

CHECKLIST FOR NEW HIRES

GET NEW EMPLOYEES OFF TO THE BEST START POSSIBLE

Congratulations. The hard part is over when you have recruited the right person for a job.

So what's next? You have legal requirements, forms to be completed and, ideally, an orientation process to be followed to help your new employee acclimate as quickly as possible. A checklist, such as the sample below, is helpful to make sure you don't skip any important steps. The first three items listed are legally required in all cases; the remaining items are suggestions that can be added to or tailored to the particular needs of your town, or to the specific position or department.

In designing your checklist, remember to think through the tools, equipment and information the employee will need to perform his or her new job and feel as supported as possible. Studies have shown that an employee's impression during the early days of work can affect the level of commitment months later.

Checklist:

1. W-4 Form. This form can be downloaded directly from the IRS web site at www.irs.gov.

2. I-9 Form. Under the Immigration Reform & Control Act (IRCA), you must have an I-9 form completed within three days of hire for purposes of verification of employment eligibility. It is helpful to photocopy the identification forms presented. The forms must be maintained for all current employees and, when employees terminate, the form must be maintained for three years from the hire date or one year after termination, whichever is later. The I-9 form can be downloaded from www.ins.usdoj.gov.

3. New Hire Reporting. In order to assist with enforcement of child support orders on the state and national level, the Vermont Department of Employment & Training (DET) requires that each new employee be reported within 20 days of hire. Information reported includes: employer name and address, federal employer identification number, employee name, address and social security number and the date of hire. The DET offers many ways to provide the information, including online reporting through www.det.state.vt.us. Other ways include magnetic tape, electronic file transfer, formatted diskette, fax or mail. In lieu of the state's new hire report, you may fax or mail a W-4 form. For further information there is a help line at 800/786-3214.

4. W-4VT Form. This form should be made available to employees who wish to adjust their Vermont income tax withholding to take into account differences between the Vermont and federal returns. These include cases where there is a civil union or where the employee makes adjustments to federal withholding in anticipation of Child Tax Credit or other federal credits not available on the state tax return. The W-4VT form can be obtained through the state web site at www.state.vt.us/tax.

5. Welcome. Designate someone to greet the new staff member on his or her first day of work, provide a tour of the workplace and make introductions to other staff members.

6. Information. Provide helpful information such as: an organizational chart; goals of the department; job description; office hours; lunch/break schedule; parking procedures; vacation/sick days/holidays; information on each benefit provided; description of the performance evaluation process; when salary increases are given; training the employee can expect; the procedure for reporting of injuries; and a safety tour.

7. Required Forms (in addition to I-9 and W-4). Make sure the following are completed as soon as possible: all benefit enrollment forms; emergency information form; and forms to give permission for and designate account(s) for direct deposit of pay.

8. Employee handbook. In addition to providing the handbook itself, have the employee sign a form acknowledging its receipt and agreeing to be responsible for becoming familiar with the policies contained therein.

9. Office procedures. Indicate protocol and procedures; available support; how to use the telephone system; and relevant machinery.

10. Items issued. See that the employee is well equipped to do the job and have him or her sign an acknowledgement of receipt of such items as keys, uniforms, safety shoes, etc.

It is helpful if your list includes the name of a specific person responsible for accomplishing each item and a space to indicate the date on which it gets done. Think about whether some of the above information, such as benefits pamphlets and forms, job descriptions and holiday listings, can be provided to the new employee before the start date to allow him or her to better absorb the information and complete

the forms in a timely fashion. If your new employee is relocating from afar, you might add to this material a listing of community resources to help orient him or her to a new community.

It doesn't take much effort, but does require a little thought, to help a new staff member feel welcome and part of your team.

- *Jill Muhr, VLCT Human Resources Administrator*

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