

It pays to go by the handbook

In the third of a series on Health and Safety, Oliver Dale looks at employee handbooks

All employers should have various employment-related policies and procedures they expect their employees to follow. While some employers put these policies and procedures in writing, others fear that putting them in writing will increase their exposure to employment-related claims. Some laws require certain employment policies to be in writing. However, there is no law that requires an employer to provide employees with a handbook. Nevertheless, there are many good reasons, both legal and non-legal, to produce and circulate a handbook.

Employee handbooks can enhance the employer-employee relationship and help to defend the business against wrongful termination, discrimination, and harassment claims. Regardless of the size of your organisation, the employee handbook can be the keystone to good employment practices.

From a non-legal perspective, an employee handbook can introduce a new employee to the organisation in a positive way. For example, providing them with the organisation values and an account of the organisation's history can make a new employee feel more at home. Moreover, a handbook can promote a sense of fairness and openness on the part of the organisation that can lead to greater employee productivity and loyalty.

“Regardless of the size of your organisation, the employee handbook can be the keystone to good employment practices”

There are also many sound legal reasons for implementing an employee handbook. Clear written policies can provide a defense against many employment-related claims brought by employees. In addition to posting on bulletin boards, the busi-



Oliver Dale of Safety Revolution

ness should circulate the handbook freely amongst staff. A handbook is a means of uniform distribution of policies and procedures to all employees.

ESSENTIAL POLICIES

While employee handbooks may contain policies on everything from employee benefits – sick leave, vacation, holidays, and insurance – to performance and discipline policies, there are several essential exposure-limiting policies that should be included.

As an organisation your efforts in implementing, circulating and putting your employment policies in writing may be invaluable should an employment dispute arise. The devotion of precious time it would take to put together far outweighs the inherent risks in not having these policies in writing.

Safety Revolution now offers a standard contract of employment, employee handbook and access to the 24hr HR Helpline for just £490.

● For more information on this and other HR or Health & Safety matters visit www.safetyrevolutionltd.com or contact Oliver Dale MBA, Managing Director, Safety Revolution Ltd oliver@safetyrevolutionltd.com

www.safetyrevolutionltd.com

Sponsored by  **safety revolution**