***Disclaimer***

***The following code of conduct sample is provided by SIMPLIFYhr for informational purposes only and is not intended to cover all aspects of employment law or serve as legal advice. This sample is not all-inclusive and may not address all issues specific to your company, industry, or jurisdiction. We strongly recommend that you consult with a qualified employment attorney to review this policy before implementing it in your organization to ensure full compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws.***

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**SAMPLE Code of Conduct Policy**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish clear expectations for professional and ethical behavior at [Company Name], ensuring compliance with California labor laws. It provides guidelines to create a respectful, safe, and legally compliant workplace environment. All employees are required to adhere to this policy at all times.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and temporary workers of [Company Name]. It covers behavior within the workplace, during work-related activities outside the office, and when representing the company in any capacity.

**Core Principles**

1. **Professionalism**
Employees are expected to conduct themselves professionally at all times. This includes punctuality, reliability, respectful communication, and fulfilling job responsibilities with competence and diligence.
2. **Respectful Workplace**
[Company Name] is committed to maintaining a work environment free from harassment and discrimination in compliance with California’s Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA). Disrespectful behavior, harassment, or discrimination based on race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected category will not be tolerated.
3. **Integrity and Honesty**
Employees must act with integrity and honesty in all interactions, both within the company and externally. This includes safeguarding confidential information, avoiding conflicts of interest, and accurately reporting time worked and business expenses.
4. **Compliance with Laws and Company Policies**
Employees are required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, particularly California-specific laws such as meal and rest break regulations, anti-discrimination laws, and wage and hour laws. Compliance with company policies, including safety protocols and anti-harassment policies, is also mandatory.

**Employee Responsibilities**

1. **Workplace Conduct**
	* **Respect and Non-Discrimination**: Employees must treat all colleagues, supervisors, and third parties with respect. Discriminatory behavior, harassment, bullying, or retaliation is strictly prohibited under California law.
	* **Harassment-Free Workplace**: In accordance with the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and AB 1825 (which mandates anti-harassment training for employers with five or more employees), harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, will not be tolerated.
	* **Reporting Misconduct**: Employees who witness or experience violations of this policy are encouraged to report them to Human Resources (HR) without fear of retaliation. California law provides protection against retaliation for employees who report discrimination, harassment, or other legal violations.
2. **Confidentiality**
Employees must protect the confidentiality of company proprietary information and any confidential personal data of coworkers, clients, or vendors. The California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) requires companies to handle personal data responsibly, and any breaches or misuse of confidential information must be reported immediately.
3. **Use of Company Resources**
	* Company resources such as computers, phones, and the internet must be used for work-related purposes. Misuse of company property, including accessing inappropriate content or engaging in non-work-related activities during work hours, may result in disciplinary action.
	* Employees must refrain from using company resources for personal gain or unauthorized purposes.
4. **Health and Safety**
	* All employees are required to comply with workplace safety regulations, including those mandated by Cal/OSHA. Unsafe conditions or practices must be reported immediately. Employees are protected by California’s whistleblower protections if they report unsafe working conditions.
	* Employees are required to adhere to all safety protocols established by the company, including those related to COVID-19 or other health-related emergencies.

**Ethical Standards**

1. **Conflicts of Interest**
	* Employees must avoid conflicts of interest that may compromise their ability to perform their job duties impartially. Any potential conflicts should be disclosed to management.
	* Under California law, employees are also prohibited from engaging in “moonlighting” or external employment that conflicts with their responsibilities to [Company Name].
2. **Gifts and Hospitality**
	* Employees must not accept gifts, hospitality, or favors that could influence business decisions or create a conflict of interest. Any gift or entertainment received from a vendor, client, or partner with a value over $50 must be reported to HR.
3. **Bribery and Corruption**
	* Employees are prohibited from engaging in bribery or corrupt practices, including offering or accepting bribes in exchange for preferential treatment. This applies to all dealings with clients, vendors, and government officials.

**Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination (California-Specific)**

1. **Zero Tolerance for Harassment**
	* [Company Name] adheres to California’s strict laws prohibiting harassment, including sexual harassment, as defined under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA). Harassment includes unwelcome advances, inappropriate jokes, offensive comments, and any behavior that creates a hostile work environment.
	* In compliance with California's mandatory harassment prevention training requirements (AB 1825 and SB 1343), all employees and supervisors must complete sexual harassment prevention training. Employers with 5 or more employees are required to provide this training every two years.
2. **Reporting Harassment and Discrimination**
	* Employees who experience or witness harassment or discrimination are encouraged to report the incident immediately to HR or management. Reports will be handled confidentially and investigated promptly, as required by California law.
	* **No Retaliation**: California law prohibits retaliation against employees who report harassment or discrimination. Any retaliation will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

[Link to FEHA: <https://www.dfeh.ca.gov/>]

**California Meal and Rest Break Compliance**

1. **Meal Breaks**
Employees are entitled to a 30-minute unpaid meal break for every 5 hours worked, as required by California law. A second meal break is required if the employee works more than 10 hours in a day. Employees must take their meal breaks on time and may not skip or delay breaks without supervisor approval.
2. **Rest Breaks**
Employees are entitled to a 10-minute paid rest break for every 4 hours worked or major fraction thereof. Rest breaks should be taken in the middle of the work period whenever possible. It is the employee’s responsibility to ensure they take their rest breaks as required.

**Disciplinary Action**

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct and California employment laws may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Disciplinary action may include:

* Verbal warnings
* Written warnings
* Suspension
* Termination

In cases of severe misconduct or violations of the law, [Company Name] may pursue legal action or report violations to the appropriate authorities.

**Reporting and Enforcement**

1. **Reporting Concerns**
Employees are encouraged to report any violations of this Code of Conduct or other legal or policy violations to HR or management. Employees may also report concerns anonymously if they feel more comfortable doing so.
2. **No Retaliation**
[Company Name] prohibits retaliation against employees who report violations or participate in investigations. Employees are protected under California law for whistleblowing and raising concerns about legal or policy violations.

**Employee Acknowledgement**

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the [Company Name] Code of Conduct Policy. I agree to abide by the policies and principles outlined in this document.

**Employee Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
**Employee Name (Print):** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_