Employee Handbook Template

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# How to use this template.

In this template, we’ve provided the most common and vital areas to cover when drafting an employee handbook.

* For each section, replace the instructions with your own words, written directly for your employees.
* Your writing should be clear and to-the-point—no need to get fancy or verbose.
* Since it’s impossible to cover everything about your business, try prioritizing the most important information for your employees, then continue by presenting the second most important information, and so on.
* Setting clear expectations will make management easier in the long run.
* When you’re all done, delete this page, and you’re ready to go!
* **Note:** This template is provided for informational purposes only. It’s highly recommended that you consult an attorney for any policies or procedures that may have legal ramifications.

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[**Click here to check out our free guide.**](https://www.spoton.com/gated-assets/save-time-on-labor-management/)

# [Company Logo]

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# [Name of Restaurant] Employee Handbook

#

# [Restaurant Name]

#

# [Address]

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# [Phone Number]

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# [Email]

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### Introduction

This is your chance to give your new employee some background on your business by stating your core values, so remember to put your best foot forward. You can also include information about your team structure to give your new employee an immediate understanding of its leadership. By the end of the introduction, they should know who to ask for whatever question comes to mind.

#### Mission Statement

A great mission statement explains the “what,” “how,” and “why” of your business. What does your business strive for? How do you make it happen? Why is it important? Keep it short and concise and feel free to repurpose language from your website if it applies.

#### Disclaimer

A handbook is not a legal contract. Consult an attorney to ensure that this section is compatible with local, state, and federal laws. In this section, include that employment is at-will, then explain what that means. Encourage your employees to come to you with any questions.

#### Employment Policies

In this section, include information on hiring, leaves of absence, accommodations, and end of employment. Have an attorney review this section. It is crucial that you’re maintaining compliance with existing laws.

#### Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Explain that your business does not discriminate between job applicants when it comes to protected classes under federal law. This includes race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and national origin. Consult an attorney to make sure all the necessary information is included.

#### Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

You’ll want to consult an attorney for this section as well. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) was passed to ensure people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else. Here, you can outline how you’ve made your workplace accessible for people with disabilities, physical or otherwise.

#### Onboarding

Here’s where you can let your new employee know your expectations for the first few weeks on the job. Are there any training courses they will need to complete before they can get started? Is there an employee shadow period? Set expectations for the initial hire phase so your new employees have a solid foundation on how to navigate your workplace in the future.

#### Leaves of Absence

What is your policy for employees requiring a leave of absence? This can include parental leave, bereavement, or extended sick leave. State and local requirements for leaves of absence vary. It is important to consult an attorney to ensure you are compliant with your jurisdiction’s laws. Clear outlines around leaves of absence help employees know what to expect and ensures everyone’s cases are handled according to the same guidelines.

#### End of Employment

Even though your employee is just getting started, it’s never too early to instill clear standards regarding their end of employment. How much advance notice do you require if an employee plans to leave? Do they need to return anything or complete an exit interview? Do you have a strike policy that leads to termination? Again, it can be helpful to consult an attorney to make sure this section is compliant with state, local, and federal guidelines.

### Code of Conduct

In this section, outline standards for workplace behavior to help employees identify inappropriate behavior. That outline gives you a framework to address if any infractions occur.

#### Dress Code

Does your restaurant require a uniform or a certain style/standard of dress? Specify between back-of-house and front-of-house to let your employees know what is an acceptable substitution.

#### Anti-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy

Be as clear as possible and state a zero-tolerance policy by defining what is constituted as discrimination and harassment. Make sure an attorney reviews this section so your business is fully compliant with local, state, and federal laws regarding workplace discrimination and harassment. State your procedures for reporting and handling complaints. This section should also include interactions with guests alongside combatting discrimination and harassment among staff.

#### Alcohol and Drugs

What are the consequences of bringing drugs or alcohol onto the premises? If your restaurant serves alcohol or hosts parties, what is the expectation for employee behavior in these circumstances? There may be different policies for drinking on the job, before a shift, or after a shift on the premises.

#### Cell Phone Policy

While cell phones are ubiquitous, they can distract employees on the job and detract from the guest experience. Your cell phone policy can be strict or relaxed, but make sure to articulate your expectations and relevant consequences, if any.

#### Disciplinary Procedures

Here you can outline any other behavior you would deem unacceptable for your workplace. Most importantly, don’t forget to explain why those behaviors are unacceptable. Do you have a strike/warning policy? What would necessitate immediate termination? What would necessitate a warning? It’s worthwhile to note that fireable offenses are not limited to those outlined in this handbook.

### Procedures & Emergencies

Whether your employee is responding to a sudden emergency or an everyday close out, clear procedures help operations run smoothly. In this section, let your employees know what to expect when it comes to routines in the workplace—this can help expedite the onboarding period and give your new employee something to reference if they have any questions.

#### Meetings

What are the expectations for staff meetings? Is there a daily pre-shift or monthly team meeting after operating hours? Give your employees as much notice as possible to help ensure attendance. In this section, you can also include information for 1:1 check-ins or annual performance reviews if necessary.

#### Opening & Closing

Where do you keep the opening and closing checklists? What are different employees on different shifts expected to complete before the restaurant is ready to receive guests, or close up for the night? This is something that fluctuates with the seasons, staff capacity, and other variables, so giving your employees a preview can help keep things as efficient as possible.

#### Scheduling Process

When will new employees know their upcoming schedule? How will they be notified? What is the process for swapping shifts or requesting vacation/sick time? How much advance notice is required for time-off? A clear scheduling process will make your manager’s life easier and give your employees clarity on what their shifts will look like.

#### Alcohol Serving Policy

Who is eligible to serve alcohol? What are the protocols for checking IDs? Consult local, state, and federal laws to make sure these policies are compliant. As usual, have an attorney review this section to make sure the legal information is correct.

#### Comps and Voids

Who is eligible to comp or void an item? For employees who are not eligible, explain how they should go about obtaining approval. What steps does your point-of-sale require to approve a comp or void? Be sure to provide examples for both comps and voids as these can differ by workplace.

#### Safety and Sanitation

What role do your employees play in maintaining a safe and clean workplace? Distinguish between back-of-house and front-of-house employees. List required practices (handwashing, glove wearing, food cleaning, dishwashing, etc.) and make sure this section covers all legal requirements. Consult with an attorney to double check from local to federal laws outlined by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). Include any information that will help keep your employees and guests safe from food mishandling and equipment mishaps.

#### Workplace Injuries

In the event that injuries do occur, make sure your employees know the appropriate response. This includes who to report the injury to, the reporting procedure, and its timeline. If applicable, include information around first aid certification and where first aid kits are located.

#### Theft and Robbery

It’s hard to prepare for a worst case scenario, but use this section to let your employees know how they can stay safe in the case of a theft or robbery. Alongside your guidance, be sure they know to call 911 if there is an emergency.

### Employee Benefits and Pay

This section provides your new employee with information on when they can expect to be paid, overtime and break policies, and the different benefits and perks they may receive from working at your business. While these policies are likely to differ based on an employee’s role and tenure, include the broadly applicable policies so you can field questions related to specific cases on your own.

#### Pay Schedule

When can your employees expect payment and what are your policies for direct deposit vs. checks? Are paychecks weekly or biweekly? How are tips paid out? No need to include specific information around specific wages, as this information should apply to all new employees. However, it can be helpful to include general information around payroll deductions so your employees can understand their paycheck and know what to expect.

#### Overtime

What is your overtime policy? Include the maximum overtime policy so your employees understand their legal rights when it comes to working overtime.

#### Breaks

Let your employees know your mandatory and/or voluntary break policy. How long are break periods? Is there a specific location employees can go to take their breaks? Will employees see break reminders on the POS? Your employees have legal rights when it comes to taking breaks. For your policy to be comprehensive, you should consult with an attorney.

#### Employee Meals and Discounts

What can your employees expect when it comes to employee meals and discounted items? Are there family meals for certain employees or shift assignments? Are there certain items with an upcharge? Do you require employee meals on-premise, or is there an off-premise option? Sketch out a meal policy so your new employees can plan accordingly.

#### Holidays and Vacation

List the national and local holidays that your business observes, including closures and limited hours. Also, outline allowances for paid time off if applicable. Explain how vacation hours accrue and whether they roll over on a yearly basis.

#### Insurance

If you offer employees insurance, explain your policy or direct them to where they can find more information about your policies. Include information about the enrollment period, requirements, and who to contact for questions.

### Restaurant System FAQs

#### Point-of-sale (POS) System

What POS system does your business use? What is the onboarding process for learning the new system? Who is the point person when it comes to tech questions?

#### Online Ordering

If your business offers online ordering, outline who oversees the preparation and fulfillment of these orders. Where are pick-up orders located? Who hands off to-go orders with third-party platforms? If your business operates at a high volume, these areas of knowledge can be a point of stress for employees—a clear plan and chain of command will help alleviate that stress.

#### Reservation Management

If your business takes reservations or has a waitlist, provide a brief overview of your reservation management system. While this may primarily be the host’s responsibilities, it can be helpful if every employee understands your restaurant’s reservation and waitlist management strategy.

#### Support Numbers

In a perfect world, Wi-Fi is always reliable, screens never crack, and systems never go down. But in reality, these things happen all the time. Your employees need to know where the Wi-Fi router is located and who to contact if your POS systems or other third-party platform go down. List support numbers for all the platforms used by your business and let employees know where they can be found within the restaurant.