Top 5 Tips For An Effective and Efficient Workplace

While growing your dental practice is the primary goal, thinking like an employer helps create an efficient workplace that contributes to the success of your practice. Dentists who initiate workplace management practices will find they spend less time on employee administration and have more time for their patients. With this in mind, we have the following suggestions to help you achieve effective and efficient workplace management practices.

KNOW YOUR EMPLOYER DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

Employers are subject to an increasing number of duties and obligations under provincial and federal legislation, and the common law. Knowing your responsibilities as an employer can help you manage situations before they become problems, and implement workplace management practices and policies suitable for your workplace. Some legislation, like the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, mandates that employers have written workplace policies and procedures in place. It may also be helpful to have written policies and procedures for common workplace situations so employees know your expectations. Registering for employer associations or seminars on employment topics can be a great way to stay up-to-date.

EMPLOYEE RECORDS

All employers in Ontario are required to keep written records for each employee they hire. Employee records must contain:

- Employee’s name, address and starting date of employment;
- Employee’s date of birth if employee is a student under 18;
- Hours worked by the employee each day and week;
- Written agreements to work excess hours or average overtime pay;
- Vacation time records;
- Vacation pay records;
- Information contained in employee’s wage statement; and
- All documents relating to pregnancy, parental, family medical, organ donor, personal emergency, declared emergency, or reservist leave

As a general rule, all records must be kept for three years, but certain records must be kept for the duration of employment. You can refer to the Employment Standards Office website for more information on employee records (www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es)

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The main goal in performance management is to ensure that an employee’s activities – what they do and how well they do them – are contributing to the success of your practice. Performance management can be conducted through informal regular chats with employees or with multi-page appraisal forms with performance ratings that are linked to compensation and promotion decisions. However informal or formal you decide to make your performance management system, it is important to remember that the purpose of the evaluation is to ensure your employee knows your expectations and that any deficiencies in his or her performance and a plan for improvement are discussed. Notes or performance evaluation forms should be kept in the employee’s file so they can be referenced in future evaluations or used for terminating an employee for poor performance.

TRAINING

New hires should be trained on your workplace policies, and given instruction on how your practice operates and their job responsibilities. By beginning the workplace relationship with clearly established job responsibilities and job performance expectations, a new employee can transition seamlessly into your practice and begin contributing to its success right away. You should establish training procedures and designate training responsibilities for different classes of employees so the addition of a new employee can happen quickly and efficiently.

REVIEW WORKPLACE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

No workplace is static. As your practice continues to grow or you add new services consider the impact on your employees and address any concerns by reviewing and updating your workplace practices and procedures annually. This does not have to be time consuming, but it will involve setting aside time to think about changes in your workplace and if your existing workplace policies and practices adhere to new structures or goals for your practice.