Best Practices: Protecting Human Resources Records

Creating an efficient filing system for managing employee records is not as difficult as it may seem. Using the basic principles of all Smead Organomics filing solutions, simply examine and optimize each of the three main components of the filing system:

1. The Finders
2. The Keepers
3. The Storage

A number of factors need to be considered to determine the best solution for your HR department. An assessment should be made of your current situation, and a set of objectives for the new system should be defined. Once you have these parameters outlined, you can address each of the system components.

The Finder

One of the first decisions to make is how files will be identified. Personnel files can be indexed by the employee's name, or by an assigned number. For small to mid-sized companies, filing by the name of the employee works well. Larger generally use numeric indexing because the risk of misfiled records is minimized. Often employees are identified by an assigned employee number in a computer database, or by their Social Security number. This number can also be used as the identifying number for the files.

Whether you choose alphabetic or numeric indexing, be sure to use color-coding on your file labels to help find files more quickly, and to reduce the risk of misfiled records.

The Keeper

Employee information is sensitive and file security is critical in Human Resources departments. Access to the filing area needs to be carefully managed. Many times a separate file for medical or investment information is kept in a different location than performance and other employee information. Folders with fasteners help keep documents

grouped in categories within the folder, such as performance reviews, application/resume, compensation/benefits, training, etc. Hanging systems can use one hanging folder for the employee, with multiple interior folders for each category.

The Storage

Your choice of filing equipment will determine the tab placement of the Keepers, on top for drawer filing, and on the side or end for shelf filing. When deciding on the Storage for your system, consider how your situation is affected by these factors:

- Physical storage space available
- Number of files to be stored
- Convenience of access by users of the system
- Projected growth
- Security and confidentiality issues
- Legal requirements
- Existing filing equipment
- Budget for new equipment and supplies

In general, end-tab shelf filing systems are the easiest to use, save the most space and are the least expensive to set up and maintain. The shelf units can be secured with locking doors, or the entire file room can be locked for security. However, if your total number of employees is relatively small, traditional locking drawer filing cabinets located in the HR department may be the right choice.

Smead Organomics offers a variety of filing solutions for managing personnel records. Choose the Team Organomics button to find out which one is best for your business. If you need more help, consult your office supplier or request a free onsite analysis by a Smead professional.