

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

HR Ethics Statement

Total access to personnel information is imperative to be effective employee advocates. Management of this information must be handled with the utmost integrity. Specifically, open conversations (either in terms of style or environment) must be weighed objectively and carefully. Employees' personnel data represents the most intimate part of their work lives. We must treat this with empathy and respect for privacy.

POINTS TO GUIDE JUDGMENT

Protecting Confidentiality

HR Representatives must remember they are working with privileged and private employee information and are required to protect the privacy of employees at all times – in speech and in written materials.

- All working documents should be kept in locked cabinets or offices and put away either at the end of the day or when you leave your work area.
- Confidential information should not be left unattended on computer screens. Close confidential documents when leaving your desk or when stopping to meet with someone at your desk.
- Employee documents being used to complete work should not be left face up on your desk, especially in open, high traffic areas.
- When use of employee documents has been completed, documents should be immediately filed.
- Federal courts can subpoena all written information regarding an employee. Be aware and careful as to what is written and included in employee files.
- Discussion of private employee information is necessary for business purposes. Be aware of limiting this type of discussion only for business purposes and in the case of privileged information, only within Human Resources.
- Information that is no longer useful should be carefully discarded. Most information should be shredded. When shredding documents, make sure the result is unreadable. (For instance, when shredding information listed vertically on a page, ensure that the shredding is done horizontally so that the information is unreadable.)

IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTATION

- Following procedures when handling confidential information will ensure confidentiality for customers and the integrity of the HR function.

Consequences

Breaching this inherent HR trust leads to these consequences:

- Diminishes trust with colleagues and customers
- Diminishes overall credibility of the entire HR department
- Could lead to formal discipline up to and including termination

HR representatives should hold others in the department accountable for fulfilling the Ethics Statement and for remembering their commitment to the SMU employees.

Please sign to indicate that you have read this document and agree to abide by these confidentiality requirements for employment in the Department of Human Resources at Southern Methodist University.

Signature

Date