and issuing refunds.

Administrative policies and procedures, such as:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> How to answer phones | <input type="checkbox"/> How to handle incoming and outgoing mail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How to answer emails | <input type="checkbox"/> How to order supplies |
| | Other _____ |

Sales policies and procedures, such as:

- How to accept different methods of payment
- How to operate the point-of-sales system
- How to take orders
- How to issue and redeem gift cards/gift certificates
- Cash handling procedures

Other _____

Fulfillment policies and procedures, such as:

- How to order inventory
- How to receive shipments
- How to store inventory
- How to track inventory
- Shipping procedures

Other _____

Customer service policies and procedures, such as:

- How to greet customers
- How to handle returns and exchanges
- How to issue refunds
- Warranties
- How to handle customer complaints

Other _____

HR policies and procedures, such as:

- How to advertise job openings
- How to interview job candidates
- How to onboard new employees
- How to conduct employee reviews
- How to discipline and fire employees
- How to approve time sheets and handle payroll

Other _____

Marketing/advertising policies and procedures, such as:

- Procedures for developing, approving and placing advertisements
- Social media marketing procedures
- Public relations procedures
- Email marketing procedures
- Website updates and maintenance procedures

Other _____

Reports and records policies and procedures, such as:

- What records and reports to keep and for how long
- How to secure records
- How to generate reports

Other _____

Safety and security policies and procedures, such as:

- How to operate security system
- Fire and natural disaster procedures
- What to do in case of burglary/robbery
- Accident prevention procedures
- Procedure for reporting accidents

Other _____

Maintenance and repair procedures for:

- Heavy equipment
- Office equipment
- Technology
- Vehicles
- Facility
- Systems (electrical, plumbing, HVAC, etc.)

Other _____

For each department, also include:

- Daily procedures
- End of week procedures
- End of month procedures
- End of quarter procedures
- End of year procedures
- Any checklists, forms or other documents needed for each procedure

Whenever possible, refer readers to other manuals (such as the manual for a company vehicle) for full details of a procedure. This will keep your operations manual from getting too unwieldy.

NOTES:
