How to Do Payroll in Massachusetts

Use this downloadable checklist to help you stay on track!

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| ✔ | **TASK** |
|  | **Step 1: Set up your business as an employer.**  *You will need the following:*  Employer Identiﬁcation Number (EIN)  [Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS)](https://www.eftps.gov/eftps/) account |
|  | **Step 2: Register online with the** [**Department of Revenue**](https://www.mass.gov/how-to/register-your-business-with-masstaxconnect) **in Massachusetts.**  *To register you will need the following information:*  EIN (this number may be the same as your social security number if you are a sole proprietor)  Your legal name  The mailing address of your business  The start date of your business |
|  | **Step 3. Set up your payroll process.**  *You’ll need to decide on the following:*  Your pay period (Read: [What Is A Pay Period? + Free Calendars](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/pay-period/))  If and how you’ll track work hours (Read: [4 Ways to Track Employee Hours](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/track-employee-hours/))  Which payroll forms you need to collect (Read: [12 Payroll Forms Employers](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/payroll-forms/)  [Need](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/payroll-forms/))  How you’ll calculate payroll (Read: [Calculating Payroll for Employees](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/how-to-calculate-payroll/))  *Helpful links:*   * [How to Do Payroll in 8 Steps](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/how-to-do-payroll/) * [Free Payroll Templates](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/free-payroll-template/) * [Best Payroll Services for Small Businesses](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/best-payroll-services/) |
|  | **Step 4: Collect employee payroll forms.**  [W-4](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw4.pdf)  [I-9](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-9-paper-version.pdf)  [Direct deposit authorization form](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Direct-Deposit-Authorization-Form.pdf)  [MA Form M-4](https://www.mass.gov/doc/form-m-4-massachusetts-employees-withholding-exemption-certificate/download) |
|  | **Step 5: Collect, review, and approve time sheets.**  *Collect timesheets for all hourly employees and* [*n on-exempt salaried workers*](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/exempt-vs-non-exempt-employees/)*. (Check off which option you’re electing to use for tracking purposes):* |

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|  | A [paper time sheet](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/timesheet-templates/)  Free or low-cost [time and attendance software](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/best-time-and-attendance-software/)  A payroll service that has a time and attendance system |
|  | **Step 6: Calculate payroll (including taxes) and pay employees.**  You will need to calculate:  Payroll tax payments  Employee paycheck amounts  Paid time off balances  Pay employees (Read: [Different Ways to Pay Employees](https://fitsmallbusiness.com/different-ways-to-pay-employee/))  Remit federal taxes through the [EFTPS](https://www.eftps.gov/eftps/) |
|  | **Step 7: File payroll taxes with the federal and state governments.**  You can order tax forms from the IRS  Report your taxes online through the [MassTaxConnect website](https://mtc.dor.state.ma.us/mtc/_/#2) by the speciﬁc deadlines based on ﬁling frequency |
|  | **Step 8: Document and store your payroll records.**  *Massachusetts mandates that you keep payroll records for three years. Your records should contain the following employee information:*  Name Address Job title  Amount paid each payroll  Daily/weekly hours worked |
|  | **Step 9: Do year-end payroll tax reports (due by January 31 of the following year)**  Federal [W-2](https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-w-2) (employees) and [1099](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1099msc.pdf) (contractors)  State [W-2](https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-w-2) |