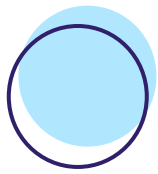Resource Library // Template

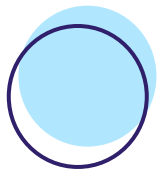# Employee Handbook

Introduction

Assembling an employee handbook can be a daunting task for any HR professional. It is an important document that communicates company policies, procedures, expectations, as well as the company culture to employees. However, striking the right balance between comprehensiveness and clarity can be challenging.

Whether you're starting from scratch or revising an existing handbook, this resource will guide you through this process and ensure you will end up with a document that serves as a reliable reference for both new and existing employees.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Employee Handbook Essentials

WHAT IS AN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK?

In every organization, the employee handbook details workplace policies, procedures, and the company's ethos. It frames the interaction between an employer and an employee and serves as a communication tool for leadership and HR to convey guidelines, expectations, culture, benefits, and legal obligations to employees.

Employee handbooks are thoughtfully crafted to be a one-stop shop for employees to understand their responsibilities, expectations, and the benefits and support they can expect from their employer.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF HAVING AN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK?

Clarity and consistency

It provides clarity on company policies and procedures and ensures that all employees receive the same information and expectations.

Culture and branding

It can play a role in shaping the company's culture and branding by communicating the organization's vision, mission, and values.

Legal protection

It can be legally binding and serves as a reference in the employment agreement, enabling the employer to update people policies without revising all contracts.

Employee relations and rights

It can empower employees with knowledge about their benefits, rights, and the resources available to them.

VARIATIONS IN SCOPE AND SIZE

Employee handbooks can vary significantly from one company to another. This can be influenced by several factors.

- **Company size:** Smaller companies may have simpler handbooks, while larger organizations may have more extensive documents with a wider range of policies.

- **Corporate culture:** Each company has its own unique culture, which will impact the sections within an employee handbook.

- **Regional differences:** Companies operating in multiple countries may tailor sections of their handbooks to account for regional differences in labor laws, holidays, and cultural norms.

- **Legal and regulatory requirements:** Industries with specific regulations, such as healthcare or finance, will have additional policies to ensure compliance.

VARIATIONS IN FORMAT

These days, most organizations use **digital employee handbooks →**. This offers several advantages.

- **Accessibility:** Online handbooks are easily accessible to employees, even when they are working remotely or on the go.

- **Updates and revisions:** Digital handbooks can be updated in real-time, ensuring that employees always have access to the most current information.

- **Employer branding:** A shareable digital handbook enhances transparency, demonstrates openness, and showcases the company's commitment to its values, potentially attracting like-minded talent who resonate with the organization's ethos.

DIGITAL HANDBOOKS

Having a digital handbook provides ample **opportunities for creativity**, allowing you to harness a multitude of tools to make it as engaging as possible. Here are several ways to achieve that:

Multimedia integration

Incorporate multimedia elements, such as videos, infographics, and interactive modules, to enhance understanding and retention of critical information.

Gamification

Introduce gamified elements like quizzes, challenges, or progress bars to encourage employees to interact with and absorb handbook content.

Collaborative features

Introduce features that allow employees to add comments, questions, or annotations to the handbook for collaborative learning and knowledge sharing.
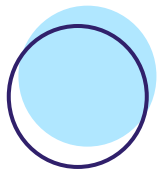
Search functionality

Implement a search feature so that employees can easily track specific policies or information, making it easier to find what they need.
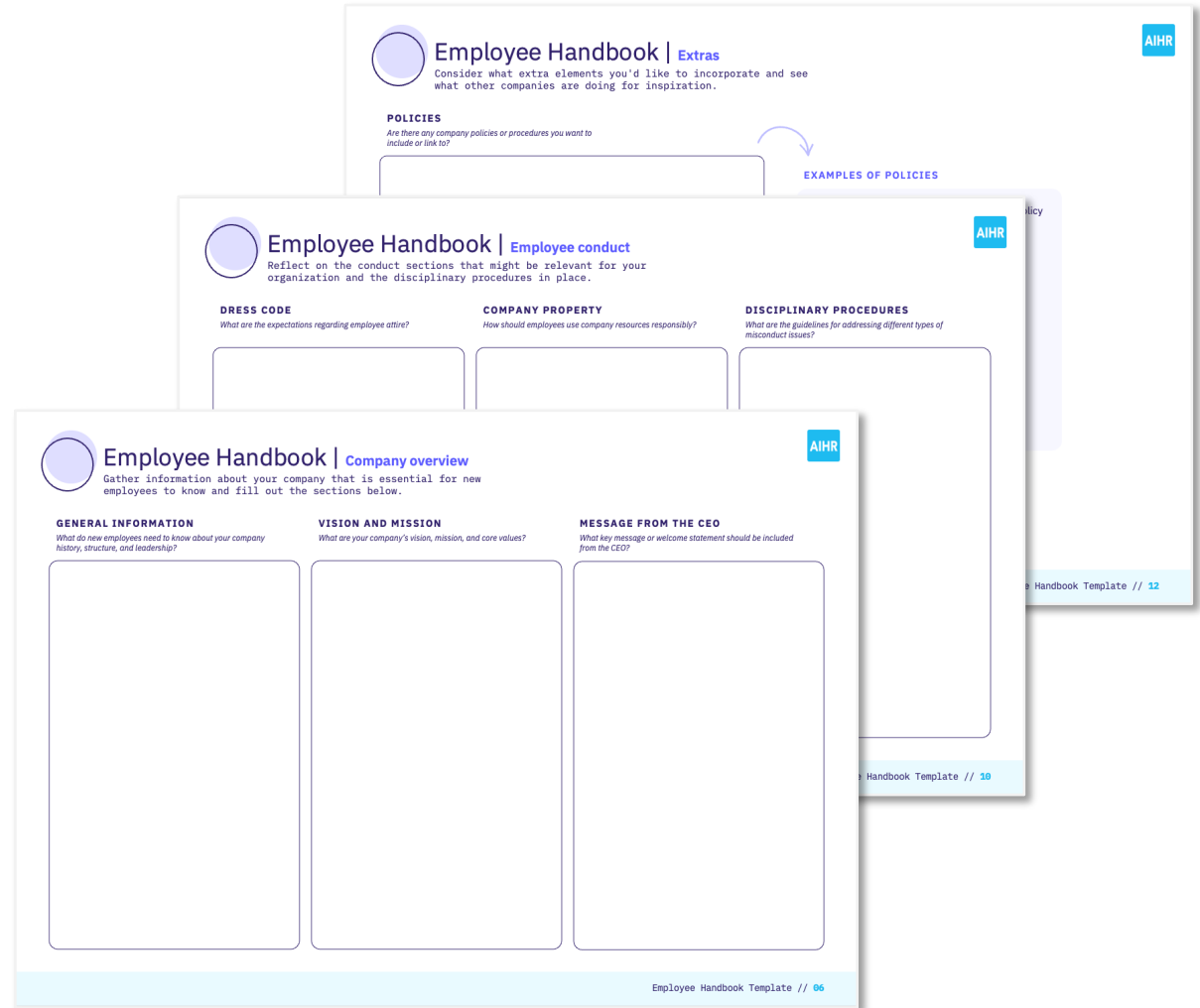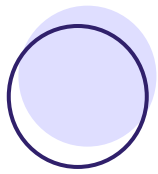
Interactive scenarios

Incorporate real-life scenarios or case studies that illustrate how policies and procedures apply in practical situations.

Employee Handbook Template | Getting started

In the following pages, you will find an employee handbook template with questions to guide you in the creation of a handbook tailored to your organization's needs. You can use these pages to reflect, brainstorm ideas, and then transfer the text to your traditional or digital handbook. You can also use it to evaluate whether there are any sections you want to add to your existing handbook.

Remember to consult with your labor law specialist to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal employment laws when finalizing your handbook.

Employee Handbook | Extras

Consider what extra elements you'd like to incorporate and see what other companies are doing for inspiration.

POLICIES
Are there any company policies or procedures you want to include or link to?

EXAMPLES OF POLICIES

Employee Handbook | Employee conduct

Reflect on the conduct sections that might be relevant for your organization and the disciplinary procedures in place.

DRESS CODE
What are the expectations regarding employee attire?

COMPANY PROPERTY
How should employees use company resources responsibly?

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES
What are the guidelines for addressing different types of misconduct issues?

Employee Handbook | Company overview

Gather information about your company that is essential for new employees to know and fill out the sections below.
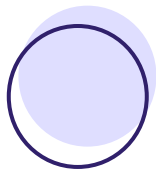
GENERAL INFORMATION
What do new employees need to know about your company history, structure, and leadership?

VISION AND MISSION
What are your company's vision, mission, and core values?

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO
What key message or welcome statement should be included from the CEO?

Employee Handbook | Company overview

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Employee Handbook | Compensation and benefits

Review your company's compensation and benefits
policies and complete the sections below.

PAY POLICY

*What is the pay schedule and how is overtime determined
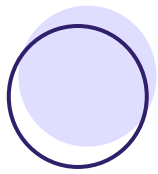and compensated?*

BENEFITS

What are some of the benefits offered by your company (healthcare, pension, wellness, etc.)?

EXPENSES

What are the procedures for reimbursing expenses?

BONUSES AND INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Does your company offer any company-wide incentive programs? What are the eligibility criteria?

Employee Handbook | Working hours and time off

Fill out the sections below with key information on your company's approach to working hours and leave.

PAY POLICY

What is the pay schedule and how is overtime determined and compensated?

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

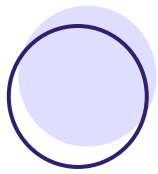*Are there any available options for flexible, hybrid, or remote work arrangements?*

PAID TIME OFF AND HOLIDAYS

How does paid time off accrue, and what is the process for requesting and approving it?

MEDICAL, PARENTAL, OR FAMILY LEAVE

What are the procedures for taking medical, parental, or family leave?

Employee Handbook | Performance and development

Consider all performance- and growth-related processes and opportunities for learning and fill out the sections below.
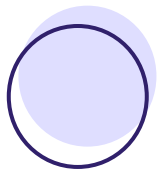
PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

How do you assess employee performance, and what is your review process?

CAREER ADVANCEMENT

How do promotions and growth occur in the company?

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

What learning and development opportunities does your company offer?

Employee Handbook | **Employee conduct**

Reflect on the conduct sections that might be relevant for your organization and the disciplinary procedures in place.

DRESS CODE

What are the expectations regarding employee attire?

COMPANY PROPERTY

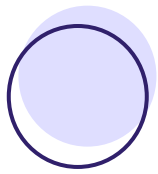*How should employees use company resources responsibly?*

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

What are the guidelines for addressing different types of misconduct issues?

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

What are the company's expectations for attendance and punctuality?

CONFIDENTIALITY

What is the policy regarding the confidentiality of company information?

# Employee Handbook | Onboarding and offboarding

Fill out the sections below with relevant information regarding the onboarding and offboarding procedures for employees.

ONBOARDING

What are the key steps and activities involved in welcoming new employees? How is orientation and training organized for new hires?

OFFBOARDING

What is the procedure for departing employees, including exit interviews and return of company property?
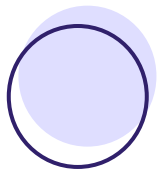
Employee Handbook | **Extras**

Consider what extra elements you'd like to incorporate and see
what other companies are doing for inspiration.

POLICIES

*Are there any company policies or procedures you want to
include or link to?*

EXAMPLES OF POLICIES

- Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy

- Code of Conduct

- Data Protection and Privacy Policy

- Digital Safety and Security

- Drug and Alcohol Policy

- Equal Employment Opportunity

- Occupational Health and Safety Policy

- Pay Philosophy and Policy

- Retirement and Termination Policy

- Social Media Policy

- Travel Policy

Employee Handbook Inspiration
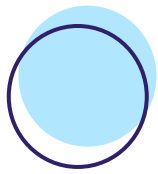
For some further inspiration on what a handbook can look like and what miscellaneous categories you might want to include, you can examine some companies' handbooks below.

Education

For an example of a comprehensive and detailed handbook assembled by an academic institution, you can check out Northwestern University's.

Tech

For an incredibly detailed, modern, and searchable handbook that has distinct sections for different teams, see what software development platform GitLab assembled.

For a user-friendly handbook that truly centers its product, Trello hosts their iconic employee handbook on its own platform.

Marketing

For an easy-to-read and concise employee handbook that still manages to cover a lot of valuable information, see marketing company Pronto's version.

Recruitment

For an example of a regional handbook of a company that operates globally, you can see Hays Recruiting's employee handbook that specifically targets their U.K. branch.

Aviation

For an example of a company that chooses to just highlight some of its key benefits in its handbook and then link to other guides and online sections, see JetBlue.

Finance

For a playful and engaging handbook that covers a lot of policies and jargon, read the one crafted by the financial services company The Motley Fool.

Gaming

For a visually stunning and humorous handbook that works well for their industry, you can see Valve's viral handbook.