Your 2020 Employee Handbook:
8 Sections To Consider Updating

If your business hasn't updated its employee handbook, it is more than long overdue. And with the massive legislative changes in the past twelve months, your employee handbook is most likely out of compliance (which could result in an employee lawsuit).

8 Sections To Consider Updating For 2020

1. Sexual Harassment Policy(s)
2. Independent Contractor Vs. Employee Designations
3. Arbitration And At-Will Acknowledgement
4. Inclusive Policies And Language
5. Family, Medical And Parental Leave
6. Medical And Recreational Marijuana Policy(s)
7. Remote Work Policy(s)
8. Social Media Policy(s)

Important Side Note: Before you publish your employee handbook, make sure you seek the advice of an HR and/or legal professional who knows the governing laws in your state. If not, you will only open your business up to potential legal problems.

12 Sections To Add/Review.

#1: Contain A Disclaimer - An employee handbook disclaimer makes it clear that the employee handbook is a guideline only. It does not establish a contract or guarantee regarding any benefit or policy. It should be clear that your business maintains the right to modify any policy without *prior* notice.

#2: State The At-Will Doctrine - You should state that your handbook is NOT a binding contract of employment. That is, employment is at-will.

#3: General Employment Information - The company's history and mission are essential parts of the employee handbook. Additionally, the company's general employment policies regarding employment eligibility, code of conduct, dress code, and hours of operation should be included.

#4: Outline Work Schedules - The company's work hours, schedules, attendance, and punctuality policies should be described clearly; as well as particular guidelines regarding flexible schedules and telecommuting.

#5: Compensation And Overtime Policy - A general guideline for all pay schedules, raises, bonus eligibility, deductions, and policies for overtime pay should be clearly stated in the handbook.

#6: Performance Evaluations - An employee's performance evaluation process, including the schedule and guidelines, should be outlined in your handbook.

#7: Employee Benefits - Benefit programs and eligibility requirements should be described in your handbook. These should include information about health and life insurance, as well as retirement plans. It would be best if you also outlined that your business has the right to alter or cancel these policies.

#8: Employee Leave Policy - Your employee leave policy should be described in this section; however, you need to include information on the federal family medical leave, military leave, and state leave requirements. In addition, be sure that your company's sick and bereavement leave policy is stated here too.

#9: Anti-Discrimination Policies - Understanding equal employment opportunity laws at the state and federal level is a significant part of employment. These laws should be described in the handbook. One of the most important aspects is making it clear that retaliation for reporting discrimination or harassment is strictly prohibited.

#10: Disciplinary Actions and Terminations - A provision related to disciplinary action should be included. Discretion in these instances is of the utmost importance, which should be clearly stated here.

#11: Computers and Technology - Policies regarding appropriate computer and software use should be outlined. Employees should be made aware that there is no guarantee of privacy regarding company computers and devices. If personal use of the company's computers is prohibited, this should be clearly stated.

#12: Acknowledgment Form - Finally, an acknowledgment form should state that the employee has reviewed, understands, and acknowledges their receipt of the handbook. Here is an appropriate place to repeat the "at-will" statement as well as the contract disclaimer.

Executive Summary: Each company has its policies, guidelines, and expectations that will need to be addressed and outlined in an employee handbook; however, the topics described above should prove helpful in mounting what can seem to be an overwhelming process.