

Human Resources Policy and Procedure Manual

Lines of Business: General Liability, Employers Liability, Public Official Liability

Risk Control Strategy/Key Issues: Establish a proactive manual with controls and procedure to reduce exposure to employment related losses.

Suggested Program Elements:

- 1. Policy Statement:** A general statement noting that the program establishes guidelines and procedures for developing, maintaining, training, and distributing the organization's policy manual/employee handbook.
- 2. Program Responsibilities:** Establish the responsibility and accountability of management to develop, maintain, distribute, and enforce the organization's policies.
- 3. The Manual:** One of the main functions of Human Resource Management is ensuring the organization's personnel and management practices conform to current regulations mandated by governmental entities and accepted employment practices. One of the best ways to accomplish this is with a personnel manual. A well-maintained manual and associated employee training programs can protect the organization by reducing its work related liability and provide a defense against claims / lawsuit made. The manual can also increase employee awareness of operating policies, make the transition process for new employees easier, and promote a productive work environment.

Important: An organization operating without a personnel manual is opening itself up for employment practices liability claims in which they will have no grounds for defense since the organization can not prove that it has objective, non-discriminatory decision making guidelines in place.

Below is an example of a Human Resources Policy and Procedure Manual table of contents. Although it may not show all necessary policies for your organization, it is a good starting point. Many of these policies can be found on line or through professional organizations.

1. Policy Statement:
 - Employment Policy Statement
 - EEO Statement
 - Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Statement of At Will Employment
 - Legal Review
2. Employment Policy Outlines:
 - Working Environment
 - Hiring Policies
 - Hours/Attendance and Punctuality
 - Luncheon Periods
 - Inclement Weather and Transportation Problem
 - Identification and Security
 - Computer Environment
 - Computer Software Policy
 - How employees are paid

- Enrollment in Benefits Program
 - Standards of Dress
 - Telephone Usage
 - Emergency Procedures
 - Guidelines for General Fire Safety/Earthquake
3. Position Classifications:
- Job descriptions
 - Career paths
 - Essential function descriptions
4. Working Conditions:
- Statement of At-Will Employment (If State applicable)
 - Employee Conduct
 - Guidelines Regarding Layoffs
 - Harassment / Discrimination
 - Workplace Violence
 - Performance Improvement Plan
 - Solving Problems
 - Grievance Process
 - Associate Counseling
 - Code of Conduct
 - Compensation Program
 - Setting Compensation
 - Performance Appraisal and Compensation
 - Payroll Process
 - Overtime Pay
5. Career Development Policy:
- Performance Appraisal Process
 - Transfers and Promotions
 - Job Postings
 - Posting Guidelines
 - Training
 - Tuition Assistance
6. Time Away From Work:
- Federal/State Holidays
 - Personal Holidays
 - Vacation
 - Vacation Carryover
 - Time Off Due to Sickness or Injury
 - Leaves of Absence
 - Other Leaves
 - Disability Leave
7. Employee benefits:
- Benefits Overview

- Benefits Descriptions
- Timing of Enrollment
- Reimbursement Accounts
- Associate Counseling

8. Leaving the organization:

- Resigning
- Continuation of Benefits
- Employee Loss of Life
- Exit Process

KEY POINTS: The organization should assure:

- The organization's policies should be consistently and objectively applied to avoid claims of discrimination.
- Before policies are incorporated into the organization's operations they should be reviewed and approved by the organization's legal representative.
- The organization's personnel manual should be reviewed annual to assure that it is up-to-date and reflects changes in the organization's operation, outdated thinking, and changes in the law.

4. Training: A well maintained manual is useless if adequate initial and repetitive training does not take place. All employees (management, line, elected and non-elected) should be given a copy of the manual or handbook (shorter version)* upon initial employment and any time a change in a policy is made. Each policy should be thoroughly reviewed with all new employees, at routine intervals for existing employees, and any time a policy change takes place. This training should be documented with a sign-off sheet, sign-in roster, or similar; and filed in the employees personnel file. Relying exclusively on employees to educate themselves on the organization's operation policies and procedures can leave it open to increased liability exposure.

*The organization may want to consider developing an employee handbook that gives summaries of specific topics vital to employees' activities as apposed to the entire personnel manual. If this is done, the employee should be instructed where a copy of the manual is located, and when it is available for them to view (usually normal working hours).

Program Activities Calendar:

- Annual audits of HR Policy and Procedure Manual
- Annual Orientation to new and existing employees each Fiscal year or School year
- Annual records compliance review

Web Site Links:

- Human Resources Policies and Procedures
http://www.hr-guide.com/PoliciesProcedures/Online_Policies_and_Procedures.htm

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