

The Top 5 Outdated HR Policies That May Need A 2025 Refresh



The world of work has evolved rapidly in the last few years, and many workplace policies may not have kept pace. Outdated handbooks and contracts not only risk legal non-compliance but also impact employee morale, productivity, and retention. Below are five common HR policy areas that may require a modern refresh.

1. Hybrid Work and Flexibility Policies

Many organizations adopted remote or hybrid work arrangements during the pandemic, but few have formalized these changes in their HR policies. If your company is still relying on ad hoc agreements or policies from 2020, it's time to update.

A strong 2025 hybrid work policy should clearly define:

- Eligibility for remote work
- Expectations for availability and responsiveness
- Equipment and cost responsibilities
- Health and safety obligations for home offices

Without clear guidelines, employers face legal uncertainty around hours of work, overtime, and even workplace injury claims.

2. Social Media and Employee Conduct Codes

Social media blurs the line between personal and professional identity. If your current policy only prohibits "inappropriate posts," it likely doesn't provide enough clarity.

Modern policies should address:

- Acceptable online behaviour in and outside of work
- Use of company branding and affiliation in personal posts
- Consequences for sharing confidential or offensive content
- Cyberbullying and harassment on digital platforms

Ensure that policies respect privacy laws and human rights protections while still safeguarding your organization's reputation.

3. Harassment and Violence Prevention

Ontario's **Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)** requires employers to maintain a workplace free from harassment and violence, but many policies haven't been updated since 2016 amendments—let alone adapted to remote and hybrid contexts.

Your 2025 policy should:

- Define workplace violence and harassment broadly (including virtual)
- Include clear complaint procedures
- Outline investigation steps and timelines
- Reflect any sector-specific or federal requirements

Consider proactive measures like regular training and anonymous reporting mechanisms.

4. Vacation Tracking and Sick Leave

Outdated policies often rely on manual tracking or fail to comply with ESA entitlements. With increasing awareness of burnout and mental health, employees also expect greater clarity and fairness.

Update your policy to:

- Reflect ESA minimums (3 unpaid sick days in Ontario, for instance)
- Offer clear procedures for requesting and approving time off
- Address carryover rules, negative balances, and shutdown periods
- Include digital tracking systems to reduce admin errors

5. Technology Use and BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)

With employees using personal devices for work, data security is a growing concern. If your technology policy doesn't cover BYOD, it's exposing your business to risk.

Modernize your tech policy to:

- Specify acceptable device use for work purposes
- Require secure access methods (e.g., VPN, password standards)
- Outline IT support limits and monitoring permissions
- Establish clear rules for data removal upon termination

The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.

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