



*This safety resource was written for the recycled materials industry by the recycled materials industry and was developed to assist you in making your recycling operation a safe place for employees, customers, and visitors. This resource covers OSHA requirements that may or may not be applicable to your operation.*

## **BUILDING AN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**APPLICABLE STANDARD:** N/A  
**EMPLOYEES AFFECTED:** All

### **WHAT IS IT?**

An employee handbook is a document that is given to every employee in your company. The handbook contains policies and rules that every employee must know and comply with to work within your scrap processing operation.

### **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

A handbook creates consistency and ensures that every employee, from your longest tenured worker to the newest hire, is aware of what is required to work at your company. It tells them what the rules are and what disciplinary action can be anticipated for breaking rules.

The first day on the job can involve a barrage of training, paperwork, and new faces—an onslaught of new information. Even if you provide comprehensive training, people will likely not be able to retain it all. An employee handbook gives the new hire something to refer to after the training is completed.

### **WHAT IS REQUIRED?**

- Develop a list of rules, policies, procedures, and other information that you feel every employee needs to know to work within your company.
- Compile the information into a handbook (a guideline can be found in Appendix A).
- Consider having the handbook translated for non-English-speaking employees.
- Distribute the handbook to all employees.
- Make sure to review any changes from earlier documents.
- Incorporate the introduction of the employee handbook into new employee orientation.
- Document that every employee acknowledges receiving a copy of the handbook.
- Consistently enforce the policies written in the handbook.
- Review the employee handbook for changes on at least an annual basis.

### **HOW DO YOU DO IT?**

Format matters less than content. The manual itself can be produced on large paper or small, or even on magnetic media. The idea is to make the information readily accessible to the people who need to know it. Appendix A presents a sample checklist of topics that might be covered.

For the safety portion of the employee manual, feel free to use as much information from the ISRI Safety Manual as you wish. It is a good idea to have legal counsel review all employment practices and policies to ensure they meet federal, state, and local codes and regulations, and that they pose no unwarranted liability.

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Language barriers present a significant challenge to the scrap recycling industry. If policies and procedures cannot be understood by the parties involved, they do no good. You should make every effort to have your policy manual translated to suit the needs of your work force.

Review the contents of the handbook periodically with employees—certainly as policies change, but also when you observe that awareness of policies has sagged.

The employee handbook can play a major role in new employee orientation. Take the time to cover the content within the handbook. Avoid using it as a “read it yourself” document for training new hires.

Once both new and existing employees have read the handbook, have them sign and date a handbook receipt, and put the receipt in their employee file.

Employee handbooks can become outdated quickly. Make sure the content is reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure the information is still relevant.