

Hancock County Government

Hancock County Government Employee Handbook

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TABLE of CONTENTS

CORE POLICIES	4
1.0 WELCOME.....	4
1.1 A Welcome Policy	4
1.2 Indemnification	5
1.3 At-Will Employment.....	5
1.4 Personnel Advisory Committee	5
2.0 INTRODUCTORY LANGUAGE AND POLICIES.....	6
2.1 Management Rights	6
2.2 Ethics Code.....	6
2.3 Revisions to Handbook	7
3.0 HIRING AND ORIENTATION POLICIES.....	7
3.1 Religious Accommodation.....	7
3.2 Disability Accommodation	7
3.3 Accommodations for Pregnant Employees	8
3.4 Recruiting and Hiring.....	9
3.5 Employee Medical Examinations.....	10
3.6 Employment Authorization Verification.....	11
3.7 New Hires and Introductory Periods.....	11
3.8 Orientation.....	11
3.9 Conflicts of Interest.....	11
3.10 Employment of Relatives and Friends.....	11
3.11 Job Descriptions.....	14
3.12 Training Program.....	14
4.0 WAGE AND HOUR POLICIES	15
4.1 Attendance	15
4.2 Direct Deposit.....	15
4.3 Employment Classifications	15
4.4 Introduction to Wage and Hour Policies	16
4.5 Job Abandonment	16
4.6 Paycheck Deductions.....	16
4.7 Recording Time	17
4.8 Travel Expenses.....	18
4.9 Use of Employer Credit Cards.....	18
4.10 Workday/Workweek	19
5.0 PERFORMANCE, DISCIPLINE, LAYOFF, AND TERMINATION	20
5.1 Disciplinary Process	20
5.2 Employment Termination	20
5.3 Criminal Activity/Arrests	21
5.4 Exit Interview	21
5.5 Open Door/Conflict Resolution Process	21
5.6 Outside Employment.....	22
5.7 Pay Raises	23
5.8 Performance Improvement.....	23
5.9 Post-Employment References.....	23
5.10 Promotions	24
5.11 Standards of Conduct.....	24
5.12 Transfers	26
5.13 Workforce Reductions (Layoffs).....	26
6.0 GENERAL POLICIES	27
6.1 Elective Officer and County Employment Restricted	27
6.2 Blanket Surety Bonds.....	27
6.3 Political Activity.....	27
6.4 Driving Record.....	27
6.5 Employer Sponsored Social Events	27
6.6 Employer-Provided Cell Phones/Mobile Devices	28
6.7 Mail Use	29
6.8 Nonsolicitation/Nondistribution Policy.....	29
6.9 Off-Duty Use of Employer Property or Premises	29
6.10 Personal Appearance.....	30
6.11 Personal Cell Phone/Mobile Device Use	30
6.12 Personal Data Changes	31
6.13 Security	31
6.14 Social Media.....	31
6.15 Telecommuting.....	32
6.16 Telephone Use.....	32
6.17 Third Party Disclosures	33

6.18	Use of County Technology	33
6.19	Workplace Privacy and Right to Inspect.....	38
7.0	BENEFITS.....	38
7.1	Deferred Compensation	38
7.2	Indiana Public Retirement System	39
7.3	Bereavement Leave.....	39
7.4	COBRA	39
7.5	Family and Medical Leave (FMLA).....	39
7.6	Health Insurance	44
7.7	Holidays	44
7.8	Military Leave (USERRA).....	45
7.9	Paid Time Off (PTO).....	45
7.10	Parental Leave	45
7.11	Unemployment Compensation Insurance	54
7.12	Full-Time to Elected Official Employment.....	54
7.13	Workers' Compensation Insurance	55
8.0	SAFETY AND LOSS PREVENTION	55
8.1	Workplace Tobacco Usage	55
8.2	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA)	55
8.3	Bloodborne Pathogens	55
8.4	County Closure and Emergencies.....	56
8.5	Drug-Free Workplace – check with new hire forms	57
8.6	General Safety	59
8.7	Workplace Violence.....	60
	INDIANA POLICIES.....	62
	HIRING AND ORIENTATION POLICIES.....	62
	EEO Statement and Nonharassment Policy.....	62
	WAGE AND HOUR POLICIES	63
	Accommodations for Nursing Mothers	63
	Meal and Rest Periods	64
	Overtime.....	64
	Pay Period.....	65
	Travel Time Pay	66
	GENERAL POLICIES	66
	Access to Personnel and Medical Records Files	66
	BENEFITS.....	67
	Employment Protections for Civil Air Patrol Members.....	67
	Court Attendance and Witness Leave	68
	Jury Duty Leave	68
	Military Family Leave.....	68
	Voting Leave	69
	CLOSING STATEMENT	70
	ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT AND REVIEW.....	71

Core Policies

1.0 Welcome

1.1 A Welcome Policy

Welcome! We hope that your employment with Hancock County Government will be rewarding and challenging. We take pride in our employees as well as in the services we provide to our County.

Hancock County complies with all Federal and State employment laws, and this Handbook generally reflects those laws. The County also complies with any applicable local laws, although there may not be an express written policy regarding those laws contained in the Handbook.

The policies contained in the Hancock County Government Employee Handbook (hereafter referred to as the “Handbook”) apply to all Hancock County employees, except when in direct conflict with special employment conditions set forth by various statutes governing employment relationships.

The following designated individuals and/or groups are exceptions to these policies as specified:

Elected officials; and Sheriff Merit Deputies.

Please take the time now to read this Handbook carefully. Sign the acknowledgment at the end to show that you have read, understood, and agree to the contents of this Handbook, which sets out the basic rules and guidelines concerning your employment. This Handbook supersedes any previously issued Handbooks or policy statements dealing with the subjects discussed herein. The County reserves the right to interpret, modify, or supplement the provisions of this Handbook at any time. Neither this Handbook nor any other communication by a management representative or other, whether oral or written, is intended in any way to create a contract of employment. Please understand that no employee Handbook can address every situation in the workplace.

While Hancock County believes these policies are accurate, some sections, like insurance, are only summaries. **Any discrepancies between these summaries and the terms of the actual plans will be governed by the terms of the underlying, more detailed policies and procedures.** The Hancock County Commissioners shall be the County Executive and shall transact the business of the County. Any questions regarding summaries, their underlying policies, and procedures, if applicable, and any discrepancies between them should be directed to the County Commissioners.

If you have questions about your employment or any provisions in this Handbook, contact the Human Resources Director.

We wish you success in your employment here at Hancock County Government!

All the best,

Board of Commissioners, of Hancock County
Hancock County Government

1.2 Indemnification

In the event that a department head, elected official, or any other County employee becomes a defendant, either in his/her representative capacity, or individually in any litigation arising out of the administration to this policy, the County and/or its insurers, shall defend the employee of that action, and pay any judgment entered in the action provided by the County, so long as the elected official, department head, or County employee has made a good faith effort to comply with the terms and conditions set out in this Handbook.

1.3 At-Will Employment

Your employment with Hancock County Government is on an "at-will" basis. This means your employment may be terminated at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause. Likewise, we respect your right to leave the County at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause.

Nothing in this Handbook or any other County document should be understood as creating a contract, guaranteed or continued employment, a right to termination only "for cause," or any other guarantee of continued benefits or employment. Only the of Board of Commissioners of Hancock County has the authority to make promises or negotiate with regard to guaranteed or continued employment, and any such promises are only effective if placed in writing and signed by the Board of Commissioners of Hancock County.

If a written contract between you and the County is inconsistent with this Handbook, the written contract is controlling.

Nothing in this Handbook will be interpreted, applied, or enforced to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of their rights under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

The policies and procedures in this Handbook apply to all Hancock County employees, except when in conflict with special employment conditions set forth for elected officials or when in conflict with various statutes governing employment relationships. Where Federal and State laws or regulations supersede Hancock County policies, employees will be instructed to observe the requirements of these state and federal laws.

1.4 Personnel Advisory Committee

The Hancock County Personnel Advisory Committee facilitates the implementation of the policies and procedures herein established. They shall meet annually to review the application of County personnel policies, such as:

1. Reviewing employee complaints in connection with the problem resolution procedure in this Handbook and providing advisory recommendations as warranted;
2. Monitoring personnel policies and procedures and making recommendations for revisions, modifications, additions, and deletions as deemed necessary; and
3. Reviewing all procedures adopted by any department as they pertain to compliance with this Handbook.

The Hancock County Personnel Advisory Committee shall serve yearly and be comprised of eight (8) members. The members of the Personnel Advisory Committee shall be: (1) County Commissioner, (1) County Council Member, the Sheriff, the County Auditor, the County Clerk, the IT Director, the Risk Manager, the Human Resources Director, and the Highway Superintendent/Engineer, or a designee of any of the referenced members.

2.0 Introductory Language and Policies

2.1 Management Rights

Hancock County, as a public employer, retains the sole and exclusive responsibility and authority to manage and direct its workforce on behalf of the public, and to conduct the operations and activities of the County to the full extent authorized by law. Such responsibility and authority shall include, but not be limited to:

1. The right to direct the work of its employees;
2. The right to establish policy;
3. The right to maintain the efficiency of public operations;
4. The right to design and implement safety programs for employees;
5. The right to design and implement job training for employees;
6. The right to determine what services shall be rendered to the public;
7. The right to determine job content and job descriptions;
8. The right to determine and implement objectives and goals of the County;
9. The right to establish, allocate, schedule, assign, modify, change, and discontinue County operations, work shifts, and working hours;
10. The right to establish, change, and discontinue work standards;
11. The right to hire, examine, classify, train, transfer, assign, and retain employees; suspend, discharge, or take other disciplinary action against employees in accordance with applicable law and to relieve employees from duties due to disciplinary reasons or other legitimate reasons; and make promotions and demotions;
12. The right to change, modify, and alter the composition of the workforce;
13. The right to determine, establish, and implement policies for the selection, training, and promotion of employees in accordance with applicable law;
14. The right to establish, implement, modify, and change procedures and policies for the safety, health, and protection of County property and personnel;
15. The right to adopt, modify, change, enforce, or discontinue any existing rules, regulations, procedures, and policies;
16. The right to establish, select, modify, change, or discontinue equipment, materials, and the layout and arrangement of equipment;
17. The right to determine the size and character of inventories and their disposal;
18. The right to control the use of property, machinery, inventories, and equipment owned, leased, or borrowed by the County; and
19. The right to determine the location, establishment, and organization of new departments, divisions, subdivisions, or facilities thereof, and the relocations of departments, subdivisions, locations, and the closing and discontinuance of same.

The above enumeration of management rights is not inclusive of all such rights and all rights granted by the County, by the Constitution, statute, charter, ordinance, or in any manner are retained by the County.

Elected officials/department heads have responsibility for the day-to-day supervision and operation of their respective offices as prescribed by Statute.

2.2 Ethics Code

Hancock County Government will conduct business honestly and ethically wherever operations are maintained. We strive to improve the quality of our services, products, and operations and will maintain a reputation for honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility, integrity, trust, and sound business judgment. Our managers and employees are expected to adhere to high standards of business and personal integrity as a representation of our County practices, at all times consistent with their duty of loyalty to the County and consistent with all applicable state and federal laws.

We expect that Elected Officials, Department Heads, and employees will not knowingly misrepresent the County and will not speak on behalf of the County unless specifically authorized. The confidentiality of proprietary information and similar confidential commercially-sensitive information (i.e. financial or sales

records/reports, marketing or business strategies/plans, product development, customer lists, etc.) about the County or operations, or that of our customers or partners, is to be treated with discretion and only disseminated on a need-to-know basis (see policies relating to privacy).

Violation of the Code of Ethics can result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment. The degree of discipline imposed may be influenced by the existence of voluntary disclosure of any ethical violation and whether or not the violator cooperated in any subsequent investigation.

2.3 Revisions to Handbook

This Handbook is our attempt to keep you informed of the terms and conditions of your employment, including Hancock County Government policies and procedures. The Handbook is not a contract. Hancock County Government reserves the right to revise, add, or delete from this Handbook as we determine to be in our best interest, except the policy concerning at-will employment. When changes are made to the policies and guidelines contained herein, we will endeavor to communicate them in a timely fashion, typically in a written supplement to the Handbook or in a posting on county bulletin boards.

3.0 Hiring and Orientation Policies

3.1 Religious Accommodation

Hancock County Government recognizes the diversity of religious beliefs and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all employees, regardless of their religious beliefs and practices or lack thereof. Consistent with this commitment, the County complies with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all applicable state and local laws that prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of religion. The County will reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs of employees if the accommodations would resolve a conflict between the individual's religious belief or practice and a work requirement, unless doing so would create an undue hardship.

Requesting a Religious Accommodation

If you need an accommodation because of your religious beliefs or practices, make the request with your Department Head/Elected Official. You may be asked to include relevant information such as:

- A description of the proposed accommodation.
- The reason you need the accommodation.
- How the accommodation will help resolve the conflict between your religious beliefs or practices (or lack thereof) and your work requirements.

After receiving your request, the County will engage in an interactive dialogue with you to explore potential accommodations that could resolve the conflict between your religious beliefs or practices and work requirements. The County encourages you to suggest specific reasonable accommodations. However, the County is not required to make the specific accommodation requested by you and may provide an alternative accommodation, to the extent any reasonable accommodation can be made without imposing an undue hardship on the County.

The County will not discriminate or retaliate against employees who, in good faith, request a religious accommodation under this policy.

3.2 Disability Accommodation

Hancock County Government complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, and all applicable state and local fair employment practices laws, and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities, including disabilities related to pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions. Consistent with this commitment, the County will provide reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified individuals where appropriate to allow the

individual to perform the essential functions of the job, unless doing so would create an undue hardship on the County.

If you require an accommodation because of your disability, it is your responsibility to notify your Department Head/Elected Official. You may be asked to include relevant information such as:

- The reason you need an accommodation.
- A description of the proposed accommodation.
- How the accommodation will help you perform the essential functions of your job.

After receiving your request, the County will engage in an interactive dialogue with you to determine the precise limitations of your disability and explore potential reasonable accommodations that could overcome those limitations. Where appropriate, we may need your permission to obtain additional information from your medical provider. All medical information received by the County in connection with a request for accommodation will be treated as confidential.

The County encourages you to suggest specific reasonable accommodations that you believe would allow you to perform your job. However, the County is not required to make the specific accommodation requested by you and may provide an alternative accommodation, to the extent any reasonable accommodation can be made without imposing an undue hardship on the County.

Where state or local law provides greater protections to employees than federal law, the County will apply the law that provides the greatest benefit to employees.

If leave is provided as a reasonable accommodation, such leave may run concurrently with leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and/or any other leave where permitted by state and federal law.

The County will not discriminate or retaliate against employees for requesting an accommodation.

3.3 Accommodations for Pregnant Employees

Hancock County Government will provide reasonable accommodation to pregnant employees for known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or other related medical conditions in accordance with the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA).

Examples of potential reasonable accommodations include:

- Seating;
- Closer parking;
- Flexible hours;
- Appropriately sized uniforms and safety apparel;
- Additional break time to use the bathroom, eat, and rest;
- Leave or time off to recover from childbirth;
- Limitations on strenuous activities; and
- Limitations on strenuous activities or those that involve exposure to compounds not safe for pregnancy.

If you require an accommodation, notify your Department Head/Elected Official. If the need for a particular accommodation is not obvious, you may be asked to include relevant information such as:

- The reason you need an accommodation.
- A description of the proposed accommodation
- How the accommodation will address limitations caused by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

The County will not require you to accept any accommodation without engaging in the interactive process to accurately understand your limitations and explore potential accommodations. The County is not required to make your specific requested accommodation and is not required to provide any

accommodation that would constitute an undue hardship on the County.

If leave is provided as a reasonable accommodation, it may run concurrently with leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and/or any other leave where permitted by law.

The County will comply with state or local laws that provide additional protections beyond the PWFA.

The County will not retaliate against employees who request or receive an accommodation under this policy.

3.4 Recruiting and Hiring

Authorization to recruit and hire to fill a vacancy in an existing or newly created position rests solely with the elected official and designated department heads.

Whenever vacancies occur or new positions are created, job information shall be distributed to County employees and may be posted in County facilities for seven (7) calendar days to encourage internal promotion and transfer whenever possible.

Basic qualifications of formal education, background, and experience shall be determined before recruiting begins and shall be based on job requirements, as well as dictates of applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Concurrently, at the discretion of hiring officials, based on the urgency and specialization of the job requirements, alternate digital/printed advertising may also be used in recruiting employees. Advertisements shall describe the position, basic qualifications, and state that the County is "An Equal Opportunity Employer."

Employment Applications

All applicants are required to complete a Hancock County **Application for Employment** as well as any other forms required for statistical purposes or deemed necessary to process the Application. Prospective employees may only complete and submit a job application in conjunction with a posted position. The standardized application form shall be maintained by the Human Resources office, as well as on the County website, and made available to elected officials, department heads, and applicants for use. The Application shall request only the information necessary for rational decision-making. Only questions specifically related to occupational standards shall be asked.

All applicants must complete the Hancock County Application for Employment in its entirety, providing any requested information in its entirety and accounting for periods of employment and unemployment. The elected official/department head may screen applicants and conduct testing relevant to the skills needed to effectively complete the duties of the position.

The County relies on the accuracy of the information contained in the employment application, as well as other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in the County's exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment, or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

Placement of an employment application with the County does not mean that all applicants will be granted an interview by the elected official/department head. However, equal consideration will be given to all applicants based on the qualifications listed for the job.

Applications will be retained in active files for ninety (90) days, or for the duration of applicant recruitment lists when used. Applications will be retained according to the retention schedules as designated by state and federal law. All newly hired employees shall report as instructed to submit documents necessary for compliance with federal, state, and local law and for enrollment in any eligible benefit programs. Hiring decisions are the sole responsibility of the appointing authority (i.e., elected officials and designated department heads).

Applicant Testing

Applicant tests may include but are not limited to, basic skills written tests, mechanical or physical agility, and psychological tests may be used by the County in the selection process for certain positions. Such tests are to be related to the requirements of the position.

Pre-employment Interviews

Pre-employment interviews are used to gather information and screen applicants for County employment. Interviews shall be conducted by the administrative officer making the employment decision.

Conditional Offer of Employment

Applicants may receive a conditional offer of employment. Upon the successful completion of all established prerequisite requirements of the position listed in the conditional offer, which may include passing medical, physical, and mental examinations or requirements, reference and criminal background checks, and driving record requirements, the offer may become a formal offer of employment. Applicants who receive a conditional offer of employment are not employees of the County unless they receive an official letter of employment. Hancock County may withdraw the conditional offer of employment at any time for any reason, except as otherwise prohibited by law.

Employment Reference Checks and Criminal Background Checks

To ensure that individuals who are employed by the County are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of the County to check the employment references of all applicants. Information regarding this procedure is contained in the "Employment History and Work Experience" section of the County's Employment Application.

For employment reference checks requested by other employers of past or current County employees, the County will respond in writing only to those reference inquiries that are submitted in writing. Responses to such inquiries will confirm only dates of employment, wage rates, and position(s) held. Employees and former employees shall be provided copies of past performance records upon request and must acknowledge receipt in writing. No additional employment data will be released without written authorization and a release signed by the individual who is the subject of the inquiry.

Based upon job requirements at the discretion of elected officials/department heads, applicants may be subject to criminal background and credit checks.

Requests by Elected Officials/Department Heads for reference, background, and/or credit checks on applicants should be directed to the Human Resources Director.

3.5 Employee Medical Examinations

To help ensure that employees are able to perform their duties safely, medical examinations may be required of those positions responsible for public safety prior to hiring, or anytime during the course of employment with the County, (e.g., hiring, FMLA, ADA) which will be paid for by the county.

After a conditional offer of employment has been extended, applicants may be required to undergo a pre-employment medical examination by a health professional of the County's choice, at the County's expense.

Employees may be required to submit to a fitness-for-duty medical or psychological evaluation prior to returning from military leave or employee illness or injury leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or to meet the terms and conditions associated with performing job duties. Applicants shall be required to submit to a drug test prior to being hired by the County.

Information on an employee's medical condition or history shall be kept in a confidential file that is separate from other employee information. Medical information shall be maintained by each individual Department, with copies involving benefits or compensation to the Human Resources Director's office. Access to this information will be limited to the employee and the elected official/department head of the employee, the

Human Resources Director, the County Commissioners, designated employees responsible for processing insurance and workers' compensation claims, and others on a need-to-know basis.

3.6 Employment Authorization Verification

Verification of Employment Eligibility.

New hires will be required to complete Section 1 of federal Form I-9 on the first day of paid employment and must present acceptable documents authorized by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services proving identity and employment authorization no later than the third business day following the start of employment with Hancock County Government. If you are currently employed and have not complied with this requirement or if your status has changed, inform your Department Head/Elected Official.

If you are authorized to work in this country for a limited period of time, you will be required to submit proof of renewed employment eligibility prior to the expiration of that period to remain employed by the County. The Auditor's office shall ensure that the I-9 Form is properly completed and retained as required by law.

The Auditor of Hancock County cannot process payroll claims for any employee unless the appropriate forms have been submitted by the employee to the Auditor's office prior to submission of said payroll claim.

E-verify

The Auditor's office shall administer the **e-verify enrollment** of all County new hires; and shall ensure that appropriate forms are properly completed and retained as required by law.

3.7 New Hires and Introductory Periods

The first ninety (90) days of your employment is considered an introductory period. During this period, you will become familiar with Hancock County Government and your job responsibilities, and we will have the opportunity to monitor the quality and value of your performance and make any necessary adjustments in your job description or responsibilities. Completion of this introductory period does not imply guaranteed or continued employment. Nothing that occurs during or after this period should be construed to change the nature of the "at-will" employment relationship.

3.8 Orientation

Once employed by the County, elected officials/department heads are encouraged to conduct an informal orientation to familiarize a new employee with the County. New employees shall be provided with a copy of the **Hancock County Employee Handbook** by the Human Resources Director. It is the responsibility of the employee to read and understand the Employee Handbook. Each employee shall sign the Employee Acknowledgment form; periodic updates will also be acknowledged.

3.9 Conflicts of Interest

Hancock County Government is concerned with conflicts of interest that create actual or potential job-related concerns, especially in the areas of confidentiality, customer relations, safety, security, and morale. If there is any actual or potential conflict of interest between you and a competitor, supplier, distributor, or contractor to the County, you must disclose it to your Department Head/Elected Official. If an actual or potential conflict of interest is determined to exist, the County will take such steps as it deems necessary to reduce or eliminate this conflict. Employees must file the Conflict of Interest forms in the Clerk's office. The Clerk's office shall upload filed Conflict of Interest Statements to Gateway

3.10 Employment of Relatives and Friends

Effective July 1, 2012, Indiana Code 36-1-20.2 specifies that relatives may not be employed by the County in positions that result in one relative being in the direct line of supervision of the other relative in

accordance with County Commissioner Ordinance No.2012-6A.

A. This section applies to all offices, departments, and employees of Hancock County.

B. An individual who is employed by a unit on July 1, 2012, is not subject to this section unless the individual has a break in employment with the unit. The following are not considered a break in employment with the unit:

1. The individual is absent from the workplace while on paid or unpaid leave, including vacation, illness or injury or family medical leave, or Worker's Compensation.
2. The individual's employment with the unit is terminated followed by immediate reemployment by the unit, without loss of payroll time.

C. For purposes of this chapter, the performance of duties of:

a precinct election officer (as defined in IC 3-5-2-40.1) that are imposed by IC 3 is not considered employment by a unit.

D. As used in this section, "direct line of supervision" means an elected officer or employee who is in a position to affect the terms and conditions of another individual's employment, including making decisions about work assignments, compensation, grievances, advancements, or performance evaluations. The term does not include the responsibilities of the executive, legislative body, or fiscal body of a unit, as provided by law, to make decisions regarding salary ordinances, budgets, or personnel policies of the unit.

E. As used in this section, "employed" means an individual who is employed on a full-time, part-time, temporary, intermittent, or hourly basis. The term does not include an individual who holds only an elected office. The term includes an individual who is party to an employment contract with the County.

F. As used in this section, "member of the fire department" means the Fire Chief or a firefighter appointed to the department.

G. As used in this section, "member of the police department" means the police chief or a police officer appointed to the department.

H. As used in this section, "relative" means any of the following:

1. A spouse
2. A parent or step-parent
3. A child or step-child
4. A brother, sister, step-brother, or step-sister
5. A niece or nephew
6. An aunt or uncle
7. A daughter-in-law, or son-in-law
8. A brother-in-law, or sister-in-law
9. A father-in-law or mother-in-law
10. A grandchild or grandparent
 - a. For purpose of this section, an adopted child of an individual is treated as a natural child of the individual.
 - b. For purpose of this section, the term "brother" or "sister" include a brother or sister by half blood.

I. Individuals who are relatives may not be employed in a position that results in one (1) relative being in direct line of supervision of the other relative.

J. (a) This section applies to an individual who:

1. is employed on the date the individual's relative begins serving a term of an elected office of the unit; and.
2. is not exempt from the application of this chapter under subsection (B) of this chapter.

(b) an individual may remain employed and maintain the individual's position or rank even if the individual's employment would violate section 10 of IC 3-5-9.

(c) Unless a policy has been adopted under section 9 of IC 3-5-9 provides otherwise, an individual described in subsection (b) may not:

1. be promoted to a position; or
2. be promoted to a position that is not within the merit ranks, in the case of an individual who is a member of a merit sheriff department or merit fire department; if the new position would violate subsection (l) of this section.

K. This chapter does not abrogate or affect an employment contract that:

1. an individual is a party to; and
2. is in effect on the date the individual's relative begins serving a term of an elected office of the unit.

L. A sheriff's spouse may be employed as prison matron for the county under IC 36-8-10-5 and the spouse may be in the sheriff's direct line of supervision.

M. An individual:

1. who served as coroner;
2. who is currently ineligible to serve as coroner under Article 6, section 2(b) of the Constitution of the United State of Indiana.
3. who, as coroner, received certification under IC 36-2-14-22.3; and
4. whose successor in the office of coroner is a relative of the individual;

may be hired in the position of Deputy Coroner and be in the Coroner's direct line of supervision.

N. Each elected officer shall annually certify in writing, subject to the penalties for perjury, that the officer has not violated this section. An officer shall submit the certification to the County Commissioner not later than December 31 of each year.

Nepotism Regulated in Contracts

A. As used in this chapter, "elected official" means:

1. County Commissioner;
2. a member of the County Council.

As used in the chapter, "relative" means any of the following:

1. a spouse
2. a parent or step-parent
3. A child or stepchild
4. a brother, sister, stepbrother, or stepsister
5. A niece or nephew
6. an aunt or uncle
7. a daughter-in-law or son-in-law
8. A brother-in-law, or sister-in-law.
9. a father-in-law or mother-in-law
10. a grandchild or grandparent
 - a. For purpose of this section, an adopted child of an individual is treated as a natural child of the individual.
 - b. For purpose of this section, the term "brother" and "sister" include brother or sister by half-blood.

B. (a) A unit may enter into a contract or renew a contract for the procurements of goods and services or a contract for public works with:

1. an individual who is a relative of an elected official; or
2. a business entity that is wholly or partially owned by a relative of an elected official;`

Only if the requirements of this section are satisfied and the elected official does not violate IC 35-44-1-3.

(b) A unit may enter into a contract or renew a contract with an individual or business entity described in subsection (a) if:

1. the elected official files with the unit a full disclosure, which must: (A) be in writing;
 - a. describe the contract or purchase to be made by the unit;
 - b. describe the relationship that the elected official has to the individual or business entity that contracts or purchases;
 - c. be affirmed under penalty of perjury;
 - d. be submitted to the County Commissioners and be accepted by the County Commissioners in a public meeting of the unit prior to final action on the contract or purchase, and
 - e. be filed, not later than fifteen (15) days after the final action on the contract or purchase, with:
 - i. the state board of accounts; and
 - ii. the clerk of the Hancock County Circuit Court;
2. the County Commissioners;
 - a. make a certified statement that the contract amount or purchase price was the lowest amount or price bid or offered; or
 - b. make a certified statement of the reason why the vendor or contractor was selected; and
3. the unit satisfies any other requirements under IC 5-22 or IC 36-1-12.
 - a. An elected official shall also comply with the disclosure provisions of IC 35-44-1-3, if applicable.
 - b. This section does not affect the initial term of a contract in existence at the time the term of office of the elected official begins.

C. Each elected officer shall annually certify in writing, subject to the penalties for perjury, that the office is in compliance with this chapter. An officer shall submit the certification to the County Commissioner not later than December 31 of each year.

3.11 Job Descriptions

Hancock County Government attempts to maintain a job description for each position. Job descriptions prepared by the County serve as an outline only. Due to County needs, you may be required to perform job duties that are not within your written job description. Furthermore, the County may have to revise, add to, or delete from your job duties per County needs. On occasion, the County may need to revise job descriptions with or without advance notice to employees.

Hancock County positions, except those of elected officials, have been described in job descriptions. The position description is the primary document used to classify County jobs. County position descriptions are maintained in the Human Resource office. Copies of departmental job descriptions are available in each department or office.

New job descriptions or any modifications to existing job descriptions shall be submitted to Human Resources.

3.12 Training Program

In most cases, and for most departments, training employees is done on an individual basis by the Department Head, Elected Official or designee. Even if you have had previous experience in the specified functions of your job duties, it is necessary for you to learn our specific procedures, as well as the responsibilities of the specific position. If you ever feel you require additional training, consult your Department Head/Elected Official or designee. County-wide training requirements are set forth by Human Resources, the Risk Manager and/or IT Department and are required to be completed by all employees.

4.0 Wage and Hour Policies

4.1 Attendance

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, the County expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on the County. In the rare instance when an employee cannot avoid being late to work or is unable to work as scheduled, he or she should notify the elected official/department head as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence, or as soon as possible in the event of an emergency (such as being transported to a hospital for treatment). When providing notification, the employee is to give the reason and the estimated length of absence. Failure to notify the elected official/department head or designated supervisor may subject the employee to disciplinary actions, up to, and including termination.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Either may lead to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

An unexcused absence is defined as an absence for which the employee does not have any available accrued benefit time to charge the absence against, or where applicable, the employee does not have the approval of the elected official/department head or designated supervisor.

4.2 Direct Deposit

Hancock County Government requires all employees to enroll in direct deposit. If you need to change your Direct Deposit, it must be submitted to the Payroll department in person two weeks in advance of when the changes need to take effect.

4.3 Employment Classifications

It is the intent of Hancock County to clarify the definitions of employment status, so employees understand their employment status and benefits eligibility. **Any changes in employment status shall be conveyed in writing. No change in employment status is to be construed or inferred without written notification. Each County employee is assigned to one (1) of the following four (4) classifications.**

FULL-TIME PUBLIC RETIREMENT (FTPR) employees are those who are not in an FTA, PT, or ST status and who are regularly scheduled to work the County's full-time schedule of a minimum of thirty-five (35) or more hours per week. FTPR employees are eligible for the following benefits, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program: PTO, Holidays, Bereavement Leave, Jury Duty/Court Appearance Leave, Leave without Pay, Worker's Compensation, Social Security benefits, Health Insurance, and retirement programs. For the purposes of clarification throughout the Handbook, these employees will be referred to as FTPR employees.

FULL-TIME AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (FTA) employees are those who are not in an FTPR, PT, or ST status and who are regularly scheduled to work at least thirty-five (35) hours or more per workweek. FTA employees are eligible for legally mandated benefits such as Worker's Compensation, Social Security benefits, and County health insurance, as well as the following so long as there is no contribution by the county; voluntary life insurance, vision, dental, AFLAC, and deferred compensation; subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of benefit programs. FTA employees are **not** eligible for the following benefits: PTO, Holidays, Bereavement Leave, Jury Duty/Court Appearance Leave, Leave without Pay, and retirement programs. For the purposes of clarification throughout the Handbook, these employees will be referred to as FTA employees.

PART-TIME (PT) employees are those who are not assigned to an FTPR, FTA, or ST status. Part-time employees shall not work more than 1500 hours between December 1st and November 30th. Any exception must have an elected official or department head prior approval with notice given to the Human Resources Office. Such exceptions are limited to mandatory training or County business necessity required of the position, or a fluctuating work schedule to meet a County business necessity. In any event, Part-Time

employees shall not work more than one-hundred-twenty-five (125) hours in a month. Part-time employees retain that status until expressly notified of a change. While part-time employees do receive all legally mandated benefits such as Workers' Compensation and Social Security benefits subject to terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program. PT employees are **not** eligible for the following benefits: PTO, Holidays, Bereavement Leave, Jury Duty/Court Appearance Leave, Leave without Pay, Health Insurance, and retirement programs. For the purposes of clarification throughout the Handbook, these employees will be referred to as PT employees.

SEASONAL/TEMPORARY (ST) are defined as employees who work on an irregular, seasonal, or as-needed basis without regard to the number of hours worked per week. It is the policy of the County that a Seasonal/Temporary employee who works for one-hundred-twenty (120) days in a calendar year shall not be rehired by the County without a minimum of six (6) months separation period between season/temporary engagements. Seasonal/Temporary employees retain that status until notified of a change. While seasonal/temporary employees receive all legally-mandated benefits such as Workers' Compensation and Social Security benefits, ST employees are **not** eligible for the following benefits: PTO, Holidays, Bereavement Leave, Personal Leave, Jury Duty/Court Appearance Leave, Leave without Pay, Health Insurance, and retirement programs. For the purposes of clarification throughout the Handbook, these employees will be referred to as ST employees.

4.4 Introduction to Wage and Hour Policies

Hancock County's compensation plan is based on the job classification system in accordance with decisions by the County or the State of Indiana as budgets are set. Pay for any given position is subject to the annual budgetary process and, as such, may be subject to increase, reduction, or status quo maintenance for any time period. The County Council adopts an annual salary ordinance establishing pay rates for all County positions.

The supervising elected official or department head may make suggestions about salary compensation and other pay system concerns; however, the final decision regarding compensation levels rests with the Hancock County Council.

Elected officials shall be paid an annual salary, which covers the period beginning on January 1, and ending on December 31, and is paid on regular pay days throughout the year.

4.5 Job Abandonment

If you fail to show up for work or fail to call in with an acceptable reason for the absence for a period of three consecutive days, you will be considered to have abandoned your job and voluntarily resigned from Hancock County Government.

4.6 Paycheck Deductions

Hancock County is required by law to make certain deductions from your pay each pay period, including deductions for federal income tax, Social Security and Medicare (FICA) taxes, state income taxes, state unemployment taxes, state disability insurance taxes, etc., and any other deductions required under law or by court order for wage garnishments. The amount of your tax deductions will depend on your earnings and the information you list on your federal Form W-4 and applicable state withholding form. Permissible deductions for exempt employees may also include, but are not limited to, deductions for full-day absences for reasons other than sickness or disability and certain disciplinary suspensions. You may also authorize certain voluntary deductions from your paycheck where permissible under state law. Your deductions will be reflected in your wage statement. If you have any questions about deductions from your pay, contact your Payroll/Benefits Department.

The County will not make deductions to your pay that are prohibited by federal, state, or local law. Review your paycheck for errors each pay period and immediately report any discrepancies to your Payroll/Benefits Department.

You will be reimbursed in full for any isolated, inadvertent, or improper deductions, as defined by law. If an error is found, you will receive an immediate adjustment, which will be paid no later than your next regular payday.

The County will not retaliate against employees who report erroneous deductions in accordance with this policy.

4.7 Recording Time

Hancock County Government is required by applicable federal, state, and local laws to keep accurate records of hours worked by certain employees. To ensure that the County has complete and accurate time records and that employees are paid for all hours worked, nonexempt employees are required to record all working time using established County time recording systems. IC 5-11-9-4 requires that public sector employees maintain records showing which hours were worked each day by officers and employees. These records are subject to audit by the State Board of Accounts.

You must accurately record all of your time to ensure you are paid for all hours worked and must follow established County procedures for recording your hours worked. Time must be recorded as follows:

- Immediately before starting your shift.
- Immediately after finishing work, before your meal period.
- Immediately before resuming work, after your meal period.
- Immediately after finishing work.
- Immediately before and after any other time away from work.
- Beginning and Ending of any split shift.
- Departure from work for personal reasons.

Employees shall record the use of paid time off (PTO), or any other type of approved leave on their time records. Failure to record the leave in any status may result in the employee not being paid for the leave.

If you are required to clock in, you should clock in no more than seven (7) minutes before the time you actually start working and clock out no later than seven (7) minutes after you actually stop working.

Time will be recorded to the quarter hour, using the seven (7) minute rule (i.e. leeway of seven [7] minutes before and seven [7] minutes after the scheduled start and stop times). All employee work commenced more than seven (7) minutes before the start time work hour will be paid on a quarter-hour schedule; all employee work continued more than seven (7) minutes after the end of the last work hour will be paid on a quarter-hour schedule.

It is an employee's responsibility to submit the appropriate time record to certify the accuracy of all time recorded. The elected official/department head will review and approve time record before submitting them for payroll processing. If corrections or modifications are made to the time record, both the employee and the elected official/department head should verify the accuracy of the changes by re-submitting the time record. Should an employee fail to submit such a time record, the time record shall be submitted by the elected official/department head with an acknowledgment that the employee has reviewed the modification.

The supervisor will approve the time record, indicating that the hours claimed were actually worked. Failure by an employee to submit a time record when required or submitting a falsified time record may result in disciplinary action.

For detailed instructions on how and when to complete time records, employees should consult with their Elected Official/Department Head.

Notify your Department Head/Elected Official of any pay discrepancies, unrecorded or misrecorded work hours, or any involuntarily missed meal or break periods.

Falsifying time entries is strictly prohibited. Falsifying time entries includes working "off the clock." If you falsify your own time records, or the time records of co-workers, or if you work off the clock, you will be

subject to discipline up to and including termination. Immediately report to Department Head/Elected Official any employee, supervisor, or manager who falsifies your time entries or encourages or requires you to falsify your time entries or work off the clock.

4.8 Travel Expenses

The County is responsible for authorizing employee County business travel and reimbursement of travel expenses including overnight lodging, per-day meal allowances as set by the State Board of Accounts, and transportation. All such reimbursements are subject to approval and appropriate documentation being submitted to the Auditor's office. In all cases, the expense for which an employee seeks reimbursement must have been budgeted in departmental budgets. All employees must obtain authorization from the appropriate elected official/department head and/or County Commissioners before business travel or reimbursement of expenses. All mileage reimbursements must be supported by MapQuest or another approved mileage calculator. Lodging, mileage, parking, and meal expenses will be paid to County Officials and employees only under the following circumstances in accordance with County Commissioners Ordinance No. 2010-2F:

Mileage Allowance

1. The rate used to reimburse County employees for miles driven on County business in a motor vehicle owned by the employee shall be the standard mileage rate as set by the Internal Revenue Service.
2. The County reimbursement rate shall change on each subsequent date that the IRS sets a new standard mileage rate.

Lodging and Meal Expenses

Employees must have pre-approval prior to purchasing any lodging or meals while traveling for business. In some cases, the County will pay for the lodging and meal expenses, and in other cases, the employee will need to pay out of pocket and seek reimbursement upon return.

Lodging and meal expenses will be paid to County Officials and employees only under the following circumstances:

1. When attending a meeting called by a state agency, expenses will be paid as provided in the directive for the agency; and
2. Instate meetings authorized by the elected official/department head, and out-of-state meetings authorized by the Board of County Commissioners, shall be reimbursed as follows:
 - a. Parking expenses.
 - b. Actual lodging expenses, but not to exceed the per diem rates set by the United States General Services Administration.
 - c. Mileage pursuant to Hancock County Code 31.024.
3. Sixty-five (\$65.00), excluding alcoholic beverages, but including tips, not exceeding twenty (20%) percent, shall be reimbursed per day.
4. Necessary ground transportation.
5. Out-of-state airfare and economy airport parking.

If the meeting is within twenty-five (25) miles of the Hancock County Courthouse Annex, no lodging will be reimbursed and only meals where there are meetings before and after the meal will be paid.

Receipts must be submitted for all expenses except mileage, which shall be certified by claimant.

4.9 Use of Employer Credit Cards

The Hancock County Commissioners shall be the designated officials responsible for the use and issuance of Hancock County credit cards. Approval is not required for Elected Officials to obtain a County credit card; however, non-elected Department heads will require approval from the County Commissioners. When the purpose for which the credit card has been issued has been accomplished, the card and all supporting

documents (e.g., receipts) shall be submitted to the custody of the Auditor's office.

Account numbers and other information, of County-owned credit cards will be maintained in the Auditor's office. The Auditor's office shall maintain an accounting system or log which will include the names of individuals requesting usage of County credit cards, their position, estimated amounts to be charged, fund and account numbers to be charged, and date the card is issued and returned.

County employees may request the use of a Hancock County credit card for travel-related expenses associated with attending conferences, workshops, business meetings, or other work-related expenses that cannot be invoiced. This request must be approved by the Department Head or Elected Official. The employee shall have a signed and approved Application for County Credit card agreement on file in the Auditor's office prior to being issued a credit card.

County credit cards are for business use only and shall not be used for personal purchases. Other examples of specifically prohibited uses include the purchase of alcohol and/or movies and entertainment.

Payment of County credit cards should not be made on the basis of a statement or a credit card slip only. Credit card payments must be made through the statutory claims process. If interest or penalty is incurred due to late filing or furnishing of documentation by an officer or employee, such interest or penalty shall be the responsibility of that officer or employee.

County-issued credit cards are the property of Hancock County and employees are required to return such cards and all supporting documents upon request. If a card is lost or stolen, the employee should report the missing card immediately to the Auditor's office.

In the case that a county-issued credit card earns rewards points, the rewards points are the property of the County and may only be used for county travel, lodging and/or any office supplies or materials that are utilized for County business.

County employees violating this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including termination.

4.10 Workday/Workweek

The County has defined the following work weeks for employees:

- The work period for deputies assigned to road patrol, jailers, and dispatchers is set at 15 days.
- The workweek for all other employees of the County Sheriff consists of a 168-hour period beginning at 7:00 am on Friday.
- The workweek for employees of the County Highway Department consists of a 168-hour period beginning at 4:30 pm on Friday.
- The workweek for all other County employees consists of a 168-hour period beginning at 4:00 pm Friday.

Employees may be required to come in early, work late, or work overtime from time to time, depending on various factors, such as workloads, staffing needs, and special projects.

Work Hours

County offices and departments shall observe the hours of work designated and established by the Board of County Commissioners. The regular work hours may be changed by the Board of Commissioners upon one week's notice to each department head.

Elected officials or department heads will advise employees of the times their schedules will normally begin and end, and employees shall be relieved of all duties and be free to leave their posts during their lunch.

County Offices: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday – Friday with one (1) hour unpaid lunch.

Soil and Water Conservation District: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday with one-half (½) hour paid lunch.

Highway Department:

Administrative Staff: 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Monday – Friday with no lunch.

Hourly Staff: 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Monday – Friday

Summer hours are as follows: 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday.

5.0 Performance, Discipline, Layoff, and Termination

5.1 Disciplinary Process

Violation of Hancock County Government's policies or procedures may result in disciplinary action, including demotion, transfer, leave without pay, or termination of employment. The County encourages a system of progressive discipline depending on the type of prohibited conduct. However, the County is not required to engage in progressive discipline and may discipline or terminate employees who violate the rules of conduct, or where the quality or value of their work fails to meet expectations at any time. Again, any attempt at progressive discipline does not imply that your employment is anything other than on an "at-will" basis consistent with applicable law. Note that the specific terms of your employment relationship, including termination procedures, are governed by the laws of the state in which you are employed.

In appropriate circumstances, management will first provide you with a verbal warning, then with one or more written warnings, and if the conduct is not sufficiently altered, eventual demotion, transfer, forced leave, or termination of employment. Your Department Head/Elected Official will make every effort possible to allow you to respond to any disciplinary action taken. Understand that while the County is concerned with consistent enforcement of our policies, we are not obligated to follow any disciplinary or grievance procedure and, depending on the circumstances, you may be disciplined or terminated without any prior warning or procedure.

5.2 Employment Termination

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated:

- **Resignation:** Voluntary employment termination initiated by an employee. Although advance notice is not required, the County requests at least two (2) weeks written notice from the employee. The elected official/department head shall determine whether the employee may work out his/her notice.
- **Discharge:** Involuntary employment termination initiated by the County.
- **Layoff:** Involuntary employment termination initiated by the County for non-disciplinary reasons, which may include but is not limited to lack of work, lack of funds or projected lack of funds, job abolishment, and/or reorganization.
- **Retirement:** Voluntary employment termination initiated by the employee meeting County retirement criteria, such as age and length of service. Employees will receive their final pay in accordance with applicable state law.

Employee benefits will be affected by employment termination in the following manner:

All accrued, vested benefits that are due and payable at termination will be paid. Some benefits may be continued at the employee's expense if the employee chooses. The employee will be notified in writing of the benefits that may be continued and of the terms, conditions, and limitations of such continuance. An employee's termination date shall always be the last day worked. **An employee's termination date may not be extended to include accrued and/or unused paid or unpaid time off** (e.g., PTO days).

Hancock County encourages scheduling exit interviews at the time of employment termination to afford an opportunity to discuss such issues as employee benefits, conversion privileges, repayment of outstanding debts to the County, or return of County-owned property. Suggestions, complaints, and questions may also be expressed. Exit interviews should be scheduled with the elected official/department head.

Return of Property

Employees are responsible for all property, materials, or written information issued to them or in their possession or control. All property must be returned by employees on or before their last day of work.

Where permitted by law, the County may withhold from an employee's paycheck the cost of any items that are not returned as required. The County may also take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

5.3 Criminal Activity/Arrests

Hancock County Government will report all criminal activity in accordance with applicable law. Involvement in criminal activity while employed by the County, whether on or off County property, may result in disciplinary action including suspension or termination of employment.

Whenever an employee is cited for an infraction while on duty or arrested for any misdemeanor or felony while on duty, the employee shall report this matter, in writing, to their elected official/department head within twenty-four (24) hours of the arrest or citation. Failure to report in accordance with this policy shall be considered a violation of the personnel policies subject to disciplinary actions, up to, and including termination.

Citations for moving traffic violations or arrests for misdemeanors or felonies that occur during an employee's off-duty or on-duty hours must be reported to the elected official/department head in writing within five (5) calendar days of receiving the citation or the arrest if the employee drives a vehicle for the County.

Unauthorized time away from work shall be subject to the County's attendance and wage policies. Time spent under arrest or in jail is not considered a valid excuse for missing work.

An employee who is cited for an infraction or arrested for any misdemeanor or felony, whether the citation or arrest happened while the employee was on duty or not, may be suspended without pay pending an administrative investigation and/or the disposition of any charges filed against the employee.

5.4 Exit Interview

Upon separation of the employment relationship with an employee, the employee is directed to contact Human Resources for separation details.

You may be asked to participate in an exit interview when you leave Hancock County Government. The purpose of the exit interview is to provide management with greater insight into your decision to leave employment; identify any trends requiring attention or opportunities for improvement, and to assist the County in developing effective recruitment and retention strategies. An exit interview will also afford an opportunity to discuss such issues as employee benefits, conversion privileges, repayment of outstanding debts to the County, or return of County-owned property. Suggestions, concerns and questions may also be expressed during this interview. Your cooperation in the exit interview process is appreciated. Exit interviews should be scheduled with the Board of Commissioners and the Human Resources Director.

5.5 Open Door/Conflict Resolution Process

Employees and supervisors will benefit from a process that allows for free discussion of matters of mutual concern and effectively addresses complaints on specific issues.

These procedures provide for open discussion and speedy resolution of issues of serious concern to any

employee who thinks that Hancock County's policies have been violated, or who believes that he or she has been treated unfairly. A complaint is an employee's expressed dissatisfaction with what that employee believes, rightly or wrongly, to be unfair treatment, or a mistake in the administration of a rule, plan, or County policy.

These classifications are provided only to illustrate the procedures that will generally be followed with respect to such conduct and are intended as a guideline for exercising discipline. This guideline does not constitute a contract of employment. The County maintains all management rights as prescribed by law including being an "At-Will" employer.

When a complaint arises, it should be heard and resolved at the lowest organizational level. This section does not apply to disciplinary actions taken by elected officials or department heads. The employee may have the following procedure available:

STEP 1: Elected Official/Department Head (Oral Complaint)

If an employee has a complaint, it should be first discussed with the supervisor. The employee should schedule a time to discuss the situation with the supervisor. Every effort should be expended to resolve the issue satisfactorily at this meeting.

STEP 2: Elected Official/Department Head (Written Complaint)

If the complaint cannot be solved satisfactorily by the employee and supervisor through discussion, or if the decision is not satisfactory, the employee may submit the complaint in writing within forty-five (45) days following the alleged act or incident. The employee may take or send the written complaint to the supervisor.

Elected officials and department heads shall give a written response to the complaint within five (5) working days.

STEP 3: County Commissioners

If a satisfactory solution is not reached at Step 2, the Board of Commissioners or their designated hearing officer may at their discretion hear the complaint; if they hear the complaint a decision shall be rendered within five working (5) days of the hearing.

5.6 Outside Employment

An employee may hold a job with another organization as long as, in the opinion of the County, the employee satisfactorily performs the required job responsibilities with the County. Employees should consider the impact that outside employment may have on their ability to efficiently perform their work, as well as any conflicts of interest that may arise. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to the employer's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

Employees who are on Family and Medical Leave under the County's FMLA policy for their own serious illness or injury shall not be engaged in outside employment while on FMLA.

If the County determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or ability to meet the requirements of the position, as it is modified from time to time, or if the County determines that the outside employment is in conflict with its ethics code or other codes of conduct, directly or indirectly applicable to a specific employee, the employee may be required to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain employed with the County.

Employees may not enter into dealings or financial interests in contracts and services performed by Hancock County. This includes deriving any direct or indirect profit resulting from the sale, service, contracting, or purchases made on behalf of Hancock County.

County employees may not accept financial benefits that would reasonably tend to influence decisions or

encourage that employee to disclose confidential County information. Any offers of money, services, benefits, favors, or other possible conflicts should be reported to supervisors and/or the County Commissioners. Employees having a financial interest in a County or substantial investments in a corporation that might benefit from their dealings with Hancock County must file a Conflict of Interest statement with the County Clerk with a copy to the State Board of Accounts.

Soliciting political party campaign contributions or promoting political activities during work hours is prohibited. Violators will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Outside employment will present a conflict of interest if it has an actual or potential adverse impact on the County. County employees shall file a conflict of interest statement with the County Clerk, State Board of Accounts, and a copy with the Auditor's office whenever an employee's outside business activities are directly or indirectly linked to the County in a business relationship, such as vendor, supplier, contractor, or independent subcontractor. The Clerk's Office shall upload the conflict of interest statement to Gateway. The County Clerk and the County Auditor have **Conflict of Interest forms** available for use, as well as the State of Indiana website.

5.7 Pay Raises

Depending on financial health and other County factors, efforts will be made to give pay raises consistent with County profitability, job performance, and the consumer price index. The County may also make individual pay raises based on merit or due to a change of job position. Such pay raises are recommended by the Department Head/Elected Official and require approval by the Hancock County Council.

5.8 Performance Improvement

Elected officials/department heads and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, regular basis. Additional formal performance reviews may be conducted to provide both elected officials/department heads and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals.

Formal performance evaluations shall be conducted on employees at the end of their introductory period, before entering full-time status, especially if the introductory period is extended. This allows the elected official/department head and employee the opportunity to discuss the job responsibilities, standards, and performance requirements, in addition to correcting deficiencies and reinforcing strengths and future goals. A copy of performance evaluations within each office shall be filed with the Human Resources.

Performance appraisals shall be confidential and shall be made available only to the employee appraised, their elected official or department head, and to a prospective elected official or department head if a transfer or promotion is being considered, and the County Attorney and County Commissioners in the event of a complaint arising out of the administration of personnel policies.

The performance of all employees shall be evaluated on an annual basis.

5.9 Post-Employment References

Occasionally, employees of the County are contacted by outsiders for information about current or former employees, or about the organization's policies, practices, or projects. The County shall only release the following information:

Disclosure

As prescribed by I.C. 5-14-4 the following information is available upon request:

1. the name, compensation, job title, business address, business telephone number, job description, education, and training background, previous work experience, or dates of first and last employment of present or former officers or employees of the agency;
2. information relating to the status of any formal charges against the employee; and
3. the factual basis for a disciplinary action in which final action has been taken and that resulted in the employee being suspended, demoted, or discharged.

However, all personnel file information shall be made available to the affected employee or the employee's representative.

Employees are advised to consult with their supervisor or department head before releasing information that is confidential or privileged by law.

5.10 Promotions

To match you with the job for which you are best suited and to meet the business needs of Hancock County Government, you may be transferred from your current job. It is our policy to promote from within only when the most qualified candidate is available. Promotions are made on an equal opportunity basis according to employees possessing the needed skills, education, experience, and other qualifications that are required for the job.

All employees promoted into new job positions will undergo an introductory period as described in the New Hires and Introductory Periods policy. Unlike new hires, however, such employees will continue to receive County benefits for which they are eligible.

5.11 Standards of Conduct

Employee job performance and personal conduct directly impact the County's ability to achieve its mission of service to the community. Therefore, the following work rules and principles of employment are adopted as guidelines for monitoring behavior and exercising disciplinary actions. Hancock County employees are expected to follow procedures and guidelines set forth by the County and the employee's office/department policies. This guideline does not constitute a contract of employment. The County maintains all management rights as prescribed by law including being an "At-Will" employer.

This policy shall not be construed to in any way limit the County's discretion in exercising discipline as it finds appropriate based on the severity of the misconduct or the totality of the circumstances.

The following conduct is prohibited and will subject the individual involved to disciplinary action, up to, and including termination.

Work Rule Violations

The following list of established work rules are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive, or to in any way limit rules, guidelines, and restrictions set out elsewhere in this Handbook. Hancock County reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind the rules as it deems appropriate. Each elected official/department head or their designee has sole discretion to give a written reprimand, a suspension without pay, or involuntary termination of employment upon violation of any of the following work rules:

1. Violation of the policies and procedures set forth in this Handbook and/or internal department policies.
2. Possessing, using, distributing, selling, or negotiating the sale of illegal drugs or other controlled substances.
3. Being under the influence of alcohol during working hours on County property (including in county vehicles), or on county business.
4. Inaccurate reporting of the hours worked by your or any other employee.

5. Providing knowingly inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading information when speaking on behalf of the County or in the preparation of any employment-related documents including, but not limited to, job applications, personnel files, employment review documents, intra-county communications, or expense records.
6. Taking or destroying County property or failure to secure facility and equipment for which the employee is responsible.
7. Possession of potentially hazardous or dangerous property (where not permitted) such as firearms, weapons, chemicals, etc., without prior authorization.
8. Failure to cooperate with other employees as required by job duties, or harassment of (as defined in our EEO policy), any fellow employee, vendor, or customer.
9. Distracting the attention of others, unnecessarily shouting, demonstrating, or otherwise causing a disruption on the job.
10. Mischief, horseplay, wrestling, or other undesirable conduct, including use of profane or abusive language.
11. Unauthorized breaks, and/or leaving the job or work area during the regular working hours without authorization.
12. Disclosure of County proprietary or confidential commercially-sensitive information of the County or its customers, contractors, suppliers, or vendors
13. Failure to comply with purchasing procedures.
14. Unauthorized posting, removal, or alteration of notices or signs from bulletin boards, and/or distributing or posting written or printed matter of any description on County premises unless authorized.
15. Failure to report accidents, and/or injury while on county time and/or involving County equipment, and mechanically defective conditions of equipment or property and/or failure to perform preventative maintenance on equipment or vehicles used by employees.
16. Abandoning or leaving unattended any County-owned vehicle, equipment, or tools anywhere away from shops, garages, and authorized storage sites, except as directed by supervisory personnel.
17. Neglect in the performance of assigned duties or in the care, use or custody of any County property or equipment. Abuse or deliberate destruction in any manner of County property, tools, equipment, or the property of employees.
18. Refusal or failure to follow directions or to perform a requested or required job task.
19. Refusal or failure to follow safety rules and procedures.
20. Excessive tardiness or absences.
21. Smoking in non-designated areas.
22. Working unauthorized overtime
23. Failure to report for overtime work without good reason after being scheduled to work according to overtime policy.
24. Solicitation of fellow employees.
25. Failure to dress according to County policy.
26. Use of obscene or harassing (as defined by our EEO policy) language in the workplace.
27. Discourteous treatment of the public.
28. Engaging in outside employment that interferes with your ability to perform your job at this County.
29. Gambling on County premises.
30. Lending keys or keycards to County property to unauthorized persons.
31. Any Conduct unbecoming of public servant.
32. Solicitation on County premises without authorization.
33. Refusal to take or failure to pass any examination required for the job.
34. Failure to maintain certifications required of the position, such as a driver's license, and/or driving a County vehicle with a suspended license.
35. Failure to give medical certifications in a timely manner.
36. Punching, signing, or altering other employees' timecards, timesheets, or unauthorized altering of own timecard or sheet.
37. Violations of privacy under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
38. Falsifying testimony when accidents are being investigated, falsifying or assisting in falsifying or destroying any County records, including work performance reports; or giving false information or withholding pertinent information called for in making application for employment or releasing confidential information.

39. Knowingly exposing others to hazardous conditions such as communicable diseases, which may pose a danger or other safety risk.
40. Obligating Hancock County for any expense, service, or performance without authorization.
41. Making or publishing of false, vicious, or malicious statements concerning employees, supervisors, the County or its operations.
42. Violation of the sexual harassment/hostile work environment policy.
43. Stealing or similar conduct, including destroying, damaging, or concealing any property of the County or of other employees.
44. Threatening, intimidating, coercing, or interfering with subordinates or other employees. Use of abusive or threatening language toward supervisors, other employees, or the public.
45. Performing private work on County time.
46. Fighting or attempting to injure other employees, supervisors, or persons.
47. Reporting for work under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances, or discovery of opened containers of alcohol, or controlled substances in or on County property or the sale of controlled substances.
48. Violation of the Drug-Free Workplace policy and/or failure to submit to a blood test, urinalysis, or breathalyzer examination.
49. Failure to disclose at time of employment the past conviction of a misdemeanor and/or felony if reasonably related to the employee's duties or the public trust.
50. Conviction of a misdemeanor and/or felony if reasonably related to the employee's duties or the public trust.
51. Failure to follow safety regulations when safety of an employee or others is involved.
52. When authorization is required, unauthorized use, removal, or participation in the use or removal of county property, funds, equipment, tools, facilities, supplies, furnishings, County records, documents, papers, or copies thereof and/or other County property.
53. Deliberate incapacitation for duty, either physically, mentally, emotionally, or educationally
54. Unauthorized presence on County property.
55. Insubordination by refusing to perform assigned duties or to comply with written or verbal instruction of supervisors.

5.12 Transfers

Hancock County Government may transfer your employment from one position to another within the same department, with or without notice, as required by service needs, or upon request by you and with management approval. Transfers in excess of 90 days may be considered final and your paycheck may be increased or decreased consistent with the pay scale for your new position.

5.13 Workforce Reductions (Layoffs)

Hancock County maintains the right to reduce its workforce. Examples of reasons when a reduction might occur include but are not limited to:

1. Lack of work;
2. Lack of funds or projected lack of funds;
3. Job abolishment; and/or
4. Reorganization.

Whenever a reduction is necessary, the County will determine the classifications in which the layoffs shall occur and the number of employees to be laid off in each department. Determinations on which employees will be laid off will include employee qualifications, length of continuous service, and operational needs of the County. Compensation for an employee separated due to a layoff will be made on the next scheduled payday. The final check will include vacation and compensatory leave time, as appropriate.

Each recalled employee shall be allowed fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of receipt of a certified letter explaining the recall to return to work.

Any recalled employees needing more than fourteen (14) days to report to work must have written approval from their elected official/department head. Any employee accepting or declining reinstatement to the same classification from which the layoff or displacement initially occurred shall be removed from eligibility for further recall.

6.0 General Policies

6.1 Elective Officer and County Employment Restricted

Effective January 1, 2013, Indiana Code 3-5-9 specifies that a County employee is considered to have resigned from employment with the County if the employee assumes the elected executive office of the County or becomes an elected member of the County's legislative or fiscal body.

A volunteer firefighter may not assume or hold a position on the executive, legislative, or fiscal body of the County if the County receives fire protection services from the department in which the volunteer firefighter serves. Fire protection services provided under mutual aid agreements are excluded. An employee or volunteer who assumes or holds an elected office on January 1, 2013, may continue to hold the office and be employed by the County or serve as a volunteer firefighter until the expiration of the term of office.

6.2 Blanket Surety Bonds

All County employees and Commission members required to post an individual surety bond for the faithful performance of their duties are hereby authorized to be included within the coverage of a blanket surety bond.

6.3 Political Activity

County employees shall not be required to participate, financially or otherwise, in any political campaign or party activity during his/her working hours. This policy includes any threats or coercion by elected officials/department heads or political party officials.

County owned equipment shall not be used to generate, copy, or reproduce campaign materials. County vehicles shall not be used to distribute campaign materials. County computers, telephones or facsimile machines shall not be used for campaign purposes.

6.4 Driving Record

All employees required to operate a motor vehicle as part of their employment duties at Hancock County Government must maintain a valid driver's license and acceptable driving record. The County may run a motor vehicle department check to determine your driving record. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of your current driver's license for your personnel file. Any changes in your driving record, including but not limited to driving infractions, must be reported to the County.

State law requires all motorists to carry auto liability insurance. It is against the law to drive without insurance. If you use your own vehicle as a part of your employment duties, you must provide management with a current proof of insurance statement or card. New proof of insurance is required every time your policy expires and renews. *See more details about operating vehicles in the Hancock County Fleet Management Plan.*

6.5 Employer Sponsored Social Events

Hancock County Government holds periodic social events for employees. Be advised that your attendance at these events is voluntary and does not constitute part of your work-related duties. Any exceptions to this policy must be in writing and signed by a Department Head/Elected Official prior to the event.

6.6 Employer-Provided Cell Phones/Mobile Devices

Cellular telephones are provided for official County business only and are made available to employees in positions where the associated benefits justify the additional operating costs. These employees would include those who travel, have job responsibilities that include being outside of the office, or who are continuously on-call for extended periods. The employee who is issued a cellular phone will acknowledge the receipt and acceptance of the conditions for the individual assignment of a County-owned cellular phone. All completed forms must be forwarded to the Human Resources office and will remain in the employee's personnel file for the duration of the individual's employment. When the employee leaves his/her position or is no longer an authorized user, the County cellular equipment must be returned to the appropriate corresponding office. If the phone is not returned, the County will charge the former employee for the cost of a new replacement phone and/or equipment.

The call detail (e.g., time, number called, date, duration) of all calls appearing on the County cellular telephone bill is *public information*. With this in mind, personal use of County-owned cellular telephones is prohibited, with the exception of essential personal calls made with minimal duration and frequency, which cannot be made at another time. Examples of these essential personal calls may include calls to arrange for the care of a child, alert a family member of an unexpected delay due to a change in your work schedule, weather-related delay, to arrange for transportation or service in the event of car trouble or a true family emergency.

If an employee is using the County phone for personal use on a continuous basis, the County may charge the employee for these additional usages through a payroll deduction or revocation of the cellular assignment and possible disciplinary action against the employee could result.

Employees are responsible for keeping track of and identifying their personal calls and/or other usages in a timely fashion when the monthly cellular bill arrives. Any calls and/or other usages in uncertainty will be the responsibility of the employee.

Use of Cellular Phones and Electronic Devices While Driving

The use of cellular phones and electronic devices while driving may present a hazard to the driver, other employees, and the general public. This policy is meant to ensure the safe operation of County vehicles and equipment, and the safe operation of private vehicles while an employee is on work time conducting County business. This policy applies to all uses of cellular phones and communication devices, except for Law Enforcement officers, including but not limited to computers, text messaging, e-mail, electronic calendars, multi-media devices, and printers.

Employees shall adhere to all federal, state, and local rules and regulations regarding the use of cellular phones and electronic devices while driving.

Accordingly, employees shall not use cellular phones if such conduct is prohibited by law, regulation, or other ordinance.

Employees, while driving a classified commercial vehicle, shall not send or read received text messages on personal or County-issued cellular phones.

Employees should not use handheld cellular phones for business purposes while driving, except for emergency personnel responding to emergency situations. Should an employee need to make or receive a business call while driving, the employee should locate a lawfully designated area to park and make or receive the call.

Employees may use hands-free cell phones to make or receive business calls. Such calls should be kept short, and should the circumstances warrant (such as heavy traffic or inclement weather), the employee should locate a lawfully designated area to park to continue the call.

Employees, while operating commercial vehicles, as defined by the U.S. Department of Transportation, shall not engage in text messaging under Federal law.

6.7 Mail Use

You are required to limit usage of the Hancock County Government mail service to business purposes only. You may not use the County address to receive personal mail. Do not use the County postage meter for your personal mail. Report any suspicious packages or envelopes to Human Resources or the appropriate department immediately.

6.8 Nonsolicitation/Nondistribution Policy

Hancock County Government prioritizes a harmonious work environment that minimizes disruption to business operations and respects the focus of employees, visitors, and others. Our nonsolicitation/nondistribution policy aims to ensure a balanced approach to interactions within the workplace.

Solicitation

For the purposes of this policy, **solicitation** includes various activities such as selling items or services, seeking contributions, or seeking support for an organization. Solicitation, whether conducted verbally, in writing, or electronically, falls under this policy's scope.

During your assigned working hours, soliciting other employees is prohibited. **Working hours** refers to periods when either you or the employees you intend to solicit are expected to be actively engaged in work-related activities. You are permitted to engage in solicitation during authorized nonworking times, such as breaks, provided that the recipients of the solicitation are also on nonworking time.

Distribution

To ensure cleanliness, organization, and safety, the distribution of nonwork-related literature or items within working areas is prohibited at all times. Working areas do not include break/rest areas, lunchrooms, and parking lots. Electronic distribution of materials during work hours is also not allowed. Any literature that violates the County's equal employment opportunity (EEO) and nonharassment policies, or knowingly spreads false information, is strictly prohibited. Nonemployees are not permitted to distribute materials on county premises under any circumstances.

Statutory Rights and Communication

This policy is not meant to curtail the statutory rights of employees, including their right to discuss terms and conditions of employment. Open communication remains a vital part of our workplace culture.

Reporting Violations

If you become aware of violations of this policy, report them to your Department Head/Elected Official.

We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a respectful and focused work environment.

6.9 Off-Duty Use of Employer Property or Premises

You may not use Hancock County Government property for personal use during working time. You are responsible for returning County property in good condition and repairing or replacing any property damaged as the result of personal use or as the result of negligence. This includes use of copy machines, computers, County products, or office supplies for personal use without prior authorization.

It is County policy to control off-duty and nonworking hour use of County facilities either for County business or personal reasons. You are prohibited from using County facilities during off-duty or nonworking hours without the written consent of your Department Head/Elected Official. If you use County facilities during your off-duty hours or County off-hours, you may be required to sign a log-in and log-out sheet maintained by the County or building manager.

6.10 Personal Appearance

Your personal appearance reflects on the reputation, integrity, and public image of Hancock County Government. All employees are required to report to work neatly groomed and dressed. You are expected to maintain personal hygiene habits that are generally accepted in the community, including clean clothing, good grooming and personal hygiene, and appropriate attire for the workplace and the work being performed. This may include wearing uniforms or protective safety clothing and equipment, depending upon the job. Use common sense and good judgment in determining what to wear to work.

Fragrant products, including but not limited to perfumes, colognes, and scented body lotions or hair products, should be used in moderation out of concern for others with sensitivities or allergies.

The County, in accordance with applicable law, will reasonably accommodate employees with disabilities or religious beliefs that make it difficult for them to comply fully with the personal appearance policy unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the County. Contact your Department Head/Elected Official to request a reasonable accommodation.

Failure to comply with the personal appearance standards may result in being sent home to groom or change clothes. Frequent violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

6.11 Personal Cell Phone/Mobile Device Use

While Hancock County Government permits employees to bring personal cell phones and other mobile devices (i.e. smart phones, tablets, laptops) into the workplace, you must not allow the use of such devices to interfere with your job duties or impact workplace safety and health.

Use of personal cell phones and mobile devices at work can be distracting and disruptive and cause a loss of productivity. Thus, you should primarily use such personal devices during nonworking time, such as breaks and meal periods. During this time, use devices in a manner that is courteous to those around you. Use of such devices should be minimal and limited to emergency use only. If you have a device that has a camera and/or audio/video recording capability, you are restricted from using those functions on County property unless authorized in advance by management or when they are used in a manner consistent with your right to engage in concerted activity under section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

You are expected to comply with County policies regarding the protection of confidential and proprietary information when using personal devices.

While operating a vehicle on work time, the County requires that the driver operate their personal cell phone in accordance with Indiana State law. (I.C. 9-21-8-59) personal cell phone/mobile device be turned off. If you need to make or receive a phone call while driving, pull off the road to a safe location unless you have the correct hands-free equipment for the device that is in compliance with applicable state laws.

You may not connect your personal device to the County network or to County equipment (computers, printers, etc.).

You may have the opportunity to use your personal devices for work purposes. Before using a personal device for work-related purposes, you must obtain written authorization from IT. The use of personal devices is limited to certain employees and may be limited based on compatibility of technology. Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent employees from engaging in protected concerted activity under the NLRA.

You will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment for violation of this policy.

6.12 Personal Data Changes

It is the employee's responsibility to convey personal information or any changes in personal data and report information affecting insurance benefits or compensation to the Human Resources office. Such information shall be submitted in writing to the Payroll/Benefits Department and elected official/department head. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, numbers and names of dependents, changes in marital status, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments, driver's license status and proof of insurance (where applicable), and other such personal information should be accurate and current. Any unreported changes in personal status may impact eligibility under the County's benefit plans. All qualifying life events must be reported to Human Resources and Payroll/Benefits Department within thirty (30) days in order to make any change to health benefits.

6.13 Security

All employees are responsible for helping to make Hancock County Government a secure work environment. Upon leaving work, lock all desks, lockers, and doors protecting valuable or sensitive material in your work area and report any lost or stolen keys, passes, or similar devices to your Department Head/Elected Official immediately. Refrain from discussing specifics regarding County security systems, alarms, passwords, etc. with those outside of the County.

Immediately advise your Department Head/Elected Official of any known or potential security risks and/or suspicious conduct of employees, customers, or guests of the County. Safety and security is the responsibility of all employees and we rely on you to help us keep our premises secure.

6.14 Social Media

Hancock County Government acknowledges that social media has become an integral part of modern life that provides us with unique opportunities to communicate and share information with others. However, we also want to educate employees that their social media use can:

1. Pose risks to the County's confidential and proprietary information, reputation, and brand;
2. Expose the County to discrimination, harassment, and other claims; and
3. Jeopardize the County's compliance with business rules and laws.

To minimize legal risks, avoid loss of productivity and distraction, and ensure that the County's IT resources and communications systems are used appropriately, all employees must abide by the following policy regarding social media use.

Social Media

For purposes of this policy, **social media** refers to any means of posting content on the internet, including personal websites, social networking sites, blogs, chat rooms, and other online platforms, whether affiliated with the County or not.

Use Good Judgment

While the County respects your right to personal expression, you should assume that anything you do on social media—whether on a business or personal account—could be viewed by a colleague, supervisor, partner, supplier, competitor, investor, customer, or potential customer. As such, any social media activity, even from your personal account, reflects on the County as well as on yourself. It is important to remember that anyone can see what you post (or what you posted five years ago).

Guidelines for Posting on Social Media

When posting:

1. Protect trade secrets, intellectual property, and confidential information related to the County.

2. Do not make statements that are maliciously false or defamatory or would constitute unlawful harassment or discrimination.
3. Do not make express or implied threats of violence.
4. Avoid linking personal accounts to the County as an official source.
5. Respect copyright, trademark, and third-party rights.
6. Do not use the County's email addresses to register on social media platforms for personal use.
7. If you identify yourself as an employee of Hancock County Government on your personal account and are posting about the County, make it clear that your views are your own and that you are not speaking on behalf of the County.

Using Social Media at Work

Do not use social media while on your work time, unless it is work related as authorized by your Department Head/Elected Official or consistent with policies that cover equipment owned by the County.

Media Contacts

If you are not authorized to speak on behalf of the County, do not speak to the media on behalf of the County. Direct all media inquiries for official County responses to Human Resources Director.

Retaliation

Retaliation against those reporting policy violations or cooperating in investigations is prohibited. Retaliatory actions may lead to disciplinary measures.

Violations

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

This policy does not limit employees rights to discuss wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment. All employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

6.15 Telecommuting

Telecommuting is defined as regularly working a full or partial workday from home or some other alternate work site.

Hancock County Government will make telecommuting available to employees when it benefits organizational and departmental needs. This option may not be available in some job classifications due to business needs. Each department manager will determine, in his or her discretion, the positions within the department that may be suitable for telecommuting.

If you meet eligibility requirements for telecommuting, you must submit a Telecommuting Agreement form (form available in Human Resource office) to your immediate Department Head/Elected Official for departmental approval. If you are granted a telecommuting arrangement, you will be subject to the same performance standards as prior to telecommuting. Telecommuting work areas may be evaluated to ensure that appropriate safety standards are met. Telecommuting may be a reasonable accommodation; consult Human Resources if you are requesting telecommuting as a reasonable accommodation.

6.16 Telephone Use

Personal telephone calls should be limited in frequency and duration. Personal use of telephones and fax machines for long-distance and toll calls is not permitted, except for emergencies. For any emergency personal use employees shall reimburse the County for all long-distance and/or toll charges. All other non-emergency long-distance calls shall be approved by his/her elected official/department head before being conducted.

To ensure effective telephone communications, employees should always use the approved greeting and speak in a courteous and professional manner.

The mail system is reserved for County business purposes only. Employees should refrain from sending or receiving personal mail at work.

6.17 Third Party Disclosures

From time to time, Hancock County Government may become involved in news stories or potential or actual legal proceedings of various kinds. When that happens, lawyers, former employees, newspapers, law enforcement agencies, and other outside persons may contact our employees to obtain information about the incident or the actual or potential lawsuit.

If you receive such a contact, you should **not speak** on behalf of the County and should refer any call requesting the position of the County to Human Resources. If you have any questions about this policy or are not certain what to do when such a contact is made, contact Human Resources.

6.18 Use of County Technology

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that contains millions of pages of information. Users are cautioned that many of these pages include offensive, sexually explicit, and inappropriate material. In general, it is difficult to avoid at least some contact with this material while using the Internet. Even innocuous search requests may lead to sites with highly offensive content. Additionally, having an e-mail address on the Internet may lead to the receipt of unsolicited e-mails containing offensive content. Users accessing the Internet do so at their own risk and Hancock County Government is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded by Users from the Internet.

The purpose of this policy is to establish acceptable and unacceptable use of electronic devices and network resources at Hancock County in conjunction with its established culture of ethical and lawful behavior, openness, trust, and integrity.

Hancock County provides computer devices, networks, and other electronic information systems to meet missions, goals, and initiatives and must manage them responsibly to maintain the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its information assets. This policy requires the users of information assets to comply with county policies and protects the county against damaging legal issues.

Hancock County Government requires all county business to be conducted via the county email address assigned to the employee.

Provision of Internet Access

As a condition of providing Internet access to its employees, Hancock County places certain restrictions on workplace use of the Internet. Hancock County encourages employee use of the Internet:

1. To support the mission of County government, this is, to serve the public;
2. To communicate with fellow employees and clients regarding matters within an employee's assigned duties;
3. To acquire information related to, or designed to facilitate the performance of regular assigned duties;
4. To facilitate the performance of any task or project in a manner approved by an employee's Manager.

Compliance with Applicable Laws and Licenses

Employees must comply with all software licenses, copyrights, and all other laws governing intellectual property protection, privacy, sexual harassment, data security, and online activity.

Please be advised that the use of the Internet access provided by Hancock County, expressly prohibits the following:

1. Game playing.
2. Distribution or download of destructive programs (i.e., viruses and/or self-replicating code).
3. Hateful, harassing, or other anti-social behavior.
4. Internet Radio, Online Videos, or other types of streaming media unless approved by the County IT Department.
5. Downloading of software unless properly scheduled with the County IT Department.
6. Installation of software without Hancock County IT Department's expressed written consent, approval, and assistance.
7. Intentional damage or interference with others (i.e., hacking and distributing viruses).
8. Making publicly accessible obscene files.
9. Solicitation.
10. Intentionally bypassing or damaging Hancock County IT security systems, (i.e., Updating County databases outside of normal application processes).
11. Dissemination or printing of copyrighted materials (including articles and software) in violation of copyright laws.
12. Sending, receiving, printing or otherwise disseminating proprietary data, trade secrets or other confidential information of Hancock County in violation of Hancock County policy or proprietary agreements.
13. Sharing or granting access to Hancock County's resources (i.e., network, equipment, services, e-mail, VPN, and/or data) with anyone regardless of intent, job position, or circumstances.
14. Offensive or harassing statements or language including disparagement of others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious or political beliefs.
15. Sending or soliciting sexually oriented messages or images.
16. Operating a business, usurping business opportunities, personal use, soliciting money for personal gain, or searching for jobs outside Hancock County.
17. Sending chain letters, gambling or engaging in any other activity in violation of the law.
18. Participating or accessing chat rooms and/or message groups (except where used for county business).
19. Using any Hancock County e-mail address for external: subscriptions, identification purposes, or social media message groups.
20. Accessing or modifying another user's e-mail or any attempts to forge e-mail messages.
21. Accessing Hancock County's resources in a manner that may hinder any mission and/or operation of County government.
22. Any attempts to interfere and/or unlawfully intercept official County communications, (i.e., deletion of e-mail messages of other users, impersonation, or providing false information).
23. Any promotion of self-campaigning.
24. Promotion or opposition of political campaigns or commenting on political stances on issues.
25. Promotion or opposition of a political party or persons identified with a political party.
26. Promotion or opposition of a view on a question of political controversy which is identifiable of the view of any political party.

Any electronics connected to County-owned computers must have the approval of IT or must have been provided and issued directly from IT.

Management's Right to Access Electronic Mail (e-mail)

The electronic mail system has been installed by Hancock County to facilitate County business communications. Although each employee has an individual password to access this system, it belongs to Hancock County and the contents of e-mail communications are accessible at all times by Hancock County management for any County business purpose. These systems may be subject to periodic unannounced inspections and should be treated like other shared filing systems.

All e-mail messages are Hancock County records. The contents of e-mail, properly obtained for legitimate County business purposes, may be disclosed without your permission. Therefore, you should not assume that messages are confidential. Back-up copies of e-mail may be maintained and referenced for County business and legal reasons.

Due to the sensitivity of e-mail, and separation of job duties, for an Department Head/Elected Official to access another user's email, they must first either have a court order/subpoena or seek approval from the Commissioners. The department manager must submit in writing the grounds for e-mail procurement, the requested time frame, and identifiable characteristics of the requested e-mails.

Upon receiving the submission, the Hancock County IT Department will coordinate e-mail retention requirements with the Commissioners. The decision to grant or deny access to e-mail records is solely the decision of the Commissioners, and not in any part that of the Hancock County IT Department.

Any requests submitted solely to that of the Hancock County IT Department will be rejected with a written statement outlining the required steps for proper e-mail procurement.

Upon denial, the Commissioners will notify the requesting department manager in writing, disclosing the reason for denial. Upon approval, the Commissioners will notify both the requesting department manager and the Hancock County IT Department in writing and verbal confirmation. At that time, the Hancock County IT Department will coordinate the required steps necessary to securely deliver, or grant access to, the requested emails.

Personal Use of E-Mail

Because Hancock County provides the electronic mail system to assist you in the performance of your job, you should use it for official Hancock County business. Incidental and occasional personal use of e-mail is permitted by Hancock County, but these messages will be treated the same as other messages. Hancock County reserves the right to access and disclose as necessary all messages sent over its e-mail system, without regard to content.

Personal use of VPN Access

Approved Hancock County employees, contractors, consultants, and service providers may be permitted to access the Hancock County network via a VPN connection, which is a "user-managed" service. This means the user is responsible for choosing an Internet Service Provider (ISP), coordinating access permissions with the Hancock IT Department, and all software installation and configuration required to establish the VPN connection. Hancock County reserves the right to grant and revoke VPN access permissions as required to maintain security and proper operation of the network.

Any user requiring VPN access must make a written request to their department manager with an explanation stating the grounds for VPN access and for the period of time. The department manager will then submit the written request with either approval or rejection to the Hancock County IT Department who will determine if and/or what level of permissions will be granted. If an employee is denied VPN access, a written explanation from the Hancock County IT Department will be provided to the requesting user via the department manager. Upon approval, the Hancock County Information Technology Department will inform the user and provide the instructions for VPN access configurations. (*Vendor Use Agreement available in IT and Human Resources offices.*)

Use of Removable Media/PortableMedia Storage Devices

Hancock County protects data from unauthorized access as part of the process to protect systems from unauthorized use. Removable media and portable media storage devices are predominantly vulnerable to theft and could expose sensitive data to unauthorized access. Employees using removable media or portable media storage devices containing or transmitting Hancock County data are required to work with the Hancock County IT Department and department manager to coordinate proper methods to protect the data in the event the device should be lost, stolen, or compromised. Protection may include encryption or other methods of security.

Types of removable media and portable media storage device include, but are not limited to:

1. Laptops
2. USB Flash Drives
3. USB External Hard Drives
4. Digital Cameras
5. Smart Phones
6. Memory Cards/Sticks
7. MP3 Players
8. Any wireless device (Bluetooth, Infrared, Wireless Internet)

Only media supported by IT will be sanctioned for storage of offsite data. In the event that a large amount of data needs to be placed on a removable storage device, the Hancock County IT Department will provide a device. Otherwise, approval of purchase will need to be obtained. Data removed from the Hancock County Network is the responsibility of the party and or department requesting or removing the data themselves.

Storing and Saving Work-Related Data

In order to provide end-users with a reliable and secure means of storing and saving work-related data, the Hancock County IT Department has implemented network-shared folders. By saving work-related data to the network-shared folders, the Hancock County IT Department can help ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the data. Any work-related data stored or saved to local drives (on your work computer) is not protected by the Hancock County IT Department. No assurance for reclaiming lost work-related data stored to local drives can be offered by the Hancock County IT Department. Any work-related data stored or saved to a local drive is done so at the end user's own risk.

Password and Encryption Key Security and Integrity

Employees are responsible for the use of their network and application accounts and the security of their passwords. Employees are prohibited from the unauthorized use of the passwords and encryption keys of other employees to gain access to other employees' network or application accounts. Employees may not place on any County-owned computer system any type of information or software that gives unauthorized access to another computer account or system.

Should access be needed to a particular network account within a department, a written request with stated purpose must be made by the department head to the Hancock County IT Department. The request may need final approval from the Hancock County Commissioners depending on the circumstances involved in the request.

Downloading, Installation of Software, Software Licensing, and Configuration Modification

Due to the risk of computer viruses, copyright and license violation, and/or degradation of the County computer networks, downloading and/or installation of any materials, programs, or updates to currently installed programs is not permitted. Hancock County purchases and licenses the use of various computer software for county business purposes and does not own the copyright to the software or its related documentation. The County prohibits the illegal duplication of software and its related documentation. No licensed or unlicensed software may be installed on Hancock County computers that have not been authorized by the County Data Board.

No computer settings or configurations including, but not limited to, themes, backgrounds, wallpapers, and screensavers are to be modified by anyone other than a member of the Hancock County IT Department. If it comes to the attention of the Hancock County IT Department through auditing, maintenance, or other means that modifications have been made, any unapproved content or modifications will be removed and/or reverted back to their original state. During this time, the employee may or may not be made aware of their infraction(s).

Waiver of Privacy

For security, compliance, and maintenance purposes, authorized personnel may monitor and audit equipment, systems, and network traffic per the Audit Policy. Devices that interfere with other devices or users on the network may be disconnected. Information Security prohibits actively blocking authorized audit scans. Firewalls and other blocking technologies must permit access to the scan sources.

The County has the right to utilize software that makes it possible to identify and block access to Internet sites containing sexually explicit or other material deemed inappropriate in the workplace.

Employees waive any right to privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive on the computer or the Internet.

Violation of Hancock County's Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Violation of Hancock County's Internet Acceptable Use Policy may include civil and/or criminal disciplinary action. The measure of discipline will correspond to the gravity of the offense as weighed by its potential effect on Hancock County and fellow employees. See Discipline Policy. When you connect to the Internet by any method at any Hancock County location or use any service provided by Hancock County, it should be for Hancock County business-related activity.

County Property

You must ensure through legal or technical means that proprietary information remains within the control of Hancock County at all times. Conducting Hancock County business that results in the storage of proprietary information on personal or non-Hancock County controlled environments, including devices maintained by a third party with whom Hancock County does not have a contractual agreement, is prohibited. This specifically prohibits the use of an e-mail account that is not provided by Hancock County, or its customer and partners, for Hancock County business.

Each employee will be granted certain access permissions and resources required to perform their specific job duty. These permissions and resources are the property of Hancock County and are for your use only. At no time shall any permissions or resources that have been granted to you through Hancock County be made available to, or shared with, any individual unless under the direction of Hancock County. This includes, but is not limited to: e-mail, Internet access, network access, Hancock County data, electronic devices, and VPN access.

Reporting Child Pornography

An employee who witnesses child pornography (or any other type of pornography) being distributed or residing on County property, computers, networks, or information technologies resources must immediately report such incident to the elected official/department head and Sheriff. This also applies to employee-owned computers or information technologies resources which are brought and/or used on County property. The employee shall immediately inform the elected official/department head who will take appropriate action and immediately report such issue to the Sheriff. If unresolved, or in the event the report is alleged against the Sheriff, the employee is advised to submit the complaint to the Prosecutor.

Child pornography shall be defined as any visual depiction or description of a child, less than eighteen (18) years of age, engaged in sexually explicit conduct, including nudity of any such child. Child pornography, whether made or produced by electronic, mechanical, or other means, may be expressed through a picture, drawing, photograph, negative image, undeveloped film, motion picture, videotape, digitized image, or any other pictorial representation.

The managing, producing, sponsoring, presenting, exhibiting, and/or creating of child pornography is a violation of County policy and of Indiana Code 35-42-4-4. Such violation shall result in disciplinary action, including immediate termination.

An employee who makes available to another employee a computer, knowing that the computer's fixed drive or peripheral device contains matter that depicts or describes sexual conduct by a child less than

eighteen (18) years of age commits child exploitation as defined by Indiana law.

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the elected official or department head.

False Reporting

Hancock County also recognizes that careful consideration must be given to questions regarding whether a particular action or incident is purely personal or social without any discriminatory employment effect. False accusations can have devastating effects on the lives and reputations of innocent women and men. Therefore, the County may discipline, up to, and including termination of employment, those employees who are proved to have intentionally, maliciously, and wrongly accused others of child pornography.

COMPUTER SECURITY AND COPYING OF SOFTWARE

Software programs purchased and provided by Hancock County Government are to be used only for creating, researching, and processing materials for County use. By using County hardware, software, and networking systems you assume personal responsibility for their use and agree to comply with this policy and other applicable County policies, as well as city, state, and federal laws and regulations.

All software acquired for or on behalf of the County, or developed by County employees or contract personnel on behalf of the County, is and will be deemed County property. It is the policy of the County to respect all computer software rights and to adhere to the terms of all software licenses to which the County is a party. The Information Technology Department is responsible for enforcing these guidelines.

You may not illegally duplicate any licensed software or related documentation. Unauthorized duplication of software may subject you and/or the County to both civil and criminal penalties under the United States Copyright Act. To purchase software, obtain your manager's approval. All software acquired by the County must be purchased through the Information Systems Department.

You may not duplicate, copy, or give software to any outsiders including clients, contractors, customers, and others. You may use software on local area networks or on multiple machines only in accordance with applicable license agreements entered into by the County.

6.19 Workplace Privacy and Right to Inspect

Hancock County Government property, including but not limited to lockers, phones, computers, tablets, desks, work place areas, vehicles, or machinery, remains under the control of the County and is subject to inspection at any time, without notice to any employees, and without their presence.

You should have no expectation of privacy in any of these areas. We assume no responsibility for the loss of, or damage to, your property maintained on County premises including that kept in lockers and desks.

7.0 Benefits

7.1 Deferred Compensation

Hancock County provides for eligible employees, including a person elected, or appointed, or receiving compensation from the State or any political subdivision, to voluntarily participate in a deferred compensation program.

The officer so designated is authorized to execute for the County individual participation agreements with each eligible employee requesting the same, and to act as the "Administrator" of the Plan representing the County, and to execute any agreements and contracts that are necessary to implement the program. It is implicitly understood that, deferrals and other minor administrative matters, there is to be no cost or contribution by the County to the program.

7.2 Indiana Public Retirement System

All FTPR County employees are covered by INPRS, a retirement program established and maintained by the State of Indiana. INPRS pays benefits to covered workers or their dependents upon retirement, death, and in certain cases, serious illness or injury. The County contributes a percentage to the pension account. The amount the County contributes varies and is determined actuarially annually. The employee's contributions and accumulated interest credits are refundable when an employee terminates employment prior to being eligible for benefits. INPRS's Employer Financed Pension requires ten (10) years of service to become vested, and is paid by the County based on an employee's length of employment, average salary, retirement option selected and age at retirement.

Questions concerning the program should be directed to the Human Resources office and/or the Indiana Public Retirement System at One North Capital, Suite 001, Indianapolis, IN. 46204.

FTA, PT, and ST employees are not eligible for this benefit.

Sheriff Department Merit Officers participate in the Sheriff's Department Pension Fund, not INPRS.

7.3 Bereavement Leave

Hancock County Government recognizes the importance of taking leave when there is a death in the family. An FTPR employee wishing to take time off for the death of a family member should notify his/her elected official/department head immediately.

When requested, employees will be given time off, in accordance with County policy, up to a maximum of five (5) working days for the purpose of attending to funeral arrangements or memorial service for a spouse, domestic partner, significant other, child, or step-child, father, mother, step-parents, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandchildren or grandparents. Pay will be given for any of the five (5) days that are regularly scheduled workdays.

Employees will be given time off up to a maximum of three (3) working days for attending to funeral arrangements for brother, sister, step-brother, step-sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step-brother-in-law, step-sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, step-son-in-law, step-daughter-in-law or grandparents of a spouse. Pay will be given for any of the three (3) days that are regularly scheduled workdays.

When the death of an employee's aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or first cousin occurs, the employee, on request, shall suffer no loss of pay up to one (1) work day for the purpose of attending the funeral if the funeral occurs on a scheduled workday.

FTA, PT, and ST employees are not eligible for this benefit.

7.4 COBRA

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) provides the opportunity for eligible Hancock County Government employees and their beneficiaries to continue health insurance coverage under the County health plan when a "qualifying event" could result in the loss of eligibility. Qualifying events include resignation, termination of employment, death of an employee, reduction in hours, a leave of absence, divorce or legal separation, entitlement to Medicare, or where a dependent child no longer meets eligibility requirements.

Contact Human Resources to learn more about your COBRA rights.

7.5 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

In accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), Hancock County Government provides up to 12 or 26 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period to covered employees in certain circumstances.

Eligibility

To qualify for FMLA leave, you must:

1. Have worked for the County for at least 12 months, although it need not be consecutive;
2. Worked at least 1,250 hours in the last 12 months; and
3. Be employed at a worksite that has 50 or more employees within 75 miles.

Reasons for Leave

You may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave in a 12-month period for any of the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child and in order to care for that child (leave must be completed within one year of the child's birth);
2. The placement of a child with you for adoption or foster care and in order to care for the newly placed child (leave must be completed within one year of the child's placement);
3. To care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition;
4. To care for your own serious health condition, which makes you unable to perform any of the essential functions of your position; or
5. A qualifying exigency of a spouse, child, or parent who is a military member on covered active duty or called to covered active duty status (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty).

The 12-month period is a 12-month period measured forward from the first date an employee takes FMLA leave.

You may take up to 26 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave in a single 12-month period, beginning on the first day that you take FMLA leave to care for a spouse, child, or next of kin who is a covered service member and who has a serious injury or illness related to active duty service.

As used in this policy:

1. **Spouse** means a husband or wife as recognized under state law for the purposes of marriage in the state or other territory or country where the marriage took place.
2. **Child** means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis, who is either under age 18 or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time FMLA leave is to commence. A child for the purposes of military exigency or military care leave can be of any age.
3. **Parent** means a biological, adoptive, step, or foster parent or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to you when you were a child.
4. **Next of kin** for the purposes of military care leave is a blood relative other than a spouse, parent, or child in the following order: brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins. If a military service member designates in writing another blood relative as his or her caregiver, that individual will be the only next of kin. In appropriate circumstances, you may be required to provide documentation of next of kin status.
5. **Serious health condition** means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider. Ordinarily, unless complications arise, cosmetic treatments and minor conditions such as the cold, flu, ear aches, upset stomach, minor ulcers, headaches (other than migraines), and routine dental problems are examples of conditions that are not serious health conditions under this policy. If you have any questions about the types of conditions that may qualify, contact Human Resources.
6. **Health care provider** means a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy, physician assistant, podiatrist, dentist, clinical psychologist, optometrist, nurse practitioner, nurse-midwife, clinical social worker, or Christian Science practitioner licensed by the First Church of Christ. Under limited circumstances, a chiropractor or other provider recognized by our group health plan for the purposes of certifying a claim for benefits may also be considered a health care provider.
7. **Qualifying exigencies** for military exigency leave include:

8. Short-notice call-ups/deployments of seven days or less (**Note:** Leave for this exigency is available for up to seven days beginning the date of call-up notice);
9. Attending official ceremonies, programs, or military events;
10. Special childcare needs created by a military call-up including making alternative childcare arrangements, handling urgent and nonroutine childcare situations, arranging for school transfers, or attending school or daycare meetings;
11. Making financial and legal arrangements;
12. Attending counseling sessions for yourself, the military service member, or the military service members' son or daughter who is under 18 years of age or is 18 or older but incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability;
13. Rest and recuperation (**Note:** Fifteen days of leave is available for this exigency per event);
14. Post-deployment activities such as arrival ceremonies, re-integration briefings, and other official ceremonies sponsored by the military (**Note:** Leave for these events are available for 90 days following the termination of active duty status). This type of leave may also be taken to address circumstances arising from the death of a covered military member while on active duty;
15. Parental care when the military family member is needed to care for a parent who is incapable of self-care (such as arranging for alternative care or transfer to a care facility); and
16. Other exigencies that arise that are agreed to by both the County and you.
17. A **serious injury/illness** incurred by a service member in the line of active duty or that is exacerbated by active duty is any injury or illness that renders the service member unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank, or rating.

Notice and Leave Request Process

If the need for leave is foreseeable because of an expected birth/adoption or planned medical treatment, you must give at least 30 days' notice. If 30 days' notice is not possible, give notice as soon as practicable (within one or two business days of learning of your need for leave). Failure to provide appropriate notice may result in the delay or denial of leave.

In addition, if you are seeking intermittent or reduced schedule leave that is foreseeable due to planned medical treatment or a series of treatments for yourself, a family member, or covered service member, you must consult with the County first regarding the dates of this treatment to work out a schedule that best suits your needs or the needs of the covered military member, if applicable, and the County.

If the need for leave is unforeseeable, provide notice as soon as possible. Normal call-in procedures apply to all absences from work, including those for which leave under this policy may be requested. Failure to provide appropriate notice may result in the delay or denial of leave.

Contact Human Resources for FMLA Leave Request Process.

Certification of Need for Leave

If you are requesting leave because of your own or a covered relative's serious health condition, you and the relevant health care provider must supply appropriate medical certification. You may obtain Medical Certification forms from the elected official/department head. When you request leave, the County will notify you of the requirement for medical certification and when it is due (at least 15 days after you request leave). If you provide at least 30 days' notice of medical leave, you should also provide the medical certification before leave begins. Failure to provide requested medical certification in a timely manner may result in denial of FMLA-covered leave until it is provided.

At our expense, the County may require an examination by a second health care provider designated by us. If the second health care provider's opinion conflicts with the original medical certification, we, at our expense, may require a third, mutually agreeable, health care provider to conduct an examination and provide a final and binding opinion. Subsequent medical recertification may also be required. Failure to provide requested certification within 15 days, when practicable, may result in delay of further leave until it is provided.

The County also reserves the right to require certification from a covered military member's health care

provider if you are requesting military caregiver leave and certification in connection with military exigency leave.

Call-In Procedures

In all instances of absence, the call-in procedures and standards established for giving notice of absence from work must be followed.

Paid Leave Utilization During FMLA Leave

FMLA leave is unpaid; however, you will be required to substitute any accrued and unused paid leave for unpaid FMLA leave as permitted by law.

Your FMLA leave runs concurrently with other types of leave, such as accrued paid leave that is substituted for unpaid FMLA leave and any state family leave laws, to the extent allowed by state law. The substitution of paid leave for unpaid FMLA leave does not extend the 12 or 26 weeks (whichever is applicable) of FMLA leave. In addition, the substitution of paid leave for unpaid leave may not result in your receipt of more than 100 percent of your salary.

If you are receiving short- or long-term disability or workers' compensation benefits during a personal medical leave, you will not be required to utilize accrued paid leave. However, where state law permits, you may elect to use accrued paid leave to supplement these benefits.

Leave Increments

Intermittent Leave

If medically necessary, FMLA leave for a serious health condition may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to a serious health condition) or on a reduced leave schedule (reducing the usual number of hours you work per workweek or workday). FMLA leave may also be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule for a qualifying exigency relating to covered military service.

As FMLA leave is unpaid, the County will reduce your salary based on the amount of time actually worked. In addition, while you are on an intermittent or reduced schedule leave that is foreseeable due to planned medical treatments, the County may temporarily transfer you to an available alternative position that better accommodates your leave schedule and has equivalent pay and benefits.

Parental Leave

Leave for the birth or placement of a child must be taken in a single block and cannot be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis. Parental leave must be completed within 12 months of the birth or placement of the child; however, you may use parental leave before the placement of an adopted or foster child to consult with attorneys, appear in court, attend counseling sessions, etc.

Family Care, Personal Medical, Military Exigency, and Military Care Leave

Leave taken for these reasons may be taken in a block or blocks of time. In addition, if a health care provider deems it necessary or if the nature of a qualifying exigency requires, leave for these reasons can be taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis.

Fitness for Duty Requirements

If you take leave because of your own serious health condition (except if you are taking intermittent leave), you are required, as are all employees returning from other types of medical leave, to provide medical certification that you are fit to resume work. You will not be permitted to resume work until it is provided. The County reserves the right to order the employee to take appropriate tests to determine the employee's fitness for duty. In the event the County orders the employee to undergo a physical examination, then Hancock County will bear the cost provided a physician retained by Hancock County is utilized. However, if the employee selects a personal physician to complete the physical examination, then the fee shall be paid by the employee.

Health Insurance

Your health insurance coverage will be maintained by the County during leave on the same basis as if you were still working. You must continue to make timely payments of your share of the premiums for such coverage. Failure to pay premiums within 30 days of when they are due may result in a lapse of coverage. If this occurs, you will be notified 15 days before the date coverage will lapse that coverage will terminate unless payments are promptly made.

Alternatively, at our option, the County may pay your share of the premiums during the leave and recover the costs of this insurance upon your return to work. Coverage that lapses due to nonpayment of premiums will be reinstated immediately upon return to work without a waiting period. Under most circumstances, if you do not return to work at the end of leave, the County may require reimbursement for the health insurance premiums paid during the leave.

Reinstatement

Upon returning to work at the end of leave, you will generally be placed in your original job or an equivalent job with equivalent pay and benefits. You will not lose any benefits that accrued before leave was taken.

Spouse Aggregation

If you and your spouse are both employed by the County, the total number of weeks to which you are both entitled in the aggregate because of the birth or placement of a child or to care for a parent with a serious health condition will be limited to 12 weeks per leave year. Similarly, spouses employed by the County will be limited to a combined total of 26 weeks of leave to care for a military service member. This 26-week leave period will be reduced, however, by the amount of leave taken for other qualifying FMLA events. This type of leave aggregation does not apply to leave needed for your own serious health condition, to care for a spouse or child with a serious health condition, or because of a qualifying exigency.

Failure to Return

If you fail to return to work or fail to make a request for an extension of leave prior to the expiration of the leave, you will be deemed to have voluntarily terminated your employment. The County is not required to grant requests for open-ended leaves with no reasonable return date under these policies or as disability accommodations.

Alternative Employment

While on leave of absence, you may not work or be gainfully employed either for yourself or others unless express, written permission to perform such outside work has been granted by the County. If you are on a leave of absence and are found to be working elsewhere without permission, you will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Interaction with State and Local Laws

Where state or local family and medical leave laws offer more protections or benefits to employees, the protections or benefits that are more favorable to the employee, as provided by these laws, will apply.

Abuse of Leave

If you are found to have provided a false reason for a leave, you will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Designation of Leave

If the County becomes aware of any qualifying reason for FMLA leave, the County will designate it as such. An employee may not refuse FMLA designation under this policy.

Retaliation

The County will not retaliate against employees who request or take leave in accordance with this policy.

7.6 Health Insurance

Hancock County provides a medical program for employees in an FTPR and FTA benefited position. The employee pays a portion of the cost as set by the Board of County Commissioners. Group insurance benefits will continue while an employee is on disability leave; however, when in a non-pay status, employees will be responsible for the timely payment of those insurance premiums that are normally deducted from gross pay.

1. All elected officials are eligible to participate in all insurance programs of the County effective the first day of their term. All full-time employees, including the Commissioners' Legal Counsel, are, after thirty (30) days of employment, eligible to participate in all insurance programs of the County.
2. All employees, except those terminated for cause, who are eligible for health insurance and who have been County employees for ten (10) years, or, in the case of elected officials, eight (8) years, and a member of the County's Health insurance program for the last four (4) years of employment, may elect to have health insurance coverage for themselves, their spouse, and/or dependents after employment ends under the following terms:
 - a. The employee must be at least fifty-five (55) years of age on termination;
 - b. The employee must pay fifty percent (50%) of the premium;
 - c. The request for coverage must be made within ninety (90) days after the employment ends;
3. The coverage terminates:
 - a. for the employee when the employee becomes eligible for Medicare;
 - b. For the spouse when the spouse becomes eligible for Medicare; and
 - c. For eligible dependents when the employee and spouse, if any, are both eligible for Medicare.
4. Any County employees who do not qualify under the bullets listed above, but are eligible for health insurance, and who have been county employees for twenty (20) years may, upon retirement, elect to have health insurance coverage for themselves, their spouse, and/or their dependents after retirement under the following terms:
 - a. The employee must be at least fifty-five (55) years of age on retirement;
 - b. The employee must pay all of the premiums, including the employer's share;
 - c. The request for coverage must be made within ninety (90) days after retirement; and
 - d. The coverage terminates:
 - i. For the employee when the employee becomes eligible for Medicare;
 - ii. For the spouse when the spouse becomes eligible for Medicare; and
 - iii. For eligible dependents when the employee and spouse, if any, are both eligible for Medicare.

Specific details regarding eligibility and coverage are available in the Human Resource office.

PT and ST employees are not eligible for this benefit.

The County will have an Insurance Committee that will be comprised of the Health Benefits Administrator, Risk Manager, Human Resources Director, a County Commissioner and a County Council Member.

7.7 Holidays

Hancock County Government offers paid holidays each year. The Paid Holidays are approved by the Board of Commissioners.

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed the preceding Friday. Holidays falling on a Sunday will be observed the following Monday.

You will be compensated for holidays in accordance with federal and state law.

7.7.1 Terms and conditions of payment of holiday pay

- a. The employee must have worked the regularly scheduled shift before and after the holiday, unless officially excused by their elected official or department head.

b. Except for Non-Administrative Employees of the Sheriffs Office, Emergency Operations Center and Community Corrections, all eligible full-time Hancock County employees are to receive the same number of holidays.

c. If a holiday occurs during an eligible employee's paid absence (e.g., PTO, Grandfathered Sick or PTO Sick), the employee shall receive holiday pay which the employee is entitled to receive under Section 7.5, and time shall not be deducted from the employee's paid time off benefit (e.g. PTO), except for employees scheduled to work on the holiday.

d. For public safety employees working 24/7 work schedules holiday pay will be for the actual holiday when the holiday falls on Saturday or Sunday, and not the date the holiday is observed for County Administrative employees.

7.8 Military Leave (USERRA)

Hancock County Government complies with applicable federal and state law regarding military leave and re-employment rights. Unpaid military leave of absence will be granted to members of the uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA; with amendments) and all applicable state law. You must submit documentation of the need for leave to [[Human Resources or appropriate department]]. When returning from military leave of absence, you will be reinstated to your previous position or a similar position, in accordance with state and federal law. You must notify your Department Head/Elected Official of your intent to return to employment based on requirements of the law. For more information regarding status, compensation, benefits, and reinstatement upon return from military leave, contact Human Resources.

7.9 Paid Time Off (PTO)

A. PAID TIME OFF ("PTO")

Definitions

Paid Time Off ("PTO") means time off with pay that can be used at an employee's discretion and with the approval of the employee's supervisor. PTO replaces vacation time, sick time, and personal days.

PTO Bank means the amount of PTO that an employee has available to use.

Unscheduled PTO means PTO taken with less than twelve (12) hours of notice

Accrual of PTO

Part-time employees are not eligible to receive PTO.

Employees who are classified as a 7-hour employee (35 hours per week):

Years of Completed Service	PTO Hours Accumulated Per Month	Annual PTO Hours Accrued
First six months of employment (Orientation period)	Credited when hired	70.5 hours
Completion of orientation period to 5 th anniversary	13 hours	156 hours
Start of 5 th anniversary year to 10 th anniversary	16 hours	192 hours
Start of 10 th anniversary year to 15 th anniversary	19 hours	228 hours
Start of 15 th anniversary year and thereafter	22 hours	264 hours

Employees who are classified as an 8-hour employee (32 or 40 hours per week):

Years of Completed Service	PTO Hours Accumulated Per Month	Annual PTO Hours Accrued
First six months of employment (Orientation period)	Credited when hired	81 hours
Completion of orientation period to 5 th anniversary	15 hours	180 hours
Start of 5 th anniversary year to 10 th anniversary	18 hours	216 hours
Start of 10 th anniversary year to 15 th anniversary	22 hours	264 hours
Start of 15 th anniversary year and thereafter	25 hours	300 hours

Employees who are classified as a 10-hour employee (40 hours per week):

Years of Completed Service	PTO Hours Accumulated Per Month	Annual PTO Hours Accrued
First six months of employment (Orientation period)	Credited when hired	81 hours
Completion of orientation period to 5th anniversary	17 hours	204 hours
Start of 5th anniversary year to 10th anniversary	20.5 hours	246 hours
Start of 10th anniversary year to 15th anniversary	24 hours	288 hours
Start of 15th anniversary year and thereafter	27.5 hours	330 hours

Employees who are classified as a 12-hour employee (84 hours per 2 week pay period):

Years of Completed Service	PTO Hours Accumulated Per Month	Annual PTO Hours Accrued
First six months of employment (Orientation period)	Credited when hired	99 hours
Completion of orientation period to 5 th anniversary	19 hours	228 hours
Start of 5th anniversary year to 10th anniversary	23 hours	276 hours
Start of 10th anniversary year to 15 th anniversary	26 hours	312 hours
Start of 15 th anniversary year and thereafter	30 hours	360 hours

When an employee reaches an employment anniversary that causes an increase in their PTO, such adjustment will take place on the first day of the month immediately following the anniversary date.

An employee must work and/or be on their own paid leave an entire month to accrue PTO for that month. Any employee who is paid for fewer hours than their normally scheduled hours for the month shall not be eligible to accrue PTO for that month. This includes an employee who is receiving short- or long-term disability benefits and employees on unpaid suspension.

An employee whose absence is due to a work-related injury or illness shall accrue PTO if they are receiving worker's compensation income replacement benefits.

If an employee moves to a position with a different hourly classification, the monthly accrual will change for the following month. The PTO bank amount does not change.

Carryover

An employee will be allowed to carry over a maximum of five hundred (500) PTO hours from one month to the next. Any time in excess of 500 hours left in the PTO bank at the end of the month will be transferred to the employee's Sick Leave Bank, which maxes out at three hundred (300) hour. Employees can have a maximum of eight hundred (800) hours between the two (2) banks. If the combined total of the employee banks reaches eight hundred (800) hours, any excess PTO time will be forfeited. (See page 8 for Transfer/Separation rules.)

For example: Employee "A" has worked for the county for 7 years. "A" earns 16 hours per month of PTO time and has a PTO balance of 494. On October 1, "A" receives 16 hours PTO for working in September. This brings "A's" PTO bank over by 10 hours. Instead of losing 10 hours of time off, those 10 hours of excess time will move to "A's" PTO Sick Bank for use in the event of an illness. If "A's" PTO Sick Bank is over 300 hours, the remaining 10 hours will be forfeited.

New Employees

A new employee shall receive PTO equivalent to what they would accrue during the first six months of employment upon hire. If an employee separates from the county prior to the end of the first six months and they have used more PTO than they would have accumulated during their tenure, they will be required to reimburse the County for time not yet accrued. This extra time will be deducted from their last check. Employees will receive their first accrual on the 1st of the month following six (6) full months of employment. For example. Joe Smith was hired on February 20, 2024. He will begin accruing additional PTO in September since the full month he was employed was March 2024. His first PTO credit will be on October 1, 2024.

Should an employee separate from the County and then be re-employed within two (2) years or fewer, the employee shall be entitled to full credit for service prior to the separation however, their anniversary date will change to the rehire date. After a separation of more than two (2) years, a returning employee shall be treated as a new employee for purposes of calculating PTO accruals and shall not receive credit for prior service.

Transfer / Separation

The balance in an employee's PTO bank is transferable between any County department. The employee's new department is responsible for all PTO time the employee brings with him or her.

Accrued PTO will be paid out at 100% under the following terms:

Accrued PTO will only be paid out if an employee:

- Leaves in good standing;
- Gives two (2) weeks' notice and;
- Has been employed full-time for three (3) full years as of their anniversary date.

Two weeks written notice must be received by Human Resources a minimum of two weeks in advance of the employee's last day in order to qualify for a payout. The elected official or department head has the discretion to accept the written notice and not require the employee to complete the notice period, depending upon departmental needs.

If an employee is asked to resign as a result in the change of elected official or department head, they would still be eligible for a pay out of accrued PTO as if they gave two (2) weeks notice.

An employee's separation date may not be extended to use up the PTO Bank balance or to continue insurance benefits after the last day worked. The employee's separation date shall always be the last day worked. Employees will be required to work a minimum of 4 hours on their last day.

PTO will not be paid out in events of involuntary termination or involuntary resignation.

In the event an employee becomes an elected official, their PTO bank will be paid out at the end of their employment as an employee. Should they return to employee status they will be given credit for years served as an elected official.

PTO usage with regard to Holidays, Military Leave or Bereavement Leave

- Employees who do not normally work Holidays will not be required to use PTO (e.g., M-F employees who work 8-4).
- Employees, such as 911 Telecommunicators, Sheriff Corrections Officers, Sheriff Patrol, etc., who are scheduled to work the holiday but wish to take the holiday off, shall be required to use PTO to be paid for the Holiday at their regular salary rate.
- Employees will not be required to use PTO for Military Leave or Bereavement Leave

Use of PTO Bank

Supervisors shall make a reasonable effort to honor PTO requests of employees, consistent with the needs of the department.

All PTO requests and/or notifications must be made in a manner consistent with each department's documented reporting procedures. Failure to follow procedures may lead to disciplinary action.

Each elected official/department head shall establish their own policy regarding requests for PTO, including, but not limited to:

- How far in advance leave must be requested;
- Whether requests must be in writing or on a particular form;
- Who is authorized to grant requests for leave;
- How decisions will be made when multiple requests are made for the same time period;
- Whether PTO may be used to make up for a late arrival or early departure.

Such policy must be in writing, distributed to each employee, posted on paper or electronically in the workplace, and uniformly followed. Unless the department has established a different policy, time off requests shall be granted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

In the absence of a written departmental policy, use of PTO with less than twelve (12) hours of notice is referred to herein as **Unscheduled PTO**. A supervisor may require proof of illness or emergency when an employee uses **Unscheduled PTO**. An employee using **unscheduled PTO** shall not be paid for the absence unless they have provided any required notification before the commencement of each workday (or, in case of an emergency, as soon as reasonably possible). If an employee is absent for three (3) consecutive days without providing proper notice, it shall be considered job abandonment and will be treated as a voluntary resignation, except in the case of Merit Deputies.

An employee will be allowed to use only that PTO time credited to their PTO Bank. Time will be credited the day after the end of the month for which it is accrued. It cannot be taken in advance of, or during, the pay period in which it is accrued.

An employee can only use PTO on a day in which they are regularly scheduled to work.

An employee using PTO for their own illness, injury or health condition shall not engage in outside employment during the period of leave.

PTO must be used in increments of fifteen (15) minutes with the approval of the department head

Minimum Staffing

Every department shall establish minimum staffing requirements for each of its operations. PTO shall not be granted, except in case of approved FMLA leave or as otherwise required by law when it will cause the staffing to fall below minimum requirements. Department Heads and Elected Officials may make an exception in very limited situations.

Employee Responsibilities

The County's goal in creating a PTO policy is to allow employees maximum flexibility in the scheduling and use of paid time off, while at the same time ensuring that County operations are not adversely affected by the use of the privilege.

Thus, the entitlement to paid time off under this policy carries a corresponding duty on the part of each employee to use their time responsibly. Such duty includes, but is not limited to:

- Scheduling time off in a manner that ensures a sufficient personal PTO balance to meet unanticipated leave requirements; and
- Giving sufficient and proper notice before using PTO (the notification guidelines stated above are merely minimums); and
- Taking all necessary steps to ensure the employee's job responsibilities can be covered during an absence and avoiding the use of PTO at times when the employee's absence will be particularly detrimental to the department.

Using PTO in a manner that is detrimental to department operations will be considered a breach of the employee's duty and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Unscheduled PTO has the potential to disrupt operations. Supervisors shall have the right to require proof of illness or other emergency, and to take disciplinary action if proof is not provided, in the following situations:

- When an employee requests Unscheduled PTO more than seven (7) times in any twelve (12) month period.
- When an employee routinely uses Unscheduled PTO on the last scheduled workday immediately preceding a holiday or the first scheduled workday immediately following a holiday.
- When an employee routinely uses Unscheduled PTO on a Friday or Monday, or any other day that precedes or follows a workweek.
- When an employee uses Unscheduled PTO in any amount on a day when the employee's absence is particularly detrimental to the department. When an employee's pattern of usage otherwise suggests a breach of their duty to use PTO responsibly in accordance with this policy.

Carryover

An employee will be allowed to carry over a maximum of five hundred (500) PTO hours from one month to the next. Any excess time left in the bank at the beginning of the month will be transferred to the

employee's Sick Leave Bank, subject to a three hundred (300) hour cap. If the employee's Sick Leave Bank reaches three hundred (300) hours, any excess PTO time will be forfeited.

B. SICK LEAVE

Sick leave is built into the PTO accrual. An employee should always keep a sufficient PTO balance to cover minor illnesses. Some employees may have a Sick Leave Bank to cover longer medical absences.

Grandfathered Sick Bank Funding (on or prior to January 1st, 2023)

Sick leave accrued by an employee on or prior to January 1, 2023, will be maintained in a Sick Leave Bank and may be used for the employee's own medical needs, medical needs of a family member, donated to another employee who has exhausted their PTO bank, or as otherwise allowed under the County's Family and Medical Leave policy.

This sick leave bank will be paid out at the equivalent of one-half (½) day of salary for each day of PTO not used.

If at any time an employee's PTO bank is in excess of five hundred (500) hours, the amount over 500 hours will be transferred to the employee's PTO Sick Leave Bank, which is capped at three hundred (300) hours. Any transferred PTO time that would cause the Sick Leave Bank to exceed the cap shall be forfeited. There is no other method of increasing the sick leave balance after August 1st, 2023.

Use of PTO Sick Leave Bank

The PTO Sick Leave Bank is intended for, but not limited to, use when:

- An employee is medically unable to work due to an illness, injury, or health condition, and is not otherwise compensated by the County or by worker's compensation or disability benefits; or
- The employee has been approved for FMLA leave to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious medical condition.

The notification requirements and employee responsibilities for using the PTO Sick Leave Bank are the same as they are for PTO.

An employee using time from their Sick Leave Bank for their own illness, injury or health condition shall not engage in outside employment during the period of leave.

Use of the Sick Leave Bank in circumstances other than those specified above may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

A supervisor may require a doctor's statement or other proof of illness or injury after an employee uses three (3) or more consecutive days from their Sick Leave Bank, or if an employee's use of the Sick Leave Bank indicates abuse, including:

- Frequent one-half (0.5) day or one (1) day absences; or
- Recurrent use of the Sick Leave Bank on the days before and/or after weekends or holidays or scheduled time off; or
- Repeated use of the Sick Leave Bank on days which the employee reasonably should know their absence would have a particularly negative effect on the department.

Repeated abuse of the Sick Leave Bank may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

Maximum Accumulation

No employee can have more than three hundred (300) hours in their Sick Leave Bank at any time.

Transfer/Separation

The balance in an employee's PTO Bank is transferable between all County departments. The employee's new department is responsible for all sick time the employee brings with him or her.

- An employee's Sick Leave Bank balance (earned after January 1st, 2023) will not be paid out upon separation of employment.
- An employee's separation date may not be extended to use up the Sick Leave Bank balance.
- The employee's separation date shall always be the last day worked.

Additional Leave

An employee who uses all the accrued time in their PTO Bank and Sick Leave Bank is not eligible for additional paid time off unless the absence falls into another category of paid leave for which the employee is eligible.

An employee who needs additional extended leave may apply for unpaid leave as provided by the County's Leaves of Absence policy. Even if additional unpaid leave is granted, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action for misuse of the PTO program.

C. DONATED LEAVE

The County provides its employees with a generous amount of paid time off, and all employees are expected to manage their time wisely, so it is available when needed. There may, however, be occasions when an employee does not have enough accrued paid time off to cover an unexpected and/or extended medical absence, or to care for a dependent suffering from illness or injury. Therefore, an employee may supplement a co-worker's paid time off with donations from their own PTO or Sick Leave Bank.

A recipient must use all their own accrued paid time off (PTO, sick leave, comp time) before accepting donated time.

No donation of PTO or sick leave may be for a period of less than one (1) hour.

Donated time does not need to be repaid.

D. ELECTED OFFICIALS

In the event of an elected official becoming a county employee, the elected official will receive credit for years of service when calculating their PTO leave.

7.10 New Parent Leave

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide paid leave to employees, so they can spend time with their newborn or child placed for adoption.

SCOPE

This policy applies to full- and part-time employees who have been employed six consecutive months or more in permanent positions by the County:

- 1) Upon the birth of the employee's child on or after June 1, 2024.
- 2) Upon the birth of a child to the employee's spouse on or after June 1, 2024.
- 3) Upon placement of a child for adoption with the employee on or after June 1, 2024.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Hancock County Government that the birth or adoption of a child is an important event where the family benefits from time spent together without concern for loss of employment or wages.

To facilitate opportunities for such family time, full-time eligible employees may request and receive up to 4 weeks of paid leave upon the birth of their child or upon placement of a child with the employee for adoption. Part-time eligible employees may request up to 2 weeks of paid leave.

Any new parent leave not taken:

- (1) within six months after the birth or placement for adoption; or
- (2) prior to separation from employment with the County is forfeited.

This leave runs concurrently with family-medical leave (FML) for eligible employees who are charged FML for absences due to childbirth or parenting. After required use of available earned compensatory time for overtime-eligible employees, employees may choose to use available new parent leave if they want to receive compensation during the FML absence.

DEFINITIONS

Child means an infant newly born to the employee or employee's spouse or a minor child placed for adoption with the employee.

Placement for adoption means the order

- 1) granting custody pending adoption; or
- 2) issuing a domestic or international decree or certificate of adoption,

whichever occurs first. Placement for adoption does not include time spent fostering a child prior to the issuance of a decree of adoption nor the adoption of step-children by a step-parent.

Spouse means a legally married husband or wife.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees are responsible for:

- notifying supervisor and HR representative that a birth or placement for adoption is anticipated and an estimated time frame;
- applying for NPL;
- applying for FML, if eligible;

- submitting supporting documentation, such as a birth announcement/confirmation from a doctor/hospital/governmental entity or document placing the child with employee for adoption (as described in the definition of placement for adoption); and
- designating absences on the timesheet as NPL, tracking usage of NPL, and not using more NPL than is authorized.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring that all applicable leaves are properly entered on the employee's timesheet before approving it;
- tracking employee's use of NPL to ensure only the authorized amount is used; and
- ensuring that work is completed during the employee's absence(s) by proper planning, cross-training, and related management techniques.

Payroll staff are responsible for:

- tracking number of hours of NPL used by agency employees in each biweekly pay cycle and providing reports to HR representative so individual usage can be monitored; and
- removing access to NPL once the leave has been exhausted or six months has passed from the date the child was born or placed with the employee for adoption.

PROCEDURES

NPL may be used intermittently in increments not less than one full day. Employees must provide notice no later than the workday prior to anticipated leave.

Employees shall enter requests for NPL following the department's requirements from requesting time off. Approval notices will be issued to the employee, supervisor, HR and payroll staff.

For additional information, please contact Human Resources.

7.11 Unemployment Compensation Insurance

Unemployment compensation insurance is paid for by Hancock County Government and provides temporary income for employees who have lost their job under certain circumstances. Your eligibility for unemployment compensation will, in part, be determined by the reasons for your separation from the County. Refer to Workforce Development.

7.12 Full-Time to Elected Official Employment

In the event that a full-time employee is elected to a full-time Hancock County elective office, such employee shall be compensated for any accrued PTO or compensatory time earned as a regular full-time employee. Such employee's PTO Sick Bank or Grandfathered Sick Time will be frozen and available for use in the event the elected official returns to a non-elected full-time position within two (2) years .. Also, if such elected official returns to a non-elective full-time position his/her time in an elective office shall count as years of service for the purpose of determining the accrual rate of PTO time or other benefits based on years of service with the County. Should an elected official become a full-time employee without ever having worked as a full-time employee, they will be credited for their years of service when determining PTO accrual amounts.

7.13 Workers' Compensation Insurance

Workers' compensation is a no-fault system designed to provide benefits to all employees for work-related injuries. Workers' compensation insurance coverage is paid for by employers and governed by state law. The workers' compensation system provides for coverage of medical treatment and expenses, occupational disability leave, and rehabilitation services, as well as payment for lost wages due to work related injuries. If you are injured on the job while working at Hancock County Government, no matter how slightly, you are to report the incident immediately to your Department Head/Elected Official. Consistent with applicable state law, failure to report an injury within a reasonable period of time could jeopardize your claim for benefits.

Employees should contact Human Resources to obtain information and forms regarding filing workers' compensation claims. Medical certifications are required. Once completed, all such forms are to be filed directly with the Human Resource office. If your injury is the result of an on-the-job accident, you must fill out an accident report. You will be required to submit a medical release before you can return to work.

8.0 Safety and Loss Prevention

8.1 Workplace Tobacco Usage

Hancock County Government is concerned about the detrimental effects of smoking and secondhand smoke inhalation. Smoking (including the use of electronic vaping products such as e-cigarettes) is prohibited in the following:

1. County offices.
2. County vehicles.
3. Client/Customer areas.
4. Restrooms.
5. Areas where signs are posted prohibiting smoking.
6. Other areas defined by the employer.

The County also prohibits the use of smokeless tobacco (e.g., chewing tobacco, dip, and snuff) in such areas.

The County will not discriminate against employees based on their off-premises, off-duty tobacco usage.

8.2 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA)

Hancock County is compliant with applicable requirements and standards of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and has established guidelines regarding the privacy of individually identifiable health information accordingly.

Hancock County has designated the Human Resource Director as the County's "privacy official" who is responsible for developing and implementing privacy policies and procedures. The Human Resources Director is the contact person who is responsible for receiving complaints regarding compliance.

All County HIPAA inquiries shall be directed to the Human Resources Director.

8.3 Bloodborne Pathogens

County employees working in high-risk jobs will be offered bloodborne pathogen training and a series of hepatitis B vaccinations for their protection. The County will provide this service at no cost to the employees for those wishing to participate in this program.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has determined that certain employees in the workplace face a significant risk to bloodborne pathogens due to their job duties (i.e. Sheriff's Deputies,

Jailers, Dispatchers, Custodians, Cooks, Highway, and Health Department employees). To ensure that County employees are aware of occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens, the County has developed an exposure control plan to minimize or eliminate employee contact with human blood or other bodily fluid which may contain bloodborne pathogens, such as hepatitis B virus and HIV. This control plan is available for use by all County employees and is located in the 911 Center and Health Department Office.

8.4 County Closure and Emergencies

Hancock County Government recognizes that inclement weather and other emergencies may affect your ability to get to work. In such situations, your safety is paramount.

County Closure

Examples of emergencies when the County may close include, but are not limited to, severe weather, power failures, or other emergency disrupting County operations.

Notification

When such emergencies occur during non-working hours, local radio and/or television stations will be asked to broadcast notification of the closing.

Partial-Day Closure

If an emergency event such as inclement weather or a power outage occurs, the County may decide to close mid-day. When the County closes mid-day, certain employees will be instructed to leave immediately so that the conditions do not further deteriorate and affect your ability to travel safely.

Any employee who reports to work and their work facility is later closed due to an emergency after his/her arrival shall be paid for a full workday without being penalized by use of vacation or personal leave or making up this time within the pay period.

However, if a full-time employee does not report to work on a day in which the facility is later closed, time missed will be charged as compensatory time or paid time off (if applicable). If a part-time employee cannot report to work, time missed will not be paid unless federal or state law requires otherwise.

Notified of Closure Prior to Reporting to Work

When a Hancock County work facility is officially closed by the County Commissioners for emergency conditions before the beginning of the workday, the time off from scheduled work will be paid to all full-time employees affected by the facility closing.

During weather emergencies when County facilities are closed, employees who are required to work shall be paid at one and one-half (1 ½) times their regular rate.

Benefits Coverage

Your health insurance coverage will be maintained by the County during the closure on the same basis as if you were still working.

Extending Leave

When the County closure ends, you are expected to report to work. Contact your Department Head/Elected Official if you cannot return to work at the end of the closure. The County recognizes that you may need additional time off to repair extensive home damage or for other emergency situations. These will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

If You Cannot Get to Work

Unique circumstances may affect your ability to come to work even when the County is able to remain open. The County recognizes that in a severe national or regional disaster, all methods of communication may be unavailable; however, you should continue to try and contact your Department Head/Elected Official, by any method possible.

Time missed under circumstances where the County remains open and you are unable to report to work is to be used as paid time off or is unpaid.

Snow Emergency Procedures

Pursuant to IC 10-14-3-29 the President of the Board of County Commissioners of Hancock County may declare a local disaster emergency if the president determines that snow or ice conditions require that vehicles should not travel on County roads. The declaration may be extended beyond seven (7) days only with the approval of the Board of Commissioners.

The Director of Homeland Security in consultation with local Street and Highway Departments may issue a declaration following the standardized local conditions as follows:

CAUTION (white)

A condition may develop that limits or hinders travel or activities in isolated areas. No travel restrictions have been placed in effect by county officials, but citizens should be alert to changing conditions.

ADVISORY (yellow)

Routine travel or activities may be restricted in areas because of a hazardous situation. Citizens should use caution or avoid these areas. Schools and businesses may begin to implement emergency action plans.

WATCH (orange)

Conditions are threatening to the safety of the public. Only essential travel is recommended (i.e., to and from work, emergency situations, etc). Emergency action plans have been or should be implemented by businesses, schools, government agencies or other organizations.

The President of Commissioners may issue a declaration following the standardized local conditions as follows:

WARNING (red)

- a. Travel shall be restricted to emergency personnel only.
- b. Citizens are directed to refrain from all travel, comply with necessary emergency measures, cooperate with public officials and disaster services forces in executing emergency operations plans, and comply with the directions of properly identified officers. Further and more specific restrictions may be included in the disaster declaration.
 - i. The operator of a vehicle found to be in violation of the above restrictions may be fined in an amount not to exceed fifty (\$50.00) dollars.
 - ii. Any vehicle found on a county road in violation of the above restriction may be:
 1. forcefully moved out of the way; or
 2. towed by order of a law enforcement officer at the owners' expense.
 3. Hancock County is not responsible for damages to the vehicle.

8.5 Drug-Free Workplace

Drug and alcohol use is highly detrimental to the safety and productivity of employees in the workplace. No employee may be under the influence of alcohol, any illegal drug, or improper use of prescribed medications while in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating a vehicle or equipment owned or leased by the County.

The County shall maintain a drug-free workplace in accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and the State of Indiana Drug-Free Workplace Executive Order No. 90-5 of 1990. Failure to comply with this law could jeopardize government funds received by the County. Any employee who is convicted of a drug or alcohol-related crime arising out of conduct while on official County business, or when serving as a representative of the County, must notify the County within five (5) days of the conviction. The County is required to notify the appropriate government funding agency within ten (10) days of the conviction. Appropriate personnel action, including possible discipline, up to, and including termination, and/or participation in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program, may result after notice of the conviction is received.

The unlawful manufacture, possession, distribution, transfer, purchase, sale, use, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs while on the employer's property, while attending County business-related activities, while on duty, or while operating a vehicle or equipment leased or owned by the County is strictly prohibited, except for possession of non-open containers of alcohol locked inside employee's personal locked vehicle. The unlawful manufacture, possession, distribution, transfer, purchase, sale, use, or being under the influence of illegal drugs while on the County's property while attending County business-related activities, while on duty, or while operating a vehicle or equipment leased or owned by the County is strictly prohibited. Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, including suspension without pay, or discharge. When appropriate, the County may refer the employee to approved counseling or rehabilitation programs.

While on official County business, an employee must comply with this policy as a condition of employment.

Should an employee be convicted of a drug-related crime, such employee must notify the elected official/department head within twenty-four (24) hours of the conviction and the elected official/department head shall immediately inform the Human Resources Director.

The County is required to notify appropriate government agencies within ten (10) days of the conviction.

Appropriate personnel action, including possible discipline and/or participation in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program, may result after notice of the conviction is received.

Conviction of off-the-job use, sale, trafficking, distribution, purchase, transfer, theft, or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, or unauthorized legal drugs may result in disciplinary action, as it could adversely affect an employee's job performance and jeopardize the safety of others.

The County will determine on a case-by-case basis whether assistance will be provided to employees whose health or performance are at risk of deterioration. Employees may use physician-prescribed medications, provided the use of such drugs do not adversely affect job performance or the safety of the employee or other individuals in the workplace.

The County recognizes that employees may wish to seek professional assistance in overcoming drug or alcohol problems. Please contact the Human Resources Director for more information about the benefits potentially available under the employee medical benefit plans and any possible referral sources.

Employees may keep prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications on County premises when prescribed by a medical physician or as needed for over-the-counter medications. Employees who operate vehicles or equipment in the course of their employment shall notify the elected official/department head of such drugs and prescriptions which may impair judgment in the performance of job duties and responsibilities.

Drug Testing

Hancock County is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive work environment for all employees. In keeping with this commitment, employees and job applicants may be requested to provide body substance samples (e.g., blood, urine, hair or other body substances) to determine the prohibited use of marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, alcohol, barbiturates, and phencyclidine (PCP). The County reserves the right to conduct drug and alcohol testing without notice. Results of any drug testing shall

remain in the employee's confidential file. All bodily substance samples will be sent to a pre-selected independent laboratory to ensure confidentiality.

Pre-Employment Testing

Hancock County will not employ individuals known to use illegal drugs or misuse prescription drugs. All prospective new employees shall be subject to drug and alcohol testing. Offers of employment shall be contingent on passing the pre-employment drug and alcohol screen. Applicants who refuse to complete the test, test positive, or refuse to complete related documentation will not be hired by the County. Applicants will be asked to list any legally prescribed drugs taken at the time of the test and will be asked to provide physician authorization for those drugs.

Reasonable Suspicion

An employee may be requested to submit to a drug or alcohol test when the elected official/department head, or other trained supervisor has reasonable suspicion that the employee has used alcohol or drugs or is impaired from the use of alcohol or drugs during his/her employment with the County. In the event that an employee is requested to submit to a drug test, the elected official/department head, or trained supervisor shall complete the appropriate form (**Alcohol and Drug Reasonable Suspicion Form**) to be provided by the elected official/department head setting forth the observations leading to the determination of reasonable suspicion including the following:

1. Observation of drug or alcohol use;
2. Observation of drugs, alcohol, or containers traditionally used for drugs or alcohol;
3. Observations of behavior of the employee, including balance, speech, reactions, and other characteristics supporting reasonable suspicion of use of drugs or alcohol or impairment by drugs and alcohol;
4. A pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior by the employee; or,
5. Information provided by reliable or credible sources of the above.

In the case of a positive test or if the employee refuses to submit to testing, the County reserves the right to exercise any disciplinary action deemed appropriate, up to, and including termination based on the severity of the situation and the totality of the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Reasonable Suspicion forms are available for use in the Human Resources office.

Post-Accident

Post-accident testing shall be required when an employee is involved in an accident on County property or while operating County equipment or vehicles in pursuit of County business. Post-accident tests may include screens for both drugs and alcohol.

Questions concerning this policy or its administration should be directed to the elected official/department head. More details are also found in the Fleet Management Plan.

8.6 General Safety

Establishment and maintenance of a safe work environment is the shared responsibility of the County and employees from all levels of the organization. The County will take all reasonable steps to assure a safe environment and compliance with federal, state, and local safety regulations.

Employees are expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution in all their work activities, and shall immediately report any unsafe conditions to their supervisor. Not only supervisors but employees at all levels of the organization are expected to correct unsafe conditions as promptly as possible. **ALL** personal injury accidents must be reported through their department head to the Human Resources office within twenty-four hours (24) or less regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and worker's compensation procedures.

In the case of an injury requiring medical attention, the employee should proceed directly to the appropriate medical facility or hospital.

If a workplace injury requires long-term medical attention, the injured employee will work with the supervisor to decide when to return to work, light-duty job opportunities that may be available, and eligibility for continuing employment. In the case of permanent disability due to job injury, a final release will be arranged, if appropriate.

8.7 Workplace Violence

As the safety and security of our employees, vendors, contractors, and the general public is in the best interests of Hancock County Government, we are committed to working with our employees to provide a work environment free from violence, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior.

Zero Tolerance Policy

The County has a zero tolerance policy regarding workplace violence and will not tolerate acts or threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior, either physical or verbal, that occurs in the workplace or other areas. This applies to management, co-workers, employees, and non-employees such as contractors, customers, and visitors.

Workplace violence can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm, damage to property, or any intentional behavior that may cause a person to feel threatened.

Prohibited Conduct

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

1. Physically injuring another person.
2. Threatening to injure a person or damage property by any means, including verbal, written, direct, indirect, or electronic means.
3. Taking any action to place a person in reasonable fear of imminent harm or offensive contact.
4. Possessing, brandishing, or using a firearm on County property or while performing County business except as permitted by state law.
5. Violating a restraining order, order of protection, injunction against harassment, or other court order.

Reporting Incidents of Violence

Report to your Department Head/Elected Official, in accordance with this policy, any behavior that compromises our ability to maintain a safe work environment. All reports will be investigated immediately and kept confidential, except where there is a legitimate need to know. You are expected to cooperate in any investigation of workplace violence.

Violations

Violating this policy may subject you to criminal charges as well as discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Retaliation

Victims and witnesses of workplace violence will not be retaliated against in any manner. In addition, you will not be subject to discipline for, based on a reasonable belief, reporting a threat or for cooperating in an investigation.

If you initiate, participate, are involved in retaliation, or obstruct an investigation into conduct prohibited by this policy, you will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

If you believe you have been wrongfully retaliated against, immediately report the matter to Human Resources.

Indiana Policies

Hiring and Orientation Policies

EEO Statement and Nonharassment Policy

Equal Opportunity Statement

Hancock County Government is committed to the principles of equal employment. We are committed to complying with all federal, state, and local laws providing equal employment opportunities, and all other employment laws and regulations. It is our intent to maintain a work environment that is free of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation because of age (40 and older), race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation (including transgender status, gender identity or expression), pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), physical or mental disability, genetic information (including testing and characteristics), veteran status, uniformed servicemember status, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local laws. The County is dedicated to the fulfillment of this policy in regard to all aspects of employment, including but not limited to recruiting, hiring, placement, transfer, training, promotion, rates of pay, and other compensation, termination, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

The County will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, or any violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy in a confidential manner. The County will take appropriate corrective action, if and where warranted. The County prohibits retaliation against employees who provide information about, complain about, or assist in the investigation of any complaint of discrimination or violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

We are all responsible for upholding this policy. You may discuss questions regarding equal employment opportunity with your Department Head/Elected Official or any other designated member of management.

Policy Against Workplace Harassment

Hancock County Government has a strict policy against all types of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment and other forms of workplace harassment based upon an individual's age (40 and older), race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation (including transgender status, gender identity or expression), pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), physical or mental disability, genetic information (including testing and characteristics), veteran status, uniformed servicemember status, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local laws. All forms of harassment of, or by, employees, vendors, visitors, customers, and clients are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2) submission to, or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

While it is not possible to identify every act that constitutes or may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of sexual harassment:

1. Unwelcome requests for sexual favors;
2. Lewd or derogatory comments or jokes;
3. Comments regarding sexual behavior or the body of another;
4. Sexual innuendo and other vocal activity such as catcalls or whistles;

5. Obscene letters, notes, emails, invitations, photographs, cartoons, articles, or other written or pictorial materials of a sexual nature;
6. Repeated requests for dates after being informed that interest is unwelcome;
7. Retaliating against another for refusing a sexual advance or reporting an incident of possible sexual harassment to the County or any government agency;
8. Offering or providing favors or employment benefits such as promotions, favorable evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, etc., in exchange for sexual favors; and
9. Any unwanted physical touching or assaults or blocking or impeding movements.

Other Harassment

Other workplace harassment is verbal or physical conduct that insults or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of the individual's age (40 and older), race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation (including transgender status, gender identity or expression), pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), physical or mental disability, genetic information (including testing and characteristics), veteran status, uniformed servicemember status, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local laws.

Again, while it is not possible to list all the circumstances that may constitute other forms of workplace harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that may constitute workplace harassment:

1. The use of disparaging or abusive words or phrases, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to the above protected categories;
2. Written or graphic material that insults, stereotypes, or shows aversion or hostility toward an individual or group because of one of the above protected categories and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, email, voicemail, or elsewhere on our premises, or circulated in the workplace; and
3. A display of symbols, slogans, or items that are associated with hate or intolerance toward any select group.

Reporting Discrimination and Harassment

If you feel that you have witnessed or have been subjected to any form of discrimination or harassment, immediately notify your elected official/department head.

The County prohibits retaliation against employees who, based on a reasonable belief, provide information about, complain, or assist in the investigation of any complaint of harassment or discrimination.

We will promptly and thoroughly investigate any claim and take appropriate action where we find a claim has merit. To the extent possible, we will retain the confidentiality of those who report suspected or alleged violations of the harassment policy.

Discipline for violation of this policy may include, but is not limited to, reprimand, suspension, demotion, transfer, and discharge. If the County determines that harassment or discrimination occurred, corrective action will be taken to effectively end the harassment. As necessary, the County may monitor any incident of harassment or discrimination to assure the inappropriate behavior has stopped. In all cases, the County will follow up as necessary to ensure that no individual is retaliated against for making a complaint or cooperating with an investigation.

Wage and Hour Policies

Accommodations for Nursing Mothers

Hancock County Government will provide nursing mothers reasonable, paid break time to express milk for their infant child for up to one year following the child's birth.

If you are nursing, you will be provided with a space, other than a restroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public.

Expressed milk can be stored in County refrigerators, refrigerators provided in the lactation room or other location. Sufficiently mark or label your milk to avoid confusion for other employees who may share the refrigerator. You may also bring a personal cooler for storage.

Break time should, if possible, be taken concurrently with any other break time already provided.

You must make reasonable efforts to not disrupt County operations.

You are encouraged to discuss the length and frequency of these breaks with your Department Head/Elected Official.

The County will not discriminate or retaliate against employees who express breast milk in the workplace in accordance with this policy.

Meal and Rest Periods

Hancock County Government strives to provide a safe and healthy work environment and complies with all federal and state regulations regarding meal and rest periods. Check with your Department Head/Elected Official regarding procedures and schedules for rest and meal breaks. The County requests that employees accurately observe and record meal and rest periods. If you know in advance that you may not be able to take your scheduled break or meal period, let your Department Head/Elected Official know; in addition, notify your Department Head/Elected Official as soon as possible if you were unable to or prohibited from taking a meal or rest period.

All employees under the age of 18 will receive one or two rest periods totaling 30 minutes if scheduled to work six or more consecutive hours.

Overtime

Each County position is designated either as **NON-EXEMPT** or **EXEMPT** from federal and state wage and hour laws (such as the Fair Labor Standards Act [FLSA]), and employees holding such positions are treated accordingly:

Employees holding **NON-EXEMPT** positions, whether hourly or salaried, are entitled to overtime pay or compensatory time off under the specific provisions of federal and state laws.

Non-exempt employees working in more than one Hancock County position shall count the combined hours worked in more than one position in determining overtime obligations under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Employees holding **EXEMPT** positions are salaried and excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws, and are not entitled to and shall not receive overtime compensation or compensatory time off.

Non-public Safety Employees' Overtime

Employees will be given the opportunity for overtime work assignments when operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours. All overtime work must receive the elected official/department head's prior authorization. Overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as practical to all employees qualified to perform the required work.

Overtime compensation is paid to all non-exempt employees in the form of monetary reimbursement or compensatory time, in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions.

Employees who work overtime without receiving prior authorizations from the elected official/department head may be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including termination of employment.

Non-public safety employees eligible for overtime shall be paid straight time for additional hours worked up

to forty (40) hours per week. The employee shall be granted either overtime compensation in the form of monetary reimbursement at a rate of one and one-half times (1 ½) the hourly wage for all approved hours worked in excess of forty (40) in a normal work week; or if overtime funds have not been appropriated, the employee will receive FLSA compensatory time as described below. Overtime monetary reimbursement is based on actual hours worked.

The Highway Assistant Superintendent and Highway Foreman shall be paid straight time for each hour above ninety-five (95) hours in a pay period with a maximum of eight (8) hours of overtime per pay period.

Non-public Safety Employees' Compensatory Time

Employees will receive non-FLSA compensatory time on an hour-for-hour basis for additional approved hours worked up to forty (40) in a normal work week.

When FLSA compensatory time is used in place of monetary reimbursement; compensatory hours shall be awarded at the rate of one and one-half (1 2) hours for all hours worked over forty (40) in a normal work week. Calculating compensatory time is based on actual hours worked. Use of FLSA compensatory time, in lieu of monetary overtime, must be determined in advance of submission of the payroll.

At their sole discretion, elected officials/department heads may schedule the use of employee compensatory time. Highway employees shall not receive compensatory time.

Maximum Compensatory Time Accrual

County employees may accrue fifty (50) compensatory time hours before monetary compensation is required. Elected officials and department heads may set lower accrual limits and are encouraged to schedule the use of compensatory time as soon as possible to avoid accrual beyond the stated limit that would require monetary payment.

Department heads shall monitor employee accrual of overtime compensatory hours, and ensure that employees schedule the use of compensatory time.

Elected officials and department heads shall provide the Human Resources Director's office with an accurate and current record of all accrued compensatory time simultaneously with the bi-weekly payroll. All elected officials and department heads must provide a record of certification of their current liability for compensatory time as of the date of the adoption of this manual. All elected officials and department heads shall provide documentation showing compensatory hours are computed in accordance with this policy.

Overtime Approved in Writing

All overtime compensation or compensatory time shall be approved in writing by completing an **Overtime Authorization form** and submitting to the employee's supervisor. Documentation shall be maintained in the department of the employee with a copy provided to the Human Resources office.

Failure to Work Scheduled Overtime or Overtime without Authorization

Failure to work scheduled overtime or overtime worked without prior authorization may result in disciplinary action, up to, and including termination.

This policy applies to all non-exempt employees of the County as determined by the County Council's designation of jobs as "non-exempt" under the FLSA.

Pay Period

At Hancock County Government, the standard pay period is biweekly for all employees. Pay dates are every other Friday. If a pay date falls on a holiday, you will be paid on the preceding workday. The County prohibits improper deductions from wages. Any employee who thinks that they have had incorrect deductions from a paycheck or was not paid the proper amount should give notice on the day of receipt of such pay or any day thereafter, in writing to the elected official/department head who should promptly bring

the discrepancy to the attention of the County Auditor so corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

The prompt reporting of errors is in everyone's best interest. All reports will be investigated. If it is determined that an improper deduction was made, the error will be corrected on the next payroll date.

Travel Time Pay

Some nonexempt positions within Hancock County Government require travel. The County pays nonexempt employees for travel time in accordance with federal and state law.

Home to Work Travel

If you travel from home before the regular workday and return to your home at the end of the workday, you are engaged in ordinary home to work travel, which is not work time.

Home to Work on a Special One Day Assignment in Another City

If you regularly work at a fixed location in one city and you are given a special one day assignment in another city, but return home the same day, the time spent in traveling to and returning from the other city is work time, except that the County may deduct/not count that time you would normally spend commuting to the regular work site.

Travel That Is All in a Day's Work

Your time spent in travel as part of your principal activity, such as travel from job site to job site during the workday, is work time and must be counted as hours worked.

Travel Away from Home Community

Travel that keeps you away from home overnight is travel away from home. Travel away from home is clearly work time when it cuts across your workday. The time is not only hours worked on regular working days during normal working hours but also during corresponding hours on nonworking days. The County will not consider as work time that time spent in travel away from home outside of your regular working hours as a passenger on an airplane, train, boat, bus, or automobile.

Work Performed While Traveling

Any work you perform while traveling must be counted as hours worked.

Calculating and Reporting Travel Time

You are responsible for accurately tracking, calculating, and reporting your travel time. Travel time should be calculated by rounding up to the nearest quarter hour.

General Policies

Access to Personnel and Medical Records Files

The employment selection procedure shall be documented and recorded and will remain strictly confidential. Accurate personnel records should be kept on file for each employee for a period of not less than seven (7) years and may be used to substantiate employment decisions in the event of an inquiry.

The County shall maintain four (4) separate personnel records concerning the employee's employment history. Those shall be the employee's personnel file, performance file, medical file, and CDL File.

1. **Personnel File:** The employee's personnel file shall contain the employee's employment application, I-9 Form, e-verify, eligibility for local public benefits, emergency information sheet, employment data information sheets concerning the history of employment, insurance enrollment

forms, retirement enrollment forms, educational accomplishments, change in address forms and beneficiary forms, and records of training. This file shall be maintained in the Auditor's office. Certain documents in this file shall be deemed confidential and released only to persons on a need-to-know basis.

2. **Performance File:** The employee's performance file shall contain documentation of performance and salary increases, disciplinary records, and other documentation concerning disciplinary actions, including grievances, absences, tardiness, and other related data. This file shall be maintained by the Auditor's office.
3. **Confidential Medical File:** The employee's confidential medical file shall contain all medical information, including health insurance, disability information, worker's compensation issues, results of drug tests, and other medically related information. This file shall be maintained in the Auditor's office.
4. **CDL File:** The CDL drug test file is maintained by the Highway Department.

Access to Personnel Files

The information contained in an employee's personnel and performance files shall be available to the employee and elected official and/or department head having direct supervisory control of the employee, Auditor, County Attorney, Human Resources Director and County Commissioners. The employee's confidential medical file shall be maintained under the control of the Human Resources Director and shall be available to the employee, County Attorney, Human Resources Director and County Commissioners.

Personnel files are the property of the County and access to the information they contain is restricted. Only officials or representatives of the County who have a legitimate reason to review information in a file are allowed to do so. With an appointment with their supervisor, an employee may review material in his/her file. Upon request, the County will provide the employee copies of any documents contained in the employee's personnel file. Personnel records shall only be available to the persons set out in this section, or upon court order and/or subpoena directed to the County Attorney.

Disclosure

As prescribed by I.C 5-14-4 the following information is available upon request:

1. the name, compensation, job title, business address, business telephone number, job description, education, and training background, previous work experience, or dates of first and last employment of present or former officers or employees of the agency;
2. information relating to the status of any formal charges against the employee; and
3. the factual basis for a disciplinary action in which final action has been taken and that resulted in the employee being suspended, demoted, or discharged.

However, all personnel file information shall be made available to the affected employee or the employee's representative.

Benefits

Employment Protections for Civil Air Patrol Members

If you are a member of the Civil Air Patrol, Hancock County Government will not discipline you for:

1. Being absent from work due to responding to an emergency service operation that began before you were scheduled to report to work; or
2. Leaving work with permission from your Department Head/Elected Official to respond to an emergency service operation that began after you reported to work.

To be eligible for these protections, you must notify the County in writing that you are a member of the Civil Air Patrol. The County may reject the notification on the grounds that you are an essential employee.

If your notification is rejected, you:

1. Must promptly notify the commander or other officer in charge of the Civil Air Patrol of the rejection of your notification; and
2. Will not be entitled the protections provided above.

If your notification is accepted, work missed will be considered unpaid leave. The County may require you to present a written statement from the commander or other officer in charge of the Civil Air Patrol indicating that you were engaged in an emergency service operation at the time of your absence.

Court Attendance and Witness Leave

Hancock County Government realizes that, on occasion, employees may be subpoenaed to testify as a witness in a criminal proceeding. In such cases, you will be provided unpaid leave to attend. Notify your Department Head/Elected Official as soon as possible to make scheduling arrangements.

The County reserves the right to require employees to provide proof of the need for leave to the extent authorized by law.

The County will not retaliate against employees who request or take leave in accordance with this policy.

Jury Duty Leave

Hancock County encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when summoned. FTPR employees shall be paid their regular pay while on jury duty leave in Hancock County and shall not receive jury duty pay. If the employee receives pay for jury duty, the employee must sign jury duty check over to the County. For jury duty outside Hancock County, employees shall retain regular pay and any jury duty payment including mileage/meal reimbursement.

Employees must show the jury duty summons to their elected official/department head as soon as possible so the elected official/department head may make arrangements to accommodate the employee's absence. The employee is expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits. Either the County or the employee may request an excuse from jury duty if, in the employer's judgment, the employee's absence would create serious operational difficulties.

If an employee is released from jury duty with more than half of his/her regularly scheduled shift remaining, the employee is expected to report to work.

The County will continue to provide and accrue all regular benefits for the full term of the jury duty absence.

FTA, PT, and ST employees are not eligible for this benefit.

Military Family Leave

Hancock County Government will provide up to 10 days of unpaid leave per year to employees who are the spouse, parent, grandparent, child, or sibling of a person who is ordered to active duty. Active duty means full-time service on active duty orders in the U.S. Armed Forces or the National Guard for a period that exceeds 89 consecutive calendar days.

To be eligible for military family leave, you must meet the following conditions:

1. Employed by the County at least 12 months.
2. Have worked at least 1,500 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the day the leave begins.

Eligible employees may take a leave of absence during one or more of the following periods:

1. During the 30 days before active duty orders are in effect;
2. During a period in which the person ordered to active duty is on leave while active duty orders are in effect; and/or
3. During the 30 days after the active duty orders are terminated.

To take a leave of absence under this policy, provide written notice, including a copy of the active duty orders if available, to your Department Head/Elected Official of the date the leave will begin. Provide this notice at least 30 days before the date you intend to begin leave, unless the active duty orders are issued less than 30 days before the date the requested leave is to begin. The leave of absence may not exceed the equivalent of 10 working days in each calendar year.

Military family leave under this policy is unpaid; however, you may choose to substitute any paid leave (other than medical or sick leave) for any part of the military family leave.

You will be allowed to continue available group health benefits at your own expense.

Upon returning to work at the end of leave, you will be placed in your original job or an equivalent job with equivalent seniority, pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.

The County will not retaliate against employees who request or take leave in accordance with this policy.

Voting Leave

If your work schedule prevents you from voting on Election Day, Hancock County Government will allow you a reasonable time off to vote. The time when you can go to vote will be at the discretion of your Department Head/Elected Official, consistent with applicable legal requirements.

Closing Statement

Thank you for reading our Handbook. We hope it has provided you with an understanding of our mission, history, and structure as well as our current policies and guidelines. We look forward to working with you to create a successful County and a safe, productive, and pleasant workplace.

Board of Commissioners, of Hancock County

Hancock County Government

Acknowledgment of Receipt and Review

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Hancock County Government Employee Handbook (Handbook) and that I have read it, understand it, and agree to comply with it. I understand that the County has the maximum discretion permitted by law to interpret, administer, change, modify, or delete the rules, regulations, procedures, and benefits contained in the Handbook at any time with or without notice. No statement or representation by a supervisor, manager, or any other employee, whether oral or written, can supplement or modify this Handbook. Changes can only be made if approved in writing by the Board of Commissioners of Hancock County. I also understand that any delay or failure by the County to enforce any rule, regulation, or procedure contained in the Handbook does not constitute a waiver on behalf of the County or affect the right of the County to enforce such rule, regulation, or procedure in the future.

I understand that neither this Handbook nor any other communication by a management representative or other, whether oral or written, is intended in any way to create a contract of employment. I further understand that, unless I have a written employment agreement signed by an authorized County representative, I am employed "at-will" (to the extent permitted by law) and this Handbook does not modify my "at-will" employment status.

If I am covered by a written employment agreement (signed by an authorized County representative) or a collective bargaining agreement that conflicts with the terms of this Handbook, I understand that the terms of the employment agreement or collective bargaining agreement will control.

This Handbook is not intended to preclude or dissuade employees from engaging in legally protected activities under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). This Handbook is not intended to violate any local, state, or federal law. No provision or policy applies or will be enforced if it conflicts with or is superseded by any requirement or prohibition contained in federal, state, or local law, or regulation. Furthermore, nothing in this Handbook prohibits an employee from reporting concerns to, filing a charge or complaint with, making lawful disclosures to, providing documents or other information to, or participating in an investigation or hearing conducted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), or any other federal, state, or local agency charged with the enforcement of any laws.

This Handbook supersedes any previous Handbook or policy statements, whether written or oral, issued by Hancock County Government.

If I have any questions about the content or interpretation of this Handbook, I will contact the Human Resources Director

Signature

Date

Print Name