

## **New Hire Packet Essentials**

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New employees want to feel like part of the team. What better way to welcome them than with a new hire packet that offers all the information they need to get started with the company?

An essential onboarding item, your new hire packet will set expectations by covering your obligations as an employer and your new hire's responsibilities as an employee. The contents of your new hire packet will vary depending on your state, number of employees, and industry.

### **REQUIRED FORMS**

There are a few required federal forms, including Forms I-9 and W-4, that your new hires must complete. There may also be state-specific forms.

#### **Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification**

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires all new hires to complete and sign Section 1 of Form I-9, which is used to verify identity and eligibility to work in the United States. The employee must give you the form by his or her first day of work, but not before he or she has accepted the job offer. You must fill out and sign Section 2 of the I-9 within three days of the employee's start date.

Keep your employees' I-9 forms on file in a secured onsite location for three years after the date of hire or one year after the termination date, whichever is longer. Note that I-9 forms must be kept separate from employees' personnel files so as to accommodate inspection by authorized government employees.

*The current version of Form I-9 has a March 31, 2016 expiration date. USCIS has asked employers to continue using this version of the form as it considers changes to the form. The public can review proposed changes and comment through April 27, 2016.*

#### **Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate**

Per the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), every new hire must complete Form W-4, which helps you determine how much federal income tax to withhold from that person's wages. Have new hires complete the W-4 by the end of their first day of work.

## **Notice of Coverage Options**

Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), employers subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) must provide all new hires, including full-time and part-time employees, with a notice of "coverage options," informing them of the Health Insurance Marketplace.

Generally, companies with annual sales of \$500k or more, government agencies, hospitals, and schools are subject to the FLSA. The notice of coverage options is mandatory, even if you don't offer health coverage. You can use one of the U.S. Department of Labor's model notices for your new hire packet.

## **State-Required Forms**

Since most states have a state income tax, you will likely need to put a state tax withholding form in your new hire packet. Depending on the state, you may also need to include:

- Withholding form for local income tax withholding
- Notice concerning workers' compensation
- Notice on state disability insurance and paid family leave
- Wage theft prevention notice
- Sexual harassment notice

Contact your state's labor office for clarification on which forms to give your new hires.

## **OPTIONAL DOCUMENTS**

### **Welcome Letter**

A welcome letter can put your new hire at ease while providing a glimpse into your company's culture. The greeting should be brief and enthusiastic. You might say that you're looking forward to his or her arrival and the contributions he or she will make to the team. For greater impact, have the new hire's boss, an executive, or—depending on the size of your company—the entire staff sign the letter.

### **Background Screening Consent Form**

By the time you send out the new hire packet, you may have already obtained the employee's written consent to a background check. If not, make the background check consent form part of the new hire packet.

If a credit check comes with your screening process, be sure to provide the Fair Credit Reporting Act summary of rights. Also, include the appropriate credit reporting disclosures in your background screening consent form. For example, you might offer to give the new hire a copy of the final report. Note that your background screening vendor may prefer that you use one of their consent forms.

### **Direct Deposit Form**

If you offer direct deposit, enclose your authorization form. You can highlight the sections that the employee must fill out, such as account and routing numbers. If you have a payroll debit card program for employees who are unbanked, include the paperwork in the new hire packet.

### **Employee Information Form**

This is a concise, confidential form that makes it easy for you to access the employee's general information—such as full name, birth date, Social Security number, physical and mailing address, phone number, email, and emergency contacts.

### **Policy Acknowledgement Forms**

Need the new hire to agree to something in writing? Then put the agreement form in the new hire packet. Agreements may pertain to:

- Drug testing
- Confidentiality
- Video surveillance
- Intellectual property
- Internet security

### **Employee Handbook (and Sign-Off Form)**

An employee handbook contains vital information about a company and its expectations for employees, such as code of ethics, antidiscrimination policies, benefits, time off, and compensation. Include a sign-off sheet for the employee to acknowledge receipt of the employee handbook.

If you do not have an employee handbook, the Small Business Administration (SBA) has resources to help employers create their own handbooks and recommends topics to cover in order to meet legal requirements.

## **Employee Benefits Enrollment Forms**

Does your company offer benefits, such as health insurance, retirement plans, and wellness programs? If so, in your new hire packet, state the options available to new employees. Provide an overview of each benefit plus enrollment instructions and a schedule of eligibility dates.

## **New Hire Checklist**

Include a checklist of all the forms and notices contained in the new hire packet. Specify which documents should be signed and returned, along with due dates, so you and the new hire can keep track of the paperwork.