



The following is located at:

<http://ChurchSafety.com/topics/staff/employees/ministryemployeehandbooks/ministryemployeehandbook.html>

Simple Tips for Ministry Employee Handbooks

Learn how to create and maintain your ministry employee handbook.

Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company | **posted 4/20/2009**

Every ministry, no matter how small, could benefit from maintaining an employee handbook. A proper handbook defines what you expect from employees and what they can expect from you. By following a few simple tips, your ministry handbook can provide valuable legal protection if your policies are challenged in court.

Getting Started

- **Consult an attorney.** Your policies and procedures may be subject to federal, state, and local laws. Have an attorney review your handbook before it is distributed to employees.
- **Keep it simple.** Information should be concise and straightforward. An employee handbook is not an employment contract and it shouldn't read like one.
- **Understand what is required.** Certain information—like equal employment opportunity and harassment policies—should be a part of every employee handbook.
- **Answer common questions.** Think of your handbook as an additional HR staff member. Consider the most commonly asked questions of HR and include the information in the handbook.

Ongoing Efforts

- **Review the handbook regularly.** You can never be finished with your employee handbook. Laws and interpretations of them can change over time. Establish a schedule for reviewing your policies and procedures.
- **Communicate policy changes.** When policies do change, have a formal plan for making sure employees are aware of the changes.
- **Document acknowledgement.** Maintain written or electronic acknowledgement that employees have received and read the handbook. There will be no question that an employee is aware of a policy, if you have proof to back it up.
- **Enforce policies consistently.** Your handbook will provide little protection from liability if it is not enforced or done so sporadically. If you don't expect employees to comply with a particular policy, consider rewording or removing it.

[Back to top](#)

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