

saam architecture

excerpt of
employee handbook

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Welcome to Saam Architecture!

Dear Employee,

You and Saam Architecture have made an important decision—the firm has decided you can contribute to our success, and you've decided that Saam Architecture is the organization where you can pursue your career productively and enjoyably.

We believe we've each made the right decision; one that will result in a profitable relationship. The minute you start working here, you become an integral part of Saam Architecture and its future. Every job in our firm is important, and you will play a key role in the continued growth of our firm.

As you will quickly discover, our success is based on delivering high quality products and providing unsurpassed customer service. How do we do it? By working smart, focusing on our customers' needs, and creatively meeting those needs. We do it by treating each other and customers with respect and admiration. We do it by performing as a team. Should you have any questions concerning this handbook, your employment, or benefits, please feel free to discuss them with a Principal.

Again, welcome!

General Employment

Flexible Work Hours and Telecommuting

We understand that flexibility can enhance both productivity and work-life balance. Features of Saam Architecture's flexible work program include:

- Each employee is provided with a laptop and access to hoteling space in the office.
- Employees are responsible for maintaining a reliable internet connection at home and covering personal expenses for mobile phones and service plans.
- While flexibility is encouraged, business needs—such as client meetings, team collaboration, and project deadlines—must take priority.

We recognize that the nature of our work often requires flexibility—whether it's meeting tight deadlines, responding to clients, or collaborating across varying schedules. In return, we extend that same flexibility to employees, trusting them to adjust their workdays to accommodate personal commitments and appointments when needed, as long as those adjustments do not interfere with client meetings, project deadlines, or team responsibilities.

We often say at Saam, "flexibility goes both ways." This means that while employees are encouraged to make space for life outside of work, they may also need to check emails, texts, or other communications outside of traditional office hours to stay aligned with team and client needs. This balanced approach helps us maintain a high level of service while supporting work-life balance.

For those who find it challenging to balance flexibility, a more structured schedule may be implemented at the discretion of a Principal to support success.

One-on-Ones

To foster communication and professional development, all employees will have regular one-on-one meetings with a Principal. Principal assignments will rotate, giving you a chance to get to know our Principals. Employees are responsible for scheduling these meetings, which provide an opportunity to discuss career growth, workplace experiences, and feedback on performance.

This is a dedicated time for open dialogue, ensuring that employees feel heard, supported, and aligned with the firm's goals.

Open Door Policy

Saam Architecture values open and honest communication. All employees are encouraged to share ideas, offer feedback, or raise concerns directly with the Principals. If you have a suggestion, an idea for improvement, or simply want to discuss something that wasn't addressed as a part of the One-on-One process, you are always welcome to reach out at any time to any of the Principals.

Time Off

Flexible Time Off (FTO)

Saam Architecture understands the importance of taking time away from work to recharge. That's why we offer a flexible time off (FTO) policy instead of a traditional accrual system. Rather than tracking a set number of vacation, holiday, or sick days, we trust our team members to take the time they need, paid according to your regularly scheduled target hours. Because this policy offers non-accrued time off, unused FTO is not paid out upon an employee's separation from the firm.

Flexible time off is built on mutual trust and professional responsibility: take the time you need while ensuring your responsibilities are met and coordinating with your team to provide coverage and continuity. This policy is intended for planned and short-term personal leave. Extended time off (e.g., parental, medical leave) follows separate policies – see below.

To ensure uninterrupted client service, employees must communicate vacation plans to the Principals and their project teams at least two weeks in advance. While we make every effort to accommodate time-off requests, the firm reserves the right to decline a request if it would interfere with operations, impact customer service, or create staffing challenges. If scheduling conflicts arise, the Principals will work toward a fair resolution that balances business needs with employee well-being.

For more information and for best practices, employees should reference Saam's Flexible Time Off Policy and Timesheet policies which is available under Tools/References in ADP WorkforceNow.

Holidays

Saam Architecture does not observe specific firm-wide holidays. Instead, employees are free to take time off for holidays in a way that aligns with their personal and professional commitments, while continuing to meet the high standards of service and responsiveness our work requires.

Employees who do not observe a particular holiday are welcome to work that day if they choose. If any scheduling concerns arise, open communication with your team and a Principal is encouraged to ensure smooth coordination and support across the firm.

Sick Time

Saam Architecture provides employees with sick time as needed, without requiring them to accrue hours before taking time off. Sick time should be recorded separately from vacation time in employee timesheets. Employees may take sick time in hourly increments as needed.

Additional state-specific sick time information can be found in the state policy documents for Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island.

Leave for Special Circumstances

For all leave policies below, employees should refer to Saam's state-specific policy documents for details that apply to their particular state. If you have any questions or need clarification, please reach out to a Principal for guidance.

Family and Parental Leave

Saam Architecture supports employees in balancing their professional and family responsibilities. Under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), all eligible employees have job protection for up to 12 weeks to care for a new child (birth or adoption) or to care for a sick family member. Employees should provide as much notice as possible before taking leave, with a minimum of 30 days' notice required.

For more details on eligibility and leave procedures, employees are encouraged to speak with a Principal and refer to Saam's state-specific leave policies. States with specific policies on Family and Parental Leave include Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York.

For states that don't have family or parental leave policies, Saam offers the following: employees who give birth are eligible for Short-Term Disability payments of 60% of their salary for a term determined by their doctor, provided that they have previously been working at least 30 hours a week. Saam Architecture will pay the employee the remaining 40% of their salary for the duration of the short-term disability period. Since short-term disability has a one-week waiting period, Saam will pay FTO for the first week of leave. Once the short-term disability period is over, Saam will pay an additional week of FTO.

After the paid leave is up, employees that remain on unpaid leave will be responsible for their portion of health insurance premiums, should they be on Saam's health insurance plan. Saam will work with employees before they go on leave to determine the best method to accomplish this. Options include: paying in advance for the premiums due while on leave, paying premiums monthly while on leave, or paying the full amount due when returning from leave.

Non-birthing parents are eligible for two weeks' paid leave.

Employee Benefits

Firm employees are entitled to a wide range of benefits. A number of the benefit programs—such as Social Security, workers' compensation, state disability, and unemployment insurance—cover all employees as required by law.

Some benefit programs require contributions from employees, but many are fully paid by the firm. We reserve the right to add, amend, modify, or terminate any employee benefit plans or programs at any time.

Health Insurance

The firm offers medical, dental and vision plans for full-time employees. Refer to the information from the insurance provider, available under Tools/References in ADP WorkforceNow, for details of eligibility and coverage.

401(k)

The firm offers a 401(k) program and matches contributions up to 4%. Refer to the information from the 401(k) provider, available under Tools/References in ADP WorkforceNow, for details.

FSA and DCA

The firm's employees are eligible to use pre-tax dollars to fund a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or Dependent Care Account (DCA). Refer to the specific plan documents, available under Tools/References in ADP WorkforceNow, for further explanation of these benefits.

Disability and Life Insurance

Employees who have completed any mandatory Introductory Period may qualify for disability insurance coverage, which will be paid for in full by the firm. Refer to the specific plan documents, available under Tools/References in ADP WorkforceNow, for further explanation of this benefit and its tax implications.

Additional state-specific information on statutory short-term disability benefits can be found in the state policy documents for New York and Rhode Island.

Workers' Compensation

The firm provides insurance to compensate for any illness or injury an employee might suffer while working on firm premises, traveling on official firm business, or attending an activity officially sponsored by the firm. If you become ill or injured, please get medical attention at once.

You must also report the details to a Principal as soon as possible. You will be required to cooperate with our workers' compensation insurance carrier in processing your claim. You must report every injury, no matter how small, to keep the coverage in force and to get any benefits or other compensation to which you may be entitled.

Professional Registrations and Memberships

The firm provides reimbursement for state professional license renewal, AIA membership (national and local), IDIQ membership, NCARB membership, NOMA membership, and GBCI membership. For other memberships and registrations, please check with a Principal.

Emerging Professionals

The firm encourages all employees to earn professional architectural or interior design registration. The firm will cover the cost of taking professional licensure exams for employees that decide to seek such a license. Costs will be covered for the first time employees attempt the exam only.

The firm will provide online study materials for the architectural registration exams. Access can be provided by reaching out to a Principal.

Staffing and project team formation will take into account providing on-project mentoring opportunities to emerging professionals. In addition, each employee will be a part of a peer group, run by Senior Associates, to enhance the professional development of all staff.

Discretionary Bonuses

At the end of the year, the Principals will evaluate the firm's financial performance. In profitable years, bonuses may be given to staff at the discretion of the Principals. Bonuses will be paid through the payroll system and included in the last check of the calendar year.

Employee Referral Bonuses

We want to tap into the great network of talent our employees have! If you know someone who would be a great fit for our team, we'd love to hear about them. All full-time and part-time employees can participate, except for those directly involved in hiring for the position (like managers or HR). See the Employee Referral Bonus Program Policy, available under Tools/References in ADP WorkforceNow, for more information.