

OREGON GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



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PURPOSE OF YOUR EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Communication Resource

- Communicates information about your culture
- Mission, Values, Policies, Benefits

Limits Legal Liability

- Protects against discrimination and unfair treatment claims
- Explains applicable laws

Administrative Time Saver

- Designed for employee and supervisory personal reference
- Answers questions that arise during employment

HANDBOOKS SHOULD...

- Define employment is not a contract, rather employment is “at will”
- Commit to comply with applicable laws
- Commitment to fair and consistent treatment of all employees
- Communicate policies[or where to find them]

HANDBOOKS SHOULD...

- Identify lines of communication
- Informs employees about what to expect and what is expected of them
- Support management in enforcing policies
- Sets up procedures to resolve disputes
- Creates your culture around harassment, diversity, drug and alcohol use, smoking, etc.

WHAT KIND OF COMPLIANCE?

Legal



Policy



WHAT A HANDBOOK IS NOT

■ NOT A PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL

- These are procedural guidelines for managers

■ NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR GOOD PRACTICES

- Policies are worthless unless management follow them

■ NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR PERSONAL INTERACTION

- Cannot take the place of one-on-one interaction between management and employees

MISTAKE #1: ONE SIZE FITS ALL

- Handbooks must be tailored to your organization
 - May include irrelevant policies
 - May omit important materials
 - May make promises you cannot meet
 - May not be state-specific
 - Do Not use a handbook from another organization
- Your handbook sets the tone and reflects organizations culture

For example, “Driving while using your cell phone is prohibited.” versus “For your safety, and to comply with state law, we require that you not drive while using a cell phone. Please pull over to make or take calls or use a hands-free device.”



MISTAKE #2: DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO. CONFLICTING POLICIES & PRACTICES

- Identify your organization's practices
- Develop policies if none exist
- Make sure policies reflect practice
- Use language that provides "wiggle room."
- Consistency in application

MISTAKE #3: TOO WORDY

- Use short, easy to read paragraphs.
- Write to the level of your staff.
- Some laws present a challenge .
 - FMLA, Harassment and Discrimination laws
- Avoid legalistic language.
- Do we really need a policy on this topic?
- Do not include names or other information that may change and cause you to have to make frequent revisions.

MISTAKE #4: NOT A CONTRACT MEANS NOT A CONTRACT

- Lock Step disciplinary practices
- Promising pay increases annually
- Listing disciplinary offenses

MISTAKE #5: DID YOU HEAR ABOUT...? PRIVACY ISSUES

- Use of Technology
- Searches on Employee Property
- Compensation

- Who oversees safeguarding this information?
- Is the importance reflected in your policies?

MISTAKE #6: I THOUGHT IT WAS A GIFT! EQUIPMENT USE AND RETURN

- Policy should clearly state:
 - Equipment belongs to employer
 - Guide to proper use, care and return of property
 - Consequences if equipment is damaged, lost or not returned – remember cannot deduct from pay costs of replacement from pay.
- What does your policy say about use of equipment:
 - At work
 - On personal time

MISTAKE #7: FAILURE TO UPDATE AND TRAIN

- Periodic review to address changes and updates
 - Employment law is ever changing
- Who is responsible for this?
- How often should it be done?
- As your organization grows, different laws may apply
- Are your supervisors trained on policies?

SAMPLE HANDBOOK

- Your Employee Handbook should include, at a minimum, the headings shown in the table of contents that are **RED**. While all of the topics listed are important and common in most organizations, they may not all be relevant to your organization.
- Wording in italics and preceded by the word “**NOTE:**” is instruction or information for the individual authoring the Handbook and should be deleted prior to publishing.
- Language in highlighted brackets and bold indicates the need for a decision. The language itself may be optional, or you may need to make a choice from two or more suggestions. For example: As a new employee, your first **[30, 60, 90]** days of employment are considered an introductory period.
- The Sample Employee Handbook reflects a philosophy of promoting positive and open employee communications. In several places, you will note wording that states or suggests certain information will be shared with or communicated to employees. If this differs from your organization’s philosophy or from its reasonable practice, modify or delete the language.
- Some regulations apply only to employers with a certain number of employees or in certain states. We have indicated these places using italicized “**NOTE:**” so that you can include or delete as noted. In some of these cases we have provided alternatives for you to choose from.



HANDBOOK CONTENTS



ANSWERS, Inc.

THANK YOU!

Human Resources

- Affirmative Action Plans
- Compensation
- Employee Relations
- Policy & Procedure
- Human Resource Practices Audit
- Compliance
- Employment
- Benefit Communication
- Labor Relations
- Investigations
- Recruitment/Staffing
- HR Resource Library
- Career Management & Outplacement Services

Training

- Employee and Managerial Training
- Needs Assessment
- Confidential Employee Surveys
- Customized Training
- One-on-One Coaching
- Facilitation of:
 - Meetings/Retreats
 - Strategic Planning Sessions
- Train-the-Trainer Materials
- Training Room
- Monthly Workshops/Programs

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