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An aerial photograph of a city at dusk, featuring a large lake in the foreground and several university-style buildings. The sky is a mix of orange, blue, and purple. The image is partially obscured by a large teal geometric shape on the left side.

2025 HR CHECKLIST

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EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Your handbook is your most important employment document because it describes how you will handle work issues that arise with your employees. It is important to review your employee handbook annually.

Does your handbook cover these important topics?:

Pregnant Workers Fairness Act - Covered employers (15+ employees) must provide “reasonable accommodations” to qualified employees or job applicants with known limitations due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless doing so would cause the employer “undue hardship.”

Harassment - Clearly define forms of harassment, reporting procedures and include a no-retaliation clause.

Cell Phones at Work - A workplace cell phone policy is designed to outline the appropriate use of personal and company-provided cell phones during work hours. It should cover areas such as texting, social media access during working time, and utilizing recording or camera features only for work related purposes with prior authorization.

Drug Free Workplace - Management should reserve the right to require a drug or alcohol test for “reasonable suspicion.” Employees with medical marijuana cards may not consume at work and may not report to work under the influence. As marijuana becomes more accepted socially and legally, employers are reconsidering their drug-testing policies.

Remote and Hybrid Work - The hybrid workplace model is here to stay, and handbooks need to address the challenges and opportunities it presents, such as working time, time records, accidents at home, and accountability.

Generative AI - AI continues to revolutionize HR processes, from payroll and benefits to compliance and people analytics. It offers options for streamlining processes, boosting productivity, and scaling teams. Handbooks should identify the approved tools and uses that employees can use and, if applicable, prohibited uses of AI at work.

Dress Code - In remote work environments, dress codes are generally more relaxed, often allowing for casual attire while encouraging professionalism during virtual meetings. Handbooks should include remote work dress codes that maintain a professional appearance when on camera.

Social Personal Relationships at Work - While many studies show that creating workplace friendships can increase employee satisfaction, personal relationships in the workplace can cause conflicts of interest. Handbooks should include policies around workplace romances, including communication procedures and prohibiting a supervisor or manager from dating a subordinate employee.

Social Networking - Handbook should address company specific requirements around social media at work. We generally recommend prohibiting employees from accessing social networking sites and recording audio/video content at work unless it is approved and business-related. While you cannot tell employees about what they can and cannot post on their personal social networking sites, you can create a policy about its use at work.

Words to Avoid - We always like to remind you to avoid using words like cause or good cause, condition of employment, annual salary, and permanent employee in your handbook.

Employee Acknowledgement - Make sure you have a written statement that employees sign at time of hire and with any updates to the handbook showing that they have read, understood and agree to abide by the handbook’s policies and procedures.



Audit

We recommend auditing the following HR practices within your organization.

Audit Employee Files	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review employee files annually for completeness of all documents.• Exclude private/personal documents from employee files. This includes drug test records, financial statements, court orders, background checks.
Audit HR People Management Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure hiring managers are following recruiting, interviewing and onboarding procedures and termination procedures.• If not a part of your hiring process, we recommend pre-employment reference checks on all candidates you are considering hiring.
Audit Company I-9 Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check to be sure you are using the most up-to-date I-9 form https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-9.pdf• E-Verify is required by some states and for federal government contractors, as it's a quick and easy way to verify work authorization. We recommend it for all employers.• Consider conducting a comprehensive I-9 audit as immigration reform is a centerpiece of the incoming Trump administration.
Audit Job Descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment regulations and HR Best Practices both require a valid job description for each job. Check state and local regulations of any location you are recruiting in to see the latest pay transparency requirements on job descriptions. Eleven (11) states now have pay transparency requirements; even if you aren't located in that state, if you are hiring there you may be required to show a pay range on your job description.
Audit and Update Employment Labor Posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check that your company is up-to-date on all required employment posters, placed in prominent locations. Federal regulations require 6 posters; various states and municipalities require additional posters.• Federal Link: https://webapps.dol.gov/elaws/posters.htm• State Links: https://www.dol.gov/whd/contacts/state_of.htm
Audit Pay Equity and Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay equity and transparency continue to be important areas of focus. Employers are required to analyze and report pay gaps and provide more information about pay to job applicants and employees.



Review

Reviewing the following components of HR can help you stay compliant in 2025.

Review Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perform annual compensation studies to make sure your pay rates are competitive.
Review Exempt Classification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The exempt salary classification has a salary test and a duties test. Employees must meet both in order to be exempt. Some states and cities have higher salary requirements for exemption.
Review Time Records Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employers are increasingly using digital time records now rather than a time clock or a paper timecard. It's more efficient and employees like this method better. Some employers allow employees to clock in on their mobile phones.
Review National Labor Relations Board Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under the "protected concerted activity" category, employees have the right to discuss their wages, benefits, and working conditions with each other and employers may not prohibit them from doing so.



Schedule

Now is the time to schedule these important HR activities for 2025.

Schedule Increased State Minimum Wage Rates

- The following states have changes in state minimum wages on January 1, 2025: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.

Schedule Employee Opinion Survey

- You will never know how your employees feel about working for you unless you ask them through an employee opinion survey or satisfaction survey. Many times, an opinion survey has identified trends that can be resolved to prevent serious problems.

Schedule Harassment Awareness and Prevention Training

- Conduct Harassment Awareness Training annually for all managers and employees. This training should cover all forms of unlawful harassment including harassment based on sex, race, religion, age, ethnicity, etc. If you don't already have it on the calendar for 2025, schedule it now.

Schedule 2025 Required Reporting

- Affirmative Action Plans: Covered federal contractors must have an updated written Affirmative Action Plan in compliance with OFCCP regulations. Certification is required on an annual basis through the Contractor Portal.
- OFCCP Monthly Compliance Reporting: Beginning April 2025, federal construction contractors and subcontractor companies will be required to submit detailed data every month regarding their workforce, including employee counts and hours worked by race, ethnicity, and gender. This change aims to enhance OFCCP's ability to monitor and enforce compliance with federal anti-discrimination laws in the construction industry.
- EEO-1 Reports: Employers are required to electronically submit an annual EEO-1 Report if they have 100 or more employees or are a federal contractor with 50 or more employees.
- Vets 4212 Reports: Most federal government contractors are required to file a Vets 4212 report.
- New Hire Reports: Employers must submit specific New Hire Reports to the state employment agency database, on a regular basis.

HR Trends and Recommendations for 2025



Skills-Based Hiring

Many employers are shifting from traditional qualifications to a skills-based approach. This includes evaluating candidates on skills and potential rather than just formal education or experience.



Employee Well-Being

Prioritizing employee well-being remains a top priority. Personalizing tasks, managing workloads, and setting realistic expectations are key to reducing stress and burnout.



Upskilling and Reskilling

With the rapid pace of technological change, upskilling and reskilling employees to meet new job requirements is crucial.



Workplace Inclusivity

Creating an inclusive workplace that supports diversity and equity is essential for attracting and retaining talent.



Menopause Accommodations

With an aging workforce, there is a growing need for workplace accommodations for menopausal women, such as flexible working hours and access to support resources.



Financial Literacy Programs

Offering financial literacy programs can improve employee morale and reduce absenteeism.



An HR Compliance Audit Can Help you Navigate this Checklist with Ease!

Having Seay Management complete an HR Audit will help you reduce or eliminate any potential liability or exposure by checking to see that you have the "HR Best Practices" you need to hire and retain good employees and providing you with the comfort and assurance that you are in compliance with employment regulations. Contact our team today!

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