

For Your Info

As of January 1, 2007 the minimum wage is \$7.50 in Massachusetts. Email: psinacole@firstbeaongroup.com if your office needs a copy of this required posting.

Also effective January 1, 2007 the IRS announced a new standard for mileage – 48.5 cents per mile.

The unemployment rate in Massachusetts (January, 2007) was 5.3%.

Employment at Will – Test Yourself!

(answers on page 2)

What is it? What is it not? Note true or false after each of the following ten statements.

1. Every state (except Montana) has an “at will” law in effect.
2. The law generally presumes that most employees are employed “at will.”
3. In 2006, 12% of all US workers were union members.
4. An “at will” employee has no job protections whatsoever.
5. In the US, union membership has declined over the past 35 years.
6. Some research suggests that early teacher unions began around the turn of the century largely because the field was overwhelmingly female and lacked the right to vote until 1920.
7. An employee handbook can provide a sound process for handling performance issues and conflicts.
8. Experts in the automotive industry point to a 1991 United Auto Workers contract for driving up the Big Three’s (GM, Ford and Chrysler) cost structure. The net cost to a vehicle is approximately \$1000-\$1300 depending upon the manufacturer and the specific vehicle.
9. Some feel that “at will” employment provides flexibility to both the employer and employee. Some feel that “at will” employment will encourage rampant firing without cause.
10. More men than women are union members.

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- 59% of HR managers state that the domestic trend most likely to cause major restructuring in the workplace is the aging population and the resulting rise in healthcare costs - SHRM Workplace Forecast 2006-2007
- 39% of HR managers state that the greater need for flex time for their employees will have a major impact on their businesses in the near future - SHRM Workplace Forecast 2006-2007
- 42% of entrepreneurs launched their first ventures as children (i.e., selling lemonade, etc.) - Entrepreneur, February, 2007
- Consumers are using ATM/debit cards more frequently, from 1995 to 2005 usage has increased from 1% to 15% - USA Today, March 6, 2007

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Employee Retention - What You Need to Know

In December of 2006, the Wall Street Journal's Career Journal.com and The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) released survey results regarding job hunting and retention. One of the findings was that nearly 75% of employees are looking for new jobs. Nearly 50% of the HR professionals that participated in the survey were implementing special retention processes and programs. According to Gail Griffin, general manager of Careerjournal.com, "As the economy and job market continue to improve, employee retention poses a greater challenge." Employees and HR professionals surveyed agreed on the top reasons employees leave their employers:

- > better compensation elsewhere
- > better career opportunity elsewhere
- > dissatisfaction with potential for career development

Answers:

- | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1. True | 2. True | 3. True | 4. False | 5. True |
| 6. True | 7. True | 8. True | 9. True | 10. True |



*Look for Pattie Hunt Sinacole's
Job Doc Column in the Boston Globe
on Sunday, April 29, 2007!*