

PawCo Foods Employee Handbook

This handbook was created to introduce you to PawCo Foods and provide information about working conditions, benefits, and policies essential to your employment here. The information you'll find in this handbook applies to all PawCo Foods employees.

Following the policies described in this handbook is a condition of your employment. However, nothing in this handbook alters an employee's status. Nothing in this handbook shall constitute nor be construed as a promise of employment or a contract between the Company and its employees.

The handbook is a summary of our policies, which are presented here for informational purposes. You are responsible for reading, understanding, and adhering to the provisions of this handbook. We hope to provide you with a work environment that is constructive to your personal and professional growth.

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1. Employee Handbook Introduction

Welcome to PawCo Foods! We're glad to have you here. Since our inception in 2021, we have developed a philosophy centered on prioritizing high nutrition for dogs by offering scientifically formulated, nutritionally complete plant-based meals that promote overall health and well-being. Our overriding goal is to lead the transformation of the pet food industry towards a more sustainable, health-conscious, and ethical future. We are on a mission to revolutionize dog nutrition by providing high-quality, plant-based meals that promote the health and well-being of every unique dog while supporting animal welfare and environmental sustainability

If you're reading this, we think you're a good fit for helping us fulfill our mission and achieve our goals.

1.1 Changes in Policy

This handbook replaces previous employee handbooks, memos, and manuals. We reserve the right to interpret, cancel, change, suspend, or dispute, with or without notice, all or any part of these policies, procedures, and benefits at any point. Employees will be notified of changes. Changes take effect on dates determined by the Company. After changes take effect, previous policies are void. Individual managers and supervisors cannot change policies.

1.2 Employment Applications

We rely on the accuracy of employment application information and any other data candidates provide during the hiring process. Falsifications, misrepresentations, or material omissions may result in the exclusion of the candidate from consideration for employment. If the candidate has been hired, termination of employment may be considered.

1.3 Employment Relationship

You enter into this employment voluntarily and are free to resign at any time for any

reason or no reason. Likewise, PawCo Foods is free to conclude its relationship with any employee at any time for any reason or no reason. Following a probationary period, the Employment Termination Policy in Section 3.14 is applicable.

2. Company Overview

Mission and Vision

PawCo Foods aims to lead the transformation of the pet food industry towards a more sustainable, health-conscious, and ethical future. We provide scientifically-formulated, plant based dog food that supports both pet health and environmental sustainability.

Brand Values

- Health and Nutrition: Offering complete, plant-based meals for optimal dog health.
- Innovation and Quality: Utilizing cutting-edge technology for product development.
- Sustainability and Animal Welfare: Supporting UN Sustainable Development Goals and reducing our environmental footprint.
- Accessibility and Convenience: Making healthy pet food accessible to all dog owners.
- Personalization & Customer Care: Understanding and catering to our customers' unique needs.
- Inclusive and Supportive Culture: Fostering a workplace where everyone feels valued.

3. Employment Policies

3.1 New Employee Orientation

Human resources provide an orientation for new employees. This includes an overview of the company's history, and an explanation of the company's vision, mission, values, goals, and objectives. Orientation also includes an explanation of tax and legal issues, benefits, and help completing necessary paperwork. Employees are presented with codes, keys, and procedures needed to access their workspace. Supervisors introduce new hires to staff, explain company evaluation procedures, review position scope, and job description, and help them start working.

3.2 Nondisclosure and Confidentiality Agreement

Protecting trade secrets and confidential business information is essential to the success of PawCo Foods. Such confidential information includes (but is not limited to): pending projects and proposals, proprietary production processes, compensation data, personnel/payroll records, financial information, marketing strategies, and conversations with people associated with the company. As a condition of employment, employees must sign a nondisclosure agreement. Employees improperly disclosing or using confidential business information or trade secrets are subject to disciplinary action, including termination and legal action, even if the disclosure does not benefit them.

3.3 Non-Discrimination

PawCo Foods does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices because of race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, age, or disability. We make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship.

3.4 New Employee Probationary Period

The probationary period for regular employees is 90 days from the hire date. This is a time for management to evaluate new employees, and for new employees to evaluate the company. During the probationary period, the company and the employee can terminate employment without notice. Upon completion of the probationary period, a review will be conducted and benefits will begin as appropriate.

3.5 Work Hours

PawCo Foods is open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM from Monday to Friday, except for holidays (see Section 6.7, Holidays). The standard workweek is 40 hours (see Section 4.3, Overtime). For calculating employee benefits, the workweek begins on Monday at 9:00 AM through Friday at 5:00 PM, unless a supervisor makes other arrangements with the employee.

3.6 Lunch Periods

Employees receive a one-hour break for lunch. Lunch breaks are generally taken between the hours of 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM.

3.7 Break Periods

PawCo Foods allows two 15-minute breaks during the following times: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. If employees have unexpected personal business to take care of, they must notify their direct supervisor to discuss time away from work and make provisions as necessary.

3.8 Emergency Closings

Emergencies, including fires, severe weather, or power failures, can disrupt company operations. Executive staff members will make the decision to close if needed. Employees will receive an official notification from their supervisors if the company is closed due to an emergency.

3.9 Employee Personnel Files

Employee personnel files should include their job application, job description, resume, records of training, salary history, records of disciplinary action, and documents related to employee performance reviews, coaching, and mentoring. Personnel files are PawCo Foods property. Access to information they contain is restricted. Management personnel of PawCo Foods who have a legitimate reason to review the file are allowed to. To review their own files, employees should contact their supervisor or Human Resources Representative. With reasonable notice, employees may review their personnel file in the company's office and in the presence of their supervisor or Human Resources Representative.

3.10 Personnel Data Changes

Employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor or PawCo Foods' Human Resources Department of changes such as mailing address, telephone number, name, number of dependents, and emergency contacts. An employee's personal data should be accurate and current at all times.

3.11 Performance Review

Supervisors conduct formal performance reviews every six months. Informal performance reviews may be conducted more often. Performance reviews are for employees and supervisors to talk about current tasks and discuss ideas for meeting work goals. Performance is directly tied to wage and salary increases. Performance reviews will have a direct effect on your compensation.

3.12 Outside Employment Policy

Employees may hold outside jobs in unrelated businesses or professions as long as there is no conflict of interest, performance standards, and scheduling demands are met, and PawCo Foods resources are not used for outside employment.

3.13 Disciplinary Action

PawCo Foods holds each of its employees to its rules and standards of ethical conduct. PawCo Foods expects the employee's supervisor to take action when employees deviate from them. Though PawCo Foods usually takes a progressive approach to discipline, some actions are grounds for immediate employment termination. These include but are not limited to:

- Unauthorized access to company property outside of business hours.
- Using company equipment and/or company vehicles without authorization.
- Theft.
- Insubordination.
- Vandalism or destruction of company property.
- Misrepresentations of PawCo Foods to a customer, a prospective customer, the general public, or an employee.
- Sharing company business practices
- Harassment
- Discrimination

3.14 Employment Termination

Terminations are part of personnel activity at any company. Examples and definitions of common termination types:

- Termination: employment termination initiated by PawCo Foods.
- Layoff: employment termination initiated by PawCo Foods for non-disciplinary reasons.
- Resignation: employment termination initiated by an employee.

Exempt employees shall give at least four weeks' written notice. Since employment with PawCo Foods is based on mutual consent, both the employee and PawCo Foods have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause during the introductory/probationary period for new employees. When a nonexempt employee intends to terminate their employment with PawCo Foods, they shall give PawCo Foods at least two weeks' written notice. For more information on the definitions of non-exempt vs. exempt employees, please refer to the [TriNet guide](#) (Pawcos's HRIS).

Employees who terminate employment with PawCo Foods shall return company property. No final employee payment will be made until all items are returned in appropriate condition. The cost of replacing unreturned items is deducted from the employee's final pay. Any outstanding financial obligations owed to PawCo Foods will also be deducted from the employee's final pay.

Benefits are affected by employment termination in the following manner: PawCo Foods will pay accrued vested benefits due and payable at termination. Some benefits may be continued at employee expense. The employee will be informed of benefits that may be continued and how to do so.

3.15 Work Safety

PawCo Foods provides information to employees about health issues and workplace safety through:

- Training sessions.
- Meetings.

- Bulletin board posts.
- Memos.
- Other written communications.

Employees must be cautious and obey safety rules. Unsafe conditions should be reported to a supervisor immediately. Disciplinary action, including termination of employment, may result from violating safety standards, creating dangerous situations, or failing to report or remedy such situations. A supervisor should be notified immediately in case of accident-related injuries, no matter how insignificant.

3.16 Health Issues

Strictly for the protection of employee health, employees should inform supervisors or human resources representatives of health-related issues. A doctor's note stating whether the employee can perform their job duties is required when or shortly after notice has been given. Employees should notify their supervisor and Human Resources Representative if a health issue requires a leave of absence. These are granted on a case-by-case basis.

3.17 If an Employee Requires Medical Attention

If an employee requires medical attention, the employee's personal physician must be notified immediately. If it is necessary for the employee to be seen by the doctor or go to the hospital, a family member will be called to transport the employee to the appropriate facility. Due to potential liabilities, PawCo Foods' employees will not be responsible for transporting another employee. The employee will be responsible for transportation charges when an emergency requires Emergency Medical Services to evaluate the employee on-site.

3.18 Building Security

Employees are not allowed on Company property after hours without proper authorization. Employees given the responsibility to close the business at the end of the day assume responsibility for locking doors, arming alarm systems, and performing any additional building care, such as turning off lights or setting thermostats. Employees who are issued work keys are responsible for them.

3.19 Company Supplies and Expenditures

Employees whose regular duties do not include purchasing shall not make purchases

on behalf of PawCo Foods without written approval. In order to make purchases in the name of the company, you must be authorized by a manager or supervisor.

3.20 Expense Reimbursement

Reimbursements under \$50 will be included in the employee's next regular paycheck. Larger amounts will be processed as an invoice. Reimbursement request forms should be turned in to the Accounting Department. Supervisors must give prior approval of expenses.

3.21 Visitors in the Workplace

To protect the safety and security of employees, visitors, and facilities, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps ensure security, guards confidential information, decreases insurance liability, protects employee welfare, and limits distractions.

3.22 Parking

Employees must park their cars in parking lots or other areas indicated and provided by the Company.

3.23 Immigration Law Compliance

New employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation verifying employment eligibility and identity. PawCo Foods employs United States citizens and non-U.S. citizens authorized to work in the United States in compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Rehired employees who have not completed an I-9 with PawCo Foods in the past three years or whose previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid must complete another.

3.24 Anti-Harassment Policy

PawCo Foods is committed to providing a work environment free from harassment. Harassment based on an individual's race, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Harassment can include, but is not limited to, unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, derogatory remarks, threats, or actions that interfere with an individual's work performance or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Reporting Mechanisms:

- Employees who believe they have been subjected to harassment should report the incident immediately to their direct supervisor, Human Resources, or via our [confidential survey](#).
- Upon receipt of a grievance, HR will acknowledge receipt within 48 hours and begin a preliminary assessment.

Investigation Process:

- A fair and impartial investigation will be conducted. This may involve interviews with involved parties, review of relevant documents, and consultation with legal advisors and third parties if necessary.
- The employee will receive updates about the progress of the investigation at regular intervals.

Disciplinary Procedures:

- If harassment is confirmed, disciplinary actions will be taken against the perpetrator, up to and including termination.
- Retaliation against an individual who reports harassment or participates in an investigation will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

Resolution and Follow-Up:

- Upon conclusion of the investigation, a decision will be made and communicated to the employee. Appropriate remedial actions will be taken if the grievance is upheld.
- The employee will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the resolution process to ensure continuous improvement of the grievance mechanism.

3.25 Neutrality Statement on Collective Bargaining and Freedom of Association

As stated in our Human Rights Policy, PawCo Foods recognizes and respects the rights of employees to freely associate, form, or join trade unions, and bargain collectively in accordance with local laws. The company remains neutral concerning employees' decisions to engage in collective bargaining. We support open dialogue between management and employees, and they should feel free to raise concerns and suggest improvements without fear of retaliation.

3.26 Remote Work Policy

PawCo Foods supports flexible working arrangements, including remote work options, to promote work-life balance and accommodate personal needs. Eligibility for remote work is determined by an employee's role, performance, and department needs. Employees must coordinate with their direct supervisor to agree on remote working arrangements, schedules, and expectations. All remote work arrangements must comply with company policies, including those regarding confidentiality, security, and timekeeping.

3.27 COVID-19 Guidelines

To ensure the safety of our employees and customers, PawCo Foods adheres to strict COVID-19 protocols in accordance with public health guidelines. This includes:

- Mandatory mask-wearing in communal spaces.
- Regular sanitization of workstations and common areas.
- Encouraging social distancing practices.
- Flexible sick leave policies to accommodate employees who are ill or need to quarantine.
- Remote work arrangements where applicable.

We will continue to monitor the situation and adjust our policies as needed to protect the health and safety of our team.

3.28 Prohibition of Child Labor and Forced Labor

PawCo Foods strictly prohibits the use of child labor or forced labor in any of its operations and facilities. This applies to all forms of forced labor, including debt bondage, trafficking, and other forms of modern slavery, as well as the employment of individuals under the minimum age prescribed by law or under the age for completing compulsory education

4. Wage and Salary Policies

4.1 Wage or Salary Increases

Employee wages are reviewed annually. The employee's review date is typically on or around the anniversary date of employment or the date of the previous compensation review, although reviews may be conducted more often, depending on the circumstances.

4.2 Timekeeping

Nonexempt employees are responsible for recording their time worked correctly. Time worked is time actually spent performing assigned duties. Employees are responsible for recording time spent on individual jobs. PawCo Foods does not pay for time spent on personal business or extended breaks. The time clock is a legal instrument. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record will result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Time records are reviewed weekly. Time record changes must be approved by a supervisor. The Payroll Department can handle questions about timekeeping.

4.3 Overtime

Overtime compensation is paid to nonexempt employees in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. Overtime is payable for all hours worked over 40 per week at a rate of one and one-half times the nonexempt employee's regular hourly rate. Time off on personal time, holidays, or any leave of absence will not be considered hours worked when calculating overtime. In addition, vacation time does not constitute hours worked. Overtime worked without authorization from the supervisor may result in disciplinary action.

4.4 Paydays

All employees are paid monthly. In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a weekend or holiday, employees will receive pay on the next day of operation. PawCo Foods provides an automated direct deposit service for employees, which automatically deposits a pay stub in an employee's bank. To use this service,

complete a direct deposit authorization form, which is available from the Payroll Department.

5. Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

Standards of ethics and conduct are essential at PawCo Foods, and the Company takes these principles seriously. All employees are expected to adhere to the Company's codes and standards in conducting business and fulfilling their roles. Deviating from these standards may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

To further support ethical and professional conduct, we have a separate [Code of Conduct](#) that outlines these expectations in greater detail. We strongly encourage all employees to review this document to fully understand the principles and standards that guide our daily work at PawCo Foods as the yearly plan in this matter.

6. Benefits and Services

PawCo Foods offers a benefits program for its regular full-time and regular part-time employees. However, the existence of these programs does not signify that an employee will necessarily be employed for the required time necessary to qualify for the benefits included in and administered through these programs.

6.1 Insurance

PawCo Foods offers the following health and life insurance programs for regular full-time employees (as determined by the carrier of the policies):

- Health Insurance: Comprehensive health coverage including dental and vision.
- Life Insurance: Coverage for life insurance policies provided by the company.

This handbook does not contain the complete terms and/or conditions of any of PawCo Foods' current insurance benefits plans. It is intended only to provide general explanations. If there is ever any conflict between the handbook and **any** documents issued by one of PawCo Foods' insurance carriers, the carrier's guideline regulations will be regarded as authoritative.

6.2 COBRA Benefits

The Federal Consolidated Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) allows employees and qualified beneficiaries to continue health insurance coverage under PawCo Foods' health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in loss of eligibility. Common qualifying events include:

- Resignation.
- Termination of employment.
- Death of an employee.
- Reduction in an employee's hours.
- Leave of absence.

- Divorce or legal separation.
- A dependent child no longer meets eligibility requirements.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at PawCo Foods' group rates plus an administrative fee. PawCo Foods provides each eligible employee with a notice describing rights under COBRA when the employee becomes eligible for coverage under PawCo Foods' health insurance plan.

6.3 Simple IRA

The Simple Investment Retirement Account (Simple IRA) plan offers PawCo Foods' employees an opportunity for saving, financial growth, and favorable tax treatment. The IRA plan helps contributors save by reducing gross taxable income.

6.4 Social Security and Medicare

PawCo Foods withholds income tax from employee earnings and participates in FICA (Social Security) and Medicare withholding and matching programs as the law requires.

6.5 Vacation

Paid vacation is available to regular part-time employees and regular full-time employees following their first-year anniversary with PawCo Foods. Paid vacation hours are based on the following:

- Vacation time accrued at the rate of 0.0769 hours per hour worked during the first 2 years of employment.
- Earned vacation can be used after one year of continuous employment.

Unused earned vacation is paid and added to the employee's final paycheck upon termination. One week of paid vacation may be carried over from one calendar year to the next. For vacations longer than one week, requests should be received in writing at least 7 days before the proposed vacation period.

6.6 Record Keeping for Vacation Hours

The Human Resources Department maintains vacation day records.

6.7 Holidays

PawCo Foods observes the following paid holidays per year for all nonexempt employees:

Date	Holiday
January 1	New Years Day
January 15	MLK Day
February 19	President's Day
May 27	Memorial Day
June 19	Juneteenth
July 4	Independence Day
September 2	Labor Day
November 28	Thanksgiving Day
November 29	Day After Thanksgiving
December 25	Christmas Day

6.8 Jury Duty and Military Leave

Employees will be granted unpaid time off for jury or military leave. Regular employees will be kept on active payroll until civic duties are completed. A copy of the jury duty summons and associated paperwork are required.

7. Employee Communications

7.1 Procedure for Handling Complaints

Under normal working conditions, employees who have a job-related problem, question, or complaint should go to their immediate supervisor first to get the fastest and best solution. If the employee and supervisor do not solve the problem, PawCo Foods encourages employees to contact the Human Resources Representative.

- A formal grievance can be submitted via a written form, email, or through our [confidential survey](#).
- Upon receipt of a grievance, HR will acknowledge receipt within 48 hours and begin a preliminary assessment.

Investigation Process:

- A fair and impartial investigation will be conducted. This may involve interviews with involved parties, review of relevant documents, and consultation with legal advisors and third parties if necessary.
- The employee will receive updates about the progress of the investigation at regular intervals.

Resolution and Follow-Up:

- Upon conclusion of the investigation, a decision will be made and communicated to the employee. Appropriate remedial actions will be taken if the grievance is upheld.
- The employee will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the resolution process to ensure continuous improvement of the grievance mechanism.

7.2 Bulletin Boards

Employees are responsible for reading important announcements and information posted on the bulletin boards in the working sites and through digital newsletters.

7.3 Suggestion Box

PawCo Foods encourages employees with suggestions that they do not want to give verbally or in person to write them down and leave them in the suggestion box located in the working sites. If this is done anonymously, care will be taken to protect employee privacy. A member of upper management checks the box on a regular basis.

7.4 Staff Meetings

Staff meetings will be held once a week. These meetings allow employees to be informed about company activities and important news. It's also a chance to recognize employee performance.

8. Sustainability Practices

8.1 UN Sustainable Development Goals

PawCo Foods is committed to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Our corporate behavior is aligned with these principles to promote a sustainable future. We recognize that businesses already have a framework in the form of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and a timetable in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is no more crucial way for businesses to contribute than to ensure respect for human rights throughout their supply chains at every step of their business operations.

8.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

We actively engage in practices that contribute to the welfare of our community and environment. Our commitment to corporate social responsibility is reflected in our continuous efforts to enhance the quality of life for our employees, customers, and the communities we serve. By integrating sustainable practices into our daily operations, we strive to minimize our environmental footprint and foster a culture of sustainability within the company.

8.3 Precautionary Measures Adopted by PawCo Foods:

As part of our commitment to sustainability and corporate responsibility, PawCo has adopted several precautionary measures to mitigate potential risks. Below are some examples of actions we have taken:

Reduction of Harmful Substances: We have actively reduced the use of substances in our production processes that could pose potential risks to human health or the environment, even in cases where scientific evidence of harm is still emerging.

Eco-Friendly Packaging Solutions: We have transitioned to fully recyclable and biodegradable packaging materials to reduce the environmental impact of our products, despite some ongoing research on long-term environmental benefits.

Energy Efficiency Initiatives: We have implemented energy-saving technologies across our facilities, including the use of renewable energy sources, to minimize our carbon footprint, recognizing the potential long-term environmental impact of

traditional energy sources.

Supplier and Partner Engagement: We have introduced stricter environmental and health standards for our suppliers, ensuring that they comply with precautionary measures that align with PawCo's sustainability goals.

Regular Risk Assessments: We conduct regular risk assessments in our operations, identifying potential hazards to both health and the environment. This enables us to implement preventive actions, even if scientific certainty regarding the risks is not yet fully conclusive.

9. HR Contacts and tools

- HR Manager: Nakisa Azizi (nakisa@myPawCo.com)
- General Inquiries: help@myPawCo.com
- Information Requests: info@myPawCo.com
- Confidential Survey link : <https://mypawco.typeform.com/to/kfNvikRv>

Conclusion

Thank you for being a part of PawCo Foods. Together, we can create a healthier, more sustainable future for our pets and our planet. Please familiarize yourself with this handbook and reach out to HR if you have any questions. Welcome aboard!