New hire payroll checklist

For small employers: the paperwork to collect before the first paycheck.

Before day one

- [ ] Offer letter with pay rate and pay schedule
- [ ] Classify the role: employee or contractor, exempt or non-exempt
- [ ] Confirm the work location (it decides state and local tax)

First day

- [ ] Form I-9, with documents checked within 3 business days
- [ ] Federal Form W-4
- [ ] State withholding form, if your state has one
- [ ] Direct deposit form
- [ ] Emergency contact
- [ ] Benefits enrollment forms

Before the first payday

- [ ] Report the new hire to your state (federal rule: within 20 days)
- [ ] Add them to payroll with the right pay rate and schedule
- [ ] Set up workers' comp and state unemployment coverage
- [ ] Set up any retirement or health deductions
- [ ] Double-check the first pay stub with them