# Employee Payroll Onboarding Checklist

Hiring a new employee is exciting — but payroll onboarding is where compliance risk often hides. Miss one form or setup step, and you could face fines or frustrated employees. This **Employee Payroll Onboarding Checklist** covers everything you need to collect and set up before the first paycheck.

## Step 1 – Collect Required Forms

- **Form W-4** (employee's tax withholding elections)
- **Form I-9** (employment eligibility verification)
- State-specific withholding forms (where applicable)
- Emergency contact information

## Step 2 – Set Up Payment Preferences

- Direct deposit authorization form
- Bank account verification (voided check or online confirmation)
- Paper check option (if chosen)

## Step 3 – Enter Employee into Payroll System

- Input personal information (name, address, SSN)
- Enter tax withholding elections (from W-4/state forms)
- Add pay rate (hourly/salary) and pay schedule
- Assign department, location, or job code (if applicable)

## Step 4 – Verify Benefits Enrollment

- Health insurance enrollment (if offered)
- Retirement plan setup (401k, SIMPLE IRA, etc.)
- Other deductions: commuter benefits, HSA, union dues

## Step 5 – Confirm Compliance Items

- Ensure employee is classified correctly (W-2 vs 1099)
- Verify new hire report is filed with state agency (required in all states)
- Double-check eligibility documents (I-9 compliance)
- Provide employee access to pay stubs & tax documents

**Tip:** Always complete payroll onboarding before an employee's first scheduled payroll run to avoid delays or compliance issues.