



November 2010



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Issue Twenty-Three

Did You Know?



It's important to breath, stretch and relax, especially if you spend most of your days sitting behind a desk.

Try a neck stretch. While seated and keeping your back tall, grasp the underside of your office chair with your left hand and pull up, creating resistance without lifting your shoulder. At the same time, gently drop your right ear to your right shoulder, feeling the stretch along the left side of your neck (Hold the stretch for 8-30 seconds and gently return to starting position. Repeat on opposite side.

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BLOG CORNER: Reduce Turnover

Stay connected
to Four Point HR.
Post a response
on this topic and
others to our blog
at
fourpointhr.com/peo.

Businesses across a wide array of industries experience the turnover of employees. Change is a normal part of life and will most certainly affect our business lives. Much of the discussion on turnover relates to the ultimate cost of rehiring and retraining after the employee leaves. The most important discussion on turnover is determining why it happens and reducing it as you go forward.

Turnover is not remedied with a few quick fixes. A workplace that limits turnover institutes and practices effective employment processes that begin with the interview and continue on a regular basis throughout each employment relationship.

What steps does your company take to reduce turnover and improve employee relationships?

IMPROVED NEWSLETTER FORMAT

In response to feedback from our subscribers, we are changing the format of our monthly newsletter. Beginning in December, the content will appear in the body of the email, rather than in a PDF attachment. There will be nothing to download and smaller email file sizes. Links from the newsletter will refer readers to our site and the content will now be accessible via mobile devices.



A Guide to Effective Attendance Reporting

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employers are required to keep track and record the time that their nonexempt employees work each day, and the total number of hours worked in each workweek. Since the FLSA does not require a specific time-recording device such as a time clock, time cards, or other system for record keeping, the employer may choose a device or method that best suits their company's needs. It must be pointed out that whatever device or method of time and attendance your company chooses to use, it must be accurate and inclusive of all hours worked by nonexempt employees.

Many experts suggest that an automated system such as a time clock, badge reader or computer login, best tracks employees' time. This type of system delivers employee attendance and hours worked directly from the source to the payroll system, reducing errors and the need for paychecks to be corrected and reissued.

This also can curb time abuse by nonexempt employees such as clocking in before work is available, clocking in late, clocking in absent co-workers, and logging in unauthorized and unneeded overtime hours. It can curb time abuse by exempt employees by tracking arrival times, departure time, and long lunch hours. It must be noted that employers cannot deduct from exempt employees when this happens, but it can be a way of making sure your exempt employees are following company time and attendance policies.

To build an effective time and attendance system, we suggest the following:

SET POLICIES ON TIME AND ATTENDANCE – Make sure your company has a well publicized policy in place that clearly define the work day hours, breaks, and lunch hours. Your employees should be well aware that unauthorized work time is not allowed, and violations could result in serious disciplinary action. Your policies on time and attendance should state all employees should report violations of the automated time system policies by other employees.

INSTITUTE A CHECKS AND BALANCES SYSTEM – Employees and supervisors should both sign off on each time record to ensure accuracy.

TRAIN SUPERVISORS AND EMPLOYEES ON PROPER TIMEKEEPING PRACTICES – Make sure supervisors and employees thoroughly understand that they are not to work off the clock for any reason and include this policy in new employee orientation.

ADOPT REPORTING PROCEDURES – This ensures that any errors found on an employee's time record are properly addressed.

KEEP RECORDS – Keep notes explaining any time record changes, which may be necessary if your company is ever audited or involved in a legal proceeding.

AUDIT PAYROLL RECORDS PERIODICALLY – This will ensure that your time and attendance procedures are in balance and can find and correct errors early.

CHECK AUTOMATED SYSTEMS PERIODICALLY – To minimize time record errors, periodically check and maintain automated time systems.

Payroll Corner

Has The Shift In The Economy Hurt Your Business?

Four Point HR will be closed Thursday November 25th and Friday November 26th for the Thanksgiving holiday. Notices will be sent the first week of November regarding the payroll schedules for the Holiday week. We at Four Point HR wish you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving.

There is a clear relationship between small business success and the economy. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, there are approximately 25.8 million businesses in the United States and more than 99 percent of all employers are small businesses. On September 27th, 2010, President Obama signed a \$42 billion Small Business Bill to help jumpstart the economy. This bill is intended to help small businesses with tax breaks and credits, and make it easier for small businesses to obtain much-needed loans and hire additional employees.

The bill provides a series of proposals that should provide immediate benefits for small businesses including:

1. Small business owners who buy new equipment will be able to write-off the first \$500,000 they spend.
2. Long term investments may be subject to zero capital gain taxes.
3. Entrepreneurs who create a new business will be able to deduct the first \$10,000 of start up costs.

Four Point HR advises business owners to seek professional advice before starting any new venture. success is important to them.



OSHA Reaches Out To Prevent Distracted Driving

Important Tax Notes

HIRE Act Tax Credit Reminder

The HIRE Act credit expiration date is quickly approaching. The Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment Act (HIRE) of 2010 exempts employer's share of the 6.2% Social Security Tax on wages paid to qualified employees from March 19, 2010 through December 31, 2010. Qualified employees are required to sign a W-11 affidavit in order for the employer to receive this credit. If you require additional information or the W-11 form, contact Four Point HR.

Employee Income Tax Withholding Credits Expire for 2011

Employee can expect an increase in the amount of withholding tax to their paychecks in the upcoming 2011 year. The two employee tax credit programs, Making Work Pay and Advance Earned Income, are due to expire at the end of 2010. With the "Making Work Pay" expiration, employees will no longer receive the maximum credit of \$800 for a married couple filing jointly and \$400 for other taxpayers that were enacted as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The tax tables that will be implemented for 2011 will reflect these changes.

IRS Announces Relief for Employers

The Internal Revenue Service announced on October 12, 2010 that it will defer the new mandatory requirements for employers to report the cost of coverage under an employer sponsored group health plan on the 2011 W-2 Form. This was determined to provide additional time to make the necessary changes to the payroll systems and procedures to be compliant with the requirement. The IRS states that this information may still be entered as an option and stresses that the amounts reported are not taxable and are intended to be informational only and to show employees their overall health care costs.

Thirty States have passed laws on texting while operating a motor vehicle. OSHA has also published safety rules for employers that have employees that use communication devices while operating vehicles on the job.

According to Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr. David Michaels "Year after year, the leading cause of worker fatalities is motor vehicle crashes. There's no question that new communications technologies are helping businesses work smarter and faster. But getting work done faster does not justify the dramatically increased risk of injury and death that comes with texting while driving."

OSHA has posted an open letter to employers, requesting that companies examine their policies and practices. The letter also informs employers that they have a legal obligation to prohibit workplace hazards such as texting while driving, and asks them to immediately remove any incentives that may motivate employees to text while behind the wheel.

"OSHA's message to all companies whose employees drive on the job is straightforward: It is your responsibility and legal obligation to have a clear, unequivocal and enforced policy against texting while driving. Companies are in violation of the Occupational Safety and Health Act if, by policy or practice, they require texting while driving, or create incentives that encourage or condone it, or they structure work so that texting is a practical necessity for workers to carry out their jobs. OSHA will investigate worker complaints, and employers who violate the law will be subject to citations and penalties."

The Transportation Department reports that in 2009 more than 5,400 people died in crashes linked to distraction and thousands more were injured.

For more information, please contact our Risk Management Department.