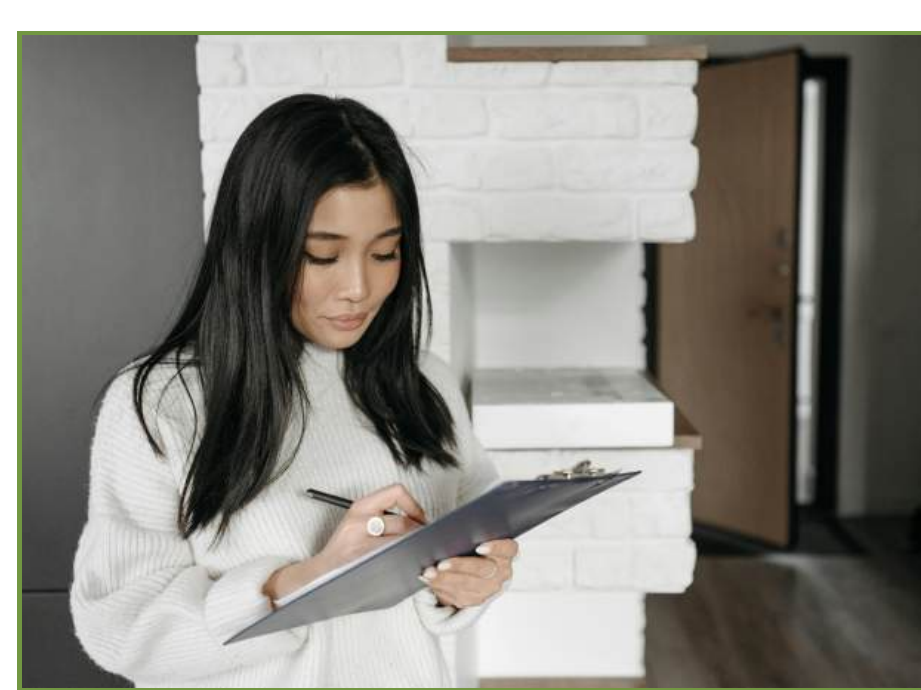


Steps to a Smoother Employee Benefit Plan Audit

Step 1: Gather Your Plan Documents

Employee benefit plan audits begin with documents, and inconsistencies surface quickly if outdated versions are used. Gather current plan documents early to ensure a clean source of truth.



Step 2: Confirm Your Plan Compliance

Review whether your plan operated as written by checking eligibility, contributions, and compensation definitions. Catching obvious gaps early saves time during the audit.

Step 3: Organize Your Data

Audits slow down when data is hard to compile, so ensure consistent and accurate information across payroll, HR, and reports. Use a clear folder structure and naming system.



Step 4: Involve Your Auditor Early

Engaging your auditor early helps align timelines, expectations, and data requirements. A kickoff call ensures everyone understands roles and deadlines.

Step 5: Review Your Contribution Timing

Auditors focus on the timing of deposits, so prepare documentation that connects payroll with plan contributions. Clear tracking reduces follow-up questions.

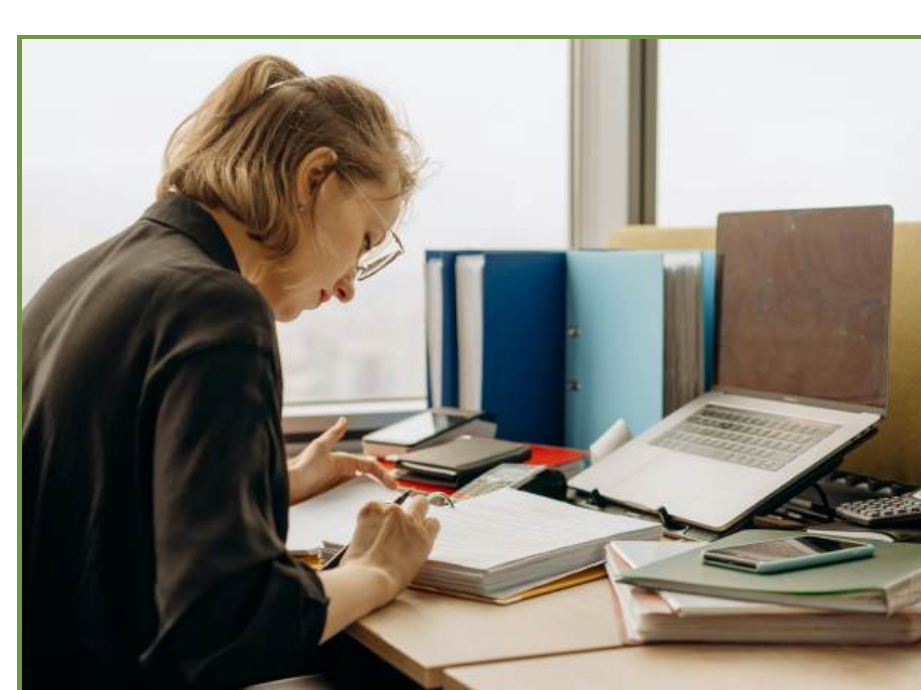


Step 6: Decide Who Owns What

Assign clear responsibilities across payroll, HR, and finance to avoid confusion and delays. A simple one-page ownership chart can help. When your auditor sends a request list, everyone already knows their lane.

Step 7: Leave Room to Fix Things

Preparation sometimes reveals issues you need to correct. Build time into your schedule to address issues such as missed eligibility or calculation errors. Early discovery makes fixes easier and less stressful.



Step 8: Close With a Forward-Looking Review

Use audit results to tighten procedures for next year, especially around data integrity and documentation storage. The goal isn't a perfect audit; it's a less painful one every year.