

Take your employee handbook online: 8 tips



Is your employee handbook still an actual book?

Turning your handbook into an electronic document can cut costs, make updating easier and give employees a convenient place to access policies.

Going electronic isn't technically difficult. But the process involves more than simply transferring written documents to a database or internal website.

Use the following guidelines to help protect your organization against legal trouble when moving handbooks online:

- 1. Put acknowledgment upfront.** Format the electronic handbook so that employees access the disclaimer and acknowledgment forms before reading the web version of the document.
- 2. Require employees to log in using their passwords to access it.** You don't want outsiders to access company policies.
- 3. Include links in the handbook** that connect the policies and information to commonly used forms or documents, such as benefits, health plan summaries and IRS forms.
- 4. Include HR email and telephone contacts.** Update as needed.
- 5. Proofread the handbook** before and after putting it online to find mistakes and omissions. Test links.
- 6. Alert employees to the change.** Send an email (with a link to the handbook) explaining the handbook is available online. Ask employees to read the handbook, sign the forms and return them to HR by a certain date. Follow up with workers who don't respond.
- 7. When handbook changes are made, immediately email all employees.** Make it clear in the subject line that the email is urgent and employees must read it. Keep records of these update emails in case legal action requires proof.
- 8. Make hard copies of the handbook available** for employees who prefer paper versions or have infrequent or no access to a computer.

Resources: Handbook checkup

- 7 most common handbook errors: www.theHRSpecialist.com/handbookerrors
- Self-audit for handbooks: www.theHRSpecialist.com/handbookaudit
- Checklist: What to include in handbooks: www.theHRSpecialist.com/handbookchecklist