



Municipal Personnel File + Records Request Checklist

Structure personnel files for the Public Information Act — categories, confidential exclusions, request triage, and deadlines.

WHAT THIS HELPS YOU DO

Use this checklist to organize municipal personnel files so a Public Information Act request can be answered accurately and on deadline — with confidential material already separated instead of discovered under pressure.

WHEN TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

- When structuring or auditing municipal personnel files
- The day any PIA request touching personnel records arrives
- Before releasing anything from an employee file
- When police/fire files need special handling review
- When training whoever opens the city's mail

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT HELPS PREVENT

- Releasing confidential material because it was filed loose
- Missing the 10-business-day AG referral window
- Treating clearly public information as secret (its own violation)
- Police officer file handling that ignores statutory protections
- Requests routed to someone who didn't know they were requests

Faulkner HR Solutions focuses on the system behind the people problem. This tool is designed to help employers slow down the decision, identify the risk, and create proof before the issue becomes a claim, complaint, turnover event, or credibility problem.

BEFORE YOU START: READINESS CHECKLIST

Gather the following before working through this document. Incomplete inputs are one of the most common reasons employer decisions fail under later scrutiny.

Have it	Input	Notes / location
☐	Employee name and role	



Have it	Input	Notes / location
☐	Date of incident, request, or separation	
☐	Supervisor involved	
☐	Policy or handbook section that applies	
☐	Prior documentation on file	
☐	Pay records, if applicable	
☐	Relevant emails, texts, notes, or complaints	
☐	Decision-maker name	
☐	Deadline, if applicable	



PERSONNEL FILE + REQUEST CHECKLIST

PIA responses are won or lost before the request arrives — in how the files are structured. Organize by category first; triage becomes mechanical afterward.

Part 1 — File Categories

Set up	Category (separate section or file)	Notes
☐	Basic employment: application, job description, pay, dates, titles (largely public)	
☐	Performance and discipline (analysis required per document)	
☐	Confidential by statute: medical, benefits selections, direct deposit, emergency contacts	
☐	Statutorily protected identifiers: SSN, driver's license, personal contact info of officials/employees who opted out, family member info	
☐	Police/fire specific: Ch. 143 files where applicable, background investigations (special rules)	
☐	I-9s stored separately from all personnel files	

Part 2 — Common Exclusions Quick Reference

Information	Typical treatment	Verify
Salary, title, dates of employment	Public	
Home address, personal phone, personal email	Protected if employee elected nondisclosure (offer the election form)	
SSN, DL number, insurance/benefit details	Confidential — redact	
Medical information of any kind	Confidential — separate file, never produced without review	
Discipline records	Often public in substance; analysis required — seek AG ruling when in doubt	
Civil service (Ch. 143) police/fire files	Special statutory scheme controls what exists in which file	

Part 3 — Request Intake and Triage

Done	Triage step	Date / owner
☐	Request date-stamped the day received (clock starts)	
☐	Routed to the Public Information Officer / designated owner immediately	



Done	Triage step	Date / owner
☐	Scope read literally — produce what is asked, not the whole file	
☐	Clarification sought in writing if the request is unclear	
☐	10-business-day checkpoint calendared: produce, or refer to the AG for a ruling	
☐	Requestor updated if compilation takes time	

Part 4 — Production Review

Done	Review step	Notes
☐	Each responsive document reviewed against Part 2 categories	
☐	Redactions applied per statute (redact the data, not the document)	
☐	AG referral drafted for anything believed confidential but not categorically excluded	
☐	Copy of production retained exactly as released	
☐	Employee notified where statute or policy provides	

Part 5 — Owner and Continuity

Public Information Officer / records owner	
Backup owner (vacations happen; deadlines don't)	
Where requests arrive (mail, email, portal) — all monitored?	
PIA training current for owner and front-line staff? (date)	
Retention schedule applied (state schedule; destruction logged)	

Role	Name / signature	Date
Records owner		
Reviewed by		



STOP AND REVIEW BEFORE ACTING

If any statement below is true, pause. Get the decision reviewed by HR, counsel, or Faulkner HR Solutions before you act.

- ☐ A personnel-file request is sitting in someone's inbox undated.
- ☐ Medical notes are loose in general personnel files right now.
- ☐ Nobody has offered employees the personal-information nondisclosure election.
- ☐ A police officer's file is about to be produced without checking Ch. 143 applicability.
- ☐ The 10-day window passes regularly because 'we were gathering documents.'

MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION STANDARD

Before this file is closed, the employer should be able to answer every question below and point to where the proof lives.

Question	Your answer / where the proof is stored
What happened?	
When did it happen?	
Who observed or reported it?	
What policy, standard, deadline, or expectation applies?	
What decision was made?	
Who had authority to make the decision?	
What alternatives were considered?	
What risk was reviewed?	
What follow-up is required?	
Where is the proof stored?	

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Organizing files for HR convenience instead of production reality.
2. Blowing the AG referral deadline and losing exceptions that were available.
3. Over-withholding public information — salaries and titles are not secrets.
4. Producing entire files when the request asked for one document type.
5. Redacting with a pen that photocopies transparent.
6. Assuming small-city informality excuses statutory deadlines; the AG's office doesn't.



WHAT TO DO NEXT

Restructure files into the categories now, run the nondisclosure election for employees who haven't had it, train the mail-openers to recognize requests, and calendar-drill the 10-day window. When a hard call arises, the AG referral process exists — use it rather than guessing.

Before you terminate, deduct, discipline, classify, or respond, get the decision reviewed.

Call 210.446.8730 or email thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info.



Public-sector HR decisions have to survive more than internal disagreement. They have to survive records requests, council questions, budget scrutiny, and public trust.

Need help applying this to a real workplace decision?

Faulkner HR Solutions helps Texas employers, nonprofits, municipalities, and growing businesses fix the people systems behind recurring workplace problems.

If this document raised a risk flag, do not guess your way through the next step.

Call: 210.446.8730

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Website: faulknerhrsolutions.info

DISCLAIMER

This resource is provided for general employer education and planning purposes. It is not legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship. Employment laws, agency guidance, and local requirements may change. Employers should review the facts of each situation before acting and consult appropriate HR or legal counsel when needed.