

Employee Handbook

From a code of conduct to benefits and perks to employment details, this employee handbook template has everything you need to start your own company policies.

What is an employee handbook?

An employee handbook is a document that communicates your company's mission, policies and expectations. Employers give this to employees to clarify their rights and responsibilities while they're employed with the company.

To help you build the best employee handbook, we crafted a template to give you a headstart in creating your own document.

Words in brackets are placeholders -- substitute them with your company's specific guidelines. Also, feel free to modify this template's language to match your company's culture.

Here's what should be included in an employee handbook; our template covers every important policy of an employee manual:

- [Employment Basics](#)
- [Workplace Policies](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Compensation and development](#)
- [Benefits and Perks](#)
- [Working Hours, PTO and Vacation](#)
- [Employee Resignation and Termination](#)

If you need to work only on specific parts of your handbook, click on each of the following sections to download them separately.

By tying these sections together, you can build a complete company employee handbook. The full template includes these sections plus an introduction so you can welcome new employees to your company.

To support your efforts even further, here's our guide on what each section entails and tips to flesh out your own employee manual matching your company's requirements:

Keep in mind that our employee handbook examples and relevant advice are not legal documents and may not take into account all relevant local or national laws. Neither the author nor Workable will assume any legal liability that may arise from the use of these templates. Please ask your attorney to review your finalized policy documents or Handbook.

Employment Basics

This section is mostly informative and helps you establish basic employment-related definitions. It'll give your employees an idea of what the terms of their contract and job classification are. They can use this section as a resource to fall back on whenever they have basic questions.

Also, this is a good place to lay out rules regarding attendance. You could also explain your recruitment process to prepare future hiring managers in your company.

Here are the contents of our [Employment Basics template](#):

- **Employment contract types.** Define full-time and part-time employees, and also interns, apprentices and other workers you employ.
- **[Equal opportunity employment](#).** This is a necessary statement, not only for legal purposes, but also to promote a culture of meritocracy and respect in your workplace.
- **Recruitment and selection process.** Here, outline the [usual steps in your hiring process](#). Also, if you often conduct pre-employment checks, define the stage hiring managers can order these checks and even how to handle them. Likewise, if you have a permanent referral program or if you issue referral rewards often, this is a good place to outline the procedure and related guidelines.
- **Attendance.** State rules regarding [attendance](#): for example, what employees should do when they can't make it to work or in which cases you may excuse unreported absence.

Workplace Policies

This section describes what your workplace is and should be like. It's about the conditions your employees work in. Include policies such as anti-harassment and health and safety in your employee handbook to build a lawful and pleasant workplace where your employees can thrive.

We crafted a [template to help you build out your Workplace policies section](#). Here are the policies included with tips on how to customize them to your own workplace:

- **[Confidentiality](#) and [data protection](#).** Our template lays out basic rules about protection of information, but you need to modify it to account for any specific laws that apply to your company. Mention these laws and how you ensure you adhere to them, as well as what you expect employees to do.
- **Harassment and violence.** Respect to and from coworkers is an important part of a harmonious worklife. In this section, you can firmly state your commitment to eliminating [harassment](#) and [violence in the workplace](#). You'll also define what counts as harassment, as well as outline possible repercussions.
- **Workplace [safety and health](#).** This section will present guidelines employees must follow to ensure a healthy and safe workplace. You can add actions your company has taken to comply with occupational health and safety laws, as well as protect employees in hazardous jobs or from

emergencies. Our template specifically includes sections about preventative action, emergency management, smoking and a drug-free workplace. You could also add a [mental health policy](#) if your company has relevant provisions.

Code of Conduct

Your Code of Conduct provides a framework for employee behavior. You'll outline how you expect employees to treat others, whether they're colleagues, partners, customers or external stakeholders. It's about ethics and trust - and building a safe and professional space for everyone.

To work on your own Code of Conduct, use our [complete template](#) which includes the following sections:

- **Dress code.** Here you can state the dress code of your company -- even if you don't have one. Employees should know what they can or can't wear. Describe requirements as much as possible; for example, what does 'formal attire' mean to your company?
- **Cyber security and digital devices.** Address internet usage, company cell phones, corporate email and social media use (both corporate and personal). Lay out guidelines without being overly restrictive toward employees; most people expect to have a certain freedom in these matters as long as they follow security and data protection guidelines.
- **Conflict of interest.** Here you can describe what constitutes conflict of interest, what employees can do when faced with one, and what the consequences are for wittingly breaking relevant laws or company rules.
- **Employee relationships and fraternization.** While many companies are flexible when it comes to employees becoming friends or dating, some rules are necessary to avoid gossip or unprofessional scenes.
- **Employment of relatives.** This section is important to avoid accusations of nepotism and favoritism. Give specific guidelines about working relationships allowed between relatives in your company.
- **Workplace visitors.** This is a matter of safety as well as protecting data and company property. Outline the process of bringing visitors on company premises to make sure employees are always alert and responsible.
- **Solicitation and distribution.** In this section, you can refer to attempts by outsiders or employees to solicit or distribute flyers, products or services and how employees can handle these cases.

Compensation and development

This part explains how you pay and reward employees for their work and help them develop. Through these policies, you show you value employees and motivate them to keep working with you.

To work on this, see our [compensation and development template](#), including these sections:

- **Compensation status and payroll.** This part is mainly important for the U.S. which has laws on exempt and non-exempt employees. You can explain the legal framework and clarify overtime rules. You can also mention on which days employees receive their salary or wages.
- **Performance management.** This section helps employees understand how their performance will be evaluated, and also prepares managers for managerial duties. You can mention the objectives of performance reviews and how you expect managers to lead their team.
- **Employee training and development.** This is your chance to highlight a big part of your retention strategy -- making sure employees improve personally and professionally. You can mention training opportunities and education budgets, if any.

Benefits and Perks

Have you ever had an employee say something like: “Gee, I didn’t know we had a gym discount”? It’s likely: often, employees aren’t aware of the full extent of benefits and perks your company offers. This section helps you keep employees well-informed in this matter.

Our [benefits and perks template](#) includes the following sections (but do add your own unique benefits and perks):

- **Employee health.** This could be anything from private health insurance to gym membership to [wellness programs](#). Also, insert explanations of relevant laws like the FMLA and COBRA.
- **Workers’ compensation.** Outline the process employees should follow if injured at work and which benefits you’ll offer. Modify our template based on applicable laws in your area.
- **Work from home.** The ability to [work from home](#) is a benefit with increasing popularity. State how employees can ask for remote working and what rules they should follow (for example, cyber security at home). Also, outline rules for permanently remote workers.
- **Employee expenses.** Mention which work-related expenses you’ll cover and what the process of claiming reimbursement is.
- **Company car.** If you offer company cars as a benefit, make sure to inform employees how you expect them to behave when using the car and which expenses you’ll compensate (e.g. gas and tolls.)
- **Parking.** Similarly to the company car benefit, if you offer free parking at the office, inform employees how to manage their allocated space. If you have a limited number of parking spaces to give out, outline the criteria you use to allocate these spaces.
- **Company-issued equipment.** If you give equipment to employees (like phones, laptops etc.), inform them how they should take care of it. Also, mention what happens when that equipment is stolen or damaged.

Related: [Employee benefits: A guide on common and best benefits](#)

Working Hours, PTO and Vacation

This is one of the sections employees will care about the most. When joining your company, they want to learn how they can divide their time between work and leisure or out-of-work responsibilities.

Draft your own relevant policies by using our [easy-to-modify template](#) containing these sections:

- **Working hours and Paid time off (PTO).** Mention your companywide working hours and any exceptions. Then, state the number of paid days off you provide employees and explain the process to request PTO.
- **Holidays.** List all holidays your company observes and explain how you'll compensate them if employees need to work on these days.
- **Sick leave.** Outline what the law obliges you to offer employees and add any extra sick leave benefits you've decided to offer. You could include both the definitions of short-term and long-term illness.
- **Bereavement leave.** Give a few days of bereavement leave to employees who lose a loved one -- this is a compassionate perk that can help you establish trusting relationships with employees.
- **Jury duty and voting.** Describe the law regarding leave for these civic duties and what documents employees might need to bring.
- **Parental leave.** This can include paternity and maternity leave mandated by law or company-sponsored for employees who have or adopt a baby. You could also include benefits regarding parental allowances, like a few hours off to attend school meetings.

Employee Resignation and Termination

If something doesn't work out, employees need to have an idea of how their employment relationship with your company will end. Especially if there's a disciplinary process involved.

We created a ["Leaving our company" template](#) to address relevant issues. Here's an outline of the contents:

- **Progressive discipline.** Go over the steps of your progressive discipline process and how you expect managers to handle it.
- **Resignation.** In cases when an employee resigns, they need to know what their notice period ought to be as well as the resignation process. This is also a good opportunity to address issues like tuition or relocation reimbursement and to expressly prohibit forced resignation.
- **Termination.** Specify applicable laws and your own internal process of [terminating employees](#). Mention the conditions of providing severance pay and how you'll compensate remaining vacation and sick leave.
- **References.** Add a small comment about giving references to employees who resigned or were terminated. For example, if an employee was terminated for cause, you have the right to refuse to provide them with references.

Conclusion

You can use the conclusion to provide notice about future revisions and ask employees to acknowledge they read the handbook. Here's [our template to do that](#).

Close your employee handbook on a positive note though. Reiterate how happy you are that an employee is now working with you and welcome them on your team. Look at [employee handbook examples](#) for inspiration, but make sure you write in your own company's tone and voice.

Download the [employee handbook pdf and start building yours!](#)