

Fact Sheet

Policies & Procedures – Your Lawful Obligations

To review the webinar associated with this fact sheet, visit <https://youtu.be/ZYWDW4HeaL8>

So many organisations have weighty tomes of policies and procedures – it might be called The Manual (yes, with capital letters) in your workplace. It usually sits on the shelf getting dusty, no one really uses it, it never really gets updated, and is just one of those things you have to have to meet your obligations and is otherwise a waste of everyone's time – right?

No!! Just like having position descriptions and employment contracts protects your business by setting out exactly what your employees are expected to do and how you will treat them, having robust, usable and easily updated policies and procedures protects your business by setting out exactly what your day to day expectations are of your employees, how they should behave in certain situations, and how everyone can be kept safe and healthy in the workplace. Policies and procedures clearly define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the workplace, provide clear guidelines on how to undertake certain activities, and ensure uniformity and consistency in decision-making and operational procedures.

These documents need to be clear, usable, dynamic and responsive to the real world of your workplace.

What policies do I need to have to comply with my lawful obligations?

- Induction Policy
- Domestic and Family Violence Leave Policy
- Flexibility Policy
- Leave Policy
- Parental Leave Policy
- Timesheet Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy
- Personal Grievance Policy
- Workplace Bullying Policy
- Performance & Misconduct Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Anti-Discrimination & Equal Opportunity Policy
- Gender Equality in the Workplace Policy
- Disclosure of Employment Records Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policies and Procedures, including:
 - o Record & Document Control Procedure
 - o Workplace Health and Safety Management Procedure
 - o Work Health & Safety Consultative Process
 - o WHS Responsibilities for all parties (managers, supervisors, officers, employees, contractors)
 - o WHS Consultation Statement
 - o Training policy
 - o Risk Management Procedure
 - o Emergency Evacuation Policy
 - o Emergency Management Procedure
 - o Electrical Safety Policy
 - o First Aid Policy
 - o Hazardous Workplace Substances Procedure

This information and advice is general in nature, based on our interpretation of current legislation and policy, and does not take into account your specific circumstances. You should consider whether the information is appropriate to your needs and seek professional advice if required.

Last updated 28 October 2020.



PINNACLE

PEOPLE SOLUTIONS

- Working during Hot Weather Policy
- Incident Report & Investigation Procedure
- Workplace Inspection Policy
- Manual Handling/Ergonomics Procedure
- Noise Procedure
- PPE & Clothing Policy
- Skin Protection Policy
- Working at Heights Procedure
- Vehicle Safety Policy
- Safe Work Procedure
- Smoke Free Policy
- Workplace Drug & Alcohol Policy
- Rehabilitation Policy
- Workers Compensation Return to Work Program Procedure

What else should we have, as best practice?

- Recruitment & selection Policy
- Health Information Collection Policy
- Probationary Policy
- Attendance & Absenteeism Policy
- Expense Claim Policy
- Leave Without Pay Policy
- Staff Training & Development Policy
- Vehicle Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Internet, Phone, Email & Computer Use Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Epidemic & Pandemic Policy

There's lots of other sorts of policies that might be applicable to your workplace and employees; i.e. if you offer Salary Packaging, you should have a salary packaging policy in place that sets out the expectations and inclusions, along with any procedures on how to start, amend and terminate salary packaging.

How do we put these into practice?

The first thing to do is to consider what policies you have in place already, whether or not they are written down. How does your business do things? Is that the best/a legal way to do it? What could you be doing better? Policies and procedures should be written down for clarity and ease of explaining to others, as well as being able to follow them consistently in the future. If you're not sure where to start, there are many places you can buy template policies online to tweak to your business needs, or get professional advice.

No one can put anything into practice if they don't know about it. Educating yourself and your staff on what is contained within your policies and procedures manual, how it works and what needs to be done is the next step. It is good practice (although not legally required) to have all employees, and any new ones in the future, sign off that they have read and understood the policies and procedures and agree to abide by them. Hold regular training sessions for your staff – this might be as simple as picking a procedure to look at in detail during toolbox or standup meetings once a week. Make sure that the policies and procedures are accessible, either in hard copy or soft copy.

This information and advice is general in nature, based on our interpretation of current legislation and policy, and does not take into account your specific circumstances. You should consider whether the information is appropriate to your needs and seek professional advice if required.

Last updated 28 October 2020.



PINNACLE

PEOPLE SOLUTIONS

Once everyone in your workplace is aware of and understands the policies and procedures, the key is to lead by example to implement them. A staff member asks you about taking leave? Pull that document off the shelf and look at what the leave policy says, and then follow that policy. Your guys are starting a new job that involves ladders? Pull that manual off the shelf and have a quick review of the Safe Working at Heights procedure to ensure that everyone is kept as safe as possible in the workplace. You have a new contractor starting? Pull out your contractor management checklist to make sure you dot all the I's and cross all the Ts.

If through this process you find that something doesn't work for you or your workplace, change it! Consult with your employees, get professional advice to ensure you're still meeting your lawful obligations and not giving bad instructions (particularly regarding safety) and then update that document. Policies and procedures are not holy tomes handed down from on high to be followed despite your better judgment; remember they are living documents that help your workplace function at its best.

What happens if I do the wrong thing?

There's two ways that things can really go pear-shaped for businesses here:

1. A business doesn't have a policy in place and something goes wrong.

Without policy and procedure in place, it's difficult to manage staff and management expectations about how things will operate in your workplace. Decisions can be made inconsistently, and you might find yourself either giving constant instruction to someone on how to do something, or putting extra effort into reinventing the wheel every time a situation arises.

2. There's a discrepancy between what your policies and procedures say, and what you actually do. A few very large organisations have been in trouble recently regarding sexual harassment in the workplace, and the issue was not so much what exactly was done to address the problem, but rather that the established policies and procedures weren't followed, even at the highest level of governance.

What do I do now?

- When is the last time you looked at your workplace manual, handbook, etc? Pick a policy at random and make sure it is being followed.
- Do you know what your lawful obligations are as a person carrying on a business or undertaking? What does the law require you to have a policies and procedures in place for?
- If you don't have anything like this in place, it's a good idea to do so as soon as possible to reduce the risk to your business.
- If you're not sure what to do, seek professional advice.

Need help? Contact Pinnacle People Solutions for tailored advice and support for your business by email to admin@pinnaclepeoplesolutions.com.au or call 1300 856 231

This information and advice is general in nature, based on our interpretation of current legislation and policy, and does not take into account your specific circumstances. You should consider whether the information is appropriate to your needs and seek professional advice if required.

Last updated 28 October 2020.