

7 things to do before your summer vacation

Ah, the beach. Or maybe you're a lake and mountain person.

Wrinkle: Employees are still going to need to be paid while you're gone, which means some advance planning is required.

Here's our list of key tasks.

1. Inform the office of your vacation time. You don't want employees inundating your office with payroll changes while you're gone, so establish a cut off time for employees to submit payroll changes to you (e.g., W-4 changes, bank account changes). Changes provided after your cut off time must wait until you get back. Likewise, separately inform the C-suite, so they won't crush your office with requests for reports.

2. Pick your temporary replacement. If it's not a member of your staff, be sure to spend some hands-on time with them. Don't assume that because you know how to process a payroll, they do also.

Tip: Write as much down as you can about processing a payroll, from time sheet approval to payment, and include links to other documents, where possible.

In addition, train your replacement in cyber-vigilance—they're not to respond to any email request for employees' W-2 data and they're not to click on, or even hover over, any links embedded in a suspicious email.

3. Encourage direct deposit sign-ups. You're not the only one going on vacation. Now is the time to push direct deposit on employees who will be going on vacation and who ask you for a pay advance.

Idea: Suggest that company policy be revised to eliminate pay advances.

4 - 6. Take steps now to protect the payroll in the event a natural disaster occurs in your absence. [NOAA](#) is predicting an average hurricane season. That's not so comforting if you're caught in it. You should take these three key payroll steps now:

- **Ensure your ability to pay employees.** You will need to establish an alternative work space and you may need an alternative method of paying employees, as well. If you allow staff to work from home, remember to safeguard laptops and USB drives from identity thieves.
- **Create electronic copies of key documents.** Key documents for payroll include bank statements, the general ledger, the payroll register, state and federal identification numbers and employees' W-4s. Coordinate this effort with HR and corporate tax.
- **Check on fiduciary bonds.** If you use a third-party payroll provider, ask your provider if it has a fiduciary bond in place. The bond could protect you if your third party defaults on your tax deposits or is late in filing your 941 forms.

7. Count your summer hires. An increase in your payroll might boost you over the 50-employee mark for Affordable Care Act purposes.

Exception: Temporary or seasonal employees don't count when you're figuring whether you're an applicable

large employer, so segregate those employees now.