| **Brought to you by**  |
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Employee Handbook Template

Your small business’s employee handbook is an opportunity to make a positive first impression on a new hire. It’s your chance to present a polished, organized resource that provides useful information while sharing your unique culture and values. Though some of the legal portions can be dense and a bit jargon-heavy, try to use a friendly tone that embodies your workplace style. A well-written handbook can ultimately increase employee longevity and set your team up for success — keeping everyone aligned around important policies and procedures.

This template will guide you through the essentials of your handbook, and can be customized based on your industry and work culture. Remember to be authentic and include what’s most important for your team’s success.

| **How to use this template**1. Insert your business’s logo and contact information onto the cover page.
2. Now you’re ready to start filling out each section. Read the instructional tips for guidance.
3. **When you’re done, remember to delete these sections showing instructional prompts: “tips,” “introduction,” “conclusion.”**
4. Proofread thoroughly to ensure there are no mistakes or spelling errors.
5. Share with management for feedback. Once the handbook is finalized, give a copy to your employees and new hires.
6. Revise once a year or as needed.
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##

**Let’s get started.**

|  |
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| ***[Insert Your Company Logo or Name Here]*****Employee Handbook** |
| --- |

| **Company Name** Street Address City, State, Zip CodePhone Number Email Website |
| --- |

#

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# Welcome

|  **Pro tip:****When you send your handbook to new hires, they are likely buzzing with excitement, eager to dive into their new role. A welcome letter helps set the tone for your business and for the handbook itself. Feel free to use a voice and tone that matches that of your business, whether it’s playful, inspiring, or serious. Try to maintain a human element in your writing, rather than making it too prescriptive — remember, a positive, inviting welcome letter can ultimately help boost** [**employee retention**](https://get.doordash.com/en-us/blog/employee-retention-strategies?utm_source=Web&utm_medium=Direct&utm_campaign=MX_US_DIR_OCT_SHD_MKT_RES_BOF_SSM_ENG_5_CUSXXX___Downloadable-Q122-Employee-Handbook-Template)**.**  |
| --- |
| *Delete these tips when done.* |

| *Write your welcome message here.* |
| --- |

##

## Introduction

Though a new hire has probably done some research, this section gives you the opportunity to share your business’s history from your perspective. Make sure to cover all the basics — from aspirational anecdotes to must-have employment policies.

| *Write your introduction here.* |
| --- |

## About us

What’s your founding story? Use this section to tell your team a bit about your business and how it came about. Maybe there’s a meaningful history behind the name, or the business was started by your great-grandfather at the turn of the 20th century. A couple of paragraphs can help team members get a better sense of the business’s past, present, and future — providing your staff with the institutional knowledge needed to interact with guests.

| *Write your “About us” here.* |
| --- |

## Our mission & values

This section highlights the “why” behind your business. You likely offered employees a position because they embodied elements of your core values during the interview process. Sharing those here gives you the chance to showcase how your team operates. It can encompass your hospitality ideology, how your staff interacts with each other, the principles of your management style, and more. Ideally, your employees will bring these values to life at work each day — so make sure they know about them early on.

| *Write your mission & values here.* |
| --- |

## Hours of operation & FAQs

Keeping your official hours of operation close to the front of your handbook provides employees with an easy reference point in case a customer calls to ask.

Be sure to include any other information that could be needed on the fly — this way your team isn’t left fumbling. Consider adding brief answers to common questions, like what your dress code is, whether you take reservations (and where), how customers can order delivery, and where the closest parking is. Think of this section as a mini cheat sheet for your business.

| *Write your hours of operation & FAQs here.* |
| --- |

## Equal Employment Opportunity

An equal employment opportunity policy lets your staff know that no discrimination or harassment will be tolerated in the workplace, particularly as it relates to hiring, firing, promotions, or wages. While it is not required, including this policy and training managers on its principles can instill trust in your team — and in the worst-case scenario, help prevent legal battles.

|  **Sample language****See the language below for an example, but note that local, state, and federal laws may require additional stipulations:** *[Company X] is an equal opportunity employer. We are dedicated to providing equal opportunities to all employees and applicants and do not discriminate against race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. This policy applies to all terms of employment, including hiring, training, scheduling, promotion, compensation, and termination.* |
| --- |
| *Delete these tips when done.* |

| *Write your equal employment opportunity policy here.* |
| --- |

## At-will employment

Depending on where your business is located, employment may be presumed to be at-will. This means that employers can terminate employment and/or alter wages and benefits for any reason, within the confines of the law, at any time. It also means that unless otherwise indicated in an employment contract, employees can leave at any time without legal repercussions. Many handbooks include this information at the beginning to make sure employees are aware of the policy.

|  **Sample language****See the language below for an example, but note that local, state, and federal laws may require additional stipulations:** *Your employment with [Company X] is at will, meaning there are no contracts in place to guarantee employment for any employee for a specific duration of time. This means you are able to leave your employment with us at any time without cause or notice, and [Company X] reserves the right to terminate your employment at any time without cause or notice.*  |
| --- |
| *Delete these tips when done.* |

| *Write your “at-will employment” information here.* |
| --- |

# Conduct & behavior

|  **Pro tip:****This section is your business’s chance to set a stake in the ground and establish its brand and personality as a workplace. Setting expectations for behavior on the job helps employees understand from the beginning how they should act in various situations.**  |
| --- |
| *Delete these tips when done.* |

## Dress code policy

Your customers’ first impression of your business is your employees and how they present themselves. In your dress code policy, outline your uniform expectations in detail, clearly indicating what is and isn’t allowed. If your uniform is more flexible, like a dark top and dark pants, give specific examples of what you expect (e.g., black dress pants rather than leggings).

This is also an appropriate place to outline what may not be allowed in terms of safety regulations, like open-toed shoes, shoes without non-slip soles, or loose hair.

| *Write your dress code policy here.* |
| --- |

## Code of conduct

This policy spells out what you expect from all employees on a daily basis in relation to your company’s values and mission. It should encourage your team to independently make decisions led by the ethics and morals of the company. You can also use this section to tell employees what happens in case of misconduct, both internally and — if applicable — legally. Some employers use this section as a benchmark for performance reviews to evaluate how effectively employees manage their tasks.

| *Write your code of conduct here.* |
| --- |

## Drug & alcohol policy

Alcohol and drug use on the job can pose a safety threat to fellow employees and customers. Explain your procedure for managing employees who abuse substances on the job, including any drug testing mandates you may have.

You may also wish to outline how you support employee proactivity in dealing with substance abuse, including any temporary leave policies for those who voluntarily seek treatment.

| *Write your drug and alcohol policy here.* |
| --- |

## Cell phone use

Cell phones can be a distraction from the job and may cause a negative experience for guests. Let employees know if and when they’re allowed to use their cell phones at work. For example, you may allow cell phone use during a break or in case of emergency, but ask that devices are otherwise kept out of sight or left in a secure location.

| *Write your cell phone use policy here.* |
| --- |

## Lateness & no-shows

When you’re operating with a small team, reliability is a must. Outline your business’s policy for who an employee should contact if they’re going to be late and what constitutes an excused lateness.

Employees should also know that they are the ones responsible for their shift in case they are unable to make it. Let them know what your policy is if they are sick, for calling out, covering shifts, getting shift swap approvals, as well as what happens if they don’t show up without letting you know.

| *Write your lateness and no-show policy here.* |
| --- |

## Fireable offenses

Now that employees have an understanding of what you expect in their conduct, make it clear what is unacceptable for your team. Explain any strike system if you have one; for instance, employees may get a strike for every unexcused absence and be terminated after a certain number of strikes. Examples of fireable offenses include harassment of any kind, unethical behavior, stealing, or violation of company policies, but tailor these to your business and expectations.

| *Write your fireable offenses policy here.* |
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# Daily operating procedures

|  **Pro tip:****This section includes what team members can expect on a daily basis, as well as what’s expected of them. It can help keep the staff aligned and make sure everyone has the right ingredients to succeed.**  |
| --- |
| *Delete these tips when done.* |

## Pre-shift meeting

If you have a regular meeting before a shift, let your team know when it occurs if it isn’t indicated on the schedule. Let your staff know the purpose of these meetings and outline general agenda items (like sharing shoutouts, hearing product descriptions, or doing menu tastings) to keep everyone excited to attend.

| *Write your pre-shift meeting policy here.* |
| --- |

## Opening procedures

Outline what each team member is responsible for at the beginning of their shift or where they can find this information. Coordinating with a manager to create checklists for each position is a great way to make sure everything gets done as needed. You can also indicate which tasks need to be completed prior to opening, and which can be done throughout the shift.

| *Write your opening procedures here.* |
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## Closing procedures

Just as with the opening procedures, create a list that includes everything that needs to be cleaned, stocked, or put away before closing. Make sure to write who each team member needs to check out with before they leave to ensure everything is finished to your standards.

| *Write your closing procedures here.* |
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## Guest service

Outline the level of service you expect from your team, whether it’s to always find a “yes” for guests or to offer small gestures for customers, like giving pets a treat or writing a handwritten thank you note on a receipt. While these actions may become routine for your staff, customers take notice and those little things can lead to [long-time loyalty](https://get.doordash.com/en-us/blog/six-ways-to-increase-loyalty-from-your-restaurant-customers-today?utm_source=Web&utm_medium=Direct&utm_campaign=MX_US_DIR_OCT_SHD_MKT_RES_BOF_SSM_ENG_5_CUSXXX___Downloadable-Q122-Employee-Handbook-Template).

It can be helpful to write this portion from a guest or customer’s perspective to convey the empathy your team should possess. This approach encourages employees to think of all situations from the customer's perspective. Consider adding a guest conflict policy, as well, so employees understand how to handle more difficult situations.

| *Write your guest service policy here.* |
| --- |

## Employee meals & breaks

Let employees know when they are able to take breaks, whether for a meal or to get some fresh air. Be sure to check any local laws or regulations before drafting this section, as there may be laws in place dictating how many breaks are required based on shift length. Consider adding any stipulations to the breaks, as well, like not smoking directly outside the business or while in uniform.

If you offer family meal, tell employees when it’s available and where they’re allowed to eat (e.g., ask them to not sit at tables that are already set). Your team should also be aware of any charge associated with family meals, if applicable, and whether they’re able to opt out.

| *Write your meals and breaks policy here.* |
| --- |

## Shift drinks

If you operate a restaurant and offer employees shift drinks at your discretion, make sure they know what they’re allowed to drink, when, and where. Many restaurants ask that employees change out of their uniform before taking a seat at the bar, so use this section to lay out any other rules you have in place for team members who want to take advantage of this benefit.

| *Write your shift drinks policy here.* |
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## Discounts

To thank your employees for all of their hard work, let them know about any discounts or perks they can take advantage of or offer to loved ones, as well as any limitations. They’ll appreciate an extra incentive, and it can help boost your [local marketing efforts](https://get.doordash.com/en-us/blog/how-to-nail-your-restaurants-local-marketing-strategy?utm_source=Web&utm_medium=Direct&utm_campaign=MX_US_DIR_OCT_SHD_MKT_RES_BOF_SSM_ENG_5_CUSXXX___Downloadable-Q122-Employee-Handbook-Template).

| *Write your employee discounts policy here.* |
| --- |

# Communication & workplace safety

|  **Pro tip:****Setting up open lines of communication with your team helps create a stress-free work environment. This section informs employees of logistics that help keep them organized and safe.**  |
| --- |
| *Delete these tips when done.* |

## Scheduling

Your team should know when to expect their schedule, how it will be sent, and for what period of time (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly). Use this section to let them know how to change their availability when needed, and how far in advance they need to do so.

You may also choose to outline the kinds of shifts you have available on the schedule, like opener, mid, and closer, and an approximation of the times for each. If you have any unique shifts for holidays (not including full closures), include those here, as well.

| *Write your scheduling policy here.* |
| --- |

## COVID-19 & other health precautions

Outline the steps you are taking to keep your team and customers safe amid the pandemic, including any mask requirements or proof of vaccination. While these may fluctuate based on local regulations, detailing your basic approach here can help your team prepare and know what to tell customers.

You can also use this space to indicate any other health precautions you have, such as where employees can find a CPR kit or first aid items.

| *Write your COVID-19 and health policy here.* |
| --- |

## Workplace safety

Workplace safety regulations can vary from business to business, so use your discretion to highlight any relevant policies and procedures. This can range from food safety to emergency plans to animal welfare, which are all intended to ensure your team and customers are safe and protected at all times while on the premises.

| *Write your workplace safety policy here.* |
| --- |

#

# Pay & benefits

|  **Pro tip:****Of all the sections of your employee handbook, this will likely be the one employees reference most. Use this space to exercise transparency and set expectations around the pay and benefits you offer.** |
| --- |
| *Delete these tips when done.* |

## Pay & overtime

Clarify when and how employees can expect to receive their paycheck. Will checks come on a weekly or biweekly basis? How will tips be distributed? What mandatory or elected deductions will be removed? Answer these questions upfront so there’s no confusion about what employees will receive at the end of the pay period (or when they’ll receive it). Similarly, outlining a pay structure based on promotions, new certifications, or tenure at your business can provide employees with clear, actionable steps for boosting their salaries. Explain when employees qualify for overtime, and outline any approval procedure you have in place.

| *Write your pay and overtime policy here.* |
| --- |

## Rewards for employee referrals

An [employee referral program](https://get.doordash.com/en-us/blog/building-employee-referral-program?utm_source=Web&utm_medium=Direct&utm_campaign=MX_US_DIR_OCT_SHD_MKT_RES_BOF_SSM_ENG_5_CUSXXX___Downloadable-Q122-Employee-Handbook-Template) — a rewards program that encourages current employees to recommend candidates for open positions — can help build a high-performing team while keeping costs low. With a new hire, there’s no time like the present to get them thinking about referring their own friends and family to apply for a job. Outline any program requirements and explain how your referral program works.

| *Write your employee referral program information here.* |
| --- |

## Holidays & time off

Share your holiday and time off policy. If your business observes any holidays with a full closure, list them here. On the other hand, if some employees will be required to work certain holidays, explain how scheduling will work.

Whether you offer paid or unpaid time off, employees will definitely have questions about how many days they can take off and how to submit scheduling requests. After clarifying the basics, explain how accrual works and whether or not it increases with length of employment. For paid time off, will employees be compensated for any unused days if they terminate their employment? Will it roll over year to year? Provide any details here.

| *Write your holiday and time off policy here.* |
| --- |

## Family & sick leave

Under federal, state, and local laws, your business may be required to offer certain types of leave — so you’ll need to research what is necessary for your situation. For instance, in the United States, the [Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla) requires businesses with 50 or more full-time employees to offer unpaid leave to qualifying employees. On the state and local level, you also may be required to offer medical, family, maternity, or parental leave. Your state may offer insurance funds to help cover the costs of family, maternity, and parental leave, but paid sick time or medical leave is typically an employer expense. Outline your policies for paid and unpaid leave, according to any regulations.

| *Write your family and sick leave policy here.* |
| --- |

## Insurance

Federal and local regulations may stipulate that businesses with a certain number of employees offer health insurance to their employees, so you’ll want to conduct your own research to see how it applies to you. Since it is often highly valued by employees, providing health insurance can help you retain experienced, in-demand talent. Use this space to detail your insurance policy if you have one, and be sure to include when and how employees can opt into coverage.

| *Write your insurance information here.* |
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# Anti-harassment & anti-discrimination

An anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policy not only ensures you comply with federal and state laws, but also reassures employees you won’t tolerate inappropriate or harmful workplace behavior. A strong policy will note that harassment of any kind is prohibited and that employees will not be retaliated against for reporting such behavior.

|  **Sample language****See the language below for an example, but note that local, state, and federal laws may require additional stipulations:** *[Company X] has a zero-tolerance policy for harassment or discrimination of any kind. This includes bullying, offensive language, inappropriate actions, or conduct that interferes with a person’s ability to perform their job duties based on their race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, marital status, citizenship, age, disability, or other characteristics protected by law. We ask that every employee help create a safe and inclusive work environment, and anyone who witnesses or is victim to the conduct outlined above come forward as soon as possible. We take all reports of harassment or discrimination seriously. Each report will be investigated and retaliation against an employee who reports such behavior is strictly prohibited.*  |
| --- |
| *Delete these tips when done.* |

| *Write your anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policy here.* |
| --- |

# Acknowledgment

To make sure everyone reads and understands the policies you’ve outlined above, have them sign an acknowledgment at the end of the document either upon receipt or when they are hired. This can also help prevent situations where an employee claims to not know about a specific policy.

## Company Employee

Signature Signature

Print name Print name

Date Date

|  |
| --- |

#

# Conclusion

Congratulations! You’re ready to welcome new employees with a comprehensive employee handbook. This will be a valuable resource to your team — and a part of your [overall recruiting strategy](https://get.doordash.com/en-us/blog/5-strategies-for-optimizing-your-in-house-restaurant-staff?utm_source=Web&utm_medium=Direct&utm_campaign=MX_US_DIR_OCT_SHD_MKT_RES_BOF_SSM_ENG_5_CUSXXX___Downloadable-Q122-Employee-Handbook-Template) — for many years to come.

Before you share this handbook with existing employees or new hires, remember to remove the introduction and all instructions. Read through the final version with a manager and a human resources professional to ensure everything is accurate and you have all of the policies necessary for your business.

Now that you have the tools to make a dream team, give them the opportunity to thrive. DoorDash helps businesses across the dining, grocery, convenience, floral, and pet industries reach new customers through delivery and pickup.

Learn more about [getting started with DoorDash](https://get.doordash.com/?utm_source=Web&utm_medium=Direct&utm_campaign=MX_US_DIR_OCT_SHD_MKT_RES_BOF_SSM_ENG_5_CUSXXX___Downloadable-Q122-Employee-Handbook-Template).