

What To Include in a Policy

The ten elements of a well-structured policy document, in the order they appear on the worksheet.

TITLE	The specific name of the policy, stating its focus clearly enough that a reader knows what it covers before reading it.
PURPOSE	The rationale behind the policy and what it aims to achieve, including how it supports the firm's goals.
SCOPE	Who the policy applies to and in what situations. All employees, specific departments, or particular roles.
DEFINITIONS	Key terms used in the policy, defined so that everyone reads the language the same way.
POLICY STATEMENT	The principles and rules that guide behavior and decision making. What is expected, stated plainly.
RESPONSIBILITIES	The roles and departments accountable for implementing, enforcing and complying with the policy.
RELATED PROCEDURES	The procedures that carry the policy out, and where those procedures live.
COMPLIANCE	The consequences of noncompliance and the process for addressing violations.
REVIEW AND REVISION	How often the policy is reviewed, and who owns that review.
APPROVAL	The names or titles of those who must approve the policy before it takes effect.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

These fields are not part of the policy text. They are what makes the policy findable, current and enforceable, and they sit at the top of the worksheet.

VERSION AND DATES	Every update is saved as a new version carrying the date and a summary of what changed. Without this, nobody can tell which copy is the live one.
WHERE IT LIVES	One central digital location. Policies kept on personal drives are the single most common reason a firm is not consistent.
CLASSIFICATION	Firm wide or department wide. This drives who is given access to it.
TAGS	The words a person would search for when they need this document.

Policy Worksheet

Page 1 of 2. The why.

Policy Title			
Version	Effective Date	Last Updated	Classification
Created By	Approved By	Review Frequency	Reviewed By
Where This Document Lives		Tags	

Purpose Why this policy exists and what it achieves.

Scope Who it applies to, and in what situations.

Definitions Only the terms a reader could misread.

TERM	DEFINITION

Policy Worksheet

Page 2 of 2. The why, continued.

Policy Statement *The rule itself. What people may do, must do, and may not do.*

Responsibilities *Who does what under this policy.*

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THIS POLICY

Related Procedures *The procedures that carry this policy out.*

PROCEDURE TITLE	WHERE IT LIVES

Compliance

CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE	PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING VIOLATIONS

Summary Of Changes in This Version *Leave blank on the first version.*

What To Include in a Procedure

A procedure is the how. Every element listed here has a field on the worksheet that follows.

PROCEDURE TITLE	The specific name of the procedure, identifying the process being outlined.
PARENT POLICY	The policy this procedure carries out. A procedure with no policy behind it is an orphan instruction.
DEPARTMENT	The team responsible for executing and maintaining the procedure.
PURPOSE	Why the procedure exists and what it is intended to achieve.
RESPONSIBILITY	The roles tasked with performing and overseeing the procedure.
DEFINITIONS	Terms, acronyms and firm specific references used in the steps.
REQUIRED TOOLS AND SYSTEMS	The systems, software and resources needed to carry the procedure out, and who grants access to them.
PROCESS	The step-by-step actions, numbered, each with the role responsible and the system used.
TROUBLESHOOTING AND ESCALATION	What to do when a step fails, and who to escalate to.
REVIEW AND REVISION	How often the procedure is reviewed, and who owns that review.

THE TWO MOST COMMONLY MISSING PIECES

WORKFLOW	The handoffs between roles. A procedure tells one person what to do. A workflow shows where the work goes next and what it carries with it. Page 8.
CHECKLIST	The short form the team uses at the desk once they know the procedure. Page 9.

BEFORE YOU PUBLISH

Five gates. A no on any one of them means the document is not ready to go out.

ONE	Does it create an efficiency that would not exist if it had never been written?
TWO	Would a new hire follow it without asking anyone a question? If people keep asking, it is not written clearly enough.
THREE	Does it name the one central location where the live copy lives?
FOUR	Does it carry a version number and a summary of what changed?
FIVE	Has everyone affected been trained and signed off that they understand it?

Procedure Worksheet

Page 1 of 2. The how.

Procedure Title			
Version	Effective Date	Last Updated	Classification
Department	Created By	Approved By	Review Frequency
Parent Policy		Where This Document Lives	
Tags		Reviewed By	

Purpose *What this procedure achieves.*

Responsibility *Who performs it, and who oversees it.*

Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION

Required Tools and Systems

TOOL OR SYSTEM	USED FOR	ACCESS GRANTED BY

TOOL OR SYSTEM	USED FOR	ACCESS GRANTED BY

Procedure Worksheet

Page 2 of 2. The steps.

Procedure Title	Version

Process One action per step. If a step needs the word "and", it is two steps.

STEP	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE ROLE	SYSTEM USED
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			

Troubleshooting And Escalation

COMMON ISSUE	FIRST RESPONSE	ESCALATE TO

Workflow Map

The third artifact. A procedure tells one person what to do. A workflow shows where the work goes next.

Workflow For	Version

Stages And Handoffs Read down the Hands Off To column. If it names the same role twice in a row, those stages belong together.

STAGE	TRIGGER	ROLE RESPONSIBLE	HANDS OFF TO	OUTPUT OR RECORD
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				

Where This Workflow Breaks Down The handoffs that fail, and the control that catches them.

FAILURE POINT	WHAT HAPPENS	CONTROL

Procedure Checklist

The fourth artifact. The short form the team works from once they know the procedure.

Checklist For		Version
Created By	Approved By	Last Updated

[illegible]

Implementation And Monitoring

Writing the documents is half the work. This page is the other half.

IMPLEMENTATION

STEP	ACTION	OWNER	DATE COMPLETE
1	Identify the problem		
2	Write the solution		
3	Communicate that the change is coming, with the date		
4	Get approval to implement		
5	Send the proposed change in writing to everyone affected		
6	Set the training date		
7	Train on the change		
8	Open a period for questions and concerns		
9	Obtain written sign off that the team understands the change		
10	Implement the change		

Training Method	Trainer	Sign Off Held By

MONITORING

Check at each interval. A policy nobody follows is not a policy.

CHECKPOINT	DATE DUE	REVIEWED BY	IS IT BEING FOLLOWED	ACTION TAKEN
One day after				
One week after				
One quarter after				
One year after				

Feedback Received from The Team	Revision Needed

Next Scheduled Review Date