



**EXHIBIT A**

**CLARK REGIONAL WASTEWATER DISTRICT**

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**Adopted 01/26/10**

**Amended 02/22/11; 03/08/11; 06/20/11; 11/20/12; 02/12/13; 03/24/15; 12/13/16;  
12/14/16; 12/26/17; 03/22/18; 12/26/18; 08/01/19; 12/23/19; 12/02/20; 12/28/21**

## WELCOME TO CLARK REGIONAL WASTEWATER DISTRICT

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Clark Regional Wastewater District. We trust that your employment with our agency will be a mutually rewarding experience.

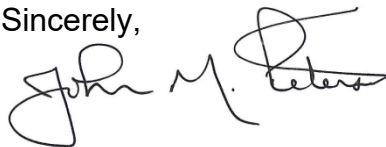
The Employee Handbook outlines the District's personnel policies. The handbook should prove to be very helpful in explaining our approach to these matters and is intended to establish clear expectations and consistent practice. Recognizing that employees are the foundation of any successful organization, our elected Board of Commissioners has consistently supported developing personnel policies that allow us to attract and retain outstanding staff.

Along with an open-door policy, we encourage active communication. Please feel free to discuss any questions you may have about these items with your direct supervisor, department manager, Human Resources, or the General Manager.

Our organization is committed to providing challenging and interesting work, encouraging growth in our staff, holding ourselves to high professional and ethical standards and celebrating our many successes. We value our staff tremendously, and we cannot separate the success of our employees as professionals and the success of the District as an organization.

Again, to new staff, welcome aboard. To those current employees simply receiving an updated handbook, we greatly appreciate your continued service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J" and "P".

John M. Peterson

General Manager

# DISTRICT EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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## **SECTION 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE DISTRICT**

## History of the District

The Clark Regional Wastewater District is a special purpose district that was founded on May 22, 1958, by a group of businessmen to meet the growing needs of the area's population. The District operates under Washington State Title 57 RCW. It has a three-member Board of Commissioners who each serve six-year, staggered terms and is elected by the public within its service area.

The District service area contains over 700 miles of sewer lines and 70 pump stations throughout more than 50 square miles of unincorporated Clark County and the City of Ridgefield. Currently, the District serves more than 45,000 Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs) with an estimated population served in excess of 100,000.

The District currently employs more than sixty employees who maintain the sewer lines and perform finance, engineering, and administrative functions for the District at its office located at 8000 NE 52<sup>nd</sup> Court. The District moved to this location in March of 1997.

The District is located in Clark County, Washington. It is a stand-alone agency with a governing Board, Management Team, and rate-based funding arrangement. The District currently contracts with the Discovery Clean Water Alliance and the City of Vancouver for treatment services. These costs represent approximately 50% of its annual operating budget.

## Mission, Vision, Values; Communication Principles and Ethics

### Mission

"Providing customer-focused, professional wastewater services in an environmentally and financially responsible manner."

### Vision

"An active partner in Clark County, to support economic development and to manage and protect water resources."

### Values: SERVICE

**Safe** and healthy workplace for all employees

**Employees** who are talented and motivated professionals that work together in a spirit of cooperation and with respect for all individuals

**Responsibility**, integrity, and fairness in managing the environmental and financial resources entrusted to the District

**Valued** partner involved and active within our community

**Innovation** and learning, creating an environment of personal and professional growth

**Communication** that is active, open, honest, and timely

**Efficient** and effective solutions that meet the needs of our customers and our community



## **Communication Principles**

- Focus on the work and what is in the best interest of the District and its stakeholders. *(Good ideas don't have boundaries and don't create winners and losers. We are all working to achieve the best interests of the District.)*
- Communicate based upon mutual respect, believing the best in the intentions of others. *(Foster a supportive, professional environment and culture.)*
- Take personal responsibility for well understood two-way communication. *(Establish clarity and fully understood expectations in all communications seeking an outcome.)*
- Resolve issues and misunderstandings directly. *(Speak with the person who is able to resolve the issue or misunderstanding.)*
- Address rumors with the truth in an open, honest, and timely manner. *(Replace speculation with honest, consistent communication.)*

## **Code of Ethics**

The District is a Special Purpose District, and all its employees will abide by RCW Title 42 Public Officers and Agencies, including RCW 42.23 Code of Ethics for Municipal Officers-Contract Interest. With that in mind, District employees are expected to conduct business with the best interests of the District in mind. Employees have the right to engage in activities outside of District business, which are of a private nature, unrelated to District business and do not conflict with the best interests of the District. No activity should be undertaken that conflicts with or appears to conflict with the performance of the employee's duties to the District. A conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest exists whenever a reasonable and prudent person would believe that the activity in question creates such a conflict. Examples of conflict of interest include but are not limited to:

- Having a monetary interest directly or indirectly, in a contract or transaction for product or services paid for with District funds
- Accepting or soliciting any gift, favor, loan, or anything of value, which can reasonably be construed as given for the purpose of obtaining special consideration or influence

If an employee is given anything of value that could be reasonably construed to create a conflict of interest, the employee must immediately report such activity to the General Manager or the Board of Commissioners. Failure to report a potential conflict of interest shall be grounds for corrective action up to and including separation of employment. Contact your supervisor or the General Manager if you have any questions regarding a possible conflict of interest including outside work.

## Employee Handbook Overview

### Employment Relationship

Nothing in this Handbook shall constitute a contract of employment or a promise of employment for any specific duration. Your employment with the District is entered into voluntarily, and you are free to resign at any time and for any reason. Similarly, the District is free to separate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason. ***Your employment relationship with the District is strictly “at will” and may be separated by either party for any reason, with or without cause, at any time. This Handbook is not a contract.*** Only the Board of Commissioners has the authority to agree to employment for any specified period of time and an employment agreement for a specific term must be in writing, signed by the employee and the President of the Board of Commissioners.

### Employment Definitions

The following terms are used to describe the classification of employees, their employment status, and special conditions:

- **Exempt Employees.** Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and state law and who are exempt from overtime pay requirements.
- **Non-exempt Employees.** Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA and state exemption tests and who are paid a multiple of their regular rate of pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week. Time is managed and recorded in 15-minute increments.
- **Full-time Employees.** Employees whose position is scheduled to work 40 hours per week on an ongoing basis (longer than six months).
- **Three-quarter-time Employees.** Employees whose position is scheduled to work 30 hours per week on an ongoing basis (longer than six months).
- **Half-time Employees.** Employee whose position is scheduled to work 20 hours per week on an ongoing basis (longer than six months).
- **Part-time Employees.** Employees whose position is scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week and less than 70 hours per month on an ongoing basis (longer than six months).
- **Limited-Term Employees.** Employees who are hired for an extended but pre-established period (which may be defined by time and/or project). They may work a full-time or part-time schedule of half-time or greater.
- **Training Period Employees.** Newly hired employees hired at a rate of pay less than the minimum rate of pay for that position’s range, not to exceed six months. May be a full-time or part-time employee.
- **Orientation Employees.** Newly hired Regular Employees who are within their first six months of employment.

- **Temporary Employees.** Employees who are hired for a pre-established period (which may be defined by time and/or project), usually during peak workloads or for vacation relief. They may work a full-time or part-time schedule. Temporary employees are eligible for Sick Leave.
- **Interns.** Students who are currently enrolled in an accredited school and are hired for a limited period of time usually during the summer. Interns may work a full-time or part-time schedule.
- **Regular Employees.** All full-time, three-quarter time and half-time employees.
- **Employment of Minors.** Generally, employees must be 18 years of age or older. Occasionally, we will hire students or others who are 16 or 17 years old, but the General Manager must approve their hire in advance. State law defines work hours and conditions.
- **Essential Personnel.** Employees designated as “Essential Personnel” on their position descriptions are required to report to work in emergency conditions even if the District Office is closed for inclement weather conditions.
- **Required Residency.** The District maintains critical wastewater conveyance infrastructure requiring designated field staff to be able to respond to an emergency condition after normal business hours in a timely manner. The District has determined that with the current technology and equipment and with the current geographical size of the District service area, the maximum standard commute time from home of residence to the District campus will be forty-five (45) minutes for the designated positions (as defined in the minimum qualifications within their position description). Time will be determined from home to the District office by an appropriate internet mapping tool such as Google Maps or MapQuest.

## Changes in Policy

This Handbook functions as an introduction to the District and as a guide to its expectations and policies. The policies expressed in this Handbook are effective on the date of the adopted resolution and as further amended by the General Manager, unless Board approval is required by law, and supersede all other pre-existing policies and practices, expressed or implied, written, or oral, which may have been issued on subjects covered herein.

To meet the needs of its employees and customers, the District needs to be flexible. Therefore, it reserves the right to make additions, deletions or other changes to the provisions and policies of this Handbook as appropriate, and any changes shall become effective upon adoption. The District will try to give employees as much advance notice of any changes as is practicable under the circumstances, but lack of notice will not make any change in policy of no effect. In all matters covered by this Handbook, including without limitation, working conditions, disciplinary matters, policy formations and compensation, the District intends to reserve complete discretion except where limited by law. In all disputes, investigations or matters of controversy, District determination of the facts, made in good faith, will be conclusive. The District reserves the right to interpret these policies as situations arise and its interpretation, made in good faith, shall be conclusive.

If you are uncertain about any policy or procedure, please check with your supervisor and/or the General Manager.

The information contained in this Handbook applies to all employees of the District. ***It is presented as a matter of information only, and its contents should not be interpreted as a contract between the District and any of its employees.***

**SECTION 2**

**DISTRICT PERSONNEL POLICIES**

## **Equal Employment and Diversity Opportunity**

The District is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We believe that every employee has the right to work in an environment free from all forms of unlawful discrimination. It is the policy of the District that employment decisions for all applications and employees will be made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, creed, marital status, veteran status, disability, or other characteristics protected under federal, state, or local law.

This policy applies to all areas of employment, including recruitment, hiring, training and development, position change, termination, layoff, compensation benefits, social and recreational programs and all other conditions and privileges of employment. Employment and promotional decisions are based upon the ability to meet and exceed essential job duties and not on personal characteristics that are not related to their ability to do their job.

The District will apply sound recruitment practices that provide all qualified job applicants the opportunity to apply for and be considered for all positions that open within the District.

The District expects that all employees will maintain a working environment that encourages mutual respect, promotes civil and congenial relationships among employees and is free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and violence. Non-compliance of our standards and policies may result in corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

No employee will be retaliated against for raising good faith concerns under this policy. We seek employee cooperation and assistance in helping to maintain equal employment opportunity.

Any employee involved in discriminatory practices will be subject to corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

The District fully complies with all state and federal policies and requirements providing for full accessibility to all District buildings for individuals with disabilities.

## **Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment**

### **Discrimination and Harassment will not be Tolerated**

The District is committed to providing a workplace where customers, coworkers, supervisors, and managers treat each other in a courteous, professional, and respectful manner. Unlawful discrimination and harassment of any kind is prohibited. This specifically includes sexual harassment and other discrimination/harassment based upon race, color, religion, sex, ethnic or national origin, age, creed, marital status, disability, or any characteristic protected under state and federal discrimination regulations.

This policy applies to all employees at all times when they are acting within the scope of their employment, whether at the office, an official company function outside the office, a District-sponsored social event or working outside of the District's office location.

Employees who violate this policy are subject to corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

### **What is Harassment**

“Harassment” is any conduct, gestures or words that are intended or reasonably likely to offend, upset, denigrate, or humiliate another. “Sexual harassment” can be defined as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or with sexual overtones where:

- Submission to the advance is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment;
- Submission to or rejection of the advance affects the basis of employment decision for the employee; or
- Such conduct or statements have the purpose or effect of interfering with the employee’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Examples of harassment, which may violate District policy, also include:

- Verbal harassment such as epithets, derogatory comments, or slurs, demeaning or sexually explicit jokes;
- Physical harassment such as assault, impeding or blocking movement, unwelcome touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement when directed at any individual;
- Visual forms of harassment such as derogatory, offensive, or sexually suggestive posters, cartoons, pictures, or drawings displayed in the workplace; or
- Behavioral forms of harassment such as suggestive facial expressions or noises, leering or obscene gestures.

### **Reporting Discrimination/Harassment**

If you believe you have been the victim of harassment or discrimination, or know of someone who has, report it immediately to your supervisor, department manager, Human Resources, or the General Manager. No employee who observes or is subjected to an act of sexual or other harassment or discrimination shall overlook the act. All employees have a duty to report acts of harassment immediately.

If you do make a complaint, the District will promptly conduct an impartial investigation. Complaints or discrimination or harassment will be handled with sensitivity, discretion and confidentiality to the extent allowed by the circumstances and the law; however, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If the District concludes that unlawful harassment or discrimination has occurred, appropriate corrective actions will be taken upon completion of the investigation. The District’s goal is to have every employee treated with dignity and respect.

### **Retaliation is Prohibited**

No action will be taken against any employee who in good faith files a complaint of discrimination or harassment or who assists in the investigation of such complaint by

providing information. Employees who believe they have been retaliated against for having reported harassment or participated in an investigation are urged to promptly notify Human Resources or the General Manager, or the Board of Commissioners, if the General Manager is the subject of the retaliation concerns, so that their concerns may be investigated. Appropriate corrective action will be taken if allegations of retaliation are sustained.

## **Disability Accommodation**

The District is committed to complying with the disability discrimination laws, including the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Washington Laws Against Discrimination (WLAD), and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. All employment practices and activities are conducted on a non-discriminatory basis. This includes providing reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals who have a disability that impacts their ability to perform the essential functions of their job.

Any employee who believes that he or she has a disability that requires accommodation should notify Human Resources as soon as possible after the disability becomes known to the employee, and before the impacts of the disability gives rise to performance issues. Upon such notification, the District will engage in what is commonly referred to as an “interactive process” with the employee. As part of the interactive process, the District may request additional information from the employee, such as a completed medical certification and medical accommodation form from the employee’s treating health care provider, so that the District may verify the existence of a disability and determine what, if any, reasonable accommodation may be offered to the employee to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of his or her job. A “reasonable accommodation” is one that does not create an undue hardship for the District. The District can make no guarantee or assurances as to specific accommodations, and all requests for accommodation must be addressed on a case-by-case basis, based on the particular circumstances.

## **Workplace Violence**

The District is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment for all employees. Any form of workplace violence committed by or against employees will not be tolerated. Employees are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities.

### **Prohibited Conduct**

The following list of behaviors, while not all-inclusive, provides examples of prohibited conduct under this policy:

- Intentionally causing physical injury to another person
- Making threatening remarks
- Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person, or subjects another individual to emotional distress
- Intentionally damaging property belonging to the District or another employee



- Possession of a weapon while on District property or while otherwise conducting District business. *Items required to perform essential duties, such as utility knives, may be carried for that purpose. Personal “pocketknives” are permissible if the blade is 3” or less in length. No firearms, knives or any other items that could reasonably be considered a weapon, either concealable or carried openly, will be permitted on District property*
- Threats to display or use a weapon

## **Reporting**

Employees who are aware of potentially dangerous situations, or who witness or are privy to violent threats or conduct are required to report them immediately to a supervisor or manager. All reports will be investigated, and confidentiality will be maintained whenever possible. All parties involved in a dangerous situation will be counseled as appropriate, and the results of the investigation will be discussed with them.

## **External Sources of Violence**

Incidents involving non-employees, vendors, clients, or others who engage in threats, threatening conduct or violent acts, should be immediately reported to a supervisor or manager. The District will, as appropriate, report the incident to the proper authorities.

## **Safety Measures**

Employees are expected to exercise good judgment and to inform a supervisor or manager if any employee or non-employee exhibits behavior that might lead to a potential danger. Such potentially dangerous behavior may include, but is not limited to:

- Carrying weapons in the workplace or while on District business
- Displaying overt signs of extreme stress, resentment, hostility, or anger
- Threatening remarks
- Sudden deterioration of performance
- Irrational or inappropriate behavior

Employees who are subject to harassment, violence, or threats from a non-employee, including domestic violence, should notify their supervisor or manager. District management will assess the situation and, if appropriate, design a plan or otherwise assist at-risk employees and District staff to prepare for possible emergency situations.

## **Enforcement**

Any employee determined to have engaged in threats, threatening conduct or any inappropriate acts of aggression or violence in the workplace or while conducting District business will be subject to corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

Non-employees engaged in violent acts on the District’s premises or directed at employees during the course of conducting District business, shall be reported to the proper authorities.

# Communications

## District Communications

In order to do our best work, each of us expects and is entitled to be treated with professional respect by our coworkers. Communications between employees at all levels are required to be courteous, respectful, and professional. When we are talking to or about each other, what we say and how we say it are important. Gossip about individuals and hateful language of any kind are contrary to our standard for communication and conduct.

## Bulletin Boards

The District has bulletin boards located in the upper-level employee lunchroom and in the maintenance shop, which are used to help communicate important District information related to employment law notices only. District bulletin boards are for District business only and may not be used by employees to post personal or non-District related materials. Employees are responsible for regularly reading the information posted on the bulletin board.

## Whistle Blower Protection

The District's Whistle Blower policy implements state law RCW Chapter 42.41. Every District employee has the right and obligation to report to the appropriate person information concerning alleged improper governmental actions and the right to do so free from retaliatory action. District officials and employees are prohibited from taking retaliatory action against any District employee because he or she reported in good faith an improper governmental action in accordance with state law. It is the District policy to:

- Encourage District employees to report improper governmental actions taken by District officers or employees; and
- Protect District employees who have reported improper governmental actions, in accordance with the District policies and procedures.

"Improper governmental action" means any action by a local governmental officer or employee undertaken in the performance of the officer's or employee's official duties, whether or not within the scope of the employee's employment that is not compliant with any law or rule, is an abuse of authority, is of substantial and specific danger to the public health or safety or is a gross waste of public funds. "Improper governmental action" DOES NOT include personnel actions.

"Retaliatory action" means (1) any adverse change in an employee's employment status, or the terms and conditions of employment, including denial of adequate staff to perform duties, frequent staff changes, frequent and undesirable office changes, refusal to assign meaningful work, unwarranted and unsubstantiated letters of reprimand or unsatisfactory performance evaluations, demotion, transfer, reassignment, reduction in pay, denial of promotion, suspension, dismissal or any other corrective action; or (2) hostile actions by another employee to the employee that were encouraged by a supervisor, manager or official.

"Emergency" means a circumstance that if not immediately changed may cause damage to persons or property.

District employees who become aware of improper governmental action shall submit a written report of such to the General Manager. If the General Manager is the subject of the report, then the report should be made to the President of the Board of Commissioners or, in the President's absence, to any Board member. In addition, an employee may report improper governmental action to the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney (1013 Franklin Street, Vancouver WA, 98666-5000) or any member of the Board of County Councilors (1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver WA, 98666-5000). The County Prosecuting Attorney's address, as well as the names and addresses of other federal, state, and local agencies, which may investigate improper governmental actions, are on record in the office of the General Manager. Except in the case of an emergency, before an employee provides information of an improper governmental action to a person who is not a public official or a person listed in the District's policy, the employee shall submit a written report to the General Manager. An employee who fails to make a good faith attempt to follow this policy shall not receive the protection of the state whistleblower law.

The General Manager, the President of the Board of Commissioners, or a Board member, as applicable, shall promptly investigate the report of improper governmental action. District officers and employees involved in the investigation of such action shall keep the identity of reporting employees confidential to the extent possible under law unless the employee authorizes the disclosure of identity in writing.

Following the completion of an investigation, the employee reporting the alleged, improper governmental action shall be advised of the results of the investigation and any actions taken by the General Manager or Board of Commissioners with respect to such report. However, any personnel actions taken as a result of the investigation may be kept confidential.

An employee who believes they have been the subject of retaliatory action for reporting improper governmental action shall obtain relief as follows:

- Provide the Board a written notice of the charge of retaliatory action specifying (a) the alleged retaliatory action, and (b) the relief requested no later than thirty (30) days after the occurrence of the alleged retaliatory action. The Board shall respond to the charge and request for relief within thirty (30) days.
- Within fifteen (15) days of the delivery of the response, or within fifteen days of the last day on which the Board could respond, the employee may request a hearing to establish that a retaliatory action occurred and to obtain relief.
- Within five working days of receipt of the request for hearing, the Board shall apply to the State Office of Administrative Hearings for an adjudicative proceeding before an administrative law judge.

The employee must prove their claim by a preponderance of the evidence. The administrative law judge shall issue a final decision no later than forty-five (45) days after the date the request for hearing was delivered to the local government. The final decision of the administrative law judge is subject to judicial review under the arbitrary and capricious standard. Relief ordered by the administrative law judge may be enforced by petition to Superior Court.

The administrative judge may grant the following relief:

- Reinstatement with or without back pay

- Injunctive relief to return the employee to the position he or she held before the retaliatory action and to prevent any recurrence of retaliatory action
- Costs and reasonable attorney's fees to the prevailing party; and
- The imposition of a civil penalty personally upon the retaliator of up to three thousand dollars (\$3,000) payable by each person found to have retaliated against the employee, and a recommendation to the Board that any person found to have retaliated against the employee be suspended with or without pay or dismissed

### **Open Door Policy**

Our policies and practices emphasize open-door practices in which employees are encouraged to deal directly with their supervisor and other members of management regarding any complaints they might have. The needs of the employee and District are best met with open and professional communication in a safe environment.

### **Complaint Handling**

Under normal conditions, if you have a job-related problem, question or complaint and you are unable to resolve it on a one-to-one personal level, you should discuss the problem, question, or complaint with your supervisor. The simplest, quickest, and most satisfactory solution will often be reached at this level, with open, honest, and respectful communication. At any time, you may seek advice and guidance from Human Resources.

If the discussion with your supervisor does not address your problem, question or complaint or resolve the matter to your satisfaction, then the following process can be used:

- Within 15 calendar days following your discussion with your supervisor, you may present your written or oral complaint to the next level of management. If the matter is still not resolved satisfactorily, then:
- Within 15 calendar days following your discussion with higher management, you may present your written or oral complaint to the General Manager. The General Manager shall investigate the problem, question, or complaint by undertaking whatever means the General Manager deems appropriate and will render a decision on the matter. If the matter is still not resolved to your satisfaction, then:
- Within 15 calendar days following your receipt of the General Manager's decision, you may appeal the General Manager's decision in writing to the Board of Commissioners.
- Within 15 calendar days, the Board of Commissioners shall make a determination as to whether they will hear your appeal and advise you of its decision. If the Board of Commissioners decides to review your appeal, your appeal will be heard at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, unless otherwise provided by the Board. Contact your immediate supervisor with any questions you have relating to the proper appeal procedure.

When the issue involves the supervisor or manager with whom you would ordinarily discuss a complaint hereunder, you may bypass that individual and proceed to the next person in authority, without compromising your appeal rights or fear of retaliatory action. At any time, you may seek the advice and guidance of Human Resources.

Difficulties in using this complaint procedure should be brought to the attention of Human Resources.

This complaint handling procedure does not apply to any disciplinary action or non-action taken by the District, which action or non-action is within the District's sole discretion. The above procedure is a non-binding guideline that the District tries to follow. It does not confer or guarantee you any rights.

This complaint handling procedure is made available to employees for the purpose of amicably and effectively resolving job-related complaints unrelated to the disciplinary decisions or acts of the District. The District shall not retaliate against an employee making a good faith report of a complaint under the procedure set forth herein, nor subject any employee to an adverse employment decision based on that employee's good faith report. However, if the District determines that a frivolous complaint is made under this procedure for the sole purpose of harassing, disparaging, or intimidating another employee, the reporting employee may be subject to corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

The District takes all complaints seriously and will address such complaints in a manner that it deems appropriate. If an investigation of a complaint is deemed necessary, the District shall conduct such investigation as discreetly as possible and practical. The District shall disseminate information relating to the complaint on a "need to know" basis only; however, the District cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any complaint.

### **Suggestions**

We encourage you to suggest methods to improve quality and efficiency in the District. Submit your suggestions in writing to your supervisor or the General Manager. Your suggestions should be detailed so that the system or procedure can be adequately evaluated.

### **Confidentiality**

During the course of your employment here, you will be working with our customer lists, business systems, future development plans and other information that we consider confidential. As a public agency, most of our records are public information; HOWEVER, you may become aware of information that is sensitive and could be misinterpreted or used inappropriately if taken out of context. Protect this information by safeguarding it when in use, filing it properly when not in use, and discussing it only with those who have a legitimate "need to know" basis. If you feel uncertain about the information you work with, discuss it with your supervisor immediately.

Additionally, all employees of the District are to respect the confidential nature of information that may be shared with them by subordinates, peers, and supervisors. The District cannot guarantee employees that information that they may share will be held in confidence.

### **Subpoena and Deposition Response Procedure**

Due to the nature of the District's very focused business, litigation involving the District or requiring District staff to be a witness is rare. In most situations, the involvement of District personnel is limited to providing and identifying District records in a lawsuit not involving the District. The following describes the procedure to be taken by District personnel when they receive a subpoena to respond to a deposition:

- District personnel who receive a subpoena for a deposition or court appearance will notify their Department Manager, General Manager and Risk Management Director of the subpoena.
- The employee will provide a copy of the subpoena to the General Manager.
- The General Manager will contact District legal counsel for consultation and direction based upon initial investigation and fact finding.
- District legal counsel will then advise the District on the appropriate course of action to be followed.

If appropriate, District legal counsel will advise the individual subpoenaed on the nature of the proceedings, the requirements of the subpoena, the proper methods for verifying the need for the District's personnel testimony and the proper methods for testifying and providing documents. If requested, in some unique cases, District legal counsel may accompany the District personnel to the deposition or trial.

## **Personnel Documents**

### **Personnel Records**

Important events in each employee's employment history with the District will be recorded and kept in the employee's personnel file. Regular performance reviews, change of status records, commendations, corrective action warnings and educational attainment records and separation documents are examples of records maintained.

You are responsible for notifying Human Resources, as soon as possible, and no later than thirty (30) days of changes in address, telephone number, and/or family status (births, marriage, death, divorce, legal separation, etc.), as income tax status and group insurance may be affected by these changes. Human Resources will provide the change notification to payroll and WA State Public Employees Benefit Board (PEBB) and Department of Retirement Services (DRS). This responsibility includes employees on lay-off status and leaves of absence.

Your personnel file is available for your inspection in the Human Resources office. Contact Human Resources to make an appointment.

### **Position Descriptions**

At the District, Position Descriptions are used to aid in staffing, wage and salary administration and training. They also help employees and supervisors communicate about job responsibilities. However, Position Descriptions are not fixed District policy; they are only guidelines and can normally be expected to change over time. Each employee is expected to review their Position Description with their supervisor at their annual performance appraisal to ensure the Position Description matches up with the current essential job duties of the position.

From time to time, employees are expected to perform duties and handle responsibilities that are not part of their normal job. If, over the months, these new duties and responsibilities remain a significant part of the assignment, the Position Description may be changed and the position may be reclassified, in the District's discretion.

Consistent with the Washington Equal Pay and Opportunities Act, a position description shall generally include the wage scale/salary range for such position.

## **Performance Management**

### **New Employee Orientation and Onboarding**

All employees starting at the District will serve a six-month (6-month/180 days) Orientation Period. The Orientation Period is used to ensure the applicant/employee selected into the position is qualified to perform the essential functions of the job and is meeting District performance expectations. During the Orientation Period, the employee's performance will be reviewed regularly. At the end of the Orientation Period, a stay interview and initial performance review will be conducted by the employee's supervisor, which shall include a recommendation regarding the employee's continued employment. The Department Manager is authorized to approve the employee's continued employment/performance in the position based on documented performance. The General Manager is authorized to separate employment with the new employee at any time during the Orientation Period based on documented performance or corrective action.

### **Employee Performance Review**

The District understands and values the contribution of all its employees. The performance appraisal process seeks to ensure that each employee has the support necessary to maximize their potential and contribution to the effectiveness of the District.

To meet this goal, the District utilizes ongoing meetings with employees and their supervisor(s) on a consistent basis (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, as determined appropriate), and tracks and documents goals, performance, and achievements throughout the year.

A key component of the performance appraisal process is ongoing communication, coaching and one on one meetings between supervisors and employees. Generally, during coaching sessions or one-on-one meetings, specific performance issues or concerns will be addressed with the employee as they occur, and the supervisor will provide additional support and/or resources to help the employee. These coaching sessions and one-on-one meetings may be reflected in the employee's annual review and/or discussed in regularly scheduled check-in meetings.

The goals form and performance review form, along with any employee comments and response materials, will be included in each employee's respective personnel file. The District shall guard the confidentiality of employees' performance appraisal, to the extent permitted by law.

Professional development goals will be established for each employee on an annual basis and will be discussed with you by your supervisor and manager. Your supervisor will submit a completed draft performance review to Human Resources prior to the annual review. Human Resources will review for completeness and for any area of concern. The supervisor will complete the final copy that will be presented at your annual evaluation meeting. Human Resources may be requested to sit in on the evaluation by either you or your supervisor. The annual performance appraisal provides an annual summary of

your regular check-in discussions on professional development, goal attainment and overall performance for the year.

At the end of the evaluation, there should be:

- A solid understanding of the past year's performance, including any differences in performance factor rating and overall rating.
- Direction for the upcoming period.
- Understanding of the new compensation level.
- Beginning of the development of next year's goals.
- Signed annual performance review by the employee and supervisor.

### **Career Development**

The District seeks to create an environment of personal and professional growth. If you would like to discuss your career or to better understand the requirements of a position at the District, please contact HR and arrange for a confidential discussion. Such a discussion will not jeopardize your present position or future with the District and will be intended to assist you in understanding the differences between your current position and the position of interest. Education and Training Assistance Programs are also available and defined under the "Other Services" section of the Employee handbook for those wishing to increase their skills and knowledge.

### **Job Shadowing**

The District seeks to create an environment of innovation and learning. Job Shadowing, the ability to observe other District functions and tasks in the work environment, provides an enhanced general awareness of other functions and tasks. This better understanding increases our ability to communicate and work together in a spirit of cooperation leading to increased overall effectiveness and customer service. If you are interested in Job Shadowing, please review the Job Shadowing procedure, complete the Job Shadowing request form, and submit it to your supervisor.

### **Job Posting**

The District seeks talented and motivated professionals to fill all positions at the District. Whenever a position becomes available and posted at the District, the hiring manager and HR will ensure that only applicants, both internal and external, who meet the qualifications of the position as defined in the Position Description, are evaluated for the position. Applicants, who currently meet the qualifications, have a history of strong performance, and could be expected to perform at a high level in the position, will be further considered for the position. Applicants that are currently employed with a staffing agency and placed at the District in a temporary employment capacity for a continuous period of 12-months or more are eligible to be considered for internal and external recruitments. Current job openings are typically posted on the District's web site, local newspapers, and niche websites.

### **Leaving the District**

If you decide to leave the District, please advise your supervisor or the General Manager in writing at least two weeks prior to your date of departure, so that an orderly transition



can be made. This process includes turning in District property, including any District-issued logo clothing, completing required Human Resources and Payroll forms and having an exit interview. The exit interview with the General Manager or Human Resources is to document the reasons you are leaving and solicit constructive feedback to improve the District. If you fail to provide the written two weeks' notice defined in this section, you shall automatically forfeit your right to payment for any accrued sick leave or vacation leave, as provided in the District Benefit Section of this handbook (Section 4).

**SECTION 3**

**DISTRICT COMPENSATION**

## Compensation Logistics

### Compensation Plan

Established wage or salary ranges are reviewed periodically and may be adjusted, as the District deems appropriate. Details of the Compensation Plan and its administration are contained in a separate document entitled “Clark Regional Wastewater District Compensation Plan” (see District Compensation Plan). If you have specific questions, please contact Human Resources or the General Manager.

### Workweek, Workday and Hours of Work

The standard, regularly scheduled workweek consists of four to five consecutive workdays of eight to ten hours worked each day, respectively, between 12:00 a.m. Sunday and 11:59 p.m. Saturday. A standard 8-hour workday normally starts at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m. A standard 10-hour workday normally starts at 6:30 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m.

#### Non-Exempt Employees

Each non-exempt employee is assigned a schedule depending on the assigned area of work and the needs of the District, which may vary from the District’s standard workweek schedule. Employees will receive notice of their assigned schedule, and any subsequent schedule changes as far in advance as possible. A supervisor may need to change the employee’s schedule, permanently or temporarily, to meet scheduling or other operational needs of the District. Please see the department supervisor with any questions about the assigned schedule.

#### Exempt Employees

Exempt employees work a professional schedule. In general, exempt employees are expected to maintain a regular work schedule that coincides with the District’s normal hours of operation; however, they are not bound by a set workday schedule (e.g. 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.). Often, the needs of the position may require that they arrive early, stay late, or attend “after hours” meetings; exempt employees are not compensated for these additional work hours with overtime pay.

### Lunch Periods

All non-exempt employees are entitled to an unpaid lunch period approximately midway through their normal workday schedule. Depending on the assigned work schedule, the duration of the lunch period may be either a half hour or an hour. The unpaid lunch period includes any voluntary travel time by the employee to and from the location of their work and the location where they take the lunch period, including voluntarily returning to the office from the field. Please see your supervisor for information on your assigned time and length of the lunch period. On an exception and occasional basis only and by agreement of the supervisor and employee, employees may elect to omit their lunch period.

## **Rest Periods**

All non-exempt employees working four (4) or more hours daily earn a 15-minute paid work break for each four (4) hours worked, up to a total of 30 minutes. Depending upon your particular position, these breaks may be scheduled, in which case they will be scheduled approximately mid-morning and mid-afternoon. In other cases, rest breaks may be taken intermittently throughout the workday, totaling 30 minutes, with supervisors' approval. Employees are expected to take their rest breaks as designated.

## **Overtime Pay**

Overtime includes any hours worked in excess of the hours in the employee's assigned workday (e.g. in excess of 8 or 10 hours), or in excess of 40 hours total in the workweek (provided, an employee is not paid overtime twice on the same hours). The District includes holidays, floating holidays, vacation, sick leave, and compensatory time used as "time worked" for purposes of computing overtime.

Overtime shall be compensated at a rate of one-and-one-half times (1-1/2) the employee's regular rate of pay (standard overtime rate). Overtime will be earned to the nearest quarter hour (rounded up or down, as appropriate) of worked time.

All overtime work by non-exempt employees must be authorized in advance by the employee's supervisor. Working overtime without authorization may result in corrective action, up to and including separation of employment.

## **Compensatory Time - Non-Exempt Employees**

Overtime is typically paid in the pay period in which it is earned. On an exception basis and by agreement of the supervisor and the employee, an employee may elect to be compensated for overtime in the form of compensatory time off (comp time) rather than overtime pay, except during the final pay period in December, in which all overtime must be paid in the pay period. Such election must be made in advance, either on a standing or ad hoc basis, and must be agreed-to by both the employee and the District.

When approved, comp time is earned at the employee's standard overtime rate, i.e. for each overtime hour worked, an employee earns 1-1/2 hours of comp time. Overtime can only be converted to comp time in one-half hour increments. Quarter-hour overtime periods will remain and be paid out as overtime.

Comp time will accrue and be managed on an annual basis (January to mid-December pay periods). Comp time can be accrued and utilized throughout the year as agreed to by the employee and supervisor, in consideration of the business needs of the District; provided, however, that an employee may use their comp time within a reasonable period after it is accrued. Comp time balances at the end of the annual period will be paid out in the final pay period of that year. Comp time will not roll over into the next year. Upon separation of employment, an employee shall be paid for any accrued but unused compensatory time at the employee's regular hourly pay rate.

## **Additional Compensation**

### **On-Call Compensation**

Non-exempt employees assigned to on-call duty, both primary and backup, shall be compensated, on an occurrence basis, for each day on call.

An employee assigned to and performing on-call duties, primary or backup, shall be compensated as follows. An employee may not take compensatory time off in lieu of on-call compensation.

Weekday:

- An amount equal to one and one-half (1.5) hours at the employee's regular rate of pay for each weekday on call.

Holiday & Weekend:

- An amount equal to two (2) hours at the employee's regular rate of pay for each day on call on a District observed Holiday (see p.4-4) or a weekend (Saturday and Sunday).

### **Call-out Protocol**

Any non-exempt employee that is called out from home, or after the employee has otherwise left the District premises for the day, to respond to an emergency shall be compensated at the employee's overtime rate of pay for a minimum of two (2) hours or the actual hours worked, whichever is greater. For purposes of this policy, hours are calculated from the time the employee leaves home (or other location upon receiving the call) to report to the District office and returns home (or to another personal destination).

## **Payroll**

### **Time Recording (Exempt and Non-exempt)**

Each employee is responsible for accurately maintaining a timesheet on a form approved by the District. A timesheet is a legal record of the hours an employee works. A non-exempt employee's paycheck is based on the timesheet. For exempt employees, timesheets are used to track paid time off and for other administrative and record-keeping purposes.

Timesheets shall be prepared and signed by the employee and reviewed and approved by the supervisor. Employees are responsible for submitting a completed timesheet by the required date in order to ensure processing for payment on payday. All hours worked shall be recorded daily on the timesheet in increments of fifteen (15) minutes, quarter-hour.

Non-exempt employees are required to utilize their accrued paid leave banks to cover any hours not worked during the workweek, measured by the quarter hour.

## **Exempt Time Off (ETO)**

Exempt time off (ETO) occurrences are intended to provide time off for exempt staff when the employee's work requires evening or weekend meetings and or when the employee's required work responsibilities exceed the typical 40-hour work week.

Exempt employees are required to use paid leave for absences of more than 4 hours in a workday. Salary or leave bank deductions will not be required for absences of 4 hours or less upon demonstration of work meeting the conditions stated above. ETO is limited to 24 such absences per year and not more than 4 such occurrences per month. In the interest and furtherance of public accountability principles, and to ensure that public funds are appropriately allocated and used, the District will make deductions to an exempt employee's paid leave banks as set forth in this policy; if paid leave is not available, the exempt employee's salary shall be deducted accordingly.

## **Pay Period and Paydays**

All District employees are responsible for the timely submission and accuracy of their time records and accounting for all hours worked and/or leave taken.

Employees are paid on a semi-monthly basis, on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month, or the last business day prior to the payday when it falls on a weekend or Holiday.

## **Emergency Pay Advances**

In the event of an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, employees may need to have money available outside of the typical pay period. Provisions are made for requesting an advance for emergency purposes only. ***The General Manager shall authorize disbursement of emergency pay advances.*** Maximum emergency advance shall be limited to 30% of gross pay, but in no case shall the advance exceed the amount earned to date by the employee. By accepting the advance, the employee understands and agrees that the advanced amount will be deducted from the employee's next paycheck, and the employee expressly consents to such deduction.

## **Payroll Deductions and Documents**

Various payroll deductions are made each payday to comply with federal and state laws pertaining to taxes, retirement, and insurance. To the extent feasible, deductions will be split equally between each pay period. If you have any questions regarding your deductions, please contact the Finance Department.

The Federal Social Security Act covers all District employees. Payroll deductions as required by the Act are withheld each pay period.

An Employee Withholding Allowance Certificate (W-4) is provided at the time of hire. Changes can be made during the year by completing a new W-4 form available from Human Resources. A copy will be placed into the employee's personnel file with the signed original given to the Finance department. At the end of each calendar year, you will be supplied with your Wage and Tax Statement (W-2) form. It is the responsibility of recently separated employees to maintain an accurate address on file with Human Resources. Questions can be answered by the Finance department.

**SECTION 4**

**DISTRICT BENEFITS AND SERVICES**

## Insurances

### Insurance Overview and COBRA

The District provides a comprehensive package of employee benefit programs for its employees. Complete and official details of insurance plans are contained in separate documents, a copy of which employees receive on their first day of work, online on the Public Employees Benefits Board Health Care Authority's website ([www.pebb.hca.wa.gov](http://www.pebb.hca.wa.gov)) or when benefits terms and programs are changed. The descriptions in this Handbook are only brief summaries for your general information. Contact Human Resources for specific details.

The District makes available and pays the full premium cost of a comprehensive insurance program for all full-time employees (medical, dental, vision, life and LTD). Full-time employees' family premiums (medical, dental and vision) are also paid in full by the District. The options available to three-quarter and half-time employees are explained below.

The District seeks to manage benefit costs while providing a comprehensive benefit package to its employees. The District will review total expected benefit costs in each budget year. If the long-term trend in benefit costs is within a reasonable and expected rate, the District will pay the full premium cost for medical and dental insurance. If the growth rate is above a reasonable rate and expected to continue to be above that rate, the District will explore and implement an appropriate cost-sharing strategy for medical and dental premiums with staff. Accordingly, the benefit packages offered by, and the premiums paid by, the District are subject to change, in the District's discretion and upon prior notice to employees.

Regular three-quarter and half-time employees may choose between the District paying their full single premium only or the District paying the percentage share of their entire family premium, with the employee paying for the rest of the coverage. For example, a three-quarter-time employee could choose to have the District pay 75% of the full family premium, with the employee paying the remaining 25% or the District paying 100% of the employee's single coverage premium and the employee paying for the remaining costs of the family coverage.

Part-time and Temporary Employees and Interns are ineligible for District Benefits, except as otherwise required by law, such as paid sick leave.

The District also provides the opportunity to waive coverage for those who have duplicate medical coverage in force for themselves and their families. If you have coverage in force, you may waive you and your family's medical coverage. The District will provide back to you the lowest monthly single medical coverage cost minus the required dental coverage cost. You are required to have medical coverage for you and your family. If your duplicate coverage is eliminated, you must re-enroll your family on the District's plan.

Benefits become effective as provided for in the individual benefit programs. You will be provided specific information regarding your effective date of coverage as part of the new employee orientation process. For more details and official terms of these plans, refer to the plan booklet, which you received on your first day of work; or contact Human Resources. Additional information is available on the Public Employees Benefits Board Health Care Authority's website ([www.pebb.hca.wa.gov](http://www.pebb.hca.wa.gov)).



The existence of these employee benefits and plans, in and of themselves, does not signify that an employee will be employed for the requisite time necessary to qualify for these benefits and plans. Our group health insurance program may be continued at your cost if you leave the District under circumstances described by federal law (COBRA). You and your eligible dependents will receive a detailed explanation of this privilege upon separation of employment.

### **Medical and Dental**

The District provides access to medical and dental insurance for its benefits-eligible employees and their dependents. Qualifications and pro-rating of the insurance is defined above in the Insurance Overview section. Currently it provides the option of either a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) or a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO). Election coverage information is provided at the time of hire and is available on an annual election period basis and in the event of significant qualifying events defined in the insurance coverage as special enrollments.

### **Vision**

The District provides vision coverage to all benefits-eligible employees and their dependents. Payment of the insurance is defined above in the Insurance Overview section. Specific information on coverage is provided at the time of hire and is available from Human Resources.

### **Life, LTD, ADD**

The District provides basic coverage for life, Long Term Disability and Accidental Death and Dismemberment with the option to purchase additional coverage. Payment of the insurance is defined above in the Insurance Overview section. Specific information on each coverage is provided at the time of hire and is available from Human Resources.

### **Flexible Spending Accounts**

The District provides for both a Medical Flexible Spending Account (FSA) and a Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP) for eligible District employees. Annual enrollment is required each year to utilize this benefit. Please see Human Resources for specific information on each of these flexible spending accounts, including benefits and risks involved when using an FSA or DCAP.

### **Supplemental Insurance**

The District makes available Supplemental Insurance options that can be purchased by an individual employee on a pre-tax basis. Sign up for the individual supplemental benefits is at the time of hire or during the annual election period (Open Enrollment), currently during the month of November. Specific information is available from Human Resources.

### **Long Term Care Insurance**

In administering the WA Cares Fund (Long Term Services and Supports Program Tax) the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) establishes and assesses a premium rate for each District employee, as established by law. The employee is responsible for any and all premiums for Long Term Care insurance, including the total premium rate established by the state, which District shall withhold from employee's earnings unless they opt out of the program, in accordance with ESD requirements, no

later than December 31, 2021. If an employee elects to opt out, the employee is responsible to notify the District and provide documentation of the ESD exemption approval before the District may stop withholding the employee's premiums. Exemptions from the WA Cares Premiums will take effect on the first day of the quarter following the ESD's approval of the employee's exemption, provided the employee has provided to the District the required proof of exemption.

## **Retirement**

### **Public Employees Retirement System (PERS)**

The Washington Public Employees Retirement System covers all District employees who work in positions that typically require at least 70 hours per month for at least 5 months each year. New employees must select their plan and level of funding if applicable. Payroll deductions as required by the retirement plan are withheld each pay period from the employee and the District.

### **Deferred Compensation**

District employees have the option of investing pre-tax dollars in two 457 plans (as prescribed by law), the State of Washington Retirement Systems Deferred Compensation Program (DCP) and the ICMA Retirement Corporation. Information and forms are available online at [www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org) and [www.dcp.csplans.com](http://www.dcp.csplans.com) or from Human Resources. The deferred compensation benefits offered by the District may be amended, altered, expanded and/or discontinued, in the District's sole discretion.

## **Vacation and Holidays**

### **Vacations**

Vacation benefits are provided to eligible employees to allow paid time away from work. Vacation time must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. Employees should provide at least 48-hours advance notice or notice as soon as the need for the absence becomes known, as further defined in Attendance Standards under Prior Approval.

Regular full-time employees accrue vacation at the following rates:

1st - 24th month (2 years) .....	8 hours/ month (4 hours/ pay period)
25th - 60th month (5 years) .....	10 hours/ month (5 hours/ pay period)
61st - 96th month (8 years) .....	12 hours/ month (6 hours/ pay period)
97th - 132nd month (11 years) ....	14 hours/ month (7 hours/ pay period)
133rd month forward .....	16 hours/ month (8 hours/ pay period)

Regular part-time employees who work 20 hours a week or more shall accrue vacation on a pro-rated basis, based on the number of hours the employee is normally scheduled to work.

One-half (1/2) of the employee's monthly vacation accrual is credited to the employee for each pay period worked. Vacation benefits accrue only while an employee is in paid status; if an employee enters an unpaid leave status, the employee's vacation accrual will be reduced, on a prorated basis measured by the duration of the unpaid status.

The General Manager may provide a vacation benefit for new hires, which may include one or both, a starting rate of vacation accrual up to the 61<sup>st</sup> month (12 hours per month), and a starting vacation balance of up to 20 hours of accrued leave. Starting accruals or vacation balances beyond that level require Board approval. If an employee is started at an advanced accrual rate, the employee will maintain that accrual rate until the employee's actual longevity indicates a different rate (i.e., an employee starting at an equivalent accrual rate of 10 hours per month or equivalent longevity of 25 months would stay at that rate until the employee's actual 61<sup>st</sup> month of employment, when the accrual would be increased to 12 hours per month).

Annual vacation planning should be scheduled with your supervisor each year by December 1 for the subsequent year. To satisfy your preferences as well as meet the staffing needs of the department, discuss your vacation plans well in advance with your supervisor. Supervisors will collect requests for vacations and then review them in total to ensure coverage before authorizing the requests. The scheduling of conflicting vacation schedules will be based on seniority with the exception of national holidays. Vacations on or around national holidays will be rotated for coverage to ensure fairness to all employees within a department.

Additionally, the individual allocation of vacation time beyond the yearly maximum of 24 days will be accomplished after all department employees have requested their initial preferences. Vacation time may be used in hourly increments of no less than one-half (.50) hour. All employees are encouraged to take at least one vacation of 5 consecutive days each year. Vacations up to three weeks may be taken at any one time but require department manager approval well in advance of the vacation.

Employees may accumulate a maximum of three hundred sixty (360) hours of vacation time. When an employee has reached the maximum allowable accrual, future accruals will cease until such time as the balance allows for additional earnings.

Employees are responsible for monitoring their accruals and scheduling time off as necessary to preserve the ability to accrue vacation.

Regular employees who have been with the District for a minimum of one year of consecutive service and have successfully completed their orientation period may cash out up to a maximum of two hundred forty (240) hours of vacation leave upon separation of employment. Any accrued, unused vacation time (up to two hundred forty hours) will be paid in full upon separation; provided, that employees voluntarily resigning from their employment with the District provide the District at least two weeks written notice of their resignation as a condition to such cash out. Employees who fail to provide this required notice of resignation shall forfeit any vacation leave cash out. Employees whose employment is separated by the District within one year of their date of employment shall not have any accrued, unused vacation time paid. Temporary employees and interns shall not be entitled to a cash out of vacation leave. Vacation pay is computed at the employees' regular rate of pay upon separation.

### **Vacation Buy Back**

Eligible employees may cash out up to forty (40) hours of accrued vacation per year. In order to be considered eligible, employees must have a remaining minimum balance of forty (40) hours of vacation after the cash out.

Vacation Buy Back will be offered one time annually in November of each year. Eligible employees will be provided with a form approved by the District to indicate the relevant selections. Time may be cashed out in 8-hour increments up to 40 hours total. Vacation Buy Back will be added to employees' wages as additional income with all standard tax implications.

**Holidays**

Regular Full-time employees are eligible for eleven (11) paid holidays (8 hours per day) in each calendar year.

<u>Holiday</u>	<u>Date Usually Observed</u>
New Year's Day.....	January 1
Martin Luther King's Birthday.....	Third Monday in January
Presidents Day.....	Third Monday in February
Memorial Day.....	Last Monday in May
Juneteenth.....	June 19
Independence Day.....	July 4
Labor Day.....	First Monday in September
Veterans Day.....	November 11
Thanksgiving Day.....	Fourth Thursday in November
Friday after Thanksgiving.....	Fourth Friday in November
Christmas Day.....	December 25

When a District holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday will be observed as the holiday. If a holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday will be observed as the holiday. If the holiday, or an observed holiday, falls on an employee's regularly scheduled day off (for example a Friday or Monday for a 4/10 shift) the employee will observe the holiday on the adjacent workday (Thursday or Tuesday). Employees working a defined shift greater than 8 hours per day (for example 4/10) will receive 8 hours for each holiday and will be required to use vacation, compensatory time, or other non-sick time accrued leave to make up the time in excess of the 8 hours. A Department Director or Manager may authorize use of sick leave for a qualifying sick event.

**Floating Holiday**

Regular employees shall receive one (1) floating holiday (8 hours) per year. Floating holidays shall be credited on the first day of employment for new hires and in the first pay period of each year for existing employees.

- Floating holidays must be used by the end of the final pay period of each year, may not be carried forward into the next calendar year, and may not be cashed out if not used.
- Floating holidays must be used in increments of four (4) hours. Requests should comply with procedures outlined for the use of vacation except that departments may authorize shorter advance request requirements or less formal application procedures.

Regular three-quarter-time and half-time employees shall be credited with observed and floating holidays on their pro-rata basis based upon the ratio of their assigned schedule

to full-time employment. For example, half-time (4-hour workday) position employees would be paid for four hours on holidays.

### **Unpaid Religious Holiday**

Each employee shall be entitled to two (2) unpaid holidays (8 hours each) per calendar year for a reason of faith or conscience or an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. An employee, in consultation with their supervisor, may select the days on which the employee desires to take the two unpaid holidays, provided that such holidays are taken in a manner consistent with the purpose of this leave.

Requests for an unpaid holiday provided for by this policy should be submitted in writing to the supervisor a minimum of four (4) weeks prior to the requested day. Requests for such holidays shall be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the specific objective facts and circumstances presented at the time of the request. The District reserves the right to disallow any holiday request if it would unduly disrupt operations or otherwise impose an undue hardship for the District, or the employee is necessary to maintain public safety. For the purposes of this policy, the term “undue hardship” shall have the same meaning established by rule by the Office of Financial Management, as codified in WAC 82-56-020. The unpaid holidays provided herein shall not carry over from one year to the next.

## **Leaves of Absence**

### **Sick Leave**

Sick leave is provided to continue pay during illness or injury incapacitating the employee to perform their work, contagious disease whereby their attendance at work would create a direct threat to the health of fellow employees or the public, or as otherwise provided by law. Sick leave use is subject to certain conditions and restrictions as defined herein.

- Use of sick leave is contingent upon following required procedures and compliance with the purpose of sick leave.
- Earned vacation leave or accrued compensatory time may be used when accrued sick leave is not available or the employee is nearing the maximum amount allowed in their vacation bank for an absence necessitated by illness or injury.
- Regular Full-time employees shall accrue sick leave at the rate of eight (8) hours per month or ninety-six (96) hours per year. Four (4) hours of sick leave is credited to the employee per each pay period worked.
- In accordance with the state paid sick leave law, Part-time and Temporary employees and Interns shall accrue sick leave at the rate of one (1) hour per every forty (40) hours worked.
- Sick leave shall begin to accrue as of an employee’s date of hire and may be used as accrued.
- Sick leave may be accumulated up to an unlimited maximum number of hours but will be paid out as defined below.

- Employees may use sick leave in increments of 15 minutes.
- No accrual shall occur during unpaid leave, and sick leave accrual will be pro-rated based on the number of hours in paid status up to a maximum of the employee's full-time or part-time schedule.
- Regular employees who voluntarily separate their employment with the District will be compensated for 50% of any accrued, unused sick leave pay up to a maximum accumulation of 960 hours (prorated for Part-time employees, based on the number of hours their normal schedule bears to a 40-hour workweek). Such compensation will be paid at the employee's regular rate of pay upon separation and shall not exceed a maximum of four hundred eighty (480) hours. In the case of an employee's voluntary separation, sick leave compensation will only be paid on the condition that the resigning employee provides the District with at least two weeks written notice of separation; employees who fail to provide this notice will forfeit their sick leave cash out. Sick leave shall not be cashed out to employees who have not successfully completed their Orientation Period at the time of separation, temporary or seasonal employees or for employees whose employment is involuntarily separated by the District (other than due to layoff or reduction in force). Employees who leave the District, but who are re-employed by the District within 12 months of their separation date, shall have any sick leave which was not previously cashed out to them reinstated upon their re-employment.
- **Workers' Compensation Integration.** An employee may charge their sick leave account for the difference between any compensation received from the Workers' Compensation Insurance program and the employee's normal pay for injuries and illnesses covered by Workers' Compensation. The calculation shall be based on the difference between the employees' normal post-tax take home pay and the pay for Workers' Compensation.
- **Sick Leave Usage.** Employees may use sick leave for any absence due to: (i) the employee's own illness, injury or health condition, to accommodate the need for medical diagnosis, care or treatment of a health condition; or preventative medical care; (ii) the employee's care for a family member with an illness, injury or health condition, or to care for a family member who needs medical diagnosis, care or treatment, or to care for a family member who needs preventative medical care; (iii) the District is closed by order of public official for any health-related reasons, or where the employee's child's school or daycare is closed for such a reason; or (iv) absences covered by the District's Domestic Violence Leave Policy.
- **"Family Member."** For purposes of this policy, "family member" means the employee's child (biological, adoptive, foster, stepchild or child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis, is a legal guardian for, or is a de facto parent); parent (including the same relationships as set forth for "child" above); spouse or registered domestic partner; spouse's or registered domestic partner's parent; grandparent; grandchild or sibling. "Registered domestic partner" shall have the same meaning as set forth in RCW 26.60.020.
- **Medical and Dental Appointments.** Sick leave will be allowed for doctor and dentist appointments for the employee or members of the employee's family member requiring the attendance of the employee. Employees shall make a

reasonable effort to schedule these appointments to cause the least disruption to their workday or, if possible, during off-duty hours.

- **Reporting and Approval Procedure.** Employees shall report their need for sick leave in accordance with the District's Attendance Policy, below.
- **Physicians Release Upon Return.** Depending on the length and circumstances of an employee's sick leave, the District may require a medical certification verifying that (i) the employee's use of sick leave was for a purpose covered by this Sick Leave Policy (see Attendance Policy below); and/or (ii) the employee has been medically released to return to work (with or without restrictions or limitations) (see FMLA below).
- **Non-Discrimination/Non-Retaliation.** The District will not discriminate or retaliate against an employee for the lawful use of paid sick leave. If an employee feels that they are being discriminated or retaliated against under this policy, the employee should contact Human Resources. If the employee is not satisfied with the District's response, the employee may contact the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries.

### **State Paid Family and Medical Leave**

The Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) administers an insurance program under the Paid Family Medical Leave Act (PFMLA), pursuant to which eligible employees will qualify for partial wage replacement and leave benefits for covered family and medical reasons. This policy provides a summary of the PFML program, but employees may obtain additional information at [www.paidleave.wa.gov](http://www.paidleave.wa.gov). To the extent an issue is not addressed in this policy, the District will administer this benefit program consistent with applicable statutes and regulations.

### **Employee/Employer Premiums**

In administering the PFMLA program, the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) establishes and assesses a premium rate for each District employee, which rate is established by law. The employee is responsible for the major share of the total premium rate (the "Employee's Share") as established by ESD. The District deducts the Employee's Share from the employee's paycheck (up to the Social Security cap, as defined by law), in accordance with its standard payroll practices. The remaining portion of the PFMLA premium rate is paid by the District (the "Employer's Share") at the rate established by ESD.

The District reports and remits the applicable PFMLA premiums to the ESD. Should the State in the future modify the PFML premium rate or the percentage of premiums subject to collection through payroll deduction, the District will modify payroll practices to reflect those statutory changes.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible for monetary leave benefits under the PFMLA, an employee must have worked 820 hours in Washington State in the year leading up to the date of leave. To be eligible for job protection under the PFMLA, an employee must (i) have been employed by the District for at least 12 months and (ii) have been in paid status for at least 1250 hours in the 12 months preceding the start of PFML.

An employee is ineligible for PFML benefits during any period of suspension from employment or during which the employee works for remuneration or profit (e.g., outside employment or contracting).

Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) benefits, as applicable, may be granted for any of the following reasons:

#### Medical Leave

- The employee's own serious health condition, as defined under the federal Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and RCW 50A.05.101, which causes the employee to be unable to work; provided, that an employee is ineligible for PFML if also receiving workers' compensation time loss benefits due to a workplace injury.

#### Family Leave

- To care for the employee's family member with a serious health condition.
- To care for the employee's child after birth or placement (by adoption or foster care) within 12 months of such birth/placement (in cases of adoption or foster care, the child must be under the age of 18 years).
- For a family member's qualifying military exigency as defined under the FMLA.

For purposes of this policy, "family member" means the employee's: child (biological, adoptive, foster, stepchild or child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis, is a legal guardian for, or is a de facto parent); grandchild, parent (including the same relationships as set forth for "child" above); spouse or registered domestic partner; spouse's or domestic partner's parent; grandparent; or sibling. "Registered domestic partner" shall have the same meaning as set forth in RCW 26.60.020 and also includes any individual who regularly resides in the employee's home or where the relationship creates an expectation that the employee care for the person, and that individual depends on the employee for care.

FMLA runs concurrently with PFML, where an absence is covered by both laws.

#### **Application for Benefits**

Applications for PFML benefits are made directly to the ESD. Employees should contact the ESD to commence the application process. The ESD will require the employee to complete its certification form, relating to the employee's eligibility and qualification for PFML benefits.

#### **Notice**

##### Employee Notice

When the need for PFML is foreseeable (such as for planned medical procedures or the birth of a child), an employee must notify the District of the need for such leave at least 30 days in advance of such leave. If the need for PFML is not foreseeable, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable.



The employee's notice must be in writing, must identify the family or medical nature of the leave, and must contain the anticipated timing and duration of such leave. If an employee fails to provide this required notice, the ESD may deny benefits for the period of time during which the notice was insufficient.

Employees apply directly to the ESD for PFML monetary benefits. An employee must, within five (5) business days of employee's receipt of the same, notify the District of the ESD's determination with respect to such application for benefits, including the amount of any awarded monetary benefits. This is to assist the District's recordkeeping and administrative functions, as well as any related paid leave calculations.

If leave is being taken for the employee's or employee's family member's planned medical treatment, the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to unduly disrupt District operations.

If taking leave intermittently, an employee must notify the District each time PFML leave is taken so the District may properly track leave use.

### District Notice

A workplace poster prepared by the ESD, outlining an employee's rights under the PFMLA, has been posted in the upstairs break room.

Additionally, when an employee is absent for more than seven (7) consecutive days for a reason known to be covered under the PFMLA, the District will provide the employee with a notice of rights, on such form prepared by the ESD. Such notice shall be provided the later of: (i) five (5) business days after the seventh day of absence; or (ii) five (5) business days after the District receives notice that the employee is absent for a covered reason.

### **Length of Leave**

Employees who qualify for PFML may take up to 12 weeks of family or medical leave per claim year, or a total of 16 weeks of combined family and medical leave. Additionally, female employees whose medical leave involves incapacity due to pregnancy are entitled to two (2) additional weeks of medical leave, for a combined total of 18 weeks of PFML.

PMFL may be taken intermittently, subject to the minimum claim requirement of eight (8) consecutive hours.

PMFL is tracked during the claim year, which is the 52-week period commencing on the Sunday of the week in which the employee meets the minimum claim requirement or in which the employee first takes leave due to the birth or placement of the employee's child (as applicable).

### **Waiting Period**

Monetary PFML benefits, with the exception of leave taken for the birth or placement of a child, are subject to a seven-day waiting period. This means that for the first seven (7) consecutive days of a PFML claim, the employee may take PFML but shall not receive any PFML monetary benefits. The waiting period for PFML monetary benefits commences on the Sunday of the week in which an employee claims a minimum of 8 consecutive hours of PFML. While no monetary PMFL benefits are paid during the waiting period, the waiting period is credited against the duration of the employee's PFML.

## **Leave Benefits**

While on PMFL, employees are entitled to monetary benefits through the state program. PFML monetary benefits are calculated based upon a percentage of the employee's average weekly wage. The benefit is generally up to 90% of an employee's average weekly wage, with a minimum weekly benefit of \$100 (or the employee's actual average weekly wage, if less) and a maximum weekly benefit of \$1000 (adjusted annually). Employees may refer to the ESD's website at [www.esd.wa.gov](http://www.esd.wa.gov) for a benefits calculator, which may provide an approximate estimate of benefits. The ESD is responsible for calculating and paying the PFML monetary benefits.

District paid time off, including but not limited to sick leave, vacation leave, PTO, etc., is non-supplemental to PFML. This means that if an employee uses District paid leave in connection with PFML, the employee must report such leave use to the ESD, and such use will reduce the Employee's PMFL monetary benefits.

When an employee is on PFML and is not using District paid time off, the employee is considered to be in an "unpaid" status with the District. Insurance coverage will be handled in the same manner as other unpaid leaves of absence, pursuant to District policy and subject to any FMLA requirements requiring continuation of coverage.

## **Reinstatement/Return to Work Recertification**

An employee who is eligible for job-protected leave will be restored to the same or equivalent position at the conclusion of PFML, unless unusual circumstances have arisen (e.g., the employee's position or shift was eliminated for reasons unrelated to the leave). The District may require a return-to-work certification from a health care provider before restoring the employee to work following PFML where the employee has taken leave for the employee's serious health condition and has taken more than three (3) days of consecutive leave and, in any event, such certification will be required if the employee will not be able to fully perform all duties of the position upon the employee's return to work. The employee should notify the District as soon as possible if they expect to have restrictions or limitations placed upon their return to work by their health care provider. Under certain conditions, the District may deny job restoration to a salaried employee who is among the highest paid ten percent (10%) of District employees. If an employee taking PFML chooses not to return to work for any reason, the employee should notify the District as soon as possible.

## **Questions**

Questions regarding this PFMLA policy should be directed to Human Resources.

## **Federal Family Medical Leaves of Absence (FMLA)**

Eligible employees are granted up to 12 weeks of protected leave without pay in a 12-month calendar period for qualifying family and medical reasons starting every January 1. To be eligible for such leave, an employee must have worked for the District for at least 12 months and at least 1,250 hours in the preceding 12 months. Employees who expect to take more than three consecutive days of sick or regular leave or more than two intermittent leaves for any of the reasons defined below, need to contact Human Resources to determine if FMLA applies, and if a Certification of Healthcare Provider form needs to be completed.

If an employee requests or makes known to their supervisor that they may or are requesting an FMLA related leave request, the supervisor must inform Human Resources and have the employee contact Human Resources to determine if FMLA applies. The supervisor cannot reject or attempt to change an employee's FMLA request before it is determined if it meets FMLA requirements. Human Resources will review and determine if the request falls under FMLA with its rights and requirements. Human Resources will notify the supervisor and the Finance department of any FMLA status.

FMLA Leave will be granted for any of the following reasons:

1. To care for your child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care; (if both parents are employed by the District, combined sick leave shall not exceed 12 weeks);
2. To care for your child (if such child is under the age of 18 or incapable of self-care), spouse or parent who has a serious health condition; or
3. For a serious health condition that makes you unable to perform the essential duties of your job.
4. A "qualifying exigency," as defined by the applicable regulations adopted by the Department of Labor from time to time, arising out of a covered family member's active duty or call to active duty in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency plan. For purpose of this policy, a "covered family member" means the spouse, child, or parent of an eligible employee.
5. To care for a covered family member who qualifies as a "covered service member." For purposes of this policy, the term "covered servicemember" means a member of the Armed Forces who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, or who is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for an injury or illness incurred by the covered servicemember in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank or rating. Eligible employees may take up to 26 weeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered family member who is a covered servicemember. Leave to care for an injured or ill servicemember, when combined with other FMLA-qualifying leave, may not exceed 26 weeks in a single 12-month period. Servicemember FMLA leave runs concurrent with other leave entitlements provided under federal and state law.

In requesting leave, you are required to notify the District if you use paid leave for a reason covered by the FMLA, so that the leave will be counted against your FMLA leave allowance. If the District has reason to believe that an employee's absence is due to FMLA-qualifying reasons, the District may initiate the FMLA process for the employee. FMLA will be monitored and tracked on a "calendar year" basis (January 1 to December 31). Employees are responsible for notifying Human Resources of any changes in status, especially when a qualifying event or condition no longer exists.

You must provide the District with at least 30 days written notice when your FMLA leave is foreseeable. If leave is not foreseeable, you must provide notice as soon as practicable. Otherwise, leave may be delayed until 30 days after notice is given. The FMLA Leave Request form is available from Human Resources. When leave is taken for

a serious health condition (either your own or a family member) that is expected to extend beyond five consecutive working days, the request must be supported by a medical certification (FMLA Certification of Healthcare Provider Form for Self or Family Member). The District may require a second or third opinion at the District's option and expense. The Certification of Healthcare Provider form is available from Human Resources.

Accrued paid leave (sick leave and vacation leave) must be used to the extent available during absences for the above reasons, and to the extent consistent with applicable law. Paid leave may not be used as an extension of a FMLA leave. Sick leave and vacation leave will not accrue during periods of unpaid leave. FMLA leave runs concurrently with PFML.

Intermittent or reduced schedule leave may be taken when medically necessary for either your own serious health condition or for that of a family member.

If your leave extends past two weeks, the District requires you to report at least every two weeks on your status and intent to return to work, unless your medical certification is for a longer duration, in which case you should advise the District of any changes to your estimated return to work, as certified. During FMLA leave, the District will continue to provide health insurance on the same basis as during regular employment. If you take unpaid leave, you must pay the premiums for other insurance plans such as disability and life insurance and other supplemental benefits you may have elected to enroll in.

The District retains the option of requiring you to provide a medical certification of your fitness for duty to Return to Work (RTW) after a medical leave for your own serious health condition. When you return to work following your FMLA leave and have not exceeded the maximum duration and absent extraordinary circumstances, you will be returned to your former or equivalent position. If you have additional questions, please contact Human Resources.

### **Bereavement**

In the event of a death of a family member, employee may take time needed, up to 24 hours, with pay, to handle family affairs and attend the funeral. For purposes of this policy, "family member" means the employee's child (biological, adoptive, foster, step-child or child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis, is a legal guardian for, or is a de facto parent); parent (including the same relationships as set forth for "child" above); spouse or registered domestic partner; spouse's or registered domestic partner's parent; grandparent; grandchild or sibling. "Registered domestic partner" shall have the same meaning as set forth in RCW 26.60.020. If the employee's deceased family member resided more than 250 miles from the District office, then 16 additional hours of leave may be taken for travel. Within the discretion of the District, bereavement leave may be combined with sick leave, vacation leave or an unpaid leave of absence.

Funeral leave for relatives that fall outside of the definition of "family member" (e.g. aunt, cousin) may be granted through the use of sick leave for 8 hours. Any additional hours granted must be taken as vacation.

### **Jury Duty and Court Appearances**

In order that you may serve on a jury without loss of earnings, the District will pay your normal earnings for the period of jury service up to 80 hours, which includes federal jury duty. You must, however, sign over to the District and submit to Finance, all court

payments (checks) received by you for jury service. You can then submit an expense reimbursement form to Finance for your actual expenses, (i.e., mileage, meals, or lodging) paid by the Court in those court payments. Please contact your supervisor, Human Resources, and the Finance department promptly after receiving notification to appear. You must also immediately return to work each day following your completion of jury duty unless there are less than two (2) hours remaining in your normal work schedule or if your place of jury duty is outside the local area and you are unable to work remotely from your temporary place of residence.

If an employee is subpoenaed to appear in court on a non-District related matter, that time is not compensated, and the employee must use available paid time off for such appearance. If no paid time off is available, the time will be unpaid.

### **Military Leave**

The District follows the provisions of the laws of the State of Washington RCW 38.40.060. Any authorized leave in excess of that provided by law shall be charged to leave without pay, paid time off or compensatory time.

### **Pregnancy Disability Leave**

Female employees not eligible for Paid Family Medical Leave and/or Family Medical Leave, or who otherwise have no PMFLA/FMLA available, are entitled to an unpaid pregnancy disability leave of absence for the period of her actual disability due to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions; employees seeking leave under this policy should provide written notice of the intended leave dates at least 30 days in advance of the leave or as soon as possible in the case of an emergency.

Pregnancy disability leave does not run concurrently with Family Medical Leave or Paid Family Medical Leave.

Pregnancy disability leave is a protected status, and is unpaid, although an employee may elect to use any available accrued leave during this leave. If an employee goes into unpaid status during a pregnancy disability leave, that employee may elect to continue coverage under the District's group health plan pursuant to COBRA, in which case the employee shall be responsible for the costs of such continued coverage.

An employee returning from such leave is entitled to the same job with the same pay unless the District's circumstances have so changed as to make it impossible or unreasonable to do so.

### **Personal Leave**

The General Manger may authorize a personal leave of absence of up to 30 days for compelling personal reasons. Approval is at the discretion of the District and is based on department work requirements, your performance history, and other factors. During this approved leave, the employee remains eligible for District paid insurance benefits. While no loss of service credit occurs during an approved leave of absence, there are other factors to consider such as employee paid benefit continuation and approval processes. See your supervisor and/or Human Resources for these details. Any unpaid personal leave of absence in excess of two (2) days requires General Manager approval.

## **Changes in Leave Status**

A District employee may move from one leave status to another depending upon the circumstances taking place during the leave. For example, an employee on vacation leave will be able to go to holiday leave status for a District defined holiday and back to vacation leave status. An employee may move from vacation status to sick leave status based upon the circumstances of the events and the approval of their manager.

## **Leave Donation Program**

### **Criteria and Eligibility of Requesting Employee**

District employees seeking to apply within the policy must meet the following criteria and eligibility:

1. Have a significant FMLA-qualifying event that could include a medically documented illness or injury to themselves or their immediate family that requires them to be unable to work for at least 14 days.
2. Have exhausted their vested paid time off banks (sick leave, vacation, floating holiday, comp time) and expect to be unable to work their normal work schedule for at least 14 days past their exhaustion of paid time off.
3. Must be eligible for leave benefits in their individual benefit package.
4. Be in good standing at the District (not under a corrective action process).

### **Criteria and Eligibility of Voluntarily Donating Employee**

District employees seeking to voluntarily donate their vested leave to an eligible employee must meet the following criteria for any type of leave which is to be donated:

- Vacation – after donating the time, a minimum account balance of 80 hours must be remaining
- Sick Leave – after donating the time, a minimum account balance of 200 hours must be remaining
- Only a maximum of 40 hours (in any combination) can be donated per request

### **Application Process**

A District employee seeking to participate in the Leave Donation Program (LDP) will complete the LDP form and submit it to Human Resources. The form will include the nature of the condition, anticipated duration, current vacation and sick leave balances and estimated amount of additional leave needed. The employee will provide any information that can be communicated to the District employees if the request is approved by the General Manager. An employee can submit more than one application at the District for any qualifying eligible event defined above.

The applicable Department Manager will review the submitted application. The Department Manager will provide any additional information they feel is important for the General Manager to know in determining the approval or rejection of the application. The updated application is then submitted to the General Manager for review and action.

The General Manager will review the application and determine the action (accept or reject) of the application. The decided action and application packet is then sent to Human Resources for administration.

Human Resources will, upon receipt of an approved application, send a communication to all employees advising that a request for donated leave has taken place. The communication will include the employee's name, the written description of the event as defined in the application and the expected duration of the event (without disclosing personal medical information). Employees will be reminded of the donation criteria and that a signed written donation request must be received by Human Resources to authorize the donations. The District will monitor donated leave request balances on a bi-monthly basis. Employees will be informed once the expected leave time need has been met and there is not a current need for additional hours. Donation requests received beyond the expected level of need will not be approved and will be returned to the donating employees. If, over time, additional hours are necessary and requested, including during a return-to-work period when the employee is limited to working part time, employees may submit additional hours at that time within the limits defined above.

The signed written request will include the name of the donating employee, the name of the recipient employee and the number of sick hours and/or vacation hours being donated. It will also include the understanding that all hours donated will be used for the benefit of the receiving employee under the guidelines noted in this section. Vested hours will accrue to the receiving employee's leave bank at the dollar value of the donating party. For example, Employee A donates five hours of vacation at their hourly base rate of \$20 per hour. The receiving employee's base rate is \$10 per hour. The receiving employee would accrue \$100 of vested time or the equivalent of their 10 hours at \$10 per hour. Note that sick time hours are vested at 50 percent and, consequently, any sick time hours donated will accrue at 50% of the donating base rate to the receiving employee. A minimum of two (2) vested hours can be donated. Vested hours include vacation, sick time, floating holiday, and comp time.

Donated leave will be tracked in a separate account for the employee and may only be used for sick time events. Donated leave cannot be used for vacation events. The employee will accrue District paid leave (sick leave, vacation) when using donated leave.

## **State Compensation and Reimbursement**

### **State Unemployment Insurance**

This program is self-funded by the District and is in compliance with all state regulations and requirements. The program provides weekly benefits if you become unemployed through no fault of your own or due to circumstances described in the law.

### **Workers' Compensation**

The District carries insurance to cover the cost of work-incurred injury or illness. Benefits help pay for your medical treatment and part of any income you may lose while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case. To be assured of maximum coverage, work-related accidents must be reported immediately to your supervisor, to Human Resources and the Department of Labor and Industries.

## **Travel and Subsistence**

The District has an adopted travel policy, which provides for reimbursement of expenses incurred by employees in the carrying out of their responsibilities with the District (see Other Adopted Plans/Policies tab – Reimbursable Expense & Travel Advance Policy). Please contact your supervisor or Human Resources prior to traveling for specific information if you have questions regarding eligibility for reimbursement of these types of expenses.

## **Other Services**

### **Education and Training Assistance Programs**

The District offers our employees opportunities for professional development in two ways. All employees are encouraged to participate in workshops, seminars, and other educational and developmental programs to improve job skills. At least once a year, employees are encouraged to attend a special training workshop or conference that is directly related to their position at the District. These classes are usually held during normal workdays and last from four hours to two days at a maximum depending upon the training being provided. It is expected that local opportunities will be sought out but, in the event that specialized training cannot be found in the local area, meals and lodging cost may also be covered as part of the training expense. There is no specific, fixed amount authorized for each employee. Every effort is made to ensure adequate funding in the District's Annual Budget to accommodate requests for workshop attendance. Employees should submit funding requests to their department manager during the annual budget development process for the following year to ensure requests are identified and funding requests are reflected in the proposed budget.

The Education Assistance Program is established to encourage employees to continue their personal development and education in order to meet present and future needs of the District, to increase employee effective work performance and efficiency and to facilitate promotion from within the District.

Any class, seminar, education program or certification/test that employees seek reimbursement for MUST receive prior written approval from the General Manager or designee. Also, participation in programs requiring time away from work and related expenses require approval prior to registration for the program.

*Eligibility:* All regular employees who are in good standing with the District are eligible for education reimbursement.

*Eligible Courses:* Courses must relate to the employee's current or future job assignment and/or opportunities and must be offered by a qualified training institution or educational facility. A qualified training institution is one that offers accredited course work transferable to other academic institutions or those institutions that provide courses that allow you to become certified or are awarded certain designations.

Training programs such as workshops, institutes, seminars, and symposiums, which do not meet the above criteria, are not covered under the Education Assistance Program. These types of courses may be attended during regular work hours after review and approval by the General Manager or designee.



*Reimbursement:* The program covers only the cost of tuition, required textbooks, required enrollment fees and costs and examination fees. Textbooks included for reimbursement shall become the property of the District. Reimbursement will not be made if the employee is eligible for reimbursement from other sources. Portions not covered by other sources MAY be covered by the District up to the limit of this policy.

*Limit:* The District will reimburse each regular employee for tuition for job-related education up to a maximum amount as defined each year. Human Resources will recommend an annual maximum dollar limit in the form of a memo provided to the General Manager for approval. The reimbursement amount shall not exceed the resident tuition rate and enrollment fees for twenty (20) credit hours at a local community college. Reimbursement will be contingent upon the employee completing pre-approved, job-related classes with a passing grade of 'C' or better. The amount allowed for reimbursement shall be as follows:

- For employees with zero (0) to twenty-four (24) months of employment, reimbursement shall be equal to seventy five percent (75%) of the annual maximum dollar allowance.
- After twenty-four (24) months of employment, reimbursement will be equal to one hundred percent (100%) of maximum annual dollar allowance.
- Annual maximum allowance does not include books.
- Employees may request reimbursement for up to one hundred dollars (\$100) per year for books, provided that all books, for which reimbursement is sought, will become the property of the District.

As detailed above, the foregoing is conditioned on:

- The educational course must have been approved by the District prior to the employee's enrollment;
- The employee must receive a grade of 'C' or better; and
- If the employee voluntarily separates their employment with the District within one year after completion of any course or courses, the employee must repay the amount reimbursed for that course or courses up to a maximum of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250).

*Application:* Employees seeking reimbursement for class, course, seminar, education program or certification or test must complete the appropriate form and receive approval before enrolling, except for newly hired employees when enrollment was completed prior to their date of hire. A copy of the signed form will be placed in the employee's personnel file. Forms are available from Human Resources.

*Claim for Reimbursement:* Upon successful completion of the class/course and within six months of the date the payment of fees was made, the employee must provide the District with a copy of the grade report and receipts for approved expenses. For examinations/tests, the District will pay for the examination/testing fees only one-time; pass or fail. Courses that do not have a grade or a pass/fail shall be reimbursed upon completion of the course.

*Exclusion from Wages:* This reimbursement will be excludable from an employee's taxable wages when meeting the criteria as outlined above and detailed in Internal Revenue Service Publication 15-b, Employer's Guide to Fringe Benefits.

### **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

The District provides access for all employees and their spouses and dependents to a comprehensive Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is a free and confidential service that will provide professional counselors to evaluate your situation and refer you or someone in your immediate family to the best possible community resources. For confidential assistance call 1-800-648-5834. Please see Human Resources for complete information on the program.

### **Automatic Bank Deposit**

Many of our employees find it convenient to have their regular paycheck automatically deposited in their bank account. All employees are afforded this option upon new hire. If you would like to make a similar arrangement, contact Human Resources for a Direct Deposit Authorization and Enrollment form.

### **Fitness Program**

The purpose of the District Fitness Program is to provide a place for employees to enjoy the many benefits of healthy exercise. The District recognizes that busy schedules and lives make it difficult for people to stay physically fit. The District provides an exercise facility as an optional benefit for the employees to use during designated non-work hours. This policy applies to employees of the District.

The District provides and maintains a room with fitness and exercise equipment and an Alexa, voice activated virtual assistant safety feature, for the use of District employees. It is available for employee use to exercise, maintain and develop strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular health. The facility may only be used by current District employees and their immediate families (when accompanied by the District employee) who meet all of the policy conditions:

- Only employees and family members who have presented a signed release from their personal physician and have signed the Indemnification and Release Agreement may use the facility.
- Employees shall complete any training offered by the District.
- Employees and their family members shall use the equipment at their own risk.
- The General Manager shall set the hours of facility availability. Initially these hours shall be time periods before and after normal working hours (as designated by the Manager) and employee breaks and lunch.
- Employees who use the facility shall keep it clean and shall offer ideas for improvements, report problems with equipment and follow all rules and guidelines for the facility.
- The District may periodically sponsor training in the proper use of the equipment and may require attendance by employees on their own time and at their expense.

- Only District owned equipment will be used in the facility. The Manager may approve other equipment after consultation with the District's legal counsel.
- Employees shall use the equipment properly with appropriate exercise techniques. This includes free weights, which require the use of a "spotter" when bench pressing to ensure a safe exercise routine.
- No food, drinks, or supplements (except water) shall be used, sold, or distributed by any person or by the District in the facility.

## **Wastewater Certification Programs**

The District recognizes its responsibility to provide the public with a proficient, competent, and professional staff in the delivery of essential services. The District seeks, whenever possible, to develop and demonstrate a proactive approach to achieving or exceeding public works standards and expectations, while providing employees with opportunities for career development and advancement, personal achievement, and reward.

To meet these objectives in the wastewater maintenance and operations area, the District participates in certification programs through the sponsorship of the Washington Wastewater Collection Personnel Association (WWCPA) and Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Wastewater Operator Certification Program.

One of the objectives of the programs is to protect public health and the environment and to provide a system in which the special skills and qualifications of wastewater personnel can be evaluated and certified.

*New Hires/New Transfers:* All Maintenance Specialist employees will be required to successfully complete, at minimum, the Washington WWCPA Wastewater Collection Specialist (WWCS) Level 1 certification. All treatment plant operator employees will be required to successfully complete, at a minimum, the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator (TPO) Grade 1 certification. This requirement must be met within one (1) year of the employee's date of hire and will be considered a condition of continuing employment. *Failure to meet this requirement will result in separation of employment from the District*

The programs offer four levels of knowledge and competency-based certification. Certification designations are: Wastewater Collection Specialist (WWCS) I, II, III and IV and Treatment Plant Operator (TPO) Grade I, II, III and IV. Designations are granted in a progressive order; therefore, levels may not be skipped unless certification within a similar organization is held. The WWCPA is the only recognized authority for review and certification for collection system personnel and Ecology is the only recognized authority for review and certification of TPO personnel. In addition to examinations, each certification level requires minimum qualifications in education and experience. [For detailed information regarding WWCS qualifications, see *Articles of Incorporation & Bylaws of the WWCPA*].

Training opportunities that assist employees in preparing for the certification exams may be available through the WWCPA or Ecology's Water Quality website. The District will pay the costs associated with attending a training session once only, per certification level, which may include:

- Transportation - District vehicle provided
- Registration (e.g. WWCPA Sewer Maintenance School)
- Travel time away from work
- Meals
- Overnight lodging
- Enrollment fee and books (e.g. Sacramento State Office of Water Programs: Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants, Volume I)

The District will pay the examinations costs for certification as follows:

- Initial membership fee
- Examination fee (initial test and one retest at each level only)

Should an employee fail an exam on the first attempt, the employee may opt for additional retests. The District will pay for one retest; the time and location of the retest will be determined by the District. For all additional retests, the employee must pay any required examination fees and use their own personal leave time to cover their absence from work (Vacation or Floating Holiday time only).

Additionally, employees will be responsible for providing their own transportation and *any other associated costs* for re-taking the exam (after the first initial re-take). Should other District personnel be traveling to the test site for the purposes of certification, and there is space available, the employees may ride in the same vehicle.

Upon successful certification, employees will meet one of the requirements of the next level within the Maintenance Specialist or Treatment Plant Operator series. This will allow the employee the opportunity to post for an open position if one becomes available.

Successful certification will not change the grade or step of the employee within their current job classification and position.

The WWCPA or Ecology may, at its discretion, recognize and honor certification obtained in other states (reciprocity). In this situation, the employee will be responsible for applying for reciprocity.

The District, while supporting this program, has no control over course or examination content, availability of training, test dates, materials or certification criteria and awards. Employees are required to meet any and all criteria as established by WWCPA or Ecology in order to obtain certification. The District will determine the number of staff available for testing based on business and staffing needs.

### **Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Program**

The District requires employees in specific positions to have and maintain a CDL in order to perform the duties of their jobs (see position descriptions). The District provides access to training, resources and vehicles for the training and testing required to obtain the CDL. To the extent allowed by law, and based on the employee's demonstrated proficiency, the District will provide documentation to the State that the employee has the training and skill set to safely operate a commercial vehicle and take the skills test. The District provides the CDL vehicle to take the skills test.

The District will generally pay the costs associated with obtaining the CDL to include:

- CDL pre-test and pre-trip training (6 hours, one time)
- Initial test and license (renewals will be paid by the District)
- Allow employee to take the initial test and initial training during normal work hours

Should an employee fail an exam on the first attempt, the employee must retest to obtain the CDL. In this situation, the employee must pay any required examination fees and use their own personal leave time to cover their absence from work (Vacation or Floating Holiday time only). The District will provide the CDL vehicle to take the driving test.

Those employees who are required to hold a CDL are subject to additional policies, restrictions, and requirements regarding their employment.

A person to be hired into a position that requires a CDL will be required to submit to a post-offer, pre-employment drug and alcohol test. Initial employment is conditioned upon that person satisfactorily passing such a test.

Additionally, if a person to be hired into a position that requires a CDL has during the previous two years operated commercial vehicles for any other employer(s), that person must authorize a request of all former employers within the past two years to release information regarding positive alcohol or drug tests and refusals to be tested. This information must be obtained before the person is employed by the District. However, if the information has not arrived by the anticipated hire date, and if the person has passed the pre-employment drug and alcohol test (as applicable), the person may be hired, and the requested information must be obtained from the previous employer(s) within 14 calendar days of the date of hire. If the information is not received within the 14 calendar days, the person shall not be permitted to drive commercial vehicles until the information has arrived. If the information does not timely arrive, or if the information obtained from a previous employer(s) indicates either a positive test or a refusal to be tested, or if the employee obstructs or interferes with the release of the information, the employee shall not be permitted to drive commercial vehicles and may be separated.

CDL holders are also subject to random drug and alcohol testing in accordance with USDOT guidelines.

CDL holders must also report accidents, traffic convictions, and/or licenses suspensions/revocations (whether on or off the job) in accordance with USDOT requirements. CDL holders are responsible for knowing, understanding, and complying with their licensing obligations. The District will perform an annual check of the status of each employee's CDL, as applicable.

### **Uniforms, Boots and Rain Gear**

The District provides and makes available uniforms, hats and name tags to all Maintenance and Inspection personnel, not just as a benefit to the employees, but also to identify those workers to the public.

As representatives of the District, Maintenance and Inspection personnel have a responsibility to represent the District in a positive and professional manner. One of the ways of accomplishing this responsibility is to wear the uniform every day.

Maintenance and Inspection personnel will utilize District uniforms, hats, name tags and safety equipment with the District's logo while working in the field. This is an expectation of the District and the Board of Commissioners.

Safety of our employees is a key objective of the District. All employees who work in an environment where injury to the foot could occur must wear safety toe work boots. Once a year (every 12 calendar months or as needed, but no more than once a year), all field personnel and any District employee who is required by the District to enter into sites requiring PPE-defined safety toe boots is authorized to purchase one (1) pair of safety toe boots, and any upgrade to the boot, from the vendor of their choosing.

Once every four years, all field personnel are authorized to purchase one (1) pair of safety toe rubber boots. The employee is responsible to provide reasonable care and maintenance for their boots as with all personal protective equipment. The employee's Department Director or Manager may authorize the purchase of PPE outside of the cycle provided above, upon receipt and approval of a request from an employee for an exemption due to a justifiable event or circumstance, including but not limited to theft or premature equipment failures.

Appropriate rain gear will be provided to all field personnel.

Each year, Human Resources will consult with the Operations Manager and will recommend a maximum dollar amount, after discount and before sales tax, for reimbursement of boot purchases and rain gear.

The amount shall be stated in the form of a memo provided to the General Manager for approval. Prior to ordering, the employee must pay any cost in excess of the authorized amount. If possible, costs within the limit will be billed directly to the District. If you have questions, please contact your supervisor.

### **Management Communications**

The District may provide coffee and like kind beverages for the public and District employees during business hours or during the conduct of District business and may provide refreshments for District employees during the regularly scheduled All Employee meetings, as this serves a business purpose and enhances customer relations.

The District conducts an annual business meeting for the Board of Commissioners and employees to facilitate the dissemination and communication of the District's strategic plan, goals, and objectives and to allow for recognition of notable achievements by the District and its employees.

The meeting may be held offsite in the Local Area (as defined in the authorized Business Expenses and Travel Advance Policy) and will include refreshments and dinner. The purpose of the meeting constitutes a legitimate business expenditure of public funds and is to be paid with District funds. Each employee is entitled to bring one guest. To the extent that the expenditure for the employee and his or her guest is considered a non-business-related expenditure, it shall be considered to be additional employee compensation.

## Performance Recognition Program

### Overview

The District's Board of Commissioners and the management of the District appreciate the hard work and dedication of all District employees. The District's Performance Recognition Program described below (hereafter "Recognition Program") seeks to recognize and reward employees who demonstrate District values, which include high levels of professionalism and customer service, emphasis on safety in the workplace and focus on productivity through improving processes and managing costs.

The objectives of the Recognition Program are:

1. Support the District's Mission, Vision and Values, emphasizing core tenets of customer focus, professionalism, and responsibility.
2. Recognize employee initiative and success in identifying and implementing new ways and ideas to increase efficiency and effectiveness, reduce costs, leverage existing resources, and create additional value for stakeholders.
3. Support and promote the District's culture as an organization that embraces learning and continuous improvement in order to more efficiently and effectively meet the changing needs of its stakeholders.
4. Communicate the achievements of employees who provide exemplary public service to the stakeholders, ratepayers, businesses, developers, neighbors, internal customers, and employees.

The fundamental values of the Recognition Program are to be:

1. Transparent - simple, well defined and understood by all employees.
2. Fair - in process, approach, and outcome to all employees.
3. Open - anyone can submit a nomination and all employees are eligible for reward and recognition.
4. Valued - by employees and stakeholders in keeping with the District culture.

### Recognition – Years of Service

The District will recognize and reward employees for increases in experience and technical and industry knowledge, and for commitment to the District (tenure). The District recognizes that employee retention reduces recruitment and training costs, especially for experienced and highly skilled employees. During the month in which an employee was hired, the District will recognize the employee for years of service as follows:

1. Recognition for years of service in a manner determined by the General Manager or designee. The recognition may be, but is not limited to, an anniversary celebration card or recognition at an employee meeting.
2. Every five (5) years, in addition to the annual recognition above, an award of eight (8) hours of paid time off for every five (5) years of service, with a maximum of forty (40) hours after twenty (20) years of service. The employee may take the time off or receive the cash value of the time off, based upon their hourly pay rate at the

time of the award. If the employee takes time off, it will be treated and managed as vacation leave. The time off must be taken or cashed out within one year of award.

### **Performance Award – Description**

Competent, resourceful, and empowered employees are a resource that allows the District to meet and exceed its stakeholders' needs. The Recognition Program allows the District to recognize and reward employees who go above and beyond expectations. To the extent applicable, Commissioners are also eligible for a performance award as provided for in this section.

### **Performance Award – General Process**

The District will either establish a Recognition Program Committee to administer the Program or assign the Program tasks and responsibilities to the Employee Committee (hereafter "Committee"). The Committee shall at a minimum consist of a member of each department and a representative of the Leadership Team. There is no limit to the number or type of awards an employee can receive in one year (either an individual award or team award).

### **Performance Award – Nomination**

Employees and stakeholders may nominate in writing an employee or team for an award. The Committee shall develop a nomination and submittal process and related forms for such process. The Program shall consist of both a formal and an informal process, as follows:

Informal: Direct and/or immediate recognition at the 'Thank You' level by a department manager or supervisor, which does not require consideration by the Committee. Following issuance of an award, the department manager or supervisor shall complete a nomination form and forward it to the Committee.

Formal: An award administered by the Committee, which may consist of significant, special and/or unique events that the Committee recommends to the General Manager and Board of Commissioners for implementation.

Individual nominations shall provide sufficient information on the specific actions taken by the nominee, including the outcomes of the actions and how the nomination supports the program's goals and objectives explained above.

Team awards may be made at each level. Values for team awards shall be the same as for individual awards. Team awards shall be shared by all employees and shall be used for a team event or celebration and/or limited time off for each employee. Cash awards will be paid by a single check payable to a single recipient selected by the team members unless otherwise authorized by the General Manager.

All levels of award shall include a certificate of appreciation from the District, signed by the General Manager and generally describing the nature of the event, actions or ideas deserving of the award.



## **Performance Award – Criteria**

In evaluating and determining the appropriate level of award for each nomination, the Committee shall use the following criteria and shall apply them consistent with the objectives and values of the Recognition Program:

Scope: The extent to which the event, actions or idea benefits the District, employees, stakeholders, customers, or community; that is, who it impacts or helps.

Impact: The degree to which the District benefits from the event, action, or idea in terms of actual cost and time savings, increased safety, waste reduction, public awareness, etc.; that is, what was the result or outcome.

Visibility: The degree to which the event, action, or idea is or could be noticed or witnessed by the employees, customers, stakeholders, or community; that is, who sees it.

Innovation: The degree to which the event, action, or idea is new and or different from on-going practices or conventional thought at the District, local, regional, or industry level.

Leadership: The level of involvement and direct impact of the employee's actions or ideas on the specific outcome, process, activity, or event.

Tenure: The length of involvement and impact of the employee (going above and beyond, overcoming resistance, level of support, being outside of job description and duties, time required beyond standard work hours, etc.).

## Performance Award – Value

The levels and amounts of awards are specified in Table 1 on the following page. The employee may elect to receive the award in cash or paid time off. The cash levels have been modified to reduce the tax burden on the employee and will be paid to the employee in a separate check or gift card.

**Table 1. Recognition Levels**

Level	Administered By	Title	Amount	
			Cash (Pre-tax \$)	Or Paid Time Off (Hours)
1	Leadership Team or Committee	Thank you	N/A	N/A
		Thank you plus	Gift card of \$10 or \$20 maximum	N/A
2	Committee	Bronze	\$60	2
		Silver	\$120	4
		Gold	\$240	8
3	General Manager and Board of Commissioners	Platinum	\$600 Or up to 5% of the first year's value to the District as determined by the Board	And up to 16 hours

The Recognition Program relies to a great extent upon employee nominations. Therefore, employees are encouraged to take notice of and nominate other employees for recognition and reward under the Recognition Program. To encourage nominations, the District will hold an annual random drawing of nominators to receive a Level 2 'Bronze Award'. Every employee who nominated an associate for reward and recognition during the previous calendar year, except for Leadership Team members, will be eligible for the drawing. Each employee nominator will have one entry per drawing.

## Safety Awareness and Recognition Program (SARP)

The District maintains a proactive focus on safety, promoting employee participation in safety and health programs, and seeking to increase every employee's awareness of safety in the workplace. The District's SARP is a two-part approach for driving a strong safety culture: 1) awareness, and 2) District-wide safety recognition events. District management has provided safety budgets for the awareness projects and for the benchmarked-defined District-wide safety recognition events that may take place every few years. The budget is based upon the business needs of the District not only meeting WISHA and OSHA safety requirements, but also supporting a strong safety culture—this supports employee health and reduces employee accidents and damage to District assets.

### Safety Awareness Projects

The District's commitment and responsibility for promoting a personal and corporate culture of safety is outlined in The District's Safety Program Manual, in both the "Safety Responsibilities Program" and "Employee Safety Orientation and Accident Prevention Program." Ongoing programs and training will take place to increase awareness of safety

in the workplace. The Safety Committee charter defines the committee's objectives and responsibilities to create visibility and to promote and celebrate safety successes with all employees.

Maintaining a strong safety culture where employees believe and act in a manner that supports "safety is my responsibility," requires consistent and ongoing reminders of both the District and employee's commitment to this culture.

To engage and remind employees of that commitment, highly visible awareness projects will engage employees in better understanding the importance of utilizing the safety program policies and procedures, as well as clearly understanding that management supports and values safety.

The Safety Committee, on an annual basis, will determine how to support safety awareness through a project(s) that may include a presentation and a safety-related item provided to each employee, which will support employee safety awareness. The annual budget will be allocated to this annual event.

## **Safety Recognition Events**

### **District-Wide**

The Safety Committee monitors safety performance indicators for the District in the context of recordable and lost time events. These two safety indicators recognize the number of hours since the District has experienced a Labor and Industries defined event that is documented on the OSHA 300 form. Both key performance indicators are presented regularly to staff as evidence of the District's progress. Each year the committee will review the safety program and culture. If the committee determines that the District is eligible for recognition, the committee will forward a recommendation to the Management Team to recognize the accomplishment with a District-sponsored event.

Eligibility Criteria:

- 360,000 hours without a controllable lost time event
- Positive safety culture
- Documented review of any recordable events

### **Individual Safety Recognition**

Timely recognition of employees who demonstrate safe behaviors or identify opportunities to change processes that can reduce the potential for unsafe outcomes is important to the District. Individual rewards and recognitions will be made through the District's Reward and Recognition Program under its current budget and authority.

## **Program Responsibility**

The Safety Committee is responsible for monitoring performance indicators and safety culture. It is also responsible for determining eligibility and appropriate awareness and recognition. The committee shall recommend the projects and events, timing, activities in support of the projects, and how to appropriately link the projects and recognitions to the continued building of a strong safety culture.

**SECTION 5**

**DISTRICT STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND CORRECTIVE ACTION**

# Attendance

## Introduction

The District's intent is to promote efficient and effective operations. Dependability and Punctuality in attendance are essential to that effort and for the professional delivery of services. These behaviors also help the employee to establish a good working reputation and are an important element of individual job performance. They are a critical factor impacting departmental and District-wide performance and they contribute towards positive co-worker morale. In addition, for the District to operate effectively, the District must be kept informed of an employee's status when they are off work due to illness or incident from any cause.

The District seeks to minimize attendance related issues. Attendance standards and expectations are discussed below along with a framework for appropriately evaluating and responding to attendance-related issues.

## Definitions

**Occurrence:** An absence or lateness (regardless of its duration without the required prior notice, will be considered an occurrence (except as otherwise provided by state or federal law).

**Prior Approval:** In order for the leave to be "approved," the employee must provide advance notice and obtain prior approval from their manager, in accordance with the Advance Notification provision below.

**Unapproved Absence:** The employee does not report to work, or leaves work early, before the end of their scheduled shift, without prior approval (excluding use of paid sick leave or leave covered under state or federal law).

### **Excessive Unapproved Absenteeism:**

- two or more occurrences in a month or
- twelve occurrences in a twelve-month period

**Unapproved Lateness:** The employee is late to work, not in place and working at the time defined as the beginning of their designated shift or the time defined for their return to work from a designated break period, without prior approval (excluding use of paid sick leave or leave covered under state or federal law).

### **Excessive Unapproved Lateness:**

- two or more occurrences in a month or
- twelve occurrences in a twelve-month period

## Attendance Standards

**Exempt:** Exempt employees are expected to report to work for their scheduled shift on a regular and consistent basis and work a "professional schedule." However, it should be noted that the flexibility associated with a professional schedule also means

that if the needs of the position require that they arrive early or stay late, they are not compensated with overtime pay.

**Non-Exempt:** All District personnel have been assigned a work schedule based upon the business needs of their work group and department. Employees are expected to arrive for work on time such that they are ready to start work at the beginning of their scheduled shift. Employees shall return to work on time from designated break periods. They are also expected to complete their shift as scheduled.

### **Advance Notification**

For all “planned” or “foreseeable” absences (including those covered by paid sick leave, such as planned medical procedure or treatment), an employee should provide at least forty-eight (48) hours’ notice, unless otherwise established by a department manager. If an absence covered by paid sick leave becomes foreseeable in less than 48 hours, the employee should provide notice as soon as the need for the absence becomes known.

If an employee is unable to report for work, will arrive late, or must leave early due to any unforeseeable reason, the employee, or individual designated by the employee, must provide at least one hour advance notice when possible, to their immediate supervisor or, in the supervisor’s absence, the department manager. If, in cases where the absence is covered by paid sick leave, such notice is not possible under the circumstances, an employee should provide notice as soon as reasonably practicable.

Compliance with these advance notification requirements does not necessarily excuse the leave, which nonetheless may be considered an occurrence of an unapproved absence or lateness for absences not covered by paid sick leave.

If an employee does not report as scheduled and, if the employee has not spoken to their supervisor or manager in advance to explain the absence or lateness, corrective action may result. Employees who are not on approved or protected leave of absence must call and notify their supervisor each day prior to the start of their scheduled shift, to report their absence. During periods of approved or protected leave, the employees must call in accordance with District call-in policies.

### **Absence Without Notice – No Call, No Show**

If an employee fails to provide notification after three days of a consecutive unapproved absence, this constitutes a “no call no show.” In such cases, the District may presume the employee has resigned their position, and the employee may be separated from employment with the District.

If an employee is having difficulties meeting the requirements of the employee’s schedule, the employee shall contact their supervisor. Excessive unapproved lateness and/or absenteeism may result in corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

### **Verification Regarding Medical Absences**

The District reserves the right to require a physician’s release to return to work when an employee returns to work following a lengthy absence due to the employee’s medical condition.

Additionally, for absences of more than three (3) consecutive days due to the employee's or the employee's immediate family member's medical condition, the District may require the employee to provide verification of the medical condition from a qualified health care provider; provided that, in those cases where the employee uses paid sick leave in connection with the absence, the verification shall not result in an unreasonable burden or expense to the employee. In such cases, if an employee believes that the required verification would result in an unreasonable burden or expense, the employee should notify the District, preferably in writing, of this and provide an explanation that (i) the employee's use of paid sick leave is for one of the reasons outlined in the Sick Leave policy above (pages 4-5 through 4-7) and (ii) how the verification requirement will result in an undue burden or expense for the employee. Upon receipt of such notice from the employee, the District will consider the employee's explanation and proceed in accordance with the resolution process set forth in WAC 296-128-660. Otherwise, failure to provide the required verification may result in loss of leave benefits for that work period and may result in further corrective action.

### **Absenteeism and Lateness**

Attendance issues and concerns arise out of individual situations and circumstances that will have different impacts on the employee, the employee's workgroup, and the District. The District reserves the right to evaluate individual situations and take into consideration individual circumstances in determining the appropriate response to unapproved absenteeism and lateness.

Factors a supervisor may take into consideration in evaluating performance in this area include:

- Not using a benefit for its intended purpose
- Frequent unapproved lateness or absence
- Unapproved lateness or absences that disrupts the flow of work, burdens co-workers, lowers morale or affects the quality of work and/or services provided by the District
- A pattern or trend of unapproved lateness or absence coinciding with holidays, weekends, or scheduled time off
- A pattern or trend of not following and adhering to current policies and procedures in communicating and tracking absences

### **Excessive Unapproved Absenteeism or Lateness**

The District seeks to apply a uniform professional approach in addressing excessive unapproved absenteeism and lateness. Frequent unapproved absence or lateness, as defined below, will be considered "excessive." Non-compliance with these standards, will initiate a communication and/or a corrective action process.

The supervisor or department manager will review the employee's attendance and performance and discuss the concern with the employee. With support from Human Resources, the District will determine whether leave is covered under federal or state law (e.g. FMLA). The supervisor will consider individual circumstances and factors involved to determine the appropriate course of corrective action. Supervisors will generally apply

progressive corrective action for excessive unapproved absenteeism or lateness under the corrective action guidelines in this handbook.

## **Inclement Weather Attendance**

### **Status Determination**

The General Manager, or written designee, shall be responsible for determining if and when the District will be operating under inclement weather status. Once the determination has been made, the General Manager, or written designee, shall notify staff that the District is operating under inclement weather conditions and of the specific operational status as discussed below.

Under inclement weather conditions, attendance requirements and responsibilities differ for employees who are defined as “essential personnel” and those which are considered “non-essential personnel.” Specific operations and maintenance staff are defined as essential personnel within the official position descriptions and are required to report during inclement weather events. Unless specifically identified in the position description, all other personnel are considered non-essential personnel. The General Manager, or written designee, may require non-essential employees to work during any office closure, work different shifts or perform job duties outside the scope of the employee’s normal job duties, until such time as the inclement weather situation has ended.

### **Notification System**

The District has an Inclement Weather Notification System and Procedure (Procedure #001-2005). The notification system is the official method used to communicate with staff in the event that inclement weather may impact the normal operations of the District.

To verify whether the office is open for normal business, closed, or opening late, each employee shall check the District website and their District email by 6:30 AM. A status message will be placed on the website and sent via email advising of the operations of the District. If the office is to be closed or open late for normal business, due to inclement weather, a special message will be provided to that effect. The District may elect to use other means to communicate with the public during inclement weather. Staff are expected to use the inclement weather notification system.

### **Office is Open for Normal Business**

As a public agency, the District must be prepared to serve the customers of the District as scheduled, regardless of weather conditions (including snow, black ice, ice storms, excessive heat, poor air quality and related adverse elements). All employees should be prepared with suitable transportation during inclement weather, as your attendance is usually required to maintain service to our customers. It is the employee’s responsibility to provide the solution to personal circumstances (distance to drive, equipment for vehicle, school closure issues, etc.) in order to be at work as scheduled.

On the first day of inclement weather, which severely restricts vehicular traffic, supervisors may grant up to a one-hour “grace” period for those employees who arrive at work late. On subsequent days, employees are expected to make whatever arrangements are needed to be at their workstations as scheduled.



In the event, due to unique conditions at your home location, you are unable to come to work safely, contact your supervisor no later than one hour before your regularly scheduled start time.

### **Office is Opening Late for Normal Business**

If the General Manager, or written designee, determines that the office will be opening late for normal business that workday, then non-essential personnel are expected to arrive and be ready to start work at the time the office is scheduled to open for the inclement weather delay. Essential personnel are expected to arrive for work on time and be ready to start work at the beginning of their regular scheduled shift. In the event, due to unique conditions at your home location, you are unable to come to work safely, contact your supervisor no later than one hour before your regularly scheduled start time.

### **Office is Closed for Normal Business**

If the General Manager, or written designee, determines that the office will be closed for normal business that workday, then essential personnel still need to report for their regular scheduled shift and non-essential personnel are excused.

### **Office is Closed Early**

If the General Manager, or written designee, makes the determination to close the office prior to the normal closing period, on duty, non-essential personnel are excused unless otherwise directed by the General Manager or written designee. All non-essential personnel who are not excused will be required to work the remainder of their scheduled shift. Essential personnel are required to remain and work the remainder of their regularly scheduled shift unless otherwise directed by the General Manager or written designee.

### **Inclement Weather Compensation**

In the event of inclement weather, staff will be compensated for actual time worked in accordance with standard District payroll policies and procedures as further described herein. All employees who work during any official office closure shall be paid at their regular rate of pay. Essential personnel required to respond during emergency situations (e.g. major fire, sewer main break and/or natural disaster) are eligible for meals in accordance with the Reimbursable Business Expense and Travel Advance Policy, Section F.

Any work time missed under the following scenarios: Office is Open for Normal Business, Office is Opening Late for Normal Business or Office is Closed due to inclement weather, will be charged to your accrued but unused vacation leave, comp time or floating holiday. If you have exhausted your vacation, comp, or floating holiday leave, then you will need to use leave without pay. You may also be able to utilize flex time with your supervisor's approval.

If the office is closed early, on-duty personnel which are excused for a portion of their regular scheduled shift will be paid for the remainder of their scheduled shift at their regular rate of pay and paid leave need not be charged.

## **District Emergency Notification System**

The District has an Emergency Notification System procedure. In the event of a District emergency where the District invokes an emergency command center, District employees are expected to follow the District Emergency Notification Procedure (Procedure #004-2005 - District Emergency Notification System).

To verify whether the office is open for normal business, each employee should call (360) 993-8850 and enter extension 809. You will be directed to a recording advising of the operations of the District.

## **On-Call Program**

### **On-Call Personnel**

Non-exempt employees are assigned to on-call duty, both primary and backup, as necessary to provide continuous monitoring of operations of the collection and treatment systems and to respond to emergency situations or service requests. For the duration of the on-call assignment (e.g., one week), employees are required to remain accessible and available and must comply with the District's alcohol and drugs policy (see p. 5-6). On-call Personnel must promptly answer the phone, respond to alarms and notifications, and return to work within forty-five (45) minutes when called.

## **Alcohol and Drugs**

The District is committed to protecting the safety, health and well-being of its employees, the public it serves and all people who come into contact with the District and the services it provides. Drug and alcohol abuse pose a direct and significant threat to this goal, and to the goal of providing a productive and efficient work environment in which all employees have an opportunity to reach their full potential. Accordingly, the District is committed to assuring a drug-free work environment for all its employees.

The District therefore strictly prohibits the use, purchase, possession, sale, conveyance, distribution, or manufacture of illegal (whether under federal and/or state law) drugs, intoxicants, controlled substances and/or drug paraphernalia associated with illegal drug use while on the job, while on District property, while operating District vehicles or while otherwise representing the District. The District further prohibits employees from being under the influence of alcohol (defined as having an alcohol concentration level of 0.04 or greater) or controlled substances (any detectable trace in the body system) while on duty. This policy applies to all District employees.

Prescription medications or nonprescription medications are not prohibited when taken in accordance with a lawful prescription, as applicable, and consistent with standard dosage recommendations. Prescription medication means a drug or medication lawfully prescribed under both federal and state law by a physician or other health care provider licensed to prescribe medication for an individual and taken in accordance with the prescription; but specifically excludes, without limitation, medical marijuana, which remains a controlled substance prohibited by federal law. Employees who are taking a prescription or over-the-counter medication that may impair their ability to perform their duties safely and effectively must notify their supervisor and should provide written notice

from their physician or health care provider with respect to the effects of such medication. The District may, at its discretion, send an employee home if the employee appears impaired by the use of prescription and/or over-the-counter medications and such impairment impacts the employee's ability to safely and/or effectively perform his or her duties.

District employees who are assigned on-call duties are expected to immediately respond to a District on-call phone call request and perform District business. Assigned on-call personnel may not report for duty and conduct District business when their performance may be impaired due to alcohol or drug use. Accordingly, assigned primary on-call personnel must refrain from using alcohol or drugs while on-call.

Employees may be subject to a drug and alcohol urinalysis test when there is reasonable suspicion to believe an employee is under the influence of, or impaired by the use of, alcohol or drugs. If an employee appears to be under any influence of drugs or alcohol, the District may require the employee to submit to appropriate tests, including urinalysis or breath tests, to confirm the existence of such alcohol or prohibited drug substance in his or her system. Failure to promptly permit such tests upon management's request shall be grounds for corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

All District employees shall be subject to reasonable suspicion, post-accident, return to duty and follow-up drug testing, as follows:

Reasonable Suspicion: Where the District has reason to suspect that an employee has violated or is presently violating or is otherwise under the influence of alcohol or drugs, such employee may be required to immediately submit to an alcohol or drug analysis test. Failure to comply with reasonable suspicion testing requirements will be grounds for corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

Post-Accident testing: Following an accident involving a District vehicle or District equipment, the driver/operator of such vehicle or equipment is required to submit to an alcohol and drug test when (1) the driver receives a citation under state or local law for a moving traffic infraction; (2) an injury or fatality occurs as a result of the accident; (3) the accident results in damage to one or more vehicles or equipment which requires the removal of the vehicle/equipment by towing or otherwise is estimated to exceed \$1,000; or (4) management deems it appropriate under the particular circumstances. Testing shall occur as soon as possible and must occur within eight (8) hours after the accident for alcohol testing and 32 hours after the accident for drug testing. An employee required to take a post-accident alcohol test may not use alcohol for eight (8) hours following the accident, or drugs for thirty-two (32) hours following the accident, or until a post-accident test is given, whichever comes first. An employee who is subject to post-accident testing must remain readily available for such testing and may not take any action to interfere with testing or results of testing. Failure to comply with post-accident testing requirements will be grounds for corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

Return to duty testing: Employees who have not complied with this policy, including those who have tested positive on a drug or alcohol test, and who under the District's disciplinary policy are allowed to return to work, must test negative prior to being released for duty.

Follow-up testing: An employee who is referred for assistance that is related to alcohol misuse and/or use of drugs is subject to unannounced follow-up testing for a period not to exceed 60 months as directed by a substance abuse professional and the District. The number and frequency of follow-up testing will be determined by the substance abuse professional and the District but will not be less than six tests in the first 12 months following the employee's return to duty.

Employees who are directed to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test must promptly report to the testing agency—under most circumstances; this will mean that the employee must report for testing no later than one hour after having received notice of the testing. In reporting for testing, the employee must report to the nearest testing facility and may not make any detours or stops en route to the testing facility. The District retains a qualified third-party administrator as its service agent to provide and coordinate the drug and alcohol testing services referenced in this policy. Employees are expected to cooperate with the administrator and to comply with the directives issued by the administrator in administering and coordinating the tests required pursuant to this policy.

A refusal to take a drug and/or alcohol test as required by the District, an undue delay in reporting for testing as instructed by the District and/or utilizing any means designed to “cheat” the test, adulterate or substitute the sample or otherwise render a false negative report shall be deemed the equivalent of a positive result and an employee engaging or assisting in such measures shall be subject to corrective action, up to and including separation of employment.

Employees who test positive for drugs may request a second test of the remaining portion of the split sample within 72 hours of notification of a positive test result by the medical review officer responsible for receiving and interpreting the drug test.

Employees violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including possible separation of employment. At a minimum, employees who test positive for alcohol or drugs shall be immediately removed from safety-sensitive functions and may be suspended without pay pending further evaluation and recommendation from a substance abuse professional (SA:”).

Employees who are found not to be in compliance with this policy but who are allowed to return to work under the District's disciplinary process shall be required to first submit to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) evaluation and shall receive a one-time opportunity to enter a treatment program if so recommended by an SAP. Upon return to work, the employee will be required to accept and comply with the terms of a “last chance agreement” and will be subject to the follow-up testing requirements set forth above.

The District considers drug addiction and alcoholism to be treatable diseases. Employees are encouraged to seek treatment voluntarily and to utilize the District-provided EAP before an alcohol or drug abuse problem affects their job performance or employment status and before they are asked to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. All alcohol or drug inpatient treatment programs paid through the District's health care plan should be accessed through the EAP. The District will accommodate employees who voluntarily seek treatment for a drug or alcohol addiction before they are requested to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test and/or are otherwise the subject of an investigation and/or disciplinary action for potential non-compliance of this or any other policy or other performance issue(s). Assistance will be provided on a confidential basis. Employees

are encouraged to “self-report,” and their job status with the District will not be jeopardized as a result of such report; provided, that the report is made prior to the District requesting a drug and/or alcohol test from the employee or otherwise initiating an investigation and/or disciplinary action into suspected policy non-compliance or related performance issues. Any employee who self-reports under these guidelines will be given a sufficient opportunity to seek evaluation, education and/or treatment to establish control over the employee’s substance abuse problem. However, self-reporting employees will not be permitted to perform safety-sensitive functions until the District is satisfied that the employee has been evaluated and has successfully completed education or treatment requirements recommended by an SAP or other drug and alcohol abuse evaluation expert. Prior to allowing an employee to return to safety-sensitive functions, the District shall require a return-to-duty test.

Employees with Commercial Driver’s Licenses: In addition to the policy set forth above, those employees who are required to have and maintain a commercial driver’s license (CDL) in order to perform their duties are further subject to the drug and alcohol testing requirements and regulations established by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and its designated agencies. District employees holding a CDL will be subject to the District’s policy and the USDOT policy set forth in the District’s Safety Program Manual under “Substance Abuse Policy for Employees Required to Possess a Commercial Driver’s License.” To the extent that the USDOT policy set forth in the Safety Program Manual conflicts with the general policy set forth above, the USDOT policy shall govern employees holding a CDL or otherwise occupying a safety-sensitive position.

Additionally, the District is registered with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Clearinghouse and shall comply with the Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use and Testing regulations set forth in 49 CFR Part 382. As part of these requirements, the District shall automatically report to the Clearinghouse, any of the following events or occurrences:

- A verified positive, adulterated or substituted drug test result
- An alcohol confirmation test with a concentration of 0.04 or higher
- An employee’s refusal to submit to a drug or alcohol test
- The District’s actual knowledge (as defined by 49 CFR § 382.107) of an employee’s:
  - An employee’s pre-duty, on-duty or post-accident use of alcohol as prohibited by 49 CFR §§ 382.207, .205 and .209.
  - An employee’s-controlled substance use as prohibited by 49 CRFR § 382.213.
  - Verification from a SAP that an employee has successfully completed the return-to-duty process
  - The employee’s negative return-to-duty test; and
  - The District’s report of completion of any required follow-up testing

All employees are expected to read and understand the contents of this policy. Any questions regarding the policy should be directed to the General Manager.

*\*\*\*Employees are specifically notified that the passage of Initiative 502, which amends Washington state law effective December 6, 2012, to decriminalize the possession and private use of a limited amount of marijuana by persons over the age of 21, shall have no effect or impact upon this policy. Pursuant to the Controlled Substances Act of 1970, 21 U.S.C. § 801 et seq., “marijuana” remains a “Schedule I” controlled substance, and its possession and/or use is illegal under federal law. Employees should recognize and understand that the “legalization” of marijuana under state law (for both medical and recreational purposes) will not excuse or otherwise constitute a “defense” to a positive drug test administered by the District in accordance with this policy. Any positive test for marijuana shall constitute non-compliance with this policy and shall be grounds for corrective action up to and including separation of employment.*

## Smoking

For reasons of health, safety, wellness, public relations, and other concerns, the District maintains a smoke-free and tobacco-free environment. Utilizing tobacco products of any kind or in any form, including chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes and vaping is prohibited in all District buildings. Smoking is also prohibited in all District vehicles.

## Dress and Personal Appearance

It is essential for the District to present a professional image at all times to anyone that interacts with the District. One of the most tangible ways of demonstrating this commitment to professionalism is in the form of dress and personal appearance maintained by District employees.

The purpose of the dress code is to ensure that all stakeholders that we come in contact with see that we respect our role and take our work seriously. This means that ornaments, clothing, or personal adornment that may be distracting or offensive to customers may be banned, should it emerge as an issue. Employees are expected to be neat and clean and maintain an appropriate, business-like appearance at all times, as determined by the requirements of the work area. Dress and appearance should not be distracting or offensive to customers or other employees. Supervisors will require that employees adhere closely to the Dress and Personal Appearance standards of the District. A professional appearance is appropriate at all times in the office. Appropriate business attire is clean, neat, and pressed and includes khaki pants, slacks, dresses, skirts, dress pants, polo shirts, buttoned shirts, sweaters, and blouses.

- **Examples of non-acceptable attire.** Faded and/or tattered jeans and shirts or clothing displaying advertising or messaging, inappropriate and non-professional logos and/or slogans. Overalls, sweatshirts/pants, jogging suits, athletic or running shoes, shorts, or tank tops are inappropriate. Any clothing with spaghetti straps; any clothing that reveals bare backs, midriffs, or any revealing, provocative clothing. Sleeveless garments that are not clearly business-like or garments that reveal undergarments either directly or indirectly through tightness or transparency. “Flip-flops” or slides are not acceptable footwear. Open-toed shoes

should offer solid stability for the work performed and be as business-like as other attire.

- **Casual Friday.** Jeans and a *slightly* more casual appearance are allowed on Fridays as long as job duties do not require more formal wear. The requirement is always neat, clean and in good repair and business-like.
- **Uniforms.** Some employees are provided uniforms for the purpose of making them easily identifiable to the public. All employees represent the District, and their appearance is important. Where uniforms are provided, employees are required to **always** wear the uniform when working.
- **Hair.** Hair should be clean, combed and neatly trimmed or arranged. This also pertains to sideburns, moustaches, and beards. The District utilizes breathing apparatus as part of its normal operation, which result in restrictions on facial hair for those required to use the apparatus. This restriction would be based on requirements imposed by state and federal guidelines for the proper and safe use of such equipment.
- **Personal Hygiene.** Good personal hygiene habits must be maintained.

### **District Uniform Policy**

Employees who have been provided uniforms by the District are required to be in uniform every workday, including after hours, holiday and weekend callouts. This includes the complete pants and shirt provided through the rental company or the rental pants and the District logo T-shirts. This also includes proper footwear provided by the District. There are no exceptions.

### **District Clothing**

The District shall provide an (1) article of District logo clothing for all employees on an annual basis. Human Resources will recommend a maximum dollar amount (after discounts and before sales tax) each year in the form of a memo provided to the General Manager for approval. The amount shall not exceed the cost of a suitable article of workwear/outerwear. The use of District logo clothing provides for and supports the culture of the organization as a highly professional, customer service-oriented organization. District logo clothing may be worn at work, when in compliance with the District's dress code guidelines, and outside of work where the employee is promoting community awareness of the District.

## **Charitable Activities and Solicitation**

The District encourages and supports employee participation in charitable organizations of their choice. However, care must be taken in utilizing District facilities and resources for the benefit of specific organizations. The District recognizes and supports employee activities in community-based organizations.

Small-scale efforts initiated by employees such as selling raffle tickets or candy for a child's school or youth group are authorized only during non-work hours, i.e. lunch periods and breaks, and must not be disruptive to the work environment. Caution should be exercised to ensure that other employees are not made to feel obligated to participate.

Soliciting by one employee of another, or collecting from one employee by another, is prohibited while either employee is on work time. Distributing literature and circulating petitions during work time or in work areas at any time is also prohibited. Trespassing, soliciting, or distributing literature by anyone not associated with the District is prohibited on District premises.

All activities for charitable purposes must be approved by the District. Contact your supervisor or Human Resources for specific details.

## **Children in the Workplace**

The District supports the national “Bring Your Child to Work Day” event for school-age children, which is the fourth Thursday in April each year. At the same time, the District seeks to maintain a professional business environment to support productivity and ensure that customers and stakeholders doing business at the office are not negatively impacted by other activities. Participation by an employee in the event must be cleared with the employee’s direct manager or supervisor in advance. In considering whether to approve the employee’s participation, managers and supervisors should consider safety, confidentiality and any special events taking place on that day in that department. Participating employees are responsible for the child (or children) and will accompany the child (or children) in the workplace. School age children are allowed to participate during the regularly scheduled workday of the employee.

The District, as a general rule, does not permit children in the workplace in lieu of childcare arrangements. Visits from the children, friends, or family members of employees should be avoided during working hours, however, such persons may visit employees occasionally for brief periods, and such persons may attend employee potlucks conducted during non-work hours.

## **Pets in the Workplace**

The Washington State Law against discrimination allows for persons with a disability, who use a trained guide dog or service animal, to bring that animal into the workplace. As a general rule, the District does not permit the presence of non-service animals in the District office. The presence of a non-service animal in the workplace for a brief visit is allowed. Employees are responsible for their pets and must accompany them when they are in the workplace.

## **Communications**

### **District Office Telephone and Wireless Communication Device Use - General**

District telephones and District-issued mobile communication devices, including but not limited to cellular telephones, tablets, and laptops (hereafter collectively called District Communication Devices or “DCD”) are to be used for District business in serving the interests of our customers and in the course of normal District operations.

An employee with a business need, as determined by the District, will be provided a DCD. The DCD is to be used for District business use only and is to be used by District personnel in carrying out their official job duties and functions. Improper use of a DCD



while driving District vehicles or operating District equipment is an infraction of this policy and may result in corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

Any loss of a DCD shall be immediately reported so that the device can be reported lost or stolen to the District's wireless provider. All DCD conducting District business shall be password protected. As with other District computers, no applications shall be installed on DCD without proper authorization.

All DCD are the property of the District and are for District business. Employees should understand that they have no expectation of privacy with respect to their DCD usage and that the District may review and inspect all data and activities stored, transmitted, sent, or recorded on the DCD at any time, in the District's sole discretion.

### **Personal Cellular Devices/Texting/Email Use**

The District is aware that employees utilize their personal cellular devices for personal phone calls, emails, and texting functions. At the same time, cellular devices can be a distraction in the workplace. To ensure the effectiveness of the District workforce, use of personal mobile devices should be limited to rest periods and lunch periods. Personal cellular devices are not to be used for conducting District business. Employees should understand that if they use their personal cellular devices for District business, any records generated thereby will likely qualify as "public records" and may be subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW, in which case the employee will be required to remit his or her personal mobile device to the District for public records recovery, in compliance with the requirements of the Public Records Act.

Any mobile device use while driving District vehicles or operating District equipment is an unsafe practice and is strictly prohibited by the District and may result in corrective action up to and including separation of employment.

### **Email Use**

The District encourages employees to utilize the District's email system as a method of increasing employee productivity, thereby improving overall capabilities of the District to serve its customers.

The contents of the District email system are public records that are subject to inspection, copying, retention and archiving by the District in accordance with the law. All employees are required to assure compliance with these laws in their use of the email system.

Because the District owns its electronic computing system and all the records that are transmitted and maintained on it, all email files are official District business records and are not the private property of employees. Employees have no expectation of privacy or a right of privacy in email communications transmitted or received through the District's electronic computing system or otherwise maintained on the District's equipment and/or hardware and software programs. All emails, whether considered "personal" by the employee, are subject to review and disclosure by supervisory or other District personnel, at any time and without prior notice, to ensure compliance with State law and this policy. Emails may be disclosable to the public and are subject to discovery proceedings in legal actions. Consequently, the District's email system is not the appropriate forum for any discussion of confidential or personal issues.

Employees are accountable for their use of email just as they are for other conduct and communications at the workplace. The District will view the propriety or impropriety of any communication on the basis of how it would have been perceived and dealt with had it been conducted in person, by phone or by “paper” communication.

The email system shall not to be used for the creation or distribution of any harassing, disruptive or offensive messages, including offensive or harassing comments about protected characteristics such as race, gender or gender reassignment, physical appearance, disability, age, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership or sexual orientation, pornography, religious beliefs and practice, political beliefs, and national origin. Employees who receive any emails with this content from any employee should report the matter to their supervisor or Human Resources immediately.

### **Social Media Use**

Social media use has the potential to constitute a public record, as defined above. Therefore, employees may not engage in personal social media activities on District computers or equipment, through the District’s electronic computing systems, or through District social media accounts. Employees may not engage in personal social media activities while on District time outside of rest periods and lunch periods. Employees may not use the District’s logo, trademarks, or graphics in connection with their social media usage.

Employees who use social media must refrain from making any comments or statements about employees, representatives or customers of the District that would violate the District’s policies. Employees may not defame or libel the services of the District.

District employees who have access to confidential information about the District’s operations, customers and coworkers may not use or disclose this confidential information in connection with their social media usage.

Any public communication by an employee which includes information related to the District must make clear to the audience that the views expressed by the employee are the employee’s alone, and that they do not reflect the views of the District. For example, “The views expressed in this [blog, posting or article] are my own and have not been reviewed or approved by the District.”

Employees who have questions about whether social media use is consistent with this policy are encouraged to speak with their supervisor or Human Resources before engaging in such usage.

A non-observance of this policy may be grounds for corrective action, up to and including separation of employment.

This policy does not prohibit employees from lawfully discussing the terms and conditions of their employment, or from engaging in any other activity protected by law.

### **Internet Use**

Access to the Internet via District resources is intended to facilitate the effective and efficient use of District employees’ time and effort. To that end, this use cannot disrupt or interfere with the work of the employee, other network users or coworkers, adversely affect operation of the Internet or the District’s own internal network or misrepresent the

interest of the District. Employees should limit their personal use of the Internet to their rest periods and breaks and may not engage in any Internet usage which interferes with the performance of their duties.

All use of the Internet via District resources must comply with applicable laws and District policies, such as non-discrimination/non-harassment. Internet access via District resources, therefore, must not be used for illegal or improper purposes.

The safety and security of the District's network and resources must be considered when using the Internet. Departments should provide employees with appropriate safety guidelines and software for their operations.

Individual users are responsible for adhering to applicable department policies when downloading resources from the Internet.

Individual users must be aware of and attempt to prevent potential District liability in their use of the Internet. For that reason, all outgoing messages that do not reflect the official position of the District or Department must include the following disclaimer: "The opinions expressed here are my own and do not represent those of the Clark Regional Wastewater District."

Resources, which involve executable or binary files, must not be downloaded without being properly scanned for viruses. Resources that are not used for a clear District purpose must not be accessed or downloaded. Resources of any kind, for which there is a fee, must not be accessed or downloaded without prior approval of a supervisor.

District employees have no right to expect that Internet access and usage is private. The District has the right to monitor and record all accesses to and usage of any web site or news group from any District computer or system at any time and does so without notice. The District may use this information and take appropriate corrective action, up to and including separation of employment or other legal proceedings. Records on the District's Internet system and/or equipment are public records. As such, they are subject to the same rules for public inspection and retention as all other District public records.

Use of the Internet by employees of the District shall support education and research that is consistent with the mission of the District. Use will be in accordance with the District's policy on standards of conduct including the following:

1. Maintain the integrity of files and data. Do not modify or copy files/data of other users without their consent.
2. Treat information created by others as the private property of the creator. Respect copyrights.
3. Use the network in a way that does not disrupt its use by others.
4. Do not use the Internet to access or process pornographic or otherwise inappropriate material.
5. Do not use the Internet for commercial purposes.

If it is determined that an authorized user is engaged in unauthorized activity or is violating this code of conduct, the District reserves the right to discontinue the user's privilege of using the Internet and take appropriate corrective action.

## Software and Equipment Use

Any record, file, or document under any format (file) that resides on a District system or on a District computer is subject to review by District staff at any time regardless of the nature of the file or where the file was created. Employees have no expectation of privacy or right of privacy in any personal record, file or document that resides on the District network system or on any District equipment used by employees. The District Network Administrator must be provided the password for any files that are password protected on the District network system.

The following describes the District's policy on employee use of District Software and Equipment as further defined in the IT Policy and Procedure Manual:

- Employees may not use District Equipment for purposes of engaging in non-District-related commercial activities.
- The District licenses the use of computer software from a variety of external sources. The District does not own this software or its related documentation and unless authorized by the software provider, does not have the right to reproduce, use, or otherwise copy that software. Unauthorized copying or use of software or documentation on any medium is strictly prohibited.
- Employees are expressly warned that they must respect copyright, trademark, trade secret, patent, license, policy and other proprietary rights and restrictions relating to the use, access or download of software or information. No one may download any software or information unless the following criteria have been met: (1) the information or software to be downloaded is directly related to work; (2) the District authorized the download; and (3) the District determines that the appropriate license fees have been paid.
- Software may only be installed on District equipment by District IT staff. No software may be installed on any District equipment, including screen savers, without proper authorization. The District may, from time to time, conduct system audits to ensure compliance with this policy. Anyone aware of any misuse of District software or related documentation must notify his or her supervisor or manager.
- No personal electronic devices (including but not limited to cellular telephones, tablets, flash drives, or computers) shall be connected to District equipment. The District issues flash drives to all employees for use on District equipment for District business only. If a District-issued flash drive is utilized offsite for official District business, upon return to the office, the flash drive contents shall be scanned for viruses and/or malware using the District's current anti-malware software. Under no circumstances shall the flash drive be utilized on an employee's personal computer or for personal use.
- Any flash drives, CDs, or DVDs provided by consultants, developers, contractors, etc., as well as proceedings from conferences/trainings, will be provided to IT Services Manager for scanning and download or other viewing instructions.
- Any vendor electronic devices (including but not limited to cellular telephones, tablets, flash drives or computers) will only be connected to District equipment

upon approval by District IT personnel, as it introduces the risk of infection of the network.

Any questions related to this this policy should be directed to the IT Services Manager or Human Resources.

## **Personal and Professional Conduct**

It is District policy that employees maintain a working environment that encourages mutual respect, promotes civil and congenial relationships among employees and is free from all forms of harassment and violence. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner as judged by a reasonable person. Employees have the right to conduct their work without disorderly or undue interference from other employees. The District prohibits employees from not complying with this right of their coworkers.

The District encourages a congenial work environment of respect and professionalism. Therefore, the District prohibits employees from intentionally harming or threatening to harm other employees, vendors, visitors, or property belonging to any of these parties. This prohibition includes but is not limited to intentional acts such as:

- Verbally abusing others
- Using intimidation tactics and making threats
- Making malicious, false, or harmful statements about others
- Creating conflict with coworkers, supervisors, visitors, or vendors
- Spreading malicious rumors and “gossiping”
- Treating coworkers or visitors in a discourteous or unprofessional manner

## **Corrective Action**

Groups of people who are working together for any purpose require certain guidelines pertaining to their conduct and relationships. Accordingly, our employees must be aware of their responsibilities to the District and to coworkers.

We strive to take a constructive approach to corrective action matters to ensure that actions, which would interfere with operations or an employee's job, are not continued and the employee is provided an opportunity to remedy the issue or concern.

The District generally applies the following progressive corrective action process: (1) oral warning; (2) written warning; (3) suspension with/without pay; and (4) separation of employment. However, where warranted by the nature of the offense of the circumstances, the District, in its discretion, may initiate corrective action at an “advance step” of the corrective action process or implement other corrective measures (i.e., demotion) as determined appropriate by the District. In addition, counseling and additional performance evaluations may be part of the corrective process, as the District in its sole discretion deems appropriate.

The District retains its right to take into consideration the circumstances of the event and the performance and work history of the employee in determining what employment action will take place on a case-by-case basis. The District in its discretion may deviate from the preceding guidelines where it deems appropriate or necessary to do so under the circumstances. In all matters of corrective action, the District reserves complete discretion except as limited by law. In all disputes, investigations or matters of controversy, the District's determination of the facts, made in good faith, will be conclusive. The District reserves the right to interpret these policies as situations arise and its interpretation, made in good faith, shall be conclusive.

Non-compliance with District standards will result in corrective action, up to and including separation of employment. In arriving at a decision for proper corrective action, the District will consider the relevant factors, including the seriousness of the infraction, the past record of the employee and other surrounding circumstances.

Although there is no way to identify every possible infraction of the standards of conduct, the following is a partial list of infractions, which may result in corrective action.

1. Falsifying employment application, timecard, or personnel or other District documents or records and general acts of dishonesty
2. Unauthorized use, removal or destruction of District or employee property
3. Unauthorized distribution or public disclosure of confidential information
4. Gambling, carrying weapons or explosives, or violating criminal laws on District premises
5. Sexual harassment or harassment based upon employee's membership in any protected class
6. Fighting, throwing any item, horseplay, practical jokes or other disorderly or unsafe conduct
7. Engaging in acts of dishonesty, fraud, waste, abuse, or sabotage
8. Threatening, intimidating, coercing, using abusive or vulgar language and/or interfering with the performance of other employees
9. Excessive absenteeism or lateness
10. Any infraction of drug and/or alcohol policy, including possession, sale or use of intoxicants or illegal drugs on District premises, the District vehicles or while on District business
11. Insubordination or refusal to comply with instructions or failure to perform reasonable duties, which are assigned
12. Infraction of safety rules or failure to follow safety procedures
13. Damaging or destroying District property due to careless or willful acts
14. Performance, which in the District's opinion, does not meet the requirements of the position

15. Engaging in such other practices as the District determines may be inconsistent with the ordinary and reasonable rules of conduct necessary to the welfare of the District, its employees, or customers
16. Infraction of District communication standards
17. Inability or unwillingness to get along with other employees
18. Failure to safeguard District assets
19. Non-compliance with any District rule, policy, or practice whether written or unwritten

This list is intended to be representative of the types of activities, which may result in corrective action. It is not intended to be comprehensive and does not alter the employment-at-will relationship between the employee and the District.

We believe our policies and expectations are clear. If, however, you have any questions concerning the application or intent of these policies, please consult your supervisor or Human Resources. An employee may request to Human Resources that corrective action documents be removed from their personnel file, 24 months (2 year) after the date of issuance if no further incidence or infraction has occurred. Your cooperation in observing our work standards and expectations will make action unnecessary.

### **Search of Property: District and Private**

For the safety of the employees and/or the welfare of the District, it is the policy of the District, when deemed necessary by management, for authorized persons to search and inspect both District property and personal items brought onto District property, which includes owned or leased facilities, surrounding grounds and parking areas. Refusal to cooperate in a search, inspection or investigation will result in a corrective action, up to and including separation of employment.

All District property is eligible for search and shall include but is not limited to individual lockers, desks, filing cabinets and computers. Personal property brought onto District grounds is eligible to be searched and shall include but is not limited to pockets, purses/wallets, briefcases, cars/trucks, lunch boxes, toolboxes, shopping bags/boxes and coats. *Employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy as to the District's premises and/or any property brought thereupon.*

The decision to search, under most conditions, will involve the department manager, the General Manager and Human Resources whenever possible. The department manager or supervisor and General Manager or Human Resources will determine the reasonableness of a search or inspection. Whenever possible, a minimum of three personnel will be required to perform the search; two to conduct the search and one to document and record the inventory and event. The person observing the search must be of the same gender as the person whose belongings are being searched.

Documentation will include the following:

1. Why the search was conducted (observed events, seriousness of the offense, and reliability of the source)

2. Who was involved
3. Where was the search conducted
4. Date and time of the search
5. What, if anything, was found
6. What actions were taken with the person involved
7. What final instructions were given to the employee

Human Resources will immediately report to the appropriate authorities any illegal items that are found and document such notification. This may result in corrective action, up to and including separation of employment from the District.



**SECTION 6**

**DISTRICT SAFETY AND HEALTH**

## **District Safety and Health Overview**

The District strives to provide safe working conditions for our employees. We observe the safety laws of the government within whose jurisdiction we operate. No one will knowingly be required to work in any unsafe manner. Safety is every employee's responsibility, and all employees are expected to do everything reasonable and necessary to keep the District a safe place to work.

### **Fires and Emergencies**

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, DIAL 911. Exits, fire extinguishers and first aid kits are located throughout the District's buildings. An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) unit is located in the copier room by the front desk. We also have volunteers trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), AED and first aid. Exits and areas around fire extinguishers must be kept clear at all times.

### **Accidents**

No matter how insignificant a workplace accident may seem when it occurs, notify your supervisor immediately, before the end of your shift, and complete the appropriate accident report detailing the incident and injury sustained. In addition, in the event of a time loss accident or accident requiring medical treatment, make sure Human Resources is notified immediately, in accordance with the Occupational Illness and Injury Reporting Policy below. Employees who fail to report an accident as required herein shall be subject to corrective action, up to and including separation of employment.

### **Occupational Illness and Injury Reporting Policy**

It is important that all workplace injuries and illnesses are reported to management as soon as reasonably possible after they occur. Prompt reporting allows for prompt identification and correction of hazards and prompt medical attention for injuries. In some instances, an employee may not immediately realize that they have been injured or made ill. In such circumstances, the employee must report the injury or illness as soon as reasonably possible after becoming aware of the injury or illness. Therefore, the following policy applies to work-related injury and illness reporting: 1) An employee who is at work when they become aware of an injury or illness must report it as soon as reasonably possible, but in no event later than leaving the District, or 8 hours after becoming aware of the injury or illness, whichever is earlier. The report must be made to the employee's supervisor, or, if prompt medical attention is needed, to Emergency Services. 2) An employee who is not at work when they become aware of an injury or illness must report it as soon as reasonably possible, but in no event later than 8 hours after becoming aware of the injury or illness. The employee must report the injury or illness by calling their supervisor or the applicable call-in procedures, explaining that they are reporting a work-related injury or illness. 3) No employee who complies with this policy will receive corrective action for not promptly reporting an injury or illness. Supervisors must not interfere with, or attempt to discourage, reporting under this policy.

### **Safety Program**

The District follows state and federal Safety rules that are contained in the adopted Safety Policy and Procedures Manual (a hard copy of which is located in each department and an electronic copy is accessible on the District's network). Each employee is responsible

to become familiar with the Safety Policy and Procedures Manual and observe the policies and procedures set forth in that manual at all times. The Safety Program includes but is not limited to an Accident Prevention Program and Safety Orientation.

### **Accident Prevention Program**

The District cares about each employee's safety and always wants all employees to be safe. The District wants to ensure that our staff understands the specific safety expectations of their position and knows what to do in case of a safety concern or incident and knows how to prevent and report hazardous and unsafe incidents and near misses. The District has an Accident Prevention Program which explains how to identify and report hazards in the workplace and how to mitigate those hazards. This includes the District's Hepatitis A/B Prevention Program.

### **Safety Orientation**

Each employee, upon hire, will go through a Safety Orientation with the District's Safety Officer that will identify and provide information and training on all safety related issues for their position and the environments they will work in. The District has identified specific safety topics and trainings relevant to each employee's position description and will provide initial and refresher trainings as required by state and federal safety requirements, at no cost to employees.

### **Health Emergency Labor Standards Act**

During a declared public health emergency:

(a) Within 24 hours of confirming that 10 or more employees at the workplace or worksite have tested positive for an infectious or contagious disease that is the subject of a public health emergency, the District will report the positive tests to the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) in a form prescribed by L&I.

(b) If the District receives a notice of potential exposure to the infectious or contagious disease that is the subject of a public health emergency, the District will, within one business day of potential exposure, provide written notice to all employees, and the employers of subcontracted employees, who were on the premises at the same worksite as the qualifying individual that they may have been exposed to the infectious or contagious disease. The written notice will be made in a manner the employer normally uses to communicate employment-related information.

## **HANDBOOK RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

## HANDBOOK RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Clark Regional Wastewater District (District) Employee Handbook and have read and understand the District Employee Handbook. I agree to conform to the rules, policies, and procedures of the District. I understand that neither spoken nor written representations, including this Handbook, create any expressed or implied contract of employment between the District and me. I agree that my employment is voluntary or at-will so that I have the right to terminate my employment at any time for any reason and that the District has the same right.

I understand and agree that the provisions of the Handbook may be amended or revised at any time, without notice, at the District's discretion, and that this Handbook is not an exhaustive statement of District rules, policies, or procedures.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## OTHER ADOPTED DISTRICT PLANS/POLICIES

- 1 – [Classification Ranges & Position Table](#) and [Organization Chart](#)
- 2 – [Compensation Plan](#)
- 3 – [Reimbursable Expense & Travel Advance Policy](#)
- 4 – [Purchasing Policy](#)
- 5 – [Sensitive & Non-Public Information Policy, Including Identify Theft Prevention](#)
- 6 – [Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Policy](#)