



# How to Develop a Policy Tip Sheet

## What is a policy? What is the purpose of a policy?

A policy is a set of guiding principles, an acceptable practice, or a rule intended to influence organization/program decision-making. Policies typically support management philosophies and help to communicate regulations that apply to all employees. Policies are formal in nature, broad in their application, and rarely change unless a regulation, law, or code of practice changes in the industry.

## What are the core elements of policy?

Policies can differ in their format and design from one program to the next. However a good policy contains, at a minimum: the name or title of the policy; the adoption or approval date; the date it is effective; any date(s) of revision; and the policy, itself. Policies can also contain information on the subject it covers (e.g. Human Resources, Finance, Services, etc.); its location (e.g., program handbook); a common numbering system (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc.); name and signature of the person who approved the policy; who is affected by the policy (e.g., all staff, children and youth, etc.); and references to other relevant policies or procedures.

The following information is typically contained somewhere on a policy along with the actual policy statement, itself.

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Employee Grievance Policy (1.1)
<b>Subject:</b>	Employee Relations (1)
<b>Policy Location:</b>	C:\Policies\Employee_Relations\Employee_Grievance_Policy.pdf
<b>Date of Adoption:</b>	July 15, 2002
<b>Effective Date:</b>	July 15, 2002
<b>Date(s) of Revision:</b>	May 22, 2005
<b>References:</b>	Employee Grievance Procedure, Employee Rights Form
<b>Policy Approval:</b>	(Name & Signature of person approving policy)
<b>Those Affected:</b>	(List those affected by the policy)
Text of Employee Grievance Policy goes here...	



### How do you write a policy?

1. Identify which program policies should be developed.
2. If you haven't already done so, develop a policy template.
3. Identify the principle, practice, or rule that you wish to communicate and draft a policy statement. Ensure that the policy:
  - a. Supports the program's mission and goals;
  - b. Is expressed as a broad statement;
  - c. Includes statements of "what" and/or "why;"
  - d. Addresses major operational issues;
  - e. Is clear and concise; and
  - f. Meets current regulations, laws and best practices (you can site relevant laws, regulations, or codes of practice in the body of the policy if necessary).

### How do you implement a policy?

Once a policy is drafted, it needs to be reviewed and approved by the appropriate oversight person or entity. If there are no formal changes to the policy following approval, then staff should be informed of the new policy and should be trained on the relevant procedures needed to carry out the intent of the policy, as necessary.

Approved or updated policies should then be placed in a central location where all employees have access to them.

### What is the difference between a policy and procedure? How are they connected?

A policy is a statement of guiding principles to be followed; procedures are more detailed, step-by-step descriptions of the actions required to carry out and implement those principles. The following chart highlights some of the differences between policies and procedures.

Policy	Procedure
Broad application	Narrow application
General guiding principle	Describes in detail specific processes or protocols
Statements of "what" and/or "why"	Statements of "how," "when" and/or sometimes "who"
Rarely changes	Prone to change
Approved by the appropriate oversight person or entity	Does not need approval

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