

CHAPTER 14 - RECORDS AND REPORTS

SECTION A PERSONNEL RECORDS AND FILES

The Human Resources Department shall establish and maintain a personnel records system, which are the County's official records for each employee. Reporting procedures and forms are established by the Director. Information compiled and retained in the central personnel file consists of records and reports deemed pertinent which shall include, but is not limited to:

1. Personal Data: Legal name, mailing address, telephone number, date of birth; copies of Social Security Card, driver's licenses (if required), certifications (if required); emergency contact information.
2. Basic Employment Information: Job title, department assignment, employee's application, pay grade and step, dates of employment, benefit selection forms, retirement information.
3. Personnel Actions: Reports of personnel actions shall be reported to the Human Resources Department in writing in the manner, time, form and method as determined by the Director. Examples of personnel actions are:
 - a. Appointments
 - b. Transfers
 - c. Promotions
 - d. Demotions
 - e. Resignations
 - f. Dismissals
 - g. Disciplinary actions
 - h. Performance evaluations and other reports of work performance
 - i. Commendations and Awards
 - j. Leaves of absences
 - k. Changes of pay grades and/or pay steps
 - l. Temporary or permanent changes in an employee's status
 - m. Training records (optional)
 - n. Employment history and other such records and reports as deemed pertinent
4. Other Information: Authorization to release information, and verifications of employment.

SECTION B CONFIDENTIALITY AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

1. Each employee's personnel records will be kept confidential to the maximum extent permitted by law, and will not be open to inspection by any person other than the employee, the employee's supervisor, Employing Official or designee and the Human Resources staff, unless the written consent of the employee has been obtained.

2. Although personnel files are considered confidential, the County may be obligated to release certain personnel information to labor organizations or to other entities or individuals making a valid request under state or federal law, (e.g., Washington State's Public Disclosure Act--Chapter 42.17 RCW). Except for routine verifications of employment, no information from an employee's central personnel file is released to the public, including the press, without a written request for specific information. The decision to release or not release information is made by the Director.
3. Other personnel records and files that are specifically exempt from public disclosure by statute, such as test questions, scoring keys and other materials used in the preparation and administration of employment examinations, addresses, telephone numbers, social security numbers, names of dependents, resumes, or applications for employment, shall generally be considered confidential and shall not be subject to public disclosure unless specifically designated as subject to public disclosure by the Director, or by law. Any employee who fails to maintain the confidentiality of personnel records and files shall be subject to disciplinary action.
4. Medical and financial information relating to employees shall be maintained in a restricted-access file separate from the employee's personnel file.

SECTION C EMPLOYEE ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILES

1. Each employee may review the contents of his/her own central personnel file. Requests for inspection of personnel files are made to the Human Resources Department. An authorized staff member shall set aside a time and place for the employee to review the file during normal and customary office hours.
2. Central personnel files are not to be removed from the Human Resources Department without prior specific approval from the Director.

SECTION D CHALLENGES TO THE PROPRIETY OF DOCUMENTS IN PERSONNEL FILES

An employee may challenge the propriety of any document in the personnel file. If, after discussion, the County retains the material in the file, the employee shall have the right to insert contrary documentation into the file. If the affected employee believes that a deficiency has been corrected by later action, he/she may request in writing to have a review of this action included in the file.

SECTION E DEPARTMENTAL WORKING FILES

Departments may create and maintain working files for the convenience of the department. Department working files are not a part of and may not substitute for the employee's central personnel file. Department working files should not contain any medical information, such as doctor's notes or documentation that was not provided by Human Resources or Risk Management.