

Spring Cleaning Your Employee Manuals



It is almost spring and time to do some spring cleaning around the workplace by reviewing your Employee Manual and ensuring it is comprehensive and up-to-date.

In some organizations building an employee manual began a long time ago and updates and reviews are built into the process. For other organizations the employee manual is a piecemeal affair with policies, org charts, forms and more scattered in a variety of locations. Regardless of where your organization stands on the scale of Employee manuals you can take time to do some spring cleaning around your employee manual.

Right Today Wrong Tomorrow

Does your employee manual refer to items that are no longer valid and leave out ones that are not only important but also mandated within your jurisdiction? If you are not sure how to answer this it is definitely time to review and update your current employee manual.

On a regular basis many jurisdictions update their legal requirements with respect to employee/employer relationships. Items such as family leave, same-sex marriage benefits, harassment policies may not have been around standards in your manual 10 or even 5 years ago but often while the times have changed not all manuals have.

The Top Must Have Content In Your Employee Manual

1) Policy requirements:

Each Provincial jurisdiction will have employment rules and legislated requirements that you will want to ensure exist as policies within your organization. As a result these are important 'must haves' in your employee manuals. A quick check of the following in your jurisdiction would be advisable. The following are key policy requirements (include a definition, policy, process)

- a. Anti-harassment policy and awareness training program
- b. Workplace violence policy and awareness training program
- c. Workplace health and safety policy and awareness training program
- d. Disability accommodation including awareness training
- e. Include reference to Federal Legislation including the Employment Standards,

Employment Equity and Human Rights Legislation.

2) Organization Overview: providing employees with an accurate view of your organization is an important component of your employee manual. To set the tone and provide a foundation for an employee to act in accordance with your preferred workplace culture include information such as:

- a. Your organizational chart
- b. Your mission, vision and philosophy
- c. A Leadership message

3) Employment Performance Expectations: Prior to joining your organization your employees may have had a wide range of varying employment expectations. Clarify your expectations for

- a. Hours of work including arrival and departure times and lunch and other breaks
- b. Time away from work including sick time (and reporting of such), vacations, leaves
- c. Standard of behaviour (including professionalism, dress, compartment)
- d. Duties and performance standards
- e. Pay including rate and method of pay and overtime (when it begins and how much is paid)
- f. Performance review process

4) Benefit Information: You may provide a separate resource that provides details about benefits available and how to access benefits but be sure to reference the basics here.

5) Onboarding Process: Spelling out the onboarding process enables a new employee to quickly understand what steps to take during the first days and weeks of work. Include onboarding training and information about probationary periods of work

6) Restrictive Covenants, Property Ownership/Return (including Intellectual Property): Include information that communicates expectations for what happens when an employee leaves your organization.

7) Discipline, Dispute Resolution and Appeal processes: Provide details of your process for discipline and appeal.

8) Termination and General Departure process: Include information about the process for termination, resignation and layoff including notice, steps, and management.

It can take some time to build your employee manual and once it is built it can be easy to ignore it and miss important updates and changes. On a regular basis as you hear about new legislative requirements consider heading into you employee manual and updating the effected content.