



# Company policies

Lesson code: 11SM-E6C9-PHHN

Intermediate (B1-B2)

American English

## 1 Warm-up

Does your company have a set of policies?

## 2 Key words

Match the words/phrases on the left to the definitions on the right.

1. strict	c	a. a paid number of days each year that you are allowed to be away from work
2. encourage (someone to do something)	f	b. have the legal right to do or have something
3. inappropriate	d	c. limiting, not relaxed
4. <u>annual leave</u>	e	d. not suitable
5. settle in	e	e. to become comfortable and familiar with a new situation, for example, a new job
6. telecommuting	g	f. to talk or behave in a way that gives someone the confidence to do something
7. entitled (to something)	b	g. working at home, via the internet

## 3 Company policies

Listen to the dialogue and put T (True) or F (False) next to each statement below.

Audio



- Working hours are strictly from 9 am to 5 pm.
- The office closes at 7 pm.
- Lunch breaks are 35 minutes' long.
- There is no formal dress code.
- Employees get 26 days of annual leave.
- Vacation days do not carry over to the next year if employees don't use them all.
- Telecommuting is possible after a few months.



## 4 Useful questions

Complete the dialogue with the questions below.

Am I allowed to use them all at once?  
Does this company allow telecommuting?  
Is there a strict policy on working hours?  
Will they expire?

Can I leave 30 minutes earlier?  
How long are we allowed for lunch?  
What is the dress code here?

**Mark:** So, Judith, do you have any questions?

**Judith:** Yes. \_\_\_\_\_ 1

**Mark:** Generally, we work 8 hours every day. You can report to work anytime between 8 am and 11 am. But not later than 11 am as we close the office at 7 pm.

**Judith:** Okay. \_\_\_\_\_ 2

**Mark:** You get an hour for lunch. If you want to take a longer break, you can, but the extra time will be treated as unpaid time, so you'll have to stay longer at work.

**Judith:** And what if I only take a 30 minute lunch. \_\_\_\_\_ 3

**Mark:** Yes, you can.

**Judith:** And what about coffee breaks?

**Mark:** You're allowed to take a coffee break whenever you feel tired or need to clear your head. In fact, we encourage it.

**Judith:** OK, fine. \_\_\_\_\_ 4

**Mark:** We don't really have a strict dress code. So, don't worry, you don't have to wear heels and you don't need to wear a skirt. But obviously, you shouldn't dress inappropriately.

**Judith:** All right. What about vacations?

**Mark:** You're entitled to 28 days paid annual leave.

**Judith:** \_\_\_\_\_ 5

**Mark:** Yes, you can use them however you want. You can take a 28-day vacation or several shorter breaks. But you should always give us advance notice if you're going to take a break. For a longer break, I mean 2 weeks or more, you should give us at least one month's notice.

**Judith:** OK. And what if I don't use my leave days in the same year? \_\_\_\_\_ 6

**Mark:** You must take at least three weeks' vacation a year. Only vacation on top of this may be carried over to the next year.

**Judith:** OK, thanks. I think that's everything ... oh, \_\_\_\_\_ 7

**Mark:** Telecommuting ... you mean working from home?

**Judith:** Yes, that's right.

**Mark:** At the beginning we'd prefer that you work at the office, unless there's some emergency and you have to work from home. After a few months, when you have settled in, we can talk about it. We try to be flexible with our employees.



## 5 Collocations

Match the verbs on the left to the expressions on the right to form phrases from the dialogue.

- |                |                       |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. report      | a. a break            |
| 2. take        | b. from home          |
| 3. stay        | c. longer at work     |
| 4. clear       | d. one month's notice |
| 5. give        | e. to annual leave    |
| 6. work        | f. to work            |
| 7. be entitled | g. your head          |

Now create your own sentence for each phrase.

## 6 Grammar: obligation, necessity and permission

Look at the table below. Find examples of each structure from the dialogue and put them in the table.

Structure	Use	Examples
<b>must</b> <b>have to</b> <b>need to</b>	to say that something is necessary or obligatory	
<b>don't have to</b> <b>don't need to</b>	to say that something is not necessary	
<b>should / shouldn't</b>	to say that something is a good or bad idea	
<b>can/can't</b>	to ask for or give permission	
<b>may/may not</b>	to ask for or give permission ( <i>more polite</i> )	
<b>be allowed to</b>	to ask for or give permission	



**7 Practice**

Claire is an architect. She has just started a new job. Complete each sentence below using a suitable structure from the table in the correct form, positive or negative.



1. She has to/needs to/must work 8 hours every day.
2. She \_\_\_\_\_ smoke at work. The building is a non-smoking area.
3. She \_\_\_\_\_ wear very formal clothes. The office has a relaxed dress code.
4. She \_\_\_\_\_ wear a hard hat when visiting a building site, according to safety regulations.
5. She \_\_\_\_\_ meet clients every day. Her work involves a lot of meetings.
6. She \_\_\_\_\_ work hard if she wants a promotion. Her boss is very demanding.
7. She \_\_\_\_\_ get up early every day. She can work flexible hours.
8. She \_\_\_\_\_ park her car near the building entrance. That space is reserved for the director.

**8 Talking point**

What are your company's policies? Use language from this lesson.



**3 Company policies**

- Mark:** So, Judith, do you have any questions?
- Judith:** Yes, is there a strict policy on working hours?
- Mark:** Generally, **we work 8 hours every day**. You **can** report to work **anytime between 8 am and 11 am**. But not later than 11 am as **we close the office at 7 pm**.
- Judith:** Okay. How long are we allowed for lunch?
- Mark:** You get an hour for lunch. If you want to take a longer break, you can, but the extra time will be treated as unpaid time, so you'll have to stay longer at work.
- Judith:** And what if I only take a 30-minute lunch. Can I leave 30 minutes earlier?
- Mark:** Yes, you can.
- Judith:** And what about coffee breaks?
- Mark:** You're allowed to take a coffee break whenever you feel tired or need to clear your head. In fact, we encourage it.
- Judith:** OK, fine. What is the dress code here?
- Mark:** We don't really have a strict dress code. So, don't worry, you don't have to wear heels, and you don't need to wear a skirt. But obviously, you shouldn't dress inappropriately.
- Judith:** All right. What about vacation?
- Mark:** You're entitled to 28 days paid annual leave.
- Judith:** Am I allowed to use them all at once?
- Mark:** Yes, you can use them however you want. You can take a 28-day vacation or several shorter breaks. But you should always give us advance notice if you're going to take a break. For a longer break, I mean 2 weeks or more, you should give us at least one month's notice.
- Judith:** OK. And what if I don't use my leave days in the same year? Will they expire?
- Mark:** You must take at least three weeks' vacation a year. Only vacation on top of this may be carried over to the next year.
- Judith:** OK, thanks. I think that's everything ... oh, does this company allow telecommuting?
- Mark:** Telecommuting ... you mean working from home?
- Judith:** Yes, that's right.
- Mark:** At the beginning we'd prefer that you work at the office, unless there's some emergency and you have to work from home. After a few months, when you have settled in, we can talk about it. We try to be flexible with our employees.



**1 Warm-up**

*Encourage a short discussion.*

**2 Key words**

1. c      2. f      3. d      4. a      5. e      6. g      7. b

**3 Company policies**

*Pre-teach any other key vocabulary from the transcript that you think will cause problems.*

1. F      2. T      3. F      4. T      5. F      6. F      7. T

**4 Useful questions**

*Either play the dialogue again or hand out the transcript.*

1. Is there a strict policy on working hours?
2. How long are we allowed for lunch?
3. Can I leave 30 minutes earlier?
4. What is the dress code here?
5. Am I allowed to use them all at once?
6. Will they expire?
7. Does this company allow telecommuting?

**5 Collocations**

1. f      2. a      3. c      4. g      5. d      6. b      7. e

**6 Grammar: obligation, necessity and permission**

1. you'll have to stay longer at work.
2. you don't have to wear heels and you don't need to wear a skirt
3. you should always give us advance notice if you're going to take a break; you shouldn't dress inappropriately.
4. You can report to work anytime between 8 am and 11 am.
5. Only vacation on top of this may be carried over to the next year.
6. You're allowed to take a coffee break whenever you feel tired ...

**7 Practice**

*Possible answers:*

2. isn't allowed to/may not
3. doesn't have to/doesn't need to
4. has to/needs to/must
5. has to/needs to/must
6. must/has to/should
7. doesn't have to/doesn't need to
8. isn't allowed to/may not

