FREE CHECKLIST

Idaho Small Business HR Checklist

The Files You Need Before Your First Hire

Hiring your first employee triggers real paperwork and real deadlines — most of it due within the first 20 days. Work through this list before day one and you will start with personnel files that are complete, consistent, and ready for any reviewer to open.

1 — SET UP ONCE, BEFORE ANYONE STARTS

- ☐ **Workers' compensation coverage in place** — Idaho requires coverage from your very first employee.
- ☐ **Idaho unemployment insurance account set up** with the Idaho Department of Labor (business registration).
- ☐ **A file system ready** — one personnel file per employee, stored securely with access limited to owner/manager.
- ☐ **Required workplace posters displayed** where employees can see them — the Idaho Department of Labor packet is free at labor.idaho.gov. Never pay a vendor for posters. Post the workers' comp notice from your insurer alongside them.

2 — THE OFFER, IN WRITING

- ☐ **Written offer letter**, signed and returned before day one — job title, pay rate, and payday stated. Idaho requires pay terms in writing (Idaho Code §45-610).
- ☐ **Job description provided and acknowledged** — duties, expectations, and any license or certification the role requires.
- ☐ **At-will employment stated in writing** in the offer letter and handbook — Idaho is an at-will state; say so plainly.

3 — DAY ONE PAPERWORK

- ☐ **Form I-9, Section 1** completed by the employee by the end of day one.
- ☐ **Federal Form W-4 and Idaho Form W-4** completed.
- ☐ **Employee handbook provided; acknowledgment signed** and filed — attendance, conduct, confidentiality, safety, and anti-harassment policies.
- ☐ **PTO policy provided and acknowledged** — what your written policy promises is what you will owe. Choose the terms before you hire.
- ☐ **Confidentiality agreement signed** if the role touches customer, pricing, or business information.
- ☐ **Emergency contact form** completed.
- ☐ **Direct deposit offered, not required** — Idaho law makes electronic payment voluntary for the employee (Idaho Code §45-608).

4 — THE FIRST DEADLINES (DON'T MISS THESE)

- ☐ **Form I-9, Section 2** — examine the employee's documents and complete the employer section within **3 business days** of the first day of work.
- ☐ **New hire reported to the Idaho Department of Labor within 20 days** of the start date (labor.idaho.gov/newhire).
- ☐ **First paycheck issued on a regular, pre-designated payday** — Idaho requires wages paid at least once per calendar month.

> **Note:** E-Verify is **not** mandatory for Idaho private employers. Form I-9 is the federal requirement every employer must meet.

5 — KEEP THE FILES STRAIGHT

- ☐ **Form I-9s filed together, separately** from the personnel files — one I-9 file for everyone, ready to produce.
- ☐ **Medical and disability records in a separate confidential file** — never in the personnel file. Same rule for background checks, drug test results, and garnishment orders.
- ☐ **Licenses and certifications copied and logged**, with expiration dates tracked and renewal reminders set 90 / 60 / 30 days out — for any role that requires them.
- ☐ **Records kept on schedule:** payroll records 3 years · time cards 2 years · tax records 4 years · unemployment insurance records 5 years.

6 — KNOW THE EXIT RULES BEFORE YOU NEED THEM

- ☐ **Final paycheck on time:** by the next regular payday **or** 10 days after separation, whichever comes first — and within 48 hours if the employee requests earlier payment in writing (Idaho Code §45-606).
- ☐ **Unused PTO paid out only if your written policy promises it** — Idaho does not require payout. Whatever the policy says, follow it exactly.
- ☐ **Separation documented factually** — reason, final pay amount, and date paid recorded in the file.

Want it all done for you? The ClearFile HR Startup Kit has every template on this list — $99 at clearfilellc.com

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General information for Idaho small businesses — templates and setup support only, not legal advice. Requirements can change; confirm current rules with the Idaho Department of Labor or your attorney.