



**CANADIAN FEDERATION  
OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS**  
*In business for your business.*

## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK TEMPLATE

We are pleased to send you a copy of CFIB's **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**. This is a template which you may adapt and use when hiring new staff. The content of this document is broadly inspired by the Employment Standards Act and can serve as an excellent starting point for putting together a practical reference document which your employees can consult at any time. The **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK** is an essential tool for successfully integrating new staff into your team!

### **Recommendations for using the Employee Handbook**

In keeping with human resources best practices, we recommend that you give a copy of this Handbook to your employees on their first day of work. This will allow you to review the various topics covered in the Handbook and establish the setting in which your employees will be working. Once you have completed this review, you will be in a position to answer your employees' questions, and can then give them their copy of the Handbook (**optional**) along with a sample letter in which they acknowledge having read the document. This letter can be found on the last page of the Handbook and will be inserted into the employee's personal file.

In the event of a misunderstanding or legal proceedings, it may well be to your advantage if you have ensured that the employee has read and understood the Handbook.

### **A few hints on customizing your Employee Handbook:**

- Words highlighted in grey must be replaced by information specific to your company.
- We have also included some optional tips; they are to be deleted before printing this document.

### **Important Notes:**

- It is strongly suggested to periodically update the Employee Handbook so that it will reflect all legislative, regulatory and internal policy changes.
- As a member of CFIB, your membership gives you access to our business support services. Our Counsellors can assist members when customizing this Handbook but it is always recommended that the final draft of the Handbook be reviewed with a qualified/certified professional (i.e. labour lawyer).
- If you are a federally regulated business, this policy may not be in line with the Canada Labour Code. Please discuss those specific needs directly with a CFIB Counsellor.

**Need customized advice? Contact us!**

1 888 234-2232 | [cfib@cfib.ca](mailto:cfib@cfib.ca)

**This guide is provided to you for information purposes only. CFIB cannot be held responsible for its final content or for any subsequent use and interpretation thereof by the company or a third party.**

We suggest that you remove this introductory page when preparing your company's Employee Handbook.

**INSERT YOUR LOGO HERE**

# **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

Insert the date of the most recent changes made to this document.

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## LETTER FROM THE (NAME OF OWNER OR EXECUTIVE)

Dear employee,

We are pleased to welcome you to the name of business team.

This is a good opportunity to provide you with a copy of the **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**, which will help you get off to a good start. The objectives of the Handbook are to give you an overview of the organization and the human resources practices of our company, and to ensure the efficiency of our operations and the harmony of our team.

This Handbook contains the following:

- Name of business (short form)
- Working Conditions Handbook
- Company Rules and Regulations
- Code of Ethics

All employees, whether seasoned or new, may occasionally need to consult the Employee Handbook. This document is intended as an easy-to-use reference tool containing the answers to your main concerns. If you cannot find what you are looking for, please feel free to pass your questions on to name of contact. We will be pleased to supplement the information in this Handbook and provide you additional details.

Finally, the Employee Handbook is an evolving document that will be adapted as appropriate to reflect cultural and organizational changes within the company, as well as the modifications that are constantly being made to government regulations.

Since it is difficult to anticipate and list all situations that might arise in the course of your work, this handbook makes broad reference to the insert applicable provincial Employment Standards Act.

On behalf of the whole team, welcome to name of business.

Signature

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Print the business owner's title

## NAME OF BUSINESS (SHORT FORM)

Describe your company.

## OUR MISSION

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Describe your company's mission.

## OUR VALUES

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Describe your company's values.

Here are a few examples that may help in drafting the above sections:

- **Teamwork:** Our development is based on our employees' involvement and collaboration; we establish structures that encourage dialogue as a way of implementing best practices.
- **Respect:** To preserve a climate that is conducive to workplace well-being, it is vital that we treat our colleagues and customers with respect and fairness, while also being sensitive to each individual's needs.
- **Innovation:** To remain competitive, we strive to encourage new ideas by maintaining an ongoing improvement process. We believe in human potential and in the constant improvement of our processes.
- **Occupational health and safety:** As a responsible employer, we ensure that every member of the team is committed to promoting and creating a working environment that is safe under all circumstances. This approach is the best way to ensure ongoing improvement in workplace health and safety.
- **Statement of philosophy:** name of business wishes to maintain a work environment that fosters personal and professional growth for all employees. Maintaining such an environment is the responsibility of every staff person. Because of their role, managers and supervisors have the additional responsibility to lead in a manner which fosters an environment of respect for each person.

### ORIENTATION AND PROBATIONARY PERIOD

All new employees to name of business shall receive an orientation session(s) which will encompass an overview of general policies, procedures and operations. This will also provide employees, new to either a position or to name of business, an opportunity to learn the performance expectations management has with regard to the position in question. They will be given a copy of this Employee Handbook and will be expected to learn its contents.

Before being classified as a permanent employee of the company, each new employee must work for a probationary period lasting i.e. three or six (3 or 6) calendar months. During this period, the company reserves the right to terminate a worker's employment without notice if his/her work is deemed unsatisfactory. The employee may also resign without giving prior notice.

During the probationary period, employees are not eligible for a salary review or for participation in the employee benefits program. Employees will however, be compensated for any statutory holidays and vacation pay during this period (if applicable) as per the insert provincially specific Employment Standards Act requirements.

The probationary period is dictated by the Employment Standards Act specific to your province. Each province has different rules and timelines which need to be reviewed and confirmed. Some employers may wish to extend the probationary period but one must realize that the entitlements under the Employment Standards Act cannot be extended and will apply regardless of any internal agreement.

### COMPENSATION

The wages of every employee are determined before he/she is hired. Management establishes the amount in accordance with the applicable pay scales and taking into consideration the tasks to be executed and the employee's relevant recognized experience.

Furthermore, name of business is an equal opportunity employer and employs personnel without regard to race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, language, citizenship, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical and/or mental handicap or financial ability, while remaining alert and sensitive to the issue of fair and equitable treatment for all.

(If applicable) The employee must provide a void cheque or a direct deposit form so that his/her pay can be deposited in the appropriate bank account. The pay cycle is insert details. The pay is deposited to this bank account insert the time, i.e. Thursdays and covers insert the time period, i.e. a one-week period from i.e. Sunday to Saturday.

Each employee will receive a pay stub when his/her wages are paid. If the pay statement contains any errors or the employee has any questions about it, he/she must contact insert contact and phone number.

An annual salary adjustment may or may not be made, depending on the employee's job appraisal and the company's performance.

If the company implements a wage policy, it should be detailed at this point. In addition, employers may want to insert the following process information:

## Performance Appraisals

### Examples

- The performance review document will be a living document for each employee. Each employee will be responsible for developing their respective work plan for the year. This plan will be reviewed by Management and amended as necessary. At the time of the performance appraisal, the employer and employee will review the objectives and the results achieved. Throughout the year, the employee and employer may refer to this document to track progress made toward objectives, highlight areas of concern and indicate challenges identified along the way.

OR

- Performance reviews, for all employees, will occur near the end of xxx, and annually thereafter. Employees should prepare for this meeting by preparing a draft work plan for the coming year. This meeting is to review successes and challenges from the preceding year, and to establish the objectives for the coming year. This would also be the opportunity for either party to identify and recommend professional development opportunities which may assist the employee in their day to day work or to grow within the organization. Once complete, both parties shall sign off on the final document and it shall be added to the employee's personnel file.

## Personnel File

### Example

- Name of business does collect personal information for inclusion in personnel files. This information is available to the employee and xxx. This information is kept in a secure location, and is not shared with members of our xxx. Information which is contained in an employee's personnel file includes the following: résumé, letter of offer, performance reviews, amendments to job descriptions, disciplinary notices, tax forms, copies of enrolment forms for benefits and approved leave requests.

## Recruitment and Selection

All employment opportunities at name of business are posted for a minimum xxx working day period. They are posted on name of business's website and on the websites of affiliated organizations such as xxx. Occasionally, they are posted on employment websites or with an employment agency. Applications are encouraged from current employees but will be screened in the same manner as applications received from outside applicants (optional).

Applicants are invited to submit their application, along with a current résumé, demonstrating that they meet the minimum criteria for the position being sought. At the closing date, all applications are screened, and candidates selected for interview are contacted. If the interview outcome is positive, references will be contacted. Depending on the feedback provided, a position may be offered to the applicant.

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The employer contributes to all plans, insurance policies and other programs provided for by law, i.e. the federal Employment Insurance, the Canada Pension Plan, etc..

If the company offers a group insurance plan, provide details here about the plan's benefits and any contacts should the employee have questions.

### Examples:

- **Benefits** - Name of business offers its employees group benefits provided by xxx. These benefits are insert details. After xxx months of employment, employees are enrolled in the plan and may select xxx coverage as required. Employers pay xxx and employees are required to pay xxx (if applicable). Currently, this is done by way of payroll deduction. Any questions can be reviewed with insert name of contact and phone number.

- **Group RRSP** - Employees begin participation in the plan after completion of xxx months of employment. The contribution by each employee is at least xxx (5%) of their gross salary, which is deducted from their paycheque. This is matched by the employer to a maximum of xxx (5%). Employees may **not** elect to place these contributions with another investment broker / agent while employed by name of business. Withdrawals from the Group RRSP plan are restricted for the duration of employment with name of business, unless permission is granted by xxx and is received in writing.

## TIME SHEETS

Possible options – choose or adapt as appropriate for your company

- Every employee is provided with a time sheet. This sheet is required for calculating his/her wages and for corporate record-keeping. Consequently, it must stay at its designated location, be handled carefully and not be used by any person other than the employee whose name appears on it. The time sheet must be filled in by the employee.  
OR
- Every employee is provided with a time sheet. This sheet is required for calculating his/her wages and for corporate record-keeping. Consequently, it must stay at its designated location, be handled carefully and not be used by any person other than the employee whose name appears on it.  
OR
- Every employee is provided with a (i.e. smart card). This card is required for calculating his/her wages and for corporate record-keeping. Employees who do not have their card with them may manually enter their code. Those who forget to record their arrival or departure times must go to xxx to rectify the situation.

## WORK SCHEDULE, BREAK PERIODS AND MEALS

The standard work week is xxx hours, day through day. The standard work day starts at xxx a.m. and ends at xxx p.m. Employees are entitled to xxx of breaks of xxx minutes and indicate time each day and xxx (un)paid xxx-minute lunch period per standard work day at indicate time.

The daily breaks and lunch period is dictated by the Employment Standards Act specific to your province. Each province has different rules; some provinces have mandatory coffee breaks while others don't. There are also various rules in regards to paid or unpaid breaks and after how many hours of work an employee is entitled to a break. All these details need to be reviewed and confirmed.

In addition, the Employment Standards Act will dictate maximum hours of work and rest period between. These details need to be reviewed and confirmed.

**Evening/night/summer schedules: add if applicable**

**Open ended clause(s): add if applicable**

Examples:

- The work schedule may change temporarily to accommodate the company's production requirements.  
OR
- The regular work hours may not be the same for all employees, depending on the type or location of the work that is assigned to them. In such instances, the working conditions are detailed in the employee's contract.

If you are in an industry that historically has layoffs (such as a seasonal business with patterns of layoffs) you may want to add a clause about layoffs in this section.



Cautionary notes: business owners need to be very careful when changing work conditions as this could be perceived as “constructive dismissal”. This includes changes that are considered significant such as those that impact salaries, changes in employee's work location, hours of work, position, etc. Prior to making changes to an employee's work conditions, we suggest that you call a CFIB Business Counsellor for assistance.

## ABSENCES AND LATENESS

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Employees are expected to follow the work schedule that has been assigned to them. **Name of business** expects all employees to arrive on time for the start of their work shift and return punctually from breaks.

Employees are sometimes required to be absent from, or late for, work. **Name of business** has provided a procedure for such cases to ensure that all staff are treated fairly. Employees are responsible for advising **xxx** of any absence or lateness as soon as possible before the start of their work shift so that the **supervisor** can make the necessary replacement arrangements and maintain good continuity of the department's activities. Unauthorized or excessive absences may result in the imposition of disciplinary measures by **management**, depending on the seriousness of the situation.

At this point in the document, information and details on disciplinary measures and the termination process could be included. As these are extremely sensitive processes, we encourage members to call a CFIB Business Counsellor for assistance. Counsellors will be able to review your options, discuss the risks to you and your business and help you navigate the rules in order to implement the appropriate procedures for your business.

This section could include for example the following:

- Disciplinary Measures
- Departure(s) including termination, resignation and layoff  
AND/OR
- Employer property (**example**) Upon termination of employment for any reason, all items of any kind created or used pursuant to the employee's service or furnished by the employer including but not limited to computers, reports, files, diskettes, manuals, literature, confidential information or other materials shall remain and be considered the exclusive property of the Employer at all times, and shall be surrendered to **xxx**, in good condition, promptly and without being requested to do so.

## OVERTIME

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Employees can occasionally be required to work overtime in order to meet production schedules. When this occurs, **xxx** will discuss the business needs with the employees in question. Overtime hours will be paid per the **insert provincially specific Employment Standards Act**.

Employees are not authorized to approve their own overtime; therefore, all work which they perform outside the usual schedule must receive prior approval from their immediate **supervisor**.

Overtime pay is dictated by the Employment Standards Act specific to your province. Each province has different rules and calculations which need to be reviewed and confirmed. Employers must also consider the requirements under rest periods when implementing overtime work and any requirements for approval from the Employment Standards office (if applicable).

## PAID STATUTORY HOLIDAYS

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The paid statutory holidays are listed below: **(these are the minimum under the Employment Standards Act)**

- List holidays per applicable provincial Employment Standards Act

Statutory holidays are paid as follows:

- List calculations per applicable provincial Employment Standards Act

Statutory holiday pay is dictated by the Employment Standards Act specific to your province. Each province has different rules and calculations which need to be reviewed and confirmed. Employers must also consider any special requirements for certain industries that may exist in some provinces.

## VACATIONS

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Vacation entitlement are as follows:

- Insert applicable provincial Employment Standards Act rules and calculations

Vacation time and vacation pay is dictated by the Employment Standards Act specific to your province. Each province has different rules and calculations which need to be reviewed and confirmed.

Here is an example of a chart that can be inserted:

Years of Service	Vacation Entitlement	Vacation Pay
1 year to less than 5 years	2 weeks	4%
More than 5 years	3 weeks	6%

All Employment Standard Act will contain very specific rules in regards to vacation pay and vacation time including scheduling and payments. It is very important for employers to familiarize themselves with the rules. Don't forget, you can always call a CFIB Business Counsellor for assistance.

## MATERNITY/PARENTAL LEAVE

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Maternity and parental leave entitlement are as follows:

- Insert applicable provincial Employment Standards Act rules

Maternity and parental leaves are dictated by the Employment Standards Act specific to your province. In addition, there is a Federal component in regards to benefit entitlements via Employment Insurance. Each province has different rules in regards to these leaves. The Federal Government oversees the management of the benefits.

Cautionary notes: maternity and parental leaves are considered protected, therefore Human Rights are a consideration in this area and any issue should be reviewed and addressed accordingly.

## SICK LEAVE(S)

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Sick leave entitlement are as follows:

- Insert applicable provincial Employment Standards Act rules

Not all provinces have mandatory sick leave rules. Employers should carefully review the requirements of their province including whether or not the leave is mandatory, the number of days and if pay is required.

Listed leaves can include:

- General and or unpaid sick leave
- Compassionate Care
- Jury Duty
- Bereavement

- Disability

Cautionary notes: sick leaves can be tricky especially if there is a more complex issue at hand. The Human Rights Code includes a “duty to accommodate” section which translates into employer responsibilities. You may wish to further review this matter with a CFIB Business Counsellor.

## OTHER CONDITIONS/POLICIES

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Possible options – choose or adapt as appropriate for your company

### Using the Internet and social media

The Internet and social media may be used during work hours only for purposes of carrying out job-related requirements and responsibilities. When the Internet and social media are used for work purposes, employees must act in a professional manner while also abiding by the organization’s Code of Conduct. It is forbidden to play video games during work hours or to surf inappropriate and offensive websites.

### Using personal mobile devices

Using personal mobile devices during work hours is not allowed since doing so could adversely impact the productivity of employees, their departments and the company. For all family emergencies, employees are encouraged to share the business’ landline number with family and friends.

### Using computer software

Computer software must be approved by the xxx and be compatible with the technological options chosen by the company, and must always be accompanied by a user license.

### Some other conditions you might mention include:

- Travel expenses
- Meal and accommodation expenses
- Professional appearance code
- Professionalism (example) When representing name of business, staff should dress and behave appropriately. Employees should choose to dress in a manner which presents a professional image to the public and is respectful of others. Excessive use of profanity is neither professional nor respectful to co-workers and will not be tolerated.
- Professional Development
- Confidential Information and Intellectual Property
- IT Information Storage and Security
- Scent Policy
- Smoke Free Environment (example) Smoking in the offices of name of business is not permitted at any time. An ‘enclosed workplace’ is defined as the inside of any place, building or structure or conveyance or a part of any of them that a) is covered by a roof or b) employees work in or frequent during the course of their employment whether or not they are acting in the course of their employment at the time, and c) is not primarily a private dwelling

## COMPANY CODE OF ETHICS

Our company has adopted values that will allow us to achieve our growth objectives while also promoting general workplace well-being. These values must be upheld by each and every one of us. Management cannot, therefore, tolerate any conduct that contravenes these company values. Below is the Code of Ethics by which all employees – workers and managers alike – must abide. We encourage you to inform your manager of any conduct that is illegal or contrary to the Code of Ethics. The company is committed to protecting employees against all forms of reprisals.

### Example of elements that may be included in your company's Code of Ethics.

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Foster cooperation and communication among each other
- Treat each other in a fair manner, with dignity and respect
- Promote harmony and teamwork in all relationships
- Strive for mutual understanding of standards for performance expectations, and communicate routinely to reinforce that understanding
- Encourage and consider opinions of other employees or members, and invite their participation in decisions that affect their work and their careers
- Encourage growth and development of employees by helping them achieve their personal goals at the [organization] and beyond
- Seek to avoid workplace conflict, and if it occurs, respond fairly and quickly to provide the means to resolve it
- Administer all policies equitably and fairly, recognizing that jobs are different but each is important; that individual performance should be recognized and measured against predetermined standards; and that each employee has the right to fair treatment
- Recognize that employees in their personal lives may experience crisis and show compassion and understanding

## COMPANY RULES AND REGULATIONS

Name of business expects staff to abide by certain rules and regulations in order to create a positive working environment for everyone. Employees are also required to follow the rules, regulations and guidelines laid out in this Handbook and communicated within the workplace.

In this section, include all provincially specific policies as well as sector specific requirements. Certain provinces have elaborate rules in regards to policies for Health & Safety, Anti-violence/harassment/bullying – those should be reviewed carefully and fully implemented in your business. You may wish to further review this matter with a CFIB Business Counsellor.

### Company equipment and assets

#### Examples:

- Use of the name of business equipment/space for personal reasons during work hours is not acceptable.
- Use of the name of business equipment/space for personal reasons outside work hours must receive approval from xxx.
- Any use of assets belonging to the company away from the business' location must be approved by xxx.
- Employees will not falsify files, documents, punch cards and production/quality reports or tamper with equipment.
- Fundraising activities on the employer's property requires prior approval from xxx.

### Health & Safety

#### Example:

The employer and senior management of name of business are vitally interested in the health and safety of its workers. Protection of workers from injury or occupational disease is a major continuing objective.

Name of business will make every effort to provide a safe, healthy work environment. All employers, supervisors and workers must be dedicated to the continuing objective of reducing risk of injury.

Name of business, as employer, is ultimately responsible for worker health and safety. As owner of name of business, I give you my personal commitment that I will comply with my duties under the Act, such as taking every reasonable precaution for the protection of workers in the workplace.

Supervisors will be held accountable for the health and safety of workers under their supervision. Supervisors are subject to various duties in the workplace, including the duty to ensure that machinery and equipment are safe and that workers work in compliance with established safe work practices and procedures.

Every worker must protect his/her own health and safety by working in compliance with the law and with safe work practices and procedures established by the employer. Workers will receive information, training and competent supervision in their specific work tasks to protect their health and safety.

It is in the best interest of all parties to consider health and safety in every activity. Commitment to health and safety must form an integral part of this organization, from the president to the workers.

### Harassment/Violence/Bullying

#### Examples:

Name of business has a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy regarding threats, verbal or physical violence/harassment/bullying towards colleagues, management, clients or representatives of the employer.

The management of name of business is committed to the prevention of workplace violence/harassment/bullying and is ultimately responsible for worker health and safety. We will take whatever steps are reasonable to protect our workers from workplace violence/harassment/bullying from all sources.

Violent behaviour, harassment and bullying in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone. This policy applies to xxx. Everyone is expected to uphold this policy and to work together to prevent workplace violence.

There is a workplace violence/harassment/bullying program that implements this policy. It includes measures and procedures to protect workers from workplace violence/harassment/bullying, a means of summoning immediate assistance and a process for workers to report incidents, or raise concerns.

Name of business, as the employer, will ensure this policy and the supporting program are implemented and maintained. All workers and supervisors will receive appropriate information and instruction on the contents of the policy and program.

Supervisors will adhere to this policy and the supporting program. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that measures and procedures are followed by workers and that workers have the information they need to protect themselves.

Every worker must work in compliance with this policy and the supporting program. All workers are encouraged to raise any concerns about workplace violence/harassment/bullying and to report any violent incidents or threats.

Management pledges to investigate and deal with all incidents and complaints of workplace violence/harassment/bullying in a fair and timely manner, respecting the privacy of all concerned as much as possible.

You may add the company's organizational chart to this section, as well as telephone numbers for emergencies or reporting workplace incidents, etc.

#### Dispute Resolution

Regrettably, conflict can occur in any working environment. In an effort to resolve conflict in an expedient, yet fair manner, Name of business recommends the following process for conflict or dispute resolution.

- Speak to the person you are having the dispute with. Many times disputes arise due to misunderstandings and miscommunications.
- If speaking to the individual does not work, speak to the xxx. They will arrange a meeting between those involved in the dispute, to determine a resolution.
- If at this level, a resolution is unattainable, the parties may be referred to mediation by an outside third party. The resolution of the mediator is binding on both parties of the dispute.

**INSERT YOUR LOGO HERE**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HAVING READ THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, attest that I have read the Employee Handbook and its various components, including the following:

- Working Conditions Handbook
- Company Rules and Regulations
- Company Code of Ethics

[Several policies could be attached to this guide and can be listed above.](#)

I acknowledge having received all the relevant information that I needed in order to have a good understanding of the content and scope of this Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Employee's signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Executive Director's signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

Please sign this letter and give it to your employer.