



Employee Documentation Framework

A working checklist for what belongs in the file, what stays separate, and how long to keep it.



WHAT BELONGS IN THE GENERAL PERSONNEL FILE

- Application and offer letter
- Signed acknowledgments (handbook, policies, offer terms)
- Performance reviews
- Coaching, discipline, and separation records
- Training records logged per the standard below



PERFORMANCE AND DISCIPLINE DOCUMENTATION STANDARD

- Specific behavior named, not a general impression ("missed the Q2 deadline by four days") not meeting expectations")
- Incident date and documentation date are recorded; any delay in documentation is explained
- What was communicated to the employee and how they responded
- Employee signature, or a note that they declined to sign and the date



TRAINING RECORDS (REQUIRED UNDER SB 513, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| □ Employee name | □ Competencies covered |
| □ Trainer or provider name | □ Certifications issued, if any |
| □ Date and duration of training | |



WHAT MUST BE STORED SEPARATELY

- Medical records and accommodation paperwork, in a separate confidential file
- Investigation materials, kept apart from the general file
- 1-9 forms, stored apart from the general personnel file



RETENTION

- Personnel records retained 4 years from the date of the personnel action or 4 years from termination, whichever is longer
- Payroll and time records retained on the same 4-year standard
- Any file tied to an open complaint or litigation held past the 4-year mark until the matter resolves



RECORDS REQUEST READINESS

- Current process can produce a complete, organized personnel file within 30 calendar days of a written request (Labor Code 1198.5)
- Files are retrievable without pulling from multiple unrelated locations
- Whoever fields the request knows what's excluded (medical, investigation, 1-9) and why

Questions on any item above?

Talk to our HR advisory team at

dk.cpa/services-business-operations-support/hr-services

