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How Employers Can Prevent Identity Theft With Their Employees

The ongoing trend of identity theft cases piling up is a huge concern indeed to employers who want to make sure everybody in their staff is well protected. A recent General Accounting Office report estimates that as many as 750,000 Americans are victims of identity theft every year. So what are you doing to protect your employees' identities? These are great ideas that any boss can use.

Guard Your Employee Files This is mainly HR, or Human Resources' responsibility as they should have policies and procedures for keeping employee information. But you can play a part by securing employee files of everybody who has set foot on your office locked in a safe. More importantly, make sure that only the Human Resources office has access to this key. Most of the time it would be Human Resources who has any kind of access to this sensitive employee data.

Non-Disclosure Of Information The only time you would go against the policy of not releasing employee information to anybody would be if your company receives a subpoena signed by a court official and asking for such data.

Claygo Every company should have some sort of clean desk policy. Hopefully you are not one of those companies that do not have one in place. This is a simple rule that states that every employee that has access to sensitive employee data would either a) keep said data under lock and key if away from workstation even if they step out for just a quick cigarette break, or b) shred sensitive information before leaving the station. This is a policy implemented by many financial and housing institutions.

Social Security Masking I'm sure you remember the time when you were still starting out, and you felt comfortable using your entire Social Security number as a personal identifier. We have to face the fact that today's ID thieves are a clever bunch, and have myriad ways of getting Social Security Numbers, that's why there are number masks implemented by many firms. So while an employee, say, Jack B. Nimble goes by 123-00-4567, masking would allow him to be known as Nimble XXX-XX-4567. Additionally, information sent via email or mail can be protected and identity theft can be curbed even further.

Use It Then Lose It In many cases, employees process sensitive information that does not need any refilling - this would require such information to be consigned to history. For just fifty dollars or so, a paper shredder can be purchased at your local office supplies outlet - if protecting your employees was like a game of poker, this would be your Royal Flush. Documents should be shredded either immediately after use or at the very least, the same day before the end of the work day. Leaving these documents unprotected is like handing your employees' details to the fraudsters on a silver platter.

The monetary cost of identity theft is great indeed, but the emotional cost can be even greater. It is your duty as employer to keep your employees as safe as possible and then some. Since this is not expert advice, your Human Resources office should have all the answers not covered in this article.

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