

Operations Manual for Management Columbia County, Wisconsin



The employees of Columbia County, the Columbia County Board of Supervisors and the committees appointed by the Board, are responsible for delivering services to the citizens of the County in a cost effective and efficient manner. Of particular concern are the ill, the aged, the youth and those whose social conditions render them most vulnerable. We will measure our success against those considerations, ever mindful of the fiscal restrictions imposed by our tax levy.

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Introduction

The passage of Wisconsin Act 10, also known as the Budget Repair Bill, in mid-2011, dramatically changed the landscape of local government especially in the area of employee relations. Upon the expiration of existing collective bargaining agreements (other than that of the Sheriff's Sworn Unit) at the end of 2011, all aspects of employees' wages, hours and conditions of employment, aside from total base wages, are no longer subjects of collective bargaining.

Working collaboratively, County management personnel and the County Board of Supervisors will determine employee schedules, work rules, job responsibilities, benefit plan design and some wage rates based on the needs of the County, the mandates imposed upon the County and the County's budgetary limitations.

This broad philosophical shift in management responsibilities presents exciting opportunities for the County to implement new policies and procedures designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the services it delivers to its citizens. It also provides additional and significant challenges to the management team responsible for ensuring that those services continue to be delivered to the public by professional, committed and knowledgeable employees.

This Operations Manual for Management has been developed to augment the newly developed Policy and Procedures Handbooks for employees; these manuals provide general explanations of the County's personnel policies, procedures, benefits and rules. The Operations Manual is designed to help department heads and others of those in management/supervisory positions to effectively implement the new ways that Act 10 allows the County to manage its business.

This Operations Manual is meant to help management better understand its responsibilities in this new environment and to suggest ways in which the revised policies and procedures can be best implemented.

No manual of this type can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As Columbia County continues to grow and as applicable laws change, the County Board of Supervisors reserves the right to revise, supplement or rescind any policies or portions thereof as it deems appropriate in its sole discretion.

Throughout his Operations Manual, the term "County" shall designate Columbia County, Wisconsin. The term "management" refers to department heads and supervisory personnel.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Columbia County assures equal employment opportunity and affirmative action in the application of its personnel administration policies. Columbia County assures equal employment opportunity and affirmative action in the application of its personnel administration policies.

Discrimination against any person in recruitment, appointment, training, promotion, retention, discipline because of race, sexual orientation, age, political or religious beliefs or affiliations is strictly prohibited.

Discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation or physical disability is prohibited except where specific age, sex or physical requirements constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to perform the essential duties of any given position within the County.

Columbia County adheres to and supports the principles set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as all regulations of the State of Wisconsin that pertain to employment practices.

The County's standard application form has removed any references that may reveal an applicant's age, race, sex or physical condition. This ensures that applicants will all be screened on the knowledge, skills and abilities he/she will bring to the County. Strict interviewing guidelines have been instituted by the County to guarantee that prohibited lines of questioning are not a part of the interview process. (Exhibit L - Appendix.)

Job Opportunities Within the County

Positions which have been approved to be filled are posted across the County. Current employees who have completed their trial period of employment are welcome to apply for those positions. External recruiting for those positions will also be conducted.

All qualified applicants will undergo the same hiring process which will include:

- The submission of an application or resume
- Interviews
- Applicable testing
- Background/reference checks

If an internal candidate is selected for the position and accepts the job, it is with the understanding that there will be a trial period of employment in the new position and that there will be no option of returning to the employee's former position. The length of the trial period is based on the complexities of the position, and will be the same for whoever is selected for the position.

The Hiring Process

Authorization to Fill New or Vacant Positions

- a. All new or vacant positions will be subject to the following requirements except for vacancies at the Columbia Health Care Center which are filled based on resident population.
- b. New Positions

1. Requests for new positions will be made by July 1, prior to the fiscal year in which such position is to be filled, and, if approved, will be filled after January 1 of the following year. The following provisions shall apply;

(a) A Position Request Form will be submitted to the Human Resources Director by the Department Head after approval by the governing committee. (Exhibit J - Appendix)

(b) The Department Head and the Chair of the governing committee will present the request to a joint meeting of the Human Resources Committee and the Executive Committee. The Joint Committee will review new position requests to create a priority list of new hires. Prior to the joint meeting, the proposed positions are to be analyzed by the Human Resources Committee to determine the workload and duties to be performed following the same procedure as is used for replacement position requests.

(c) If the position is approved by the Joint Committee, the Human Resources Committee will allocate it to one of the classes in the Position Classification and Compensation Plan.

(d) The funding for the new position will be approved by the Finance Committee as part of the budget preparation.

(e) Departmental Annual Reports will include information as to new positions and the funding sources for those positions.

2. New positions which are one hundred (100%) percent funded through non-County sources can be requested at any time during the year by a Department Head but must receive governing committee, Executive Committee, Human Resources Committee and Finance Committee approval.

c. Vacant Positions.

1. When a Department Head becomes aware that a position will open due to staff leaving Columbia County employment, a Position Request Form will, if the position is to be refilled, be submitted to the Human Resources Director by the Department Head. (Exhibit J - Appendix.)

2. At the time a request is received for replacement hiring, the Human Resources Committee will conduct a hiring analysis and approve the job description, in conjunction with the Department Head and governing committee, and also determine whether it is imperative that the position be filled.

3. The Human Resources Committee shall make a recommendation on its finding to the Executive Committee.

4. Once approval to refill the vacant position has been received from the governing committee, Human Resources Committee and Finance Committee (required only if there is a fiscal impact) recruitment will be instituted to fill the position.

5. Recruitment will include both internal and external sources. Any current County employee who has completed his/her probationary/trial period is eligible to apply for any vacant position, but will be subjected to the same employment process as external candidates. This will include the submission of an application or resume, applicable skill testing, drug screening for some positions, interviews and background/employment history checks. If an internal candidate is selected for the position, it is with the understanding that there will be a probationary/trial period, and if the employee, after having accepted the job, decides that it is not to his/her liking, or if he/she does not successfully complete the probationary/trial period, there will be no opportunity to return to his/her former position within the County.

6. The candidate whose knowledge, skills, abilities, education and experience best match the need of the hiring department will be selected to fill the vacancy.

7. The successful applicant will be given a letter of employment, furnished by the Human Resources Department, which will include the individual's job title, rate of pay, employment date and the length of the probationary/trial period for the position he/she is filling. (Sample: Exhibit M - Appendix.)

8. During the recruitment process to refill a vacant position, Departments are authorized to hire a qualified Limited Term Employee to temporarily refill the position, if necessary, upon request of the Department Head to the Human Resources Director provided there is sufficient funding in the department budget to pay the costs of the Limited Term Employee and the approvals of the governing committee, Human Resources Committee, Executive Committee and Finance Committee have been obtained.

9. If an employee does not complete the probationary period, the Department Head may utilize a six month eligibility list created by the original vacancy to refill the position without following the approval process set forth in steps one (1) through five (5) above.

Selection and Replacement of Department Head Positions

The County has established a uniform procedure for selection and placement of individuals to fill vacant department head positions. This process applies to all department head positions that become vacant for any reason, unless superseded by a different ordinance, statute or hiring procedure adopted by the County.

It is the policy of the County to fill all vacant positions consistent with all fair employment laws and practices. The employment process will be consistent with all laws prohibiting the discrimination of any individual for a position with the County.

When a department head position becomes vacant, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. The Chair of the County governing committee that is responsible for the function will initiate an authorization request to fill the position. This authorization request will be in the form of a letter seeking approval from the Executive Committee to fill the vacant department head position. The written request seeking approval must include:

a. The position description which outlines the duties and responsibilities, as well as a statement of the necessary qualifications, including education and experience;

b. A chart which shows the organization of the department with reporting relationships;

c. A statement which supports the need for the County to fill the position; and

d. A suggested salary range for the position that is consistent with County compensation guidelines and established by the governing committee in conjunction with the Human Resources Director and Human Resources Committee.

2. The governing committee may not begin the recruitment and selection process until the Executive Committee has approved all provisions of the hiring request in writing. If the Executive Committee denies the request, the governing committee will consider the reasons for

the denial and resubmit its request to fill the vacant department head position with appropriate revisions. If the governing committee cannot make the revisions or if it feels the recommendations of the Executive Committee are inappropriate, the governing committee and the Executive Committee will meet to resolve the differences which exist in securing approval to fill the vacant department head position.

3. After proper approval is secured, the Human Resources Director will, following consultation with the governing committee, develop a recruitment plan. This plan will incorporate any affirmative action guidelines that may be applicable for the County or that particular position. Both internal and external sources will be utilized to identify qualified candidates.

4. Everyone who applies for a department head position must provide a current resume and the names and contact information for at least three (3) professional references. The failure of any candidate to provide a current resume and three (3) professional references will automatically disqualify him/her from consideration for the position. The County is under no obligation to request that the required material be submitted after the County has received the initial application.

5. After all applications for the position have been received or the time period established for the submission of applications has expired, the Human Resources Director will review all applications and eliminate those applicants who do not meet the established minimum qualifications for the position. Thereafter, the Human Resources Director shall consult with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing committee to further narrow the list of candidates to those whom the Human Resources Director, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the governing committee deem to be the most qualified.

6. The Human Resources Director or his/her designee will make the necessary arrangements with the County Interviewing Committee to interview the qualified candidates. The Human Resources Department will provide each member of the interviewing Committee with the resume, qualifications and any other information about each of the qualified candidates that are deemed to be relevant. The Interviewing Committee will interview the selected candidates, and upon the conclusion of each interview, each member of the committee will prepare an independent evaluation of each individual. At the conclusion of all of the scheduled interviews, the Interviewing Committee will either:

a. Chose the candidate deemed to be most qualified by at least 80% of the committee; or

b. Direct the Human Resources Director to inform the governing committee and the Executive committee that the majority of the Interviewing Committee agrees that none of the candidates who were interviewed are qualified to fill the department head position and that the Interviewing Committee does not intend to recommend a candidate from the panel of those interviewed.

7. If, following the interview process, the majority of the Interviewing Committee agrees to not recommend a candidate from the panel of those interviewed to fill the vacant position, the Human Resources Director shall recommence the recruiting process consistent with the procedures established in this section.

8. The Interviewing Committee will recommend a starting salary for the recommended candidate; the recommended salary must be within the range submitted to the Executive Committee with the authorization request and which is consistent with County compensation guidelines. The starting salary will be established by the governing committee and

the Human Resources Committee. The Human Resources Director will thereafter negotiate the terms and conditions of employment in consultation with the governing committee and the Human Resources Committee. Upon final selection of the department head, the Human Resources Director will advise all candidates not selected.

9. No offer of employment is to be made until all background checks have been completed, including contacts with the professional references. The background and reference checks are to be conducted with the Chair of the governing committee and the Chair of the Human Resources Committee or his/her designee.

10. A letter which specifies all the terms and conditions of employment with the County, is to be prepared by the Human Resources Director for the signature of the Chair of the County Board of Supervisors and sent to the candidate who has been selected to fill the department head position.

This written employment offer will include the following:

- a. Position title;
- b. Reporting relationship;
- c. Salary;
- d. Fringe benefit information; and
- e. The County's termination procedure.

Copies of this employment offer are to be sent to the Chair of the Governing committee and the Chair of the Human Resources Committee with a copy retained in the department head's personnel file.

11. The candidate who is selected to fill the department head position will attend the first County Board of Supervisors meeting following his/her appointment and will be introduced to the Board by the Chair of the department's governing committee.

12. Since Wisconsin is an at-will employment state, individuals hired under the provisions of this policy shall serve at the pleasure of the County. Individuals will serve a one (1) year trial period, during which the governing committee may terminate him/her at any time after consultation with the Executive Committee. Anytime after the one year trial period, the Executive Committee, upon the recommendation of the governing committee, may terminate a department head with thirty (30) days written notice. This termination procedure is to be communicated to the individual selected at the time the offer of employment is extended by the County. A department head who voluntarily resigns his/her position with the County must provide his/her governing committee with thirty (30) days written notice.

When a Department Head position becomes vacant and it is approved to be filled, an Interview Committee will be created. The Interview Committee will consist of the following individuals

- a. The County Board Chair;
- b. The Chair of the Human Resources Committee;
- c. The Chair of the Finance Committee;
- d. The Chair of the governing committee;
- e. The Vice Chair of the governing committee;

(1) The representatives from the governing committee must be County Board Supervisors.

(2) If any of the above individuals are unable to participate in the selection process, he/she shall designate a replacement participant from the applicable

committee; except that if the Vice Chair of the governing committee is unable to attend, then the Chair of that committee shall name the replacement from that committee.

(3) No County Board Supervisor may represent more than one (1) committee on the Interview Committee.

(4) Members appointed to the Interview Committee are responsible for interviewing the applicants for vacant Department Head positions as outlined here.

(5) No individual will be appointed to fill a Department Head position until the complete hiring process as described has been completed.

It is the responsibility of all County executives and officials involved in hiring Department Heads to follow the provisions and procedures contained in this Operations Manual. In the event the Human Resources Director is unavailable to perform the duties set forth in this Section, the Columbia County Executive Committee will designate the individual who will be responsible for carrying out the duties of the Human Resources Director.

Pre-employment Physicals

After an employment offer has been made, an applicant who has been chosen to fill a position may be required to have a health screening. More extensive testing may be required for prospective employees for Solid Waste, Highway and Sheriff's Departments as well as the Columbia Health Care Center.

Trial or Probationary Periods

For department heads, the Executive Committee will determine the length of the trial or probationary period, based on the complexities of the position.

Within each department, management will determine the length of the trial or probationary period for each job title; the length of that period will be based on the complexities of the position, not the background/experience of the individual hired to fill the position. The probationary/trial period will be no shorter than six (6) months, and no longer than eighteen (18) months. During the probationary period, the employee's work performance will be evaluated every six months or more frequently if needed. (Appendix: Probationary Period Evaluation.)

In those cases where multiple departments share the same job title, the length of the trial or probationary period will be determined by the agreement of the department heads that share that job title. If those department heads are unable to reach a consensus on the length of the trial period, the justification for each department's recommendation for the length of the trial period will be submitted to the Human Resources Committee which will make the final, binding decision.

Citizenship

United States citizenship is not a requisite for employment with the County, except for positions within the Sheriff's Office. However, aliens must be in full compliance with prescribed federal law, in particular the Immigration Act of 1986, and an alien in the employ of the County must move with the utmost dispatch to become naturalized citizens within the minimum time period prescribed by federal law. Proof of the employee's action in this regard may be required by the County. If at any time the employee is not in compliance with the federal law, he/she will be subject to dismissal by the County. Potential employees must provide proof of citizenship or legal alien status.

Special Provisions for the Columbia Health Care Center

The Columbia Health Care Center has on staff a Personnel Analyst, whose duties shall be to assist with and coordinate the human resources function for the Columbia Health Care Center with the County's Human Resources Department.

All appointments to positions in the Columbia Health Care Center shall be made by the CHCC Human Resources Manager, upon the recommendation of the Department Head or Administrator.

The Administrator has delegated Department Heads to be responsible for all aspects of employment within their jurisdiction. The Administrator shall hire, fire, and appoint Department Heads. The Personnel Analyst develops and conducts active recruitment programs that are designed to meet current and projected Columbia Health Care Center manpower needs. Recruitment is tailored to the positions to be filled and shall be directed to sources likely to yield qualified candidates.

All applications for employment shall be made on forms prescribed and approved by the Administrator, the CHCC Personnel Analyst, and the County Human Resources Office. The Personnel Analyst will require proof of application statements, preferable prior to or just after the interview.

The Department Head and Personnel Analyst will select the best qualified applicants (based on prior experience and education) for screening and final consideration.

The hiring pay rate shall normally be the minimum rate of the pay range prescribed for each class, except when an employee has been rehired, at which time the probationary rate may be waived (for re-hired union employees). Licensed nurses have a pay scale that considers experience.

Temporary positions shall be paid at the starting rate and remain at that rate as long as the position is temporary. Student rates apply to individuals in all departments if said individual is in high school. It also applies to individuals who are training to be Nursing Assistants until they become certified.

Special Provisions for the Highway and Transportation Department

The Highway Commissioner shall have authority to employ, discharge, suspend, layoff, or reinstate such personnel in accordance with Columbia County personnel policy as set forth in this Manual, where such policies are not in conflict with the Wisconsin Statutes, as he/she deems necessary for such purposes; provided, however, that the County Highway Committee may by action recorded in its minutes determine the number of persons to be hired, and may also at any time by action so recorded, order the Highway Commissioner to employ, discharge, suspend, lay off, or reinstate any such person in accordance with this Manual where such policies are not in conflict with the Wisconsin Statutes. The term “personnel” or “person” shall include all patrolmen, laborers, foremen, clerks, stenographers, or other employees necessary to carry on such activities.

On-Call and Call-In Pay for Managerial Employees

The Operations Superintendent, Shop Superintendent and Patrol Superintendents shall receive compensation in addition to their regular salaries according to the following schedule:

Weekend on-call duty	\$100.00 per weekend
Holiday on-call duty	\$50.00 for a 1 to 2 day holiday that falls on Monday – Friday
Call-in pay	\$25.00 for each event to which managerial employees are required to respond in person. Paid in addition to on-call pay listed above.

Reimbursements for Managerial Employees

Managerial Employees shall receive reimbursement for prescription safety glasses, safety shoes and the cost of renewing the required Commercial Driver’s License (“CDL”) in a manner equivalent to similar benefits provided to Field Employees of the Highway and Transportation Department.

Special Provisions for the Sheriff’s Office

The Sheriff is empowered to make emergency/temporary appointments for a period to not exceed three (3) months.

Applicants responding to vacancy eligibility advertisements will be required to participate in a written examination. Those applicants who have received the highest ratings in the examination will be invited to interview with the county. The interview panel will consist of Sheriff’s office employees and the Human Resources Director or his/her designee. The results of the written examination will be added to the scores resulting from the interviews to create an

eligibility list to be provided to the Sheriff. The Sheriff may review the top three (3) candidates, or, in the event of tied top scores, all of the candidates who received the top three (3) scores.

A conditional offer of employment may be made to the candidates of the Sheriff's choice, and the candidates will be required to participate in a psychological examination, a physical examination and undergo drug testing. A background check will also be completed, including court records, prior employment verification and references.

Upon successful completion of the examinations and the testing as outlined above, the selected candidates may be offered a confirmed appointment.

All sworn deputies must be residents of Columbia County and legal citizens of the United States at the time of the commencement of employment with the County. However, the Sheriff may permit a newly hired deputy a period of time not to exceed six (6) months to establish residency in Columbia County. The Public Safety Committee, upon the recommendation of the Sheriff, may agree to extend the initial six (6) month time period to establish residency to an additional period of time which will not exceed twelve (12) months from the date of hire.

All appointments to positions within the Sheriff's Office are subject to an eighteen (18) month trial period, and employees promoted or transferred to a different position will be subject to a twelve (12) month probationary period.

Managerial Sheriff's Office employees including the Executive Secretary shall receive fringe benefits including vacations, holidays and an annual clothing allowance in a manner equivalent to similar benefits provided to Sworn Sheriff's Office employees.

New Employee Orientation

All new employees will, in their letter of employment, be told when and where to report for his/her first day of employment with the County. Before beginning work in his/her department, every employee will participate in an Orientation Program.

Human Resources Department Orientation

On the first day of employment, all new employees, except for Health Care Center and Highway and Transportation Department employees will meet with the staff of the Human Resources Department to:

1. Sign necessary payroll forms.
2. Be advised of general conditions of employment, such as: county rules, fringe benefits, hours of work, pay, privileges, and responsibilities.
3. Receive a copy of his/her job description, the Columbia County Employee handbook that applies to his/her department, and other relevant literature.
4. Be provided with a receipt to sign acknowledging that he/she has read and fully understands the Columbia County Employee Handbook that pertains to his/her department (the

signed acknowledgement of which is to be retained in the employee's personnel file). (See Appendix: Acknowledgement of Receipt.)

5. Be provided with a copy of the Personal Computer Software Acquisitions and Usage, Internet Access, and E-Mail Policies, and sign a statement indicating that he/she has read and understands the policies.

6. Be provided with written safety policies as required by the County Board and sign acknowledgment of reading and understanding said policies.

7. Sign a statement indicating that his/her hiring by Columbia County does not represent a guarantee of employment or contract for employment.

Departmental Orientation Programs

After the Human Resources Orientation, the new employee will report to his/her work station and participate in a program designed to introduce him/her to the department in which he/she will be working and that will include information regarding the conditions related to his/her job and work site, introductions to fellow workers, the department's work standards, safety regulations, break periods, attendance standards, the length of the probationary period for that employee's position, the basis on which the employee's work will be evaluated during the probationary period, a short tour of the workplace, and a discussion about the department's policies and procedures. (Orientation Checklist Exhibit N – Appendix.)

If the department has developed its own Policies and Procedures manual, that information should also be discussed with the new employee. The employee's supervisor should also review the County's Policy and Procedures manual applicable to his/her department given to the employee during the Human Resources orientation program. (Exhibits II - LL: Appendix for copies of the four (4) manuals.)

Sample departmental Policies and Procedure manuals are included in the Appendix (Exhibit O) as is a departmental orientation check list (Exhibit P) used to ensure that all of the necessary information is discussed. Topics that are relevant to the departmental orientation include the department's dress code, confidentiality, performance standards, attendance standards, department policies and procedures, the organizational structure of the department and the County in general, compensation, policies regarding the use of County property and resources, internet access and e-mail policies. All forms that are signed by the new employee are to be sent to the Human Resources Department for retention in the employee's personnel file.

It is wise to prepare a training plan for each new employee. This will ensure that the training covers all of the essential functions of the job and also serves as a tool to judge the speed at which a new employee is learning his/her new responsibilities. (Exhibit Q - Appendix.)

Employee Classifications

Regular Full Time employees are those who work a minimum of one thousand nine hundred fifty (1,950) hours per calendar year and whose positions qualify them to participate in the Wisconsin Retirement Fund and all County benefits.

Regular Part Time employees work less than one thousand nine hundred fifty (1,950) hours in a calendar year and they are eligible for pro-rated County benefits.

Student Interns perform work for the County on a part time or temporary basis with or without compensation in order to gain work experience. Paid Student Interns are eligible for Social Security benefits; unpaid interns receive no benefits.

Limited Term Employees (LTEs) are hired on a temporary basis to work not more than twelve hundred (1200) hours in a twelve (12) month period. All LTEs receive the same hourly wage. They are hired to replace employees who are on a leave of absence or for peak seasonal work. They are eligible for Social Security benefits, but no other benefits. If an LTE is subsequently hired to fill a permanent position, his/her service date would be the date he/she began employment as a Limited Term Employee if there is no break in service between the LTE status and the conversion to permanent status.

Huber Employees are incarcerated individuals who are employed by the County under the State's Huber Law work release program. They are paid an hourly wage but receive no benefits.

Casual Employees are on call or on stand-by to work at the Columbia Health Care Center when there is a significant staff shortage. Casual Employees are entitled to retirement benefits after working more than twelve hundred (1200) hours in a year.

Volunteers are individuals who offer to perform specific services for the County without remuneration or benefits, but who may receive community credits of some sort.

Seasonal Employees are most frequently hired by the Highway and Transportation Department to work less than twelve hundred (1200) hours in a year during peak work periods such as summer highway projects and winter snow plowing; the pay is a flat hourly rate. Seasonal Employees are eligible only for Social Security benefits.

Departments May Share Employees

It may be fiscally advantageous for departments to share employees. Regular full time and regular part time employee may work in two separate departments with different job classifications and rates of pay. Benefits will be split between the departments.

Limited Term Employees (LTEs) can work in various departments because the rate of pay and the job classification remains the same across County lines. However, the departments in which the LTEs work must have budgeted funds available and the arrangement must be approved by the governing committees involved.

Part time employees may not also serve as an LTE in a different department.

Some Columbia Health Care Center employees are specifically hired to float between positions and/or departments. They, as well as Columbia Health Care Center employees who are working on an emergency basis, are permitted to work in different departments.

Classification and Compensation Plans

The County will maintain a job classification plan to provide a system of standardized titles and job descriptions for effective planning and budgeting, standards of job performance, valid recruitment and selection programs and fair and equitable pay.

With the leadership of the Human Resources Director, the Human Resources Committee is responsible for the overall development and administration of the classification plan, in cooperation with the governing committees, department heads and key staff employees.

Department heads, working with his/her governing committee, are responsible for recommending to the Human Resources Committee the elimination of classifications that are no longer useful or appropriate for the department. The Human Resources Committee will then approve or deny the recommendation. This action should be initiated by the department head, in consultation with his/her governing committee. A written request that outlines the reasons for the elimination of any specific job title/classification should be sent to the Human Resources Director, asking that the Human Resources Director and the Human Resources Committee approve the elimination of the job title.

It is also the responsibility of the department head, in conjunction with the governing committee, to bring to the attention of the Human Resources Committee situations in which a position is improperly assigned to its given classification. This action may also be initiated, in writing, by an employee who has data/facts that substantiate his/her request that the employee's department's governing committee review the request and forward it to the Human Resources Committee for consideration. The Human Resources Director is responsible for auditing the duties and complexities of the job and providing a written analysis of his/her findings to the Human Resources Committee which will then decide on the proper classification of the job.

The County maintains a compensation plan for all employees that includes the schedule of pay ranges, consisting of the minimum and maximum rates of pay for all classes of positions within the County. The objective of the compensation plan is to provide an appropriate salary structure for the recruitment and retention of qualified, competent employees, and to provide appropriate pay incentives to encourage employee productivity and proficiency.

The Human Resources Director is responsible for the development and administration of the compensation plan through periodic reviews and comparative studies of pertinent factors affecting the levels of pay. When appropriate, the Human Resources Director will recommend necessary amendments to the compensation plan to the Human Resources Committee which shall become effective upon approval of the Committee and the County Board.

The Compensation Plan is directly linked to the classification plan and based on the principal of equal pay for equitable work. Pay ranges within the Compensation Plan shall be

determined with regard to such factors as: uniformity of pay for each class, the knowledge, skills and abilities required to competently perform the responsibilities of each position, as well as the difficulty and complexity of the work, the availability of qualified applicants, prevailing rates of pay for similar jobs in the public and private sectors, changes in cost of living indices, and financial position of the County.

The entrance or starting pay rate will normally be the minimum rate of the pay range prescribed for each class. A department head may recommend that a particular appointment may be made above the entrance pay rate. Such decision shall be based on education and experience and be approved by the department head, governing committee and Human Resources Committee.

In-range increments are based on satisfactory work performance and length of service in a class. Such increments shall not be granted automatically. The employee shall have a written overall performance evaluation of “good” or higher in order for an in-range increment to be granted. This shall be submitted to the Human Resources Department before the increment will be granted.

The Work Week

Regular full time employees have a work week of either 37.5 hours per week (7.5 hours per day) or 40.0 hours per week (8.0 hours per day). Your own work week is determined by the department in which you work. Part time work schedules vary by assignment and department; your supervisor will discuss your work hours with you. Part time employee schedules are subject to change; however, any changes will be discussed with you prior to their implementation.

Overtime and How It Is Paid

Upon occasion, management may find it necessary to extend the work day. The hourly rate of pay will apply to each hour worked to a maximum of 40 hours per week. Any hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in any given week will be compensated at one and one-half (1.5) times the employee’s hourly rate of pay. This compensation may come in the form of time off or in pay, as determined by department management.

Pay Days

Employees are paid every other Friday by direct deposit to the bank of choice. If a scheduled payday falls on a County-recognized holiday, the deposit will be made the day before. On the day the deposit is made, employees will be given a notice that provides the details of his/her earnings for that pay period. The notification is non-negotiable, and provides information regarding: your rate of pay, the hours worked in the current pay period, benefit deductions, State and Federal deductions vacation, holidays, sick leave and voluntary deductions. An example is on the next page.

Direct Deposit Notification

A		B						
		Employee Name	Employee Number	Check Date	Pay Period Ending	Deposit Number		
Employee, Test		7053	5/20/2011	5/13/2011	0000018			
Hours & Earnings				Gross Wages & Deductions				
Earnings Description	Hours	Rate of Pay	Current Earnings	YTD Earnings	Description	Current	YTD	
Regular	40.00	15.125	605.01	3,219.15	Gross Wages	1,255.40	5,277.19	
Overtime 1.5	2.00	22.688	45.39	45.39	Federal Income Tax	36.12	276.28	
Sick Pay-8				603.28	Federal FICA Withheld	44.00	204.18	
Vacation-8	40.00	15.125	605.00	1,007.19	Federal Medicare Withheld	15.19	70.49	
Holiday Pay				201.09	WI Department of Revenue	42.54	229.14	
Fit Hldy-8				201.09	Life Ins.	13.44		
					Disability Ins	19.29	78.33	
					DeferredComp	25.00	625.00	
					TestPension	72.81	72.81	
					Hith Fam FT	207.92	415.84	
Leave Available				County Paid Benefits				
Description	Hours Used	Current Pay Period	Hours Earned	Current Pay Period	Description	Current Pay Period	Year to Date	
Vac Avail	40.00			80.00	Hith Fam FT	1,871.32	3,742.64	
SickAvail 8			4.00	- 141.75	Life-Prem		3.36	
PerHol Avail				16.00	Life-AddPrem		0.67	
FitHolAvail				8.00	Pension	72.81	539.35	
Total Hours		Gross Wages		Taxes		Other Deductions		NET PAY
82.00		1,255.40		137.85		325.02		792.53

- A Employee Information:**
 - i. Employee name
 - ii. Employee number
- B Pay Period Information:**
 - i. Check date
 - ii. Pay period ending date
 - iii. Check number
- C Hours, Earnings & Hourly Rate of Pay (Current Pay Period & Year to Date (YTD) Earnings)**
 - i. Pay type (regular, overtime, sick, vacation, etc.)
 - ii. Number of hours per pay type
 - iii. Current hourly rate of pay
 - iv. Gross earnings per pay type for current pay period and YTD
- D Gross Wages, Taxes & Deductions:**
 - i. Current pay period and YTD gross wages
 - ii. Taxes withheld for current pay period and YTD (Federal, Soc. Sec. (FICA & Medicare), State)
 - iii. Benefit deductions for current pay period and YTD
- E Leave Available:**
 - i. Benefit available (description)
 - ii. Benefit hours used for current pay period
 - iii. Benefit hours earned for current pay period
 - iv. Benefit hours remaining to be used (balance)
- F County Paid Benefits:**
 - i. County paid benefit (description)
 - ii. Current pay period County paid benefit
 - iii. Year to date benefits paid by the County
- G Current Pay Period Summary:**
 - i. Total hours paid (regular, overtime, sick, vacation, etc.)
 - ii. Current pay period gross wages
 - iii. Current pay period taxes withheld (Federal, Social Security, and State)
 - iv. Other current pay period deductions (excluding taxes)
 - v. Current pay period net pay

Compensatory Time

In some departments, employees who work more than forty (40) hours in a week may earn compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay. Compensatory time may not be accrued by part time employees. The accrual of compensatory time may not exceed forty (40) hours. Management has the discretion to direct employees to use the compensatory time he/she has earned. Management's scheduling of compensatory time must be done in such a way that the time off will not result in overtime for any other employee and will not have an impact on the efficient operation of the department. Ideally, this time off should be scheduled to coincide with days that are known to be less busy. (For example: days on which mail is not delivered, such as Federal Holidays which are not recognized by the County.)

Current Compensatory time will not exceed 40 hours at any time. Any accumulations over that maximum will be paid out as overtime and have a direct impact on the budget of each department. Management is responsible for ensuring that compensatory time is controlled and that no employee exceeds the forty (40) hour per calendar year limit. Each department head's control of compensatory time will be a major factor in his/her evaluation because of its impact on budgetary matters. While some elected officials have opted to not participate in the Management Performance Evaluation System (which is their right), all department heads, including elected officials, will be subject to a budgetary performance evaluation which will be done in conjunction with the annual Budget Review, conducted by each Governing Committee and reviewed by the Executive and Finance Committees. As a part of the budget process, it is a public record.

Compensatory time may be taken in fifteen (15) minute increments up to the allowed maximum of forty (40) hours, but as with all time off, compensatory time must be approved by the department head or his/her designee. Compensatory time off may be used in conjunction with other paid time off, with the approval of department management.

Management has the right to direct employees to use accumulated compensatory time.

Employee Benefits

Health Insurance

The County provides health insurance for its employees, with a percentage of the cost paid by the employee at a cost determined by the County Board. The County will not provide duplicate family insurance coverage in the event that a husband and wife are employed concurrently by the County. In that situation, both spouses may opt for individual single plan coverage or one family plan for both unless one spouse has different dependents than the other; in that case, two family plans must be selected. Regular part-time employees receive health insurance benefits on a pro-rata basis.

Life Insurance

The County participates in the State group life insurance plan and pays for life insurance equal to one year's earnings for each employee. Employees may opt to purchase additional life insurance for themselves or dependents through this plan by payroll deduction.

Unemployment Compensation

County employees are covered by Wisconsin Unemployment Compensation laws.

Workers' Compensation

County employees are subject to the Wisconsin Workers' Compensation laws. In the event of an injury at work or on the county's premises, the must notify his/her supervisor immediately, and an injury report (Exhibit D - Appendix) must be completed and submitted to the Human Resources Department within 24 hours.

When an employee seeks medical attention for the injury, he or she must provide the attending physician with a copy of the Attending Physician's Return to Work Recommendation Record (obtained from the Human Resources Department) and a copy of his or her job description (obtained from the Human Resources Department or the employee's supervisor). The employee is to request that the attending physician return the form to the Human Resources Department as soon as possible.

Unpaid Personal Time Off (PTO)

Management may grant unpaid personal time off to employees who request it in writing, after having exhausted all benefit hours available. Not more than forty (40) hours of unpaid time off will be granted during any one calendar year, and that time off must not have an adverse impact on the efficient operation of the department or the services it delivers o its clients, nor result in overtime pay or compensatory time off for any other employee.

Retirement

County employees are participants in the Wisconsin Retirement Fund. A regular employee may be vested in the Wisconsin Retirement Plan after five (5) years of continuous employment with the County.

Post Retirement Health Insurance Benefits

Individuals who retire from the County prior to reaching Medicare eligibility may continue to participate in the County's group health insurance plan by paying the full premium at the rate established by the insurer.

Holidays, Vacations and Other Time Off

Time off with pay comes in the form of sick leave, holidays, vacations and compensatory time (if available the department in which you work).

Holidays

Paid holidays for employees in departments other than the Sheriff's Office, Columbia Health Care Center and the Highway and Transportation Department are as follows:

New Year's Day	Independence Day
Memorial Day	Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day	Day After Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve Day	Christmas Day
New Year's Eve Day	Two (2) personal Holidays

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the County will recognize that holiday on the preceding Friday; Sunday holidays will be recognized on the following Monday. If consecutive holidays (such as Christmas Eve Day and Christmas Day) fall on a Friday and Saturday or a Sunday and Monday (as they will in 2021 and 2022 respectively) the County Board will determine and announce the applicable holiday schedule by October 1 of the year preceding the year in which the first three holidays (Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve Day) will be recognized.

Personal Holidays must be approved by department management and scheduled in advance.

Because the Sheriff's Office (SO) and the Columbia Health Care Center (CHCC) are both around-the-clock operations, they have different holiday schedules than the rest of the County departments.

Vacation

Accrual: Employees earn paid vacations based on his/her anniversary date in accordance with the following schedule:

<u>Full Years of Continuous Employment</u>	<u>Weeks of Vacation</u>
6 months	1 (5 days)
1	1 (5 days)
2-4	2 (10 days)
5-11	3 (15 days)
12-17	4 (20 days)
18+	4 weeks (20 days)
18+ (For employees hired before 12/31/2011)	4 weeks (20 days) + one additional day for each additional year of service to a maximum of 30 days of vacation per year

Department Heads will receive four (4) weeks of vacation in the year in which they are hired. In subsequent years, Department Heads will earn four (4) weeks of vacation on the anniversary date of his/her hire as a Department Head. After eighteen (18) years of employment, Department Heads will receive vacation according to the schedule shown above. Vacation benefits that were approved for specific department heads prior to January 1, 2012, as a condition of hire or continued employment shall remain in full force and effect.

Earned vacation will be used in the anniversary year following that in which it was earned. Vacation not used within the anniversary year after which it has been earned will automatically be carried over into the next anniversary year, but that vacation must be used within 90 days of the day it is carried over. If it is not used within ninety (90) days, the vacation will be lost. (Note: This paragraph does not apply to Sheriff's Non-Sworn Staff. Separate policies established by the Sheriff apply.)

Department management is responsible for scheduling vacations and personal holidays for the department's staff and for them to ensure the most efficient operation of the department. Length of employment shall not be used to schedule vacations or personal holidays in such a way that advantages some employees over others.

Leaves of Absence

Bereavement Leave

Paid time off is granted to an employee in the event of a death in his/her family. The length of time off is specified in the Bereavement Policy Chart. (Exhibit A - Appendix.)

With management approval, compensatory time, if available, holiday, vacation time or sick leave may be used to extend bereavement leave.

Sick Leave

Eligible county employees earn sick leave at the rate of one (1) working day per month, or major fraction of each month worked, up to an accumulated one hundred twenty (120) days. The accumulation begins on the employee's first day of employment.

When an employee is going to be absent from work for any reason, he/she is to notify management as early on the first day of absence as possible. This is necessary so that arrangements can be made to ensure that the tasks for which the employee is responsible will be completed as required. Sick leave will be granted when an employee must be absent for work for the following reasons:

- The illness or disability of the employee, employee's dependent child, or a family member for whom the employee has caregiving responsibilities, including maternity;

- Reasonable medical or dental attention of the employee, employee's dependent child, or a family member for whom the employee has caregiving responsibilities, that cannot be scheduled during non-work hours;
- In conformance with Federal and State Family Medical Leave laws.

An employee who uses three (3) or more days of consecutive sick leave is required to submit a written statement issued by a licensed medical practitioner to substantiate the medical reason for the absence. An employee who has been hospitalized for any reason or who has undergone a surgical procedure is required to submit a physician's statement that indicates the employee is able to return to work. This is required if the employee is cleared to return to work on either a full-time or part-time basis; and the statement must indicate the terms under which the employee is able to resume his or her duties.

Unused sick time will accumulate from year to year in an employee's sick leave account to a maximum of one hundred twenty (120) days. Ninety percent (90%) of the sick time balance will be paid to the employee at the time of retirement or to the employee's estate in the event of death.

Donated Sick Leave

With the approval of the department head and the Human Resources Committee, an employee may donate up to five (5) unused sick leave days to a fellow employee who has exhausted all other benefits including Family and Medical Leave.

Sick Leave Incentive Holiday

Employees who use no sick leave allowance in a calendar year will earn one Personal Holiday (Sick Leave Incentive Holiday) to be taken in the following calendar year and scheduled as are all other Personal Holidays.

Family Medical Leave

In the Appendix there is a three-page chart that provides a detailed explanation of the Family Medical Leave Act (FLMA) (Appendix - Exhibit E), as well as an application for a Family Medical Leave (Exhibit F.) Questions you may have about this policy should be directed to your supervisor or to the Human Resources Department. If an employee does not qualify for FMLA, he/she may request a Personal Leave of Absence as explained in the following section.

Military Leave

Employees who are called for Military Duty will be granted a Military Leave of Absence. Where the salary paid to the employee for such Military Duty is less than an employee's County salary, the County shall reimburse the employee for the loss occasioned by such difference in pay. The employee's position will be available for him/her upon return from military service, provided that the employee is still able to perform the duties of his/her position. The employee who has been on a Military Leave of Absence will be returned to a position that is similar in

responsibilities, status and pay, with the understanding that salary advancement will not be interrupted by the military leave of absence. The employee must return to work at the County within 90 days of discharge or as agreed upon by the employee and department management.

Personal Leaves

In the event an employee has an extended illness and has exhausted all his/her sick leave, family medical leave, comp time and vacation, or is not eligible for a Family Medical Leave, department management may authorize a thirty (30) day unpaid personal leave of absence. That leave may be extended for an additional six (6) months if the need is verified by a physician's statement and upon the approval of both department management and the County's Human Resource Committee. Employees on Personal Leaves of Absence will not accumulate any benefit time (such as vacation time, sick time, comp time) and will be responsible for paying the full costs of any County-sponsored benefits in which she/he participates (such as, but not restricted to, group health insurance, AFLAC, group life insurance).

Before returning to work, on either a limited hour basis or to full-time work, a physician's release will be required.

Personal leaves for other reasons may be requested, but will be granted only in very unusual circumstances, and in those cases re-employment is not guaranteed

Injuries While At Work

If you suffer any type of injury while at work or while on County property, you are required to report it immediately (by the end of that work day) to your supervisor. State regulations mandate that all injuries, no matter their severity, be reported. The County's Workers Compensation Insurance carrier will investigate the cause of the injury and work with the employee and her/his medical providers to provide the best possible outcome. See Exhibit D in the Appendix for the Injury Report Form that must be submitted.

Personnel Records

Unless otherwise specified, employee records are kept in the Human Resources Department, and these Personnel Files are available only to the employee, the employees' supervisors and department management, and to the Human Resources Department. The files include:

- Application for Employment
- Performance Evaluations
- Applications for various benefits such as health insurance
- Payroll and tax information
- Disciplinary records

Employees may, upon written request, review their files on an annual basis.

Employment Verifications, Reference or Credit Checks

All requests for employment information or verification of employment, whether made by telephone or in writing, must be referred to the Human Resources Department. This policy applies to inquiries regarding both present and former employees.

It is the County's policy to release only the individual's dates of employment and job title. No information regarding performance evaluations or reasons for termination (if applicable) will be made available.

If a current or former employee wishes to have additional information regarding his/her employment history released, he/she must submit an authorization to that effect, in writing, to the Human Resources Department.

Technology in the Workplace

The use of technology in many departments within the County has simplified processes and increased the efficiency and productivity of its employees. All employees are expected to become familiar with the resources available to them, and to participate in internally offered training courses that will enhance skills and job performance. Training courses that are available are listed in Exhibit S - Appendix.

Telework

At the discretion of the department head and with the approval of the Human Resources Department, an employee may work remotely, such as from home, with the following limitations:

- Any telework engagement must be in the best interest of Columbia County.
- The work performed must be information based.
- The employee must be able to work with limited direct supervision.
- The remote site must have access to high speed internet.
- The remote location must be a safe environment conducive to telework.
- All parties must indicate agreement with the telework restrictions by signing the Telework Agreement Form (see Exhibit NN) and filed with the Human Resources Department.
- Department Heads and employees should reference the Telework – Best Practices (see Exhibit MM) when considering a telework engagement.
- The telework agreement may be terminated at any time by the department head, the employee or the Human Resources Department without prior notice.

Personnel Sanctions for Noncompliance of Information Systems Technology Policies

All County employees are required to adhere to the County's information technology policies published on the County's intranet, located at the following link: <http://ccweb/countyintranet/mis/CustomerCare/CountyInformationTechnologyPolicies.aspx>

Any County employee violating these policies while using the County's information systems network shall be subject to loss of network privileges and any other disciplinary actions deemed appropriate by the Human Resources Department and governing committees, possibly including termination and criminal and/or civil prosecution. Any user who is aware of violations of any of the policies defined within this document is required to report such violations to either the Human Resources or the MIS Department.

Loss of Necessary Licensure or Certification

There are positions within the County that require licenses or certifications. Some job descriptions may specify that the maintenance of a valid Wisconsin driver's license or a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) is required in order to perform all the essential functions of the position. If, for any reason, that license is revoked, it must be understood that the employee is no longer legally able to perform the essential functions of the job, and, unless a position is available in his or her unit that does not require a valid driver's license or CDL, the employee will be terminated.

In other cases, professional licensure or certification may be required. If an employee no longer qualifies for such licensure or certification, it is understood that the employee is no longer legally able to perform the requirements of his/her position and employment will be terminated immediately, as outlined in the preceding paragraph.

All employees who operate a commercial vehicle must conform with all current Federal Regulations (49 C.F.R. parts 40 & 381) of the Omnibus Transportation Testing Act of 1991, as well as all State of Wisconsin supplements.

Upon reinstatement of the required licensure or certification, the individual may re-apply for a position with the County, however, re-employment is not guaranteed

Personal Use of County Property and Resources

The County is responsible for providing its employees with the tools necessary to perform his or her job. Use of those tools for personal advantage is strictly prohibited. However, incidental use of County-provided computers (while an employee is on break, lunch or before or after work hours for which he or she is not being paid) is acceptable. In addition, County-issued cell phones may be used by employees in emergency situations. Employees must understand that computer usage may be tracked and that excessive use of the County's cell phones may be subject to investigation.

All records of the County's business, its income/receipts, expenditures/outlay, operations, projects, plans and employees are the property of the County and cannot be removed from County-owned or leased property.

For specific policies regarding access to the County's computer system, internet access and electronic mail refer to Exhibits G, H and I in the Appendix.

Speaking of Cell Phones

It is recognized that the majority of the County employees have their own, personal, non-County issued cell phones. In most cases, it is not appropriate to engage in personal telephone calls while at work. However, management in each department is responsible for setting appropriate guidelines for use of personal cell and business telephones. It is recognized that in many departments, cell phone usage is integral to the conduct of County business.

What Shall I Wear Today?

County employees are required to dress appropriately for their profession and the public and to always maintain a professional attitude while carrying out their duties. However, departments may schedule “dress down” or casual days upon occasion. On those days, blue jeans, as long as they are not baggy, dirty, ripped or torn will be considered appropriate. Shorts may not be worn, but some departments may approve capris. Tee-shirts or tops with sayings that may be considered offensive to others because of sexual innuendos or political or ethnic connotations will not be tolerated. Halter tops, or those with spaghetti straps or which leave the midriff exposed are inappropriate business wear. While sandals are considered appropriate in a business setting, flip-flops, which may also cause injury, should not be worn. Departments may develop dress codes which management feels appropriate for their particular work environment.

Management Rights

The County and its management have the right to determine the number of employees, the duties of each employee, the nature and place of the work, and all other matters pertaining to the management and operation of the County, including the hiring, promoting, transferring, demoting, suspending or discharging an employee. This also includes the right to assign and direct employees, to schedule work and to establish and enforce policies and procedures.

Staff Reductions

Should the County find it necessary to implement cost saving staffing measures, both short-term furloughs or employee lay-offs will be considered. However, each employee’s knowledge, skills, abilities and value to the department as a whole must be the determining factors in managements’ decision on which employees will be impacted by the implementation of the cost-saving measures that have been decided upon. It is imperative that each employee’s knowledge, skills and abilities be addressed in the annual evaluation that is given to each employee. This will ensure that the staffing decisions are based on consistent and objective factors that are defensible and justifiable. Final staffing decisions will be made by the department head in collaboration with his/her governing committee as well as the advice and counsel of the Human Resources Director.

The Columbia County Grievance Procedure

A grievance is a dispute regarding an employee's discipline or termination of employment, or a dispute concerning workplace safety. No grievance shall be processed under this procedure unless it is in writing and contains all of the following:

- A. The name and position of the grievant;
- B. A clear and concise statement of the grievance;
- C. The issue involved;
- D. The relief sought;
- E. The date the incident or alleged violation took place;
- F. The specific section of County policy or workplace safety rule alleged to have been violated; and
- G. The signature of the grievant and the date.

1. The term “days” means all calendar days, Sunday through Saturday, including weekends and holidays regardless of whether the employee is scheduled to work. The time within which an act is to be done under this procedure shall be computed by excluding the first day and including the last day.

2. A “grievant” is an employee as defined by Wisconsin Statutes governing this grievance procedure. A grievant shall personally present his or her case at each stage of this procedure. A grievant may select one (1) other person to assist in processing a grievance.

3. “Workplace safety” means those conditions related to physical health and safety of employees enforceable under Federal or State law, or County rule related to: Safety of the physical work environment; Safe operation of workplace equipment and tools; Provision of protective equipment, training and warning requirements; Workplace violence and accident risk.

4. “Discipline” means suspension or demotion resulting in loss of pay or benefits. Discipline does not include oral or written reprimands, performance reviews, work plans or other employment action that does not result in loss of pay or benefits.

5. “Termination” means discharge from employment. Layoffs (reduction in force) are not considered terminations and are not subject to this procedure

Procedure

Filing a Grievance. Within ten (10) days after the facts upon which a grievance is based are known, or should have reasonably become known, an employee shall present a written grievance to the County Human Resources (“HR”) Department on the required County grievance form. (Exhibit B - Appendix.) The County HR Department shall determine if the grievance is timely, if the subject matter of the grievance is within the scope of this procedure and if the grievance has been otherwise properly processed.

HR Committee Review. A grievance that the County HR Department determines to be properly and timely filed will be reviewed by the HR Committee of the Columbia County Board of Supervisors during a regularly scheduled monthly HR Committee Meeting. Grievances shall be scheduled at the discretion of the HR Committee Chair. The grievant may request that the Human Resources Committee review the grievance in a closed session. The Human Resources

Committee has the discretion to grant or deny that request. If the grievance is reviewed in a closed session, the Committee's decision will be made in open session. The Human Resources Committee may take one of three actions:

- Uphold the action taken by department management;
- Reverse the decision made by department management; or
- Refer the grievance to the department's governing committee for review. That committee's recommendation will be referred back to the Human Resources Committee for final action.

The HR Committee's decision concerning a grievance will be recorded in the HR Committee Meeting Minutes.

Review by Impartial Hearing Officer ("IHO"). Five (5) days following the final approval of the HR Committee meeting minutes containing a grievance decision, a grievant may file a written request with the County HR Department seeking IHO review of the grievance.

An IHO shall be appointed by the County Board Chair or designee. The grievant shall pay a fee of not to exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) per grievance to the IHO in advance of any hearing. The County shall pay the remainder of the IHO's fees. The IHO will convene a hearing at a date and time mutually convenient to all parties. The IHO may require the parties to submit grievance documents and witness lists in advance of the hearing to expedite the hearing. The grievant shall have the burden of proof in all cases. The IHO may apply relaxed standards for the admission of evidence, including allowing the admission of hearsay. The IHO shall provide the parties with a written decision within thirty (30) days following the hearing.

The IHO may only consider the matter presented in the initial grievance filed by the employee. The IHO shall have no power to add to, subtract from or modify the terms of any County policy, statute, or work rule. The IHO shall deny the grievance if a rational basis exists for the County's action.

Appeal to the County Board. Either party may appeal an adverse determination by an IHO to the Columbia County Board of Supervisors. A written notice appealing an IHO's decision shall be filed in the County Clerk's Office within ten (10) days following the date of the IHO's written decision. The IHO's decision shall be reviewed at a regular monthly County Board Meeting, which will be scheduled at the discretion of the County Board Chair.

The County Board will consider grievance appeals in open session and will make its decision based on the written decision of the IHO. The County Board will not conduct a new hearing or examine the records, evidence and testimony that were produced at the hearing before the IHO. The County Board shall decide the appeal by a simple majority vote of the members present, either affirming or reversing the IHO's written decision. The County Board's decision concerning an appeal will be recorded in the monthly Proceedings of the County Board and shall be binding on all parties.

Timelines

A grievant's failure to process a grievance within the time limits set forth in this procedure shall constitute waiver of the grievance which will then be considered resolved. To encourage that grievances are addressed in a prompt manner, the time limits set by this procedure are intended to be strictly observed and may not be extended without the express written consent of the County Board Chair.

Exclusive Remedy

This procedure constitutes the exclusive process for the redress of any employee grievances as defined herein. However, nothing in this grievance procedure prevents County employees from addressing concerns regarding matters not subject to the grievance procedure with County managers and elected officials.

I Don't Have a Grievance (as it is defined above) but I Do Have a Problem - What Can I Do?

The Definition of a "Problem"

It must be understood that, subject to applicable law, the County has the right to determine the number of employees, the duties of each employee, the nature and place of the work, and all other matters pertaining to the management and operation of the County, including the hiring, promoting, transferring, demoting, suspending or discharging for just cause an employee. This also includes the right to assign and direct employees, to schedule work and to establish and enforce policies and procedures. That notwithstanding, the County also recognizes that all employees should have access to a process to resolve any issues that he/she may have in conjunction with his/her job.

To address that, a complaint procedure has been established that provides employees with an avenue to resolve any issues which impede his/her ability to perform his/her job duties. This process does not include situations involving harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct which were discussed earlier and for which another process has been established.

The Procedure to Resolve that Problem or Issue

The County has established a complaint procedure that provides employees with an avenue to resolve any issues they may have (not to include harassment, discrimination or retaliation, which were discussed earlier, and for which another process has been established).

An employee who has a complaint about any aspect of his/her employment, should schedule a meeting with department management to explain the problem, and to define what measurements need to be taken to resolve the issue. The problem and the employee's recommendation for solving the concern should be put in writing before that meeting. If the complaint involves the immediate supervisor or department head, the employee's first step is to

schedule a meeting with the Human Resources Director. Either department management or the Human Resources Director may find that the complaint has no merit. In that event, the employee may request that the complaint be heard by the department's governing committee. Both the employee and the Human Resources Director or his/her designee will attend that meeting. The employee may request that this hearing be held in a Closed Session. The governing committee has the option of agreeing with the request or denying it. If the complaint is not resolved at that level, the employee, accompanied if he or she chooses, by a mentor of his or her own selection, will meet with the Human Resources Committee. The employee may, once again, request that this be held in a Closed Session. The Human Resources Committee may agree with that request or deny it. If the Human Resources Committee also rejects the complaint, the employee can file for a "Peer/Supervisory" review. That review will be conducted by the Human Resources Director. Included in the panel will be the employee, two peers of his/her choosing, two peers chosen by the Human Resources Committee, the employee's immediate supervisor, and a member of the Executive Committee of the County Board of Supervisors. This review is scheduled with the understanding that the decision of this panel will be final. The employee may, once again, request that this be held in a Closed Session. The members of this Peer/Supervisory review panel may agree with that request or deny it. A written summary of the findings and basis of the decisions of each of the committee reviews will be provided and will be made available to the Supervisory/Peer Review Panel.

All of the reviews must all be scheduled within sixty (60) days of the filing of the complaint and resolved within ninety (90) days.

Performance Evaluations

Performance evaluations will be conducted every six months during an employee's trial or probationary period. If appropriate, management may conduct evaluations more frequently. (See Exhibit T in the Appendix for the Probationary Evaluation form.)

After the probationary period, performance evaluations must be conducted on an annual basis; however, evaluations may be done at any time to ensure that each employee is aware of any situations that may be impacting the quality of his/her performance. (See Exhibits U-AA in the Appendix for Annual Performance Evaluation forms used across the County.)

The Human Resources Department is responsible for notifying department management when Performance Evaluations are to be conducted, and the forms that are used are available on the County's intranet.

The purpose of the annual review is to help each individual maximize his/her performance by focusing on the employee's knowledge, skills, abilities, dependability, reliability, safety record, attendance, productivity, initiative and creativity (if applicable to the position), adherence to policies and the quality/quantity of work. The evaluation is designed to identify opportunities for enhanced effectiveness and to provide a forum for the employee and his/her supervisor to discuss career goals as well as additional training that would be beneficial.

Since staffing decisions will be increasingly based on the employees' knowledge, skills and abilities, these elements need to be defined and explained to each employee. Should reductions in force become necessary, the County must be in a position to justify its retention of its most valuable employees.

- **Knowledge:** The body of information an employee must have to competently perform the job's tasks; some knowledge is inherent in fields of study, such as accounting, social work, secretarial sciences, technology programs, etc., while other knowledge is gained through experience on prior jobs or learned as new policies and procedures are incorporated into one's responsibilities.
- **Skills** are usually measurable: i.e.: typing 55 word per minute accurately; the number of program applications an employee is able use; dexterity, strength, etc.
- **Abilities** are observable traits: ability to communicate effectively either orally (enunciation, tone of voice, proper grammar, selection of material to be communicated and or method of presentation) or in writing (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity of material, etc.); ability to effectively listen to ascertain a client's needs or desires; ability to make others feel comfortable; ease in adapting to new situations.

For additional information on identifying Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) see Exhibits BB and CC in the Appendix.

Performance Improvement Programs

When an employee's performance does not meet the requirements of his/her position, it is Management's responsibility to institute a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The PIP is designed to communicate and document the situation, and to help the employee meet the expected levels of achievement.

The situation might be the employee's inability to perform certain tasks, in which case additional training may be necessary. The employee may not be able to build effective working relationships or is not following County policies and procedures, or does not take initiative if a job must be done or a problem arises. In most cases, the resolution of the situation will depend on the cooperative effort of both the employee and his/her supervisor to ensure that the employee has had all of the training and counseling necessary in order for him/her to meet the expected performance levels and understands the consequences of not meeting the established performance standards.

In other cases, only the employee can ensure that he/she will meet the expected standard. For example, an employee who has established an unsatisfactory attendance record must assume responsibility for correcting the pattern. An individual who refuses to respect the established dress code or ignore County policies is responsible for his/her own actions, and Management is not responsible for correcting that individual's behavior, once the problem has been clearly communicated to the employee.

The length of a PIP and the frequency of the follow-up or status meetings depend on the situation. If, for example, an employee has become unreliable or undependable, the time frame

for improvement must extend over a fairly lengthy period of time, because anyone can improve an attendance record for thirty or ninety days. Attendance standards should be a part of each employee's Departmental Orientation, and the individual should remain on the PIP until he/she has met the attendance standard. If the employee is not able to achieve that in an agreed-upon period of time, it should be understood that termination of employment will be the result.

On the other hand, if the employee is unable to meet the expected levels of performance when he/she has received remedial training, the follow-up check-points should be held as often as necessary to point out the performance problems that have arisen since the last meeting or the training was conducted. In the event of measureable performance problems, the length of the program should be predicated on the average length of time it has taken others to learn the tasks involved.

The Performance Improvement Plan (Exhibit DD - Appendix) is designed to formally communicate and document situations in which an employee's performance does not meet the expected standards. It is a written document that outlines the level of performance that must be achieved, the period of time by which the desired results must be achieved, the training that will be offered to him/her and the support management will provide. The Plan makes it clear that failure to achieve the desired level of performance will lead to further disciplinary action being taken, up to and including termination of employment. The key to a successful PIP is documentation: the problem, how it must be solved, by when it must be resolved, the employee's responsibility for improvement, management's support, and the discussions at each follow-up check point meeting.

Status reports will be prepared regularly and discussed with the employee who is on a Performance Improvement Program Plan. (Exhibit EE - Appendix.)

Before an employee is put on a Performance Improvement Plan, a Performance Evaluation that identifies the unsatisfactory performance must be given to the employee; that evaluation must stipulate the expected level of performance, and the time period by which that level must be reached. If the employee is unable or unwilling to meet that level, management or his/her designee should consult with the Human Resources Director before instituting a PIP.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Screening

It is the policy of the County to maintain a drug and alcohol-free workplace for its employees. Drug and alcohol use both on and off the job can threaten an employee's personal well-being and safety as well as the safety of other County employees and the public. Employees must report to work free from any substances that could inhibit his/her ability to perform his/her duties. *Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.*

The County prohibits the use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs or any controlled substance other than the employee's own prescription medications on County time or on or in County property. *Possession, use of, or being under the influence of any of the above on County time or premises is grounds for immediate dismissal.*

If management determines that an employee has exhibited behavior that may be associated with a person under the influence or alcohol, or if the employee has been involved in an on-the-job accident or other work related incident in which drug or alcohol abuse may be a contributing factor, the County reserves the right to require an employee to undergo a blood test and/or urinalysis to determine the presence or absence of alcohol or drugs in his/her system. The screening will be done in conformance with established Federal guidelines. ***Refusal to cooperate with this policy will be grounds for immediate dismissal.***

An employee who is required to undergo such screening will receive, in writing, a full explanation of the drug and alcohol screening protocol that will be followed. ***Failure of the employee to acknowledge the receipt of such information will also be subject to immediate dismissal.***

Note: The full Columbia County Policy on Substance Abuse Screening Protocol is found in the Appendix, and copies of it, along with the acknowledgement of receipt of that information (to be signed by the employee) are to be made when needed to comply with this requirement. (See Exhibit FF in the Appendix.)

As required by the Drug Free Workplace Act, Public Law 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D, employees are hereby notified that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance, alcohol or drug paraphernalia is strictly prohibited in the workplace. Furthermore, this law makes it a condition of employment that employees abide by the Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy and notify the County (your immediate supervisor, department head or the Human Resources Director) of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) days after such conviction.

Note: An employee who voluntarily admits a problem and requests assistance with a drug and/or alcohol rehabilitation program prior to the County identifying a drug or alcohol problem on the job will be granted any necessary leave of absence (without pay) to participate in such a program. Such leave of absence will be available to an employee only one (1) time and will be conditional on the employee's full compliance with the terms of the rehabilitation program. No disciplinary action will be taken for an employee's use of drug or alcohol when the employee comes forward prior to the County identifying a drug or alcohol problem on the job. However, employees may be disciplined for drug or alcohol related conduct. Employees who do request such assistance will be given, in writing, a complete explanation of the process the County will use to aid in the employee's recovery and to determine her/his ability to return to employment with the County. (Exhibit GG - Appendix.)

Failure to acknowledge the receipt of such information will negate the employee's expectation of a leave of absence to participate in a rehabilitation program.

Testing for Controlled Substances

For purpose of this policy and the Federal Regulations, Columbia County will utilize a minimum of a five panel drug screen consisting of the following drugs:

- Tetrahydrocannabinol (Marijuana drug)
- Cocaine
- Amphetamines
- Opiates (including heroin)
- Phencyclidine (PCP)

In the instance where there is reason to believe an employee is abusing a substance other than the five drugs listed above, the County reserves the right to test for additional drugs under the County's own authority using standard laboratory testing protocols.

Prescription Drug Usage

If an employee whose position affects public safety where the inability or impaired ability to perform essential functions will result in a significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual or others is taking any legally prescribed medication, therapeutic drug, or any non-prescription drug which contains any measurable amount of alcohol or which carries a warning label that indicates the employee's mental functioning, motor skills or judgment may be adversely affected by the use of this medication, he or she must notify his/her supervisor before performing any work related duties. A written report of this notification is to be filed by the supervisor with the department head. It is the responsibility of the employee to inform his/her physician of any types of safety-sensitive functions that he/she performs in order that the physician may determine if the prescribed substance could interfere with the safe and effective performance of the employee's duties or the operation of County equipment. However, as required by the Federal Regulations, any employee who uses or possesses medication containing alcohol while on duty or who tests positive for alcohol will be removed from his/her position and subject to the provision of this policy, even though the reason for the positive alcohol test is the fact that the employee's prescription or nonprescription medication contains alcohol.

A legally prescribed drug is one where the employee has a prescription or other written approval from a physician for the use of the drug in the course of medical treatment. The prescription must include the patient's name, the name of the substance, quantity/amount to be taken, and the period of authorization. The misuse or abuse of legal drugs while performing County business is prohibited by County policy. (Note: This section does not apply to Sheriff's Non-Sworn Staff. Separate policies established by the Sheriff apply.)

Confidentiality of Records

The County respects the confidentiality and privacy rights of all of its employees. Accordingly, the results of any test administered under this policy and the identity of any employee participating in the County's EAP or other assessment or treatment program will not

be revealed by the County to anyone except as required by law. The County will release an employee's records as directed by the express written consent of the employee authorizing release to an identified person. In addition, the County will ensure that any lab or agency used to conduct testing under this policy will maintain the confidentiality of employee test records. However, the lab or testing agency will disclose information related to a positive drug or alcohol test of an individual to the department head or Human Resources Director.

The department head or Human Resources Director may disclose this information to the employee or to the decision maker in a lawsuit, grievance or other proceeding by or on behalf of the individual which arises from any action taken in response to a positive drug or alcohol test; or as required by law, including court orders or subpoenas.

Communication of any personal information regarding any County business must be regarded as confidential, and it is the responsibility of every employee to ensure that the information remains confidential. (Confidentiality Agreement – Exhibit HH; Appendix.)

Management Responsibility for Creating and Maintaining a Safe and Comfortable Work Environment

An effective policy for creating and maintaining a comfortable and safe working environment requires the support and example of Columbia County personnel in positions of authority. Columbia County agents or employees who fail to cooperate with Columbia County-sponsored investigations of harassment or retaliation may be severely sanctioned by suspension or dismissal. By the same token, officials who refuse to implement remedial measures, obstruct the remedial efforts of other Columbia County employees, and/or retaliate against sexual harassment complainants or witnesses may be immediately discharged.

Creating a Safe and Comfortable Workplace

Federal and State laws prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion or political beliefs, creed, sex, age, disability, national origin or sexual preference. Among these prohibitions is the harassment of fellow employees. The County is committed to maintaining a place of employment and a work environment that is free from discrimination and any form of harassment whatsoever.

Harassment is unlawful and is conduct that exposes both the County and individuals engaging in harassment to significant liability under the law. Employees at all times should treat other employees respectfully, with dignity and in a manner so as not to offend the sensibilities of a co-worker. Accordingly, Columbia County is committed to vigorously enforcing this Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation policy at all levels within the County.

No employee should be subjected to behavior that is personally offensive, which lowers morale or interferes with productivity in the workplace. Each employee has a duty to help maintain a workplace free from harassment. This duty involves refraining from any insulting, degrading, demeaning or exploitative behavior toward other employees, including sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical acts of a sexual nature where (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or a condition of an individual's employment; (2) An employment decision is based on an individual's acceptance or rejection of such conduct; or (3) such conduct interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

It is also unlawful to retaliate or take reprisal in any way against anyone who has articulated any concern about any form of harassment or discrimination against the individual raising the concern or against another individual.

Examples of conduct that would be considered harassment or regarded as retaliation are set forth in the Statement of Prohibited Conduct below. These examples are provided to illustrate the kind of conduct prohibited by this policy and the list is not exhaustive.

Columbia County has an affirmative duty to investigate and eradicate all forms of harassment, discrimination and complaints about conduct in violation of this policy. All employees should be advised that Columbia County will impose strict penalties for all confirmed violations of this policy.

Examples of Prohibited Activities

Columbia County considers the following to represent the kind of acts that violate this Harassment Policy and subsequently create a hostile work environment.

- **Physical Contact of a Degrading, Demeaning or Sexual Nature** including punching, hitting, slapping, rape, battery, molestation or attempts to commit any such assaults; and intentional physical conduct that is offensive or sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against another employee's body, or poking another employee's body.
- **Unwanted Sexual Advances, Propositions, or Other Sexual Comments** including sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience directed at, or made in the presence of, any employee who indicates or has indicated in any way that such conduct in his or her presence is unwelcome; and preferential treatment or promises of preferential treatment to any employee for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any employee to engage in sexual activity for compensation or reward; and subjecting or making threats of subjecting an employee to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct, or intentionally making performance of the employee's job more difficult because of that employee's sex.
- **Sexual, Discriminatory or Otherwise Offensive Displays or Publications** anywhere in the workplace by employees (except as required by the Criminal Justice system). This includes: displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional materials, reading materials, or other materials that are offensive to other employees, sexually suggestive, demeaning, or pornographic, or bringing into the work environment or possessing any such material to read, display, or view at work. Materials will be presumed to be offensive to other

employees if such materials depict persons, symbols, situations, objects, caricatures, language or any other thing known to be generally offensive to certain classes of persons or known to be offensive to a particular employee. Materials will be presumed to be sexually suggestive if such materials depict through words, symbols, situations or in any other way a person of either sex who is not fully clothed or in clothes that are not suited to or ordinarily accepted for the accomplishment of routine work in and around Columbia County and who is posed for the obvious purpose of displaying or drawing attention to the private portions of his or her body. Reading or otherwise publicizing in the workplace or during work-related activities materials that are in any way offensive to other employees, sexually suggestive, demeaning or pornographic; and displaying signs or other materials purporting to segregate an employee by sex, race, creed, color, age, disability or sexual preference in any area of the workplace, except as required by the criminal justice system.

- **Retaliation for Harassment Complaints** in the form(s) of disciplining, changing the work assignments of, providing inaccurate work information to, or refusing to cooperate or discuss work related matters with any employee because that employee has complained about or resisted harassment or discrimination; or intentionally pressuring, falsely denying, lying about or otherwise covering up or attempting to cover up conduct, such as that described in any item above.

Other Prohibited Conduct

- **Harassment** is defined as engaging in persistent, repetitive, hostile and unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or which creates a hostile work environment; such conduct is strictly forbidden.

- **Discrimination** or treating people inequitably or with bias because of the individual's age, race, sex, religious or sexual preferences, ethnicity or cultural background is illegal and will not be tolerated.

- **Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace or bringing weapons into the work place**, except as required by the criminal justice system.

- **Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.** Under these circumstances, the County reserves the right to require drug or alcohol testing.

- **Misappropriation of County funds or property.**

- **Use of County property or resources for personal gain.** All records of the County's business, its income/receipts, expenditures/outlay, operations, projects, plans and employees are the property of the County and may not be removed from County-owned or leased property.

- **Falsification of County records or causing County records to be falsified.**

- **Conduct unbecoming of a County employee while on or off duty.**

- **Disclosure of confidential records or information.**

- **Willful misconduct or insubordination.**

- **Hindrance of the regular operation of his/her department because of unauthorized absence or tardiness.**

- **Violations of State laws.**

- **Refusing to take a required drug and/or alcohol test or providing false information in connection with such a test of falsifying test results through tampering, contamination, adulteration or substitution.**

- **Fraudulent use of sick leave benefits.**
- **Failure to notify his/her supervisor or manager of absence or tardiness.**
- **Taking for personal use a fee, gift or other thing of value in connection with his/her job responsibilities.**
- **Theft of goods from any other employee or client with whom the employee has contact.**
- **Endangering his or her own safety or that of others through non-compliance with established safety procedures or carelessness in the performance of his/her job responsibilities.**
- **Abusive behavior toward other employees or the public.**
- **Willful misconduct or refusing to carry out the work assignments or instructions given by the work unit supervisor, department head or a County official who has lawful authority over the employee.**
- **Providing incorrect or fraudulent information on any County forms, including (but not limited to) all those associated with employment, Workers' Compensation reports, or medical/dental information that may result in unwarranted benefit payments.**
- **Drinking intoxicating beverages, using controlled substances or engaging in illegal gambling while on the job or on County property.**
- **Destruction or waste of County property, either intentionally or as the result of engaging in unlawful or hazardous activity.**
- **Aiding or abetting another employee who engages in any form of prohibited conducted.**
- **Assault.**
- **Creating a hostile work environment** by intimidating, harshly criticizing, refusing to cooperate or deliberately withholding information necessary for another employee to accomplish the duties assigned to that employee; or evaluating the work of an employee not under his or her supervision.
- **Destruction or waste of County property, either intentionally or as the result of engaging in unlawful or hazardous activity.**
- **Aiding or abetting another employee who engages in any form of prohibited conducted.**

The above is not all-inclusive, and other behaviors which suggest hostility toward any employee is considered to be a form of harassment; other behaviors that indicate fraudulent or unauthorized activity will also be considered as prohibited behaviors.

Reporting Prohibited Conduct

Management and supervisory personnel are responsible for recognizing, and reporting, any activities or behavior that suggest a County employee may be the subject of or is engaged in any type of prohibited conduct. The Human Resources Director must be contacted immediately in the event this situation arises.

Additionally, any employee who feels that he or she has been subjected to any type of prohibited conduct or has witnessed such conduct must report the incident immediately to

management. This policy applies even if it was not directed toward the employee himself or herself. If the complaint is against the employee's immediate supervisor, the incident must be reported at once to the Human Resources Director or another member of management in whom the employee has confidence. Anyone, including members of management, who is aware of any type of prohibited behavior including harassment or discrimination, is responsible for reporting it to the Human Resources Director, who will investigate it immediately. If such conduct is not reported by either the employee who was subjected to it or an employee who witnessed such conduct both/all parties will be disciplined.

Records of oral counseling and written warnings will become a permanent part of the individual's personnel file and will be removed only upon termination, retirement or death. Those who file complaints or report misconduct will not be named, nor will any documentation become a part of his/her own personnel file.

Procedures for Making, Investigating, and Resolving Harassment and Discrimination Complaints

The Human Resources Director is responsible for the investigation of harassment and discrimination complaints.

The Human Resources Director may appoint "designees" to assist in handling harassment and discrimination complaints.

The identity of complainants will be revealed only to those persons who have an immediate need to know. It will be made clear to anyone contacted in the course of an investigation will be advised that the parties involved in a charge are entitled to confidentiality that any breach of confidentiality or other act of retaliation or reprisal against the complainant or other individuals involved with the complaint is a separate, actionable violation of this policy. Such violations will be dealt with in accordance with the schedule of penalties above and will be administered consistent with federal and state labor laws.

Schedule of Penalties for Misconduct

Harassment is unlawful and hurts other employees. Every incident of harassment creates a negative work environment in which all employees suffer the consequences. Harassment and sexually based conduct has no legitimate business purpose; accordingly, any employee who engages in such conduct will be made to bear the full responsibility for such unlawful conduct.

The following schedule of penalties applies to all violations of the County's Harassment Policy. Where progressive discipline is provided for, each instance of conduct violating the Policy moves the offending employee through the steps of disciplinary action. In other words, it is not necessary for an employee to repeat the same precise conduct in order for more severe discipline to be imposed.

A written record of each action taken pursuant to the Policy will be placed in the offending employee's personnel file. The record will reflect the conduct (or alleged conduct) and the discipline imposed.

- **Retaliation for Harassment Complaints:** In the form(s) of disciplining, changing the work assignments of, providing inaccurate work information to, or refusing to cooperate or discuss work related matters with any employee because that employee has complained about or resisted harassment or discrimination; or intentionally pressuring, falsely denying, lying about or otherwise covering up or attempting to cover up conduct, such as that described in any item above.

- **Assault:** Any employee's first proven offense of assault or threat of assault, including assault of a sexual nature, will result in dismissal.

- **Other Acts of Harassment by Co-Workers:** Acts of harassment, other than assault, will result in non-disciplinary oral counseling for an alleged first offense. A written warning, suspension, or discharge will be imposed for the first proven offense, depending upon the nature or severity of the misconduct. Suspension or discharge will be imposed for the second proven offense, depending on the nature and severity of the misconduct.

- **Retaliation:** Alleged retaliation against a harassment complainant will result in non-disciplinary oral counseling. Any form of proven retaliation will result in suspension or discharge upon the first proven offense, depending upon the nature and severity of the retaliatory acts, and discharge upon the second proven offense.

- **Management Personnel/Supervisors:** Any member of management (including supervisors) who commits any act of harassment (other than assault) with respect to any other County employee will be subject to non-disciplinary oral counseling upon alleged first offense, suspension or dismissal for the first proven offense. The penalty will depend upon the nature and severity of the misconduct, and discharge for any subsequent offense must be assumed.

Other acts of harassment or retaliation or which create a hostile work environment will result in non-disciplinary oral counseling for an alleged first offense.

A written warning or suspension or discharge will be imposed on all employees for the first proven act of harassment or retaliation or creating a hostile work environment; the severity of the discipline will depend on the nature and severity of the misconduct. The second proven incident of any type of harassment will result in suspension or discharge, based on the nature and severity of the misconduct.

Each instance of prohibited conduct will be investigated and the resultant penalty will be dependent on the severity of the situation, its impact on other employees and/or the public, the cost to the County and its taxpayers, and the over-all work record of the employee who has engaged in prohibited conduct. Prior incidents will be a factor in the severity of the penalty.

An employee who brings alcohol, illegal drugs or weapons in to the workplace (except as required by the criminal justice system) will be suspended immediately without pay and an investigation into the circumstances will be conducted. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the employee will be discharged for misconduct.

An employee who is in possession of, uses or is under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or any controlled substance other than his/her own prescription medication on county time or premises will face immediate dismissal.

Each instance of prohibited conduct will be investigated and the resultant penalty will be dependent on the severity of the situation, its impact on other employees and/or the public, the cost to the County and its taxpayers, and the over-all work record of the employee who has engaged in prohibited conduct. Prior incidents will be a factor in the severity of the penalty.

Mileage Reimbursement for County Business

Some County employees are required to meet with clients outside of the workplace or to attend training sessions and conferences in various off-site locations. While an employee may choose to use his/her personal vehicle for such travel, mileage for that travel will not be reimbursed if a County-owned vehicle is available, or if a County-owned vehicle could be shared by others attending the same function. If a County-owned vehicle is not available, and up to four employees are attending the same off-site meeting or function, one employee will receive mileage reimbursement for providing transportation for up to three other employees. Travel arrangements for such meetings or functions must be approved by department management prior to participation.

Accommodation for Religious Beliefs

The County will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations for an employee to observe conscientious religious beliefs. The employee should notify the department head in a timely manner, preferably at least fifteen (15) days in advance, of such religious observance, in order to ensure that the employee's duties will be covered in his/her absence. This accommodation will be without pay unless compensatory time is used.

Reimbursement for Loss of Personal Items

The County will not normally reimburse, in any manner or form, personnel employed by the County, for any personal objects, possessions or clothing which are lost or damaged either while on duty or off duty, as an employee of the County, unless the employee can prove liability rests with the County, or the items are covered by the County's insurance. Personal objects, possessions and clothes are items purchased and maintained by the employee and not purchased or maintained by the County.

In order that all employee requests might be processed in accordance with the foregoing policy, the following procedures shall be used:

1. The employee shall submit to his/her supervisor a request for reimbursement along with a full description of what contributed to the loss and the extent to which the County or one of its employees was liable or responsible for the loss sustained.

2. The supervisor will review the incident and the facts, consult the County's insurance contract, and present to the Human Resources Committee a report and recommendation on disposition of the claim.

3. The Human Resources Committee will review the case and either declares the claim invalid and so advise the employee, or authorize reimbursement in part or full. The decision of the Human Resources Committee is final and shall be communicated in writing to the employee.

Employment of Relatives/Family Ties

No one will be employed, promoted or transferred to any department, division or job where the employee would be directly supervised by or would supervise a relative, including: spouse, parents, children, siblings, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, grandparents, grandchildren, father- and/or mother-in-law, step children, stepparents or any person sharing the employee's residence.

Intellectual Property Policy

County employees are encouraged to use his/her creative skills to develop work products and procedures that contribute to the efficiency of the department in which he/she works and enhance the services provided to the community, those products and procedures remain the property of the County. (Exhibit C – Appendix.)

Changes in an Employee's Status

It is the responsibility of the employee to inform the Human Resources Department of any changes in address, marital status, number of dependents, telephone number or insurance information. These changes must be recorded within thirty (30) days of the effective date to ensure that changes are made in insurance records as applicable, and that items mailed to the employee by the County are deliverable.

County Organization Chart

Appendix

Exhibits

<u>Title</u>	<u>Exhibit</u>
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