

**GRANT COUNTY EMPLOYMENT HANDBOOK**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of the Grant County Employment Handbook and any amendments in effect as of the date indicated below. I recognize it is my responsibility to read the handbook (approximately 75 pages) carefully and thoroughly and familiarize myself with its contents.

Specifically, I understand that my employment at Grant County is at will. This means that I am free to resign my employment at any time, for any reason or no reason with or without cause, and with or without prior notice. I understand that the County retains the right to terminate my employment at any time, for any reason or no reason with or without cause and with or without prior notice.

I understand that no agent nor any representative of Grant County, other than the Board of Commissioners has the authority to enter into an agreement for employment for any specified period of time, or to enter into any employment agreement that in any way modifies the at will status of my employment with Grant County.

I understand that the contents of the Employment Handbook do not constitute a contract of employment between myself and Grant County regarding any of the policies, practices, or benefits described in the handbook, and that Grant County has the right to unilaterally amend and/or revoke any of the policies, procedures, or benefits described in this handbook without prior notice to me.

**I understand that to the extent that any policy may conflict with existing Grant County labor contracts or local, state or federal laws, the County will abide by the applicable existing labor contract, local, state or federal law. Where labor contracts establish limitations on employee rights, those limitations shall supersede the provisions of these policies.**

I understand that the provisions of this handbook supersede any prior employee/employment handbooks or any other descriptions of Grant County's policies, procedures, or benefits.

---

Employee Name

---

Employee Signature

---

Date

ORIGINAL – PERSONNEL FILE

COPY – EMPLOYEE



## **SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 WELCOME TO GRANT COUNTY**

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Grant County.

Each of you plays a role towards the success and continued growth of Grant County. We encourage your intellectual curiosity and welcome reasonable suggestions for the continued improvement and growth of our organization.

Grant County is committed to providing quality services and protection to its citizens and visitors in a professional, courteous, respectful and honest manner. We encourage maintaining high standards of ethics and integrity.

Communication is the key to effective services. We encourage professional communications, whether it is with a citizen, visitor, fellow employee, your supervisor, another member of management or an elected official or department head.

Again, welcome to Grant County.

## 1.2 MISSION STATEMENT

### MISSION STATEMENT

To provide the public safe, reliable, resource-effective local government services with integrity.

### VISION THEMES

To enhance Grant County's core value of serving others with integrity, good stewardship and common sense.

To foster excellent working relationships with Elected Officials, department heads and all County employees by empowering all levels of Grant County government with tools, facilities, equipment and educational opportunities which, in turn, will lead to highly motivated and successful employees serving the public.

To develop a Financial Plan in order to carry out the County mission and take advantage of technology by providing employees with the necessary tools, education and facilities.

### VALUES

**Integrity...** Trust, Fairness, Honesty

**Stewardship...** Resource-effective, Caretaker

**Common Sense...** Flexibility, Practicality

**Respect...** Courtesy, Consideration

**Accountability...** Responsibility, Reliability

**Professional...** Accurate, Dependable

### 1.3 CODE OF ETHICS

Grant County is committed to high standards of conduct by and among employees in the performance of their duties. Individual and collective adherence to high ethical standards is central to the maintenance of public trust and confidence in government.

While employees may agree on the need for proper conduct, they may experience personal conflict or differing view of values or loyalties. In such cases the principles contained in this Code of Ethics provide valuable guidance in reaching decisions which are governed, ultimately, by the dictates of the individual conscience of the employee and his or her commitment to the public good.

Certain of these ethical principles are best expressed as positive statements: actions which should be taken; courses which should be followed; goals which should permeate both public and private conduct. Other principles are expressed as negative statements: actions to be avoided and conduct to be condemned.

The Grant County Code of Ethics herein applies to the day to day conduct of all employees of county government.

The ethical county employee *must*:

- Promote decisions which only benefit the public interest.
- Promote public confidence in County government.
- Keep safe all funds and other properties of the county.
- Perform the work of the County diligently, promptly and efficaciously.
- Maintain a positive image to pass constant public scrutiny.
- Evaluate decisions so that the best service or product is obtained at a minimal cost without sacrificing quality and fiscal responsibility.
- Maintain high standards of work every day in dealings with the public, employees and associates.
- Maintain a respectful attitude toward employees, public officials, colleagues, associates and citizens.
- Comply with all laws, policies, rules and regulations applicable to the County.

The ethical county employee *must not*:

- Engage in outside interests that are not compatible with the impartial and objective performance of his or her duties.
- Improperly influence or attempt to influence other employees to act in his/her own interest.
- Accept anything of value from any source which is offered to, or could reasonably be expected to influence his/her action as a public employee.
- Use any county resource for personal or private benefit or gain.

The ethical county employee accepts the responsibility that his or her mission is that of servant and steward to the public.



## **SECTION 2 – HOW WE KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOU**

### **2.1 COMMUNICATION**

There are several ways Grant County communicates regularly with employees, including communication boards, an intranet and our Website. Grant County's main communication board for employees is located in the Courthouse, outside of the Commissioner's office. Comprehensive employee information is also located outside of the Human Resources office. Each office or department maintains a communication board as well. Announcements, job postings, benefits information, important dates, community information and county information will be posted on these boards. Employees should check these weekly to keep informed of important County information and updates.

### **2.2 PROBLEM RESOLUTION**

Grant County believes that each employee deserves to be treated fairly and with respect. Occasionally, problems may arise and Grant County recognizes the importance of resolving employment concerns in a timely manner. In order to accomplish this, we must be made aware of any problems or concerns. We encourage honest and informative communication.

We encourage employees to talk first to their immediate supervisor about any problem. If the problem concerns their immediate supervisor, or if he/she cannot resolve the problem, employees should talk to his/her supervisor and move up the reporting structure as necessary.

If employees cannot resolve the situation within their office or department, employees are encouraged to contact Human Resources.



## **SECTION 3 – GENERAL**

### **3.1 ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK**

This handbook is a summary of current employment policies at Grant County. Grant County reserves the right to suspend, revise or revoke any of the policies, plans or benefits described in this handbook at any time and without prior notice. Any such changes made by Grant County will immediately supersede the current contents of this handbook. This handbook supersedes any past Grant County employment policies and/or practices addressed herein.

To the extent that any policy may conflict with existing Grant County labor contracts or local, state or federal laws, the County will abide by the applicable existing labor contract, local, state or federal law. Where labor contracts establish limitations on employee rights, those limitations shall supersede the provisions of these policies.

Nothing contained in this handbook is intended to nor does it create an employment contract between Grant County and any of its employees.

### **3.2 AT WILL EMPLOYMENT**

Employment at Grant County is at will. This means that employees are free to resign their employment at any time, for any reason or no reason with or without cause, and with or without prior notice. The County retains the right to terminate an employee's employment at any time, for any reason or no reason with or without cause and with or without prior notice. No agent or representative of Grant County, other than the Board of Commissioners has the authority to enter into an agreement for employment for any specified period of time, or to enter into any employment agreement that in any way modifies the at will status of employment at Grant County.

### **3.3 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Grant County is an equal opportunity employer and believes that every employee has the right to work in surroundings which are free from unlawful discrimination.

It is Grant County's policy to provide equal employment opportunity to qualified persons and that employees be treated fairly, without regard to race, color, gender, creed, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, political ideology, union activity, industrial injury, whistleblower activities, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, except as otherwise provided by law, veteran status, and other basis that is prohibited by local, state or federal laws.

This policy relates to recruitment, placement, promotion, training, demotion, transfer, layoff, recall, termination, rates of pay, employee benefits, and participation in County sponsored activities.

### **3.4 NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Grant County strives to maintain a workplace that fosters mutual employee respect and promotes harmonious, productive working relationships. The County's position is that discrimination in any form constitutes misconduct. Therefore, the County prohibits discrimination based on race, color, gender, creed, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, political ideology, union activity, industrial injury, whistleblower activities, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, except as otherwise provided by law, veteran status, and other basis that is prohibited by local, state or federal laws. This policy applies to employees throughout the organization and to non-employees, including, but not limited to contractors, volunteers, and board members who may have contact with employees as a result of their employment.

We expect that all employees will act responsibly to establish a pleasant and friendly work environment. However, if employees believe they have been the subject of discrimination, employees should report it to their immediate supervisor, department head or the Human Resources department. That person will take the necessary steps to initiate an investigation of discrimination.

The County will conduct its investigation in as confidential a manner as possible. The County's goal is to reach a timely resolution of each complaint and communicate to the employee and the other parties involved on a need to know basis. Appropriate corrective action will be administered against any employee engaging in discrimination. Retaliation against any employee for filing a valid complaint or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

### **3.5 HARASSMENT**

Harassment, based on race, color, gender, creed, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, except as otherwise provides by law, veteran status, or other basis that is prohibited by local, state or federal laws, opposition to prohibited discrimination, or retaliation is a violation of federal and state law. Harassment is prohibited in all County workplaces. Appropriate preventative measures shall be used within this organization to promote respect for the rights of co-workers. Remedial measures and/or corrective actions, up to and including termination of employment, shall be utilized when acts of harassment occur.

Additionally, this policy applies to and protects any employee of Grant County and/or anyone who does business with Grant County (contractors, vendors, customers, non-employees, etc.). All harassment complaints, regardless of where reported, or from whom, shall be taken seriously and assessed by management (department head/elected official) and/or the Human Resources department.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Supervisors and Managers**

Supervisors and managers through their actions shall model respectful behavior by:

- Pursuing preventative measures to ensure a supportive harassment-free work atmosphere;
- Encouraging reports of harassment and/or discrimination incidences;
- Taking remedial measures to stop harassing behavior whenever reported or observed;
- Notifying the Human Resources department of all allegations or incidences of harassment in the workplace; and/or
- Ensuring that retaliatory behavior is not allowed.

Supervisors and managers should be evaluated on their performance reviews as to their conduct, responsibilities, and adherence to this policy.

## **Harassing Behavior**

Harassment is any conduct that:

- Degrades or shows hostility toward an individual because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran or marital status, opposition to prohibited discrimination, or retaliation;
- Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment through written, graphic, or verbal communications including comments, jokes, slurs, or negative stereotyping, or interferes with an individual's work performance; and/or
- Is sexual in nature and has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Demeaning and/or derogatory harassment toward one's gender;
- Demeaning behavior, staring, pinching, touching or other physical contact, or blocking the movements of another person;
- Unwelcome sexual comments, innuendoes, jokes, abuse personal remarks, etc.;
- Graphic sexual, or degrading verbal comments about an individual's body or words used to describe an individual;
- Sexually explicit displays or distribution of pictures, materials, or objects in the workplace;
- Verbal or physical conduct directed at a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, mental or physical handicap and/or marital or veteran status;
- Offering or implying a reward or threat concerning work assignments, performance reviews, discipline, promotions, or other terms or conditions of employment in exchange for sexual favors;
- Unwelcome sexual advances or propositions, sexual flirtations (verbal or non-verbal), obscene gestures;

- Obscene letters, phone calls, e-mails, or unwelcome words or comments with sexual or other discriminatory meanings;
- Unwelcome request for sexual favors or repeated social contact;
- Sexual assault or other unwelcome sexual contact; and/or
- Foul language

### **General Harassment**

General workplace harassment is a form of offensive treatment or behavior which, to a reasonable person, creates an intimidating, hostile or abusive work environment.

Examples of general harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal or physical behavior which is derogatory, abusive, bullying, threatening or disrespectful;
- Ridiculing or undermining an individual with vindictive or humiliating words or acts.

These behaviors can constitute harassment as defined by Grant County policy even if unrelated to a legally protected status.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

Retaliation for reporting complaints of harassment is strictly prohibited. Employees who report a complaint of harassment or discrimination, or provide information related to such complaints, or oppose harassing and/or discriminating behavior, shall be protected against retaliation.

Retaliation is considered as serious as prohibited harassment, and may result in corrective actions, up to an including termination of employment. During the complaint investigations, all parties shall be reminded that retaliation is prohibited.

Examples of retaliation can include negative actions such as, but not limited to:

- Poor performance evaluations;
- Change in job duties or other negative employment decisions;
- Laughing at, ignoring or failing to seriously report complaints of harassment; and/or
- Continuing/escalating harassing behavior after the employee objects

### **Addressing Harassment**

If an employee feels he/she is being harassed and/or retaliated against, he/she is encouraged to notify their supervisor or the Human Resources department immediately. If the harassment involves their supervisor or the employee does not feel comfortable bringing the matter to the attention of their supervisor, the incident should be report direct to the elected official/department head or to the Human Resources department. Employees can explore concerns and options related to harassment with the Human Resources department.

## **Other Harassment Complaint Options**

Depending on the harassment complaint, other state and federal agencies and specific time frames for filing charges may be utilized for reporting harassment. The following lists the agencies and the time frames that a complainant must notify the agency of harassment. Most deadlines run from the last date of alleged unlawful harassment or retaliations.

- Human Rights Commission 365 days
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 300 days

## **Harassment Complaint Investigation**

Whenever any supervisor or manager becomes aware of harassment, immediate remedial measures shall be taken to stop the behavior.

All allegations, regardless of where reported, shall be forwarded to the Human Resources department. The complaint shall be reviewed to determine whether a detailed fact-finding investigation is appropriate.

If a fact-finding investigation is necessary, the investigation shall begin within a short period of time based on the circumstances and dependent on the investigative process used by the employer. A qualified investigator shall be appointed to gather and consider the relevant facts. Employees must be ethical and honest throughout all proceedings. This qualified investigator may be from the Human Resources department or may be from the outside. The confidentiality of all parties who are involved, present information and information about the harassment allegation shall be disseminated on a need to know basis or as required by applicable law.

The alleged harasser shall not have supervisor authority over the individual who conducts the investigation and shall not have any direct or indirect control over the investigation.

## **Corrective Actions**

If the findings of the investigation indicate that a violation of the harassment policy has occurred, immediate and appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, shall be administered to the offender. Corrective actions shall be proportional to the seriousness or repetitiveness of the offense. Affected parties shall be informed as to corrective actions, as allowed by law.

## **Policy Distribution**

Every employee shall be supplied with a copy of this policy each time it is updated. Additionally, the complaint reporting procedures and other information about harassment shall be posted in central locations throughout each office/department, and incorporated into the Policy and Procedure Manual. Appropriate training on a periodic basis, will be provided so that employees have an understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

### **3.6 DISABILITY AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

Grant County is committed to providing equal employment opportunity to employees and applicants, including those who have physical and/or mental disabilities, including life threatening illnesses.

Reasonable accommodation is used as a means of overcoming unnecessary barriers which prevent or restrict opportunities for otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities in these areas related to employment: the application process; job performance; and benefits, privileges, or terms and conditions of employment.

In partnership with the applicant or employee, Grant County will evaluate a request for reasonable accommodation to the known physical and/or mental disabilities of an otherwise qualified applicant or employee with the disability.

Grant County may be unable to provide an accommodation if it would require a fundamental change in the nature of services or cause an undue financial or administrative hardship. Grant County is not obligated to provide the best accommodation available, as long as the accommodation is effective for the purpose.

An otherwise qualified applicant or employee with a disability has the right to refuse an accommodation. However, if the individual cannot perform the essential functions of the job with or without an accommodation, he or she may not be qualified for the job.

The Human Resources department will work with the elected official or department head in determining if, and what type of, reasonable accommodation may be made. If it is decided that the accommodation is not reasonable, the requesting individual will be notified in writing of the reasons.

Grant County will maintain reasonable confidentiality regarding an employee or applicant's disability according to all applicable local, state or federal regulations.

### **3.7 MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENTS**

Grant County maintains a minimum age requirement of 18. Exceptions are possible for part-time or temporary/seasonal work. Specific hour restrictions apply and Minor Work Permits may be required.

## **SECTION 4 – RECRUITING AND HIRING**

### **4.1 JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

Job Descriptions are designed to outline essential functions, primary duties, accountabilities, minimum qualifications and job scope. It is our expectation that each employee will offer his/her services, within the approved scope of the job's responsibilities, and other duties as assigned. Job Descriptions are maintained through Human Resources and copies are available in each office or department.

### **4.2 RECRUITMENT**

Grant County encourages promoting from within the organization but strives to fill the position with the most qualified and experienced individual. All applicants must meet the minimum qualifications and essential functions described in the Job Description prior to the date of regular appointment. The County reserves the right to seek qualified applicants outside the organization at its discretion.

### **4.3 JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The hiring authority or the Civil Service Commission will initiate an announcement for any vacant position within the County.

The announcement will generally include: the title and salary range of the position; basic function and nature of the job; specific skills, training and/or experience required to perform the job; location of the work; where to apply and receive information; and a closing date. The hiring authority will determine the scope for external announcements. The Human Resources department will distribute announcements for internal postings. A reasonable effort will be made to distribute announcements internally prior to external advertising; however, the County reserves the right to seek qualified applicants outside the organization at its discretion. At the hiring authority's discretion, the job may be posted within the office/department only. Except in the case of "emergency hire" situations, announcements will be posted and/or advertised a minimum of five (5) working days prior to the closing date.

### **4.4 EMERGENCY HIRE**

Under unusual circumstances an "emergency hire" may be necessary and is subject to approval by the elected official/department head. In "emergency hire" situations, no announcement needs to be posted, but rather an employee is temporarily appointed to the position during the term of the emergency. Once the emergency situation has been resolved, the position will be posted as above. (*See Section 4.3 Job Announcements*).

#### **4.5 PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING**

Depending upon the skills required by a position, as determined by the employer, applicants may be required to submit to physical, written and/or oral examinations. Additionally, as determined by the employer, some positions may require pre-employment drug screening and/or criminal background checks.

#### **4.6 SELECTION AND HIRING**

The selection method will include evaluation of job-related knowledge, interpersonal skills, skills, abilities, experience, education, training, certification, aptitude and character. When appropriate, a specific selection process may be outlined in the announcement.

A Grant County Application for Employment is required for all applicants for any position. The hiring authority will determine the interview process, which may vary based on the position and/or circumstances. Applicants not selected for an interview may not necessarily be contacted. Upon completion of the interview process, the hiring authority will determine the best-qualified candidate for the position. The hiring authority will make a verbal offer to the successful candidate. Once the position has been accepted, the remaining candidates interviewed for the position will be notified in writing.

It is the policy of Grant County to only accept applications/resumes for specific open positions. We do not accept unsolicited resumes and/or applications.

#### **4.7 CIVIL SERVICE POSITIONS**

The Civil Service Secretary/Chief Examiner administers the recruitment and application process for Civil Service positions. Civil Service positions include deputy sheriffs and other employees of the Sheriff's Office with the exception of the Sheriff, certain appointed staff positions and any special deputies.

## SECTION 5 – EMPLOYMENT

### 5.1 NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

New employees will receive a general orientation. The orientation will include completion of all new hire paperwork and an explanation of the Employment Handbook and benefits. Supervisors will explain the job responsibilities and provide training as necessary.

All newly hired employees shall present valid documentation confirming their identity and legal status to work in this country within three (3) days of beginning work for Grant County.

### 5.2 INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

Employment is at will and the first six (6) months for full-time employees and the first thousand (1000) hours for part-time employees are considered an introductory period, during which supervisors will evaluate the employee's ability to meet Grant County standards for work performance, attendance, conduct and attitude. The introductory period may be extended, by the employer, for the employee to obtain position required credentials.

Employees and their supervisor will evaluate the employee's attendance, conduct, attitude and performance before the end of the employee's introductory period. As determined by supervisors, the introductory period may be extended for three (3) months in cases where additional time and/or training is needed, as determined by the employer, to evaluate the employee's performance. However, employees not capable and/or not willing to meet County standards may be terminated at any time. Nothing about this introductory period, or completion thereof, shall be construed as altering at will employment.

### 5.3 EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employment status affects areas such as, but not limited to, benefits and overtime/compensatory time. Positions will be full-time or part-time based on number of hours regularly scheduled to work. Full-time and/or part-time positions may be eligible for the overtime provisions in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Employment status is assigned to the position through the job description process in accordance with County policy and local, state and/or federal regulations.

A **full-time employee** is one who is employed in a budgeted position and is regularly scheduled and works an average of forty (40) or more hours per week.

A **part-time employee** is one who is employed in a budgeted position, paid on a salary or hourly basis, and is regularly scheduled and works less than forty (40) hours per week.

An **exempt employee** is one who is employed in an executive, administrative, managerial or professional capacity as defined by the FLSA. These employees are exempt from overtime and are paid for work performed rather than hours of work.

A **non-exempt employee** is one who is employed in a position which is not one of the categories of exempt employees. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime as set forth in the FLSA (over forty (40) hours worked in a seven (7) day work period) and are paid for all hours worked.

A **temporary/seasonal employee** is one who is employed for a specific period of time or season for the purpose of assisting an office or department with its workload and should not exceed a five (5) month consecutive period of time. The Board of County Commissioners may grant any necessary extension of this five (5) month consecutive period on a case-by-case basis.

#### **5.4 PROMOTIONS/TRANSFERS**

Whenever practical, promotion within the organization is encouraged but the goal is to fill positions with the most qualified and experienced individual. All applicants must meet the minimum qualifications and essential functions described in the Job Description prior to the date of regular appointment or as otherwise outlined. However, the employer reserves the right to recruit and hire from outside the County to fill the position with the most qualified applicant.

To be considered for a promotion or transfer, the employee must meet the minimum qualifications of the position and not have any written disciplinary records in the employee's personnel file within the past twelve (12) months. Date of hire will not be altered for any employee who is promoted or transferred within the organization.

After promotion or transfer to a new position, a new introductory period of six (6) months must be successfully completed. In the case of unsatisfactory performance in a promotional or transfer position, the employee may be considered for transfer back to the previous position held by the employee, if the previous position has not been filled; the employee shall have no expectation that their previous position will be held open.

If there is unsatisfactory performance, a re-organization, a disciplinary reason or an employee request, an employee may be transferred to a position in which the salary classification is lower than their current position, subject to prior approval by the employer. In such cases, the employee's compensation will be reduced to the lower wage as of the first day of work in the new position. After transfer to a position not previously held by the employee within the last twelve (12) months, a new introductory period of six (6) months must be successfully completed.

#### **5.5 WORK REDUCTIONS/CALL BACK**

Employees may be laid off for reasons including, but not limited to, changes in the organization, lack of work and/or lack of funds. When layoffs are required, the hiring authority will base the decision on the needs of the office or department. All layoffs are subject to prior approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

The County will, whenever possible, provide the employee with two (2) weeks prior notice of layoff, during which time the employee may be allowed to use earned annual leave or compensatory time to pursue other employment. During the six (6) month period following a layoff, the County will consider for recall those persons on lay off status, if a suitable position becomes available and the former employee has filed a written request for consideration with the Human Resources department, subject to the following provisions; past performance, qualifications, disciplinary record, abilities and seniority will be considered to determine which employees will be recalled for available work.

## **5.6 RE-EMPLOYMENT**

Should employment with Grant County end due to resignation or lay off and the former employee is no longer on recall status, the former employee may be considered for re-employment. Former employees, not on recall status, will be required to go through the application and interview process as outlined in *Section 4.6 Selection and Hiring*. Former employees will not necessarily be given first consideration in the selection process.

## **5.7 EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES**

Members of an employee's family may be eligible for employment with Grant County except if:

- The family member would be in a direct or indirect supervisor/subordinate relationship as determined by the employer.
- The employment of a family member would potentially represent an actual or perceived conflict of interest as determined by the employer.

For purposes of this policy, family is limited to spouse, sibling, parent, child/stepchild, in-law, or any other member living in the employee's household.

Relatives should not be placed in a supervisor/supervisee relationship or another role that might lead to a conflict of interest, real or perceived. This does not mean that related persons may not work in the same office/department, but the County *Conflict of Interest Policy* may apply and should be carefully considered. A transfer to a different position within or outside of the office/department may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. Such transfer is dependent upon a position being available and the provisions of *Section 5.4 Promotions/Transfers*.

## **5.8 EXPENSES**

Certain reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses may be required of an employee during employment. Any out-of-the-ordinary expenses are subject to prior approval by a supervisor. Expenses should be submitted monthly. Outstanding expenses at year end must be submitted by the January Accounts Payable cutoff date. Employees who incur exceptionally high expenses may submit an additional Claim for Expense form prior to end of the month. *(See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-01, Travel and Policy 02-02, Expense Reimbursement for specific travel expense allowances and procedures).*

## **5.9 TRAVEL**

In order to provide service to our citizens, and training and information for our employees, travel may be required. Employees may be required to travel outside of normal work hours and/or stay overnight outside of the area. Grant County will reimburse for reasonable expenses associated with such travel, subject to such travel and expenses having been previously approved. All work-related travel is subject to prior approval by the elected official or department head. All out-of-state travel is subject to prior approval by the Board of County Commissioners. *(See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-01, Travel for specific travel expense allowances and procedures).*

## **5.10 CELLULAR TELEPHONES**

Some positions may require the use of a cellular telephone while performing County business away from the normal work location. County cellular telephones are provided for only County business purposes. Cellular telephones should not be used when operating a motor vehicle or heavy equipment. *(See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-10, Cellular Telephones for allowances and procedures).*

## **5.11 EMERGENCY CONDITIONS/INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Grant County's commitment to our citizens, require that all offices, departments and activities shall be open and in operation during established work hours regardless of emergency or weather conditions. Because many County services are of primary importance during emergency conditions, all employees should make every effort to report for work on a timely basis, unless travel conditions present undue personal risk. Should emergency conditions occur which would prevent an employee from reporting to work; the employee is required to contact their supervisor or his/her supervisor as much in advance of the scheduled starting work time as possible. It is the employee's responsibility to have all necessary telephone numbers to report their absence. Employees may use any earned annual or earned compensatory time in these instances, subject to prior approval by their supervisor.

Should conditions prevail that require the Board of County Commissioners to announce curtailment of County operations for the safety and welfare of employees and/or citizens, no pay shall be deducted for time lost during the first two days of the announced curtailment of operations, nor shall employees be required to use earned annual or compensatory time for such two-day period unless the employee had already scheduled the time as annual, sick or compensatory time off. This provision may not apply to essential services personnel called upon to provide County safety and security services.

## **5.12 EMPLOYEE LOUNGES**

Employee lounges are located throughout County facilities. Employees are welcome and encouraged to use these facilities and all appliances. Employees are expected to keep these lounges clean after use. Employees should be considerate of others by leaving counter areas, refrigerators and tables clean and by properly disposing of trash and waste.

## **5.13 PERSONNEL RECORDS**

Personnel records will be kept reasonably confidential. Employees, their supervisor, anyone above the employee, in their reporting structure, anyone else, on a need to know basis, such as the County's attorney to represent the employer in a grievance, etc., and the Human Resources department shall have access to the employee's personnel file. Personal information such as medical records is confidential and is maintained in a separate file. Authorized personnel in the Human Resources department, other persons on a need to know basis and Payroll personnel will have access to these records, in accordance with the law or court order. Upon written request, employees may review and obtain copies of all items in their personnel file. Employees may not remove items from their personnel file.

Employment information may be released in accordance with the law. Employment dates, position and salary are examples of information which can be released. Additional information may be released as specifically authorized by the employee in writing or as otherwise required by law.

Employees are requested to notify Payroll whenever there is a change in their name, address, telephone number, emergency contact information, marital status or number of dependents. Lack of notification may result in the loss of some service or benefit. In certain instances, official documentation must be submitted with these changes.

## **5.14 SUGGESTIONS**

Grant County relies on its employees for suggestions regarding improvements in all aspects of the work process. Employees are encouraged to direct these suggestions to their supervisor in a positive manner for discussion.



## **SECTION 6 – HOURS AND ATTENDANCE**

### **6.1 HOURS OF WORK**

The workweek commences Sunday at 12:01 a.m. and ends the following Saturday evening at Midnight. The standard workday is either eight (8) hours or ten (10) hours, as determined by the employer, for full-time non-exempt employees. Workday lengths for exempt employees are determined primarily by their positions. Standard business days are Monday through Friday. Standard business hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Lunch periods are unpaid, and thirty (30) or sixty (60) minutes, in length.

Subject to the office/department's needs, employees may work various shifts, including shifts outside of the above standards. An employee's shift may be changed as business conditions and needs change. If applicable, employees may request a shift change in writing from their supervisor. A reasonable effort will be made to accommodate subject to business and service needs of the organization and the public as determined by the employer.

### **6.2 OVERTIME**

Grant County specifically reserves the right to require any employee to work overtime as business needs dictate. Although we will attempt to give employees adequate notice of overtime assignments, this is not always possible. Employees who fail or refuse to comply with an overtime requirement may be subject to corrective action up to, and including, termination of employment.

Exempt employees are not entitled to overtime pay, regardless of the number of hours worked. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay. Overtime is compensated at one and one-half (1 ½) times the employee's normal hourly wage for each hour worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a workweek. Holiday time, annual leave and sick leave and other forms of paid time off shall not count toward the overtime threshold of forty (40) hours.

Overtime is subject to prior supervisor approval by using an Overtime Request & Authorization Form. Employees shall not work overtime without prior approval. (*See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-07, Overtime & Compensatory Time for specifics*).

### **6.3 COMPENSATORY TIME**

Employees who may be eligible to earn overtime may choose compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay subject to the following provisions. Compensatory time off will be at the rate of one and one-half (1 ½) hours for each hour worked over forty (40) hours in a workweek, e.g. ten (10) hours worked over forty (40) would equal fifteen (15) hours compensatory time off. Employees may accrue compensatory time up to a maximum of forty (40) hours. When the maximum is reached in any given month, subsequent overtime hours must be paid as overtime

pay. Use of compensatory time is to be scheduled by mutual agreement between the employee and their supervisor at a time that will not restrict the County's ability to meet necessary work requirements. Due to business needs, the office/department may have restrictions regarding the amount of time employees may have to use earned compensatory time.

Employee requested compensatory time is subject to prior approval based on the above conditions by using an Overtime Request & Authorization Form. Records of earned and used compensatory time will be reconciled monthly and maintained by Payroll. Compensatory Time Logs must be routed to Payroll with monthly Time Sheets. (*See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-07, Overtime & Compensatory Time for specifics*).

#### **6.4 CALL BACK**

Circumstances may develop where it becomes necessary for supervisors to request an employee return to work after the employee has left their work location for the day. In these cases, non-exempt employees will receive a minimum two (2) hours pay at the applicable rate except if such call out is within fifteen (15) minutes of employee's regularly assigned shift. The employee will be paid at the overtime rate of pay for actual time worked. (For example: Employee is called back to work and performs thirty (30) minutes of work. The employee is compensated for thirty (30) minutes at overtime rate of pay and ninety (90) minutes at regular rate of pay).

Circumstances caused by the employee's actions will not subject the employer to call back pay provisions. In these cases, non-exempt employees will receive pay at their regular rate of pay for actual hours worked. Only actual hours worked are considered for purposes of calculating overtime pay. Call back pay is not applicable for employee with on-call responsibilities (*See Section 6.5 On-Call*). Exempt employees are not eligible for call back pay.

#### **6.5 ON-CALL**

Certain positions require on-call responsibilities. Employees in on-call status must remain in the County and be available for contact by pager, cell phone and/or radio. Personal activities are not strictly limited during on-call status, however employees must be able to respond to duty in a sober and ready condition after normal business and/or work hours from any location in Grant County. Employees may receive on-call pay, determined case-by-case based on demands and business needs. In addition to any on-call pay, actual time worked will be paid, at the applicable rate of pay, and count toward the overtime threshold.

#### **6.7 TIME RECORDS**

It is the employee's responsibility, to ensure that attendance and hours worked are recorded accurately. Altering or falsifying time and attendance records or completing another employee's time and attendance record is prohibited and is grounds for corrective action up to, and including, termination of employment. Time and attendance records are County property and are not to be removed from the work premises. It is also the employee's responsibility to ensure that

time and attendance records, e.g. Time Sheets, Leave Request & Authorization Forms, etc. are routed to their supervisor in a timely manner.

## **6.8 ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Grant County relies on an employee's presence for effective services. It is important that employees report for work on time as scheduled. If, for some reason, an employee will be delayed or if it is legitimately necessary for him/her to be absent from work, the employee must call their supervisor promptly and prior to the scheduled work shift. If the employee is unable to contact their supervisor, he/she must contact his/her next level supervisor. It is the employee's responsibility to have all necessary telephone numbers to report their delay or absence.

Employees must call in each day they are absent prior to their work shift, except when there is a previously approved extended leave-of-absence. In this case written documentation with an intended return date is necessary. A no show/no call situation may result in corrective action up to, and including, termination of employment. Employees who are absent from work for three (3) consecutive days without notice will be considered to have abandoned their position and will be terminated.

Employee absences and tardiness are recorded daily. Specific Attendance and Punctuality policies vary between offices/departments based on the nature of service provided. Tardiness and poor attendance are grounds for corrective action up to, and including, termination of employment.

Occasionally an employee will exhibit a pattern of absenteeism that must be corrected despite having sufficient leave time available to cover the absences (i.e., absent and/or being late on a specific day of the week, absent and/or being late the day before or after scheduled vacation, etc.).

## **6.9 MEAL AND REST PERIODS**

Grant County may allow non-exempt employees to take one (1) fifteen (15) minute break for each four (4) hours of scheduled work. It is not always feasible for these breaks to be allowed. These breaks may not be taken at the beginning of the shift, at the end of the shift or just prior to or just after the meal period. These breaks may be taken at approximately the half (1/2) way point of each four (4) hour period of time. Breaks may be scheduled at the supervisor's discretion and based on the service needs of the office/department.

Non-exempt employees, scheduled to work at least eight (8) hours per shift, will receive either one (1) thirty (30) minute or one (1) sixty (60) minute, unpaid meal break each shift. The meal break should be taken approximately during the middle of the shift. Your supervisor may inform you of the meal break allotment and time, if applicable. Non-exempt employees, scheduled to work more than five (5) hours, but less than eight (8) hours per shift will receive at least one (1) thirty (30) minute unpaid meal break each shift. Offices/departments may have varying

procedures for rest breaks and meal periods. Employees should contact their supervisor for specifics.

#### **6.10 UNAUTHORIZED WORK**

Non-exempt employees are strictly prohibited from working unauthorized or “off-the-clock” hours of work. Employees are required to accurately record all hours of work. Because the County utilizes an exception reporting payroll system, if time reporting is not required in your office/department, hours worked in excess of the regularly scheduled shift must be reported on an Overtime Request and Authorization. Additional hours of work are subject to prior approval by your supervisor. Employees shall not work unauthorized hours without prior approval.

## **SECTION 7 – COMPENSATION**

### **7.1 SALARY CLASSIFICATION**

Grant County's Compensation Plan and rate of pay ranges for each classification will be determined by knowledge and skills, mental demands, accountability required, working conditions, levels of authority and responsibility in the organization and budgetary considerations. The Compensation Plan provides minimum and maximum rates of pay for each classification, with intermediate steps as deemed appropriate by the employer. The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to modify the Compensation Plan. These provisions are not subject to the grievance procedures.

### **7.2 CLASSIFICATION EVALUATION PROCESS**

Currently, Grant County uses an outside provider for the classification evaluation process. Subject to limitation by the Board of County Commissioners and budgetary considerations, employees and their supervisor may complete a job analysis for this process. From the job analysis and in comparison with similar positions within the organization, each job is assigned to a classification band based on the knowledge, skills, mental demands, accountability and working conditions required of the position. The classification evaluation process does not apply to certain civil service positions, certain professional positions and any elected official. These provisions are not subject to the grievance procedures.

### **7.3 RECLASSIFICATIONS**

An elected official or department head may request a change in a position's classification when the duties of the position have substantially changed and such changes are documented in the Job Description. To ensure consistency, compensation administration and correct status classification according to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), all changes to a Job Description must be reviewed with the Human Resources Department. Any changes to the Job Description are subject to prior approval by the Board of County Commissioners. Changes to Job Descriptions, which potentially alter the salary classification must be submitted for classification evaluation and are subject to approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

The employee's classification and rate of pay shall be adjusted to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month in which the job analysis was submitted. If the reclassification places the position at a higher rate of pay, the employee's rate will be adjusted accordingly. If the reclassification places the position at a lower rate of pay, the employee's rate of pay will be adjusted accordingly. These provisions are not subject to the grievance procedures.

#### **7.4 OUT OF CLASS PAY**

Employees may be assigned to work at a classification lower or higher than their regular assigned classification. Employees assigned to work at a lower classification will not suffer a reduction in salary unless permanently assigned to that classification. Employees assigned to work at a higher classification for one (1) or more full shifts in a work week will be paid at the higher rate of pay retroactive to the first hour worked. For certain professional positions, out of class pay may be effective in less than full shift increments per prior approval/assignment by the department head.

#### **7.5 PAY INCREASES**

A cost of living adjustment (COLA) increase may be granted on a comprehensive basis and applied to the Compensation Plan, subject to prior approval by the Board of County Commissioners. COLAs may occur annually and may vary according to the collective bargaining process and the applicable labor contracts for applicable employees. When necessary the Board of County Commissioners may determine if a wage freeze needs to be instituted.

#### **7.6 LONGEVITY PAY**

Employees must have one year of continuous service and be a member of the Washington State Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) or the Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters (LEOFF) retirement plan to be eligible for longevity pay. Longevity pay for full-time employees is currently at the rate of \$11.72 per month per year of service for a maximum of twenty (20) years of service or \$234.40 per month. Longevity pay for part-time employees will be prorated. Longevity pay is awarded on your anniversary date.

Longevity shall be maintained during approved leaves-of-absence, provided the leave does not exceed ninety (90) calendar days, unless otherwise protected by law. Thereafter, longevity will be adjusted day for day. Longevity shall terminate if you resign, retire, become an elected official or are laid off. Longevity shall terminate if you separate employment.

Elected officials are not eligible for longevity pay.

#### **7.7 PAYROLL**

Employees will either be paid on a salary or an hourly basis. If an employee is paid on a salary basis, there is one payroll period each month, the 1<sup>st</sup> through the end of the month, with a pay date on the last business day of the month. If an employee is paid on an hourly basis, the payroll period is from the payroll cutoff date of the previous month to the payroll cutoff date of the current month, with a pay date on the last day of the month. If a pay date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Holiday, employees will generally be paid on the last working day immediately

preceding the regular pay date. Employees should see their supervisor for questions regarding their paycheck.

If an employee is absent on a payday, their paycheck will be held unless the employee has made arrangements for it to be mailed to their home address or has provided signed written authorization for it to be released to another person. Employees may be eligible to participate in automatic deposit of your paycheck. *(See Section 9.10, Automatic Deposit).*

## **7.8 PAY DRAWS**

Full-time and part-time employees working in regular budgeted positions paid on a salary basis are eligible to take a once monthly pay draw unless the employee's wages are currently being garnished or assigned. Temporary/seasonal employees and full-time employees paid on an hourly basis are not eligible for pay draws.

Draws will be exactly forty percent (40%) of earned monthly salary with no payroll deductions. Draws may be requested between the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month only. An Application for Salary Draw form approved by the elected official or department head must be submitted to the Accounting department no later than the first business day following the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Draws will be paid on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month or at the close of the business day nearest the 20<sup>th</sup>. If the 20<sup>th</sup> is on a Saturday, pay will be disbursed on Friday and if the 20<sup>th</sup> is on a Sunday, pay will be disbursed on Monday, provided the employee earned salary through the date the draw is distributed. The balance of earned salary due, minus the draw and all payroll deductions will be paid on the regular pay date. *(See Section 7.6, Payroll).*

## **7.9 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

With each paycheck, employees will receive a statement showing gross pay, deductions and net pay. Grant County is required by law to deduct from an employee's paycheck federal withholding taxes and the employee's portions of social security taxes, Worker's Compensation premiums and contributions to PERS and/or LEOFF. These amounts are forwarded directly to the federal or state government. As a service to employees, Grant County also makes other deductions, subject to prior approval by the employer and which have been authorized by the employee in writing.

## **7.10 GARNISHMENTS/WAGE ASSIGNMENTS**

If a garnishment or wage assignment is received, Grant County will meet the requirements of the law, after the garnishment or assignment has been confirmed. The garnishment or assignment will continue until written notice of discontinuance or satisfaction is received in accordance with the law. Excessive garnishments, in accordance with statutory regulations, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **7.11 COMPENSATION UPON SEPARATION**

Should employment with Grant County terminate, employees will be compensated for wages due for earned but unused annual and compensatory time and limited accrued but unused sick leave in accordance with the Sick Leave Policy (*See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-05, Sick Leave*), less regular deductions from the final paycheck in accordance with the regular payroll schedule and/or the law and/or court order. Deductions will be implemented for any unreturned County property or unpaid monies owed the County. The final paycheck will be mailed to the most recent address on file unless prior arrangements are made with Payroll. Separated employees may not request pay draws.

## **SECTION 8 – CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

### **8.1 JOB TRAINING**

Employees may be provided job-specific internal training. The amount of training will vary from job to job. Some jobs will require specific external training and certification as well. A job may require one-time or annual specific and/or non-specific training in order to proceed in any level promotions that may apply. An employee is required to take any job specific training necessary to remain qualified in his/her position. Employees should see their supervisor for specific training provided or required for their position.

### **8.2 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS**

Employment is at will as previously stated. Nothing in this section shall be construed to create an employment contract nor shall it be construed to alter the fact that employment is at will. During an employee's first year of employment with Grant County, he/she may receive two (2) evaluations from their supervisor; a six (6) month evaluation and a twelve (12) month evaluation (approximately from date of hire). Some offices or departments may require in addition to, or a variation from, this schedule based on specific training or certification requirements and the availability of such training/certification. Every year thereafter, employees may receive an evaluation. If employees transfer to, or are promoted to, another position within the organization, he/she may receive two (2) evaluations during their first year in the new position and annually thereafter.

Employee evaluations may consist of a written evaluation by supervisors and a written self-evaluation by the employee. Employees and their supervisor may then meet to discuss both evaluations, which may include all aspects of the employee's work. The supervisor's evaluation and the self-evaluation will become a permanent record of the personnel file.

### **8.3 PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS/LICENSES**

Employees may have an opportunity to participate in professional associations and acquire licenses or certifications, which promote Grant County's goals and the employee's own professional development. The request shall be in writing and document the cost and benefit to the employee and Grant County and is subject to prior written approval by the supervisor.

#### **8.4 CONTINUING EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CONFERENCES**

Subject to budgetary limitations as determined by the Board of County Commissioners, Grant County supports education and training for employees and may sponsor attendance at seminars and/or classes, which are relevant to the employee's job. The request must be in writing and document the cost and benefit to the employee and Grant County and is subject to prior written approval by the supervisor.

Employees may be required to attend seminars and/or classes, which will benefit their job knowledge and performance and may be sponsored by Grant County. These seminars and/or classes may require travel and/or participation during non-work hours. Non-exempt employees will be compensated in accordance with the FLSA for seminars or classes required during non-work hours. Employees may be required to reimburse the County for cost incurred in certain circumstances. *(See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-01, Travel and Policy 02-03, Employee Training & Continuing Education).*

## **SECTION 9 – BENEFITS**

### **9.1 MEDICAL/DENTAL/VISION/LIFE INSURANCE**

Full-time and qualifying part-time employees are eligible to receive certain medical, dental, vision and life (health) insurance benefits, as determined by the employer, on the first of the month following the employer determined waiting period. Part-time employees regularly scheduled to work at least twenty (20) hours per week are eligible for health insurance benefits on a pro rated basis. Employees must receive pay for a minimum of eighty (80) or more hours per month to maintain their eligibility for health insurance benefits. Any payment toward the premiums that the employee is responsible for is paid the pay date prior to the coverage through authorized payroll deductions.

Temporary and seasonal employees are not eligible to receive health insurance benefits.

Employees may be required, as determined by the employer, to share in paying a portion of the premiums for insurance.

Dependents may be added to health insurance only when the eligible employee is originally enrolled, during open enrollment or when there has been a loss of coverage, as determined by employer, or during any qualifying event, for the dependent. Open enrollment is December of each year.

Employees, on paid leave or Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, will be responsible for any optional or employee-paid premium payment(s) during the leave. Employees, on unpaid leave, in excess of Family and Medical Leave (which shall run concurrent with other leaves paid and or unpaid), may retain health insurance benefits as provided by COBRA, *see Section 9.3 Continuation of Health Insurance Benefits (COBRA)* or may be responsible for paying for the entire premiums as determined by the employer.

Specific information about the health insurance benefits is covered in informational material provided. Questions regarding health insurance benefits should be directed to the Human Resources department. Questions regarding enrollment should be directed to Payroll. Grant County reserves the right to change premium contributions, insurance carriers and/or modify coverage, inclusive of elimination or modification of certain coverages.

### **9.2 FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN**

Grant County may sponsor employee benefit programs known as a “Flexible Benefits Plan” (the “Plan”) for you. Under federal tax law, this is also known as a “cafeteria plan”. It is so called because it lets employees choose from several different insurance and fringe benefit programs, as determined by the employer, according to the employee’s individual needs. Through employee salary redirection, the Plan allows eligible employees to use funds, provided by the employer, to

choose one or more of the benefits offered. Where applicable, coverages may be paid with pre-tax dollars; other benefits under the Plan will only be allowed to be funded with post-tax dollars.

Regular employees (full-time or part-time) are eligible to purchase various flexible benefits, as determined by the employer. If elected, flexible benefits are paid in advance through authorized payroll deductions by the employee. The employee may be eligible to participate in these benefits on the first day of the month following the required waiting period of employment. Questions regarding the eligibility waiting period should be directed to the Human Resources department or Payroll. The annual election period thereafter is January of each year.

These benefits may be administered through a third-party provider, as determined by the employer. Questions regarding the programs should be directed to the Human Resources department or the provider representative.

### **9.3 CONTINUATION OF HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS (COBRA)**

Subject to certain qualifying events, employees, spouses and/or dependents covered by health insurance benefits may be eligible to continue specified portions of health insurance benefits. More specific information regarding the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) will be provided. COBRA is administered through third party provider. Please contact the Human Resources department or Payroll with further questions regarding COBRA.

### **9.4 RETIREMENT PROGRAM (PERS & LEOFF)**

Full-time and part-time employees regularly scheduled to work seventy (70) or more hours per month are normally enrolled in the Washington State Public Employee's Retirement System Plan (PERS) or the Law Enforcement Officer and Fire Fighters Retirement System Plan (LEOFF).

Employees are legally required by Washington State to contribute a percentage of their "compensation earnable" to PERS or LEOFF. The legislature may change this rate as necessary to reflect the cost of the plan.

Grant County also pays contributions that are based on a percentage of the employee's salary. Employer contributions are invested by the State Investment Board to help pay future retirement benefits. Employer contributions cannot be withdrawn.

For more information regarding PERS and/or LEOFF, please contact Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) at 1.800.547.6657 or [www.drs.wa.gov](http://www.drs.wa.gov).

## **9.5 DEFERRED COMPENSATION PROGRAM**

Regular full-time and regular part-time employees that meet program qualifications are eligible to choose and contribute to a deferred compensation plan, upon hire. These employer sponsored retirement savings plans enable employees to defer a portion of their current compensation for payment at later date, generally retirement. Salary deferrals (or contributions) are voluntary, and are made through the ease of payroll deduction. Under these plans, any contributions and earnings accumulate tax-deferred. However, withdrawals are taxed as ordinary income when they're made and other penalties may apply. Any questions regarding the Deferred Compensation Program should be directed to the Human Resources department or Payroll.

## **9.6 WORKER'S COMPENSATION**

Worker's Compensation Insurance provides some coverage when an employee is injured on the job or suffers an occupational illness at work. State law determines payment for medical expenses and lost time from work.

Employees are required to utilize sick leave, annual leave and compensatory time while away from work on Worker's Compensation. State law requires that time loss payments received for work injury/illness must be used to buy back sick and annual leave used during the employee's time away from work.

If an employee is injured while at work or suffers an occupational illness at work, the employee must immediately report such injury or illness in accordance with *Section 12.4 Safety and Accident/Injury Reports*.

## **9.7 SOCIAL SECURITY**

The Federal government, to help employees financially when they reach retirement age and to provide disability income for various categories of employed and dependent persons, provides Social Security benefits. Grant County matches the amount deducted from the employee's paycheck for this program. All employees are required by law to contribute.

## **9.8 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

Grant County is a covered employer. The basic objective of Unemployment Compensation is to provide employees with partial replacement of wages during short periods of involuntary unemployment.

Employees may qualify for Unemployment Compensation after separation from Grant County depending on the reason for the separation and if certain qualifications are met. The criteria for determining eligibility are set by state law.

## **9.9 CREDIT UNION**

Grant County employees are eligible to become a member of participating local credit unions. A credit union is a co-operative financial institution owned by its members. Regular employees of Grant County may join any or all credit unions at any time during their tenure with the County. Information regarding these credit unions is available from the credit unions or Payroll.

## **9.10 AUTOMATIC DEPOSIT**

Grant County offers automatic deposit of an employee's paycheck into the account(s) of their choice at various financial institutions with branches located in Ephrata or Moses Lake, Washington. Please contact the Accounting department for a list of participating financial institutions. Funds are normally deposited to the employee's account on payday.

Certain circumstances may warrant temporary or permanent loss of automatic deposit benefits. Employees will be informed on a case-by-case basis if this becomes necessary.

Employees should contact Payroll for a list of participating financial institutions, enrollment forms and for details on automatic deposit requirements and benefits offered. Employees may elect to take advantage of automatic deposit at any time during their tenure with the County.

## **9.11 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential resource for employees and potentially their immediate family. Please contact the Human Resources department with questions regarding the EAP.

## **9.12 BENEFITS FOR TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES**

Temporary and Seasonal employees are eligible for Worker's Compensation Insurance, Social Security and Unemployment Compensation benefits only. Hours worked as a temporary/seasonal employee do not count toward any required benefit waiting periods.

## **SECTION 10 – LEAVES-OF-ABSENCE**

### **10.1 ANNUAL LEAVE**

Full-time and part-time employees regularly scheduled to work more than eighty (80) hours per month are eligible to take paid annual leave the first of the month following completion of the introductory period, as defined in *Section 5.2 Introductory Period*. The amount of pay employees will receive when on annual leave will be based upon the amount of regular hours scheduled to work. Overtime hours will not be included in the calculation. Annual leave may not be taken prior to being earned or prior to successful completion of six (6) months of employment with Grant County.

Annual leave may be taken in no smaller than half (½) hour increments. A Leave Request & Authorization Form must be submitted. Annual leave schedules must be coordinated and approved in advance with the supervisor. There may be or become the need for seasonal or other restrictions on annual leave schedules. Annual leave will be scheduled according to each office/department's policy. Employees should direct any questions regarding annual leave eligibility and scheduling to their supervisor.

If a holiday occurs during a scheduled annual leave, employees will receive holiday pay for that day. Annual leave may be used as sick leave subject to the supervisor's prior approval or as provided by law. Annual leave may not be transferred to another employee. For specific accrual, use and pay out provisions, see *Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-04, Annual Leave*.

### **10.2 SICK LEAVE**

Full-time and part-time employees regularly scheduled to work eighty (80) or more hours per month are eligible for paid sick leave within one month of hire. The amount of pay employees will receive when on sick leave will be based upon the amount of regular hours scheduled to work. Overtime hours will not be included in the calculation. Sick leave may not be taken prior to being accrued.

Sick leave may be taken in no smaller than half (½) hour increments. Sick leave shall not be used as annual leave. Sick leave shall not be transferred to and/or between related or non-related employees, except as expressly outlined in the *Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-06, Sick Leave Donation*.

Sick leave may be used for only the following reasons:

- Illness or injury to the employee, which prevents him/her from performing their job;
- Exposure to a contagious illness, which would jeopardize an employee's health, the health of co-workers or the general public;
- Illness or injury to a member of the employees immediate family; or

- Doctor appointments for the employee, or a member of his/her immediate family

For sick leave purposes, an employee's immediate family is considered to include their spouse, sibling, parent, grandparent, child/stepchild, in-law, or any other relative or member living in their household. Doctor appointments are subject to prior approval by their supervisor. A Leave Request & Authorization Form must be completed for this purpose. A Leave Request & Authorization Form must be completed immediately upon an employee's return from any unscheduled sick leave day(s) and routed to their supervisor.

If it is necessary for an employee to be absent from work, he/she must notify their supervisor immediately and in accordance with their office or department's policy. If an employee is unable to contact their supervisor, the employee must contact his/her supervisor and so on up the "chain of command". Employees must call in each day they are absent from work, except in cases of prolonged illness or injury in which case, a doctor's note with an expected return to work date may be required.

### **10.3 EXTENDED LEAVE-OF-ABSENCE**

In certain circumstances, Grant County may grant regular employees an extended leave-of-absence not to exceed twelve (12) months. The granting of an extended leave-of-absence is at the sole discretion of, and is subject to the prior approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

Employees must exhaust all accrued annual leave and compensatory time while on an extended leave-of-absence prior to going to unpaid status. Any benefits available prior to the extended leave-of-absence will be retained. However, no additional benefits will be awarded, earned or accrued while on extended leave-of-absence in an unpaid status. An employee on an approved extended leave-of-absence in an unpaid status may qualify for health insurance continuation in accordance with COBRA. (*See Section 9.3 Continuation of Health Insurance Benefits (COBRA)*).

To request an extended leave-of-absence, a Leave Request & Authorization Form with a written letter of explanation should be submitted, in advance, to the employee's supervisor. An employee on an extended leave-of-absence may not necessarily retain his/her position during their leave of absence.

### **10.4 LEAVE WITHOUT PAY**

In some instances, employees may take leave without pay. A Leave Request & Authorization Form must be submitted. Leave without pay must be coordinated and approved in advance with the employee's supervisor.

## **10.5 CIVIL LEAVE**

Grant County will excuse from work employees who are summoned for jury duty or subpoenaed to appear in court or otherwise participate in a legal proceeding. Employees will receive their regular pay for civil leave, however, employees must pay the County for any remuneration received for service (payment for mileage remains the employee's). Jury and court leave will not be counted against annual leave or sick leave.

Employees must submit a Leave Request & Authorization Form along with a copy of the court summons or subpoena to their supervisor as soon as it is received. Service time and benefits remain in force during jury or court leave.

Employees have the right to attend jury duty when summoned. If such service is scheduled during a period when the employee's presence is necessary, Grant County may request the employee to defer service. The County will take no adverse action if the employee elects to serve as scheduled.

## **10.6 ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE**

Circumstances may arise, which make it necessary for Grant County to place an employee on Administrative leave. Administrative leave may be with pay or without pay depending on the circumstances. The employee will be notified in writing if the employee is being placed on Administrative Leave. During administrative leave, the employee must be available to the supervisor or Grant County with reasonable notice. Service time and benefits remain in force during administrative leave.

## **10.7 MILITARY LEAVE**

Grant County will grant paid military leave to employees ordered to serve on active duty or active duty training for the National Guard or Reserves of the United States, not to exceed fifteen (15) workdays per year, in accordance with RCW 38.40.060. Employees who voluntarily or upon demand, leave a position for more than fifteen (15) workdays to enter active duty in the Armed Forces shall be placed on military leave without pay for up to five (5) years, except as otherwise provided by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act (USERRA).

Employees may exhaust accrued annual leave and compensatory time during military leave without pay, but are not required to do so. An employee who returns to work after a military leave of absence shall be restored to his/her previous position and salary, to a comparable position and salary, or to the position and salary he/she would have attained had he/she not been called to service so long as he/she applies for re-employment as follows:

Within ninety (90) days of discharge or separation for service of more than one hundred eighty (180) days,

Within fourteen (14) days of discharge or separation for service of more than thirty (30) days but less than one hundred eighty one (181) days or

At the beginning of the next regularly scheduled work period on the first full day after discharge or separation for service of less than thirty one (31) days.

Employees must present written documentation of honorable discharge or separation. Further, an employee's seniority rights are restored upon successful reemployment, as well as restoration of health insurance benefits as if the employee had never taken a leave-of-absence.

Employees must submit a Leave Request & Authorization Form along with a copy of their military orders to their supervisor as soon as it is received, unless it is impossible, unreasonable or precluded by military necessity. Any benefits available prior to military leave will be retained. However, no additional benefits will be awarded, earned or accrued while on leave. Please contact the Human Resources department for additional information or with questions.

## **10.8 FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)**

Under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), eligible employees are entitled to take up to twelve (12) workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave during a twelve (12) month period. Grant County uses a "rolling" 12-month period measured *backward* from the date an employee uses FMLA leave. Under this method of calculation, each time an employee takes FMLA leave the remaining leave entitlement would be any balance of the twelve (12) workweeks, which has not been used during the immediately preceding twelve (12) months.

To be eligible for FMLA, an employee must:

- Have worked for the County for a total of twelve (12) months (need not be consecutive); and
- Have worked at least one thousand two hundred and fifty (1,250) hours for the County in the previous twelve (12) months

FMLA leave will be granted for one or more of the following reasons:

- Birth or placement of a child (includes adoption or foster care). Leave must be concluded within twelve (12) months of the event;
- To care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition (employee's spouse, child or parent); and
- Medical leave for the employee's own serious health condition.

Employees are required to:

- Utilize FMLA when their absence is eligible for FMLA leave;
- Exhaust all accrued, applicable paid leave, including annual leave, sick leave and compensatory time, concurrently with FMLA leave.

- Give 30 days advance notice on foreseeable leave; as soon as possible on emergency leave. Supervisors must notify Accounting as soon as notice is provided.
- Supply medical certification. The County may require a second or third medical opinion at the County's expense;
- Where applicable, undergo a fitness-for-duty medical certification before returning the employee to work;
- Report monthly or more often as required by the supervisor regarding employee's status and intent to return to work;
- Notify the supervisor of intent to return to work as soon as possible. Supervisors must notify Payroll immediately with any adjustments to the original FMLA leave request; and
- Complete all required paperwork, including Request for Family Medical Leave.

The County will continue paying its portion of the health insurance premiums during FMLA leave as if the employee had continued working. Employees must pay their usual portion of the health insurance premium, if any, and in accordance with the regular payment schedule of the health insurance premiums. Grant County is not obligated to continue health insurance benefits during FMLA leave if any employee contribution portion is more than thirty (30) days late.

The County will restore an employee to their original position, or to an equivalent position, with equivalent pay, benefits and other employment terms and conditions.

Under specific and limited circumstances where restoration to employment will cause substantial economic injury to its operation, the employer may refuse to reinstate certain highly paid "key" employees after using FMLA leave. A "key" employee is a salaried "eligible" employee who is among the highest paid ten (10) percent of employees within seventy five (75) miles of the work site. In order to do so, the employer must:

- Notify the employee of his/her status as a "key" employee, in either the response to the employee's notice of intent to take FMLA leave or as a follow-up to the employers' designation of FMLA leave for an employee;
- Notify the employee as soon as the employer decides it will deny job restoration and explain the reasons for this decision; and
- Offer the employee a reasonable opportunity to return to work from FMLA leave after commencement of FMLA leave.

If any employee does not return from FMLA leave, the employee will be considered to have voluntarily resigned and the County shall seek reimbursement of County paid insurance costs from the employee. Employees shall notify their supervisor as soon as possible of their intent not to return to work. Supervisors shall immediately notify Payroll of such intent not to return to work. At that time, COBRA benefits will be made available, if applicable.

Employees shall make a reasonable effort to schedule medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt County operations. Medical appointments, therapy sessions, etc. should be made outside of work hours, when possible. Unless it is medically necessary, intermittent leave is subject to prior approval by the supervisor.

Employees who choose to take FMLA leave consecutively after pregnancy disability leave as defined in 10.9 Pregnancy Leave, shall be allowed to do so. FMLA leave will be in addition to the pregnancy disability leave, thus extending leave to eighteen (18) or more weeks in the case of pregnancy/childbirth. Employees are required to notify their supervisor of their choice to take FMLA consecutively after pregnancy disability leave at least thirty (30) days in advance or as soon as possible in case of an emergency. If an employee does not notify their supervisor, FMLA leave will run concurrently with the pregnancy disability leave.

County employees married to County employees are limited to a total of twelve (12) workweeks between them of unpaid leave after birth, adoption or placement of a child.

All paid leave will run concurrently with FMLA leave. Employees must exhaust accrued paid leave concurrently with FMLA leave. Sick leave is eligible in qualifying circumstances of FMLA leave.

The Grant County FMLA leave policy is not applicable to domestic partners. Common law marriages are not recognized in Washington State.

Failure to comply with the above policy and procedures, without good cause, may result in delay, denial or termination of FMLA benefits.

Please see the Human Resources department with questions regarding FMLA leave.

## **10.9 PREGNANCY DISABILITY LEAVE**

Under Washington State discrimination laws, eligible employees are entitled to take up to six (6) workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave due to disability associated with a usual pregnancy/childbirth. If the disability phase is longer than six (6) workweeks, the pregnancy disability leave extends to the actual length of the disability. This leave is concurrent with any FMLA leave, unless the employee notifies their supervisor of their intention to take FMLA leave consecutively after pregnancy disability leave. All accrued, applicable paid leave, including annual leave, sick leave and compensatory time must be exhausted during this leave. Any unpaid leave during these six (6) workweeks is without employer-paid health insurance benefits if FMLA leave has already been exhausted or if employee has chosen to take FMLA consecutively after pregnancy disability leave.

Under Washington State discrimination laws, eligible employees with a disability due to pregnancy are entitled to unpaid, job-protected leave in addition to the above six (6) weeks as a reasonable accommodation. The length of this additional leave will be determined on a case-by-case basis, dependent on the needs of the employee, office, department and/or County. Medical certification is required for such additional leave.

Please see the Human Resources department with questions regarding pregnancy leave and coordination with FMLA leave

## **10.10 PARENTING LEAVE**

Grant County may grant a parenting leave not to exceed six (6) months after the birth of a child. This parenting leave will run concurrent with FMLA and Washington State pregnancy disability laws. Any portion of this leave, which is in addition to FMLA or Washington State regulations, is unpaid and non job-protected. All accumulations, of benefits, cease during this unpaid parenting leave, except as otherwise protected by Federal and State regulations.

Grant Count may grant a parenting leave not to exceed six (6) months after a spouse has given birth to a child. This parenting leave will run concurrent with FMLA. Any portion of this leave, which is in addition to FMLA, is unpaid and non job-protected. All accumulations, of benefits, cease during this unpaid parenting leave, except as otherwise protected by Federal and State regulations.

When both parents are employed by Grant County, only a total of six (6) months of Grant County parenting leave is allowed.

## **10.11 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Full-time and Part-time employees regularly scheduled to work eighty (80) or more hours per month are eligible for up to twenty four (24) hours of paid bereavement leave when a death occurs in the family. The amount of pay employees will receive when on bereavement leave will be based upon the amount of regular hours scheduled to work. Overtime hours will not be included in the calculation.

Bereavement leave may be taken in as small of increments as necessary (no less than ½ hour), please exercise good judgment.

A Leave Request & Authorization Form must be submitted for this purpose.

Bereavement leave may be used in the case of loss of a family member. Earned annual leave, compensatory time or sick leave, at the employee's option, may be used for approved additional days for bereavement.

## **10.12 SICK LEAVE DONATION PROGRAM**

Grant County may allow regular full-time and regular part-time employees to donate accrued sick leave to employees who meet certain eligibility requirements. (*See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-06, Sick Leave Donation*).

### 10.13 PAID HOLIDAYS

Full-time and part-time employees will receive holiday pay for the holidays listed below. Full-time employees receive eight (8) hours holiday pay and part-time employees receive the pro-rated amount of hours according to their FTE status, i.e. fifty percent (50%) employee receives four (4) hours holiday pay, seventy-five percent (75%) employee receives six (6) hours holiday pay, etc. Part-time employees or full-time employees working over eight (8)-hour shifts (i.e. four (4) ten (10) hours shifts) will be required to use Annual Leave as necessary for a full day's compensation.

New Year's Day	Independence Day	Friday after Thanksgiving
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Labor Day	Christmas
President's Day	Veteran's Day	Day before or after Christmas
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving	(varies each year)

Employees may not "transfer" such days or holiday pay to other dates. If any, of the above dates fall on a weekend, generally, the Friday before or the Monday after, will be observed, as designated, by the County, at the beginning of each year. Holidays, for full-time and part-time employees, assigned to shift work outside a normal Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. shift, may not necessarily be assigned on the actual date of the holiday. Full-time and part-time employees scheduled to work on a designated holiday will receive holiday pay at one and one-half (1 ½) their regular rate of pay for hours actually worked plus their regular rate of pay for eight (8) hours or a pro rated amount of hours for part-time employees. Employees should see their supervisor with questions. (*See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 05-01, Paid Holidays and Policy Memo 05-04, Documentation of Alternate Schedules to Accounting*).

### 10.14 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

If an employee's religious beliefs require observance of a holiday not included in the basic holiday schedule, employees may, subject to their supervisor's approval, take the day off using annual leave or compensatory time. Leave without pay, for religious holidays, is subject to approval by the elected official/department head.

### 10.15 LEAVES-OF-ABSENCE FOR PART-TIME AND TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES

Unless otherwise specified above, temporary and seasonal employees are not eligible for leaves-of-absence. Part-time employees are generally eligible for pro rated leaves-of-absence.

## **SECTION 11 - STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Employment is at will as previously stated. Nothing in this section shall be construed to create an employment contract nor shall it be construed to alter the fact that employment is at will.

### **11.1 GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT/WORK ETHICS**

To serve and protect all Grant County citizens and visitors at all times is the essence of Grant County's mission. Employees are expected to represent the County in a professional manner, which is courteous, efficient and helpful. Grant County expects the highest standards of integrity, honesty and ethical conduct of its employees.

Grant County strives to provide superior service to its citizens and visitors. Employees are an integral part of providing these services. It is essential that all citizens and visitors, co-workers and members of management be treated courteously at all times. Employees can, in turn, expect the same courtesy from their co-workers and members of management.

Integrity is a firm adherence to a set of moral values or standards. In employment matters, integrity emphasizes consistency; following the goals, values, policies and procedures of the County at all times, even when the outcome is unpleasant.

Honesty means to be free from fraud and deception. At work, being honest means telling the truth but also not withholding information in order to deceive or protect personal interests or the interests of others.

Ethical, means the use of a moral code, to distinguish between "good" and "bad" or "fair and "unfair". In employment matters, it may generally refer to a conflict between personal interests and job requirements. Unethical behaviors include those in which the "professional" role is used to pursue a personal interest. (*See Section 1.3 Code of Ethics*).

### **11.2 CONFLICTING OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES/MOONLIGHTING**

Regular employees considering outside employment or association membership must ensure that such activity does not interfere or conflict with their employment at Grant County. Employees must not accept a position which would pose a conflict of interest, compete with or negatively affect their performance at Grant County, or which requires the use of Grant County property. We request that employees inform their supervisor of any prospective employment in addition to that of Grant County.

Specific policies regarding conflicting outside activities may vary between offices/departments based on the nature of service, labor contracts and/or federal and/or state regulations. The employee's supervisor will inform the employee of their office/department's policy. Employees may be required to inform their supervisor of any employment or outside activities in addition to that of Grant County.

### **11.3 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Any practice, activity, or conduct that puts an employee in or appears to put an employee in a position that conflicts with the best interests of the County, citizens, co-workers, or visitors should be scrupulously avoided. Employees are encouraged to advise their supervisor of potential conflicts of interest or any improper practices they become aware of.

### **11.4 QUALITY WORK**

Employees of Grant County are part of their office or department's team and part of the County's team. As such, for the benefit of the employee, co-workers and the County, we ask that employees perform the responsibilities of their job with thoroughness, thoughtfulness and integrity while always keeping the County's goals in mind.

Grant County strives to provide quality services to citizens and visitors. Individual employees, as part of the team, are important to the County's success.

### **11.5 PERSONAL USE OF COUNTY RESOURCES**

Personal use of County resources is prohibited. County resources include, but are not limited to, telephones, facsimile machines, copiers, computers, internet scan numbers, etc. Use of County resources or work time for private purposes or personal financial gain is strictly prohibited. (*See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-13, Conflict of Interest*).

### **11.6 NON-FRATERNIZATION**

While Grant County encourages amicable relationships between its management and their subordinates, it recognizes that involvement in a romantic relationship may compromise or create a perception that compromises a member of management's ability to perform his/her job. Any involvement of a romantic nature between management and/or supervisory personnel of the County and anyone he/she supervises, either directly or indirectly, is prohibited. Violation of this policy may lead to corrective action, up to and including, termination of the management individual involved in the relationship. If these types of problems arise, they will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

### **11.7 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Grant County is a public employer and many of its services are to provide information of public record to any and all persons requesting such information. However, there is some information that is of a confidential and sensitive nature and may require specific procedures for providing the information to requesting parties. Each office or department is responsible to advise employees of policies and procedures regarding information/records, confidentiality, if

applicable and proper requests for information procedures, including the Grant County Public Records Ordinance and state law. When in doubt, employees should ask before releasing information.

Failure to comply with an office or department's policies and procedures regarding confidential information and request for information may result in corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

## **11.8 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Grant County encourages the research and development of better ways to provide services. As a part of an employee's position, he/she may be required to develop specific procedures for Grant County. All work and work product, in any format, including electronic format, produced or developed during work hours, using County resources or on behalf of Grant County remains property of Grant County, even after separation from employment. Employees may not sell or otherwise distribute products developed for Grant County. Products developed for Grant County are not for personal use, profit or gain. Violation of these provisions may result in corrective action up to and including termination of employment. Violation also may result in Grant County pursuing any and all legal remedies available, including recovery of profits and/or gains.

## **11.9 REPORTING IMPROPER GOVERNMENTAL ACTION**

Grant County encourages employees to disclose, to the extent not prohibited by law, improper governmental actions of local government officials and employees. It is the desire of Grant County to safeguard legitimate employer interests by encouraging that complaints be made first to Grant County and by providing for a speedy dispute resolution. The County protects employees who report improper governmental actions in accordance with the Whistleblower's Act. (*See Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-14, Whistleblower Act*).

## **11.10 PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND IMAGE**

First impressions are often lasting. The County's image rests on the impressions created by written materials, telephone presence and the appearance of employees and worksites. The quality of services shall be consistently reinforced by professional appearance.

Employees are expected to be neatly dressed and clean appearing at all times. The County expects employees working in an office setting to dress in a manner consistent with our commitment to maintain a professional office environment. Office dress standards may be relaxed due to extreme weather conditions or because of special work requirements. Field personnel must be in proper uniform, if applicable, including any required identification badges. Remaining field personnel are expected to dress neatly and in keeping with our commitment to operate in a professional and safe manner. Elected Officials and department heads may develop and require adherence to more strict personal appearance standards, including uniforms.

Employees may be required to wear safety attire as associated with their position. Employees should see their supervisor for specific personal appearance and/or safety attire standards for their position.

Failure to comply with personal appearance and/or safety attire standards will result in corrective action up to, and including, termination of employment.

### **11.11 PERSONAL VISITORS**

The County requests that personal visitors be kept to a minimum. Employees should meet visitors in the lobby area of each office or department. For security, confidentiality and liability purposes, several offices or departments restrict personal visitors from the actual work area.

### **11.12 TOBACCO USE**

Grant County maintains a tobacco-free environment. Grant County ordinances and state regulations also prohibit the use of tobacco products in any County vehicles. Smoking shall be permitted only during rest or meal periods in designated smoking areas and in compliance with state regulations. Employees are expected to dispose of cigarette butts, smokeless tobacco, etc. in an appropriate receptacle.

### **11.13 ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Grant County provides many of its employees with access to certain telecommunication tools to perform their job; pagers, cellular telephones, e-mail, Internet, telephone, fax machine, etc. All telecommunication tools provided by Grant County are property of Grant County and to be returned to the County at separation of employment or at the request by the County. All telecommunication tools are for the sole purpose of performing County related tasks.

Employees provided with pagers are required to have them turned on and in the employee's possession at all times as designated by their supervisor. Employees are required to respond to pages received in a timely manner.

See *Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-10, Cellular Telephones* for policies and procedures regarding use of a cellular telephone and *Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-12, Electronic Communications* for policies and procedures regarding use of a computer, e-mail, the Internet, etc.

Employees with access to telephones and fax machines are expected to use them as an efficient County services tool. Personal calls, both incoming and outgoing, must be limited. Employees with a job-related need will be provided a scan number for long distance calls. Personal long distance calls utilizing a scan number are prohibited. Except in cases of emergency, personal

calls shall be made only during rest and meal periods. County calls, especially long distance, shall be managed to incur minimum necessary expense.

Electronic mail and telephone voice mail are efficient and valuable tools. If employees receive a message that is not addressed to the employee, the employee is not authorized to read or use information contained in that message. The rule of thumb, when it comes to e-mail and voice mail, is that employees should not say or write anything that they would not want someone other than the intended receiver to hear or read.

#### **11.14 PARKING**

Due to the service nature of Grant County's operations, it is important that visitors to the County's various worksites have ample parking. Each worksite has specified areas for visitor parking, which employees may not use. Employee parking is provided and specified. Employees may use this designated parking on a first come first serve basis. Authorized personnel only may use reserved parking spaces in employee parking areas.

#### **11.15 USE OF MOTOR VEHICLES**

An employee's position may require the employee to drive a County Motor Pool Vehicle or their personal vehicle to conduct official County business. For the safety and protection of the employee and others, employees must follow all safety rules while operating any motor vehicle. (See *Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-09, Motor Vehicle Use*).

#### **11.16 CONTACTS WITH THE NEWS MEDIA**

The Board of County Commissioners, elected officials or designated department heads shall be responsible for all official contacts with the news media, including answering questions from the media. The Board of County Commissioners, elected official or department head may designate specific employees to give out procedural, factual or historical information on particular work-related subjects. If contacted by the media regarding a subject an employee is not authorized to publicize, the employee must report this request to their supervisor and refer the media to the appropriate designated person. If in doubt, employees should ask their supervisor first.

#### **11.17 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

Grant County employees may participate in political or partisan activities of their choosing provided that County resources and property are not utilized and the activity does not adversely affect the responsibilities of the employees in their positions. Employees may not campaign on County time or in a County uniform or while representing the County in any manner. Employees may not allow others to use County facilities or funds for political activities, except as otherwise allowed by law.

Any County employee who meets with or may be observed by the public or otherwise represents the County to the public, while performing regular duties may not wear or display any button, badge or sticker relevant to any candidate or ballot issue during working hours. Employees shall not solicit a contribution for partisan political cause, on County time or County property, except in specific cases, such as the Fair or Museum, and in accordance with established policies.

### **11.18 GIFTS AND LOANS**

Grant County employees shall not accept any gifts, gratuities, loans, goods or services from any individuals or firms who are either conducting or seeking to conduct business with, or seeking to obtain approvals from the County. Employees will neither use their official position nor accept gifts, loans, gratuities for personal gain.

This policy does not pertain to reimbursements for County related business or the receipt of goods or services available to the general public.

### **11.19 SOLICITATION**

It is the County's desire to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner. We believe that our employees, citizens and visitors should have the opportunity to work without interference from persons who are pursuing a purpose not related to normal business activities. Therefore, we do not allow non-employees to come upon our premises to solicit employees, citizens or visitors or to distribute literature or other materials for any purpose at any time.

Furthermore, employees are prohibited from distributing any form of literature or other material in their work areas, which are not related to the County's business purpose unless authorized by management. Employees are also prohibited from soliciting other employees for any cause during their assigned working time. For purpose of this policy, working time means time during which either employee is expected to be actively engaged in their assigned work.

### **11.20 WORKPLACE RULES**

Grant County is committed to providing quality service to citizens and visitors, and as such requires the highest standard of conduct and professionalism. Employment at Grant County is at will as previously stated. This means that employees are free to resign their employment at any time, for any reason or no reason, with or without cause, and with or without notice. The County retains the right to terminate employment at any time, for any reason or no reason with or without cause, and with or without notice. Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter the fact that employment is at will. The following conduct, although not a complete list, is prohibited at Grant County:

- Possessing firearms or dangerous weapons on County property, except in the case of authorized law enforcement;

- Assaulting or threatening a fellow employee, citizen, visitor, vendor or applicant;
- Theft, misuse or removal of County property, another employee's property or a citizen or visitor's property;
- Gambling on County property;
- Violating the County's Drug and Alcohol Policy (see *Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-11, Drug & Alcohol*);
- Giving or taking a bribe of any nature as inducement for obtaining or retaining a County job or position or for services performed;
- Conviction, deferred prosecution, or any other alternative disposition of a criminal charge, which Grant County believes would have an adverse effect regarding an employee's work and work relationships or brings into question continued suitability in the office or department;
- Inappropriate/improper use of public office/authority, misrepresentation of official authority or omission of responsibilities based on official authority and responsibilities;
- Conflict of interest between off-duty activities and official duties;
- Failure to properly record, complete, schedule, notify, communicate, process and/or file any and all matters pertaining to County business;
- Harassment of any kind;
- Any breach of confidentiality requirements, whether written or verbal;
- Falsifying any County record or report, such as an application for employment, a production record, a time record, etc.;
- Insubordination, including but not limited to, refusal or failure to obey orders or instruction in the line of duty, in accordance with established work rules and policies;
- Disrespect displayed toward a supervisor or the County while performing work for the County;
- Dishonesty
- Ignoring safety rules or common safety practices, including failure to report exposures/safety hazards to one's supervisor;
- Engaging in disorderly conduct, horseplay or immoral conduct;
- Using uncivil, profane, insulting, vile, obscene or abusive language;
- Failure to report occupational injuries or accidents, including motor vehicle accidents immediately to one's supervisor;
- Engaging in activities other than assigned work during working hours and/or while operating County equipment, without prior approval by one's supervisor;
- Acting in an insulting, rude, insolent or uncivil manner toward any citizen, visitor, vendor, fellow employee or other person while working for the County, while operating County equipment, while on County premises or while representing the County;
- Failure to provide appropriate, non-discriminating services to the public and employees;
- Failure to exercise the care and attention to one's work required by the circumstances;
- Tobacco use in restricted or prohibited areas, whether on County property or otherwise;
- Acting in any manner inconsistent with common sense rules of conduct necessary for the welfare of the citizens, County or its employees;
- Unexcused or excessive absences or tardiness or failure to maintain satisfactory attendance and punctuality;
- Leaving work before the end of the shift, not being ready to begin work at the start of the shift or working overtime without prior approval of one's supervisor;

- Sleeping , loitering or spending unnecessary time away from the job;
- Unauthorized possession or use of any County property, equipment or materials;
- Contributing to unsanitary conditions or poor housekeeping;
- Using County property or time for personal financial gain or financial gain of another person;
- Careless, reckless or unsafe use of any County property, equipment or material;
- Soliciting and/or accepting payment, gifts or any item of value for services performed during the regular workday or while representing the County outside of the regular workday;
- Deliberate or negligent alteration, destruction or waste of County property, facilities, records or equipment or that of another employee or citizen;
- Violating specific departmental rules;
- Parking in reserved parking spaces, including areas specified for visitor use;
- Posting, altering or removing any matter from County bulletin boards without specific authorization.

The above is not intended to be a complete list. Employees are expected to use ordinary, reasonable, common sense rules of conduct throughout the performance of their work. Employees are expected to adhere to any federal and/or state regulations related to any of the above. If an employee believes that federal and/or state regulations are being violated by any department rules, they should notify their supervisor immediately. Employees who violate these rules will be subject to corrective actions, up to and including termination of employment. (See *Section 13.1 Corrective Action Policy*).

## **11.21 DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

Grant County is committed to providing a safe, healthy and efficient working environment. To help achieve this goal, employees are prohibited from:

- Possessing, distributing, selling, manufacturing, or using any controlled substance;
- Consuming alcoholic beverages while on County premises, in County vehicles or while on County time, having alcohol in one's blood, breath and/or urine, or bringing alcohol onto County premises and/or work sites; and
- Abusing prescription drugs or possessing drugs which have not been prescribed for you by a physician.

An employee who violates this policy is subject to corrective action up to, and including, termination of employment. Use of some illegal drugs/controlled substances is detectible for several days. Detection of any alcohol, illegal drugs and/or controlled substance will be considered a violation of this policy.

The County substance abuse program includes several components to support the County's efforts to remain drug free, including:

- Drug testing for accidents involving injury and/or property damage;

- Drug testing when a supervisor suspects that an employee has consumed alcohol and/or has used a controlled substance during working hours or has come to work after doing so; and
- An Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

While the County does not condone the abuse of alcohol, prescription drugs, and/or use of illegal drugs, Grant County does recognize that addiction to drugs and/or alcohol can be treated. If an employee recognizes a personal addiction or abuse problem and seeks assistance from management in advance of detection, the County will assist the employee in seeking treatment. The confidential nature of the employee's counseling and rehabilitation for drug and/or alcohol abuse will be preserved to the extent required by law. (See *Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-11, Drug & Alcohol*).

## **11.22 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

Grant County is committed to providing a safe work environment that is free from acts of violence. The County will not tolerate acts of violence committed by or against employees, visitors or vendors on County property or while performing County business at remote locales.

Every employee has a responsibility to keep the workplace free from acts of violence. Employees who have a question, hear a threat, see a potential act of violence, or an actual act of violence, are required to notify their supervisor or another member of management immediately. (See *Policy & Procedure Manual Policy 02-08, Workplace Violence*).



## **SECTION 12– HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY**

### **12.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Grant County makes a concerted effort to provide a safe and healthful work environment. It is the responsibility of the Safety Committee to ensure and relay current health and safety information to employees. Every employee has a responsibility to learn and practice safe methods for doing their work. Employees should see their supervisor with questions.

If an employee sees a potentially hazardous condition, they are required to notify their supervisor immediately. If an employee is injured on the job, whether or not medical attention is required, he/she must submit a written Accident/Injury Report to their supervisor as soon as possible after the incident.

### **12.2 SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Grant County has established a Safety Committee, comprised of employees and members of management representatives to develop, relay, and ensure all health and safety procedures and compliance. The Safety Committee shall meet at least once quarterly or as necessary. It shall be the responsibility of each representative to relay all pertinent information in a timely manner to affected employees.

### **12.3 CONTAGIOUS DISEASES**

An employee suffering from a contagious illness is responsible to ensure that during such known contagious stage(s) that he/she is not jeopardizing another employee or citizen's health and well-being. Employees should practice good judgment when determining whether or not they should attend work during known contagious stage(s) of illness. In cases of known contagious illness, supervisors may request a medical release prior to authorizing an employee to return to work.

### **12.4 BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS**

Grant County will take reasonable precaution to protect employees from the hazards of blood and other potentially infectious materials. The level of known occupational exposure varies between departments and positions. Employees employed in positions with levels of occupational exposure requiring training will be provided such training in addition to more specific policies and procedures.

## **12.5 FIRST AID**

Grant County offices, departments and vehicles will have available a first aid kit for minor injuries. The kits shall be supplied as necessary.

In the case of a more serious injury or emergency, employees are required to immediately notify 911. If an employee is injured on the job, whether medical attention is required or not, he/she must submit a written Accident/Injury Report to their supervisor as soon as possible after the incident.

## **12.6 FIRE/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

In the event of a fire and/or emergency, all employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to the safety and well being of themselves and others. In the event of a fire and/or emergency, employees must immediately notify 911.

Grant County work locations will have established and published fire and emergency procedures, including escape routes. Employees are expected to know, understand, respond and utilize these procedures in the event of an emergency.

## **12.7 EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION BADGES**

For identification and security purposes, employees may be required to wear an employee identification badge. Such badges identify an employee as a County employee to the public and fellow employees and should not be used to misrepresent an employee's authority.

## **12.8 SECURITY AND PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Grant County may issue property to an employee for his/her use to perform his/her job. These may include, but not be limited to, computers, lockers, vehicles, pagers and cellular telephones. Employees are solely responsible for property issued to them. Employees shall not allow use of issued property by other employees through sharing keys, access codes, passwords, combination lock information, etc. Employees are responsible to ensure access to such items is secure.

Grant County does not assume responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to personal property brought to the workplace. While we cannot guarantee security of your personal property, we ask that employees report any incidents immediately to their supervisor.

Grant County reserves the right to inspect and/or search any personal property or vehicle brought to or taken from the premises based on reasonable suspicion or violation of alcohol and/or controlled substance policies or violation of other policies such as workplace violence, etc.

## **12.9 PRIVACY**

Grant County provides its employees with the tools necessary to perform his/her work. Such tools shall not be used for personal gain. However, some tools may be used for personal purposes, such as storage of personal items belonging to the employee. Employees do not have an expectation of privacy regarding such personal items kept in or on County issued property and Grant County reserves the right to inspect any and all County property at any time with or without notice. County property shall include, but not be limited to vehicles, desks, lockers, computers, etc.



## **SECTION 13 – DISCIPLINE AND SEPARATIONS**

### **13.1 CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY**

Employment is at will as previously stated. Nothing in this section shall be construed to create an employment contract nor shall it be construed to alter the fact that employment is at will. The County's method of corrective action is meant to help employees improve except where problems exist or are serious in nature. At times, the employer may issue an oral reprimand and written reprimand before proceeding with termination of an employee's employment. Some infractions or behaviors are serious enough to warrant proceeding direct with termination of employment. For serious infractions, a suspension without pay may also be appropriate. Supervisors will determine what is appropriate in addressing the situation. All documentation may be considered to establish an overall conduct record. Serious corrective action shall be reviewed with the Human Resources department prior to it taking place.

An employee may be terminated for a single occurrence of behavior or violation of policy without having been previously warned or reprimanded.

This process should not restrict the opportunity for less formal communication with supervisors.

Grant County may discipline an employee for any violations of any rules or regulations, including departmental rules. Such rules and regulations may not necessarily be enumerated in this Employment Handbook or elsewhere. Corrective action may include the following:

- Oral coaching and counseling;
- Oral reprimand;
- Written reprimand;
- Suspension without pay;
- Discharge

The employer is not restricted to following progressive discipline.

In certain cases where it is necessary and appropriate to remove an employee from the workplace pending discipline or to conduct an investigation, the employee may be placed on Administrative Leave with or without pay. This shall be reviewed by the Human Resources department prior to implementation.

Oral coaching and counseling is informal verbal notice provided to the employee. Such counseling is documented and is included in the employee's personnel file.

Oral reprimand is a formal but verbal notice provided to the employee. Oral reprimands are documented in writing and placed in employee's personnel file. Employees shall sign oral reprimands as evidence only of having received the oral reprimand. Oral reprimands shall include an explanation of the violation or problem and request for corrective action by the employee

Written reprimand is a formal written notice provided to the employee. Written reprimands are placed in employee's personnel file. Employees shall sign written reprimands as evidence only of having received the written reprimand. Written reprimands should include the following:

- Statement of the facts;
- Statement of discipline administered;
- Corrective action required of the employee;
- Definite period during which the employee must clearly demonstrate improvement;
- Statement of further potential corrective action to be taken if corrective action is not achieved; and
- Employee's comments and acknowledgement of receipt of discipline

Suspension without pay is an involuntary period of unpaid leave imposed for disciplinary reasons. Documentation of suspensions is to be signed by the employee and placed in the employee's personnel file. The number of days of suspension is dependent on the nature of the violation and the employee's record. In the case of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) exempt employees, the suspension without pay shall not be less than one (1) week. Employees serving a suspension shall not be employable with any other County office, department or funded organization during the suspension. Written documentation of suspensions should generally follow the outline provided for written reprimands with the addition of a statement that it is a "final warning" and that the employee will be discharged upon the occurrence of any other violation/infraction.

Discharge is involuntary termination of employment. Employment at Grant County is at will. The County retains the right to terminate an employee's employment at any time, for any reason or no reason and with or without notice. Written documentation of discharge may include the reason(s) for the discharge but not necessarily because employment is at will. Prior to discharge being implemented, the Human Resources department shall review the matter.

## **13.2 LEAVING GRANT COUNTY**

When an employee wishes to resign because of illness or for personal reasons, the possibility of a leave-of-absence may be explored if the employee has a good work record and has sufficient length of service.

Written notice of an employee's resignation, including the anticipated last day of work would be appreciated and should be given to their supervisor. An employee's last day of work will be considered the official date of separation from the County. It is suggested that the employee give at least two (2) weeks notice before voluntarily resigning employment. The County reserves the option to provide an employee with pay in lieu of working the two (2) week notice period. (*See Policy & Procedure Manual, Policy Memo 05-03, Prohibition against Severance Pay*). Employees are required to turn in all County property upon employment separation of any kind.

Upon separation under any circumstance and for any reason(s), employees will be compensated for all wages due for services rendered through their date of separation and any additional compensation due, such as annual leave minus authorized deductions on the next regularly scheduled pay day. Questions regarding final paychecks should be directed to Accounting.

When employees leave the County, they will be asked to participate in an exit interview. The primary purpose of this is to ask employees for valuable feedback about their work experience at Grant County. An employee's participation in an exit interview is voluntary and greatly appreciated. We encourage honesty and openness during this process. Information obtained during the exit interview will be maintained reasonably confidential and shall not be referenced during any employment verification for the resigning employee.

### **13.3 RETIREMENT**

Grant County is a member of the federal Social Security System, Washington Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) and the Washington Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters System (LEOFF). When an employee reaches the appropriate retirement age or appropriate timeline for his/her retirement system(s), has accumulated a sufficient number of years in the appropriate retirement system(s) and meets the other eligibility requirements, he/she may retire. Employees contemplating retirement or who have questions about the retirement system(s) should contact the Human Resources department or the Department of Retirement Systems.



## **SECTION 14 – GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

### **14.1 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Employees shall use the following procedure in handling grievances regarding alleged violations of this Employment Handbook. The time limitations provided are essential to the prompt and orderly resolution of any grievance. These time limitations may be waived or extended upon written mutual agreement.

- Step 1 – The first step in the grievance procedure is at the office/department level. The employee must submit a signed and dated written grievance to his/her immediate supervisor within thirty (30) calendar days of the occurrence. The grievance shall include:
  - A description of the events in question and the date(s) of occurrence;
  - The name(s) of the individual(s) involved;
  - A specific statement of which policy the employee believes was violated;
  - The desired remedy.

The immediate supervisor will respond in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the grievance. If the immediate supervisor cannot resolve the grievance or does not respond to the employee's grievance, the employee may present the grievance in writing to the elected official/department head within thirty (30) calendar days of the response or when the response was due.

- Step 2 – If the action(s) in Step 1 do not resolve the grievance, the employee shall submit the signed and dated written grievance, along with a statement regarding why he/she does not agree with the answer(s), to the elected official/department head within thirty (30) calendar days of the response in Step 1 or when the response was due. The elected official/department head will respond in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the grievance. If the employee disagrees with the elected official/department head's decision, the employee may present the grievance in writing to the Board within thirty (30) calendar days of the elected official/department head's response.
- Step 3 – If the action(s) in Step 1 and 2 do not resolve the grievance, the employee shall sign, date and submit the grievance, all answers and the recommendation, along with a statement regarding why he/she disagrees, to the Board within thirty (30) calendar days after the elected official/department head's response to the grievance. The Board has the right to hold a meeting regarding the grievance or review the information and make a final decision within thirty (30) calendar days of the meeting or submission of the grievance to the Board. The Board shall provide its decision in writing. The Board's decision shall be final and binding on the parties.

Employees shall be free from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal in seeking resolution of their grievance. Further, employees acting as witnesses to a grievance shall be free from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal.

Failure by an employee to comply with any time limitation of the Grievance Procedure shall constitute withdrawal and dismissal of the grievance. Failure by Grant County to comply with any time limitation of the Grievance Procedure shall allow the employee to proceed to the next step subject to the applicable time limitations.

When possible, resolution meetings/hearing shall be scheduled during normal County working hours, subject to the public interest and the efficiency and non interruption of County services.

Any time during the grievance procedure, either party may request assistance from the Human Resources department. Questions about the grievance procedures should be direct to the Human Resources department.