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# Hello,

Welcome to **<AGENCY>.** **We’re glad you’re here!**

We believe that a good start is half the battle, so we’re happy to help you get settled with this employee handbook. Here, you’ll find everything you need to know about things like employment terms, how we work, and the structure of our organization. It also covers practical matters - such as how to request time off and what to do if you’re sick.

If you have any questions about this handbook, don’t hesitate to reach out to us!



**Good to have you here!**

**Working in an architectural firm is all about collaboration. How can <AGENCY> support you?**

At **<AGENCY>**, everything revolves around collaboration. Since our founding in [year], we have built a culture of open communication and teamwork. We offer a dynamic work environment where everyone has the opportunity to grow and collaborate on innovative projects that improve the built environment.



# Who, what, where

A clear structure helps you reach the right people for specific questions or topics. You can find all of your colleagues listed below:

# Employment conditions

Back to business, here you’ll find some practical and important details you should know about your employment contract.

## What you will receive from us

* Your employment contract (digital version);
* An Employee Information Form (FAM) to collect details like your tax withholding statement, emergency contact person, and other relevant information;
* This employee handbook.

Content of the contractThe contract outlines various agreements, including the scope of work, salary payment, a possible probation period, and the role you will be performing.

## Collective Labour Agreement (cao)

The Collective Labor Agreement for architectural firms applies to your contract. You can find [it](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/downloads/) here.

## What we need from you

* Signed employment contract;
* Completed FAM form;
* A copy of your identification (not a driver's license);
* A copy of your (relevant) diplomas;
* Your tax withholding information.

We handle your personal data with care and store it in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Your data will only be used for administrative and legal purposes and will be kept for as long as necessary according to the applicable regulations.

Probation periodDepending on the length and type of employment contract, we apply a probation period. We believe it’s important for both sides to ensure a good fit. After you start, you will receive an invitation for a probation review meeting.

## Working hours

A full-time workweek consists of [40 uur](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/artikel-12/). This excludes travel time and commuting. Our office is open Monday to Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

End of fixed-term employment contract
A fixed-term employment contract ends automatically on the agreed-upon end date. Exception: a contract can be terminated ‘by mutual consent’ before the end date. This can also be included in your contract with an ‘early termination clause’.
The employer needs permission from the UWV (Employee Insurance Agency) to terminate the contract early; the employee does not. More details can be found in [Article 14](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/artikel-14/) of the Collective Labor Agreement and in the [FAQ](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/helpdesk/faq/werkafspraken/kun-je-een-tijdelijk-contract-tussentijds-beeindigen/).

Termination of a permanent employment contract
Both the employer and the employee must terminate a permanent employment contract in writing, stating the reasons and observing the applicable notice period. In cases of urgent cause, termination must be immediate and explained in writing.

**Notice periods:**

* **Employee**: The standard notice period is one month, unless otherwise agreed in writing. If a longer notice period is agreed for the employee, the employer must observe at least double that period.
* **Employer**:
	+ Less than 5 years of service: 1 month
	+ 5 to 10 years of service: 2 months
	+ 10 to 15 years of service: 3 months
	+ 15 years or more: 4 months

Termination takes effect at the end of the month, unless otherwise agreed. Please refer to your employment contract for more details on the notice period and other conditions.



# Workplace & way of working

## Address

**<**[**AGENCY**](http://www.agency.nl)**>**

[Insert your agency’s website link]

## Building<AGENCY> is located in a historic building that combines modern architecture with industrial elements. The space offers an inspiring work environment where the past and future meet. The office is designed to encourage creativity and collaboration and is situated in a location that is both functional and stylish for our daily work.Office accessAccess to the <AGENCY> office is secured with an access pass. Upon entry, you’ll use your pass to open the main entrance. On your first working day, you will receive a pass that grants you access to the building and our office spaces during your time with the agency. Please make sure to always carry your pass with you to ensure smooth entry. If you lose or forget your pass, contact the reception desk or the facilities manager for a replacement.Office layoutYou’ll find our office layout and floor plan below to help you get oriented and find your way around quickly.[Insert floor plan]Loaned equipment<AGENCY> provides certain materials and equipment to employees for temporary use. To borrow these items, you’ll need to complete and approve a loan form. These items remain the property of the < AGENCY>, and we expect you to handle them with care. If any items are lost or damaged, please report this immediately to the facilities or office manager. Be sure to return all items on time and in good condition.

## [Insert loan form]Telephony

The general phone number of <**AGENCY**> is [insert phone number]. Employees who receive a company phone will be given instructions on setup and use. Make sure your device is configured with the correct email and security settings, including two-step verification. Personal apps and data may only be installed if they comply with <**AGENCY**>’s IT policy.

If your device is lost or broken, report it immediately to the IT department or office manager so that a suitable solution can be arranged quickly.

## LightingThe lighting in the office is partly centrally controlled and partly manual. On the [floor], there is a control panel in the hallway that switches the main lights on and off. A code is required to access it, which is displayed on the panel itself. If you are the first to arrive, please switch on the lights, and if you are the last to leave, don’t forget to turn them off.<AGENCY> doorbellVisitors can ring the doorbell at the main entrance. This is connected to [reception/office], where access can be granted remotely.

## In principle, you can organize your work flexibly at <AGENCY> - in consultation and with approval - so working partly from home is definitely an option.

## Flexible workingWe operate a flexible desk policy at <AGENCY>, although many colleagues have their preferred spots. There are two workstations equipped with extra monitors and two hot desks without. During busy periods, please coordinate with each other and make shared agreements about desk use. We ask everyone to keep workspaces tidy and to clear away personal items after use.Working from homeRemote work is possible at <AGENCY>, but always in consultation with your supervisor. We encourage a healthy balance between working at the office and at home, ensuring collaboration and availability remain strong. Agree clearly on your schedule and make sure you have a proper home office setup.PrivacyAt <AGENCY>, we handle both personal and business data with care. When necessary, privacy guidelines and measures are applied to safeguard confidentiality.Kitchen

The kitchen is available for all staff and is equipped with coffee and tea facilities, a microwave, and refrigerators. Please note that food in the fridges is considered private property. We ask everyone to keep the kitchen clean, put used items away, and place dishes in the dishwasher.

## Reception / Cafeteria (if applicable)Employees and visitors can make use of the cafeteria on the ground floor, where food and drinks are available for purchase. Seating is available near the reception and on the floor above.

## WindowsWindows must remain closed due to the building’s ventilation system, which ensures optimal air quality and climate control throughout the office.

**Lactation room**A quiet, private lactation room is available. Please contact the facilities team or your supervisor to arrange access and further details. Be sure to leave the space clean and ready for the next colleague after use.

**Storage and lockers**

Storage areas and lockers are intended for keeping office supplies and materials.

**Printer room**

The printer room is equipped with printers and copiers for general use. Please use the equipment with care and report any issues or malfunctions to the IT department or office manager immediately. Keep the area clean by properly disposing of paper scraps and empty ink cartridges. Use printers efficiently and sparingly to help reduce paper waste.

**Meeting rooms**

<**AGENCY**> has several meeting rooms of various sizes, ranging from small discussion rooms to larger spaces for team meetings or presentations. Meeting rooms can be reserved via our office manager (info@agency.nl) to ensure they are available when needed. Please leave the room tidy after use so others can also enjoy a clean space.

**Mail shelf & mailbox**

Mail is delivered daily and placed on the staff mail shelf. Letters and packages for internal distribution can be placed in the central mailbox.
 **Toilets**
Toilets are located in the hallway. Don’t forget to bring your access pass - you’ll need it to return to the office.

**<AGENCY> WhatsApp-group**We have a <**AGENCY**> WhatsApp group. It’s a convenient channel for short messages or quick updates that need to be shared fast. Please keep messages relevant and concise to ensure the group remains effective.

**Wifi**

Name: [insert network name]
Password : [insert password]

**<AGENCY> Emergency plan**

The emergency exit is located close to our workspaces and can be identified by the illuminated green sign. In case of fire or another emergency, do not use the elevator. Use the stairs and follow the marked emergency exit to safely leave the building.

[Insert <**AGENCY>** emergency plan]

**First aid kit**
The red first aid kit is located on the shelf above the first coat rack. In the case of minor injuries or emergencies, you can find first aid materials there.

**Emergency Response Officers (BHV)**Zaha Hadid zahahadid@agency.nl

Renzo Piano renzopianoj@agency.nl

# Compensation

**Salary (payment)** Your salary is paid monthly around the 25th. If the 25th falls on a weekend, you will receive your salary on the preceding Friday. Your payslip and annual income statement will be sent to your personal email address.

**Holiday allowance**
You are entitled to holiday allowance each year, which amounts to 8% of your gross salary. It is calculated over your earnings from June 1st to May 31st and paid out in May.

## At the end of employment When your employment ends, the accrued holiday allowance for the worked months will be paid out in your final settlement. If you have taken more leave than you have accrued, this will be deducted from your holiday pay.Travel reimbursementYou will receive a travel allowance (€ 0.23 per km maximum in 2025). This may be a fixed amount per kilometer or a full reimbursement for second-class public transport.

**Overtime**
We work in a results-driven manner, where the quality of your work is more important than the number of hours worked. <**AGENCY**> does not recognise overtime as such.
For employees up to and including job level 5, overtime can be compensated—by payment or time off - if discussed and approved in advance by your supervisor.
For employees at job level 6 and above, managing work time is considered part of the role, and occasional extra hours are inherent to the responsibilities.

You can find more information about overtime, flexible working, and additional hours in [Article 13](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/artikel-13/) and [Appendix 6](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/bijlage-6/) of the Collective Labour Agreement for Architectural Firms.

Expense claims
Incurred any costs? Submitting a claim is easy! Use the [insert expense claim form link] and hand it in - along with the original receipt - to the office manager.

# Holiday and leave

When you enjoy your work, every day can feel rewarding - but it’s also important to take time off now and then to focus on other things.

## Leave entitlement



Above, you’ll see how your leave is accrued and what you can use it for.

## The example shown is based on a full-time workweek. If you work part-time, your leave entitlement is calculated proportionally.Additional vacation days

It’s possible to purchase additional vacation hours through the *cao à la carte* scheme. You can find [details](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/artikel-28/) about how this scheme works.

## Pregnancy and maternity leave

Congratulations - you’re expecting! Please inform your supervisor once you’re pregnant. Our office will notify the UWV and arrange your maternity leave.

Leave is divided into two parts: maternity leave before the birth (*zwangerschapsverlof*) and maternity leave after the birth (*bevallingsverlof*). During your leave, you’ll continue to accrue vacation days.

The total leave period is at least 16 weeks. It starts 4 to 6 weeks before your expected due date. You may decide how early you want your leave to begin, within that range. The leave is calculated from the day after your due date. If you become unfit for work due to your pregnancy, the UWV will require your leave to begin 6 weeks before the due date.

## Special leave

All forms of statutory special leave are outlined in the Work and Care Act (*Wet Arbeid en Zorg*), including maternity leave, parental leave, and others. Additionally, under the Collective Labour Agreement (cao), you are entitled to special leave in the following cases:

1. For the duration of the funeral or cremation of your partner, child, or a step- or foster child who is part of your household;
2. Up to three days for the funeral or cremation of your child, stepchild or foster child *not mentioned under point 1*, a parent, step-/foster-/in-law parent, son- or daughter-in-law;
3. One day for the funeral or cremation of a (great-)grandparent (including your partner’s), grandchild, sibling, brother-/sister-in-law;
4. Up to five days per calendar year to attend union meetings if you’re a board member, provided the union submits a written request and your work allows for it;
5. As long as necessary to visit a healthcare provider for personal medical reasons - unless the appointment can reasonably be made outside working hours. If not, schedule it at the beginning or end of your workday whenever possible;
6. As long as reasonably needed to attend job interviews in the case of dismissal or imminent dismissal not caused by your own actions;
7. One day in case of a house move - this can be used once every three years.

Please note**:** The leave entitlements under points 3 and 4 only apply if the event or ceremony takes place on a regular working day.

Parental leave

You can request parental leave through your manager, at least two months before the leave begins. This request must be made in writing.
Parental leave is leave that you can take to care for your child(ren). Parents are entitled to a maximum of 26 weeks of parental leave. The first 9 weeks are partially paid (70%). You must take these 9 weeks within the child’s first year. The remaining 17 weeks are unpaid (you can take them until your child turns 8 years old).

The following rules apply to parental leave:

* You can take parental leave for each child separately;
* Both parents are entitled to parental leave;
* You can also take parental leave for a foster child, stepchild, or prospective adoptive child. The child must be registered as living with you according to the Personal Records Database (Basisregistratie Personen).

For more information on special leave, refer to [Article 39](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/artikel-39/) of the Collective Labour Agreement for Architectural Firms.

## Public holidays

The following days are public holidays on which you are free:

* January 1st (New Year’s Day)
* Easter Monday
* April 27th (King’s Day) – If April 27th falls on a Sunday, King’s Day will be celebrated the day before.
* May 5th (Liberation Day, once every 5 years, 2025, 2030 etc.)
* Ascension Day
* Whit Monday
* December 25th and 26th (Christmas Day and Boxing Day)

During the Christmas and New Year, you are required to take holiday days as <**AGENCY**> will be closed.

Part-time employees generally work with a fixed schedule as much as possible.

## Collective leave

<**AGENCY**> observes collective leave on specific days [insert period], when the entire agency is off at the same time. This leave will be announced at the beginning of each year, after approval from the employee council.

# Sick leave

Being sick is never pleasant. If you're unable to work due to illness, you need to request sick leave.

What to do if you’re sick
On the first day of your illness, call your supervisor before 9:00 a.m. Inform him/her that you cannot work due to illness. You should reschedule any appointments and/or tasks you have, or ask one of your colleagues to take over them.

Note: You must report your illness on the first day, even if you were scheduled to be off that day.

An employer cannot ask for just anything, but the following information should be provided if requested:

* Your phone number, email address, and (where applicable) your (hospital) address;
* The expected duration of your illness;
* Ongoing appointments and tasks;
* Whether the illness is related to a workplace accident;
* Whether the illness is a result of a traffic accident and whether the damages can be claimed from the responsible party.

## What happens after your sick leave notification?

After reporting your illness, we expect you to do everything possible to recover as quickly as possible. We will contact you to check on your progress. If you recover before this, please inform your supervisor.

## Holiday during illness

If you want to go on holiday while on sick leave, you need to get approval from your supervisor. He/she may consult with the occupational health service before making a decision.

**Sick while on vacation**

If you become ill during your vacation and cannot enjoy it, you can report sick during your vacation. Inform your supervisor on the first day you're sick. Provide your vacation address and a contact number. See a medical professional and request an official doctor's note. Keep your supervisor updated on your situation and report back when you return home.

Salary during illnessIf you're sick, you will receive your full salary. For long-term illness, this applies at least for the first year of sickness. In the second year of illness, you will receive at least 70% of your salary and vacation pay. If you fully cooperate with the reintegration process and follow the guidelines as prescribed by the company doctor, you will continue to receive 100% of your salary.

Pension accrual is always based on your 100% salary.

## Illness due to pregnancy or childbirth

If your sick leave is related to pregnancy or childbirth, let us know when you report your sickness. You will receive 100% salary during this illness period.

Company doctor
You may be required to visit the company doctor. The doctor will assist and advise both you and us regarding your situation.

The general practitioner and specialists will provide the diagnosis and create a treatment plan. The company doctor will assess if there are reasons preventing you from working during your illness. He/she will give advice on when you can resume your tasks and what steps are necessary to support your reintegration (*Plan van Aanpak*).

Rights and responsabilities
During a period of illness, we expect you to actively work on your recovery and not to hinder or delay your healing process. You are required to attend appointments with the company doctor and follow his/her advice. In addition, you must be reachable between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. so that <**AGENCY**> can contact you if necessary.

If the company doctor determines that you are capable of performing adjusted work and such work is available, you are required to carry out these tasks. Concrete agreements regarding this will be made between you, the company doctor, your supervisor, and your case manager.

If you do not comply with these obligations, consequences may follow. These can range from a written warning to suspension or termination of salary payments. This can also affect the final decision regarding your eligibility for a WIA benefit (Work Disability Benefit) from the UWV. If you disagree with the assessment of the company doctor and/or the guidance provided, you may request an independent expert opinion from the UWV.

End of employment while ill
If your employment contract ends while you are still sick, you will officially be recorded as "ill at the time of departure." We will report this to the UWV. The UWV will contact you, assess whether you are entitled to a sickness benefit, and support your reintegration into the labor market

More information is available in the [absence timeline](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/geen-categorie/verzuimtijdlijn-hou-grip-op-het-proces/).

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# Spaarvarken met effen opvullingOverige zaken

Annual statement
We send out the annual statement once a year (around February/March) to the private email address you provided.

 **Employer statement**
Need a mortgage? Then the bank will likely ask for an employer statement. This document includes details about your income and whether you have a permanent contract.
Don’t have a permanent contract? No worries - in consultation with your supervisor, we can issue a declaration of intent. You can request an employer statement through your supervisor.

Final settlement
Leaving <**AGENCY**>? You’ll receive your final settlement within six weeks of your contract ending. This includes your accrued holiday allowance for the months you worked but haven’t yet been paid for.

# Undesirable behavior & confidential counselor

# We value a safe and respectful working environment. If you are experiencing any form of undesirable behavior, you can reach out to a confidential counselor.<AGENCY> has a subscription with *De Vitale Vertrouwenspersoon*, giving you access to certified external confidential counselors who are independent and easy to reach. They offer confidential support, both online and by phone.

Want to know more? Contact your supervisor or visit
<https://devitalevertrouwenspersoon.nl/> or scan this QR code:



# Learning & Development

Lifelong learning - at <**AGENCY**>, we not only believe this is incredibly important, it’s also embedded in the Collective Labor Agreement (cao). Here’s how we approach it:

Development: job-oriented & career-oriented
**What does the cao say about time and financial compensation?**

[Articles 31](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/artikel-31/) and [32](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/artikel-32/) of the cao are particularly relevant here, along with the practical application outlined in [appendix 9 of the cao](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/bijlage-9/).
There is a distinction between development aimed at your current job and development aimed at your career, as illustrated in the image below.



**Job-oriented development**

Is your development aimed at your current role? Then for training that is 100% job-related, both time and costs are fully reimbursed (100%).

**Career-oriented development**

Is your development aimed at your broader career or future — even if that future lies outside <**AGENCY**> or even outside the architecture field?
If it is considered 100% career-oriented development, then the employer is expected to contribute at least 25% of the costs. This reflects the importance cao parties place on supporting long-term personal growth.

**Development hours: your personal budget**

Employees who work 40 hours per week are entitled to 35 development hours per year (adjusted proportionally for part-time employees).
These development hours can be used as your personal contribution toward career-oriented development, in addition to the employer's contribution.

An example for clarification:
Can you use development hours for a yoga course?
If you’re taking the course to become better at yoga yourself, this does not qualify as career-oriented development, so you can’t use your development hours.
However, if you're pursuing a career as a yoga instructor, you can use your development hours.

# Performance & development cycle

We regularly take time to talk about how things are going and how your development is progressing. Once a year, there will be a formal performance review. During this conversation, topics like your salary and other aspects of your role and performance are discussed. See [Article 23](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/artikel-23/) and [Appendix 8](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/bijlage-8/) of the Collective Labor Agreement (cao). For more details about the performance & development cycle, check [Article 30](https://www.sfa-architecten.nl/artikel/artikel-30/) of the cao.

# Social media guidelines

We encourage open dialogue, the exchange of ideas, and sharing of knowledge. Platforms like LinkedIn and our website <[www.agency.nl](http://www.agency.nl)> allow us to connect with the architecture industry online. If you’re unsure about what to post, feel free to consult someone from the communications team.

## Posting from your personal accountOnly post from your personal account - not on behalf of <AGENCY> - unless this has been explicitly discussed with the communications team.Professional profile

Keep your LinkedIn profile professional. Use a clear, business-appropriate photo - preferably one where you’re smiling.

## Respect the house style guide

Stick to <**AGENCY**>’s brand guidelines and use official brand statements.
Got a great idea and need help bringing it to life? Reach out to your communications colleague for support.



# ICT guidelines

## Be aware

We often work with sensitive data. Handle this information with care. Never store it on your personal drive or in your email, but use the designated storage drive.

## Purpose of use

The laptop or phone you have been provided with remains the property of <**AGENCY**> at all times. Both are primarily intended for business use.

**Work safely**

Change your password and PIN code after receiving your laptop and phone. Lock your computer when stepping away. Do not share passwords casually (even with colleagues).

Report immediatelyData breach? Lost or stolen laptop or phone? Report it immediately to your supervisor.

#

# Tools

Here you’ll find an overview of the programs/tools we use at <**AGENCY**>, along with a brief description.

Microsoft SharepointThis is where you’ll find all the helpful documents and information you need before you get started. We don’t store other documents here - those are kept in Teams.

Teams
We use this Microsoft tool for all meetings and chats. It also contains a folder structure where you can find all our work and save your own documents.

## Outlook

Of course, you use Outlook for your personal emails, but it’s also where you’ll find the shared team mailbox. Helpdesk questions come in here and are also answered from this mailbox. Everyone has their own folder where emails are placed for the relevant colleague. General emails are always forwarded to the inbox so everyone stays informed.

**Important:** if you're not working on a scheduled workday - for example, due to vacation - always set your Out of Office reply. This lets colleagues and external contacts know you're unavailable and who to contact for urgent matters.

**Useful information**
Let your colleagues know if you're working in the office or on a different day than usual (especially if you’re part-time). Share this info via the team inbox so everyone knows when to expect you at the office or when you're available on a different day.

****Once again, welcome to <AGENCY>! **If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to ask. Wishing you all the best!**