



FREE CLIENT RESOURCE

Payroll Recordkeeping Quick Guide

A plain-English guide to the payroll records small employers should keep organized throughout the year.

Important: Payroll rules can vary by federal, state, and local requirements. Use this as an organization guide and confirm requirements for your specific business and location.

Core Payroll Records To Keep

Done	Record type	Examples
[]	Employee identifying information	Name, address, SSN/TIN, hire date, job title, pay rate, status, and work location.
[]	Tax withholding forms	Federal and applicable state/local withholding forms, plus updates when employees submit changes.
[]	Time and attendance records	Hours worked, overtime, paid time off, sick leave, tips, shift notes, and approvals where applicable.
[]	Pay details	Gross pay, deductions, employer taxes, reimbursements, net pay, pay date, and pay period.
[]	Payroll tax filings and payments	Copies of filed reports, payment confirmations, notices, and account correspondence.
[]	Contractor payment records	W-9s, invoices, payment history, and 1099 review notes when applicable.

Pay Period Review

- Confirm employee hours, overtime, rates, reimbursements, tips, commissions, and deductions before payroll is submitted.
- Review new hires, terminations, address changes, garnishments, benefit changes, and tax form updates.
- Save payroll reports by pay date and reconcile payroll withdrawals to the bank account.
- Keep payroll records separate from general receipts so year-end reporting is easier.

Year-End Prep

- Verify employee and contractor names, addresses, and tax identification numbers before year-end forms are prepared.
- Review fringe benefits, owner wages, retirement contributions, health insurance, and reimbursements before forms are finalized.
- Reconcile payroll reports to general ledger totals and bank withdrawals.
- Save copies of W-2, W-3, 1099, 1096, payroll tax forms, and confirmation receipts.

Need a deeper tool?: Pair this quick guide with the DIY Payroll Workbook and instruction booklet for structured payroll tracking.