



12 Common Handbook Mistakes

Here's a handy checklist to use when updating your handbook. Check off each after you verify that your handbook DOES NOT violate these rules.

- Using form handbooks, which usually have many provisions that have nothing to do with your organization.
- Meshing policies and procedures, which confuses employees and provides more fodder for plaintiffs' lawyers.
- Including a probationary period, implying that anyone who stays with the company 90 days is then a permanent employee.
- Being too specific in descriptions and lists, especially those involving discipline.
- Not being consistent with other company documents.
- Not adding a disclaimer, or not enough in the right places.
- Sabotaging disclaimers by what you do or say, especially reassuring employees that their jobs are secure and they'll be fired only for a really good reason.
- Not adapting the handbook for each state's laws.
- Failing to update the manual frequently for changing laws.
- Being unrealistic about what your employees or supervisors will buy into as your policy.
- Incorporating overly broad rules.
- Making 'over the top' anti-union statements.