

Your January 1 employee handbook updates checklist



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An employee handbook is a valuable tool for setting clear expectations among employees, promoting the fair application and uniform enforcement of policies, demonstrating compliance with employment laws and mitigating risk. But with all the legal changes taking effect on January 1, updating the handbook is a serious challenge. This is especially true for multistate employers.

This checklist can help simplify the handbook update process. Organized by jurisdiction, it lists significant new or updated compliance requirements, effective on or around January 1, that resulted in updates to employee-facing policies. The checklist also includes links to the corresponding Brightmine handbook templates.

To get started, identify the states and localities listed below where your organization has physical operations or remote employees. Next, review the “When to Include” section of the listed handbook templates to determine if, based on the underlying law, the policy is applicable to your organization, and then update or add the relevant policies to your employee handbook.

An updated version of this checklist covering laws taking effect January 1 through June 30, 2026, will be available in July.

California

- **Crime victim leave:** provides [leave](#) for employees who are a victim of certain crimes, or whose family member is a victim, to attend judicial proceedings related to the crime (1/1/26)
 - [Crime Victim Leave Handbook Statement \[1-24 Employees\]: California](#)
 - [Crime Victim Leave Handbook Statement \[25+ Employees\]: California](#)
- **Paid sick leave:** expands [crime victim leave protections](#) (1/1/26)
 - [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Accrual Method\]: California](#)
 - [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Lump Sum Method\]: California](#)

Berkeley employers

- ☐ **Paid sick leave:** expands [crime victim leave protections](#) under the state paid sick leave law (1/1/26)
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Accrual Method]: Berkeley, California
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [1-24 Employees; Lump Sum Method]: Berkeley, California
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [25+ Employees; Lump Sum Method]: Berkeley, California

Emeryville employers

- ☐ **Paid sick leave:** expands [crime victim leave protections](#) under the state paid sick leave law (1/1/26)
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Accrual Method]: Emeryville, California
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [1-55 Employees; Lump Sum Method]: Emeryville, California
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [56+ Employees; Lump Sum Method]: Emeryville, California

Los Angeles employers

- ☐ **Paid sick leave:** expands [crime victim leave protections](#) under the state paid sick leave law (1/1/26)
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Accrual Method]: Los Angeles, California
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Lump Sum Method]: Los Angeles, California

Oakland employers

- ☐ **Paid sick leave:** expands [crime victim leave protections](#) under the state paid sick leave law (1/1/26)
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Accrual Method]: Oakland, California
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [1-9 Employees; Lump Sum Method]: Oakland, California
 - ☐ Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [10+ Employees; Lump Sum Method]: Oakland, California

San Diego employers

- ☐ **Paid sick leave:** expands [crime victim leave protections](#) under the state paid sick leave law (1/1/26)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Accrual Method\]: San Diego, California](#)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Lump Sum Method\]: San Diego, California](#)

San Francisco employers

- ☐ **Paid sick leave:** expands [crime victim leave protections](#) under the state paid sick leave law (1/1/26)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Accrual Method\]: San Francisco, California](#)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[1-9 Employees; Lump Sum Method\]: San Francisco, California](#)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[10+ Employees; Lump Sum Method\]: San Francisco, California](#)

Santa Monica employers

- ☐ **Paid sick leave:** expands [crime victim leave protections](#) under the state paid sick leave law (1/1/26)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Accrual Method\]: Santa Monica, California](#)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[1-25 Employees, Lump Sum Method\]: Santa Monica, California](#)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[26+ Employees, Lump Sum Method\]: Santa Monica, California](#)

Colorado

-  **Overtime and minimum pay standards:** modifies the [Colorado Overtime and Minimum Pay Standards \(COMPS\) Order](#) (1/1/26)
 - ☐ [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Colorado Overtime and Minimum Pay Standards Order \(COMPS Order #40\) Poster Handbook Statement: Colorado](#)
 - ☐ [Meal and Rest Breaks Handbook Statement: Colorado](#)
 - ☐ [Overtime Handbook Statement: Colorado](#)

- **Paid family and medical leave:** provides eligible employees with an [additional 12 weeks](#) of paid family and medical leave while their child is receiving care in a neonatal intensive care unit (1/1/26)
 - [Family and Medical Leave Insurance Handbook Statement: Colorado](#)

Connecticut

- **Paid sick leave:** expands [coverage](#) to employers with 11 or more employees in the state (1/1/26)
 - [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Accrual Method\]: Connecticut](#)
 - [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Lump Sum Method\]: Connecticut](#)

Delaware

- **Paid family and medical leave:** provides [paid family and medical leave benefits](#) to eligible employees under the Healthy Delaware Families Act (1/1/26)
 - [Paid Family and Medical Leave Handbook Statement \[10-24 Employees\]: Delaware](#) New
 - [Paid Family and Medical Leave Handbook Statement \[25+ Employees\]: Delaware](#) New

Illinois

- **Blood and organ donor leave:** allows part-time employees to use paid leave to donate an organ under the [Employee Blood and Organ Donation Leave Act](#) (1/1/26)
 - [Blood Donor Leave Handbook Statement: Illinois](#)
 - [Organ Donor Leave Handbook Statement: Illinois](#) New
- **Lactation accommodation:** requires covered employers to compensate employees at their regular rate of compensation during [lactation breaks](#) (1/1/26)
 - [Lactation Accommodation Handbook Statement: Illinois](#)
- **Leave for victims of domestic, sexual or gender violence:** provides [additional protections](#) to employees under the Victims Economic Security and Safety Act (1/1/26)
 - [Leave for Victims of Domestic, Sexual or Gender Violence or Any Other Crime of Violence Handbook Statement \[1-14 Employees\]: Illinois](#)
 - [Leave for Victims of Domestic, Sexual or Gender Violence or Any Other Crime of Violence Handbook Statement \[15-49 Employees\]: Illinois](#)

- Leave for Victims of Domestic, Sexual or Gender Violence or Any Other Crime of Violence Handbook Statement [50+ Employees]: Illinois

Minnesota

- **Meal and rest breaks:** amends meal and rest break requirements (1/1/26)
 - Meal and Rest Breaks Handbook Statement: Minnesota
- **Paid family and medical leave:** provides paid family and medical leave benefits to eligible employees under the Minnesota Paid Leave Law (1/1/26)
 - Paid Family and Medical Leave Handbook Statement: Minnesota New
- **Paid sick leave:** reflects amendments concerning advancing leave (1/1/26)
 - Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Lump Sum Method]: Minnesota
- **Bloomington employers**
 - **Paid sick leave:** reflects amendments to the state paid sick leave law concerning advancing leave (1/1/26)
 - Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Lump Sum Method]: Bloomington, Minnesota
- **Minneapolis employers**
 - **Paid sick leave:** aligns the Minneapolis Sick and Safe Time Ordinance with the state paid sick leave law (12/31/25); reflects amendments to the state paid sick leave law concerning advancing leave (1/1/26)
 - Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Accrual Method]: Minneapolis, Minnesota
 - Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Lump Sum Method]: Minneapolis, Minnesota
- **St. Paul employers**
 - **Paid sick leave:** reflects amendments to the state paid sick leave law concerning advancing leave (1/1/26)
 - Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Lump Sum Method]: St. Paul, Minnesota

New Hampshire

- **Childbirth, postpartum and infant care leave:** requires covered employers to provide [unpaid leave](#) for employees to attend their own medical appointments for childbirth or postpartum care, or to attend their infant's pediatric medical appointments (1/1/26)
 - [Leave for Childbirth, Postpartum and Infant Care Medical Appointments Handbook Statement: New Hampshire](#) New
- **Family military leave:** allows eligible employees who are legally married to a member of the uniformed services to take unpaid [family military leave](#) (1/1/26)
 - [Family Military Leave Handbook Statement: New Hampshire](#) New

Oregon

- **Paid family and medical leave:** prohibits employers from requiring use of paid family and medical leave benefits before employees may be eligible for [disability benefits](#) (1/1/26)
 - [Paid Family and Medical Leave Handbook Statement: Oregon](#)
- **Paid sick leave:** expands reasons employees can use [paid sick leave](#) to include blood donation (1/1/26)
 - [Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[1-9 Employees; Accrual Method\]: Oregon](#)
 - [Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[1-9 Employees; Lump Sum Method\]: Oregon](#)
 - [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[10+ Employees; Accrual Method\]: Oregon](#)
 - [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[10+ Employees; Lump Sum Method\]: Oregon](#)

Pennsylvania

- **Pittsburgh employers**
 - **Paid sick leave:** increases the accrual rate and amount of leave employees may use and carry over per year under the [Paid Sick Days Act](#) (1/1/26)
 - [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[1-14 Employees; Accrual Method\]: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania](#)
 - [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[1-14 Employees; Lump Sum Method\]: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania](#)

- Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [15+ Employees; Accrual Method]: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [15+ Employees; Lump Sum Method]: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Rhode Island

- **Temporary caregiver insurance and leave:** expands [qualifying reasons for leave](#) to include bone marrow or organ donation and caring for a sibling, and extends wage replacement benefit period to eight weeks (1/1/26)
 - Temporary Caregiver Insurance and Leave Handbook Statement: Rhode Island

Washington

- **Domestic violence leave:** expands leave and accommodation protections under the [Domestic Violence Leave Act](#) to victims of a hate crime (1/1/26)
 - Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking or a Hate Crime Handbook Statement: Washington
 - Accommodations for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking or a Hate Crime Handbook Statement: Washington
- **EEO:** provides discrimination protections for [victims of a hate crime](#) (1/1/26)
 - EEO Handbook Statement: Washington
- **Meal and rest breaks:** allows [hospital workers](#) to waive meal and rest breaks under certain conditions (1/1/26)
 - Meal and Rest Breaks Handbook Statement: Washington
- **Paid family and medical leave:** amends several provisions of the [paid family and medical leave law](#), including those concerning benefit amounts and reinstatement (1/1/26)
 - Paid Family and Medical Leave Handbook Statement: Washington
- **Paid sick leave:** expands [leave protections](#) to victims of a hate crime (1/1/26)
 - Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Accrual Method]: Washington
 - Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement [Lump Sum Method]: Washington

Seattle employers

- ☐ **Paid sick leave:** expands [leave protections](#) under the state paid sick leave law to victims of a hate crime (1/1/26)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Accrual Method\]: Seattle, Washington](#)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Lump Sum Method\]: Seattle, Washington](#)

Tacoma employers

- ☐ **Paid sick leave:** expands [leave protections](#) under the state paid sick leave law to victims of a hate crime (1/1/26)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Accrual Method\]: Tacoma, Washington](#)
 - ☐ [Paid Sick Leave Handbook Statement \[Lump Sum Method\]: Tacoma, Washington](#)

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