General Work Policies

You set the tone for your company. Policies and codes of conduct provide expectations for staff, vendors, and your customers. Clear and consistent policies lead to efficient workflows and a happy workforce. Workplaces with lax or nonexistent policies quickly become chaotic. In some cases, they can even become hostile work environments that are ripe for employment-based litigation.

The key to an orderly workplace is the implementation of standards for on-the-job behavior. General work rules create parameters for employee behavior and describe the consequences that will occur when workers violate company policies.

Mutual respect should be the overarching theme of the general work rules and labor policies you institute in your business. Some rules are a matter of personal preference, while others are mandated by federal and state laws. Most small business owners find it helpful to include general work rules that address common workplace issues.

Every employee should be provided an employee handbook. The handbook should summarize major policies that relate to the employee and the employee’s job. Common workplace policies should include:

* Attendance
* Breaks
* Dress & Hygiene
* Smoking
* Drug & Alcohol use
* Computer use
* Cell phone use
* Use of social media
* Harassment
* Gifts and gratuities
* Confidentiality
* Complaints and grievances

All business will have their own specific policies related to their industry and individual philosophies. However, all business have general work policies that are part of the standard expectation of any employee in any business. Informing staff, particularly through an orientation, employee handbook, and other forms of training can set the right expectations from the start.