

Employee handbook acknowledgment request email template

Ask employees to read and sign the updated handbook, with a deadline and a simple way to do it.

Updated October 15, 2026. Written and reviewed by the HRTally Research Team.

When to use this template

A signed handbook acknowledgment is one of the most useful documents HR keeps. When an employee says they never knew about a policy, the acknowledgment shows they received it. Use this email when you publish a new handbook, a major update, or when onboarding a new hire who hasn't signed yet.

Make it easy: one link, an estimated reading time, a clear deadline, and a short summary of what's new so people know where to focus. Electronic signatures through your HRIS or onboarding system are fine, and they create a dated record without paper. Follow up personally with anyone who hasn't signed after the deadline.

Version 1: Updated handbook

SUBJECT Please review and sign the [Year] employee handbook by [Date]

Hi everyone,

Our updated employee handbook is ready. Please read it and sign the acknowledgment by [Date].

Where: [Link to HRIS or e-signature page]

Time needed: about [Number] minutes

What's new this year:

- [Change 1]
- [Change 2]
- [Change 3]

Signing confirms that you received the handbook and know where to find it. It doesn't mean you agree with every policy, and it isn't a contract. If you have questions about anything in it, ask your manager or contact [HR contact].

Thank you,
[HR contact]
[Company]

Version 2: Reminder for unsigned acknowledgments

SUBJECT Reminder: handbook acknowledgment due [Date]

Hi [Employee first name],

Our records show you haven't yet signed the acknowledgment for the [Year] employee handbook. It's due [Date].

Here is the link: [Link]. It takes about two minutes once you have reviewed the handbook.

If you are having trouble with the link, or have questions about a policy before you sign, let me know.

[HR contact]

Subject lines to try

- Please review and sign the [Year] employee handbook by [Date]
- Reminder: handbook acknowledgment due [Date]
- Our updated handbook is here
- Action needed: sign your handbook acknowledgment
- What's new in the [Year] handbook

How to personalize it

- Summarize what's new so people don't have to reread everything.
- Explain what signing does and doesn't mean.
- Offer a paper copy for employees without regular computer access.
- Track completion and send personal reminders, not repeated mass emails.

Mistakes to avoid

- Acknowledgment language that turns the handbook into a contract.
- Requiring signatures in a single day.
- Burying changes that reduce benefits.
- Forgetting employees on leave, who should get the request when they return.

Legal and compliance notes

The acknowledgment itself should say the handbook isn't a contract and that employment remains at will

where that applies. Some states require specific policies, such as paid sick leave or lactation accommodation, to be distributed in writing, and some require translations for workforces with many speakers of other languages. Keep signed acknowledgments with personnel files. Employees on leave should receive the request after they return, with a reasonable deadline.

| When to send it

Send within a week of publishing the handbook, with a two-week deadline. Send one reminder a few days before the deadline and personal follow-ups after it. For new hires, include it in the onboarding packet.

| Before you hit send

- The subject line says what changed and when, and it reads well on a phone.
- Managers were briefed and can answer questions the same day.
- Anyone personally affected heard the news privately first.
- The effective date and any action required appear in the first three lines.
- Employees without company email will get it through managers, texts, or posters.

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