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THE SUPERHR DIGEST



In this Edition

From the Get-Go: Why Policies Fail (And How to Make Them Work)

Compliance Update: Are Your Managers Accidentally Breaking Employment Standards?

OH&S Insights: Managing Medical Leave

Level Up: The 10-Minute Conversation That Builds Engagement

Everyday HR: "Can I Make an Exception Just This Once?"

Employee Development: A New Focus on Growth

Exciting News: Out & About with SuperHR

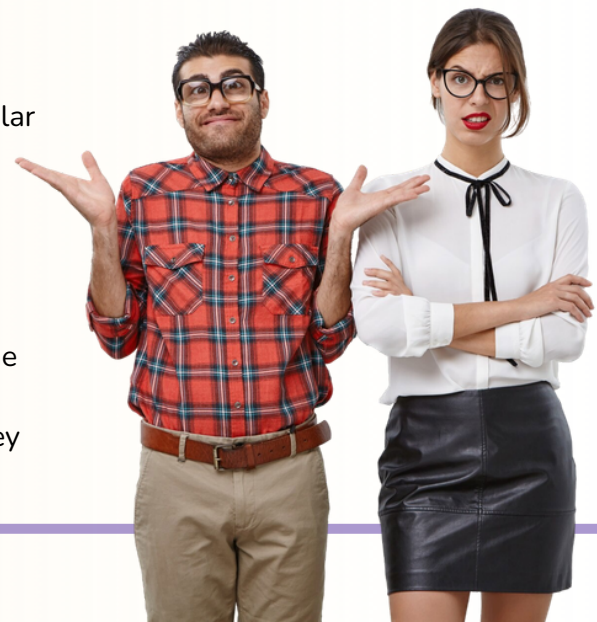
FROM THE GET-GO

Why Policies Fail (And How to Make Them Work)

Every organization has policies, but not every organization sees the results they expect. The reason is simple: policies alone don't change behaviour—consistent leadership does. A policy is only effective when employees understand its purpose and see it applied fairly across the organization. When expectations are unclear, enforcement is inconsistent, or leaders fail to model the behaviour they expect from others, even the best-written policies quickly lose their value.

The most successful workplaces treat policies as living tools, not documents that sit in a handbook. They communicate expectations clearly, explain the "why" behind them, reinforce them through regular conversations and training, and hold everyone, including managers, accountable to the same standards.

Before writing another policy, ask yourself: Do our employees know what is expected, understand why it matters, and see those expectations applied consistently? If not, the problem may not be the policy—it may be the implementation. Strong policies protect your organization, but strong leadership brings them to life. Together, they create a workplace built on fairness, accountability, and trust.



Are Your Managers Accidentally Breaking Employment Standards?

When employers think about Employment Standards compliance, they often focus on payroll, vacation pay, or termination obligations. Yet many Employment Standards complaints don't begin in the payroll department, they begin with well-intentioned managers making everyday decisions without realizing they are creating legal risk. Supervisors play a critical role in ensuring compliance, and without proper training, they can unintentionally expose an organization to costly complaints, penalties, and damaged employee trust. Here are some of the most common compliance mistakes we continue to see across Canadian workplaces.

Employees Skipping Meal Breaks

Many managers allow employees to "eat while they work" or skip their meal break to leave earlier or finish a busy shift. While this may seem helpful, Employment Standards legislation generally requires employees to receive uninterrupted meal breaks after working a specified number of hours. These breaks are intended to protect employee health, safety, and well-being—not simply to provide time to eat.



Training Without Pay

Whether it's online training, safety orientations, policy reviews, or mandatory meetings, if the training is required by the employer, employees are generally entitled to be paid for the time they spend participating. Treating mandatory training as "voluntary" can quickly become an Employment Standards issue.

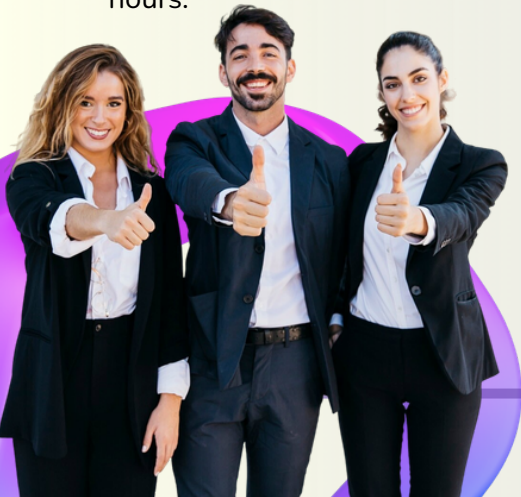
Answering Messages After Clocking Out

Technology has made it easy to stay connected, but it has also blurred the line between work and personal time. Responding to emails, text messages, or phone calls after an employee has clocked out may constitute compensable work, particularly if it becomes a regular expectation. Managers should establish clear boundaries around after-hours communication and avoid creating an expectation that employees remain available outside of working hours.



The Bottom Line

Employment Standards compliance isn't just an HR responsibility, it's a leadership responsibility. Every supervisor should understand that the decisions they make throughout the day can have legal and financial consequences for the organization. Training managers, communicating clear expectations, and consistently following workplace policies, are the best way to reduce risk, strengthen compliance, and build a culture of fairness and accountability.





Managing Medical Leave: Supporting Employees While Protecting Your Workplace

Medical leaves of absence are an important workplace protection, allowing employees the time they need to recover from illness or injury without fearing the loss of their employment. At the same time, employers have a responsibility to manage these leaves consistently, fairly, and in accordance with employment standards and human rights legislation.

Challenges often arise when communication breaks down. Employees may fail to provide updates, medical documentation may be incomplete, or managers may be unsure of what information they can legally request. In some cases, warning signs suggest that a leave may not be used for its intended purpose. Responding emotionally or making assumptions can quickly create legal risk for the employer.



Instead, organizations should have a clear medical leave policy that outlines reporting expectations, documentation requirements, communication during the leave, and the employee's responsibilities for providing updates when appropriate. Managers should apply these expectations consistently to every employee while respecting privacy and confidentiality.

It is also important to remember that not every questionable situation is misconduct. Employers should gather the facts, document concerns, and seek guidance before taking disciplinary action. A fair, consistent, and objective approach protects both the organization and employees who legitimately require medical leave.

OH&S Action Item

Review your Medical Leave Policy and documentation ask:

- Do employees understand their responsibilities while on leave?
- Do managers know what they can, and cannot, ask for?
- Are expectations applied consistently to every employee?

we also encourage employers to implement a standardized Leave of Absence Request Form for every medical leave. Beyond documenting the employee's request, this form establishes clear expectations from the very beginning, including communication responsibilities, medical documentation requirements (where appropriate), expected return-to-work updates, and the employer's return-to-work process.

It also creates a consistent framework for following up with employees who become non-responsive during their leave, helping organizations demonstrate that they have made reasonable efforts to maintain communication while supporting a safe and successful return to work.

A well-managed medical leave process supports employee recovery, reduces workplace conflict, and helps protect your organization from unnecessary legal risk.



The 10-Minute Conversation That Builds Engagement

One of the most effective ways to improve employee engagement doesn't require a new program, expensive software, or a larger budget. It starts with a simple conversation.

Employees want to know that their work matters, that their contributions are recognized, and that their manager is invested in their success. Setting aside just ten minutes every week or two for a one-on-one check-in can strengthen trust, identify challenges early, and improve performance before small issues become larger problems.



These conversations don't have to be formal. Ask questions like:

- What's going well?
- What's getting in your way?
- How can I better support you?
- Is there anything we could do differently as a team?

Listening is just as important as asking. Employees who feel heard are more likely to stay engaged, collaborate effectively, and take ownership of their work. Small, consistent conversations build stronger relationships, increase job satisfaction, and create a culture where feedback flows both ways.

Level UP Challenge

Schedule one 10-minute check-in with each direct report this month. Focus on listening rather than solving every problem. You may be surprised by the ideas, concerns, and opportunities that emerge through a simple conversation.



This month, challenge yourself to make one meaningful connection with every member of your team. Put away your phone, eliminate distractions, and simply listen. You may uncover a great idea, prevent a future problem, or strengthen a working relationship. Great leaders don't wait for engagement to improve—they create it one conversation at a time.



Remember, engagement isn't built during annual performance reviews—it's built through consistent, meaningful interactions. Employees who feel heard, supported, and valued are more likely to stay motivated, take ownership of their work, and contribute to a positive workplace culture. Sometimes, ten focused minutes can accomplish more than an hour-long meeting.

"Can I Make an Exception Just This Once?"

Almost every manager has faced this situation. A trusted employee asks to leave early without using vacation time, skip a required process, work through lunch to leave sooner, or receive special treatment because "it's only this once." Wanting to help, the manager agrees without thinking about the long-term impact.

The reality is that today's exception can become tomorrow's expectation.

When managers make exceptions without a clear business reason or fail to document their decisions, they risk creating a workplace precedent. Once employees see that a rule has been relaxed for one person, others may reasonably expect to be treated the same way. If similar requests are later denied, employees may perceive the decision as unfair or discriminatory, even when that was never the employer's intention.

Over time, inconsistent decision-making can weaken workplace policies, reduce management credibility, and increase legal risk. In some cases, employers may find themselves responding to Employment Standards complaints, Human Rights applications, grievances, or allegations of constructive dismissal if employees believe they have been treated differently without a legitimate reason. While not every exception creates legal liability, inconsistent practices often become a significant challenge when an employer is required to justify its decisions.

EverydayHR Tip

This doesn't mean managers should never be flexible. There are many situations where accommodations or exceptions are appropriate—particularly when responding to medical needs, family responsibilities, or other protected grounds. The key is ensuring that every decision is based on legitimate business or legal reasons, applied consistently, and documented appropriately. Managers should also consult Human Resources or senior leadership whenever an exception could affect workplace policies or establish a new practice.

Before approving an exception, ask yourself:

- Would I make the same decision for another employee in the same circumstances?
- Can I clearly explain the business reason for this exception?
- Am I comfortable if this decision becomes the standard for future requests?

A few extra minutes spent evaluating and documenting an exception today can help prevent employee relations issues, Employment Standards complaints, and costly legal disputes tomorrow. Great workplaces aren't built on rigid rules—they're built on fair, thoughtful, and consistent decision-making.

A New Focus on Growth

We're excited to introduce a new section in our newsletter dedicated to Employee Development, because strong organizations are built on continuous learning. Each month, we will highlight practical training opportunities available to your team, including a featured course, Info-Sessions and a micro-learning video designed to reinforce key workplace skills in a simple and engaging way. Our goal is to make development accessible, relevant, and easy to implement, supporting both compliance and long-term team success.



Strong workplace cultures don't happen by accident—they are built through continuous learning and development. Organizations that invest in employee training see stronger leadership, better communication, increased engagement, and greater consistency in how workplace expectations are understood and applied. Training is no longer just about compliance; it's about giving people the skills and confidence to contribute to a respectful, productive, and high-performing workplace.

This month, we're pleased to introduce our newest SuperHR Academy course, **Gossip in the Workplace**. Designed for employees, supervisors, and managers, this practical training explores the impact gossip has on workplace culture, teamwork, employee morale, and psychological safety, while providing effective strategies to prevent and address it. Together, we can create workplaces where communication builds trust—not division.

Micro-learning Video of the Month



When in Doubt... Check the Policy Book - This month's micro-learning video reminds employees that the Policy Book is more than a handbook—it's a valuable resource that supports informed decision-making and helps create a more consistent workplace. When everyone follows the same expectations, organizations reduce misunderstandings, strengthen compliance, and build a culture of accountability. Before making assumptions or relying on hearsay, employees should make it a habit to consult the company's Policy Book. Whether the question relates to attendance, meal breaks, vacation requests, workplace conduct, or health and safety, the answer is often already there.

Employment Records

Join us for our next Info Session: **Employment Records – A Gold Mine for the MOL**. Learn why employment records are often one of the first things requested during an inspection, audit, or employee complaint, and how incomplete or inaccurate documentation can lead to unnecessary penalties and liability. We will explore what records employers are required to maintain, how long they must be retained, and common compliance gaps. This session will help employers reduce risk, demonstrate compliance, and ensure they have the records needed to support important employment decisions.



Stellar New Clients Joining our Community

We're excited to welcome **The Patch Brewery** and **Stefano Ricci of Vancouver** to the SuperHR Canada community!

Both organizations have partnered with us to strengthen their workplace practices, enhance compliance, and continue investing in their people. We look forward to supporting their HR journey through practical solutions, leadership development, and workplace training that help build strong, respectful, and high-performing cultures.

Welcome aboard, we're excited to be part of your continued success!



Out & About with SuperHR



1: Launch of the Fraser Valley Hospitality and Tourism Hub.
2: BC-India Business Network.

3: SWRBOT Summer Sizzle in South Surrey.
4: Langley Asia- Pacific Business Network.