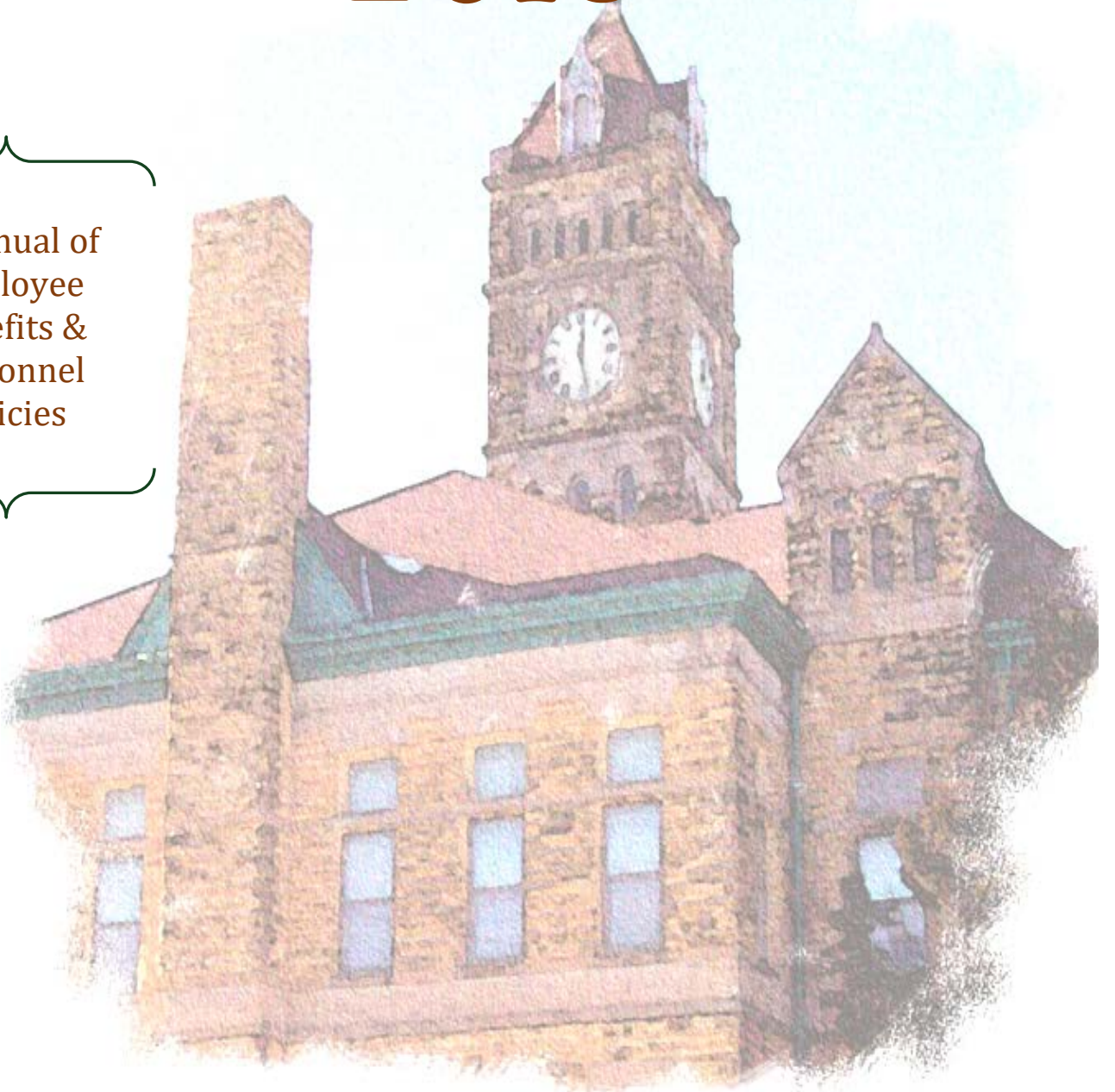


# Mitchell County Handbook 2018

A Manual of  
Employee  
Benefits &  
Personnel  
Policies



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# Introduction

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### Welcome

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Mitchell County. For all new employees, we hope that your stay with the County will be challenging, energizing and rewarding. For those of you who have been working for the County, we wish to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for your valued service.

We are pleased to provide you with this Employee Handbook which outlines the personnel policies and practices currently in effect at Mitchell County. We are certain that this handbook will be a helpful reference to you during your association with the County. Although revisions have been made to some of our previous policies, the scope and nature of these changes are designed to apply equally and fairly to all employees while addressing the County's current business needs.

The Employee Handbook applies to all County employees, other than Elected Officials and independent contractors. In the event of a conflict between this document and any law, ordinance or resolution, that law, ordinance or resolution shall supersede this document.

It should be noted that the information contained in this Handbook does not and is not intended to create a contract of employment or for benefits and does not create any express or implied contractual rights.

Due to the size of our organization and the competitive nature of our industry, we have set high standards of performance for our employees. While this is necessary to sustain our growth and achievement, at the same time we are committed to providing you with the challenge, recognition, compensation, and benefits to allow you to reach your individual goals while maintaining the overall objectives of the County.

By working together during the next growth phase of the County and beyond, We are confident that the future will be both productive and prosperous for each of us.

### Purpose

This Mitchell County (herein referred to as “the County”) handbook presents general guidelines to establish a professional atmosphere for you and to ensure fair and objective treatment. It will acquaint you with our mission, vision, benefits, and some important personnel policies and procedures. The handbook makes no attempt to address every situation encountered in the workplace or answer every question about your employment. You are encouraged to discuss situations that may not be covered in this handbook with your supervisor or County Commissioners. This handbook is not intended to serve as your final guide in all situations; as, in many instances, it is only a summary of more detailed policies that are updated frequently with or without notice.

The County reserves the right to modify or discontinue the benefits, procedures, practices and policies described herein from time to time, and without notice; however, we will endeavor to inform you of such changes in a timely manner. Any changes must be approved by an affirmative vote of the Board of County Commissioners. The change will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the vote took place, be published in the format of this manual and be furnished to each County employee and official. Amendments to this manual will supersede the original policy it is intended to replace.

This handbook in part or total should not be construed in any fashion or manner to imply, directly or indirectly, an employment contract on the part of you and/or the County; nor does it guarantee any fixed terms and conditions of your employment. Your employment is not for any specific time and may be terminated at-will, with or without cause and without prior notice, by the County or you may resign for any reason at any time.

Please note that an elected or appointed official, or a supervisor under the supervision of such official, may formulate administrative or operational departmental regulations which supplement the provisions of this manual and which are pertinent to only that department.

Departmental regulations may enhance the provisions contained herein but may not conflict with these provisions or decrease the right and benefits established in the Employee Handbook. This handbook supersedes any departmental regulation in the event of a conflict.

This document is effective **April 23, 2018** and supersedes all handbooks and policies covered herein which were issued prior to this date.

### **At-Will Employment Statement**

While we hope to have a long and profitable relationship with you, your employment with the County is voluntary and is subject to termination by you or the County at-will, with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time.

While the County may have a disciplinary system in place, this system does not have to be used—the County may make the decision to terminate you without first taking these disciplinary steps.

None of the information provided in our policies signifies a contractual agreement or should be interpreted to conflict with, eliminate or modify in any way your employment-at-will status with the County.

# Workplace Environment

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We are committed to creating a professional and productive work environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. We prohibit conduct of any kind that disrupts or interferes with another person's work performance and/or work environment, especially where that conduct could constitute discrimination or harassment.



### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

We value the diversity of our workforce and take steps to create and maintain an inclusive, non-discriminatory workplace where you can effectively and efficiently utilize your skills and experience. We provide equal employment opportunities to all employees without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, citizenship, religion, disability, age, veteran status, or any other status protected by law.

In addition, we comply with all state and local laws, regulations and ordinances governing non-discrimination in employment in every location in which we have facilities and/or employees. Our commitment pertains to the entire personnel system: recruiting, hiring, transfer, promotion, training, discipline, termination, compensation, benefits and all other privileges, terms and conditions of employment.

You are held accountable for strict adherence to this policy. The Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk provides advice and assistance on all equal opportunity matters. All supervisors are responsible for equal opportunity compliance, including but not limited to the examples above.

Any practice that appears to be inconsistent with this policy should be reported to the Human Resources/Payroll Clerk.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

We value your contributions and make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities in order to help them perform their job responsibilities, in accordance with applicable laws.

It is our policy that employment discrimination on the basis of a disability is prohibited. This means discrimination in all employment practices including job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment is prohibited. It applies to recruitment, layoff, leave, fringe benefits, and all other employment-related activities.

An individual is considered to have a “disability” if:

1. he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
2. he/she has a record of such an impairment; or
3. he/she is regarded as having such an impairment.

This policy also provides protections to individuals who have a known association or relationship with such an individual.

“Reasonable accommodations” are modifications to applicants' or employees' work environment or schedule that allow them to perform the essential functions of the job they seek or hold unless the accommodations create undue hardship for the County.

If you have a qualified disability (including life-threatening illnesses) you may make requests for reasonable accommodations to your supervisor. This process is also available for applicants. We will endeavor to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability who can still perform the essential functions of the job. Accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis and in conjunction with recommendations from the individual and medical professionals. Disabilities and life-threatening illnesses will be treated in a confidential manner, to the extent possible.

Please see the Harassment & Discrimination Prevention policy for the reporting procedure.

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Harassment & Discrimination Prevention**

We expressly prohibit any form of unlawful employee discrimination and/or harassment discrimination based on race, color, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, age, disability, protected activity, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws.

## Workplace Environment

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By way of example, unlawful discrimination includes modifying the terms of an employee's job or job duties solely on the basis of their protected status. The harassment of any person, who is an employee, applicant, customer, or visitor based upon that person's race, color, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, age, disability, or any other legally protected characteristic, is not acceptable and is prohibited. Harassment based on a protected activity, such as opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in the complaint process, is also prohibited. Violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. It is the responsibility of all supervisors and managers to enforce this policy actively, even if they do not receive a direct complaint.

Prohibited discrimination and/or harassment include(s) behavior such as:

- verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory comments, jokes or slurs based on an individual's membership in a protected category;
- visual conduct such as derogatory posters, photography, cartoons, screensavers, drawings, or gestures based on an individual's membership in a protected category;
- visiting Internet sites that could be deemed inappropriate by fellow employees. Examples of sites in this category would be ones that contain offensive comments, jokes and/or radical political viewpoints based on a protected category;
- sending E-mails or other electronic communications that contain discriminatory and/or harassing content based on a protected category; and/or
- retaliation for making discrimination and/or harassment reports or threatening to report discrimination and/or harassment.

We are committed to investigating and resolving reports or complaints of workplace discrimination and/or harassment.

If you are subjected to what you believe is discrimination and/or harassment, you:

- may tell the discriminator/harasser to stop your unwanted behavior if you feel comfortable doing so; and
- should immediately report the alleged incident to your supervisor, department head, County Attorney or the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk.

If you become aware of potentially discriminatory and/or harassing conduct engaged in or experienced by a co-worker, you should immediately report that information to your supervisor, department head, County Attorney or the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk.

### Sexual Harassment Prevention

We are committed to providing a work environment free of sexual harassment, and all forms of sexual harassment are prohibited. The County's Sexual Harassment Policy applies to all persons involved in the operations of the County and prohibits sexual harassment by any employee of the County. The County's policy also prohibits sexual harassment by vendors or clients, and prohibits you from discriminating against and/or harassing vendors or clients. If sexual harassment occurs on the job, whether on or off the premises or by someone not employed by the County, the procedures in this policy should be followed as if the discriminator/harasser were an employee of the County.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; and/or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with your work performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Prohibited harassment may include:

- unwelcome sexual advances;
- offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors;
- making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances;
- visual conduct: leering, making sexual gestures, and/or displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons or posters;
- verbal conduct: making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, sexually explicit jokes;
- comments about someone else's body or dress;
- verbal sexual advances or propositions;
- verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentary about an individual's body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual, suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations or sexually or otherwise offensive emails;
- repeated requests for dates;
- touching, such as rubbing or massaging an individual's neck or shoulders, stroking someone's hair, or brushing against another's body;
- sexually suggestive touching;
- grabbing, groping, kissing, fondling;
- sitting or gesturing sexually;
- offensive voice-mail messages, E-mail messages or other electronic communications;
- visiting sites that could be deemed inappropriate to fellow employees, such as sites that depict pornographic and/or materials of a sexual nature;
- questions about one's sex life or experiences;
- physical conduct: touching, assault, impeding or blocking movements;
- retaliation for making sexual harassment reports or threatening to report sexual harassment; and/or
- any other conduct or behavior deemed inappropriate by the County.

If you believe you have been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy, you should follow the Reporting Procedure for investigating and resolving such complaints.

### ***Reporting Procedure***

We are committed to investigating and resolving reports or complaints of workplace discrimination and/or harassment.

If you are subjected to what you believe is discrimination and/or harassment, you:

- may tell the discriminator/harasser to stop your unwanted behavior if you feel comfortable doing so; and
- should immediately report the alleged incident to your supervisor, department head, County Attorney or the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk.

If you become aware of potentially discriminatory and/or harassing conduct engaged in or experienced by a co-worker, you should immediately report that information to you supervisor, department head, County Attorney or the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk.

We are committed to promptly and thoroughly investigating any reports or complaints of discrimination or harassment and will promptly take appropriate remedial action to resolve the problem. To help with the investigation, you should provide the County with a detailed account of the events which you believe constitutes the alleged discrimination or harassment. We will maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances.

We strictly prohibit retaliation against any person by another employee or by the County for using this complaint procedure, reporting alleged discrimination or harassment, or for filing, testifying, assisting or participating in any manner in any investigation, including an investigation, proceeding, or hearing conducted by a governmental enforcement County.

Any person who is found to have engaged in unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. A person who engages in discrimination or harassment could also be held personally liable for monetary damages.

We do not consider conduct in violation of this policy to be within the course and scope of employment or the direct consequence of the discharge of one's duties. Accordingly, to the extent permitted by law, we reserve the right not to provide a defense or pay damages assessed against any employee for conduct in violation of this policy.

### Workplace Violence

The County will not tolerate any form of violence, harassment or other inappropriate behavior by any employee that affects the conditions of employment, unreasonably interferes with another individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Personal conduct detrimental to County personnel, guests, contractors or vendors which could cause undue disruption of work or endanger the safety of persons or property of others, or exhibiting personal conduct which may be characterized as workplace violence is prohibited. The definition of "workplace violence" applies to all such conduct, whether committed by an employee, vendor, contractor, or guest. Workplace violence includes, but is not limited to, the following conduct, when such conduct is committed on County premises, or in connection with a County activity or event:

- oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm or any other disruptive behavior;
- offensive and/or unlawful touching or application of force by one person against another when done in a rude, insolent or angry manner;
- possession of a weapon (prohibited weapons include any form of weapon or explosive restricted under local, state or federal regulations; this includes all firearms, knives, or other weapons);
- committing acts motivated by or related to, sexual harassment, discrimination or domestic violence;
- retaliatory actions against an individual who reported a workplace violence incident;
- threats to do bodily harm to another;
- use of profanity or abusive language;
- stalking of another; and/or
- inciting, causing or encouraging another to commit any of the conduct described above.

Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action up to or including discharge, criminal penalties, or both.

If you believe you have been subjected to workplace violence or the threat of violence, you should immediately separate all contact and communication with the threatening or offending person. Then you should report the incident to your Manager or the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk. In the event of immediate danger, if these persons are not available, contact local law enforcement.

We need your cooperation to implement this policy effectively and maintain a safe working environment. Do not ignore violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or other disruptive behavior. If you observe or experience such behavior by anyone on the premises, whether he or she is an employee or not, report it immediately to a Supervisor or the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk.

The County will respond immediately to any report of workplace violence by investigating the report and taking appropriate corrective and disciplinary action up to or including termination of an employee engaged in inappropriate behavior, if necessary. Complaints will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible for an effective resolution.

In cases of threats or assaults that require immediate attention, you should call the police at 911.

## Weapons and Threats

In an effort to assure a safe working environment, the County has adopted the following policy relating to employee possession and the carrying of weapons and/or other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances while on County premises or while otherwise performing services for the County. This policy does not apply to County law enforcement personnel authorized to carry and/or otherwise be in possession of weapons and/or other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances as a part of their job duties.

- **Generally.** Except as otherwise provided in this policy, employees are prohibited from carrying openly or concealed any weapons or be in possession of dangerous or hazardous devices or substances while on County premises or while performing services for the County.
- **Definitions.** “Weapons” and “dangerous or hazardous devices or substances” include without limitation: all types of firearms, air guns, knives (**other than small pocket knives**), explosives, and other items that by their nature are intended to inflict harm to other persons or property.

County “premises” include, without limitation, all County owned and leased buildings, facilities, parking lots, grounds, vehicles and equipment.

“Services for the County” means any activity for which employees receive pay from the County.

- **Concealed Carry License Holders.** County employees that are Concealed Carry License (“CCL”) holders pursuant to the Kansas Personal and Family Protection Act (“the Act”) are also subject to this policy with limited exceptions and the provisions of the Act. No employee may carry a concealed handgun on County premises or while performing services for the County unless he/she: (1) is CCL holder under the Act; [and] (2) is in compliance with all applicable provisions of the Act;[and] (3) has on his/her person a valid CCL at all times.
- **Limitations.** Employee CCL holders are strictly prohibited from carrying a concealed handgun in any County building which has implemented “adequate security measures” within the meaning of the Act. These buildings are:

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Employee CCL holders are prohibited from carrying a concealed handgun in any County vehicle, while operating County equipment, in their personal vehicles when using those vehicles to perform services for the County, or when off County-premises while otherwise performing services for the County.

## Workplace Environment

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- **Warning.** Only authorized law enforcement officers are authorized to draw their firearms and only when responding to deadly force within in the limits of applicable law. No other County employees are authorized to draw or otherwise use their firearms or other weapons as a function of their jobs. Employees that do so may be subject to personal civil and criminal liability, and will also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- **Violations of Policy.** Employees that violate any of the provisions of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

Threats against or intimidation of other employees, guests, contractors or vendors will also not be tolerated whether they are made in person, by mail, over the phone, on email systems or any other form of technology or means of communication. You are encouraged to report weapons or threats to your Manager or the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk so that an investigation can be conducted. Any threat or act of intimidation or physical violence to any employee, client, contractor or vendor may result in discipline up to or including termination.



### **Substance Abuse**

We believe that employees our most valuable resource. We also believe that drug and alcohol abuse endanger the health and safety of employees and compromises personal lives, families and the community. The County is committed to providing an alcohol and drug-free environment and to work with employees staying free from the effects of alcohol and drugs. Customers, their families and people in the community who rely on our products and services should also expect to interact with alcohol and drug-free professionals.

The County's Substance Abuse Policy prohibits the following:

- Unauthorized use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation or sale of a controlled substance, drug paraphernalia or alcohol in or on the County premises, facilities, vehicles, or during work hours. Possession includes, but is not limited to, storage in a desk, cabinet, automobile, bag, purse or any other repository on the County premises of any illegal drug, drug paraphernalia, or controlled substance whose use is unauthorized.
- Being under the influence of an unauthorized controlled substance, illegal drug or alcohol in or on the County premises, facilities, vehicles, or during working hours. Being under the influence of alcohol is defined as a blood alcohol content of .04. Being under the influence of an illegal drug or unauthorized controlled substance is testing positive at a specified level established by the drug-testing laboratory.
- Refusing to consent to testing or submit a urine or blood sample for testing when requested by management. (See substance screening.)
- Switching or adulterating any urine sample submitted for testing.
- Refusing an inspection when requested by Management.
- Failing to adhere to the requirements of any drug or alcohol treatment or counseling program in which the employee is enrolled as a result of disciplinary action stemming from violation of this policy.
- Failure to notify immediate supervisor of any conviction under any criminal drug statute within five (5) days of the conviction. The County reserves the right to discipline up to and including termination any employee who is convicted under any criminal drug statute violated on-site or under circumstances which adversely affect the County's reputation in the community.
- Failure to report to the immediate supervisor the use of a prescribed drug which may affect the employee's ability to safely perform the functions of his/her position, and/or failure to keep prescribed medicine in its original container.
- Refusing to sign the Handbook Acknowledgement Form agreeing to abide by the County Substance Abuse Policy.

### ***Substance Screening***

Both employees and applicants for employment may be subject to screening under the circumstances described below. Substance screening means testing of blood, urine, breath, and saliva or otherwise as deemed necessary to determine possession, impairment or presence of illegal substances in an employee's system.

## Workplace Environment

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**Pre-employment** – The County may require new employees to pass a drug test. Offers of employment will be contingent on passing the test. The County will not hire any applicant who fails to pass a pre-employment substance screening.

**Reasonable Suspicion** – When there is reasonable cause to suspect any employee has reported to work or is working impaired, he or she may be subject to substance screening.

**Post Accident/Incident** – Any employee involved in a job-related accident or an incident involving the apparent violation of a safety rule/standard either of which did or could have resulted in serious injury or property damage may be subject to substance screening.

**Post Rehabilitation** – Any employee who tests positive for a controlled substance or alcohol who is allowed to undergo rehabilitative treatment instead of being discharged must test negative before returning to work and may be required to undergo random post-rehabilitation testing as many as four times in a twelve-month period following his/her return.

**Random** – The County reserves the right to require employees to participate in random drug testing that is unscheduled and given without prior notice.

### ***Positive Test Results***

If the employee receives notice that the employee's test results were confirmed positive, the employee will be given the opportunity to explain the positive result following the employee's receipt of the test result. In addition, the employee may have the same sample retested at a laboratory of the employee's choice.

### ***Adverse Employment Action***

If there is reason to suspect that the employee is working while under the influence of an illegal drug or alcohol, the employee will be suspended with pay until the results of a drug and alcohol test are made available to the County by the testing laboratory. Where drug or alcohol testing is part of a routine physical or random screening, there will be no adverse employment action taken until the test results are in.

### ***Confidentiality***

The County will make every effort to keep the results of drug and alcohol tests confidential. Only persons with a need to know the results will have access to them. The employee will be asked for the employee's consent before test results are released to anyone else. Be advised, however, that test results may be used in arbitration, administrative hearings, and court cases arising as a result of the employee's drug testing. Also, results will be sent to federal agencies as required by federal law. If the employee is to be referred to a treatment facility for evaluation, the employee's test results will also be made available to the employee's counselor. The results of drug testing in the workplace will not be used against the employee in any criminal prosecution.

### ***Costs***

The County will pay the cost of any drug and alcohol testing that it requires or requests employees submit to, including retesting of confirmed positive results. Any additional tests that the employee requests will be paid for by the employee.

### ***Inspections***

For the purposes of assuring compliance with the prohibition of drug possession and/or use, employees may be subject to inspections. The County with the assistance of law enforcement may search employees work area, desk, files, lockers, or other county property under the control of the employee, as well as an employee's personal effects, and automobile on county property, if there exists a reasonable belief that drugs or drug paraphernalia may be present. Any refusal to submit to such reasonable inspections can be treated as insubordination and potentially subject to disciplinary action.

### ***Consequences for Violation of this Policy***

Violation of this policy and/or any of its specific provisions will result in disciplinary action, up to or including termination. Employees who use or distribute drugs on the job are subject to discharge and any drugs confiscated will be turned over to the local law enforcement.

### **Smoking**

To comply with applicable health codes and OSHA regulations, and in recognition of the health, safety and comfort benefits of smoke-free air and the responsibility to provide and maintain an optimally healthy and safe working environment for you, our clients, our vendors and other visitors, the County has adopted a Smoke-Free Workplace Policy whereby smoking is prohibited inside all County facilities except for areas where it is specifically authorized. The Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk is responsible for implementing and monitoring smoking regulations, and supervisors are expected to enforce the regulations. The smoking policy applies to employees, customers and visitors, while on the County's premises. Violators will be subject to corrective action as warranted. You may contact the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk for information regarding the effects of smoking and the availability of smoking-cessation programs.

### **Conflict of Interest**

We expect employees to conduct business according to the highest ethical standards of conduct. All employees must be aware of the impact that their activities have on the County. With this in mind, you must conduct your work and non-work activities in such a manner that the activities do not conflict with the best interests of the County or detract from the performance of your job responsibilities.

The County recognizes employees' rights to engage in activities outside of their employment which are of a private nature and unrelated to our business. However, employees must disclose any possible conflicts so that the County may assess and prevent potential conflicts of interest from arising. A potential or actual conflict of interest occurs whenever employees are in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for themselves or an immediate family member (i.e., spouse or significant other, children, parents, siblings) as a result of the County's business dealings.

All business affairs of the County must be conducted on an ethical and legal basis. You should not provide or accept money, gifts or personal favors for the purpose of receiving preferential treatment or securing a personal gain or as inducement to enter into any transaction. Examples of such prohibited conduct include giving or taking gifts of significant value (i.e. in excess of \$25), gratuities, favors, loans, guarantees of loans, excessive entertainment, kickbacks, rebates, and other types of financial inducements. Common business practice permits the offer or acceptance of certain courtesies of nominal value, usually in the form of meals and entertainment, provided the judgment of the parties will not be unduly affected.

In general, the use of good judgment, based on ethical principles, will guide you with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed with the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk or the County Commissioners. A violation of this policy will result in immediate and appropriate discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

### Workplace Bullying

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. As such, the County prohibits bullying of any kind and will deal with complaints accordingly. This policy applies to employees while working, at work functions and while traveling on business.

Bullying is defined as unwelcome or unreasonable behavior that demeans, intimidates or humiliates an individual or a group of individuals.

Bullying can be:

- An isolated incident or persistent incidents
- Carried out by a group or an individual
- Either direct or indirect
- Verbal or physical

Some examples of bullying include:

- Abusive or offensive language
- Unwelcome behavior
- Unreasonable insults or criticism (especially in public)
- Teasing and/or spreading rumors
- Trivializing of work or achievements
- Exclusion or isolation

Bullying can have devastating results. If you witness bullying or suspect bullying is taking place, report it to your Manager and/or to the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk immediately. All suspected incidents of bullying will be thoroughly investigated and disciplinary measures will be taken accordingly.

# Employee Benefits

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The County is pleased to offer a competitive benefits package for our full-time employees. Benefits comprise a substantial portion of your overall compensation package.

### COBRA Benefits

#### COBRA Benefits

The County complies with the federal law, Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, P.L. 99 272, and later amendments, otherwise known as COBRA. Covered employees and their dependents who lose insurance coverage for any of the following reasons are eligible to continue their coverage through COBRA:

1. a covered employee's separation of employment for any reason other than gross misconduct;
2. reduction of work hours to fewer than the number required for participation;
3. a covered employee's death;
4. a covered employee's divorce or legal separation from the spouse (COBRA is then offered to the spouse and dependent children, if any);
5. a covered employee's entitlement to Medicare under the Title XVIII of Social Security; or
6. a covered child's loss of dependent status under the plan (Children are covered through age 26 on the medical plan and 19 on the dental and vision plan or 25 if a full-time student. If a child, older than age 19 and enrolled as a full-time student, discontinues his/her student status before the age of 25, the date the child does not return to school will become the eligibility date).

If you resign or are separated from the County's employ for reasons other than gross misconduct or if your work hours are reduced, and if this event makes you or your dependents no longer eligible to participate in one of our group health insurance plans, you and your eligible dependents may have the right to continue to participate for up to eighteen months at your (or your dependents') expense. If you are determined to be disabled under the Social Security Act at the time your separation of services or reduction in hours occurs, you may be entitled to continuation coverage for up to 29 months.

The 18-month continuation coverage period provided in the event of your separation of services or reduction in working hours may be extended to 36 months for your spouse and dependent children if, within that 18-month period, you die or become divorced or legally separated, or if a child ceases to have dependent status. In addition, if you enroll for Medicare during the 18-month period, your spouse and dependent children may be entitled to extend their continuation period the 36 months, starting on the date that you become eligible for Medicare.

All administrative rules and processes as well as changes in plan benefits and premiums apply to those on continuation coverage.

## Employee Benefits

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In the event of divorce or legal separation, or the loss of dependent child status under the plan, a covered employee or dependent must notify Human Resources within 60 days to maintain the right to continue coverage. At that time, Human Resources will provide enrollment materials to the employee or covered dependent within 14 days of that notification.

The covered employee or dependent has 60 days to elect continuation of coverage from either the date that coverage would ordinarily have ended under the plan by reason of a qualifying event or the date of notification, whichever comes later. Election of continuation of coverage is established by completing and returning enrollment materials to Human Resources.

COBRA premiums will be billed by the applicable insurance provider, and the first premium will be due within 45 days of the date of election. Subsequent premiums must be received within the terms set forth by the provider. Failure to make timely payments will result in termination of coverage without notice.

COBRA continuation coverage will end for any of the following reasons: discontinues its insurance plan, or the premium payment is not made in a timely fashion and the person who elected continuation of coverage becomes covered under another insurance plan or Medicare. Continuation coverage will end after 18 months if the qualifying event was termination or reduction in hours, unless the qualified beneficiary is disabled at the time of termination or reduction in hours, in which case coverage may extend to 29 months. Continuation coverage will otherwise end after 36 months.

Continuation coverage may end if any of the following events occur:

1. failure to make timely payments of all premiums;
2. assumption of coverage under another group health plan, which does not exclude or limit coverage provided to you on account of a pre-existing medical condition; or
3. County termination of its group health plans. If you enroll for Medicare, you will no longer be eligible for continued coverage, but, as noted earlier in this statement, your spouse and dependent children may be entitled to extend their continuation coverage.

If you would like additional information regarding COBRA, please contact the Human Resources Manager.



### HIPAA

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was established to assist you in the transition to a new health plan. Further, the Privacy Rule provides the first comprehensive federal standards to protect your personal health information in any form – electronic, written or oral. As a general rule, Protected Health Information (PHI) cannot be disclosed to third parties without authorization. This Regulation is designed to prevent possible discrimination in employment or health insurance coverage, due to the increased use of electronic transactions of employee or patient medical information, and the need for limited access to these records.

The County acknowledges participants' privacy rights as specified under HIPAA, and has implemented policies and procedures to ensure these privacy rights are protected.

In conducting the operations of the County Health Plan, the County will manage Protected Health Information ("PHI") in a manner that prevents unnecessary or inadvertent access to, use of or disclosure of PHI.

Participants in the County Health Plan have the right to review their PHI, as well as request restrictions on how and to whom their PHI is communicated. Any violation of this policy should be reported to the Board of County Commissioners, who is designated as the County HIPAA Privacy Officer. The County will not discriminate or retaliate against any participant for making such a request or reporting a violation of this policy. Complete information regarding the County's HIPAA Privacy Policy and Procedures may be found posted in the break area or may be obtained from Human Resources. Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Additionally, participants will receive a certificate of creditable coverage through the insurance carrier at points designated under regulations: Loss of Coverage, COBRA Termination or for up to 24 months following Loss of Coverage as requested.

### ERISA

The County wants to assure that you are made aware of your rights concerning your benefits. As a participant of the Plans described in the following pages, you may be entitled to certain rights and protection under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). A complete statement of ERISA rights is contained in the Summary Plan Description for each plan.

ERISA provides that all Plan participants shall be entitled to:

- Examine, without charge, at the Plan Administrator's office and at other specified locations, such as work sites, all Plan documents, including insurance contracts, and copies of all documents filed by the Plan with the U.S. Department of Labor, such as detailed annual reports and Plan descriptions.
- Obtain copies of all Plan documents and other Plan information upon written request to the Plan Administrator. The Administrator may make a reasonable charge for the copies.
- Receive a summary of the Plan's annual financial report. The Plan Administrator is required by law to furnish each participant with a copy of this summary annual report.
- Obtain a statement telling you whether you have a right to receive a retirement benefit at normal retirement age and, if so, what your benefits would be at normal retirement age if you were to stop working under the Plan now. If you do not have a right to retirement benefit, the statement will tell you how many more years you have to work to get a right to a retirement benefit. This statement must be requested in writing and is not required to be given more than once a year. The Plan must provide the statement free of charge.

In addition to creating rights for Plan participants, ERISA imposes duties upon the people who are responsible for the operation of the benefit plan. The people who operate your Plan, called "fiduciaries" of the Plan, have a duty to do so prudently and in the interest of you and other Plan participants and beneficiaries. No one, including your employer, or any other person, may fire you or otherwise discriminate against you in any way to prevent you from obtaining a (retirement, welfare) benefit or exercising your rights under ERISA. If your claim for a (retirement, welfare) benefit is denied in whole or in part, you must receive a written explanation of the reason for the denial. You have the right to have the Plan review and reconsider your claim. Under ERISA, there are steps you can take to enforce the above rights. For instance, if you request materials from the Plan and do not receive them within 30 days, you may file suit in a federal court. In such a case, the court may require the Plan Administrator to provide the materials and pay you up to \$100 a day until you receive the materials, unless the materials were not sent because of reasons beyond the control of the Administrator. If you have a claim for benefits that is denied or ignored, in whole or in part, you may file suit in a state or federal court. If it should happen that Plan fiduciaries misuse the Plan's money, or if you are discriminated against for asserting your rights, you may seek assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor, or you may file suit in a federal court. The court will decide who should pay court costs and legal fees. If you are successful, the court may order the person you have sued to pay these costs and fees. If you lose, the court may order you to pay these costs and fees, for example, if it finds your claim is frivolous. If you have any questions about your Plan, you should contact the Plan Administrator. If you have any questions about this statement or about your rights under ERISA, you should contact the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk or the nearest Area Office of the U.S. Labor-Management Services Administration, Department of Labor.

### Employer-offered Insurance

The County makes available (including, but not limited to): comprehensive Medical, Dental, Vision, Life, Disability, and Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) insurance program for regular, full-time employees. Dependent coverage is also obtainable under our Medical, Dental and Vision plans only. Life, Disability, and AD&D insurance are fully paid for by the County (100% group participation is mandatory the County may modify or discontinue these benefits at any time.

Regular employees working at least 37½ hours per week will become eligible for coverage on the first day of the month following employment with the County. Part-time employees working less than 37½ hours per week and Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits.

Here is a list of benefits that the County offers:

Medical – insurance coverage for medical and surgical expenses

Dental – insurance coverage to pay a portion of your costs associated with dental care

Vision – insurance coverage the provides reduced-cost fees on some eye health and vision correction services and products

Life insurance – provides financial protection to your beneficiary in the event of your death

Disability - provides supplementary income in the event of an illness or accident resulting in a disability that prevents you from working

Flexible Spending Account – allows you to set aside pre-tax money for certain out of pocket medical, dental, vision, and child/elder care expenses

Please note we reserve the right to modify and/or discontinue the benefits it provides, premium amounts it pays, eligibility rules, and other provisions of these benefit plans, for any reason. When possible, we will try to notify you in advance of such changes or additions.

The benefit information included in this handbook is merely an overview; a more detailed description of the specific provisions of the various plans can be obtained by reviewing the Summary Plan Description booklets. The exact provisions of the Plans may only be determined by reading the actual Plan Documents.

**Employees are urged to consult the insurance summary plan description for details of the plan benefits. The plan document controls payment of any benefits.**

**The existence of these employee benefits and plan documents, in and of themselves, does not signify that you will be employed for the requisite time necessary to qualify for these benefits and plans, as your employment is “at-will.” The County may change, modify or discontinue these benefits and contribution amounts at any time, as permitted by law.**

### **Retirement Plan**

The County is a member of the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) which requires employee participation after one year of continuous employment. After enrollment, both you and the County contribute to the system. Your contributions are fixed by statute as a percentage of gross salary. KPERS has provisions for full retirement at age 65 and early retirement based upon age and service.

Upon retirement, you shall be paid accrued vacation leave pay up to a maximum of 30 days (240 hours), whichever is less. To qualify for these benefits, a retiree must fall into one of the following classifications:

- An eligible employee who retires at age 65 or over.
- An eligible employee who elects to retire under early retirement provisions of KPERS and who has completed a minimum of ten (10) years of continuous service.
- An employee with a minimum of five (5) years continuous service with the County, who is forced to retire for disability reasons as certified by a physician.

### **Social Security and Medicare**

All employees are covered by the Federal Social Security Act. A required percentage of your salary is deducted from your paycheck to pay the employee's portion of this protection, and the County matches your deduction dollar-for-dollar to the limits set by the law. The plan is designed for your future security and that of your dependents and provides for retirement, disability, death, survivor and Medicare benefits.

### **State Unemployment Insurance**

This program is funded entirely by employers in applicable states. The program provides weekly benefits if you become unemployed through no fault of your own or due to circumstances described in the law.

### **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

The County provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to you. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if you are hospitalized, immediately.

If you sustain work-related injuries or illnesses, you should inform your Manager immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it be reported immediately. This will enable you to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible if eligible.

Neither the County nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during your voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by the County.

# Time Away from Work

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We understand that there will be times that you will be away from work for various reasons. This section will address those situations and our policies from time away from work.

## **Vacation**

Our Vacation plan is designed to provide you with the opportunity to rest and get away from the everyday routine. For that reason, we believe it is important to take Vacation, and encourage you to do so. Regular full-time, active employees will be granted Vacation time based on the number of years of continuous employment with the County.

## Employee Benefits

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Regular full-time employees are provided the following vacation leave with pay:

<b>Years of Continuous Service</b>	<b>Vacation Earned Per Pay Period</b>	<b>Maximum Accrual</b>
<1 year through 7	1 days	12 days
8 through 14 years	1.25 days	15 days
15 and over	1.5 days	18 days

Regular part-time employees do not earn vacation leave.

Vacation time is subject to the following restrictions:

- An employee must obtain the approval of the supervisor prior to the employee's scheduled absence. Supervisors may waive advance notice, but the supervisor must approve the leave request, which would preferably be submitted in writing.
- Vacation must not be used in increments of less than one hour for non-exempt employees and not less than half-day increments for exempt employees.
- If an employee is absent from work without notifying and receiving approval from their supervisor for three (3) consecutive business days, it may be assumed that the employee has voluntarily resigned and, after a reasonable effort is made to contact the employee, recruitment may begin to fill the position.
- Vacation leave is earned by the pay period and may not be taken until the first of the pay period following accrual. Vacation leave may be taken in no less than one-hour increments.
- A legal holiday or other day on which County offices are closed, which occurs during an employee's vacation, shall not be charged against the employee's vacation leave credits.
- When an employee is on vacation leave and becomes ill during his/her vacation, the employee may request the period of illness be charged to sick leave. The supervisor may require the employee to furnish proof of illness before the request is approved.
- Upon termination of employment, unless terminated within the first year of employment, an employee is entitled to pay for unused accrued vacation leave not to exceed 30 days (240 hours).
- Employees on Leave without Pay will not earn vacation leave for that time period. Vacation leave for the partial month worked will be prorated according to number of hours in pay status.
- Human Resources/Payroll Clerk shall keep records of earned and used vacation. It is the responsibility of the employee to assure that their vacation leave balance does not exceed the maximum accrual listed above by December 31 of each year.
- Vacation leave may be donated to other employees if the need arises. Donors have no limit to the hours they may give but recipients can receive no more than 720 hours.

### Holidays

At the beginning of each calendar year, the Board of County Commissioners designates the year's paid holidays for County employees. This list of holidays is distributed by Human Resources to all departments for posting.

If a legal holiday occurs during an employee's vacation, that day will not be charged to the employee's accrued vacation time.

An employee who is on leave without pay during any portion of the last working day before, or the first working day following a legal holiday, shall not receive pay for the holiday.

Typical holiday may include:

#### Holiday

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday (½ day)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day (Thursday and Friday)
- Christmas Day

**If a holiday falls on the weekend, the Human Resources department will advise of the date the holiday will be observed.**



### **Sick Leave**

We understand that at times, employees will need to be absent from work due to illness or other medical reasons. Because of this, we offer you sick time.

Our sick-leave policy is designed to provide “paid time off” for personal illness, medical appointment, injury, or the illness/medical appointment/injury of a parent, child, or spouse. Sick leave is not an entitlement for extra days off, but rather a benefit to be used only in time of need.

Full-time employees working at least 37.5 hours per week will earn sick leave with pay as follows:

Employees on Leave without Pay will not earn sick leave for that time period. Sick Leave for partial months worked will be prorated according to number of hours in pay status.

Sick leave must not be used in increments of less than one hour for non-exempt employees and not less than half-day increments for exempt employees.

Approval of sick leave shall be requested and required upon the employee's return to work. Failure to provide the requested certification of sickness or injury may result in loss of pay for the absence and may be grounds for disciplinary action.

A supervisor may request verification and a healthcare provider’s statement may be required. The employee must claim all sick leave for the pay period during which the leave is used. This report shall be made to the supervisor or other person designated for recording purposes.

### ***Notice of Illness***

- When an employee takes sick leave, they shall report the reason for the absence and the expected duration to their supervisor.
- Notification shall be before or during the first hour the employee was scheduled to work, and the employee must speak directly to an immediate supervisor or as otherwise required by written departmental regulation, rule, or policy.
- If the employee is medically unable to personally report their absence, notification may be made by a family member.
- If the actual length of absence exceeds the time which was anticipated, the employee shall notify the supervisor of the new expected duration of sick leave.
- If you are on sick leave for more than three (3) consecutive business days, your Supervisor may request that your physician complete the Medical Certification Form prior to your return to work.

### **Absenteeism**

As of the 4th day of consecutive absence for any illness, you may be required to provide a doctor's note upon return to work. We want to ensure that you are not jeopardizing your health or recovery (nor the health of your co-workers) by returning to work too soon. You will also be required to have your doctor complete a Personal Leave Certification of Health Care Provider form if absent more than three (3) consecutive days.

Please keep in mind that your supervisor may request written documentation for any absence of any length. If you are absent from work for three (3) or more consecutive scheduled workdays without calling in, it will be assumed that you have voluntarily resigned your employment. Additionally, unless you are on an authorized leave of absence, you must maintain contact with your supervisor throughout any absence extending beyond one day, notifying him/her daily whether and when you will be returning to work.

Sick leave will automatically be applied to any sick or emergency time taken by the employee, if available. If sick leave has been exhausted and you require more time away from work, you may apply for additional unpaid leave, which is described in the Personal Leave of Absence policy. If you are absent for illness or emergency and no sick leave available, you will not be paid for the time you are absent from work, unless you qualify for Medical Salary Continuation. Vacation time may NOT be substituted for sick leave unless approved in advance (approved PRIOR in writing, not verbally) of the absence or the leave falls under the Personal Leave of Absence policy.

### Communicable Diseases

We strive to maintain a safe and healthy work environment, and request that you inform the County in the event that you have or may have been exposed to a communicable disease as defined by a governing health agency.

For the purposes of this policy, "communicable disease" is defined as any condition that can be If you know or have reason to believe that you have a communicable disease you have an ethical, and in some cases, a legal, obligation to seek treatment and protect others.

Whether symptomatic or not, if you have a communicable disease (e.g., SARS, tuberculosis, meningitis, or Avian Influenza (H5N1, H5N2) which poses a threat to others through airborne or social contact (other than those that are sexually transmitted), you are not permitted to report to work if you are in the communicable phase of your illness. You must advise your Supervisor or Human Resources/Payroll Clerk who will assist in determining when you may return to work.

If you are diagnosed with, or have reason to believe that you may have, or have been exposed to, a communicable disease as described above you:

- should seek immediate medical assistance;
- should not come into the office unless and until approved to do so by a medical doctor and your Supervisor; and should immediately contact the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk via telephone and advise of the situation so that appropriate measures can be taken to protect you as well as employees, customer, or vendors you may have come in contact with.

Our decisions involving persons who have communicable diseases shall be based on current and well-informed medical judgments concerning the disease, the risks of transmitting the illness to others, the symptoms and special circumstances of each individual who has a communicable disease, and a careful weighing of the identified risks and the available alternative for responding to an employee with a communicable disease.

transmitted directly or indirectly to a person from an infected person and that is classified as such by governing health agencies.

### **Personal Leave Of Absence (LOA)**

The County may grant a Personal Leave for valid and compelling personal reasons and in accordance with the law. Personal leaves are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will be granted at the County's discretion based on the reason for the request, length of credited service, operating needs of the department and length of time requested. Leave time will be unpaid if all Sick and Vacation time has been exhausted.

You may request a personal leave of absence for a period of up to ninety (90) days once you have completed six-months of service. A personal leave of absence must have written approval by your supervisor and the County Commissioners in conjunction with the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk, be for a valid reason, and will be granted at the discretion of management. Any absence not approved will be deemed an unexcused absence.

If the leave is foreseeable, a Time Off Request Form must be completed as soon as possible and approval granted before the leave begins. An employee on an approved leave of absence longer than five consecutive work days must contact the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk to make arrangements for the continuation of medical and/or dental benefits, if applicable.

An employee on personal leave does not accrue vacation time or personal time and is not eligible for holiday pay. We will attempt to return you to your former position or to a similar position when you return from a personal leave of absence. However, the County's need to fill a position may override its ability to hold a position open until the employee returns from leave. Therefore, we cannot assure that it will be able to return the employee to any position after the leave of absence is over. We retain the discretion to determine the similarity of any available positions and the employee's qualifications.

If the leave is for greater than 30 days, notice of intent to return to work must be given in writing at least one week prior to the intended date of return. In the case of illness or non-work related injury, medical certification may be required.

Failure to return from a personal leave of absence upon the expiration of the leave period will be considered a voluntary resignation, having resigned as of the last day of the approved leave period. Any employee absent without approval will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

### **Family and Medical Leave Policy**

We are a covered employer under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and therefore grant qualifying leaves of absence to employees who have completed at least one full year of service with the County and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the twelve month period preceding the leave. As an eligible employee, you may take up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date you use FMLA. If you and your spouse are both employed by the County, the combined FMLA-leave taken between the two of you will count toward the total amount of leave available. For example, you and your spouse's combined FMLA-leave entitlement is a total of 12 weeks within the "12-month period" for any birth, placement of a child for adoption/foster care, care for a child after birth/placement, or to care for an employee's own seriously ill parent. This can be split between the two of you in any proportions. Such leave will be charged against that employee's available 12 weeks of FMLA leave.

Basic Family and Medical Leave may be taken for any one, or combination, of the following qualifying events:

- birth of a child (including prenatal care), and to care for the newborn child;
- placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- to care for your spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition;
- to deal with your own serious health condition that renders you unable to perform the essential functions of your job; and/or
- military entitlements outlined below.

#### ***Serious Health Condition Definition***

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents you from performing the functions of your job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three (3) consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

#### ***Military Leave Entitlements Under FMLA***

If you are eligible and have a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation you may use your 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

## Time Away From Work

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FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits you to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period if you otherwise meet the eligibility requirements. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

### ***Substitution of Paid leave***

Under the Family and Medical Leave Act, we will require you to substitute available paid leave time including vacation, comp time, and qualifying disability leave for part or all of the unpaid leave requested. In addition, if you accrued paid sick leave, you are required to use all accrued paid sick leave when taking FMLA leave due to your own serious health condition or a family member's serious health condition. In such a situation, you may choose the order in which you wish to take the comp time and sick and vacation leave. In the event you use comp time and/or paid sick and/or vacation leave, you should follow the notification procedure set forth in the applicable policy. Once such benefits are exhausted, the remainder of the leave will be unpaid.

Any substitution of paid leave will count toward your total allotment of FMLA.

### ***Use of Leave***

You are not required use this leave entitlement in one block. You may take leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary; however, you must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt County operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

### ***Employee Requests and Responsibilities***

You may request FMLA leave through Human Resources.

You are required to provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, you must provide notice as soon as practicable and must comply with the County's normal procedures to notify the County of an Absence.

In order to exercise benefits under FMLA, you must provide sufficient information for the County to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include confirmation that you are unable to perform your job functions; your family member is unable to perform daily activities; the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider; or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. You must also inform Human Resources if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

## Time Away From Work

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After notice is given, the County will notify you whether you are eligible for FMLA and specify any additional information required as well as your rights and responsibilities. If you are not eligible, the County will notify you of the reason for ineligibility. If you are eligible and the leave qualifies for FMLA, the County will notify you that the leave has been designated as FMLA.

### ***Medical Certification***

The County requires appropriate documentation on the applicable certification form obtained through Human Resources for leaves at the following times:

- Initial request (to be returned within 15 days);
- Before returning to work (following a serious health condition to certify fitness for duty which may be on a form other than the County's certification form);
- If you are not returning to work following a leave during which the County has paid health care premiums; and/or
- Re-certification on a regular basis during leave.

The County may seek clarification through its own provider and/or require you to undergo a second independent examination by a County designated provider at the County's expense.

### ***Interim Benefits***

Under FMLA, the County will maintain your coverage under the group health plan for the duration of your FMLA leave at the level and under the conditions such coverage would have been provided if you had continued to work.

You are responsible for payment of your portion of health insurance premiums during such leave. Seniority and benefits will not continue to accrue during such leaves; however, the use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of your leave. You will be provided with advance notice of the costs and a schedule for remitting these payments. If the payment is more than 30 days late, upon 15 days written notice, the County's obligation to continue health care coverage ceases. However, the County may continue to pay your share of the missed premium(s) during the leave period. The County may then recover through subsequent payroll deductions your share of the missed payment when you return to work.

If you do not return from scheduled FMLA leave, except for circumstances beyond your control, the County may consider you to have voluntarily resigned and recover all health premiums it paid on your behalf during any unpaid FMLA leave. The County may require medical certification of any alleged continued serious health condition.

### ***Reinstatement***

As an eligible employee, you are entitled to reinstatement to your former position or an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment upon return from leave. Exceptions to this provision may apply if business circumstances have

## Time Away From Work

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changed (i.e., if your position is no longer available due to a job elimination). Exceptions may also apply for certain key employees (as defined in FMLA regulations).

If you are returning from leave because due to your own serious health condition, you will be required to provide a fitness-for-duty certification from your healthcare provider.

### ***Enforcement***

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

If you feel the County has violated these provisions, you may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against the County. FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights. The County will enforce this policy in accordance with any other applicable state and/or federal law.

FMLA leave is provided for you to recuperate or care for a family member; other employment during FMLA leave is prohibited.

This Summary discusses some of the major components of the County's Family and Medical Leave Policy. The complete policy is available for review in the Human Resources Dept.. Any questions regarding this Summary or the Family and Medical Leave Act should be directed to Human Resources.



### **Military Leave**

We provide military leave to eligible employees in compliance with federal and state laws, including the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Questions regarding the County's military leave policy should be directed to Human Resources.

You should notify your supervisor as soon as you become aware of a military service obligation.

#### ***Leave for Annual Training***

If you are a member of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard Reserves or the National Guard, you may be granted a leave of absence for the purpose of participating in Reserve or National Guard training programs.

You will be granted the minimum amount of leave needed to meet the minimum training requirements of your unit. You will not be required to use vacation time for military duty, but may elect to schedule your vacation to coincide with military duty in order to receive your full regular vacation pay in addition to any pay from the military. If you choose not to use vacation leave for your annual active-duty training, and your net military pay is less than your expected net County pay, you will receive payment equal to the difference so that you will not be penalized financial participation in military reserve duty. Payment by the County in this case shall be limited to annual active-duty training which occurs on scheduled working days up to a maximum of two weeks per year.

#### ***Leave for Military Service***

If you are a permanent employee who performs service in the uniformed services, you may be granted leaves of absence for the purpose of participating in military service. Under USERRA, "uniformed services" consists of the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard and their Reserve components, U.S. National Guard and Air National Guard, the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service and any other category of persons designated by the President of the United States in time of war or emergency.

You will be granted leave as required to complete the military service, for up to five years of cumulative uniformed service-related absences. Some special categories of military service are exempt from this five-year limit.

If your leave is less than 31 days, you must report back to work by the beginning of the first regularly scheduled work period after the end of the last calendar day of service, plus the time required to return home safely and have an eight hour rest period.

If your leave is between 31 and 180 days, you must apply for re-employment no later than 14 days after completion of uniformed service. Employees with leaves longer than 180 days must apply for re-employment no later than 90 days after completion of uniformed service.

## Time Away From Work

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The reporting or application deadlines are extended for persons who are hospitalized or convalescing because of an injury or illness incurred or aggravated during the performance of military service.

Returning service members will be reemployed in the job that they would have attained had they not been absent for military service, with the same seniority, status and pay, as well as other rights and benefits determined by seniority (escalator position). The County will make reasonable efforts (such as training or retraining) to enable returning service members to refresh or upgrade their skills to help them qualify for reemployment. However, certain exceptions apply and a service member may be placed in an alternative reemployment position if he or she cannot qualify for the escalator position.

Reemployed service members are entitled to the seniority and rights and benefits based on seniority that they would have attained with reasonable certainty had they remained continuously employed.

During a period of military service, you will be treated as if you are on a furlough or leave of absence. Consequently, during the period of service you are entitled to participate in any rights and benefits not based on seniority that are available to employees on comparable nonmilitary leaves of absence.

If your health plan coverage would terminate because of an absence due to military service, you may elect to continue the health plan coverage for up to 24 months after the absence begins or for the period of service (plus the time allowed to apply for reemployment), whichever period is shorter. You may be required to pay up to 102 percent of the full premium for the coverage. However, if the military service is for 30 or fewer days, you cannot be required to pay more than the normal employee share of any premium.

### ***Benefits during Leave for Military Service***

You will continue to accrue vacation and sick-leave credit during a military absence of two weeks or less. Additionally, the county will continue to pay its share of payment for life and health insurance while you are on a military leave of two weeks or less. During this time, you must make arrangements with the County Payroll Clerk to pay the amount that is regularly deducted from your paycheck while on paid status.

### Civil Leave

It is the position of the County that as a matter of good citizenship, you should serve when called in various situations, including:

- jury duty;
- to appear in court as a witness by subpoena;
- to serve as a witness before equal opportunity or civil rights commissions or bodies; and/or
- to perform emergency civilian duty in connection with national defense, emergency preparedness operations or county rural volunteer firefighting duty.

You will be paid your full salary and benefits for the time absent from work for the Civil Leave as outlined above, if you are scheduled to work during the time missed. You are required to surrender any payments received from the court for such services to the County Clerk with the exception of any amount paid for expenses due to travel (i.e. mileage payment).

You will be paid to appear in court when such appearance is considered a part of your official job duties such as a party in a civil law suit related to the performance your official duties with the County and to serve as an expert witness because of professional knowledge related to your position with the County.

As soon as a summons is received, you should notify your supervisor who will then notify the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk. A copy of the summons may be requested. You should report to work when not needed by the court unless distance or time makes it impractical.

### Voting

The County encourages you to fulfill your civic responsibilities by participating in elections. You are expected to find time to vote either before or after your regularly scheduled working hours. If you can provide evidence that you are unable to find two (2) consecutive hours to vote during your non-working hours, the County will grant you the necessary time to ensure you have two (2) consecutive hours to vote.

You must request time off to vote from your supervisor at least a week prior to the Election Day. Advance notice is required so that the necessary time off can be scheduled at the beginning or end of your work schedule, whichever provides the least disruption to the normal work schedule.

### Time Off for Domestic Violence

We will provide time off to victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault in order to obtain or attempt to obtain relief and to help ensure the health, safety, or welfare of you or your child(ren).

Victims of domestic violence or sexual assault may take up to 8 days off of work in a calendar year to:

## Time Away From Work

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- obtain or attempt to obtain relief, including, but not limited to, a temporary restraining order, restraining order or other injunctive relief to help ensure the health, safety or welfare of the victim or the victim's child(ren);
- seek medical attention for injuries caused by domestic violence or sexual assault;
- obtain services from a domestic violence shelter, domestic violence program or rape crisis center; and/or
- make court appearances in the aftermath of domestic violence or sexual assault.

You must request time off through this policy by providing advanced notice of the need for time off, unless it is not feasible for you to do so. Upon return from this time off, you must provide us with documentation to support the need for time off. Such documentation may take any of the following forms:

- a police report indicating that you were a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault;
- a court order protecting or separating you from the perpetrator, or other evidence from the court or prosecuting attorney that you have appeared in court; or
- documentation from a medical professional, domestic violence advocate or advocate for victims of sexual assault, health care provider or counselor that you were undergoing treatment for physical or mental injuries or abuse resulting from an act of domestic violence or sexual assault.

If an unscheduled absence occurs, no adverse action will be taken against you provided that you submit the above documentation within 48 hours after the beginning of the unscheduled absence.

Time off under this policy will be without pay except in cases where you elect to use any Vacation time during the absence.

We will maintain the confidentiality of the situation to the extent possible. Moreover, we will not retaliate against or tolerate retaliation against you for seeking or obtaining leave under this policy.

The County will also abide by any other federal, state or local laws regarding time off for victims of crimes.

## Lactation Accommodation

The County provides lactation accommodation for employees who are nursing mothers, in accordance with federal, state, and local law. Such accommodation includes reasonable break time and a private location for nursing mothers to express milk at appropriate intervals during each work day for one year following the birth of a child. If you are breastfeeding a child and need to express milk during the working day, you should confer with your supervisor or the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk, who will consult with necessary management to determine how best to achieve lactation accommodation for you while allowing you to accomplish the performance of your job. You may use your break and lunch time to express milk under this policy. Breaks to express milk should not last longer than 30 minutes. If you are a non-exempt employee and you need to take more than two breaks during the work day to express milk, you will need to use either unpaid time or available paid time off.

Milk should be placed in an appropriately and clearly labeled secure container provided by you and may be stored in County refrigerators.

## Workers' Compensation

We provide workers' compensation insurance for work-related accidents or illnesses. The insurance provides payment of medical expenses and partial salary.

To provide for payment of medical expenses and partial salary continuation in the event of a work-related accident or illness, you are covered by workers' compensation insurance. The amount of benefits payable and the duration of payment depend upon the nature of the injury or illness and state laws and regulations. In general, however, all medical expenses incurred in connection with a work-related injury or illness are paid in full as long as proper procedures are followed, and partial salary payments may be provided once the requisite state waiting period has been met.

If you are injured or become ill on the job, you are required to **immediately** report the injury to your supervisor or another member of management, who will in turn notify the Insurance Clerk. This will ensure that the County can assist in obtaining appropriate medical treatment. If you fail to follow this procedure, the appropriate workers' compensation report might not be filed. This error may consequently jeopardize your right to benefits in connection with the injury or illness.

## Bereavement

We endeavor to provide reasonable time off from work to manage the difficulties associated with the death of a family member. In the event of a death in your immediate family, you may have time needed up to five (5) working days per calendar year, with pay, to handle family affairs and attend the funeral.

"Immediate family" is defined as: spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, legal guardians, grandparents, brothers, sisters, fathers/mothers-in-law, son/daughter-in-law or dependent member of employees household. These "immediate family" definitions include blood and/or legal relations (i.e., "step", "half" or other like/kind relations as defined by federal or state law).

One day leave is granted to attend the funeral of other relations such as aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, brother/sister-in-law, first cousin or co-worker. For any leave requested, it is important to notify your supervisor as soon as possible. Documentation of the circumstances for Bereavement leave may be required. More bereavement time may be granted at the discretion of the supervisor.

A two-hour working leave MAY be granted for the death of a friend or acquaintance (with approval of Supervisor). A half-day leave will be granted for service as a pallbearer or member of a Color Guard.

# Compensation & Salary Administration

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We are proud to provide competitive compensation to you. This section will describe our policies and procedures regarding your compensation and overall salary administration.

### Employee Classifications

You are classified as either exempt or non-exempt for pay administration purposes, as determined by the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

The definitions of the worker classification categories can be summarized as follows:

**Exempt:** Management, supervisory, professional, sales or administrative employees, whose positions meet FLSA standards, are exempt from overtime pay requirements.

**Non-exempt:** Positions that do not meet the FLSA exemption standards and are paid overtime. These are generally non-supervisory, non-professional or non-administrative positions. Overtime work, however, is prohibited without specific supervisor authorization.

In addition, your status is defined as one of the following:

**Full-time:** Employees regularly scheduled to work 37 ½ hours or more per week. Full-time employees may be eligible for County benefits, provided they meet specific plan eligibility requirements. Please refer to the Benefits section of this Handbook or contact Human Resources for information regarding eligibility. Full-time status for County purposes should not be construed as meeting the requirements of full-time status for any specific benefit plan.

**Part-time:** Employees regularly scheduled to work less than 37 ½ hours per week. Part-time employees may not be eligible for all County benefit programs offered. You will be informed at Orientation as to which, if any, programs are available to part-time staff. Please contact Human Resources with any questions regarding your status and program eligibility.

**Temporary/Seasonal:** At-will employees who are temporarily hired for a pre-established, limited period of six (6) months or less, usually during peak workloads or for Vacation relief. Such workers may or may not be on the County's payroll. These workers are notified of the temporary nature of their work assignments, although they may work a full-time or part-time schedule. Temporary workers are not eligible for County benefits and time spent as a temporary employee will not be credited to service, and accrual of benefits will not be retroactive to include time in temporary status.

**Elected Official:** County Clerk, Commissioners, Register of Deeds, Treasurer, Sheriff, and County Attorney are elected officials in this County. They are responsible to the electorate of the county, state statutory requirements, and fiscally responsible to the Board of County Commissioners. They do not earn or report any forms of leave time but are eligible for other benefits offered to County employees.

**Appointed Official:** Certain officials are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to perform statutory or other duties defined by resolution. They are responsible to the Board of County Commissioners and are employees of the County government. Appointed officials are eligible for the same benefits as elected officials.

### Work Hours

Normal business hours for most departments are 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Other department schedules are as follows:

<b>Department</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Days</b>
Sheriff's Department	Three 8 hour shifts	M-Su
Dispatch	12 hour shifts	M-Su
EMS	24 hour shift	M-Su
Road and Bridge	7am – 4pm	M-F
Noxious Weed	7am – 4pm	M-F
Treasurer's Office	8:30 to 4:30	M-F

We understand that the arrival and departure times for various employees and departments may vary to allow for flex-time scheduling and to accommodate the needs of our business. Such modifications will be written in departmental regulations and will take precedence over the above schedule. Please keep in mind that you are not to conduct any work-related duties before or after normal operation hours without prior notice by or approval from your supervisor in accordance with departmental regulations.

### Paid Breaks

We recognize that you work better and enjoy your work more when you are rested and refreshed. Non-exempt employees are generally provided two paid 15-minute rest breaks (one in the morning; one in the afternoon). Part-time employees working a minimum four-hour work day will be permitted to take one 15-minute break. If you are a non-exempt employee taking a break, you are encouraged to leave your workstation during your paid break in order to achieve the rest and refreshment the break is designed to give. You should coordinate break times with your supervisor and co-workers to maintain adequate coverage at all times.

In the unlikely event of an emergency or unusual condition, your supervisor may ask you to change or postpone your break in order to finish a particular project. If your workload does not allow time for a rest break on a particular day, no extra compensation or consideration is owed by the County.

You cannot use your Paid Break to account for your late arrival or early departure or to cover time off for other purposes. In addition, you cannot extend your Unpaid Meal Period by tacking your Paid Break onto it, and vice versa. For example, rest breaks may not be accumulated to extend a meal period and rest breaks may not be combined to allow one twenty-minute long break. You are also not allowed to save unused breaks for extra paid time off.

Note that if you are taking breaks in excess of this policy, such as for smoking, you could be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.



### Unpaid Meal Breaks

Meal periods are important to County productivity and your health. In general, you will receive an unpaid meal break of 60 minutes. If you are a non-exempt employee, you are required to take an unpaid meal/rest period of at least one-half (½) hour on each full day worked, in accordance with applicable laws and County policy. Meal breaks are generally taken around the noon hour; however, will be flexible and scheduled by the supervisor according to a staggered schedule to allow for appropriate staffing throughout the noon hour. Check your department's supplemental regulations for details.

If you are a non-exempt employee, you should not perform any work while on your meal break, and you must clock out for meal periods. Supervisors should not request or permit a non-exempt employee to work during meal periods.

You cannot extend your Unpaid Meal Period by tacking your Paid Break onto it, and vice versa.

### Salary Administration

The County's salary and wage schedule is comprised of ranges relating to the requirements of the position, not the qualifications, performance or longevity of the employee. Salary and wage schedules are published by the Human Resource Dept./Payroll Clerk separately and are reviewed and/or revised annually by the County Commissioners.

The County pays its full-time regular and part-time regular employees monthly on the last working day of the month unless those days fall on a Sunday or bank holiday. In that case, the payday will normally be the last day of the pay period that is a Friday. For purposes of salary administration, the workweek begins and ends at midnight Sunday of each week unless otherwise identified in standard procedures and documented in employment records.

If you suspect an error in your pay, you should discuss the problem with your supervisor, or the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk.

### Time Records

If you are an employee, regardless of status other than Elected Officials, you are required to clock in and out on the time clock(s) provided. It is your responsibility to ensure that your time is recorded in a precise manner, indicating actual time worked and all time away from work such as for meals or personal reasons other than paid breaks (but not more than 10 minutes before your shift begins or after your shift ends, unless approved and/or requested by your supervisor. Any altering, falsification or tampering with time records may result in disciplinary action up to or including termination of employment. Your supervisor will approve your time record. Do not alter another person's record, or influence anyone else to alter your record for you. In the event of an error in recording your time,

please report the matter to your supervisor immediately. Supervisory employees are to review and certify time records prior to submission to payroll.

### **Overtime**

If we have classified your position as non-exempt, you are eligible for overtime pay, and will be paid one and one-half times your hourly rate for any hours actually worked in excess of 40 hours per workweek. For overtime pay purposes, partial hours worked will be rounded to the nearest half-hour. This time may be compensated by compensatory time off at a future date or payment on the employee's next paycheck. Vacation, Sick Time, and other absences, whether paid or not, do not count in the calculation of overtime.

While in most cases it is not our intention that overtime is a regular part of your work schedule, if you are a non-exempt employee, your job will require at least occasional overtime, and you are expected to work overtime as requested by your supervisor. Supervisors will attempt to provide reasonable notice when the need for overtime work arises; however, advance notice may not always be possible. Nonetheless, if you are a non-exempt employee, you may not work overtime without prior authorization from your supervisor.

Overtime should only be assigned in those situations where the supervisor in charge is convinced that the work is essential to meet established schedules or deadlines. If you are a non-exempt employee, you are responsible for the accurate reporting of overtime hours and for ensuring that any overtime worked is pre-approved by your supervisor.

### **Compensatory Time**

If you are required or allowed to work overtime, you and your supervisor must stipulate whether the overtime compensation will be paid as compensatory time off or cash payment. The staffing needs and budget constraints of the department may determine which type of compensation will be used.

You may accrue up to one week (40 hours) compensatory time. Any compensatory time accrued over one week (40 hours) must be used within the same pay period of accrual. If, for any reason, you are unable to use the compensatory time accrued beyond 80 hours, you will be compensated in money on the next pay date.

Supervisor shall be responsible for verifying that the employee has a signed "Compensatory Time-Off Agreement" in their employee file prior to granting compensatory time.

### **On-Call Status and Pay**

The County may require an employee to be on stand-by. Stand-by means a period of time outside the employee's regularly scheduled work hours, during which the employee is required, at the

County's direction, to remain available to the County within a specified response time. An employee on stand-by shall remain available at the County's direction for recall to perform necessary work. Stand-by assignments shall be limited to work situations where a probability for emergency recall of employees exists.

Employees on stand-by who are called in to work shall be compensated for actual hours worked at the appropriate rate of pay. They generally shall not be paid compensation for stand-by time.

An employee on stand-by as defined above who is not available when called and who does not present reasonable justification for failure to report when called, shall be subject to discipline.

A County employee shall not consume alcohol or be under the influence of mind-altering drugs while on a stand-by status.

### **Call Back Pay**

Call-back pay is earnings received when you are called back to work at the last minute to perform duties. Scheduled work or scheduled overtime does not qualify as call back pay. All call-backs must be implemented by a manager.

Call-back work (after your normal duty hours) qualifies you for overtime in accordance with the provisions outlined in the "Overtime" section with the exception that you shall receive a minimum payment of at least two (2) hours. For example, if you are called back into work for less than 2 hours, you will receive two (2) hours worth of pay.

Please remember that clocking in is mandatory. If it is an emergency and there is no time to clock in, you are required to send an email to you manager to inform them of the hours you worked, and why you were unable to clock in.

### **Direct Deposit**

We strongly encourage salary payments via direct deposit because of its security and convenience. Your paycheck can be directly deposited into most designated checking and/or savings account(s) anywhere in the United States.

Approximately fifteen (15) business days are required for banking systems to verify the account information needed to activate the direct deposit function.

Please note that the County reserves the right to reverse deposits that have been made to an individual's account in error.

### Payroll Deductions

In accordance with federal, state and local laws, the County is required to take certain mandatory deductions from your pay. The compulsory deductions from each paycheck include:

- federal income tax
- state income tax
- federal social security tax
- local income tax
- Medicare tax
- judicially mandated deductions

The amounts of deductions for taxes are determined from tables prepared by the Internal Revenue Service and other taxing authorities based on your salary and the information you have provided on a W-4 form and/or state withholding form where applicable. If the amount being withheld is not sufficient to cover income-tax liability, you may change deductions or furnish written authorization to withhold a larger amount.

In addition to the deductions that are required by law for federal, state and local tax withholdings, the County provides automatic payroll deduction for most benefit programs. Voluntary deductions may include the following:

- medical insurance
- supplemental insurance
- Retirement Plan

To make adjustments to payroll deductions, colleagues should contact the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk.

### Errors in Pay

Every effort is made to avoid errors in your paycheck. If you believe an error has been made, tell your supervisor immediately. He or she will take the necessary steps to research the problem and to assure that any necessary correction is made properly and promptly.

If you believe that an improper deduction has been made to your salary, you should immediately report this information to the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk.

Reports of improper deductions will be promptly investigated. If it is determined that an improper deduction has occurred, you will be promptly reimbursed for any improper deduction made.

### **Business Expenses**

Business expenses including all usual and reasonable travel, entertainment and other expenses incurred in connection with County business must be approved in advance. It must be emphasized that these expenses should be on a fair, reasonable and realistic manner consistent with the County's standards.

All business expenses must be approved in writing by your supervisor and the County Clerk. Employees with reimbursable expenses must submit approved expense reports, along with dated receipts, to your supervisor at the end of the month in which the expenses were incurred. The appropriate forms may be obtained from the County Clerk's Office.

We strive to distribute reimbursement checks in a timely manner after submission of an approved expense report. Expense policies are set in accordance with applicable law, and, accordingly, expense reimbursements are not considered compensation in any way.

Specific details of business expense process will be outlined by the County's Business Reimbursement Policy

### **Status Changes**

Please notify the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk as soon as possible when changes occur in your personal status, such as change of address or telephone number, dependent status, insurance beneficiaries, emergency contact or other relevant information. This information is critical in order to properly administer your benefits.

# Employment Relationship

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We strive to maintain a quality employer-employee relationship. This section will describe some of the policies we've put in place to foster this relationship.

### **At-Will Employment**

The employment relationship is based on the mutual consent of you and the County. Accordingly, at any time, either you or the County may terminate the employment relationship at-will, with or without cause or advance notice. There is no implied promise that employment will continue for a set period of time, or that your employment will be terminated only under particular circumstances.

### **Background Checks and Drug Testing**

We perform background checks and drug testing on all employees. We abide by the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act and applicable state laws during this process. Additionally, a background check may be performed at any time during an individual's employment with the County. It is our policy to verify the accuracy of information from a variety of sources which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- References & Prior Employment
- Credit History
- Motor Vehicle Records
- Most Recent Salary
- Professional Licenses
- Criminal History
- Education
- Social Security Number
- Civil Court Records

False statements or omissions in response to questions and/or during interviews, or false statements or omissions made on employment applications, in resumes or on any other documents or materials submitted as part of the employment process may be grounds for termination of employment.

### **Immigration Reform and Control Act**

The Immigration Reform and Control Act ("IRCA") prohibits knowingly employing aliens who are not legally authorized to work in the United States or knowingly employing legal non-immigrants whose classification does not permit employment in this country. IRCA requires every employer to obtain written certification from all new employees stating that they are authorized by law to be employed in the United States. The County must also independently verify your identity and employment eligibility within three days of your hire date. Every new employee must complete a Form I-9 issued by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services attesting to your legal status. Verifying your legal status to work in the United States requires proof of both the individual's identity and authorization to work.

### Personal Appearance/Presentation

You represent the County; for this reason, your appearance must be appropriate for your work situation. Appropriate and responsible dress and grooming reflect pride not only in ourselves, but also in the County. This should always be kept in mind while performing on behalf of the County.

Employees are expected at all times to present a professional, businesslike image to customers, prospects and the public. Acceptable personal appearance, like proper maintenance of work areas, is an on-going requirement of employment with the County. Radical departures from conventional dress or personal grooming and hygiene standards are not permitted.

Office workers and any employees who have regular contact with the public must comply with the following personal appearance standards:

- You are expected to dress in a manner that is normally acceptable in similar business establishments. Specifically, clothing that does not fit properly, is too revealing, is inconsistent with safety standards or represents extremes in dress or is otherwise deemed inappropriate for the position will not be allowed. “Business casual” dress is permitted; however, employees are still expected to present a neat appearance and are not permitted to wear ripped, disheveled or suggestive clothing. Clothing must be neat and clean. Please keep in mind that you represent an image that is important to the County. Your cooperation is appreciated.
- Other examples of inappropriate dress include, but are not limited to, jeans, athletic clothing, shorts, novelty buttons, baseball hats, and similar items of casual attire that do not present a businesslike appearance.
- Hair should be clean, combed and neatly trimmed or arranged. Shaggy, unkempt hair is not permissible regardless of length.
- Sideburns, moustaches and beards should be neatly trimmed.
- Tattoos and body piercings (other than earrings) should not be visible.

If you do not regularly meet the public, you should follow basic requirements of safety and comfort but should still be as neat and businesslike as working conditions permit.

You may be required to meet special dress, grooming and hygiene standards, such as wearing uniforms, depending on the nature of your job. It is your responsibility to comply with specific departmental dress regulations.

At its discretion, the County may allow you to dress in a more casual fashion than is normally required. On these occasions, you are still expected to present a neat appearance and are not permitted to wear ripped, disheveled or suggestive clothing, athletic wear or similarly inappropriate clothing.

If you do not meet the standards of this policy, you will be required to take corrective action, which may include leaving the premises. Non-exempt employees will not be compensated for any work time missed because of failure to comply with this policy. Violations of this policy also may result in disciplinary action. This policy is not intended to apply to Law Enforcement personnel working in undercover operations.



### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Reliability and dependability are some of the most important assets you can provide as an employee. Dependability, attendance, punctuality, and a commitment to do a good job are essential to our mutual success. It is your responsibility to make necessary arrangements to ensure you are ready to begin work at the start of your scheduled work day and remain at work throughout the scheduled period. While occasional absenteeism or tardiness may be unavoidable, excessive absenteeism or tardiness may result in disciplinary action up to or including termination of employment. Any problem related to attendance should be discussed with your supervisor, preferably in advance.

Please note that absent other arrangements, failure to arrive for work without informing your immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk for three (3) consecutive days may be considered as though you have voluntarily resigned.

### **Public Relations**

Good relationships with our vendors, suppliers and the general public are clearly essential for our continued success. The public's impression of the County is greatly formed by the people who serve them. In a sense, regardless of your position, you are a County ambassador. The more goodwill you promote, the more the public will respect and appreciate you, the County and our products and services. Regardless of the nature of the contact, you are encouraged to be courteous, pleasant, respectful and helpful at all times.

### County Property

You are expected to exercise due care in your use of County property and to use such property only for authorized purposes. Negligence in the care and use of County property may be considered cause for discipline up to and including termination.

Unauthorized removal of County property from the premises or its conversion to personal use will be considered cause for discipline up to and including termination and/or legal prosecution.

You are expected to take proper care of any equipment, tools, vehicles, and any other property assigned to you. It is important that any damaged, broken, lost or stolen property be immediately reported to your supervisor who will notify the County Clerk's Office for submission to insurance so that repairs or any other necessary action may be taken. The County property may not be removed from the premises without management approval.

For this purpose, "County property" means all property that is owned, leased, rented, or has been otherwise paid for or furnished by the County. Examples include:

- offices and contents, such as desks, files (electronic/paper), art work, credenzas and other furniture;
- computers, computer hardware and software, cellular telephones, the contents of electronic storage and memory devices and the devices themselves;
- books, manuals, procedures, standards, guides and other documents relating to the County, its clients and employees, or the manner in which it conducts its business;
- automobiles owned or leased by the County; and/or
- the spaces, places or things used to conduct business or business-related activities, such as meetings or entertaining, or any other facilities including halls, dining rooms, planes and training venues.

It is one of your primary duties to safeguard the County's property. For example, any theft or attempted theft should be reported to a supervisor without delay. Suspicious circumstances or behavior should always be reported. Information of this type is regarded as strictly confidential to the extent possible, (If there is an investigation or criminal charges, this information may be divulged as necessary), and will never be treated as trivial.

If you are ever suspected of theft while on the County premises you will be given every opportunity to establish your innocence. This will include your right to reveal the contents of your pockets or bag, or briefcase and vehicle on the County premises to a supervisor in the presence of a witness. You are expected to participate in searches and investigations when requested. The County reserves the right to request the assistance of the Police whenever it sees fit to do so.

### **County Phones**

County telephones are to be used for business purposes in serving the interests of our customers and in the course of normal, everyday County operations. Please answer all calls promptly and courteously. On occasion, personal calls may be necessary, but we ask your cooperation in limiting them to emergencies or essential personal business and in keeping them brief. Long-distance telephone calls made for personal reasons that are charged to the County account are expected to be reported to the Accounts Payable Clerk and reimbursed to the County by the Employee. Employees found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Employment Postings**

Various federal and state laws require employers to display certain posters for the benefit of present and prospective employees in order to inform you of key provisions pertaining to these laws. These posters are to be displayed in the work location where they can be readily observed in the course of your activities. Please note the County bulletin boards are provided for County communication and may not be used by employees without the approval of the Human Resource Manager.

The County has established this grievance procedure in an effort to afford all employees a means of obtaining further consideration of problems when they remain unsolved at the supervisory level and to establish policies and procedures that provide for timely resolution of grievances.

#### ***Scope***

This policy applies to all regular full-time and part-time employees in all departments within the County, other than elected officials.

#### ***Definition***

A grievance is the dissatisfaction an employee feels when he/she has been treated unfairly or believes a mistake has been made in the administration of a rule, plan, policy, or condition of employment.

### *Procedure*

1. Within seven (7) calendar days of the occurrence of the event causing the grievance, the employee must complete section I of the Employee Grievance Form and submit it to their immediate supervisor.
2. The immediate supervisor shall attempt to resolve the grievance within five (5) business days after it is presented, shall complete Section II of the Employee Grievance Form, and return to the employee.

**Note:** In the event that the grievance involves discrimination or retaliation by the immediate supervisor OR termination, demotion or suspension without pay, the employee may present the grievance directly to the proper elected official as shown in the chart below.

3. If the employee is not satisfied with the solution of the supervisor, the employee shall submit the written grievance to the elected official overseeing the employee's department, within 12 business days of the event causing the grievance, as shown in the following chart:

Department	Elected Official
Appraiser	County Commissioners
Clerk	County Clerk
District Court	County Attorney
Emergency Management	County Commissioners
EMS	County Commissioners
Fire	County Commissioners
Health	County Commissioners
Noxious Weed	County Commissioners
Register of Deeds	Register of Deeds
Road and Bridge	County Commissioners
Sheriff Dept.	Sheriff
Treasurer	Treasurer

4. Within five (5) business days of the filing of the grievance, the Elected Official will select a three-member Grievance Panel. In no case will more than one member of the Panel be from any one department.
5. Within five (5) business days of appointment, this Panel will initially convene and proceed to investigate the grievance. The Panel may hear arguments from principal parties, collect additional statements when required and will prepare a written recommendation.
6. The Panel will present the written recommendation to the proper Elected Official within 15 business days of appointment, subject to reasonable extensions as determined by the Elected Official. The documentation and recommendation of the Grievance Panel will be reviewed by the Elected Official, who shall make a final decision which shall then be provided to the employee and the supervisor.

No prejudicial, discriminatory, or other unfavorable action may be taken at any time against any member of a Grievance Panel for participation or vote in regard to his/her duties on the Panel.

No prejudicial, discriminatory, or other unfavorable action may be taken at any time against the employee for utilizing the grievance procedure outlined herein.

## Housekeeping

Cleanliness is essential for the safety and comfort of all employees and guests. Therefore, you are expected to keep our County facilities and property clean and in good working order at all times. You should notify your supervisor if any damage occurs to County property, such as chairs, windows, carpeting, furniture and equipment, so that repairs or replacement can take place.

A neat and orderly environment increases efficiency and helps to make your day more pleasant. By observing the following simple rules of housekeeping, we can all contribute to a pleasant place to work:

- Keep your work area neat and orderly.
- When you leave work for the day, clear your desk of unnecessary papers.
- After using the conference rooms, remove all working materials, glasses, etc. Also, put all chairs back where they belong.
- After using the break areas, ensure the areas are neat and clean, wash dirty dishes and make sure any unnecessary debris is thrown away.
- For those of us with office space, use your filing cabinets and desk drawers to store your working materials. Do not let them accumulate on the floor.
- You are expected to exercise care in handling of all types of food to avoid damage to carpet, furnishings and/or equipment.

### **Media Relations**

You may not grant permission or provide media interviews (whether newspaper, magazine or television network/station) regarding official County business without prior approval from the County Attorney. Media requests for written material are to be approved by the County Attorney prior to dissemination to any outside source. This ensures that accurate information will be given for those matters which are appropriate for public knowledge.

### **Parking**

The County provides sufficient designated employee parking. Please refrain from parking your vehicles in spaces designated as visitor parking. These parking spots are reserved for visitors to our facilities and in accordance with our public relations policy, we endeavor to provide the public a pleasant experience when visiting our offices. Please use courtesy and common sense to assist in avoiding accidents, injuries or damage to vehicles. If you should damage another car while in the parking lot please report the incident to your supervisor. The County assumes no liability for loss, theft or damage of vehicles on County property.

### **Personnel Records and Privacy in Employment**

Over the course of your employment, there will be times when you provide confidential information about yourself for payroll, insurance and benefit purposes. Please be assured that we regard this information as confidential. Access to any personnel file is restricted to those who have proper authorization and a legitimate business reason, unless otherwise required by law or legal process. All medical information will be kept apart from the general personnel file as a separate confidential medical record which will be made available under limited conditions as specified by law. Information in this medical file will not be released to any third party, including your personal physician, without your explicit written approval.

The County generally does not provide employment references, except to verify dates of employment, job title, and salary (if specifically authorized by the employee or former employee). All requests for references and verifications of employment must be directed to the Human Resources Manager. The County requires that you give written consent in advance before we will verify salary information, job chronology and/or performance information.

Requests for employee information received from outside the County, including requests for references on current or former employees, must be directed to Human Resources. Supervisors and other employees are prohibited from providing personal or employment references on current or former employees.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***Examination of an Employee's Personnel File***

Inspection of an employee's personnel file may be accomplished at reasonable times during office hours under the following conditions:

Under Kansas law, you do not have the legal right to view the contents of your personnel file. Any request to view your personnel file will be at the discretion of the County. You may request to inspect your personnel file and may do so in the presence of the supervisor or Human Resources Department/Payroll Clerk if the request is approved. You are NOT allowed to remove, alter, or copy the contents of the file.

Should a supervisor outside of your chain-of-command need access to your personnel file, (i.e., in the case of a hiring situation) you must first give written approval.

The County will cooperate with federal, state, and local government agencies investigating an employee if the investigators furnish proper identification and proof of legal authority to investigate. The supervisor or Human Resources Department/Payroll Clerk may permit a government investigator to review a personnel file on County premises, but the investigator will not be allowed to remove or reproduce this information without consent.

In the event that your file is subpoenaed, the County will provide all information it is legally required to provide in the subpoena.

### **Employment of Relatives and Significant Others**

We are committed to maintaining a work environment free from favoritism and conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived. We permit the employment of qualified relatives of employees as long as such employment does not, in the opinion of the County, create actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Additionally, relatives of current County employees may not be hired, promoted or transferred into positions where:

- they will be working directly for a relative;
- they will be directly supervising a relative;
- an inherent conflict of interest exists;
- a relative will occupy a position in the same line of authority within the organization; and/or
- a relative will have the authority to affect, review and/or approve decisions regarding the individual's employment.

For purposes of this policy, "relative" is defined as a spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, first cousin, or corresponding in-law or "step" relation. This policy also applies to individuals who are residing together as if they had one of these relationships. Employees who marry or enter into a domestic partnership arrangement while employed are treated in accordance with these guidelines.

In addition, the County recognizes that at times, an employee and your "close friend," or "significant other" may be assigned to positions that create a co-worker or supervisor/subordinate relationship. We will, at our discretion, exercise business judgment with respect to the placement of employees in these situations in order to avoid the creation of a conflict or the appearance of a conflict of interest, avoid favoritism or the appearance of favoritism and decrease the likelihood of harassment in the workplace.

We will review any existing situations that fall under this policy as of the date of this Handbook on a case-by-case basis, and take action as we deem appropriate.



### **Consensual Relationships**

The County also reserves the right to address issues arising out of a consensual dating relationship that may create a potential conflict of interest. If a relationship is established during the course of employment which involves a direct supervisory relationship, or other potentially harmful conflict including that with a vendor, action will be taken. This conflict includes any actions that adversely affect either employee's work performance, objectivity, or professionalism. It is the responsibility of those involved to disclose the relationship to the County Attorney. The individuals concerned will be given the opportunity to decide who is to be transferred to another available position, or if no such position exists, to decide which employee will leave the employment of the County. If the decision is not made within thirty (30) calendar days, Management will decide what action is to be taken.

### **Performance**

You are expected to meet the County's standards of work performance. Work performance encompasses many factors, including attendance, punctuality, personal conduct, attitude, job proficiency and general compliance with the County's policies and procedures. If you do not meet these standards, the County may, under appropriate circumstances, take corrective action up to or including separation of services. The intent of corrective action is to formally document performance problems while providing you with a reasonable time frame within which to improve performance. This process is designed to encourage development by providing you with guidance in areas that need improvement, such as poor work performance, attendance problems, personal conduct, and general compliance with the County's policies and procedures. Corrective action may not be applied in every situation. Please see the Disciplinary policy for further information.

### **Performance Evaluations**

The County recognizes that you are critical to the success of the organization. It is our desire to provide performance evaluations and ongoing feedback in a manner that is meaningful to you and will assist you in your development within the County. We value feedback, and you are encouraged to discuss any issues, concerns or ideas you have at any time. Everyone has the opportunity to discuss performance issues with their supervisors.

To that end, the County has established a performance-based evaluation system which provides for an objective, consistent and uniform method of measuring on-the-job performance that applies to all County employees. Supervisors will conduct performance evaluations on an annual basis.

If you are new to your position, you will receive a review after the first six-months of employment in that position. This also applies to current employees who take a new position with the County. This review will provide an opportunity for the supervisor to educate you on the philosophy of the County and address any lack of skills that have been shown.

### ***Objectives of Performance Reviews***

- Assist supervisory personnel in making systematic and objective evaluations of work performance, which can be especially useful in determining certain personnel actions.
- Provide a basis for determining your job training needs.
- Give you a detailed evaluation of your performance and provide you with the information needed to assist in improving or sustaining your performance.

### ***Guidelines***

- The evaluation shall be completed using a standardized form. Supervisors may obtain the appropriate form from Human Resources/Payroll Clerk.
- The evaluation shall be based on job performance and employee qualifications, which shall, in turn, be based upon each position's job description and work standards.
- Other factors, such as personal habits, outside activities, etc., shall not be considered if they are not directly related to the job.
- The reviews and evaluation should give you a clear picture of where you stand in terms of performance standards and provide an opportunity for you to express disagreement with any points made.
- You should also be encouraged to seek and receive guidance in improving performance.
- All supervisors are required to share the evaluation with you within two weeks of the evaluation performed.
- You shall have the right to make any written comments concerning the evaluation.

Informal performance evaluations may be conducted at such times as may be necessary throughout the year. This process is intended to provide valuable feedback to allow you to continue to grow and develop in your position with the County and allows you a forum in which to discuss with your supervisor your accomplishments, performance standards, opportunities for improvement, and the development of goals. You will be allowed to provide comments and input into this process as well. Performance counseling is an ongoing process over the course of employment with the County. Supervisors are expected to maintain a continuous dialogue with you regarding your performance, covering both positive and negative factors. The completed form will become a part of your official personnel file. A change in compensation may or may not be a part of this process. Adjustments to salary are at the discretion of the County.

### Performance Standards

We are each responsible for performing our duties adequately and properly. Personnel policies and procedures must be followed. You are expected to respect your coworkers and should not behave in a manner that obstructs or hinders other employees from completing their duties. The County expects that employees will operate in a manner that is safe for themselves, their coworkers the general public we serve, as well as follow the County's safety procedures at all times.

The County expects all employees to uphold the County's mission, as well as certain standards of conduct within the County and in their dealings with customers and the general public. In order to maintain these principles, you should:

- Meet your commitments
- Be honest in all business relationships
- Exercise common sense
- Utilize sound judgment
- Be imaginative in striving for improvement
- Gain the respect of the public and co-workers
- Be accountable for your own work
- Work with your co-workers and supervisor to make constructive suggestions for change
- Strive to bring out the best in others
- Use tact and courtesy in your dealings with coworkers, the public and third parties
- Broaden your outlook – take responsibility for your own development
- Develop your ability to communicate, both written and verbal

### Discipline

We hold ourselves to a high standard of quality where the rules and authority figures simply assure that quality is maintained. By accepting employment with us, you have a responsibility to the County and to your fellow employees to adhere to certain rules of behavior and conduct. It is our hope that your employment with the County will be successful; however, work related problems do develop occasionally. You are expected to comply with all of the rules, standards, policies and procedures established by the County. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action. Whenever possible, we attempt to counsel you regarding these problems and identify a time period in which the problems can be corrected. However, if the situation cannot be successfully resolved in the established time frame, appropriate discipline, including separation of services, demotion or suspension may be necessary. At the discretion of management, some situations are deemed so serious that they may require the elimination of any step(s) or immediate separation of services. In general, the following procedures will be followed with regard to discipline:

- Verbal reprimand, with documentation to your personnel file
- Written reprimand, with a copy to your personnel file
- Suspension, with or without pay
- Separation of services

## Employment Relationship

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To decide on the appropriate course of action, the County may consider:

- The seriousness of the violation
- Your employment record
- Your ability to correct the conduct
- Actions the County has taken for similar conduct by other employees
- How your actions affect customers/clients/the public

### ***Misconduct***

Conduct, actions or performance violations or conflicts with the County's policies may result in immediate separation of employment without warning. The following are some examples, although not an exhaustive listing, of grounds for immediate dismissal:

- Insubordination
- Gross negligence
- Theft, fraud or sabotage
- Breach of trust or dishonesty
- Falsification of county records
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Excessive tardiness or absenteeism
- Sexual or other forms of harassment
- Violation of the substance abuse policy
- Making false statements on a job application
- Willful violation of an established policy or rule
- Failure to carry out reasonable job assignments
- Fighting or serious breach of acceptable behavior
- Absence from work without notice or leave for three (3) consecutive working days
- Leaving the county location prior to scheduled quitting time without authorization
- Violation of the county's conflict of interest, non-disclosure or confidentiality policy
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of the county or customer property
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms in the workplace

### **Separation of Services**

Our employment relationship is entered into by mutual consent and for mutual benefit. Either you or the County may terminate the employment relationship at any time. You are thus free to resign for any reason you feel is appropriate, just as the County may decide your services are no longer needed. When you decide to leave the County for any reason, we encourage you to notify your supervisor with a dated and signed written statement at least two (2) weeks prior (excluding Vacation and Sick Leave) to your planned departure date to help ensure a smooth transition; however, the County reserves the right to release an employee prior to the (2) two week period depending on the circumstance. All County property must be returned to the County at the time of termination, including computer equipment, keys, uniform, cellular telephones, etc. You will be responsible for lost or damaged property not returned in good working order, notwithstanding normal wear and tear.

### **Exit Interviews**

If circumstances permit, Human Resources/County Commissioners would like to arrange an exit interview before you leave the County. This interview will cover the reasons for separation, how benefits will be affected, outstanding payments to the County, if any, and other relevant matters. Human Resources/County Commissioners will also ask about your career with the County and for your suggestions regarding how to improve the work environment.

# Safety & Security

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We are interested in your welfare and believe the basis for successful safety is the constant cooperation from you by complying with the following policies.

### Safety and Security

The County is interested in your welfare and believes the basis for successful safety is the constant cooperation and input from you. Your attention to hazards in your daily work, the use of safe working practices, and the reporting of any unsafe conditions will serve the mutual best interest of you and the County. We hope to minimize the health and safety risks within the workplace. Every effort is made to comply with relevant federal and state occupational health and safety laws. You should report any unsafe conditions or behaviors encountered in the workplace to your supervisor immediately. Safety and security are integral to your position at the County. You are responsible for making sure the facilities and your work area are secure. If you are provided with facility keys or access cards, you must make certain the facility is secure when you are the last to leave. This includes, but is not limited to, turning off appropriate lights, closing and locking all doors and windows and setting the security alarm. See your supervisor when safety directions and assistance are needed and report any potential security risks to your supervisor.

### Workplace Injuries

If you are injured on the job, regardless of how minor, you must **immediately** report such incidents to your supervisor as required under workers' compensation laws. Proper medical care will be arranged for you and any injury report forms will be completed. Due to the important role that reporting injuries plays in the County's overall safety program, failure to report injuries in a timely manner may result in disciplinary action.

Neither the County nor the workers' compensation insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during your voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by the County.

### Searches and Investigations

For your own protection, and the protection of the County, the County reserves the right to conduct internal investigations pertaining to security, auditing, work-related matters, your protection, or retrieval of the County property when there is a legitimate business reason to do so. The County may search the County's office and equipment, all emails and computer records, all voice mails and telephone records, employee work areas, personal belongings, and vehicles operated on County business. As a reminder, you should not have any expectation of privacy when using any of the County's equipment or facilities.

Should a search be necessary, an effort will be made to conduct it in an unobtrusive manner and in your presence whenever possible. You are expected to cooperate and assist with the investigation if requested and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

### **Personal Property**

While keys may be issued for your desk, locker, files or workstation for the purpose of securing County records, we cannot assure the security of your personal property. The County reserves the right to search any personal property on County premises when there is a legitimate business reason to do so. Any personal items brought on premises deemed inappropriate by the County will be removed without notice. As always, please be considerate of the County's image as well as your image with customers and co-workers.

We suggest that you give serious consideration before bringing valuables into the County. Any theft should be reported to your supervisor immediately and we will attempt to recover the lost items; however, the County assumes no liability for loss, theft or damage of personal items.



# Technologies

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The use of technology is vital to our success. This section will describe your responsibilities while using this technology.

### Information Technology Systems

This policy applies to the use of all Information Technology Systems at the County Information Technology Systems include, but are not limited to, all computer systems, the Internet, electronic mail ("email") and voice mail systems. the County reserves the right to periodically amend or revise this policy with or without prior notice. All Information Technology Systems and any documents or messages created or contained within the Systems are the property of the County. This policy is adopted to ensure that all Information Technology Systems are properly used and that you understand the rules which apply to any use of the Information Technology Systems.

The following rules and conditions apply to all users of our Information Technology Systems:

- The Information Technology Systems are to be used for business purposes only. Limited or occasional personal use of these resources is acceptable, but that usage should in no way affect your productivity; however, engaging in private or personal business activities, including use of instant messaging and chat rooms, maintaining, organizing, or participating in non-work-related Web logs ("blogs"), Web journals, "chat rooms", or private/personal/instant messaging is expressly prohibited. This includes representing yourself as an employee of the County and/or representing the views or opinions of the County in any manner not expressly required as a part of your position.
- All communications should be composed and drafted in a way that would be suitable for communication in a public setting. Employees should be mindful that anything created on the Information Technology Systems is maintained for certain periods of time and consequently may later be retrieved and reviewed by others, including people outside of the County.
- All communications are subject to the County's employment guidelines. No harassing, embarrassing, indecent, profane, abusive, obscene, intimidating, discriminatory or other offensive language or material may be sent through the Internet, by email, voice mail or other form of electronic communication or otherwise displayed on or stored in the County's Information Technology Systems. Employees encountering or receiving such material should immediately report the incident to their supervisor.
- You should not have an expectation of privacy in anything created, sent or received on any of the Information Technology Systems. All messages and documents generated on the Information Technology Systems are to be considered County records. The County reserves the right to monitor, review, access, delete and/or disclose all messages sent over its Internet, email or voice mail systems or any documents contained on the County's computer systems.
- All persons or entities accessing or using the County's Information Technology Systems must use prudent procedures to prevent computer viruses and to ensure adequate security and controls for all Information Technology Systems.
- All persons or entities accessing or using the County's Information Technology Systems must comply with all software licenses, copyrights and all laws governing intellectual property.

Violation of this policy, in whole or in part, may result in disciplinary action, up to or including immediate termination of employment. In addition, you may face both civil and criminal liability from the County or from individuals whose rights are harmed by the violation.

### **PC and Virus Protection Policy**

Copying/Transferring Software:

- You are prohibited from intentionally copying, moving, transferring, altering or destroying any program or software package from/on any of the County's workstations or network server without the permission of the IT Manager. Because of licensing restrictions on certain software packages, violation of this rule can result in severe penalties to the County. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may follow for any such violation.
- You are prohibited from copying, moving or transferring any program or software package to any of County's workstations or network server; or for personal use without the permission of IT. IT will decide what software can be introduced to the County's system and conduct the virus screening necessary to protect the system security and integrity. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Social Media Policy**

We understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

This policy applies to all employees who work for the County.

#### ***Guidelines***

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the County, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in the County policies and three basic beliefs apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of the County or the County's legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Know and follow the rules**

Carefully read these guidelines, our Business Ethics Policy, and the Discrimination & Harassment Policy, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Be respectful**

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, customers, members, suppliers or people who work on behalf of the County. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our Communication Policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage customers, members, employees or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or County policy.

### **Be honest and accurate**

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the County, fellow employees, members, customers, suppliers, and people working on behalf of the County or competitors.

### **Post only appropriate and respectful content**

- Maintain the confidentiality of the County trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trades secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications.
- Respect financial disclosure laws. It is illegal to communicate or give a "tip" on inside information to others so that they may buy or sell stocks or securities. Such online conduct may also violate the Insider Trading Policy.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to the County website without identifying yourself as a County employee.
- Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the County. If the County is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the County, fellow employees, members, customers, suppliers or people working on behalf of the County. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the County, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the County. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the County."

### ***Using social media at work***

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your supervisor or consistent with the Information Technology Systems Policy. Do not use the County email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

### ***Retaliation is prohibited***

The County prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***Media contacts***

Employees should not speak to the media on the County's behalf without contacting the Board of County Commissioners. All media inquiries should be directed to them.

### ***For more information***

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact the Human Resources Manager.

## **Cell Phone/PDA/Electronic Device Policy**

While at work employees are expected to exercise the same discretion in using personal cellular phones and PDA's as is expected for the use of County phones. Excessive personal calls during the workday, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to others. You are encouraged to make any other personal calls on non-work time where possible and to ensure that friends and family members are aware of County policy. Personal cell phones and PDA's are strictly prohibited on the production floor.

The County will not be liable for the loss of personal cellular phones, PDAs, or other electronic devices brought into the workplace.

The use of camera phones, PDA's or other audio or video recording capable devices within the County may constitute not only an invasion of employees' personal privacy, but may breach confidentiality of County trade secrets or other protected information. Therefore, the use of camera or other video-capable recording devices within the County is prohibited without the express prior permission of senior management and of the person(s) present at the time.

Violations of this policy will be subject to the highest forms of discipline, including termination.

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Look here to find certain subjects in the handbook.

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# Acknowledgment

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Every employee is required to acknowledge their receipt of the Employee Handbook by signing the following form and returning to Human Resources.

## Acknowledgment Form

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The purpose of this Handbook is to describe current County personnel policies and to provide you with general guidance only. We reserve the right to change these policies at any time, and without notice, and will endeavor to advise you of those changes in a reasonable timeframe.

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the County's Employee Handbook to read in order to fully understand my privileges and obligations as an employee with the County. I agree to read it thoroughly, including the statements in the foreword describing the purpose and effect of the Handbook. I agree that if there is any policy or provision in the Handbook that I do not understand, I will seek clarification from the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk.

Furthermore, I understand that this Handbook is not a contract, express or implied, or a guarantee of employment for any specific duration, nor does it guarantee any fixed terms or conditions of employment. Employment with the County is "at will," which means that both I and the County are free to terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice. No supervisor or representative of the County, other than the Board of County Commissioners or the Board's authorized designee has the authority to enter into any agreement guaranteeing employment for any specific duration. Any employment agreement entered into between I and the County must be in writing and be signed by myself and the Board of County Commissioners or his/her authorized designee. Further, no supervisor, manager or other representative of the County has the authority to make any verbal promises, commitments, or other statements of any kind regarding the County's policies, procedures or any other issues that are legally binding on the County.

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Employee's Name (Typed or Printed)

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Employee's Signature

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Date

**Please return this signed form to the Human Resources Manager/Payroll Clerk and retain a copy for your records.**