Why Do You Need an HR Policy and a Manual?

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FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

Mark D. Abruzzo, Esq. has no financial interests to disclose
Benefits of an Effective HR Manual

• Puts employees on notice of the practice’s expectations.
• Makes important practice policies easily accessible to staff.
• Prevents disputes over internal policies and procedures.
• Serves as evidence in employment suits, unemployment compensation disputes, workers’ compensation matters, etc.
Key Components of an Effective HR Manual

• Maintained and Up-to-Date.
  o Compliant with current laws.
  o Consistent with the actual policies and procedures of the practice.

• Sets out policies in a clear and concise manner.
  o Easy to understand language.
  o Eliminate ambiguous wording.

• Communicated to staff through training sessions.

• Signed acknowledgement of receipt, review, and understanding.

• Consistent enforcement.
Mistakes to Avoid in Crafting an HR Manual

• Using form handbooks that are not tailored to:
  o Applicable state and local laws; or
  o Actual procedures and culture of the practice.

• Imposing contractual obligations on the practice.
  o Maintain at-will relationship between the parties.
  o Include a clear disclaimer.

• Drafting that is overly vague or specific.
  o Overly vague = unclear expectations
  o Overly specific = unintended limitations on practice (e.g., maximum leave policies)

• Violations of employees’ rights.
  o Certain federal and state laws protect employees’ rights to engage in certain conduct and discussion (e.g., the National Labor Relations Act).
Important Policies to Include in an HR Manual

- Electronic Resources Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Paid Time Off and Leave Policies
- Harassment/Discrimination Policies (sample provided)
- Discipline and Termination Policy (sample provided)

**The sample policies do not constitute legal advice, and should not be used without the review of a local employment attorney.**
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