

Rhode Island Mini-Handbook Requirements Checklist

Effective January 1, 2026

This checklist is designed to help Rhode Island employers understand what must be provided to employees in writing at the start of employment under Rhode Island law.

It is intended for general guidance only and does not replace the required written notice or individualized legal advice.

What This Checklist Is

- 1 A plain English summary of Rhode Island written new hire notice requirements
- 2 A self assessment tool to identify documentation gaps
- 3 A starting point for employers reviewing onboarding practices

What This Checklist Is Not

- 1 A completed notice form
- 2 A substitute for the required written disclosure
- 3 Legal advice

1. Required Written Employment Information

Beginning January 1, 2026, Rhode Island employers must provide written notice of the following information at the start of employment:

- [] Employee rate of pay
- [] Basis of pay (hourly, salary, commission, or other)
- [] Pay schedule (weekly, bi weekly, etc.)
- [] Regularly scheduled payday
- [] First scheduled payday
- [] Employment status (full time, part time, temporary, seasonal)
- [] Exempt or non exempt classification for wage and overtime purposes
- [] Allowances, if any (meals, lodging, or other)
- [] List of regular deductions that may be taken from pay
- [] Employer legal name
- [] Employer trade or operating name, if different
- [] Employer physical address
- [] Employer telephone number

2. Required Policy Disclosures

Employers must disclose their policies related to time off and work expectations. These disclosures may be brief but must be clear.

- Sick leave policy
- Vacation or paid time off policy
- Holiday or personal leave policy
- Regular hours of work

Note: Policies may be referenced from a handbook if one exists, but employees must be informed where to find them.

3. Documentation Check

Identify where this information currently exists within your onboarding process:

- Offer letter
- Employee handbook
- Onboarding packet
- Payroll or HR platform
- Email or informal communication
- Not currently documented

If information exists in multiple places, confirm that it is consistent across all documents.

4. Employee Acknowledgment and Retention

Rhode Island requires employers to retain proof that the written notice was provided.

- Employee receives the notice at the start of employment
- Employee signs or acknowledges receipt
- Employer retains a copy of the signed notice

Employers should retain this documentation for at least three (3) years.

5. Common Compliance Gaps

- Pay schedule not stated in writing
- PTO or sick leave policy described verbally only
- Deductions not clearly disclosed
- Employer contact information missing or outdated

- [] Offer letters that omit required disclosures

6. Important Notes

The law focuses on written disclosure, not document length or format.

A full employee handbook is not required to satisfy the notice requirement.

Many employers meet the requirement using a short, focused document commonly referred to as a mini employee handbook.

The appropriate approach depends on the size, structure, and complexity of the business.

Questions About Your Situation?

Many employers already meet portions of this requirement without realizing it. Others benefit from reviewing or consolidating existing documents.

If you have questions about whether what you currently provide is sufficient, a short conversation can usually clarify whether you are already compliant, what documentation may be missing, and whether a limited notice or broader handbook makes sense.

There is no obligation and no sales pitch. Just answers.

Prepared as an informational resource for Rhode Island employers. Not legal advice.