

PERSONNEL FILE

RETENTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Policy Number: HR-408
Effective Date: Approved by the **Eastern Washington State Historical Society (EWSHS)** Board of Trustees on March 4, 2020.
Application: Applies to all employees of the **EWSHS**.
History: This policy replaces BP #133

Purpose – To establish a policy pertaining to the retention and confidentiality of personnel records and files.

Definitions

Personnel Files – Consistent with the State Government General Records Retention Schedule, information that includes, but is not limited to:

- Transactional record of hire into the state and subsequent movement in state employment.
- Job application, interview notes, references, and reference notes
- Personal information about the employee, e.g., name, address, social security number, position status and pay.
- Appointment letters.
- Record of performance, certificates of achievement (including educational), performance evaluations, recognition letters, corrective or disciplinary action notices, and documents or materials that may lead to corrective action process.
- Reports of training activity.
- Other forms or information relative to employment with state government.

Policy Statement

The **EWSHS** is committed to protecting the confidentiality of the information contained within employee personnel files and within any of the files maintained by human resources for the agency.

Files are kept under the supervision of a human resource representative, during work hours and stored in a locked office or locked file for safe keeping after hours. The human resource representative has signed an agreement to maintain the strictest standards of confidentiality when dealing with any employee issues or records.

Some information is not appropriate for storage within the personnel files. Examples of information kept elsewhere are shown below:

Information not in personnel file	Where this information is stored
Affirmative action information.	Separate affirmative action file.
Annual leave, sick leave and	Attendance files are accessible in the payroll system.

personal holiday information.	
Benefits, retirement, direct deposit form, unemployment insurance and insurance forms.	Department of Enterprise Services (DES).
Coaching documents.	Supervisory files maintained by immediate supervisor. Note: Coaching documents may eventually be included in a personnel file if such documents lead to corrective or disciplinary action.
Emergency contact information.	Separate emergency contact file in the human resource office.
I-9 information.	Separate I-9 file.
Medical verification of a condition, Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (LNI) records or claims, reasonable accommodation, or shared leave activity.	Separate confidential medical file in the human resource office.

Employees have access to view their own personnel files, during standard hours, in the presence of a human resource office representative. An employee may authorize any other person to review their personnel file in the presence of a human resource office representative by providing written authorization which details the name of the person or persons authorized to review the file, the date of authorization, and the printed name and signature of the employee. Such authorization will be retained by the Agency and appended to the personnel file of the employee.

Human resource office representatives frequently refer to employee personnel files and do not need written authorization.

Supervisors and managers have access to view their subordinate employee's personnel files during standard hours, in the presence of a human resource office representative, without prior authorization.

Some state agencies have access to view personnel files during standard hours, in the presence of a human resource office representative, without having to obtain prior authorization. The following agencies may send representatives to view personnel files for state business purposes:

- Washington State Personnel Resources Board.
- Washington State Auditor.
- Agency director or their designee.

After an employee becomes aware that adverse information has been placed in his/her personnel file, he/she has a right to add a statement of rebuttal or correction of such information. At any time, an employee has the right to add job performance information to his/her personnel file.

Supervisors and managers may add information to their subordinate employee's personnel file with human resource representative consent, and with notification to the employee. For represented employees, this should be in accordance with applicable Collective Bargaining Agreements.

Material that is proven to be false or inaccurate will be promptly corrected by human resource representative.

The **EWSHS** retains employee personnel files at the agency as long as an individual is employed by the agency and for seven years after the conclusion of employment. At the expiration of seven years, the file will be forwarded to the archives department of the EWSHS for storage in accordance with the State Government General Records Retention Schedule.

When an **EWSHS** employee accepts an appointment with a different state agency, the **EWSHS**, as most recent former employer, will provide employee information to the new employer in a transmittal package using the authorized transmittal forms available on the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) website under Manager HR Forms-Employee Personnel Records Transmittal and Employee Payroll Records Transmittal.

Primary roles and responsibilities for Personnel Files within the EWSHS.

Role	Responsibilities
Employee	Know your rights regarding personnel files.
Supervisor	Be aware of your responsibilities regarding personnel files.
Agency HR Liaison	Follow the policy and procedures outlined to handle personnel files including confidentiality and retention.
DES Small Agency HR Services Primary Consultant	Advise agencies if any questions arise regarding personnel files, confidentiality and retention.

WACs that apply to this policy

357-22-010 (requirement to maintain files)	357-22-015 (requirement to publish policy)
357-22-020 (employee review of files)	357-22-025 (transfer of files to other agencies)
357-22-030 (management of personnel files)	357-22-035 (copies to be provided to employees)
357-22-040 (retention requirements)	357-22-045 (employee rights to add information)