

# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOKS

## Why do you need them, and what should they look like?

Every dairy operation has its own rules and policies. However, few communicate these properly to their employees. The employee handbook is an effective way of documenting policies and procedures, as well as communicating expected standards of performance and conduct.



The employee handbook is also a great tool to use during the orientation of new employees, by providing information about the dairy's history, facilities, salary structure and compensation policies and other important things that should be communicated within the first week of work to all new employees.

### FYI

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The employee handbook can also be a tool to avoid liability with employee problems. It is important dairy employers clearly state policies against certain things, like discrimination or harassment based upon sex and race. Also, having a policy stated about not hiring illegal aliens should be included in all employee handbooks.

### Where do you begin?

Even if you never had an employee handbook for your dairy, you are already managing your employees based on informal or unwritten policies and rules. The employee handbook would be a formalization of policies and procedures already existing at your dairy.

Your employee handbook should have answers to the questions most frequently asked by your employees. This is why an effective employee handbook should at least have the following:

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- Introduction/welcome section
- History of your dairy
- Mission and vision statements
- Organizational chart
- Equal employment opportunity policies (including immigration law compliance)
  - Employment and compensation policies
  - Employment benefits & time off policies
  - Discipline and termination policies (including zero tolerance policies for mistreating animals)
- Safety policies
- Company disclaimer

Always remember to go through the employee handbook (or at least through the important points) with new employees during their first week at work. If you are developing an employee handbook for the first time, call a meeting with all your employees to introduce the handbook and answer any questions. Go to my website at [www.apndairy.com](http://www.apndairy.com) for more information on how to develop your own, customized employee handbook.

Finally, it is important to review the handbook frequently (once per year) to ensure it is updated with new or refreshed policies and practices. □