

# Employee Handbook

This template is a general starting point for information only — it is not legal advice. Employment, wage, leave, and at-will rules vary by country, state, and city and change over time. Have a qualified employment attorney review and tailor this handbook before you distribute it, and delete any policy that does not apply to your organization.

## 1. Welcome

Welcome to {{Company Name}}. This handbook introduces who we are and explains the policies, benefits, and expectations that apply to everyone who works here. It is meant to answer the questions most people have in their first weeks and to be a reference you can return to. {{Add one or two sentences on your mission and the values you want every employee to share.}} It is not a contract, and it does not cover every situation — when something is not addressed here, ask your manager or {{People / HR contact}}.

*Open with a short, genuine welcome and one or two lines on your mission and values. This sets the tone before the policies begin.*

## 2. Employment Basics

- Equal opportunity: {{Company Name}} is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of any characteristic protected by applicable law.
- Employment relationship: {{Describe your employment relationship — e.g., employment is at-will where permitted by law, meaning either party may end it at any time, with or without cause}}.
- Employee classifications: {{Define full-time, part-time, temporary, and exempt vs non-exempt as you use them}}.
- Probationary / introductory period: {{Length and what it means, if you use one}}.

*At-will employment is not valid everywhere — outside the US, and in some agreements, different rules apply. Confirm the correct wording for every location you employ people with your attorney.*

## 3. Code of Conduct

- Treat colleagues, customers, and partners with respect and professionalism; we do not tolerate harassment, bullying, or discrimination of any kind, including conduct based on any characteristic protected by applicable law.
- Report any concern about harassment, discrimination, safety, or unethical conduct to your manager or {{People / HR contact, plus an alternate in case your manager is involved}}; we investigate good-faith reports and {{strictly prohibit retaliation against anyone who raises a concern or takes part in an investigation}}.

- Avoid conflicts of interest: disclose any outside work, investment, or personal relationship that could affect — or appear to affect — your judgment on the job, and let us decide together how to manage it.
- Be reliable about attendance: follow your agreed schedule and notify your manager as early as possible — by {{call or message before your start time}} — when you will be late or absent.
- Dress appropriately for your role and for any client or customer contact. {{Describe your dress code — e.g., business casual in the office, smart dress for client meetings, and any safety-required clothing.}}
- Do not work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. {{State your policy on alcohol at company events and on any testing you do, consistent with the laws where the employee works.}}
- Protect the company’s reputation when you speak publicly or post on social media: make clear you speak for yourself, never share confidential or customer information, and {{point to your social-media or communications policy}}.

*Cover professional behaviour, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination, attendance, dress, and conflicts of interest. Say how to report a concern and state a clear no-retaliation commitment.*

## 4. Working Hours, Pay & Timekeeping

- Standard hours are {{e.g., Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.}}, with arrangements for remote or flexible work described in {{your remote-work policy}}.
- You are paid {{weekly / every two weeks / monthly}} by {{direct deposit}}. Pay periods run {{describe the pay period and pay date}}.
- Non-exempt employees are paid for all hours worked and receive overtime as required by {{the wage-and-hour law that applies where you work}}; get your manager’s approval before working overtime. Exempt employees are paid a salary and are not eligible for overtime. {{Confirm each employee’s classification — getting exempt vs non-exempt wrong is a common, costly mistake.}}
- Record your time accurately using {{your timekeeping system}}; non-exempt employees must log start, end, and unpaid break times each day.
- Take the meal and rest breaks {{provided by law and by company policy where you work}}; {{state whether breaks are paid and how long they are}}.
- If you believe your pay is wrong or a break was missed, tell {{Payroll / your manager}} promptly so we can review and correct it.

*State the standard schedule, pay periods, how overtime is handled for non-exempt staff, and how time is recorded. Wage-and-hour rules are heavily regulated — match them to your jurisdiction.*

## 5. Time Off & Leave

- Paid time off (PTO): {{describe how much PTO employees earn, how it accrues, how to request it, and whether unused PTO carries over or is paid out — these rules vary by location, so set

them with care}}.

- Company holidays: {{list your paid holidays for the year, and how holiday pay works for anyone scheduled to work that day}}.
- Sick leave: {{describe paid sick time and how to report an absence; some states and cities mandate specific sick-leave accrual and uses — match the requirement where each employee works}}.
- Family and medical leave: {{describe job-protected leave such as parental, family, or medical leave that applies to you — for example, federal FMLA in the US for covered employers, plus any state or local program — and confirm eligibility with your attorney}}.
- Other legally required leave: {{cover jury duty, voting leave, military/USERRA leave, bereavement, and any others required where you operate}}.
- To request planned time off, submit it through {{your time-off system}} at least {{notice period}} in advance when you can; for unexpected absences, notify your manager as early as possible.

*List paid time off, holidays, sick leave, and any legally required leave (such as family, medical, or jury duty). Required leave varies widely by location — verify each entitlement before you publish.*

## 6. Benefits Overview

This section summarizes the benefits {{Company Name}} offers, including {{health insurance, retirement plan, and any others}}. Official plan documents govern in all cases; where this summary and a plan document differ, the plan document controls. {{Describe eligibility and enrolment.}}

*Keep benefits descriptions short and point to the official plan documents for detail. Never let the handbook contradict an insurance or retirement plan document.*

## 7. Workplace Health & Safety

- Report any work-related injury, illness, or near miss to your manager and {{People / HR contact}} the same day, however minor, so we can document it and arrange care.
- Report unsafe conditions, equipment faults, or hazards as soon as you notice them; you will not be penalized for raising a safety concern in good faith.
- Know the emergency procedures for your location: {{exits, assembly point, fire-extinguisher and first-aid locations, and who is trained in first aid}}.
- Follow the safety rules and any personal protective equipment requirements specific to your work and location. {{Reference the workplace-safety regulations that apply to you — for example, OSHA in the US — and your own site rules.}}
- Set up your workspace, on-site or remote, to avoid strain; {{tell employees how to request an ergonomic assessment or equipment}}.
- If you can work from home when you are mildly unwell, do — but stay home and use sick leave when you should not be around others.

*Cover how to report injuries and hazards, emergency procedures, and any safety rules specific to your*

workplace. Reference the safety regulations that apply to your industry by name.

## 8. Technology & Acceptable Use

- Company devices, email, and accounts are provided for work; **{{limited reasonable personal use is allowed / personal use is not permitted}}** — set the rule that fits your culture and state it clearly.
- Keep accounts secure: use strong, unique passwords, turn on multi-factor authentication where offered, lock your screen when you step away, and never share credentials.
- Protect company and customer data: store it only in **{{approved systems}}**, do not move it to personal accounts or unapproved cloud tools, and follow **{{your data-protection obligations — e.g., GDPR, CCPA, or other laws that apply}}**.
- Think before you use generative-AI or other third-party tools for work: do not paste confidential, personal, or customer data into tools we have not approved. **{{List approved tools and the approval process.}}**
- Company systems may be monitored and logged for security, legal, and business reasons to the extent permitted by law; **{{state plainly what is monitored and what employees should consider private}}**.
- Report a lost or stolen device, a phishing attempt, or any suspected security incident to **{{IT / security contact}}** immediately — fast reporting limits the damage.
- Return all company devices, accounts, and data when your employment ends or whenever asked.

*Set expectations for company devices, accounts, email, and data. Be clear about what is monitored and what is private, and reference your data-protection obligations.*

## 9. Confidentiality & Company Property

Employees are expected to protect **{{Company Name}}** confidential information, customer data, and intellectual property during and after employment, and to return all company property on departure. **{{Reference your confidentiality or IP agreement where one applies.}}**

*Tie this to any separate confidentiality, IP-assignment, or data-protection agreement employees sign, rather than restating it all here.*

## 10. Discipline & Leaving the Company

This section describes how **{{Company Name}}** addresses performance and conduct issues and what happens when employment ends — including notice expectations, final pay handled per applicable law, return of property, and any exit steps. **{{Describe your progressive-discipline approach, if you use one, and keep it consistent with the at-will language above.}}**

*If you describe a progressive-discipline process, add that the company may depart from it at its discretion — otherwise it can be read as a promise that undercuts at-will employment.*

## 11. Acknowledgement of Receipt

I acknowledge that I have received and read the {{Company Name}} Employee Handbook. I understand it summarizes current policies and is not a contract of employment, that employment is {{at-will, where permitted by law}}, and that {{Company Name}} may update these policies at any time. I agree to follow the policies it describes.

Employee Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	Date Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

*Have every employee sign and date this page, and keep the signed copy on file. It is your record that the handbook was received and understood.*