Creating employee files can be a daunting task. This guide simplifies the process by outlining what is common in a typical employee file. Employee files can be physical or digital. Additionally, one employee may have documents in multiple categories that will need to be kept separate. Generally, employees have documents that fall into one of three categories: **Personnel File**, **Confidential File**, and an **I-9 File**. Below are some examples of what is typically kept in these files.

Personnel File

The Personnel File typically contains items related to the employee's performance, knowledge, skills, abilities, or behavior. Components of the Personnel File typically include:

EMPLOYMENT RECORDS

- ☐ Job applications
- ☐ Job descriptions
- ☐ Resumes
- ☐ Offer letters
- ☐ Signed acknowledgements (handbook, code of conduct, & other key policies)
- ☐ Records of promotions or transfers
- ☐ Compensation changes
- ☐ Performance appraisals
- ☐ Records of attendance
- ☐ Completion of training programs
- ☐ Warnings & any formal discipline
- ☐ Awards received

SEPARATION DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Exit Interviews
- ☐ Resignation letters
- ☐ Termination memos
- ☐ Unemployment documents
- ☐ Separation agreements

Confidential File

Access to the confidential file should be limited. When a document contains information that reveals a protected status or is protected health information it should be stored separately from the personnel file to help prevent the perception of discrimination. Some examples of information contained in a confidential file are the following:

- ☐ Pre-employment references and background reports
- ☐ Records related to medical leave
- ☐ Any document containing medical information
- ☐ Reasonable accommodations
- ☐ Workers compensation claims
- ☐ Personal credit history
- ☐ Drug & alcohol tests
- ☐ Long or short-term disability documentation
- ☐ Dependent information

I-9 File

A common recommendation is to keep I-9 forms separate from all other records. This helps employers maintain documents centrally, which aids in participation in formal or informal I-9 audits. It also streamlines the destruction of I-9s as allowed by federal I-9 regulations. Some employers choose to use a binder system for all employee I-9 forms maintained alphabetically and separated by current or terminated status.

Here are some additional tips to stay compliant:

- Audit files periodically
- Use best practices for records retention. Refer to Helpside's Federal Record Retention Requirements document for more information
- Limit access by housing employee files in a secure location
- The separation of an employee's Personnel file and Confidential file should still be maintained after an employee's termination.