

Hired? Now What? The Office Policy Manual

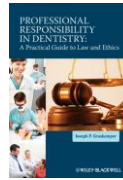
Joseph P Graskemper DDS JD DABLM
FAGD FAES FICOI FASO FACLM FACD
Associate Clinical Professor
Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine



Professional Responsibility in Dentistry

A Practical Guide to Law and Ethics

Joseph P. Graskemper



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- It is considered a legal document as to the rules of conduct for employer and employee.
- It gives notice to both regarding employment expectations and termination.
- Administrative Law Judges, Labor Department, and the Unemployment Benefits Office often turn to the office manual for guidance in their determinations and rulings for or against the employer.

The Introduction

- Must be written clear and understandable
- Should have statement that the office policy manual is not an employment contract, express or implied.
- The office policy may be changed with or without notice by the employer. Employee will receive notice of such changes.
- Must be consistently enforced.
- You can have a mission statement and a vision statement which is helpful to new employees especially since it spells out the office "corporate culture"

- More than 50 employees have more regulations for written policies such as Family Medical Leave Policy, Healthcare Coverage.
- Also per state -- workman's compensation, equal opportunity employment, non-discrimination policies, military leave, accommodation for disabled, etc. may have to be in a written policy
- A statement that this policy supersedes any and all previous written or stated policy
- Must have an acknowledgement page for employee to sign and date---do so with each update. Save the signed page in employee folder.

Office Hours

- Current office hours are always subject to change per the employer
- Expected to arrive 15 minutes prior to scheduled time to prepare for patients. Arrivals prior to that 15 minutes will not be paid without prior consent.
- All employees are expected to leave ASAP after dismissal of all patients and completion of all duties
- Time off during office hours and any overtime must have prior approval
- Continued tardiness and/or absenteeism is grounds for termination. All employees must call in if tardy or absent.

General Office Rules

- State that the office is an “at-will” employer. The employer or the employee may terminate the employment relationship with or without cause and with or without notice. Hence, there is no employment contract or right.
- To be considered full time employee must work more than (30) hours. A part-time employee is anyone working less than (30).
- There are no benefits for part-time employees.
- All must follow infection control procedures.

- Gloves, mask, glasses must be worn whenever involved in patient care.
- There is a probationary period for all new employees of 90 days (which may be extended if needed and determined by the employer); after which is not a guarantee of employment nor implicitly promise any additional rights upon its completion.
- Any and all injuries occurring on the job must be reported immediately to the employer. All required forms must be properly filled out per OSHA compliance.
- This office prohibits harassment of an individual based on sex, race, religion, national origin, physical handicap or age. Any harassment must be immediately reported to the employer in confidence so an investigation may be done and corrective action taken.

- Confidentiality is a must regarding all patient information and any and all electronic communications should be handled as confidential
- The employer reserves the right to monitor all electronic communications including internet activity
- The internet/computer is for office use and as such excessive use or the access to discriminatory, offensive or obscene sites/uses are grounds for termination.
- Upon termination for any cause, reason, or as determined by the employer, there is absolutely no severance pay to employees.

Social Media

- Social media refers to Email, Facebook, Twitter, Linked-in, blogs, and any other electronic communication or activity
- Any electronic communication regarding the doctor/s, office, practice, and/or fellow employee is completely forbidden and cause for termination
- If there is a problem, bring it to the immediate attention of the employer

- While employed and after termination all employees and former employees must adhere to HIPAA standards regarding patient information confidentiality and are prohibited from any direct or indirect solicitation of other employees and patients and/or making any disparaging remarks of the employer, employees or patients on or within any electronic communication

Paydays

- Paydays are on Thursdays and are based on your timecard
- Time cards are property of the business
- All notes regarding mistakes on timecard, sick days and vacation days must logged onto your timecard accordingly in order to be paid
- Any adjustments will be made the following week
- If payday falls on a holiday, vacation, or when the office is closed, paychecks will be available before or after accordingly

- No overtime will be paid without prior approval of the employer
- Everyone is expected to work as scheduled. Overtime is only paid after 40 hours per week.
- Paychecks, wages, bonuses, level of pay or any other remuneration or gifts are strictly confidential. Any communication regarding such information is cause for dismissal/termination.
- Employees will be evaluated approximately yearly on their anniversary hire date. This is not a guarantee of wage increase or bonus or continued employment.
- Raises in pay are based on merit only and only at the discretion of the employer.

Paid Holidays

- Employees must be full-time for 90 days (introductory/probation period) to be eligible for a paid holiday
- Holidays are as follows:
 - New Year's Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
 - Labor Day
 - Thanksgiving Day
 - Christmas Day

- When a holiday falls on a vacation day, you will be paid for that day. You will not be paid double for that day and will not take another day off in place of the holiday.

Jobs

- Business Manager
- Office Manager
- Administrative Assistant
- Treatment Coordinator
- Appointment Scheduler
- Communication Coordinator
- Insurance Coordinator
- Dental Assistant
- Dental Hygienist

Job Duties

- Front Office – phones, appointments, insurance, recall, etc.
 - Daily
 - Turn off all switches
 - Turn off printers, calculator
 - Close down all computers, turn off monitors
 - Turn lamp on
 - Set back up
 - Set alarm

- Weekly
 - Water plants
 - Clean counters and machines
 - Organize front reception area including magazines as needed
 - Vacuum and mop floors, and clean restroom

Back Office

- Daily – Greet pts., set up and take down rooms., ordering, etc
 - Clean, Scrub all instruments, including the handpiece heads
 - Mark down needed supplies, temp. crowns
 - Oil all slow speed handpieces
 - Close down all computers, turn off monitor
 - Turn off x-ray developer
 - Turn off all switches
 - Set alarm
 - Change cold sterilizer, ultrasonic solution, rag wheels, or as needed

- Weekly (or more often if needed)
 - Organize treatment trays, rct files, drawers, cabinets
 - Wipe down all counters cabinets, change papers in drawers as needed, change towels
 - Wipe down equipment, x-ray heads, chairs or after each use
 - Vacuum, mop floors in all operatories and lab area if needed
 - Clean traps and central trap

- Clean and autoclave lab handpiece, burs and wheels as needed
- Every week send in autoclave monitor
- Monthly
 - Every 3 months clean autoclave or as needed
 - Check pumice, stone and plaster trays

Uniforms

- Employees are to furnish their own uniforms clean and pressed (scrubs of proper color, shoes)
- There will be no unprofessional footwear
- Chair side jacket (infection control barrier) are made available for those involved in patient care
- A yearly uniform allowance may be given

Personal Grooming

- Hands and fingernails should always be neatly trimmed and clean
- Work clothing (scrubs) should always be clean and pressed
- Hair should be neat and clean at all times and not interfere with office duties or patient care. Long hair should be pulled back.
- All makeup application should be done in the restroom, not within patient view, and on your own time.
- Oral hygiene after any meals and daily showers and deodorant is a must.

Oral Hygiene

- All members of office team should seek regular dental care and cleanings
- Practice what you preach!!

Staff Meetings

- Staff meetings are held monthly or as determined by the employer
- Staff meetings are mandatory (excused absences are allowed)
- They are for the benefit of all and allows for proper communication to improve patient care.
- It is NOT a grip session
- An anonymous suggestion box is available. All appropriate suggestions will be covered at the staff meeting or may be brought to the attention of the employer at any time

Continuing Education

- Should you attend a continuing education course, you will not be paid for time away from the office (check with state)
- Any payment for cont. educ. Is at the discretion of the employer

Employee Relationships

- Employees are encouraged to cooperate with one another for the good of the practice. "Team Work" and helping one another is essential; even if it means going beyond your normal daily duties.
- Any and all intra-office problems must be immediately brought to the attention of the employer
- Bickering and arguing between employees or with the employer will be grounds for dismissal/termination.
- Keep communications open and positive.

Employee Breaks

- Breaks are not to be taken at the expense of the patients' care or if interrupting front office duties. Breaks are to be taken when and if there is a break between patients.
- Taking breaks in excessive numbers or length or if it interferes with patient care are grounds for dismissal/termination

Office Supplies

- Stamps, light bulbs, toilet tissue, facial tissue, dental supplies are all part of the business. Pilferage will be cause for dismissal/termination. This includes pens, pencils, and office supplies.

Phone Calls Office and Cell Phones

- The office phones are for office business. Personal use of business phones is limited to essential communication or in the case of an emergency.
- Excessive phone calls (incoming and outgoing) for personal use is cause for termination.
- Personal phones will not be received at work except in the case of an emergency. A message will be taken so you may return the phone call on you own time, not office time.
- Personal cell phones MUST be on silent mode or off.

- Employees are prohibited from using cell phone cameras or video recorders on the premises of the practice

Courtesy to Patients

- All patients are to be greeted by name and with a smile to establish identity.
- Address patients by Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., or Dr. when appropriate; normally if older than you. First names of older patients are only allowed with the patient's permission.
- Patients are not to be talked about in front of other people (HIPAA, Dr-Pt Confidentiality, Pt. Autonomy)
- Any improper and/or discourteous attitudes towards any patient will not be tolerated and will be grounds for dismissal/termination.
- There should be no dating of patients that were not previously known to you.

Medical Insurance

- There is no medical insurance through the office
- Medical insurance is personally available through the NYS Health Insurance Marketplace

Dental Care

- No benefits are available prior to 90 days of employment
- During the first year all dental benefits are at the discretion of the employer
- After 1 year of full time employment, 50% off regular UCR fees plus any lab fees incurred. Routine prophys, x-rays, and exams are at no charge if the employee clocks out.
- If the employee has dental insurance outside of the office, the ins. co. will be billed and any payments will be applied to the employee's balance.

- All dental care to be done during slow hours, on employee's time and with employer's knowledge
- All appointments to be made with consideration of the scheduling of regular patient
- Employee's time card must be properly marked for time taken off for dental care.
- Spouses and children are given a 50% off regular UCR fees plus any lab costs.
- Any cancellation fees will be applied to all family members
- There will absolutely be no refund of insurance payments to employee or their families.

- Other family members include the employee's mother, father, brothers and sisters. They will be given a 20% courtesy off regular UCR fees. No other relatives are included.
- Any balance due for dental services for employee, spouse, children or other family members will be taken out of the employee's last paycheck upon termination
- There are no dental benefits for part-time employees. Any courtesy is at the discretion of the employer
- All insurance forms must be filled out with assignment of payment to the office

Vacations

- There will be no paid vacations for the 1st year of full employment
- All vacations days should be taken when office is closed
- All vacations days will be taken prior to any approved personal days, which are without pay
- All vacation/personal days must be approved at least 2 weeks in advance
- Paid vacations are for full-time employees only. There is no paid vacation for part-time employees

- Vacation days may be used when the office closed due to inclement weather or for any other reason, otherwise you are not paid when the office is closed.
- Vacation days will not be carried over to the next year and will be lost/forfeited if not used.
- There is no accrual for vacation days. Vacation days are merely a courtesy.
- One week vacation (as broken down by the number of half-days you work) is granted during the 2nd year of employment as it applies to your anniversary date.
- Half day vacation can not be taken when scheduled for a full day
- After 3 years you are granted 2 weeks vacation which may not be taken consecutively.

- If employment is terminated during the 1st year of employment, there will not be any vacation pay due the employee. Any and all vacations days are forfeited.
- If employment is terminated after the 1st year of employment all vacations days are forfeited and a possible courtesy may be granted at the discretion of the employer
- If employment was terminated on good terms with the employer and allowing 2 weeks notice to the employer of employee's termination, as a courtesy to the employee, after forfeiture of all vacation days there may be a pro-rated payment of .134 day per full week worked during the current employment year from date of evaluation (anniversary hire date) to the date of termination and determined by the cause for termination and at the discretion of the employer

Sick Leave

- After 2 years employment, full-time employees will be eligible for 1 week paid sick leave (as broken down by the number of half-days worked)
- If and when sick, the employer must be informed before the start of work on the day you are missing due to sickness. Failure to do so is cause for dismissal/termination.
- Sick days are only used if you are too sick to come to work
- Using sick days for any other use is cause for termination and will not be paid

- You cannot accumulate sick days.
- The maximum sick days allowed in 1 year anniversary period is 1 week
- Sick days cannot be used together with vacation days
- If more than 2 days sick in a row a doctor's verification is necessary to receive sick leave pay
- At the end of 3 years, any unused sick days for that anniversary year will be paid at \$50 per half day. This cannot be accumulated from year to year and is only available during the current anniversary year.
- There is no sick leave before 2 years employment
- Upon termination, with or without cause, all sick days are forfeited

Other Benefits

- Bonus
- Pension
- Cont. Educ.
- Life ins.
- Day Care
- Maternity Leave

All employees agree that any and all patient charts, files, and lists shall belong to and are the sole and exclusive property of the practice and the employer. All employees further agree and acknowledge that the patient charts, files and lists and the information contained therein and the names and addresses of all patients are confidential and constitute trade secrets of the employer. All employees further promise and agree that he or she will not disclose and such confidential information, including office policy and office management information and procedures to any other person and shall not use such confidential information other than in the connection with the employment for the practice and the employer.

During employment, after termination and thereafter, Employee agrees to take no action (written or oral) which is intended, or would reasonably be expected, to harm [Dentist/Dental Office/Fellow Employee] its/their reputation or which would reasonably be expected to lead to unwanted or unfavorable publicity to the [Dentist/Dental Office/Fellow Employee].

This policy may be reviewed by the employer and changes may be made without notice based on the sole discretion of the employer. No statement of policy as set forth in this policy manual is intended as a contractual commitment or obligation of the employer or the office or any individual employee or group of employees. Circumstances may arise in which the employer determines that changes in these policies are required. For this reason, the employer reserves the right, at any time, to modify, rescind, or supplement any or all action which may be contrary to a policy set forth herein with notice to employees.