



New Employee Policies for your Staff

Recently the Gold Seal suite of HR materials were updated to reflect current IR laws and HR best practice. Some significant changes have been made to the HR Manual and Employee Policy Handbook (EPH).

Of most importance to employees will be the changes to the Employee Policy Handbook.

What's New?

The EPH contains over 35 Policies that guide employees and organisations in their behaviours, responsibilities and expectations. There are policies covering many aspects some of which include:

- Code of Conduct
- How to dress at work
- Attending work under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Taking leave
- How to deal with work injuries
- Studying at work
- Managing conflicts of interest

There are seven new policies to address situations not previously covered or new legislative requirements. These include:

- Abandonment of Employment Policy
- Death during Employment Policy
- Flexible Working Arrangements Policy
- Privacy of Employee Data, Data Security & Confidentiality Policy
- Retirement Policy
- Uniform Policy
- Workers Compensation Policy

There have also been amendments made to further enhance or clarify aspects in the following policies:

- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Dress Code Policy
- Study Policy
- Training & Development Policy

Communicating the Changes to Staff

In order for the EPH to be a useful tool, it is imperative that employees are made aware of the updated policies and if need be refreshed on all other policies. It is recommended that staff receive training whenever there are changes.

Refresher training on Employee Policies is beneficial for many reasons.

- It helps keep employees focused on what is expected of them and their responsibilities
- It enables the Employer in the case of Performance Counselling, to highlight non-adherence



to Employee Policies as a reason for disciplinary procedures.

Example

The EPH clearly outlines what is expected in relation to employees' consumption of alcohol at work-related functions. Should any employee step outside of these expectations, the Employer can use the Alcohol and Drugs Policy as a reference tool during disciplinary meetings.

Should an employee not have been briefed on the policies guiding him, he/she could argue quite rightly that he did not know the expectations the business had in relation to alcohol consumption at work functions and he/she thought his behaviour to be within reasonable boundaries. It is best that this line of discussion is completely removed, by all parties having a thorough understanding of what is acceptable.

It is recommended that Employers undertake a process to discuss all policies, particularly the new ones, with all staff. The way this is done will of course vary from business to business and may include presentation of the policies at team meetings, emails to staff about the new policies on the intranet, individual meetings and so on. Such meetings should provide opportunities to provide clarification if any is required by employees.

To ensure all employees acknowledge their understanding and acceptance of the policies, it is recommended the Employee Policy Acceptance Form is signed and kept on file. A copy of this is available on this website in the **[HR/IR Manuals and Templates webpage](#)**.

What is most important is that all employees are able to read the EPH, have time to digest it, ask questions and then sign the acceptance form to acknowledge this.

Further Assistance

For assistance or guidance on the HR/IR materials or any HR/IR matters, contact 03 9510 5100 or email hrservices@goldseal.com.au