



Suggestions for Writing

Employee Handbooks



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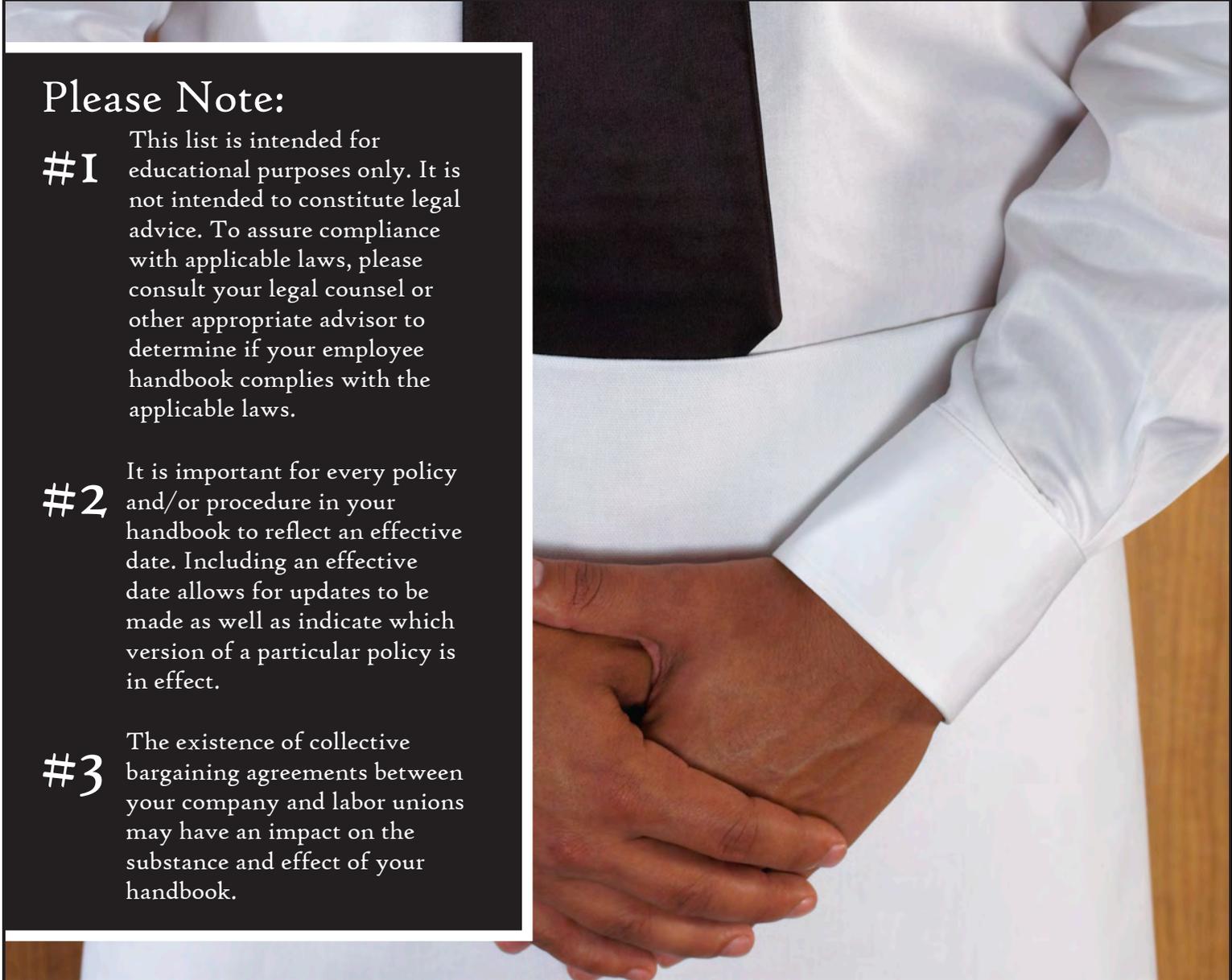
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Checklist of Policies & Procedures for Employee Handbooks

Outlined in this handbook is a checklist of policies and procedures you may want to consider including in your employee handbook. Items provided on the list do not necessarily mean you are required and/or advised to include every policy and procedure in your employee handbook. Not all policies and procedures are applicable for every employer. Your employee handbook should reflect the particular needs, character, culture of your business, and the benefits your company offers to its employees.

Information identified by an asterisk, “*” are policies identified by experts as particularly important for you to consider including in your company’s handbook.



Please Note:

#1

This list is intended for educational purposes only. It is not intended to constitute legal advice. To assure compliance with applicable laws, please consult your legal counsel or other appropriate advisor to determine if your employee handbook complies with the applicable laws.

#2

It is important for every policy and/or procedure in your handbook to reflect an effective date. Including an effective date allows for updates to be made as well as indicate which version of a particular policy is in effect.

#3

The existence of collective bargaining agreements between your company and labor unions may have an impact on the substance and effect of your handbook.



I. Introductory Material

- A. Greeting by Company Leader (President, CEO, Owner, etc.)
- B. Company History and/or Company Mission Statement
- C. Why a policy and procedures handbook is helpful to employers and employees*
- D. Expectations for updating and distributing handbook materials (who is responsible)*
- E. At-will statements and disclaimers*
- F. Employer's right to revise handbook provisions*
- G. Revocation of previous handbooks and policies*
- H. Non-discrimination EEOC Statement*
- I. Affirmative action statement (if government contractor)*



II. Hours of Work, Attendance, & Absenteeism*

- A. Definitions*
 - 1. Work day
 - 2. Workweek
 - 3. Hours of work
- B. Overtime compensation*
 - 1. Is pre authorization for overtime required?
- C. Recording hours of work*
 - 1. Time sheets
 - 2. Time clock
 - 3. Verification procedures
 - 4. Warning: Not clocking in before work
 - 5. Defining absenteeism and tardiness*
 - a. Reporting absenteeism policy (call-in policy)*
 - b. Excused and un-excused absences policy*
 - c. Absenteeism disciplinary policy*
 - d. Absenteeism forms and return to work procedure
- D. Breaks and meal times*
- E. Compensation for travel time
- F. Compensation for meetings, lectures, and/or training



III. Wage & Salary Administration

- A. Wage and Salary Administration Policies*
- B. Performance review*
- C. Length of service and/or merit raises
- D. Incentive Wage Policy
 - 1. Sales
 - 2. Production-based policies
- E. Working condition differentials
 - 1. Shifts
- F. Other bonuses
- G. Overtime pay policies*
 - 1. Who is eligible and who is exempt*
- H. Method of wage payment (check, direct deposit, and cash options)
- I. Time of payment
 - 1. Pay period
 - 2. Paydays
 - 3. Process if employee is absent on payday
- J. Pay advances
 - 1. Loans
 - 2. Vacation pay
- K. Payroll deductions
 - 1. Federal and state
 - 2. Insurance
 - 3. Union dues
 - 4. Other deductions authorized by employee



Please Note:

Pursuant to the Iowa Wage Payment Collection law, other than deductions made pursuant to federal and state tax laws, an employer may only make deductions from wages if an employee provides written consent for deductions that benefit the employee.



IV. Seniority, Promotions, Transfer, & Layoffs

- A. Accumulation of seniority, anniversary date explanation
- B. How seniority works (layoffs, recall, overtime, vacation scheduling, leaves of absence)*
- C. Job bidding and job posting procedure
- D. Promotions and the factors considered
- E. Transfer application procedure*
- F. Layoffs and recall procedure



V. Employee Conduct, Work Rules, & Other Employment Policies*

- A. Harassment
- B. Disability
- C. Drug and alcohol policy
 - 1. Drug and alcohol testing
- D. Code of conduct and/or Ethics
- E. Confidential Information
- F. Hiring of Relatives and Friends
- G. Travel and Expense Reimbursement
- H. Solicitation, distribution and bulletin boards
- I. Workplace search policy
- J. Electronic communications
 - 1. E-mail
 - 2. Internet use
 - 3. Personal cellular phone
- K. Company equipment
 - 1. Telephone
 - 2. Computer
- L. Smoking
- M. Dress and appearance



VI. Discipline*

Placement on probation, demotion, suspension and termination may be imposed for the following violations: performance, violation of company policy, violation of company work rules, tardiness, and/or absences. Such consequences may also apply for any other condition existing where, at management's discretion, disciplinary action is necessary.

- A. Progressive discipline (oral warning and/or written warning)
- B. Reserve right to impose discipline management believes is appropriate under circumstances*



Please Note:

Terms of collective bargaining agreements with unions may govern imposition of discipline under certain circumstances.

VII. Termination of Employment



- A. Policy statement on management's right to terminate at-will employees*
- B. Termination may be voluntary or involuntary
- C. Employee voluntary termination policy statement
 - 1. Notice period
 - 2. Written notice
 - 3. Consequences for failing to provide notice in advance or written notice
- D. Policy statement on payment of vacation, sick leave, and/or holidays upon termination of employment
- E. Requirements to return company equipment upon termination
- F. Process for making personal phone calls upon termination



VIII. Complaints & Grievances*

- A. Formal or Informal grievance policy
- B. Complaint or conflict resolution procedure (is there an open door policy)
- C. Outline of steps to follow in the complaint and grievance procedure
- D. Individuals available to contact with grievance, complaint, or concern



IX. Benefits*

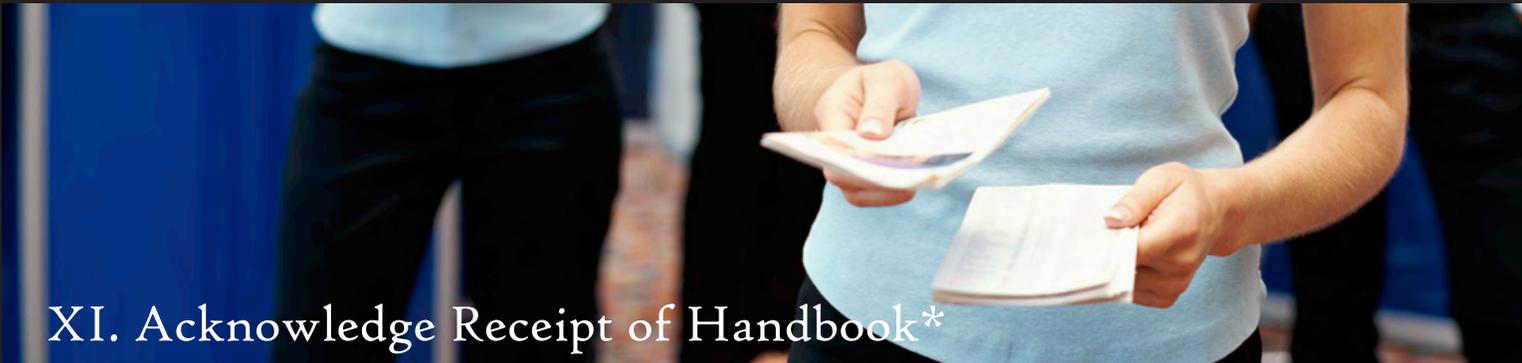
- A. Paid and unpaid holidays*
- B. Vacations*
 - 1. Eligibility
 - 2. Amount
 - 3. Scheduling
 - 4. Payment method
- C. Bereavement leave*
- D. Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (applicable for 50 or more employees)*
- E. Short-term sick leave*
 - 1. Eligibility
 - 2. Length of sick leave
 - 3. Accumulation
 - 4. Unused sick leave
 - 5. Return to work procedure
- F. Other leaves of absence*
 - 1. Eligibility
 - 2. Approval procedure
 - 3. Effects on seniority
 - 4. Other benefits
- G. Military leave of absence*
- H. Jury duty*
- I. Voting*
- J. Insurance
 - 1. Group life insurance
 - 2. Disability insurance

- 3. Health insurance
 - a. Medical
 - b. Dental
 - c. Vision
 - d. Amount of benefits
 - e. Eligibility requirements
 - f. Employee contribution
 - g. Dependent coverage's cost
 - h. Claims procedure
 - i. Coverage during leave
 - j. Continuation after termination*
- K. Employee assistance program(s)
- L. Profit sharing program(s)
- M. 401K Plans and Retirement Plan



X. Safety Rules*

- A. Safety rules and policies outline (reference where they are kept)*
- B. Individuals available to contact with safety rules and policies questions*
- C. Consequences for violation of safety rules



XI. Acknowledge Receipt of Handbook*

Require employees to sign and date a statement saying they have been provided the opportunity to read the information in the employee handbook and that they were offered an opportunity to ask questions about the employee handbook contents. The signed statement can also indicate the employee is aware they are expected to read and be familiar with any updates to the information within the employee handbook.

After the employee has signed and dated the statement, place the original form in the employee's personnel file and provide a copy to the employee.



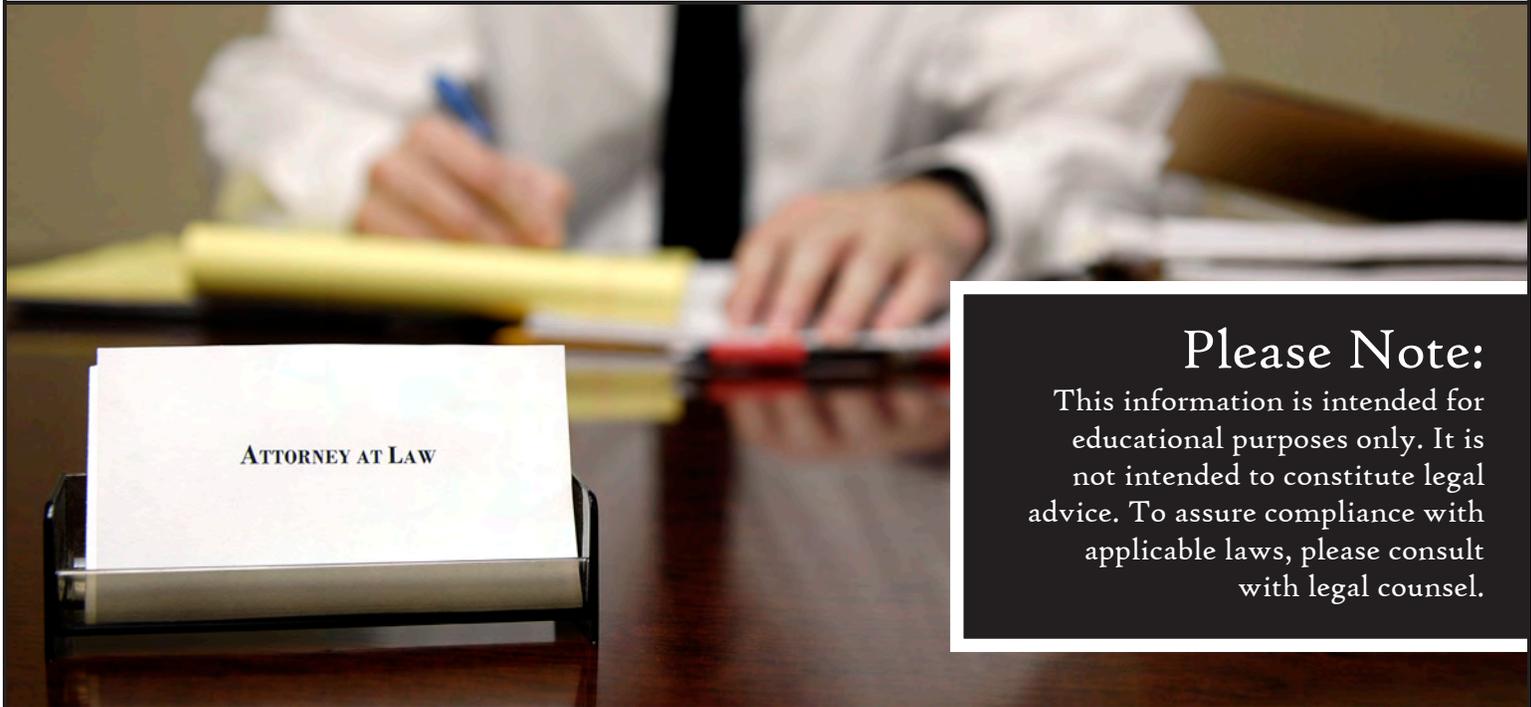
XII. Content to Include in Disclaimers

Most employers have by now become aware of the general need to have “disclaimers” in employee handbooks. However, many handbooks still fail to set forth enough clarifications or explanations of the employer’s intent and may be inadequate to protect the employer under recent court decisions.

Most employer handbooks should contain a series of statements which include at least the following:

- The handbook does not create an express or implied employment contract.
- The handbook is not all inclusive, and is only a set of guidelines.
- The handbook does not alter the “at-will” relationship between employer and employee (Unless the employer wants to change this traditional relationship). Meaning that both the employer and employee can terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason.
- The handbook does not guarantee employment for any definite period of time.
- The handbook applies to the following categories of employees: [fill in].
- The handbook supersedes any previous handbook, written or unwritten policies.
- The handbook can only be changed in writing, by the president of the organization or his/her designee.
- The handbook can be changed by the organization unilaterally, at any time. The employer reserves the right to revise, amend, or terminate any or all policies, procedures and benefits contained in this handbook, in whole or in part, with or without notice, at any time. I also understand the employer is not bound by the contents of this handbook.

Most courts have recognized and honored these disclaimers, but only if they are prominently displayed. Some courts have declared that the disclaimers must appear at the front of the handbook and should be in bold print to be given effect.



ATTORNEY AT LAW

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