

GENERAL DENTIST

General Policy Manual

Note: The following policies and procedures comprise general information and guidelines only. The purpose of these policies is to assist you in performing your job. The policies and procedures may or may not conform with Federal, State and Local laws, rules and regulations and are not offered here as a substitute for proper legal, accounting or other professional advice for specific situations.

Prior to implementing any of these suggestions, policies or procedures, you should seek professional counsel with your attorney, accountant and/or the appropriate governing or licensing board or any other applicable government body for a full understanding of all appropriate laws, rules, procedures or practices pertaining to your healthcare discipline or business activities.

TRAINING MANUAL INFORMATION

READ FIRST

The purpose for this General Policy Manual is to help you understand and use the basic policies needed to be an effective part of our dental team.

Our reasons for giving you this training manual are threefold:

1. To **provide written policies** and procedures relating to your job functions.
2. **To ensure you have a resource** for correcting or adding to the written exam questions (since we only accept 100%)
3. **To provide you with a future reference.** We do not expect you to memorize all of the policies relating to your job. But, we do expect you to refer back to the appropriate written material and review it on your own as well as with your supervisor.

When you have finished reading the policies in this manual see the office manager or doctor to arrange to take the written exam at the end of the manual. When taking the exam you may refer back to the appropriate policy in an open book style to change or add to your answers.

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HOW TO EDIT YOUR MANUALS

As you might imagine, creating these manuals was quite an undertaking. We knew that no single manual would apply to every practice, since each doctor has a unique personality and management style. Over the years, we updated the manuals with both ideas from our clients and emerging techniques.

The resulting contents provide detailed policies and procedures that will significantly reduce your administrative efforts. You may choose to leave the contents in the original form or to adapt the contents to meet your specific style.

Once you have reviewed the manuals and personalized the contents, you will have a solution for competently dealing with the majority of employee-related concerns in your dental office. You'll also have written documentation to consistently support each situation, which will alleviate you from continually rendering opinions.

We recommend you (or your designee) print the manuals and place them in a notebook binder. Then, review each policy and make edits as needed. For example, you may want the phone answered differently than the wording in our script or you may not want to include "Paid Holidays." In these instances, simply draw a line through the corresponding content (use red or blue ink so it's easy to see) and then draw an arrow to the new text that you want included. If there is a policy that does not apply to your practice, simply draw an arrow through the whole policy and write "delete" in bold letters across the appropriate section.

When the editing is complete, copy the changes into the original Microsoft Word file and save. You can then print as many copies as you need and make changes in the future as necessary.

In addition to the detailed information in our manuals, we suggest you retain other relevant handbooks and references that are essential to managing your practice (e.g., equipment manuals, software guides, etc). All manuals and guides should be stored together in an easily accessible area of your office for quick reference.

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to be known as the best dental practice in this community. We strive to provide excellent results and to be the most friendly, efficient staff and doctor in the state.

We are dedicated to helping each patient attain his or her maximum potential for good oral health. Through this commitment, we will sustain a prosperous and viable practice with a well-compensated staff and doctor.

Our purpose is to operate at full capacity with unparalleled quality and patient service.

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WELCOME TO OUR TEAM

Welcome to our dental office. We look forward to a long and prosperous relationship with you and hope that you feel the same way about our team. We are dedicated to providing quality care in every aspect of service to our patients from our first greeting to the delivery of our excellent dental care.

At our dental office we understand the value of dedicated and loyal employees who enjoy their jobs and work with confidence. We expect our employees to always perform at their highest level. To support this endeavor we are committed to providing clear, detailed policies and procedures for job functions, general rules and office guidelines. This includes explicit policies and procedures for each individual position.

We believe in open communication. If you need clarification about anything please see your office manager or doctor right away. Our approach will allow you to continue performing your duties with accuracy and confidence.

You are an important part of our team now. We are happy to welcome you and hope you enjoy working with us in providing great service to our great patients!

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WHY DO WE NEED POLICY?

Can you imagine baseball without any rules or driving in rush hour traffic with no laws or guidelines governing what to do when the lights turn green, yellow or red? The obvious result would be confusion and chaos. This same logic applies to every organization. If there are no guidelines and rules for employees to follow they will not know what is expected of them and frustration, confusion and unnecessary disagreements can ensue.

For these reasons and many more it is vital we have a Dental Office General Policy Manual.

In addition to achieving our goal of improving our patient's dental health, we want to maintain a comfortable and fun environment. This can only happen if everyone knows the specific expectations required of him or her as employees.

The following policies will cover staff bonuses, time off, uniforms, benefits, etc. The doctor may decide to change these policies as necessary in the future. If a change occurs you will be notified in writing of the policy amendment or cancellation. If you discover no policy exists to cover a specific situation relating to your job (or to the office in general), you are **expected to propose a policy** to cover that particular situation. Any proposed policies should be provided in writing to your office manager or doctor who will review and then forward (when appropriate) the proposal to the doctor for consideration.

If you have any concerns with a policy see your office manager or doctor for immediate clarification. If you don't understand something please get it clarified.

This General Policy Manual and all other training materials are the property of the practice and may not leave the office without permission from the doctor.

PROPOSING NEW POLICIES & CHANGING POLICIES

To ensure that our office runs smoothly, efficiently and in a team-oriented manner, all policy changes and additions require written approval from the doctor.

If you have a great idea on how to do something better or more efficiently, write a memo with your suggested policy change and forward it to the office manager or doctor. The office manager or doctor will review the memo. The doctor will then review your proposed policy. If the doctor approves the policy it will be created in policy format and distributed to all staff for discussion at the next staff meeting.

We definitely appreciate your ideas, enthusiasm and input, so feel free to suggest anything you think will help.

When a policy is changed without everyone's knowledge things become confusing and unorganized. So please follow the above procedure and refer other staff to it as needed.

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WORK SCHEDULE

Our office hours are _____. All staff and dentists are expected to arrive 15 minutes prior to opening each morning to help prepare for our patients. The only exception would be part time staff or a doctor's rotating schedule. (This exception will be noted in writing and issued to the appropriate staff members to avoid any confusion with this policy.)

You are expected to handle all your personal errands during your lunch break or on the afternoon we are closed.

There may be times when we run late due to servicing patients. Please keep in mind that patients are our priority and you may be required to stay later to properly care for our patients. Employees that accept this responsibility willingly and without complaints will be recognized in their evaluations.

If your responsibilities require you to work more than 40 hours per week, you must get written approval from the office manager or doctor before any overtime will be paid. If a backlog exists in your area of responsibility you must inform the office manager or doctor in writing of the situation. Please include complete details in your written summary so a plan can be formulated and the backlogged work completed. All positions in this practice should be able to operate efficiently without any backlogs and without any need for more than 40 hours per week.

If personal emergencies require your absence during regular work hours, record when you leave and when you return to work. You will not be paid for time away from the office.

Ideally you will never be unexpectedly late or absent from work. However, if an urgent and unexpected situation arises, call the office manager or doctor at home one hour before we open or at least one hour before your work schedule is to begin. You must also contact any other staff member that your absence may affect.

If there is excessive illness, a doctor's statement may be required. Any excessive tardiness or absence is grounds for possible termination. Unexpected absence from any position creates a burden on the rest of the staff, so please do your best to ensure it doesn't occur.

PROTOCOL FOR CALLING OFF WORK

If you cannot attend work for any reason (sickness, personal issues, etc.), please call the office and advise us of your situation before the day starts. If you are supposed to be on the job at 9:00 AM and you aren't here at 9:00AM, we consider your behavior to be disrespectful, irresponsible and a clear indication that you don't want to work here.

If you can't arrive by your scheduled start time, call the office and advise the office manager or doctor of your situation. Do not assume another employee is going to pass along your information. Take full responsibility for yourself – please!

If you are absent and you know for sure you will not be able to come on the following day, please call the office no later than 4:00 P.M. on the final day you are absent, so we can prepare accordingly.

Following is a list of employee phone numbers. Please keep a copy of this list at home for your reference.

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OFFICE MEETINGS

Office meetings are held every Friday at 12:30 PM unless we are still servicing patients or you have been notified otherwise from the office manager or doctor. These meetings will be approximately one hour long and are necessary to keep you updated on any future plans, policy additions/changes and most importantly to review all statistics from the previous week and/or month. Our staff meetings are **not gripe sessions**. If you have a complaint about something take it up with your office manager or doctor. You will never be reprimanded for communicating but we will not tolerate abusive and profane language, harassment, or conduct that is injurious, offensive, or coercive of coworkers or clients.

We encourage you to give your ideas for improving the quality or speed of our services. In addition, we welcome suggestions to correct situations that may be hindering our efficiency.

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CHANGE IN PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Personnel files are kept for each staff member for personal tax status, phone numbers, commendations, reprimands, etc. You are required to keep the office manager or doctor informed (in writing) of changes regarding:

1. Name
2. Phone number
3. Address
4. Marital status
5. Number of dependents
6. Personal health

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TERMINATION OF EMPLOYEES

If it ever becomes necessary to dismiss an employee due to his/her inability to do the job, he/she will turn in their keys and leave on the day of dismissal. We do not want to make a situation more uncomfortable than it already is for either party.

Unused vacation pay will be paid if an employee is terminated. Employees who are terminated are to be treated fairly and according to state and federal guidelines. They will be paid for wages accrued through the day of termination. They will not be paid bonuses for the month they were terminated.

If possible, an exit interview will be conducted. This interview will cover the following:

1. Suggestions on how the employee may improve his/her performance for future employment, no matter where it may be.
2. A review of any incomplete matters.
3. The reclaiming of any keys or other property belonging to the practice. If any items are missing or damaged, the cost (including the cost of changing the locks and replacing keys) will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck provided this is allowed under state and federal guidelines.
4. The delivery of the final paycheck or the date it will be available for mailing to the individual.

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RESIGNATION

Any employee wishing to resign is expected to provide at least two week's advance notice in writing to the office manager or doctor. If you are at a management level, you are expected to give at least four week's notice and to help ensure a replacement is procured and properly trained to take your place. Any resignation given less than the above stated times is considered insufficient notice and is grounds for immediate termination.

This policy is based on the assumption that the employee has been performing well and the reason for their leaving is based on external circumstances not related to our practice.

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LEAVES OF ABSENCE

On occasion, it may be necessary for an employee to take a leave of absence due to personal, health or related matters. Leaves of absence will be granted for limited periods of time depending on the reasons and circumstances that prompt such a request. A leave of absence must be supported by a valid reason and approved by the doctor. This absence will be without pay.

If you desire a leave of absence, you must present a complete written request form. The request must include the expected length of absence, dates of the leave, and the circumstances involved. An approved leave will not be extended past the date of the initial written request without further written approval.

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PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS

Occasionally, a staff member finds it necessary to leave our organization either temporarily or permanently.

The proper channel for resigning is to give written notice to the office manager or doctor, who will promptly arrange for an exit interview as soon as possible.

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BAD WEATHER

If we are forced to close early due to bad weather, all employees who reported to work will be paid for their hours worked. Those who did not come in that day will not be paid.

If the office is closed prior to the start of the workday, no pay will be given. The employee who lives closest to the office will go in for the purpose of rescheduling patients. The office manager or doctor will coordinate this action.

Unless otherwise notified, all employees are urged to make every effort to report to work.

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PAY PERIODS AND PAYCHECKS

Paychecks are issued every two weeks. Checks will not be cut early, so please don't ask.

If a payday is on a weekend or holiday, your check will be distributed on the last workday before the weekend or holiday. The check will remain dated the normal date of the paycheck.

Each employee is responsible for completing his/her pay sheet and submitting it to the office manager or doctor on the last day of the pay period.

If desired, we can arrange to have your paycheck automatically deposited in your checking account. See the office manager or doctor for the forms you will need to complete.

Ordinarily, checks will be given only to the person whose name appears on the check. If the office is notified, checks will be mailed as instructed. If any employee is absent on payday, the office will hold that check until he/she returns.

If an employee loses a check, the office manager or doctor should be notified immediately. If the bank has not paid the check, the office will issue a stop payment notice. The employee must pay for stop payment charges and a new check will be issued. If the lost check is found, let us know immediately.

No check can be distributed to an employee until he/she has signed a W-4 form, which declares number of dependents. Deductions will be made accordingly and will include Federal Withholding, Social Security, State Withholding, and City and/or County Withholding (if applicable), and State Disability (if applicable). These deductions will be itemized with each paycheck.

Following the first of each year, staff will receive a W-2 tax form from the office. This form states how much money the person was paid and how much was withheld the previous year. A copy of the W-2 should be included in the employee's tax return when it is sent to the IRS or state.