

GUIDE TO CREATING AN EMPLOYEE FOOD SAFETY HANDBOOK



Why should I create an employee food safety handbook? What are the benefits?

- An employee handbook is a valuable tool which can be used as an introduction to your operation — it outlines and explains your rules, procedures and policies. Existing employees can also benefit by using the handbook as a one-stop resource which answers many frequently asked questions. However, the handbook should not be used as a replacement for training employees, instead, it is meant only as an additional resource.
- Having an employee handbook ensures that each employee receives the same information about your expectations and also outlines your policies on non-conformance.

Who should the handbook be directed towards?

- Depending on the type of operation you have, you may choose to provide different workers (seasonal vs. full-time) with different versions of the handbook, emphasizing only the information which is applicable to them. Another option is to provide certain employees with different sections of the handbook as it pertains to them (e.g., agricultural chemical applicator vs. packing line operator).
- Organize the content sections to ensure that all information is easily accessible. You must consider the literacy level of your employees as well as the languages they speak.

What kind of information should I include?

- Each operation is unique, so your employee handbook will differ from that of other operations. Topics you may choose to cover are listed below:

General Items

- Introduction to your operation (e.g., hours, products, tour, etc.)
- Workplace policies (e.g., behavioural and dress codes, parking, pay rates, etc.)
- Workplace health and safety

Food Safety-Related Items*

- Contact information (person responsible for food safety program)
- Food safety background (e.g., biological, chemical and physical hazards, illness, cross-contamination, etc.)
- Personal hygiene (e.g., facilities, hand washing, first aid, bio-security, etc.)
- Employee illness policy
- Job-specific information/training (e.g., agricultural chemical handling, equipment use, calibration, pest control, cleaning procedures, manure spreading, water quality, storage procedures, record-keeping, etc.)
- Waste management (e.g., garbage/recycling, glove disposal, etc.)

**For further guidance on creating your food safety policies, refer to the CanadaGAP Manual*

How can I ensure that employees have read the handbook?

- Ask your employees to complete a short quiz (written or verbal) based on the information included in the handbook and/or have them sign an acknowledgement stating they have read and understood the handbook.

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