

TIPS FOR HANDBOOK REVIEW

Nov 05, 2018

It's that time of year when human resources departments turn their attention to reviewing and updating their employee handbooks for the upcoming year. Below are some things to consider when updating your handbook:

- **Updates to federal laws** – Have any applicable federal laws or regulations been changed, or any court or agency opinions issued that impact your policies?
- **Updates to state or local laws** – Similarly, have any applicable state laws or regulations been changed?
- **State law addenda** – Does a “one-size fits all” handbook work for your company, or does your company footprint require state law addenda? Has your company recently expanded into new locations?
- **Keeping up with the times** – Unfortunately, policies relating to safety, security, emergency plans, emergency contact information, etc. are becoming increasingly necessary and important.
- **Introduction** – Does your statement describing your company, its history and philosophy, etc. need refreshing or updating?
- **Policies v. Practices** – Is your handbook keeping up with your actual practices?
- **Cross-references** – Are there new and separate company policies (e.g., Code of Conduct; global policies) that should be cross-referenced in the handbook?
- **Consistency with separate policies** – Do you have separate policies (such as a stand-alone reaffirmation of a policy against harassment, or local facility policies that are separate from a corporate handbook) that are similar or related to policies in the handbook, and if so, is the language consistent?
- **Phone numbers, names, titles, third party administrators** – If specific information regarding these and similar subjects is provided in the handbook, does it require updating?

- **Distribution, Accessibility and Acknowledgments** – When was the last time you distributed your handbook? Is the handbook accessible to employees? Have you obtained acknowledgments from all employees concerning receipt of the handbook? Do you need to get updated acknowledgments? Are managers familiar with the contents and do they understand their role in applying and enforcing policies?
- **Input** – Have you obtained the input and review of other necessary departments, such as Benefits, Compliance, Security, IT, and Legal?
- **Date** – Remember to identify directly on or in the handbook the new/current effective date.

Periodic review and updating of your employee handbook – and ensuring you give consideration to the issues described above – can improve the usefulness of your handbook and offer better protection for your company.

Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP has a team of knowledgeable lawyers and other professionals prepared to help employers review their employee handbooks. If you or your organization would like more information on this or any other employment issue, please contact an attorney in the Employment and Labor practice group.

RELATED CAPABILITIES

- Employment & Labor

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