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HR Health Check!

6 HR Hotspots for OT Practice Owners to Review

To ensure compliance, efficiency, and smooth business operations in the year ahead, it's advisable for occupational therapy practice owners to review their Human Resources practices.

Here are 6 HR hotspots for occupational therapy practice owners to review:

1. Position Descriptions (PDs)

Employers commonly conduct regular performance appraisals, which are opportunities for practice owners/managers and employees to discuss performance goals and agree on measurable performance indicators. Accurate, up-to-date PDs are an important tool for supporting the performance appraisal process and providing clarity on the expectations of the employee's role. Accurate PDs are also an essential when classifying employees under an award.

2. Classifications

Practice owners must ensure that employees and positions are classifying staff correctly. Classification levels under the Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020 (HPSS Award) determine the pay rates and entitlements based on an individual employee's skills, qualifications, years of experience, and responsibilities. Paying an employee at an incorrect classification level is a legal and financial liability known as an underpayment and a breach of the award.

3. Pay Rates

It's important to ensure you are paying employees at least their minimum entitlements. The penalties for underpaying employees have never been higher. Minimum pay rates under the HPSS Award are reviewed annually by the FWC.



Always refer to the newest pay guide and seek guidance from an experienced employment and industrial relations professional when interpreting an award.

4. Independent Contractor Arrangements

It is important for practice owners to review all employee work arrangements and employment contracts to ensure these agreements are lawful, particularly if you engage independent contractors or you're considering engaging independent contractors. All independent contractor agreements must comply with the new Closing Loopholes changes which have now come into effect.

5. Leave Balances

Excessive accrued annual leave balances for employees can represent a significant financial liability for practice owners. Not taking accrued annual leave can also be hazardous to the health and safety of employees who may not be getting enough of a break from work to reset and recharge.

The HPSS Award allows practice owners to direct their employees to take paid annual leave, however it's important to note that there is a process that must be followed. Practice owners should also review the employee leave provisions in their employment contracts and the HPSS Award on a regular basis, to ensure they

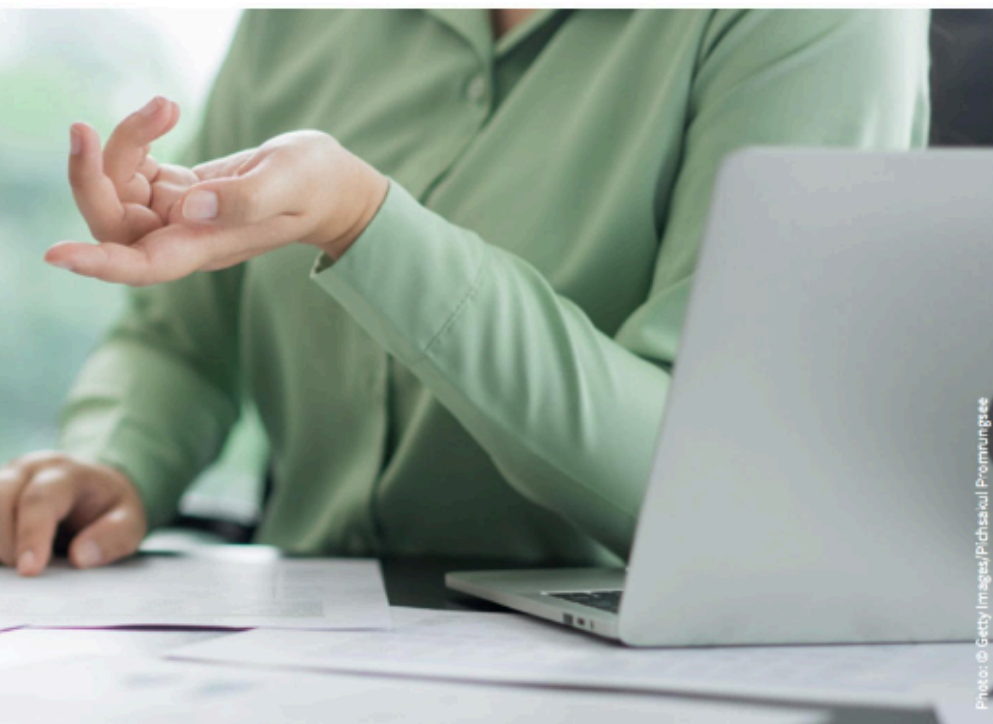


Photo: © Getty Images/Pichasak Promrungsree

“Workplace policies guide various aspects of your practice, including outlining clear expectations and providing a consistent approach to managing workplace issues”.

are meeting their obligations and keeping up to date with any legislative changes.

6. Workplace Policies

Workplace policies guide various aspects of your practice, including outlining clear expectations and providing a consistent approach to managing workplace issues. Workplace policies should always be kept up to date with current employment laws and tailored to the unique circumstances of your practice, to ensure regulatory compliance and to mitigate risks to your business and staff.

The six HR hotspots discussed in this article is not an extensive list of HR areas

to review in your practice. For assistance conducting an HR health check for your practice, you can contact an HR consultancy that works closely with the allied health sector such as WorkPlacePLUS.

As the national HR and IR partner of Occupational Therapy Australia, WorkPlacePLUS provides support to OTA members on employment matters affecting your practice. For more information, contact Anna Pannuzzo on (03) 9492 0958 or visit www.WorkPlacePLUS.com.au.

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