

How to Use This Guide

Your bank's employee handbook reflects your decision about how you wish to handle a variety of employment issues. This guide to writing an employee handbook is designed to:

- Help ensure your policies comply with regulatory and legal requirements.
- Protect critical management rights so you can continue to manage effectively your bank.
- Aid you in defining your bank's human resources policies.
- Communicate to supervisors and employees how you expect employment issues to be handled.
- Present your bank to your employees as a good professional place to work.

This guide starts with a sample handbook that can be used for all levels of employees or as the nonsupervisory handbook by a bank that already has a supervisor's manual. When beginning the drafting of your bank's handbook, you must decide whether you will have one handbook for all levels of employees. Most community banks do not have the resources to have a detailed supervisory handbook and a separate, briefer handbook for employees. If your bank decides to write one handbook, you should not try to make it a policies and procedures manual.

Most employee handbooks are written for an industrial or blue collar environment and are not tailored to the unique requirements of a bank. Tailoring a handbook to a bank environment involves:

- Bank specific terminology.* The banking industry is unique, and bank employees know that.
- Customer service emphasis.* Few industries depend on customer service to the extent that banks do. Therefore, this emphasis must run throughout the handbook.
- Unique ethics issues.* Other industries do not need to deal with such issues as performing transactions for oneself or approving loans to relatives.
- Security issues.* Bank employment handbooks should deal with actions to take during a robbery and controlling access to the building.

To make it easier for you to tailor your handbook to your particular bank environment, we also included the sample employee handbook on CD. This handbook is the same one you have in print. You can use the print version as your working copy and make changes to the version on your CD as necessary.

The second part of this guide explains the process of writing the handbook. It includes a practical explanation of the laws, regulations, and other concerns that determine the issues addressed in the handbook.

The order of the topics in Part I, Model Employee Handbook, match the topic order in this part so that you may easily refer to a topic in question. Part II is intended to be your reference source for writing your

handbook. We remind you throughout this part about delicate issues surrounding certain regulatory requirements so that you can be sure your handbook approaches these areas judiciously.

Part III outlines some of the major state laws that affect employment policies in your location. Remember that in certain instances, state laws will supersede federal law, so consult your state's law whenever appropriate.