

Board of County Commissioners

Human Resources Policy Manual

Revised October 20, 2026

Table of Contents

CHAPTER I – HUMAN RESOURCES RULES 1
Section A – Adoption 1
Section B – Purpose 1
Section C – Interpretation 2
Section D – Saving Clause 2
CHAPTER II – DEFINITIONS 3
CHAPTER III – AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT, PROHIBITED HARASSMENT POLICY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN 7
Section A – Americans With Disabilities Act 7
Section B – ADA Accommodation: Service Animals 7
Section C – Prohibited Harassment Policy 8
Section D – Prohibition Against Retaliation 10
Section E – Employee Responsibilities, Complaint Rights, Complaint Resolution Policy and Resolution Procedures for Prohibited Harassment 10
Section F – Affirmative Action for Equal Opportunity Plan 12
CHAPTER IV – ORGANIZATION FOR HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION 17
Section A – Board of County Commissioners 17
Section B – Human Resources & Risk Management Director 17
Section C – County Administrator 17
CHAPTER V – CLASSIFICATION PLAN 18
Section A – Purpose 18
Section B – Job Descriptions 18
Section C – Position Titles 19
Section D – Classification of New Positions 19
Section E – Reclassification of Positions 19
Section F – Position Control 20
Section G – Abolishment of Positions 20
Section H – Maintenance of the Classification Plan 20
CHAPTER VI – COMPENSATION PLAN 21
Section A – Purpose 21
Section B – Market Adjustment (Optional) 21
Section C – Merit Increase 21
Section D – Starting Rates for New Employees 21
Section E – Market Impact Positions 22
Section F – Promotional Increases 23
Section G – Special Teams Pay 23
Section H – Incentive Pay 24
Section I – Bilingual Pay Differential 25
Section J – Effects of Demotion 25
Section K – Employee Transfers (Lateral) 25
Section L – Temporary Work at a Higher Classification 26
Section M – Pay Adjustments 26
Section N – Shift Differential Pay 26
Section O – Overtime/Compensatory Time/Call Back Pay and Stand-By 27
Section P – Pay for Work During Emergencies or Disasters 29
Section Q – Pay for Out-of-Town Travel 31
Section R – Pay Day 31
Section S – Safe Harbor Policy 31
CHAPTER VII – EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PROMOTIONS/TRANSFERS 34
Section A – Vacant Positions 34

Section B – Filing of Applications 35
Section C – Employment of Department Directors 36
Section D – New Employees 36
Section E – Employment of Relatives 36
Section F – Fluid Positions 36
Section G – Demotions 40
Section H – Probation 40
Section I – Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Veteran's Preference 40
Section J – Select Elect Support Employees 41
Section K – Temporary Appointment 41
Section L – Emergency Relief Employees 41
Section M – Contingent Workers (through Temporary Staffing Agencies) 41
Section N – Internships 42
Section O – Volunteers 43
CHAPTER VIII – EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE 44
Section A – Purpose of Evaluations 44
Section B – Evaluation Program Policy 44
Section C – Evaluation Periods and Probationary Increases 44
Section D – Evaluation Review Process 45
Section E – Evaluation Processing 45
Section F – Counseling 45
CHAPTER IX – ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE 46
Section A – Hours of Work 46
Section B – Lunch Periods 46
Section C – Break Periods 46
Section D – Attendance 46
Section E – Holidays 46
Section F – Paid Time Off (PTO) 48
Section G – Eligibility 49
Section H – Restrictions on Accumulation/Use of PTO 49
Section I – Use of PTO 49
Section J – Approval of PTO Leave Requests 50
Section K – PTO Advances 50
Section L – Payout of PTO Upon Separation of Employment 50
Section M – Optional Yearly PTO Leave Pay Out 51
Section N – Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank 51
Section O – Annual Leave (Vacation) 56
Section P – Sick Leave 60
Section Q – Optional Yearly Sick Leave Pay Out 64
Section R – Bereavement Leave 65
Section S – Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Leave 65
Section T – Military Leave of Absence 66
Section U – Civil Leave 67
Section V – Leave of Absence, Without Pay (LOA/WOP) 68
Section W – Fit For Duty 68
Section X – Unauthorized Leave 70
Section Y – Mentoring Leave Policy 70
Section Z – Domestic Violence Leave 71
CHAPTER X – BENEFITS 73
Section A – Insurance 73
Section B – Travel Expenses 73
Section C – Credit Union 73
Section D – Workers' Compensation 73

Section E – Retirement 73
Section F – Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 74
Section G – Educational Reimbursement Program 75
CHAPTER XI – TRAINING ACTIVITIES 78
Section A – Purpose 78
Section B – Procedure 78
Section C – New Employee Orientation 78
CHAPTER XII – POLITICAL ACTIVITIES 79
CHAPTER XIII – CODE OF CONDUCT 80
Section A – Personal and/or Romantic Relationships 80
Section B – Ethics, Purchasing and Gifts 81
Section C – Vendor/Contractor References 82
CHAPTER XIV – OUTSIDE WORK 83
CHAPTER XV – TIME REPORTS 84
CHAPTER XVI – RECORDS AND REPORTS 85
Section A – Human Resources Transactions 85
Section B – Human Resources File Inspection 85
CHAPTER XVII – USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY 86
Section A – General Statement 86
Section B – Theft or Pilfering 86
Section C – Tobacco-Free Workplace Policy 86
CHAPTER XVIII – UNLAWFUL ACTS PROHIBITED 88
CHAPTER XIX – USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES 89
Section A – Operation of County Vehicles 89
Section B – Employee Driving Records 90
Section C – Assignment of Vehicles 90
Section D – GPS Policy 91
CHAPTER XX – DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS 94
Section A – Policy 94
Section B – General Provisions 94
Section C – Application of Disciplinary Action 96
Section D – Disciplinary Action Procedures 97
Section E – Types of Disciplinary Action 98
CHAPTER XXI – GRIEVANCE/APPEAL PROCEDURE 99
Section A – Policy 99
Section B – Definitions 99
Section C – Eligibility to File a Grievance 99
Section D – Informal Discussion (Immediate Supervisor) 99
Section E – Procedures 99
Section F – Time Limits 101
Section G – General Provisions 101
CHAPTER XXII – SEPARATIONS 102
Section A – Types of Separation from County Service 102
Section B – Resignation 102
Section C – Compulsory Resignation 102
Section D – Reduction in Force (Layoff) Policy 102
Section E – Loss of License or Other Job Requirements 103
Section F – Dismissals 103
Section G – Death 104
Section H – Retirement 104
CHAPTER XXIII – DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY 105
Section A – Drug-Free Workplace Policy (Effective September 9, 1997) 105
Section B – Substance and Alcohol Misuse Policy DOT FMCSA for CDL Holders 114
Section C – Substance and Alcohol Misuse Policy DOT FTA – For Employees Performing Maintenance on

Revenue Service Vehicles or Equipment 134
CHAPTER XXIV – HEALTH CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY 151
Section A – Pandemic Disease/Virus 151
CHAPTER XXV – EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM 153
Section A – Objective 153
Section B – Eligibility 153
Section C – Program Administration 153
Section D – The Suggestion Committee 153
Section E – Program Procedures 153
Section F – Awards for Suggestions 154
Section G – Awards Drawing for Participation in the Suggestion Program 154
Section H – Other Information 155
CHAPTER XXVI – EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM 156
Section A – Objective 156
Section B – Eligibility 156
Section C – Types of Awards 156
CHAPTER XXVII – UNIFORMS 158
Section A – Mandatory Wearing of Uniforms 158
Section B – Termination/Transfer – Reimbursement for Cost of Uniforms 158
Section C – Taxation 158
CHAPTER XXVIII – LOST OR DAMAGED PROPERTY, EQUIPMENT OR VEHICLES 160
Section A – Policy 160
Section B – Intent 160
Section C – Procedures 160
Section D – Assessment for Damages 160
CHAPTER XXIX – COMMUNICATIONS POLICY 162
Section A – Purpose 162
Section B – Scope and Applicability 162
Section C – Policy 162
Section D – Cellular and Mobile Devices 163
Section E – Text Messaging 165
Section F – Use of Equipment 166
Section G – Monitoring 166
Section H – Personal Use Defined 166
Section I – Public Records 166
Section J – Retention of Electronic Mail 167
Section K – Software, ITunes, and Domain Registration 167
Section L – Information Technology Project Management 167
Section M – Compliance 169
Section N – Definitions 169
CHAPTER XXX – WORKPLACE VIOLENCE 172
Section A – General Statement 172
Section B – Prohibited Conduct 172
Section C – Reporting and Investigating Threats or Incidents 173
Section D – Reporting Situations with Potential for Violence 173
Section E – Employee Training 174
Section F – Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 174
CHAPTER XXXI – WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION POLICY 175
CHAPTER XXXII – BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ANTI-FRAUD POLICY 176
Section A – Purpose 176
Section B – Scope of Policy 176
Section C – Policy 176
Section D – Prohibition Against Retaliation 178
Section E – Reporting Procedures 178

Section F – Investigation Responsibilities 179
Section G – Sanctions 179
Section H – Authorization for Investigating Suspected Fraud, Waste or Abuse 179
Section I – Administration 180

CHAPTER I – HUMAN RESOURCES RULES

Section A – Adoption

By action of the Board, the Human Resources Policy Manual was adopted and became effective October 1, 1975.

Section B – Purpose

1) The purpose of this manual is to set forth policies and guidelines relative to employee benefits and procedures under the Board. It provides employees with sufficient understanding of their privileges and benefits as well as their duties and responsibilities.

   This policy manual has been created and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in an effort to provide managers, supervisors and employees with a clear understanding of the human resources policies and procedures of the County. This policy manual is not intended to create any type of contract between the employee and the County, nor is it intended to endow any employee with a property interest in his/her employment or any aspect thereof.

2) Unless stated otherwise, benefit provisions contained herein do not apply to part-time, temporary, probationary or emergency relief employees.

3) Rules and individual department policies not in conflict with this manual are not affected and are valid.

4) In order to modify any portion of this Human Resources Policy Manual, the Board must approve the revision.

5) These policies are adopted to provide for the recruitment and development of the best available employee for each position in Okaloosa County. They provide for establishing orderly procedures for administering the human resources system in such a way as to be consistent with the following merit principles:

   a) Recruiting, selecting and advancing employees on the basis of their relative ability, knowledge and skills including open competition of qualified applicants for initial appointments;

   b) Establishing pay rates consistent with the principles of equal pay for equal work;

   c) Training employees, as needed, to assure high quality performance;

   d) Retaining employees on the basis of the adequacy of their performance, correcting inadequate performance and separating employees whose inadequate performance cannot be corrected;

   e) Assuring fair treatment of applicants and employees in all aspects of human resources administration without regard to actual or perceived race, color, national origin or ancestry, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation, marital status, age or genetic information and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights;

   f) Establishing procedures for the presentation and adjustment of employee grievances;

g) Okaloosa County has traditionally operated without a union and has done so with pride. We feel the working environment at Okaloosa County is good. County philosophy includes goals of maintaining a climate of excellent employee relations showing respect for the rights and dignity of employees, as well as striving for employee satisfaction through fair compensation, comprehensive benefits and job security. We try to treat all employees fairly and as individuals. From time to time there have been, and perhaps will be again some problems, but we have always been able to solve them, without the intervention of an "outside union."

Today's society places enough pressures and burdens on employees and employers alike without the possible complication that history shows sometimes comes when outsiders enter the relationship between a county and its employees. You as an individual are important to Okaloosa County. We believe a union cannot solve any problems that you and the County working together cannot solve ourselves. We urge you to speak for yourself directly to us. You do not have to pay union dues to have our attention.

In our opinion, unionization often brings about the loss of many employee rights and is a stumbling block to those employees who show initiative and want to get ahead. Further, we believe unionization often hinders operational flexibility so important and necessary to a healthy and amicable working environment. We hope that you share our view and that you will work with us in the achievement of our goal for you and the people of Okaloosa County.

Section C – Interpretation

These policies are intended to cover most human resources problems and actions that will arise. Those not specifically covered shall be interpreted by the Human Resources Director with the advice of the County Administrator. Such interpretations shall be in keeping with the intent of these policies.

Section D – Saving Clause

If any chapter, section or other portion of these regulations is found to be invalid by a duly constituted authority, it shall not affect the validity of the balance of these regulations.

CHAPTER II – DEFINITIONS

The following words and phrases apply throughout this Human Resources Policy Manual unless otherwise clearly indicated in the context:

1) Allocate – Assigning the position to an appropriate class on the basis of the similarity of work and level of responsibility performed in the position.

2) Anniversary Date – The date one year from the full-time or the part-time regular employment date. For salary increases, the anniversary date shall be that date each year on the date (month, day) of employment unless the anniversary date has been adjusted due to a leave of absence or suspension, or period of emergency relief employment, then the new adjusted date of employment would be used.

3) Appeal – The right to exercise the grievance procedure.

4) Appointing Authority – A department director, or other official employee authorized to make appointments for the County.

5) Board – The Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners.

6) Class – A group of positions sufficiently similar as to duties performed, level of responsibility, minimum requirements or training, experience, or skill, and such other characteristics that the same title, the same examination for selection, and the same rate of compensation may be applied to each position in the group.

7) Classification and Pay Plan – The system of assigning jobs to classes and to an appropriate pay grade on the similarities of positions.

8) Compensatory Time – Time off with pay granted in lieu of cash overtime payments.

9) Continuous Service – Employment that is uninterrupted except for an authorized leave of absence, suspension, or a separation due to a reduction in work force of six (6) months or less.

10) Demotion – A change of an employee from a position in one class to a position in another class having a lower minimum starting salary and with less discretion and/or responsibility.

11) Department – A unit of county government with specific duties.

12) Dismissal – The involuntary termination of an employee.

13) Eligible – An applicant who has completed the necessary application process required under these rules and who has qualified to be placed on a list of qualified applicants.

14) Emergency Relief Employee – An employee who is called into work intermittently, does not work on a scheduled basis, and is exempt from any benefit provisions. Periods of emergency relief employment are excluded from continuous service with the County.

15) Employee – A person appointed to a position in the county government for which they are compensated on a full-time or part-time basis. Examinations – Methods sometimes used to determine eligibility of applicants for employment. Examinations may be assembled (written) or unassembled, and may include but shall not be limited to written, oral, physical or performance tests, training and experience evaluation, or any combinations of these.

16) Executive Pay Band – A pay grade on the salary schedule created October 1, 2012 that combined grades 83 and 84 into one pay grade (executive pay band).

17) Exempt Employees – Executive, Professional, Administrative and Computer employees, as defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act, who are exempt from overtime.

18) Full-Time Employee – An employee who works on a continuing basis 30 hours or more per week.

19) Grievance – A dispute alleging a violation of a policy, rule or procedure contained in the Human Resources Policy Manual.

20) Human Resources Director – The official designated to administer the human resources system for the County.

21) Intern – A college referred, degree-seeking student, desiring a temporary, paid or unpaid, work assignment within Okaloosa County government in order to gain practical experience within a particular field of study.

22) Lay-Off (Reduction in Force) – An appointing authority may separate an employee due to, but not limited to, lack of work, lack of funds or abolishment of the position.

23) Liaison Commissioner – Board of County Commissioners member appointed by the Board to facilitate mutual understanding between the Board and the Liaison Commissioner's designated County department(s) by: 1) maintaining and communicating knowledge of department's overall mission and 2) supporting department's attainment of goals and mission through an awareness of budget, operations, and special projects. The Liaison Commissioner is not authorized to act on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners and does not act in a decision making or direction capacity unless at a duly advertised public meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

24) Merit Increase – An increase in pay, in the pay range or grade, based on an employee's job performance.

25) Minimum Qualification – Those minimum requirements as to education and experience that qualify an applicant to be considered for appointment. Additional requirements may also be indicated when necessary, such as licenses, certificates and others.

26) Non-Exempt Employees – Employees covered by the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act who are eligible for overtime.

27) On-Call Employees – Individuals who are hired for an indefinite period to meet staffing needs, but who normally work less than a 40-hour workweek. On-call employees are exempt from any benefit provisions except those prescribed by federal or state law, and their service is excluded from continuous service with the County. On-call employees are not eligible to apply for internal vacancies.

28) Overtime – Time in excess of 40 hours in a workweek except for certain correctional employees.

29) Part-Time Employee – An employee who works on a continuing basis, but less than 30 hours per week.

30) Performance Evaluation – A method of evaluating each employee on a periodic basis as to his/her performance on the job.

31) Position – An office or post in a department of the County involving duties requiring the services of one (1) person. It can be part-time, full-time, temporary or regular, occupied or vacant.

32) Probationary Employee (Initial) – An employee serving the first six (6) months of their appointment. They must pass this period of observation and evaluation successfully. The initial probationary period will be a six (6) month period based on any continuous employment, whether it is full-time or part-time.

33) Probationary Employee (Extended) – An employee placed in an extended probationary period due to a disciplinary action, or documented work performance deficiencies. This period may not exceed 90 days past the initial six (6) month probationary period. Any employee placed on an extended probationary period will not be eligible to use annual leave and will not be eligible to be paid any annual leave if termination occurs prior to the end of the extended probationary period.

34) Probationary Employee (Promoted, Demoted or Reclassified) – An employee placed in a probationary status, at the discretion of the department director, due to a change in their job title or classification and shall be entitled to use any benefits to which they were entitled prior to the change.

35) Promotion – A change of an employee from a position in one class to a position of another class, having a higher minimum salary and carrying a greater scope of discretion and responsibility.

36) Reclassification – The assignment of an existing position from one class to a different class due to a significant change in their duties or responsibilities.

37) Red-Circle Rate Concept – The concept used that allows an employee to retain their present salary, which is above the maximum pay range for the position, as revised October 1990.

38) Regular Employee – Satisfactory completion of the probationary period by an employee, results in that employee achieving regular status.

39) Resignation – The termination of an employee at his/her request.

40) Series – A number of classes related to each other in terms of work within the same occupational field, e.g., Clerk I, Clerk II, and Clerk III would constitute a clerical series.

41) Sexual Harassment – Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

    a) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an

individual's employment; or

b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or

c) Such conduct has the purpose of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

42) Suspension – An enforced leave of absence for either disciplinary purposes or pending investigation or charges against an employee.

43) Temporary Employee – An employee filling a temporary position for a special project or other work of a temporary nature that will not exist beyond six (6) consecutive calendar months and is not renewable. Upon approval of the County Administrator, temporary appointments may exceed six (6) months when needed to replace or supplement employees incapacitated by workers' compensation injuries or fill lifeguard positions, on a seasonal basis.

44) Transfer (Lateral) – The movement of any one (1) employee from one (1) position to another having the same salary range and the same level of responsibility.

45) Vacancy – A position duly created and still existent but not occupied by an employee.

CHAPTER III – AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT, PROHIBITED HARASSMENT POLICY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN

Revised and effective – 04-16-2024

Section A – Americans With Disabilities Act

It is the intent of Okaloosa County to comply with the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended in 2008. In that regard, qualified individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply for positions and the County will reasonably accommodate such individuals. In circumstances where a disabled individual is the most qualified for a position, with or without a reasonable accommodation, that individual will be selected. It is primarily the responsibility of the disabled applicants and employees to call to the County's attention any need for a reasonable accommodation in testing or with respect to the position the individual seeks or holds.

Employees who believe they have not been afforded their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended in 2008 may file a complaint by contacting the EEO Officer or Human Resources & Risk Management Director, by following the procedure outlined in the Complaint Resolution Procedure chapter below.

Section B – ADA Accommodation: Service Animals

Okaloosa County does not allow animals in the workplace; however, an individual with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act to bring a service animal to work when medically necessary.
In general, a service animal is an animal trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, such as guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals to an impending seizure, or pulling a wheelchair and fetching dropped items. An emotional support animal is not a service animal.
Okaloosa County Human Resources & Risk Management Department will evaluate all requests to bring a service animal into the workplace to determine if the accommodation is reasonable and can be provided without undue hardship. Employees may be asked to bring the service animal to the workplace to demonstrate the animal's training and ability to be in the workplace without disruption.

If an accommodation is granted to allow a service animal in the workplace, the arrangement may be permitted on a temporary or trial basis. The employee must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of the animal is solely the responsibility of the employee.
The County may exclude or remove any animal from the premises, including a service animal, if the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it, or if the animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. The employee is expected to clean and dispose of all animal waste appropriately.
All animals need to be immunized against rabies and other diseases common to that type of animal. All vaccinations must be current, and animals must be in good health.
Service animals must wear an owner identification tag (which includes the name and phone number of the owner) at all times.

Animals must be on a leash, harness or other type of restraint at all times, unless the owner/partner is unable to retain an animal on a leash due to a disability. If a leash, harness or other type of restraint interferes with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice,

signal, or other effective controls.

Section C – Prohibited Harassment Policy

1) Overall Statement

Okaloosa County is committed to providing its employees with a workplace free of unlawful harassment. The County maintains a strict policy prohibiting discrimination or harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, national origin, color, religion, sex, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age, marital status, political affiliation, or protected activity.

This prohibition applies to all employees, vendors, and customers of the County. No county employee is expected to tolerate any conduct prohibited by this policy from anyone while at work or engaged in County business. The County does not consider conduct in violation of this policy to be within the course and scope of employment and does not sanction such conduct on the part of any employee, including supervisory and management employees.

2) Prohibition Against Harassment

As mentioned in the overall statement above, the County prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, national origin, color, religion, sex, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age, marital status, political affiliation, or protected activity. Such prohibited harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following examples of offensive conduct:

a) Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, or blocking normal movement;

b) Retaliation for making or threatening to make harassment reports to the County, or for participating in an investigation into harassment allegations;

c) Verbal conduct such as threats, epithets, derogatory comments, or slurs;

d) Visual conduct such as derogatory posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings, or gestures;

e) Written communications containing statements that may be offensive to individuals in a particular protected group, such as racial or ethnic stereotypes or caricatures.

If you feel that you or any of your fellow employees have experienced unlawful harassment on the job, please file a complaint by contacting the EEO Officer, Human Resources & Risk Management Director or any suitable member of management. Use the Complaint Resolution Policy and Procedure.

3) Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment

Okaloosa County is opposed to and will not tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

a) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;

b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual;

c) Such conduct has the purpose of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to the following examples of prohibited offensive conduct:

a) Unwanted sexual advances;

b) Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors;

c) Making or threatening retaliation after a negative response to sexual advances;

d) Visual conduct such as leering, making indecent or sexual gestures, and displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, calendars or posters;

e) Verbal conduct such as making or using derogatory comments, using demeaning or inappropriate terms (such as "Babe", "sweet heart", or "honey"), telling sexually explicit jokes and making comments about an employee's body or attire;

f) Written or electronic communication of a sexual nature, suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations, whether in hard copy or via a computer or other electronic device;

g) Verbal sexual advances or propositions;

h) Physical conduct such as unwanted touching, assault, impeding, or blocking movements;

i) Sabotaging work;

j) Retaliation for making harassment reports or threatening to report harassment.

Note that not all of these are sexual in nature. In some of these examples the behavior is based on gender (such as sabotaging a woman's work) and is therefore considered sexual harassment. Note also that sexual harassment can occur between employees of the same sex. It is unlawful for any employee to sexually harass any other employee, regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other protected class.

If you feel that you or any of your fellow employees have experienced sexual harassment on the job, please file a complaint by contacting the EEO Officer, Human Resources & Risk Management Director or any suitable member of management. Use the Complaint Resolution Procedure.

Section D – Prohibition Against Retaliation

Okaloosa County strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee by another employee or by the County through the actions of its supervisors and managers. Employees are protected against retaliation for:

1) Using the County's Complaint Resolution Policies and Procedures or Grievance Procedure;

2) Reporting harassment;

3) Filing, testifying, assisting, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding or hearing conducted by the County or a government enforcement agency.

Section E – Employee Responsibilities, Complaint Rights, Complaint Resolution Policy and Resolution Procedures for Prohibited Harassment

Okaloosa County establishes the following procedure for reporting, investigating, and resolving claims of racial or sexual harassment or other types of equal opportunity claims or prohibited harassment.

1) Employee Duties Regarding Harassment

   a) Any employee who believes he/she has been subjected to harassment prohibited by this policy should immediately tell the harasser to stop the unwanted behavior. The employee shall also be required to immediately report the behavior, preferably in writing, to the EEO Officer, Human Resources & Risk Management Director, or any member of management (Supervisor position and above).

   b) If an employee observes or becomes aware of unlawful harassing conduct engaged in or suffered by a county employee, regardless of whether the observing employee is directly affected, the employee is required to immediately report that information, preferably in writing, to the EEO Officer, Human Resources & Risk Management Director, or any member of management.

2) Harassment Complaint Right

   Employees who believe they have been unlawfully harassed or discriminated against, including sexual harassment, shall have the right to file a formal complaint with any member of management, the Human Resources & Risk Management Director, or the EEO Officer.

3) Harassment Complaint Resolution Policy

   This procedure is in addition to the Grievance Procedure set forth in the Grievance/Appeal Procedure Chapter XXI and does not replace that procedure. For Chapter III related issues, employees shall utilize this procedure.

   The County encourages any person who believes he or she has been unfairly treated or harassed due to their actual or perceived race, national origin, color, religion, sex, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age, marital status, political affiliation, or protected activity to utilize the Complaint Resolution Procedure. It is the County's intent to take timely and appropriate corrective action, including discipline,

whenever it determines that unlawful harassment has occurred in violation of this policy. The goal of such corrective action will be to stop the unlawful harassment, correct its effects if possible, and ensure that it does not recur.

Employees are required to report such harassment as soon as possible because a timely investigation is much more productive. It is difficult for the County to investigate such allegations if they are not reported timely. Witnesses may have departed the County's employment, memories may have faded, and the County may be less able to accomplish an in-depth investigation if complaints are not brought to attention expeditiously.

Although reporting prohibited harassment is mandatory, the County recognizes that sometimes people are reluctant to come forward with claims of harassment, favoritism or unfair treatment and may wait weeks, months, or even years to do so, and because the County does not want anyone to be precluded from voicing their concern, this procedure is always available, even with older claims that should have been reported earlier.

This policy applies to every person in county employ and to applicants for county employment.

4) Harassment Complaint Resolution Procedure

    1) Any employee who wishes to make a complaint under this procedure should contact the EEO Officer, the Human Resources & Risk Management Director or any member of management. Any complaint may be made orally initially, but Human Resources will request the complaint be reduced to writing when formally being reported.

    2) Any member of management who receives a report of prohibited harassment must immediately notify Human Resources. Any and all complaints or observations of unlawful harassment will be investigated as promptly and as thoroughly as possible by Human Resources. To investigate the complaint, Human Resources may interview witnesses, research files and/or take such action deemed necessary.

    3) The Human Resources & Risk Management Director may recommend to the County Administrator any remedial relief considered appropriate including back pay, transfer, promotion, etc. The Human Resources & Risk Management Director may also recommend any disciplinary action found appropriate up to and including dismissal. The type of discipline administered will depend on the severity of the conduct, as well as any other factors presented in the particular circumstances. If disciplinary action is appropriate, the department director will take such action. If the claim is against a department director, such disciplinary action will be taken by the County Administrator. However, nothing contained herein shall prevent the County Administrator from taking actions against department directors at any time.

    4) The employee who made the complaint will be made aware of the determination as to whether unlawful harassment occurred. If the determination resulted in discipline of any employee (e.g., written reprimand, suspension or dismissal), a copy of the actual notice of disciplinary action will be placed in the employee's human resources file.

    5) Because of the extremely sensitive nature of these types of claims and cases, investigators may request all persons interviewed to keep the contents of their interview

confidential to the extent permitted by law. To the extent permitted by law, all complaints, reports and recommendations will be kept confidential.

6) Supervisory and management employees who discuss cases in which they or any of their employees are involved with anyone other than those persons directly involved, will be subject to discipline, including dismissal, unless they have been given specific instructions to the contrary.

7) This procedure does not create any property rights or extend the time to file a grievance under the Grievance/Appeal Procedure or in any way constitute a waiver of any other statute of limitations.

Section F – Affirmative Action for Equal Opportunity Plan

1) Statement of County Policy

The Board prohibits unlawful discrimination, and will strive to ensure that all aspects of county employment are equally available to all minorities, on the same basis and under the same terms and conditions as they are available to non-minorities.

The County believes that special measures and efforts are appropriate to preclude discrimination within its organization. The County will accordingly assure a determined and sustained effort in support of this belief and policies outlined in this equal employment opportunity program.

Pursuant to the goals of this program, all management and supervisory employees will share in the responsibility for implementing the program, and management performance in the area of equal employment opportunity will be evaluated in the same way that performance or other assigned duties are evaluated. Violations of this program for Affirmative Action for Equal Opportunity (hereafter program) will meet with appropriate action.

In order to effectively promote this program, the County may seek the assistance of appropriate entities including suppliers, government agencies, educational institutions, civil rights organizations and other community organizations.

It is the responsibility of each member of management, to give this program his/her full support by leadership and personal example. In addition, it is the duty of every county employee to create a job environment that is conducive to this program. Overall responsibility for the direction of this program, and its implementation, will reside with the Human Resources & Risk Management Director, who will serve as the County's Affirmative Action Coordinator.

2) Terms of Program

a) Policy

Okaloosa County's policy statement on equal opportunity and non-discrimination is contained in this chapter. Okaloosa County will take affirmative action to ensure the implementation and enforcement of its Affirmative Action for Equal Opportunity program. Although the program is directed to minorities (to include females), any employee who

believes he/she is being unlawfully discriminated against is covered by this program and encouraged to use the Complaint Resolution Procedure.

b) Responsibility for and Implementation of the Program

i) The Human Resources & Risk Management Director is hereby designated as the program coordinator and is responsible for the program. The coordinator has the support of the Commissioners and County management and is identified as the responsible official for the internal and external communications that relate to the program. These responsibilities include:

(1) Developing and revising this program and devising techniques for communicating the County's affirmative action program both internally and externally;

(2) Assisting in identifying any problem areas concerning the placement of minorities and female staff;

(3) Assisting County management to devise solutions to any areas identified as potential or possible problem areas;

(4) Serving as liaison between the County and minority and women's organizations and community action groups concerned with employment opportunities of minorities and women;

(5) Assuring that the County Commission remains informed of the developments in the area of equal employment opportunity issues;

(6) Reviewing the job application form to ensure that:

(a) Any and all questions are job related;

(b) Job titles are descriptive of job content;

(c) Job description and qualification standards do not cause inadvertent unlawful discrimination and are free from sex bias;

(d) Job requirements are known by all members of management involved in the recruitment, screening, placement and promotion process.

ii) In addition to these responsibilities, the Human Resources & Risk Management Director is also to provide for periodic review of applicable recruitment practices, training programs, hiring and promotion practices, and other applicable human resources practices to remove any impediments that may exist for minorities and females. This review shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) Regular discussions with managers and supervisors to assure that the County's affirmative action program is being followed;

(2) Review of the qualifications of all employees seeking promotions or transfer to ensure that qualified minorities and women are given equal consideration;

(3) Periodic review of such matters as:

(a) Display of EEO posters and notices;

(b) The quality of facilities provided for both sexes;

(c) The opportunity of all employees to participate in any county-sponsored recreation and social activity;

(d) Equal opportunity to attend county sponsored training, seminars, etc.;

(e) See that disabled employees and applicants needs are addressed;

(4) Assurance that supervisors understand that their work performance is being evaluated, among other criteria, on the basis of their efforts to comply with this program and the results of such efforts;

(5) Assurance that supervisors adequately address and respond to any reported and/or observed unlawful harassment of employees;

(6) Assurance that supervisors adequately address and respond to any reported and/or observed comments, jokes, cartoons, etc., that are intended to be derogatory to minorities or women;

(7) Assurance that the overall selection process will be reviewed continually, including the training, transfer and promotion procedures, to ensure freedom from bias toward or stereotyping of minorities and women;

(8) Assurance that efforts will continue to be made to find qualified minority and female applicants through local recruitment organizations, and other organizations created to promote the employment opportunities of minorities and females.

3) Dissemination of Policy

Okaloosa County recognizes that knowledge and understanding of the program is crucial to its effective implementation. Therefore, the County will take steps to disseminate to the workforce and the community its policy regarding this Affirmative Action for Equal Employment Opportunity program.

a) Dissemination of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Within the County.

i) Human Resources staff will discuss the program at employee orientation and management training programs and at other appropriate meetings. During these discussions the County's commitment to the program will be stressed. All participants will also be encouraged to use the Complaint Resolution Procedure and will be assured that any good faith claim will not result in retaliation.

ii) Notice of the program, as well as a copy of the program, will be prominently posted

on bulletin boards.

iii) Periodic references to the program will be made in county publications.

iv) Through the above and other such steps, the County will communicate to the employees the specifics of the program in order that employees may know of and avail themselves of its benefits.

b) External Dissemination of the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

i) The County will include the County's Affirmative Action for Equal Employment Opportunity statement on the website for the electronic application system.

4) Review of Recruitment and Hiring Process

a) See the Employment, Vacancies and Promotions/Transfers Chapter for procedures followed regarding employment, vacancies and promotions/transfers.

b) The County will offer training on interviewing skills to all supervisory staff and other appropriate employees at the time of implementation of this policy and as appropriate thereafter. Deviations may be made from the recruitment and hiring procedures only with the agreement of the department director and Human Resources & Risk Management Director.

The Human Resources & Risk Management Director shall periodically review recruitment and hiring procedures to ensure that they are meeting affirmative action and equal opportunity objectives.

5) Analysis by Department of Current Workforce Complement.

A major focus of this program is to ensure that qualified minorities (to include females) are appropriately represented in all aspects and levels of County management.

a) Therefore, the program coordinator, or designee who shall report to the program coordinator, shall analyze the placement, transfer, and promotion procedures. The coordinator or designee shall review all departments of the County to determine whether or not minorities (to include females) are represented in the employee and management complement.

b) Once the departments have been reviewed, then the following criteria, among other factors, should be considered to determine whether or not, (and if so, how) the workforce may be diversified through placement, promotion or transfer.

i) Are the jobs in the department desirable in terms of:

(1) Current wages;

(2) Opportunity for promotion?

ii) What is the turnover rate and if low, is there an opportunity to create vacancies through promotions, voluntary transfers, etc.?

iii) Have affirmative efforts been made in the past to recruit minorities (to include females) for these positions? If so, were they successful in generating qualified applicants? If not, what changes can be made to better ensure receipt of applications from qualified minorities and females?

6) Complaint Procedure for Program of Affirmative Action for Equal Employment Opportunity

See the Complaint Resolution Policy and Procedures Section.

Failure to follow any of these procedures in this program of Affirmative Action for Equal Opportunity shall not be grounds to invalidate any hire or employment decision, nor to create any right, expectation of right, or other property interest in any applicant, would be applicant or employee.

CHAPTER IV – ORGANIZATION FOR HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

Section A – Board of County Commissioners

The Board shall:

1) Approve the Human Resources Policy Manual and any subsequent amendments or revisions thereto;

2) Approve the Compensation Plan and all amendments thereto;

3) Confirm department director appointments.

Section B – Human Resources & Risk Management Director

The Human Resources & Risk Management Director shall be responsible to the County Administrator for the administration and technical direction of the Okaloosa County human resources program.

Section C – County Administrator

The County Administrator shall:

1) Recommend to the Board the pay and position classification plan;

2) Select, employ, and supervise all employees, and fill all vacancies, positions or employment under the jurisdiction of the Board; provided, however, the employment of all department directors shall require confirmation by the Board;

3) Suspend, discharge or remove any employee under the jurisdiction of the County Administrator, pursuant to procedures adopted by the Board.

CHAPTER V – CLASSIFICATION PLAN

Revised and effective – 3-24-2026

Section A – Purpose

The Classification Plan is the foundation upon which a comprehensive human resources program is built. The Classification Plan is used as a guide to:

1) recruit and examine candidates for employment.

2) provide a systematic arrangement and inventory of positions.

3) determine appropriate salary ranges.

4) provide uniform terminology of jobs.

5) aid in managing organizational structure, clarifying lines of authority and identifying responsibility.

Section B – Job Descriptions

1) Each job description lists the minimum requirements or qualifications needed to perform the job such as education, work experience, and other qualifications.

2) Job descriptions are descriptive and explanatory and are not necessarily inclusive of all duties performed. They are designed to generally indicate the types of duties and level of responsibilities assigned to a position. Employees may be required to perform duties which are not included within their job description. All County employees are expected to perform duties as assigned, including assignments related to declared emergencies.

3) Human Resources shall maintain a master set of all approved job descriptions which shall constitute the official Classification Plan. The official record shall show all amendments to the original plan. The copies of the job descriptions may include the date of adoption and/or the last revision.

4) Each time a department, or portion thereof, is substantially reorganized, the department director should submit new job descriptions or Job Assessment Tools (JAT) for all affected positions to Human Resources.

5) Human Resources may request department directors to complete a JAT at any time when there is reason to believe there has been a significant and on-going change in duties and responsibilities of one or more positions.

6) Human Resources shall make active job descriptions available on the County Human Resources & Risk Management website.

Section C – Position Titles

1) The official title of a budgeted position in the classification plan shall be used to designate the position in all budget estimates, payrolls, and other official records, documents, vouchers, and communications in connection with all human resources processes.

2) Any other title approved by an appointing authority may be used as a "working title" in departmental correspondence not having to do with administrative human resources processes covered in these rules.

Section D – Classification of New Positions

1) Whenever a new position is created, a JAT shall be submitted to Human Resources to describe in detail the duties of such position. Human Resources shall create new job descriptions which indicate a general statement of job, minimum qualifications, examples of work, and other requirements of such positions. In order to verify the position has been appropriately allocated, a desk audit and/or interview with the department director or designee, or the incumbent director may be required by Human Resources after a new position is created and occupied.

2) Recommendations for new positions may be completed throughout the fiscal year and are not necessarily restricted to the budget request process. Departments wishing to establish new positions should first discuss with the appropriate level Administrator for tentative approval. If tentatively approved, the department should either review the classification plan for an existing job title to use or complete the JAT available on the Human Resources & Risk Management website page and forward it to their assigned Human Resources contact for further instructions and consideration.

3) The Human Resources & Risk Management Director shall review and provide recommendations for approval or disapproval to the County Administrator on all proposed position creations, allocations, reallocations, and abolishment.

4) The County Administrator shall review and approve or disapprove recommendations of the department director and Human Resources & Risk Management Director regarding all proposed creations, allocations, reallocations and abolishment of positions.

Section E – Reclassification of Positions

The Human Resources & Risk Management Director may recommend changing the classification of existing positions when it is believed a position is incorrectly classified. This will include recommendations for changing the exemption status of a position and/or pay grade. Such action is called reclassification and must be reviewed and approved by the County Administrator. Requests for Job Title Change may be approved by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director when it is the only change being requested.

Directors who believe a position may need to be re-evaluated are encouraged to coordinate with Human Resources and complete a JAT. If an employee believes that his/her position is improperly classified, the employee should express their concerns to his/her department director. Reclassification requests shall be submitted in writing to Human Resources and shall contain a statement of justification, facts and any other pertinent information necessary to fully evaluate the reclassification issue. As part of the reclassification process the appropriate rate of pay and pay grade shall be evaluated. All employees occupying reclassified positions, at a

minimum, shall fall within the pay range and shall meet the minimum qualifications of the position. Depending on the position reclassification, an employee may have their pay raised or lowered (as appropriate) to not only be within the pay range, but also to be equitable to other similarly positioned employees based on the position responsibilities, the employee's time of service with the County, employee qualifications, and any other pertinent information.

Section F – Position Control

All positions in the County are established and maintained each fiscal year in accordance with customary budget and generally accepted accounting procedures. The request for additional positions not approved through the budget process shall be coordinated through the Human Resources & Risk Management Department. Requests to establish new positions will be reviewed by, and approved at the discretion of, the County Administrator and upon approval of the Board.

Section G – Abolishment of Positions

Whenever there is justification for abolishing a position such as lack of work, reorganization, lack of funds, or other reasons, the department director shall make such recommendation to Human Resources. The Human Resources & Risk Management Director shall review the request and present recommendation, along with the department's request for consideration, to the County Administrator for approval.

Section H – Maintenance of the Classification Plan

The Human Resources & Risk Management Director shall be custodian of the Classification Plan and shall be responsible for its maintenance and updates as necessary.

Any change in the Classification Plan, such as establishing new positions, abolishing positions, reclassifying positions, or pay grade changes for positions, require prior review by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director and the approval of the County Administrator.

CHAPTER VI – COMPENSATION PLAN

Revised and effective – 07-14-2026

Section A – Purpose

The Compensation Plan is designed as a fair and equitable method for payment of employees in the County. The Plan shall establish a basic salary schedule as approved by the Board. The salary ranges shall include minimum and maximum rates of pay for all positions included in the Classification Plan. In addition to the basic salary schedule, the Compensation Plan consists of two (2) salary components that shall be used to adjust employee compensation. These two (2) mechanisms include market adjustments and merit increases.

Section B – Market Adjustment (Optional)

The market adjustment is the component which is used to ensure the salary structure is adjusted equally across-the-board to reflect changes in the wage index. Two (2) considerations dictate whether a wage adjustment will be administered: changes in the wage index based upon references such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the budgetary constraints of the County. Each year, the Board shall vote on the applicability and ability of Okaloosa County to apply a wage adjustment(s) to the salary structure. When applicable and when funds are available, an increase will be applied equally to all ranges and may be applied equally to all employee salaries.

Section C – Merit Increase

This compensation strategy outlines the guidelines related to the application of merit increases for years the Board approves funding for this program.

1) The merit increase component is designed to reward job performance, therefore, serving as an incentive system. Base salary increases are awarded to employees whose performance exceeds expectation and is consistently competent and/or above standard. The performance pay system is based upon the principle that performance which exceeds expectation should be rewarded because such performance is a greater contribution to the County than average or below standard performance. The merit increase is strictly used to monetarily reward above standard performance.

2) Employees whose performance is evaluated to exceed expectation may receive a base salary increase up to three percent (3%).

3) Employees at the maximum of their salary ranges and deserving of a merit increase will be awarded a lump sum equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of the annual increase the employee would have received had he/she not been at the maximum of the salary range.

4) Employees who have received disciplinary action (reprimand or above), within the year prior to the time when the merit increase shall go in effect, are not eligible for the increase.

Section D – Starting Rates for New Employees

1) A new employee shall be paid at least the minimum rate of pay for their position. Exceptions may be granted upon the written prior approvals of the department director, the

appropriate Deputy County Administrator, the County Administrator, and the Human Resources & Risk Management Director.

2) The minimum rate for each position is based upon the assumption a new employee meets the minimum qualifications stated in the class specifications. Human Resources will coordinate with departments to ensure the minimum qualifications for positions are aligned with the desired proficiency levels to meet business needs.

If a selected candidate exceeds the minimum qualifications stated in the class specification, the candidate may be appointed at a higher rate up to ten percent (10%) above the minimum of the salary range or advanced appointment rate for the classification upon the written approval of the Department Director and the Human Resources & Risk Management Director. Appointments up to the maximum of the salary range may be authorized by the County Administrator. These cases shall be thoroughly analyzed and measured against objective qualification standards, including, but not limited to, related job experience, education background, comparable market data, internal salary equity, available resources, and federal wage and hour laws. Consideration shall be given to review and compare the salaries of employees in similar positions.

Section E – Market Impact Positions

1) Certain positions may be designated by the County Administrator as market impact positions based on the following criteria:

   a) High turnover.

   b) Difficulty in recruiting candidates.

   c) Difficulty in filling the position.

2) For positions designated as market impact positions, Human Resources may:

   a) Conduct a market survey of salaries being offered and paid by other organizations.

   b) Identify the market rate for the position.

   c) Raise the hiring rate for the position to the market rate.

3) For market impact positions in which there are incumbents in addition to vacancies, adjustments may be made to current incumbent based on input and approval from the Department Director, appropriate Deputy County Administrator, the County Administrator, and the Human Resources & Risk Management Director. Factors such as recent performance and/or any disciplinary actions may be considered in determining if an adjustment is to be made.

4) Positions designated as market impact will be reviewed as necessary to determine whether the designation should be continued. In cases where the status is discontinued, all salary adjustments awarded because of the status will remain in force. No future salary adjustments will be awarded based on market impact designation unless the position is re- designated as market impact at a future date.

Section F – Promotional Increases

1) Policy

When an employee is promoted to a position of a higher grade, the employee's salary will increase at least to the minimum or hiring salary of the new grade. If an employee is at or above the minimum salary, a maximum of a ten percent (10%) increase may be authorized by the department director and the Human Resource & Risk Management Director. Promotions up to the maximum of the salary range may be authorized by the County Administrator.

2) Procedures for Determining Promotional Increase

a) After a thorough analysis of internal equity and measurement against objective qualification standards, the department director will recommend the amount of the promotional increase within the standards stated in this policy.

b) Final approval for all promotional increases must be made by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director or the County Administrator, with recommendations from the department director and Deputy County Administrator as appropriate.

c) The decision regarding a promotional increase shall reflect the promoted employee's experience and qualifications in comparison with other employees' backgrounds in the same job.

Section G – Special Teams Pay

1) Correctional Officer – Special Teams Pay

a) Correctional Officers serving on the Honor Guard Team will be provided with a monthly stipend of $200.

2) Correctional Officer – Field Training Officer (FTO) Stipend

a) Correctional Officers serving as a Field Training Officer (FTO), a Facility Instructor or who serves on the Tactical Response Team will be provided a monthly stipend of $250.

3) EMS – Special Teams Pay

a) Members of designated special teams will be paid $25 per week for each week they are involved in team training or activities of a special team.

b) The maximum allowable pay for special teams in any one (1) week is $25.

4) EMS – Field Training Officer (FTO) and Alternate Shift Commander Stipend

a) FTO's will be paid $25 per week for each week they serve in the capacity of FTO for at least 24 hours.

b) Employees who are required to fill in for absent Shift Commanders for less than 30 days will be paid $25 per week for each week they serve in the capacity of Alternate Shift Commander for at least 24 hours.

c) Hours worked in the same week as a FTO and Alternate Shift Commander may be combined to reach 24 hours.

d) The maximum allowable pay for FTO and/or Alternate Shift Commander duties in any one (1) week is $25.

e) EMS Shift Training Officers are not eligible for the FTO and Alternate Shift Commander Stipend. The maximum allowable EMS special pay for an employee in any one (1) week is $50.

Section H – Incentive Pay

1) Airports Ramp Control Incentive Pay

Airports Operations Staff who obtain the VPS Ramp Control Tower (RCT) Certification will receive a $2 RCT "Ramp" incentive. Certification in the VPS RCT will require:

a) Passing a written exam with a minimum score of 80% on the provided material.

b) Sixteen hours of on-the-job training by a qualified Ramp Control Specialist.

2) Code Enforcement Incentive Pay

The positions of Code Enforcement Officer and Code Enforcement Supervisor will be awarded a five percent (5%) increase upon obtaining the following certification issued by the Florida Association of Code Enforcement:

a) Level II Certification

b) Level III Certification

c) Certified Code Enforcement Professional Certification (CEP)

A copy of the certification must be submitted to Human Resources to affect the increase.

3) Construction Inspectors Incentive Pay

Any Construction Inspector III or Fire and Construction Inspector III possessing more than two (2) standard licenses (not including Coastal Structural) will be awarded a seven percent (7%) increase for each standard license in excess of two (2). A Three- and one-half percent (3½%) incentive will be awarded for the Coastal Structural license if the employee has not already received an incentive or promotion for that license prior to October 1, 2000.

The following standard licenses are the only ones considered for a seven percent (7%) increase in administration of this incentive structure:

a) Plumbing

b) Commercial

c) Electric

d) Mechanical

e) Fire Safety

4) Correctional Officer Incentive Pay

Okaloosa County follows the guidelines outlined in the Florida Statues on incentive pay for Correctional Officers. Under Florida Statues, full-time Correctional Officers are eligible to participate in the salary incentive program.

a) Eligible Correctional Officers receive $20 per month for each successfully completed 80-hour training unit, capped at $120 per month for the training incentive.

b) Eligible Correctional Officers also receive a maximum $30 per month for an Associate's degree and an additional $50 per month for a Bachelor's degree or higher. The combination of both incentives is not to exceed $130 per month.

Section I – Bilingual Pay Differential

Non-exempt positions will be designated for bilingual pay differential when a second language is critical to efficiently providing services in the normal day-to-day operations of the unit.

1) A limited number of employees in designated positions will be eligible for bilingual pay differential. Department directors will submit written requests to Human Resources, outlining the requirements for bilingual skills for positions and requesting bilingual pay differential for employees.

2) Incumbents or new hires in designated positions must demonstrate the required level of oral proficiency through a designated testing authority of the County to be eligible for bilingual pay differential.

3) Bilingual pay differential will be paid to non-exempt employees at the rate of $.50 per hour in addition to the base pay.

4) In the event an employee moves to a position that is not designated as eligible for bilingual pay differential, the premium payment will cease.

Section J – Effects of Demotion

When an employee is demoted (to include voluntary demotion) to a position in a lower pay grade, the employee shall be paid at a rate which is within the approved range for the grade of the new position and shall likely be paid a lower wage. The rate of pay shall be determined and coordinated by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director and department director, taking into consideration the circumstances surrounding, and the reasons for the demotion. An employee receiving a demotion may be required to serve a probationary period in the new position.

Section K – Employee Transfers (Lateral)

When an employee is transferred to a position in the same pay grade, such transfer shall not change the date from which eligibility for consideration for a merit increase shall be counted. Generally, in a lateral transfer, the employee's salary will remain the same. However, if the employee's salary is less than the hiring rate and the employee exceeds the minimum qualifications stated in the class specification, the employee may be transferred at a higher rate

consistent with the new hire policy upon the written approval of the department director and the Human Resources & Risk Management Director.

Section L – Temporary Work at a Higher Classification

An employee may be required to work at a higher classification on a temporary, incidental or emergency basis and may do so for a period of 30 days or less with no increase in pay. If an employee is required to perform the required work for a period exceeding 30 days, the employee may be given a temporary appointment (or provisional appointment) to the higher position and be paid an appropriate rate for the higher classification. The employee's pay will increase to at least the minimum or hiring salary of the new grade, or if the employee is at or above the minimum salary, a maximum of a ten percent (10%) increase may be granted. At the conclusion of the assignment, the employee's pay shall revert to the authorized rate established for the employee's regular position. Any such temporary increase granted shall not affect the employee's eligibility for normal merit increases. Temporary assignments may not exceed six (6) months without approval for extension in writing by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director and the County Administrator.

Section M – Pay Adjustments

The County Administrator, in coordination with the Human Resources & Risk Management Director and upon the written request with justification and approval of the department director, shall have authority under limited circumstances to authorize pay adjustments for employees. This provision is restricted to circumstances such as, but not limited to, a significant increase in responsibility or scope of discretion of the position, or extraordinary market conditions. The amount of the pay adjustment shall take into consideration the performance and tenure of the employee; difficulty recruiting and filling the position with a quality candidate; loss of institutional knowledge; internal equity; pay adjustment amount being requested; supporting market data for the request; and the department's budgetary impact.

At times, it may be appropriate to award a temporary pay adjustment. The County Administrator, in coordination with the Human Resources & Risk Management Director and upon a written request with justification and approval of the department director, shall have authority under limited circumstances to authorize temporary pay adjustments for employees. This provision is restricted to circumstances such as, but not limited to, a temporary increase in workload or responsibility. Temporary pay adjustments may not exceed six (6) months without approval for extension in writing by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director and the County Administrator.

Section N – Shift Differential Pay

1) Shift differential pay is designed as an incentive for non-exempt employees designated to work evening or night shifts as defined below:

   a) Evening Shift – Start time at or after 11:00 AM to 5:59 PM.

   b) Night Shift – Start time at or after 6:00 PM to 3:59 AM.

   c) 12-Hour Shift – For Hours worked between 6:00 PM – 6:00 AM, regardless of when the shift starts.

d) No shift-differential pay for shifts with start times at or after 4:00 AM to 10:59 AM.

2) The shift differential pay at the start of the shift will be effective throughout that work shift, extending until the employee is released from duty.

3) Shift differential for Water & Sewer WWTP Operators, of all classes, on a 10-hour evening or night shift will be paid at the flat rate of $1.00 per hour. Other employees receiving shift differential will be paid at the flat rate of $.25 per hour for the evening shift and $.50 per hour for the night shift and $1.00 for the 12-hour shift.

4) Shift differential pay is not applicable in the following instances:

a) Where employees are on official leave.

b) Where employees are participating in out-of-town training or seminar activities.

c) Where employees are performing work-related travel.

d) Where non-shift workers are called into work overtime for less than a full shift.

e) Where non-shift workers are flexing time for special projects.

Section O – Overtime/Compensatory Time/Call Back Pay and Stand-By

1) Overtime Compensation

a) Exempt Employees

Executive, professional, administrative, and computer employees, as defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act, are normally exempt from overtime except as described in the section on Pay for Work During Emergencies or Disasters. All department directors are included in this exemption. However, when an emergency arises requiring attendance for abnormal and prolonged periods, or the employee is required to perform services outside the normal scope and responsibilities called for in their position and when a non-exempt employee is unavailable or unsuitable to perform the work, overtime compensation will be authorized as appropriate by the County Administrator with notification to the Board. Exempt employees are hired for an annual salary rate to accomplish a job for the County. Although generally expected to be present and working for the total hours of the normal workweek, exempt employees are allowed some latitude with respect to time spent at work. For example, a manager who works numerous additional hours to complete a project may, with his/her department director's permission, take some time off work at a later date.

b) Non-Exempt Employees

All hourly and non-exempt salaried employees, except for Correctional Officers and designated 12-hour shift Non-Certified Corrections Technicians, are entitled to overtime compensation after 40 hours of work in a seven (7) day workweek. Unless overtime is given in the form of compensatory time off as provided below, hourly employees (except Correctional Officers and Non-Certified Corrections Technicians) shall receive time and one half (1½) their regular rate of pay for all hours worked more than 40 per workweek.

c) Correctional Officers and Designated 12-Hour Shift Non-Certified Corrections Technicians

Correctional Officers and Designated 12-Hour Shift Non-Certified Corrections Technicians, shall receive time and one-half (1½) their regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 86 in a 14-day work period.

d) Hours Worked on Holidays

For hourly employees, all hours worked on a county-approved 'actual' calendar holiday will be paid at one and one half (1½) times the employee's regular rate, with an additional eight (8) hours paid at the employee's regular straight time rate unless the employee is already being paid at overtime rate at the time of the holiday. Under that circumstance, employees will be paid at two and one quarter (2¼) times the employee's regular rate, with an additional eight (8) hours paid at the employee's regular rate. Employees working on "observed" holidays, other than the 'actual' calendar holiday, will be paid at the employee's applicable straight time or overtime rate. As an alternative to receiving eight (8) hours of holiday pay, an employee may be allowed to take eight (8) hours off at another time within 60 days. Hours worked on a holiday are paid in this manner regardless of whether the employee has fulfilled the work period requirements outlined below.

e) General Requirements

Paid time off for leave (annual, sick, civil, military, etc.) will not be counted as hours worked for purposes of determining overtime compensation for non-exempt, non-represented employees. Holiday leave will count as hours worked for purposes of determining overtime for all non-exempt employees.

Overtime is to be avoided except during peak loads or emergencies. During critical emergencies, as determined by the department director, non-exempt employees will receive pay at the rate of time and one half (1½) regardless of actual hours worked in the workweek. Examples of critical emergencies may include public water outage, public sewer overflow, road closures from weather events, traffic control device repairs, etc.

Employees are strictly prohibited from working overtime without permission in advance from their supervisor.

2) Call Back and Stand-by Pay

a) Stand-by

A non-exempt employee on stand-by, regardless of whether he/she is called to work, will be paid the following:

i) One (1) hour per day on weekdays.

ii) Two (2) hours per day on weekends and county-approved actual calendar holidays.

Stand-by pay will be at the employee's applicable straight time or overtime rate.

b) Call Back

All hours worked on call back will receive pay at a rate of time and one half (1½) for all hours worked, regardless of the number of hours worked in the workweek. Hours worked includes travel time from and to the employees' home.

3) Compensatory Time

Exempt employees are not eligible to earn or accrue compensatory time off. All non-exempt hourly employees may be granted compensatory time off in lieu of overtime at the rate of one and one-half (1½) times the actual hours worked, subject to the following:

a) Compensatory time off may only be given pursuant to an agreement or understanding (oral or written) between the department director, or designee in writing for specific positions, and the employee prior to the actual performance of work.

b) Subject to the approval of the Department Director, Correctional Officers may accrue up to 480 hours of compensatory time off and all other employees may accrue up to 240 hours of compensatory time off. Overtime worked over these limits must be compensated in cash.

c) Compensatory leave must be used prior to using PTO.

d) Employees may choose to receive payment for accrued compensatory time off in cash upon the employee's separation of employment or upon entry into the Florida State Retirement System Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP).

e) Compensatory time off will be allowed within a reasonable period after requesting its use, so long as it does not unduly disrupt the operations of the department.

f) For record keeping and reporting purposes, compensatory time off earned and taken must be accounted for in the payroll system by entries on biweekly time reports.

Section P – Pay for Work During Emergencies or Disasters

1) Policy

The following pay procedures apply when a catastrophic emergency or disaster is declared by the Board, County Administrator or designee.

2) Definitions

a) Emergency Leave – Time off with pay during regularly scheduled working hours when county offices are closed and employees are released from duty due to an emergency or disaster.

b) Pre/Post Emergency/Disaster Pay – One and a half times (1½) the employee's straight time rate of pay. Pre/Post Emergency/Disaster Pay will be paid to non-director-level exempt and non-exempt employees who 1) are designated by their department directors to work before or after disasters or emergencies; and 2) work when county offices are closed and all other employees are released by the County Administrator.

c) Emergency Pay – Two (2) times the employee's straight time rate of pay. Emergency Pay will be paid to non-director-level exempt and non-exempt employees who 1) are

designated by their department directors to work during an emergency/disaster or when emergency/disaster conditions occur; 2) work when county offices are closed and all other employees are released by the County Administrator; and 3) the work occurs within a specified timeframe as defined by the County Administrator.

Department directors who perform emergency related work when county offices are closed and all other employees are released by the County Administrator will be paid at the straight time rate for hours worked, up to a maximum of 12 hours pay in each 24-hour period. The County Administrator and/or Deputy County Administrators are not eligible to receive additional compensation during an emergency/disaster.

3) Procedures

a) All county employees have an emergency management obligation to be available for working assignments before, during, and after disasters/emergencies. Employees will be notified and trained or instructed in their emergency disaster assignments annually. Employees are required to report, either by phone or in person, to their department's designated contact point prior to and immediately after a disaster/emergency to receive work assignments. Assignments will typically include clean-up, repair, answering citizen phone lines, manning Emergency Operations Center (EOC) positions, and working at community distribution centers or comfort stations. Because these assignments are essential to the recovery of the community after an emergency or disaster, failure to respond or be available for assignment will be considered cause for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

b) Pre/Post Emergency/Disaster Pay will begin when county offices are officially closed and the County Administrator, or designee, releases employees. When emergency conditions warrant, Emergency Pay will be paid for time worked during a specified timeframe as defined by the County Administrator. Pre/Post Emergency/Disaster Pay will be paid continuously for all hours worked after the Emergency Pay timeframe defined by the County Administrator until normal business hours resume. This policy shall not be interpreted to provide employees with Emergency Leave and Pre/Post Emergency/Disaster or Emergency Pay concurrently for the same period of time (double and a half or triple time).

c) Exempt and non-exempt county employees who are designated by their department directors to work before, during or after emergencies or disasters will be compensated for time worked at the applicable pay rate regardless of whether or not they have 40 hours paid in the workweek. In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, employees required to be on site and available for duties will be paid at applicable pay rates. Employees on site for personal convenience or safety who are not working will not be paid.

d) If a county vehicle is not available for use by an employee assigned to disaster or emergency duties under this policy, the employee will be eligible for mileage reimbursement for use of a personal vehicle from the location of his/her usual work assignment to the location of the disaster or emergency assignment.

e) Exempt and non-exempt employees, who are released from duty by the County Administrator or designee during normal work hours, will be compensated at their usual rates of pay for their regularly scheduled hours. Employees who are released from duty

and already on official leave during this time will not be charged leave and will receive their usual rates of pay for the same number of hours as the other employees who are released from duty. Employees participating in out-of-town, work-related activities do not qualify for Pre/Post Emergency/Disaster pay, Emergency Pay or Emergency Leave, unless environmental circumstances warrant and authorized by the County Administrator or designee.

f) Due to the Emergency Management obligation of all county employees, employees placed on alert during an emergency or disaster are not entitled to stand-by pay, unless they are otherwise on routine stand-by.

g) Exempt employees are required to submit exception reports to document time worked for which emergency pay is payable; however, exempt employees are not required to submit exception reports for emergency leave.

h) Part-time, relief and temporary employees are not eligible to receive Emergency Leave, Pre/Post Emergency/Disaster Pay, or Emergency Pay.

Section Q – Pay for Out-of-Town Travel

While on overnight out-of-town travel assignments, non-exempt employees should be paid during their normal working hours on non-working days (e.g., Sunday), as well as on their regular working days.

Section R – Pay Day

1) All employees are paid biweekly (every two (2) weeks). The pay period begins on Sunday at 11:00 PM and ends the following Sunday at 10:59 PM.

2) Employees will receive their pay every other Thursday.

3) Electronic paystubs, for those signed up for direct deposit, will be delivered to the email designated by the employee. Delivering a paper paystub/check to anyone other than the payee is prohibited unless the employee has authorized such delivery in writing.

4) Salary and/or leave advances will not be granted under any circumstance without the approval of the County Administrator.

Section S – Safe Harbor Policy

1) Policy

a) It is the policy and practice of the County to compensate employees for all time worked and to do so in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. To ensure that employees are paid properly for all time worked and that no improper deductions are made, employees must record correctly all work time and review their paychecks promptly to identify and to report all errors. No one who is eligible for overtime should perform any work that is not authorized and recorded on his/her timecard or timesheet. While all-time worked will be paid, even if not authorized, working without authorization is a violation of County policy that could lead to disciplinary action.

b) The County makes every effort to ensure that employees are paid correctly. Occasionally, however, inadvertent mistakes can happen. When a mistake does happen and is called to the attention of management, a correction will be made promptly. If an employee believes a mistake has occurred (including any improper deductions, underreported hours of work or other errors) or if an employee has any questions, the reporting procedure outlined below must be used.

2) Non-Exempt Employees

Employees classified as non-exempt (which means they are eligible for overtime pay) must maintain a record of the total hours worked each day. These hours must be accurately recorded on a biweekly timesheet that will be provided by management. Each employee must sign and date his/her timecard or timesheet to verify that the reported hours worked are complete and accurate. Timecards or timesheets must accurately reflect all regular and overtime hours worked, any absences, early or late arrivals and early or late departures. At the end of each pay period, employees must submit their completed timecard or timesheet to their supervisor for verification and approval. Employees should not sign their timecard or timesheet unless it is accurate. If a timecard or timesheet is not accurate, the supervisor must be notified immediately. When each paycheck is received, employees should verify immediately that they were paid correctly for all regular and overtime hours worked each workweek.

3) Exempt Employees

a) Employees classified as exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Acts (FLSA) overtime pay requirements will receive a salary that is intended to compensate for all hours worked for the County. This salary initially will be established at the time of hire or when first classified as an exempt employee.

b) It is the County's policy to comply with the salary basis requirements of the FLSA. Therefore, managers are prohibited from making any improper deductions from the salaries of exempt employees.

c) Under federal law, deductions from the salaries of exempt employees are permissible under certain circumstances, including but not limited to the following:

i) The first or last week of employment in the event less than a full week is worked.

ii) Any full work week in which no work is performed;

iii) Full day disciplinary suspensions for major safety violations or significant infractions of important written workplace conduct rules; or

iv) Family and Medical Leave absences (either full or partial day absences).

d) It is not an improper deduction to require the use of PTO for full or partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness, disability or other reasons. Pursuant to attendance and leave policies, employees who are absent for all or part of a workday may apply accrued paid time off to that missed work time. After all paid time off is exhausted, no partial day deductions will be made from the salary of a salaried exempt employee unless permitted by law.

4) Violations and Reporting Procedures

a) It is a violation of the County's policy for any employee to falsify a timecard or time sheet or to alter another employee's timecard or timesheet. It is also a serious violation of County policy for any employee or manager to instruct another employee to incorrectly or falsely report hours worked or to alter another employee's timecard or timesheet to under- or over-report hours worked (or to fail to report any such misconduct). Report any violations of this policy immediately to the Human Resources Director or designee. It is not a violation of the County's policy for a timekeeper, supervisor or other management official to make corrections to a timecard or time sheet to ensure compliance with county policies.

b) Non-exempt employees must not work any hours outside of their scheduled workday unless their supervisor has authorized the unscheduled work. Employees must not start work early, finish work late, work during a meal break or perform any other extra or overtime work unless authorized to do so and that time is recorded on their timecard or time sheet. Employees are prohibited from performing any "off-the-clock" work. "Off-the-clock" work means work performed but not reported on biweekly timesheets to include but not limited to reading, sending or otherwise work e-mails during non-working hours. Any employee who fails to report or inaccurately reports any hours worked will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

c) Questions about deductions from pay or wages may be directed to the Human Resources Director or designee. Employees who believe their pay has been subject to any improper deductions or does not accurately reflect hours worked should immediately report the matter to their supervisor, manager, director or the Human Resources & Risk Management Director or designee. Any member of management who receives a report of pay discrepancies must immediately notify the Human Resources & Risk Management Director or designee.

d) Reports of improper deductions will be promptly investigated by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director or designee. If it is determined that an improper deduction has occurred, the employee will be promptly reimbursed for any improper deduction made.

Every report will be fully investigated, and corrective action will be taken where appropriate, up to and including dismissal for any employee(s) who violates this policy. The County will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report alleged violations of this policy or who cooperate in the County's investigation of such reports. Any form of retaliation in violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

CHAPTER VII – EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PROMOTIONS/TRANSFERS

Revised and effective – 08-06-2024

The selection of all employees will be based upon proper and legal consideration of the following criteria:

1) Qualifications;

2) Previous work history;

3) Objectives to provide affirmative action for equal employment opportunity;

4) Experience;

5) Other valid and appropriate criteria.

Preference is given to certain veterans and spouses of veterans as provided by Chapter 295, Laws of Florida.

Section A – Vacant Positions

When an employee is separating their employment, a period of two (2) weeks overlapping of two (2) employees in one (1) position will be allowed for training purposes. Longer periods of overlap may be permitted for more complicated positions, as funding permits, and with the approval of the County Administrator.

1) Job Vacancy Postings

   a) Upon a department's request to fill a properly budgeted, non-frozen position, Human Resources will distribute an Internal and/or External Job Vacancy posting based on the preference of the department, for a minimum of one calendar week. Job Vacancy postings are not required for temporary and relief positions.

   b) Human Resources will include the e-mail addresses of employees in active lay-off status, if available, to the weekly e-mail distribution list vacant positions.

   c) At the department's request, Human Resources will coordinate additional outside advertising and recruitment sources (i.e., newspapers, trade journals, civil rights organizations, professional associations, social media, etc.).

   d) Interested individuals will be required to complete an online application for the position per the parameters of the posting and prior to the closing date to be considered. Emergency relief and temporary employees are eligible to apply for internal vacancies.

   e) If the same position has been recruited for within the prior six (6) months, the department director may elect to forego a new posting of the vacancy and select a qualified applicant from the prior group or groups of qualified applicants.

   f) After the closing date to apply, applicants believed to meet the minimum qualifications as noted in the job posting, and/or specified by the hiring department through supplemental

questions in the job posting, will be referred to the department to include applicants claiming veteran's preference which will be identified to ensure appropriate preference is given. Background checks will be conducted on prospective employees. Background checks are to be completed by either Human Resources or by departmental staff trained in background checks, as applicable, with Corrections or Public Safety positions requiring department specific or mandated checks outside the scope of and beyond checks conducted by Human Resources. Reference checks may be completed by Human Resources or by the hiring department if staff have received training to complete reference checks. The hiring department should coordinate their efforts to conduct reference checks with Human Resources to ensure work efforts are not duplicated.

g) At the close of all interviews, the hiring manager shall forward the hiring recommendation to Human Resources along with the criteria and basis for their selection as well as all interview notes and documentation related to the posting. Human Resources will examine the department's selection and either process the hire after completion of any final criminal background checks, applicable pre-hire drug testing, and any other due diligence to complete the hiring process or communicate with the hiring department if any hiring issues arise. Recommendations will be forwarded by Human Resources to the County Administrator for approval as necessary.

Section B – Filing of Applications

1) All applications for positions shall be made utilizing the County's applicant tracking system. The application shall request details covering training, experience, and other pertinent information.

2) Applicants claiming veteran's preference must indicate it on the application and provide the required documentation.

3) All applications shall be signed by the applicant attesting to the truth of all statements contained in the application (to include electronic signatures). Any false statement or misrepresentation by an applicant may be cause for denying employment consideration or for discharge from county employment at any time after being employed.

4) Applications will be accepted only for positions that are actively posted on the County's website. A completed application is required for each position for which an applicant wishes to be considered.

5) Applicants previously employed by Okaloosa County will be required to indicate all prior county employment on the application.

6) Hiring managers are encouraged to coordinate with Human Resources to view the employee files for any prior County employee being considered for re-hire.

7) Applicants who were dismissed by Okaloosa County will be identified to the hiring authority by Human Resources. Applicants who were either dismissed or permitted to resign in lieu of termination due to their testing positive in a County directed drug test will not be eligible for rehire for a minimum of one year from the date employment was terminated. They may only

be considered for rehire with proof of completion of a substance abuse/treatment program after their prior separation from County employment. This provision is applicable to all County employment opportunities to include relief, part-time, and temporary employment through the County directly or through a contracted staffing agency. All full-time and part-time employees shall be eligible for promotion and/or transfer to another department after successful completion of their initial probationary period. Exceptions may be granted within the initial probationary period with approval from Human Resources and involved department directors.

8) Employees assigned to the County through a staffing agency that have reached the end of their contractual agreement with the staffing agency (e.g., met the time line requirement in order to be hired by the County) may apply for internal job postings offered by the County in the same manner as regular full-time County employees.

Section C – Employment of Department Directors

The County Administrator will recommend a candidate to employ as a department director. Employment shall require confirmation by the Board.

Section D – New Employees

All new employees report to the Okaloosa County Human Resources & Risk Management Department to participate in new employee orientation and complete all required employment forms, prior to reporting to their assigned department.

Section E – Employment of Relatives

Approval will not be granted for the employment, promotion or transfer of a member of the immediate family of an employee (father, mother, spouse, son, daughter, grandparent, grandchildren, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepparent, stepchild, or other members of the employee's household) to a position where a relative would be supervising that employee or otherwise in violation of guidance and requirements outlined in Florida Statutes relating to nepotism.

Additionally, beginning May 17, 2022, and going forward, approval will not be granted for the new hire (initial hire) of any person into a County department/division where any of the above-mentioned family members are assigned. Exceptions may be approved for hiring in separate divisions/shifts of departments upon recommendation of the Department Director and approval by the County Administrator. The department reserves the right, in coordination with Human Resources, to consider promotion or transfer of existing staff (hired prior to May 17, 2022) into new internal opportunities so long as such movement does not create a supervisory issue as mentioned above.

Section F – Fluid Positions

1) The positions of Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator and Water Treatment Plant Operator in the Water & Sewer Department have been designated as fluid positions. The designation of the position as an "A", "B", or "C" position will be determined by the license held by the incumbent or designated candidate for hire. For example, when apprentices receive their

"C" license, their titles and grades will be changed to that of Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator "C" upon approval of their Department Director. When Water Operations Service Workers receive their "C" license, their titles and grades will be changed to that of Water Treatment Plant Operator "C" upon approval of their Department Director.

2) The positions of Construction Inspector I, II and III have been designated as fluid positions. Construction Inspectors attaining the following designated number of standard and provisional licenses will be promoted to the next higher level upon approval of their Department Director.

   a) Construction Inspector I – This position requires the ability to obtain a Residential 1 & 2 Family Dwellings provisional license. A Residential Family 1 & 2 Family Dwellings standard license must be obtained within one (1) year of issuance of the provisional license.

   b) Construction Inspector II – This position requires a Residential 1 & 2 Family Dwellings standard license and the ability to obtain at least two (2) provisional licenses.

   c) Construction Inspector III – This position requires a Residential 1 & 2 Family Dwellings standard license and at least two (2) additional standard licenses.

3) The positions of Fire and Construction Inspector I, II and III have been designated as fluid positions. Fire and Construction Inspectors attaining the following designated number of standard and provisional licenses will be promoted to the next higher level upon approval of their Department Director.

   a) Fire and Construction Inspector I -- This position requires a Fire Safety Inspector certification from the Florida State Fire Marshall and the ability to obtain a Residential 1 & 2 Family Dwellings provisional license. A Residential 1 & 2 Family Dwellings standard license must be obtained within one (1) year of issuance of the provisional Residential 1 & 2 Family Dwellings license.

   b) Fire and Construction Inspector II – This position requires a Fire Safety Inspector certification from the Florida State Fire Marshall, a Residential 1 & 2 Family Dwellings standard license and the ability to obtain at least two (2) provisional licenses.

   c) Fire and Construction Inspector III – This position requires a Fire Safety Inspector certification from the Florida State Fire Marshall, a residential 1 & 2 Family Dwellings standard license and at least two (2) additional standard licenses.

4) The positions of Engineering Technician, Engineer-in-Training, Design Engineer and Engineer II have been designated as fluid positions. Engineering Technicians recognized as an Engineer Intern by the State of Florida will be promoted to Engineer-in-Training upon approval of their Department Director. Engineers-in-Training who are eligible to attain or who have attained registration by the State of Florida as a Professional Engineer will be promoted to either Design Engineer or Engineer II as designated by the department and upon approval of the Department Director.

5) The positions of Paramedic and EMT have been designated as fluid positions. The designation of a position as a Paramedic or EMT may be determined by the certification held by the incumbent or designated candidate for hire. When employees who are EMTs receive their Paramedic certifications, their titles and grades will be changed to that of Paramedic upon approval of their Department Director.

6) The positions of Utilities Service Worker, Utilities Technician I and Utilities Technician II have been designated as fluid positions. The designation of a position as a Utilities Service Worker, Utilities Technician I or Utilities Technician II may be determined by the license and certification held by the incumbent or designated candidate for hire. When employees who are Utilities Service Workers receive a Level 3 Distribution System Operator License and a Class "C" Wastewater Collection Certification, their titles, grades and pay will be changed to that of a Utilities Technician I upon approval of their Department Director. When employees who are Utilities Technician Is receive a Water Distribution System Operator Level 2 License and a Class 'B' Wastewater Collection Certification, their titles, grades and pay will be changed to that of Utilities Technician II upon approval of their Department Director. Utilities Technician Is and IIs who fail to maintain their licenses and/or certifications will have their title, grade and pay changed to that of a Utilities Service Worker.

7) The positions of Equipment Technician, Certified Equipment Technician and Master Equipment Technician have been designated as fluid positions. The designation of a position as an Equipment Technician, Certified Equipment Technician or Master Equipment Technician may be determined by the certification held by the incumbent or designated candidate for hire. When employees who are Equipment Technicians receive at least one accepted ASE certification, their titles and grades will be changed to Certified Equipment Technician, upon approval of their Department Director. The Fleet division accepts ASE certification in any Automotive or Medium Heavy Truck category. The Transit division accepts ASE certification in any Automotive, Medium Heavy Truck or Transit Bus category. Certified Equipment Technicians who fail to maintain at least one accepted ASE certification will have their title, grade and pay changed to that of Equipment Technician. When employees who are Equipment Technicians or Certified Equipment Technicians receive at least one accepted ASE Master Certification, their titles and grades will be changed to that of Master Equipment Technician upon approval of their Department Director. The Fleet division accepts ASE Master Automobile Technician Certification or ASE Master Medium/Heavy Truck Technician Certification. The Transit division accepts ASE Master Automobile Technician Certification, ASE Master Medium/Heavy Truck Technician Certification or ASE Master Transit Bus Certification. Master Equipment Technicians who fail to maintain their accepted ASE Master Certification will have their title, grade and pay changed to that of Certified Equipment Technician if the employee continues to hold at least one accepted ASE certification or Equipment Technician if the employee does not hold any ASE certifications.

8) The positions of Mobile Equipment Technician, Certified Mobile Equipment Technician and Master Mobile Equipment Technician have been designated as fluid positions. The designation of a position as a Mobile Equipment Technician, Certified Mobile Equipment Technician or Master Mobile Equipment Technician may be determined by the certification held by the incumbent or designated candidate for hire. When employees who are Mobile

Equipment Technicians receive at least one accepted ASE certification, their titles and grades will be changed to Certified Mobile Equipment Technician, upon approval of their Department Director. The Fleet division accepts ASE certifications in any Automotive or Medium Heavy Truck category. Certified Mobile Equipment Technicians who fail to maintain at least one accepted ASE certification will have their title, grade and pay changed to that of Mobile Equipment Technician. When employees who are Mobile Equipment Technicians or Certified Mobile Equipment Technicians, receive at least one accepted ASE Master Certification, their titles and grades will be changed to that of Master Mobile Equipment Technician upon approval of their Department Director. The Fleet division accepts ASE Master Automobile Technician Certification or ASE Master Medium/Heavy Truck Technician Certification. Master Mobile Equipment Technicians who fail to maintain their accepted ASE Master Certification will have their title, grade and pay changed to that of Certified Mobile Equipment Technician if the employee continues to hold at least one accepted ASE certification or Mobile Equipment Technician, if the employee does not hold any ASE certifications.

9) The positions of Traffic Signal Technician I and Traffic Signal Technician II have been designated as fluid positions. The designation of a position as a Traffic Signal Technician I and Traffic Signal Technician II may be determined by the certifications held by the incumbent or designated candidate for hire. When employees who are Traffic Signal Technician I's receive an IMSA Traffic Signal Bench Technician Level II or IMSA Traffic Signal Field Technician Level II Certification, their titles and grades will be changed to that of Traffic Signal Technician II upon approval of their Department Director.

10) The positions of Lift Station Technician and Lift Station Specialist have been designed as fluid positions. The designation of a position as a Lift Station Technician and Lift Station Specialist may be determined by the certifications, license, and experience held by the incumbent or designated candidate for hire. When employees who are Lift Station Technicians receive a Class 'B' Wastewater Collection Certification and a Class 'B' commercial driver license with a tanker endorsement, and have the required experience, their titles, grades and pay will be changed to that of Lift Station Specialist upon approval of their Department Director. Lift Station Specialists who fail to maintain their licenses and/or certifications will have their title, grade and pay changed to that of a Lift Station Technician.

11) The positions of Non-Certified Corrections Technician, Correctional Officer Cadet, and Correctional Officer have been designated as fluid positions. Upon enrollment in a corrections officer certification course and approval of their Department Director, Non-Certified Corrections Technicians will have their title, grades and pay changed to Correctional Officer Cadet. Upon completion of said course and obtaining the correctional officer certification, along with the approval of the Department Director, the Correctional Officer Cadet will have their title, grades and pay changed to Correctional Officer.

12) The positions of Road Technician and General Equipment Operator have been designated as fluid positions. Upon obtaining a valid Class "A" or "B" commercial driver license with air brakes, a Road Technician will have their title and grade changed to that of a General Equipment Operator upon approval of their Department Director.

Section G – Demotions

A position may be filled by the demotion of an employee in accordance with the provisions of these rules and regulations. Demotion may be the result of reclassification of a position, disciplinary action or at the request of the employee. A demoted employee at a minimum, shall fall within the pay range and shall meet the qualifications of the demoted position. Depending on the position of the employee in the new pay grade, an employee may have their pay lowered (as appropriate) to not only be within the pay range, but based on the position responsibilities, time of service with the County, employee qualifications, consideration of the rate of pay and equity for other similarly positioned employees, and any other pertinent information.

Section H – Probation

1) Probationary Period (Initial Employment) – When a person is initially employed to fill a position on a regular full-time or part-time basis, they shall be given a probationary appointment. This period shall be considered the "working test" portion of the employment process and they must pass this period of observation and evaluation successfully. The initial probationary period will be a six (6) month period based on any continuous employment whether it is full-time or part-time.

2) Probationary Period (Extended) – At the discretion of the director and in coordination with Human Resources, an employee may be placed in an extended probationary period for a period of time not to exceed three (3) months past the initial six (6) months probationary period. Any employee placed on an extended probationary period will not be eligible to use annual leave and will not be eligible to be paid any annual leave if termination occurs prior to the end of the extended probationary period. Any request to extend the probationary period beyond the time frames listed above will require a detailed justification in writing from the department and approval of the County Administrator, or designee.

3) Probationary Period (Promoted, Demoted, or Reclassified) – An employee may be placed in a probationary status, at the discretion of the department director up to six months, due to a change in their job title or classification. Termination of an existing employee during this additional probationary period shall be subject to the progressive disciplinary action policy as outlined in the manual.

4) An employee may be dismissed with or without cause at any time during the initial or extension of the initial probationary period or during a probationary period associated with a demotion as a result of disciplinary action.

5) Any probationary employee shall be provided with regular appointment status upon successful completion of the applicable probationary period.

Section I – Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Veteran's Preference

The County will comply with the provisions and standards as outlined in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act of 1994 (USERRA), and the Florida Statutes related to veteran's preference.

Section J – Select Elect Support Employees

Employees hired in the Select Elect Support "SES" category: have their salaries and benefits set by the hiring department, are exempt (non-hourly), serve at the pleasure of the agency head, are subject to personnel action at the discretion of the agency head, and are exempt from the disciplinary and grievance procedures outlined in the County's Human Resource Manual.

Section K – Temporary Appointment

A temporary appointment may be made for a special project or other work of a temporary or transitory nature that will not exist beyond six (6) consecutive calendar months and is not renewable. Upon approval of the County Administrator, temporary appointments may exceed six (6) months when needed to replace or supplement employees or fill approved seasonal positions. A temporary appointment which exists for any part of a month is considered to be in existence for the entire month. At the point the temporary appointment has been identified as lasting longer than six (6) months the County will begin paying retirement in accordance with the Florida Administrative Code Chapter 60S – 1.004.

Section L – Emergency Relief Employees

Employees serving in a "relief" capacity for the County are called into work intermittently, do not work on a scheduled basis, and are therefore exempt from any benefit provisions offered by the County. Periods of emergency relief employment are excluded from continuous service with the County.

Section M – Contingent Workers (through Temporary Staffing Agencies)

Occasionally departments may have short-term temporary staffing needs that are most effectively filled by employees from temporary staffing agencies.

1) Qualifying Circumstances

   If budgeted funds are available, the department director may engage a contingent worker under the following circumstances:

   a) To replace an employee who is on a leave of absence due to a workers' compensation covered injury, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, Military Leave of Absence, or Leave of Absence Without Pay; or

   b) When there is an excessive workload that cannot be handled by current staffing levels.

2) Procedure

   a) The requesting department has the option of utilizing an approved temporary staffing agency to fill the opening or of utilizing a County employee that is available for temporary reassignment and determined to be qualified to perform the work. If utilizing a staffing agency, the department is required to ensure the employee has successfully completed the staffing agency background check PRIOR to allowing the employee to begin work for the County.

b) Department coordinates payment from department's budgeted funds with the staffing agency.

c) Individuals retired through the Florida Retirement System (FRS) shall not be employed through a staffing agency to work for the County until a full 12 months has elapsed after retirement.

3) Special Provisions for Drug-Free Workplace Policy

The County covers all workers with a Drug-Free Workplace Policy. Contingent workers are required to submit to drug testing under the same circumstances that all county employees do.

The department is required to distribute the County's Drug-Free Workplace Policy to each contingent worker, obtain signatures, and forward signed forms to the Human Resources Department.

4) Driving Eligibility Requirements

Contingent Workers who drive county vehicles or operate county equipment must maintain a satisfactory driving record and meet the same standard required of all county employees. See the Employee Driving Records Section for outline of standards.

Section N – Internships

The Okaloosa County Internship Program is designed to provide a structured learning opportunity that offers professional experience within a public sector work environment.

1) Definition

An intern is a temporary, paid or unpaid, work assignment within Okaloosa County government in order to gain practical experience within a particular field of study or function of County government.

2) Program Goals

Internship positions must provide valuable work experience through the practical application of skills and broadening of work knowledge. A structured internship should offer the following:

a) Defined and carefully planned projects and/or duties;

b) Professionally enhancing tasks;

c) Continuous training and mentoring.

3) Procedures and Requirements

County departments seeking to provide internship opportunities must complete and submit the Intern Request Form to the Human Resources Department. The interning department is responsible to ensure background checks, pay roll forms, or other pre-start documents

and training are completed through the Human Resources Department prior to the internship beginning.

Prospective interns must submit to and successfully complete a background check as well as agree to adhere to all County policies while interning.

4) Benefits and Compensation

Interns are not eligible to receive employment benefits granted to regular, full-time employees. Additionally, internship duration may not exceed five (5) consecutive months without approval of the County Administrator.

Requests for paid internships should be submitted and approved during the County's annual budgeting process unless otherwise approved by the County Administrator during the course of the fiscal year. The sponsoring department will be responsible for maintaining and reporting accurate time records.

Section O – Volunteers

Members of the Board of County Commissioners and County departments may use volunteers to assist with official county business. Volunteers shall not be paid and must successfully complete the County's background check requirements. All prospective volunteers shall first be coordinated and approved through the Human Resources Department. Consistent with Section 125.9504, Florida Statutes, volunteers may be furnished such other benefits, subsistence, travel, meals or reimbursement of expenses as approved by the County Administrator.

CHAPTER VIII – EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Revised and effective – 02-06-2024

Section A – Purpose of Evaluations

Performance evaluations are intended to foster discussion about employee job performance between management and staff. Performance evaluations may also be used to:

1) Determine performance award (merit pay) increases (when available);

2) Assist in the selection of employees for promotion;

3) Provide essential information for employee development;

4) Serve as a basis for establishment of layoff rosters.

Section B – Evaluation Program Policy

The Human Resources Department shall be responsible for the establishment and administration of a performance evaluation program for all employees. The performance evaluation shall be in a standard format as prescribed by the Human Resources Director.

Section C – Evaluation Periods and Probationary Increases

1) Probationary Reviews – All part-time and full-time employees shall be evaluated at the end of their initial or extended probationary period. All part-time and full-time employees with satisfactory work performance, shall be eligible for up to a three percent (3%) salary increase upon successful completion of their initial or extended probationary period, with the following exceptions:

    a) EMS Division (Paramedics and EMTs) – These classifications are represented by collective bargaining agent and are subject to wage provisions as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement ("CBA"). Effective November 2021, in the absence of a negotiated provision to allow for a three percent (3%) increase upon successful completion of the probationary period, an increase was added by the County to the starting wage of EMTs and Paramedics upon hire. This action was permitted through the negotiated provisions outlined in the CBA. Please refer to the CBA for information about "wages" applicable to these represented employees.

    b) Corrections Department (Certified Correctional Officers) – Effective July 2022, in lieu of a three percent (3%) increase upon successful completion of the probationary period, an increase will be added to the starting wage of Certified Correctional Officers upon hire.

    c) Non-Certified Corrections Technicians – Effective February 6, 2024, in lieu of a three percent (3%) increase upon successful completion of the probationary period, an increase will be added to the starting wage of Non-Certified Corrections Technicians upon hire.

2) Annual Reviews – All full-time and part-time employees shall be evaluated annually in accordance with direction provided from the Human Resources Department.

Section D – Evaluation Review Process

1) Evaluations shall be prepared by the immediate supervisor of each employee and reviewed by the appropriate department director.

2) Supervisors should use the comments sections of the evaluation in order for the evaluation to be considered complete.

3) The evaluator should discuss the performance evaluation with the employee to include areas of excellence as well as any areas needing improvement or development.

4) The employee, supervisor and department director shall sign the completed evaluation.

Section E – Evaluation Processing

1) For years in which a performance award (merit pay) is available, employees whose performance evaluations demonstrate consistently satisfactory and/or above satisfactory performance may receive an increase in pay as a determined by the terms of the award program in place at that time. Base pay increase will be up to no more than the maximum of the employee's assigned pay grade at the time the increase is approved. An amount equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of any approved amount over the maximum of the pay grade shall be paid as a one-time lump sum payment.

2) Completed evaluations shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Department for processing at least 14 days prior to the effective date.

3) Merit increases, when applicable, shall be effective the first day of the pay period in which the anniversary date occurs.

4) Completed performance evaluations will be maintained by the Human Resources Department in accordance with Chapter XVI – Records and Reports.

Section F – Counseling

Counseling allows a supervisor to bring to an employee's attention the need for improving performance, work habits or behavior, or to serve as a warning against prohibited conduct and/or to clarify an important issue. The supervisor should identify and define area(s) needing improvement, and inform the employee as to how such improvement can be realistically achieved, stressing the importance of satisfactory work performance. A Counseling Form (printed or electronic) may be used to document a counseling session.

The purpose of counseling is to improve the performance of the employee. Counseling is not a formal disciplinary action, and is not grievable.

CHAPTER IX – ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE

Revised and effective – 08-01-2023

Section A – Hours of Work

1) The established workweek for all full-time employees shall be not less than 30 hours.

2) The work schedule for each department shall be established by the department director.

3) Every effort will be made in county departments to accommodate employees required to work Saturdays and/or Sundays for days of worship.

4) Exempt employees who are required to work excessive hours in a pay period may be allowed some flexibility with regard to the number of hours worked in a subsequent pay period, provided however, that the additional hours must be approved in writing by the department director or County Administrator and the hours off must be used within that same fiscal year.

Section B – Lunch Periods

Lunch periods shall be scheduled in a manner to best serve the public. Employees are expected to utilize their lunch period during the hours designated by their supervisor.

Section C – Break Periods

Employees may be given two (2) 15-minute breaks during each eight (8) hour work shift at a time considered convenient by the immediate supervisor. There may be occasions when the workload will not permit breaks.

Section D – Attendance

Each department director shall be responsible for the attendance of all persons in their department.

Section E – Holidays

1) Observed Holidays

   a) The following are County observed holidays:

New Year's Day	Veteran's Day
Martin Luther King's Birthday	Thanksgiving Day
Good Friday	Friday After Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Independence Day	Christmas Day
Labor Day	

Floating Holiday - (see 3 below)

b) For employees who normally work Monday through Friday, holidays falling on Saturday will be observed on the Friday preceding the holiday and those falling on Sunday will be observed on the Monday following the holiday.

If a holiday falls on Saturday and/or Sunday and an employee is normally scheduled to work Saturday and/or Sunday, the actual calendar date of the holiday will be considered the holiday for that employee.

2) Eligibility and Payment

a) All full-time regular employees who are working during the pay period in which the holiday occurs, or who are on approved leave with pay, shall be entitled to holiday pay from the initial date of employment. Part-time, temporary and emergency relief employees are not entitled to holiday pay.

b) All holidays (except floating holiday) will be paid at eight (8) hours.

c) If a non-exempt employee is required to work on a county-approved actual calendar holiday, the employee will be compensated in accordance with the Compensation Plan Chapter.

d) If a holiday falls on an employee's regularly scheduled day off, the employee will be compensated at the discretion of the department director by either:

i) Paying the employee eight (8) hours holiday pay at the regular hourly rate in addition to their earned salary for that workweek; or

ii) Allowing the employee to take eight (8) hours off at another time within 60 days.

e) Divisions/Departments on the four (4) – 10 hours workweek schedule will flex their workweeks as follows:

i) In a week with one (1) holiday, the workweek will total 32 hours worked;

ii) In a week with two (2) holidays, the workweek will total 24 hours worked.

f) Deferred holidays may be taken at a time agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor or department director.

3) Floating Holiday

Full-time employees with five (5) years or more continuous service will be eligible for a 10-hour floating holiday to be taken when the employee wishes, subject to department director approval (birthday, anniversary, etc.). The floating holiday will be taken on a calendar year basis and cannot be accumulated. There will be no cash payment in lieu of use.

Note: The following section referencing PTO (Paid Time Off) will be effective for all employees October 1, 2024. This policy is non-applicable to members of collateral bargaining units at this time.

Section F – Paid Time Off (PTO)

The purpose of Paid Time Off, hereinafter known as PTO is to establish a leave program that allows eligible BOCC employees flexibility in planning for and taking time off. PTO combines personal business or recreation, doctor appointments and unexpected absences such as illness or illness in the family, into a single system that simplifies accountability and tracking.

Accrual of PTO begins on the date of employment for all regular employees, and in most cases, ends with the date of separation. Regular employees for the purposes of PTO are all employees except relief, seasonal, and temporary employees. For the purpose of computing PTO taken, only normal working days/schedules are to be counted as leave.

PTO shall be earned based on the following schedule for regular employees:

Year of Service	**PTO Leave Accrued Each Month**
Less than 2 years of service	14
More than 2 years but less than 5 years of service	16
More than 5 years but less than 10 years of service	18
More than 10 years but less than 15 years of service	20
More than 15 years but less than 20 years of service	21
20 years or more of service	22

PTO accrual for fractions of a month shall be prorated based on hours credited in a pay status. Please see the schedule below:

Date of Employment	Leave
1-7	100%
8-14	75%
15-21	50%
22-31	25%

Date of Termination	Leave
1-7	25%
8-14	50%
15-21	75%
22-31	100%

Section G – Eligibility

All full-time, regularly scheduled employees are eligible to earn PTO. All part-time employees who work a regularly established schedule may earn PTO after one (1) year of service at one-half (1/2) the rate of regular full-time employees, except that the accrual rates shall not increase with additional years of employment.

Section H – Restrictions on Accumulation/Use of PTO

1) Any employee using more than 80 hours of leave without pay due to using all available PTO will have their anniversary date adjusted for the period of leave and the employee will not accrue PTO during the leave of absence without pay.

2) Earned PTO may not exceed 960 hours. Amounts in excess of 960 hours shall be forfeited unless used by the end of the pay period in which September 30th falls.

3) Any employee making a department transfer within the Board of County Commissioners will retain any unused PTO leave. Upon initial employment, Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners will not accept accrued leave earned from another agency.

4) No leave without pay will be allowed when the employee has accrued PTO leave to cover the period of leave and is eligible to use PTO leave. However, use of PTO leave is strictly prohibited for absences covered by workers' compensation. Employees on military leave who have exhausted their annual 240 hours paid military leave may elect to use leave without pay for additional military assignments.

Section I – Use of PTO

1) Employees shall begin accruing PTO on the beginning date of employment and are eligible to use leave as accrued.

2) Employees retiring or separating from the County may use no more than two (2) scheduled days of PTO per week within the last three (3) months of employment. Exceptions must be approved by the County Administrator.

3) Any PTO leave taken and any terminal leave to be paid must be reported on biweekly time reports and exception reports.

4) Minimum Charge – One quarter (1/4) hour is the minimum charge for leave, and additional leave is charged in multiples of one-quarter (1/4) hour.

5) Certification by Physician

   For the following reasons, a medical certification signed by a licensed physician may be required by the employee's department director to substantiate a request for PTO:

   a) Leave of any duration if absence from duty recurs frequently or habitually provided the employee has been notified or warned that a physician's certification will be required.

   b) To support a request for FMLA leave, and a fitness for duty report to return to work.

Section J – Approval of PTO Leave Requests

1) An employee must request PTO in advance in accordance with current Policies and Procedures of the employee's Department/Division so conflicts may be avoided and coverage assured. Approval of PTO is based on the needs of the department and is not guaranteed. The determination of the Department Director on the matter of scheduled PTO shall be final.

2) Leave requests in excess of two (2) consecutive weeks must be approved by the Department Director. Leave requests in excess of two (2) consecutive weeks by a Department Director must be approved by the respective Deputy County Administrator to which they report.

3) If an emergency prevents prior approval of leave, the employee must contact their immediate supervisor prior to the scheduled start time to report the absence, in accordance with current Policies and Procedures of the employee's Department/Division. If the immediate supervisor cannot be reached, the employee should contact and secure the approval of the designated supervisor next in line or the Department Director.

4) Excessive unscheduled absences, especially those occurring on the first or last day of the employee's work week/schedule, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Section K – PTO Advances

PTO will not be advanced except when an employee is injured on-the-job during the first 90 days of employment. Advanced PTO will be pro-rated, considering the amount of PTO the employee has accrued, to cover the 7-day waiting period of Workers Compensation.

Section L – Payout of PTO Upon Separation of Employment

1) In cases of separation of employment with Okaloosa County by voluntary resignation, retirement or termination that does not involve gross misconduct, employees who have successfully completed their probationary period may receive up to the maximum of 480 hours of PTO payout.

2) An employee may choose to receive a lump sum payment of PTO, either at the time the employee enters the DROP Program or after the employee's DROP participation ends. Employees participating in the DROP Program shall continue to accrue PTO. If an employee chooses to receive the maximum lump sum payment of 480 hours of PTO at the time the employee enters the DROP, no further lump sum payments shall be made.

3) Employees that have previously taken a leave payout when entering the DROP Program are only eligible for payout of PTO hours at the time of separation equal to the difference of 480 hours minus the prior payout of hours.

4) PTO Payout- Gross Misconduct

a) Any employee terminating employment with the County who is alleged to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery during employment shall have their leave balance held in abeyance until the completion of the investigation. If the investigation reveals the allegations to be unsubstantiated, the County will authorize the payment of PTO leave in accordance with this Section. Any employee terminating who has completed their initial or extended probationary period shall forfeit all rights and benefits under this Section if they are:

   i) Determined by the County, during its internal investigation, to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment; or

   ii) Found guilty or entered a plea of guilty or no contest in a court of competent jurisdiction to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment, committed prior to terminating; or

   iii) Terminated based upon the employee having admitted they committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment.

b) If the County, during its internal investigation, determines the employee has committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment, or otherwise meets any of the criteria contained in subsection a) (1), (2) or (3) above, then the County, through its Human Resources & Risk Management Director, shall issue a written determination setting forth its findings and the basis for that determination. Within five (5) business days of the issuance of the determination by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director, the employee may seek review of that determination by the County Administrator. The County Administrator, or a designee, shall review the basis for the determination and relevant material submitted by the employee and either uphold or reverse the determination of the County. The decision shall be final.

c) The appeal and review of any determination relating to the forfeiture of rights and benefits under this Section is separate from any appeal and review of an adverse employment action under the County's grievance process.

Section M – Optional Yearly PTO Leave Pay Out

There will be an optional pay out of PTO leave in November of each year. Employees who have a balance of at least 240 PTO hours may choose to be paid out up to 24 hours of PTO Leave in eight (8) hour increments.

Section N – Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank

1) Purpose

The purpose of the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank is to establish a plan allowing the participation of full-time regular employees to bank leave for use after the depletion of their PTO and compensatory leave.

2) Eligibility

a) In order to be eligible for membership in the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank, an employee must:

i) Be a full-time employee; and

ii) Have completed one (1) year of employment with the Board prior to application for membership; and,

iii) Have a minimum of 80 hours of accumulated PTO at the time of application for membership.

b) The Application for Membership in the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank Form must be completed with the following:

i) Employee's name;

ii) A statement that the employee's participation is voluntary;

iii) An authorization for an initial contribution of eight (8) hours of PTO leave to the bank;

iv) An authorization for an additional contribution of PTO upon depletion by the bank;

v) A statement of terms and conditions of membership in the bank;

vi) The signature of the participating employee.

c) Eligible employees will have 30 calendar days following the completion of one (1) year of employment to join the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank. In addition, eligible employees may join the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank during the annual open enrollment period from August 1st to September 15th.

3) Participation/Maintenance

a) Participation in the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank is at all times voluntary and a participating member may withdraw at any time by giving written notice to the administrator of the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank.

b) When 320 hours have been deposited in the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank, the bank will be activated for use by eligible employees.

c) When the balance of the Leave Bank drops below 240 hours, each member will be required to contribute eight (8) hours of PTO (not to exceed 16 hours in any one (1) calendar year).

d) Should a member be in the process of applying for leave from the bank at the time the bank needs replenishment, membership shall be continued and replenishment shall be waived.

e) A member of the bank may request up to 240 hours from the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank. An additional 240 hours may be requested by the member due to

extenuating circumstances. Approval for the additional 240 hours shall require renewed medical evaluation and committee review.

f) No member shall use more than 480 hours of leave from the bank in a calendar year.

g) Hours contributed to the bank shall be placed in a single account for use by all members. No contributions for the benefit of a specific individual, illness or position will be accepted.

h) A participating member who withdraws leave hours from the bank will not be required to replace those hours, except as a regular contributing member of the bank.

i) Any leave contributed to the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank by a member shall be forfeited upon the employee's cancellation of membership in the bank, retirement or termination from county employment.

j) Emergency Medical PTO leave may be granted retroactive for a period not to exceed 80 hours from the date an application for leave is received by Human Resources.

k) In the event the employee returns to work prior to using all leave granted, any unused leave shall be returned to the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank.

l) The following occurrences do not qualify for use of Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank hours:

   i) Cosmetic surgery, unless necessitated by an illness, accident or injury not excluded under this sub-section;

   ii) Intentional self-inflicted injuries;

   iii) Illness, accident or injury to a member of the employee's family;

   iv) Personal illness, accident or injury covered by workers' compensation;

   v) Normal pregnancy and delivery without serious complications.

4) Request to Use Banked Emergency Medical PTO Leave

   a) Eligibility to request use of banked leave shall be:

      i) That banked leave be used for member's illness, injury or accident;

      ii) That all PTO and compensatory leave on employee's record have been exhausted;

iii) That the employee's department director has approved the request and attests:

(1) The leave will not be used for workers' compensation injury;

(2) A doctor's statement has been provided as to the nature of the illness or injury, the anticipated recuperation period and prognosis for recovery or return to work.

(3) That the member has exhausted all PTO and compensatory leave on record.

b) The department shall provide Human Resources with the request to use banked leave on the appropriate form and shall include:

i) Date absence began;

ii) Number of hours of absence to date;

iii) Number of hours of leave without pay (if any) during this period;

iv) An original doctor's statement;

v) An attestation the employee/member has exhausted all available leave;

vi) Signature of the department director.

c) If the request to use Emergency Medical PTO leave is approved, members shall not be required to pay back the leave awarded unless:

i) Upon investigation and findings of abuse of the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank.

d) If the request to use banked Emergency Medical PTO leave is denied, members shall have the right to appeal the denial to the County Administrator within five (5) working days after being notified of the denial. The decision of the County Administrator shall be final.

e) This policy does not guarantee more job protected leave than is allowable under FMLA

5) Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank Committee

a) Each department having members in the leave Bank shall nominate one (1) employee to serve on the committee.

b) To be qualified for appointment, each employee must be eligible to participate in the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank and must have elected to do so.

c) Five (5) members [plus two (2) alternates] will be selected (names drawn at random) by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director from the nominated employees to serve on the committee. The five (5)-member committee will serve for a period of two (2) years.

d) The committee shall meet as needed to review requests to use Emergency Medical PTO leave. The committee shall approve or deny a request within five (5) working days.

e) The committee shall appoint a chairperson who will serve as spokesperson in all administrative matters.

f) The Human Resources & Risk Management Director shall be a non-voting member of the committee and shall serve as the administrator of the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank. The Human Resources & Risk Management Director shall not be required to participate in the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank. The Human Resources & Risk Management Director shall:

i) Maintain accurate and reliable written records regarding all functions of the Leave Bank;

ii) Investigate alleged abuse of the Leave Bank;

iii) Review all Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank awards prior to communicating award to requesting employees.

iv) Annually provide a summary report to Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank members, which includes:

(1) Number of hours on deposit in the bank at the close of the calendar year;

(2) Total number of hours withdrawn from the bank during the calendar year;

(3) Number of employees who withdrew leave from the bank during the calendar year.

g) Approval to grant hours will be by majority vote. The committee may grant fewer hours than requested.

6) Termination of Membership

a) Members who choose not to contribute to replenish the bank when such request is made will be dropped from the bank.

b) Members who choose to withdraw from participation after initially contributing to the bank may not withdraw their contributed leave.

c) A member who has utilized banked leave and returns to work may reapply to the bank during the next open enrollment, when he/she meets all eligibility requirements.

d) Members who withdraw from participation from the Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank may not reapply for membership for a period of 12 months. The Application for Voluntary Withdrawal Form is available in Human Resources and online.

7) Abuse of Emergency Medical PTO Leave Bank Policy

Alleged abuse of the Leave Bank shall be investigated by the administrator of the bank and, if warranted, the participating employee shall repay all leave credits drawn from the bank and may have his/her membership in the bank canceled by majority vote of the committee. In addition, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

Note: The following sections referencing annual and sick leave are in effect for all employees until September 30, 2024. These policies will remain in effect for members of collective bargaining units at this time.

Section O – Annual Leave (Vacation)

1) Accrual of Annual Leave

a) Full-time employees accrue annual leave based on years of service as follows:

Years of Service	Leave Accrued Each Month
0-5	8 hours
6-10	10 hours
11-15	12 hours
16-20	14 hours
21-25	16 hours
26+	18 hours

b) Upon initial appointment or upon termination, annual leave accrual will be prorated based on the date of employment or date of termination as follows:

Date of Employment	Leave
1-7	100%
8-14	75%
15-21	50%
22-31	25%

Date of Termination	Leave
1-7	25%
8-14	50%
15-21	75%
22-31	100%

c) Any employee using more than 80 hours leave without pay due to using all available annual or sick leave, will have their anniversary date adjusted for the period of the leave and the employee will not accrue annual leave during the leave of absence without pay.

d) Probationary employees accrue annual leave from the date of employment; however, they cannot take annual leave until the initial or extended probationary period is complete. Any employee placed in a probationary status due to a change in their job title/classification shall be entitled to use any benefits to which they were entitled prior to the change.

e) Part-time employees shall accrue leave after one (1) year of service at one-half (1/2) the rate of regular full-time employees, except that the accrual rate shall not increase after five (5), 10, 15, 20 or 25 years of employment.

f) Any employee making a department transfer within the Board of County Commissioners will retain any unused annual leave. Upon initial employment, Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners will not accept accrued annual leave earned from another agency.

g) No leave without pay will be allowed when the employee has accrued annual leave to cover the period of leave and is eligible to use annual leave. However, use of annual leave is strictly prohibited for absences covered by workers' compensation. Employees on military leave who have exhausted their annual 240 hours paid military leave may elect to use leave without pay for additional military assignments.

h) Any annual leave taken and any terminal annual leave to be paid must be reported on biweekly time reports and exception reports.

2) Request for Leave

a) A request for annual leave shall be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor and approved by the department director or designee. If prior approval is not requested, an employee must call their immediate supervisor for approval, prior to the beginning of the work shift. The vacation schedule shall be arranged in each department so that, insofar as practical, the department can function without the hiring of additional part-time help.

All extended leave (more than 80 successive hours) will have the approval of the department director and notification of the Human Resources & Risk Management Director.

3) Minimum Charge – One quarter (1/4) hour is the minimum charge for annual leave, and additional leave is charged in multiples of one-quarter (1/4) hour.

4) Use of Annual Leave

Annual leave may be granted for the following purposes:

a) Vacation Leave;

b) Absence due to illness of an employee or member of the employee's family;

c) Absences for transaction of personal business that cannot be conducted during off-duty hours;

d) Religious holidays other than those designated by these rules as official holidays or designated by the Board as holidays;

e) Employees may not use sick leave for annual leave;

f) Any absences from work not covered by other types of leave provisions established by these rules.

5) Accumulation of Annual Leave

There is no maximum amount of unused annual leave which may be accrued.

6) Payment for Unused Annual Leave

a) Standard Annual Leave Payout Policy

i) All unused annual leave, up to the established maximum hours listed below, shall be paid to an employee upon separation from the County service, provided the initial or extended probationary period was completed. Employees electing to participate in the Florida State Retirement System Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) may choose to receive payment for unused annual leave up to the maximum upon entry into the DROP. Employees choosing this option will continue to accrue annual leave and may use it in accordance with the Annual Leave (Vacation) Section, but will not then be eligible for payment of any remaining unused annual leave upon actual termination of employment with the County.

Eligible full-time and part-time employees will be paid for all hours of unused annual leave up to a maximum of 240 hours.

ii) Any employee terminating who has completed their initial or extended probationary period who is alleged to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery during employment shall have their leave balance held in abeyance until the completion of the investigation. If the investigation reveals the allegations to be unsubstantiated, the County will authorize the payment of terminal annual leave in accordance with this Section. In no case shall the County hold the terminal annual leave in abeyance for more than 180 days from termination.

iii) Any employee terminating who has completed their initial or extended probationary period shall forfeit all rights and benefits under this Section if they are:

(1) Determined by the County, during its internal investigation, to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment; or

(2) Found guilty or entered a plea of guilty or no contest in a court of competent jurisdiction to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment, committed prior to terminating; or

(3) Terminated based upon the employee having admitted that they committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment.

iv) If the County, during its internal investigation, determines that the employee has committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment, or otherwise meets any of the criteria contained in subsection iii) (1), (2) or (3) above, then the County, through its Human Resources & Risk Management Director, shall issue a written determination setting forth its findings and the basis for that determination. Within five (5) business days of the issuance of the determination by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director, the employee may seek review of that determination by the County Administrator. The County Administrator, or his designee, shall review the basis for the determination and relevant material submitted by the employee and either uphold or reverse the determination of the County. The decision shall be final.

v) The appeal and review of any determination relating to the forfeiture of rights and benefits under this Section is separate from any appeal and review of an adverse employment action under the County's grievance process.

b) Special Annual Leave Payout Policy

i) Any employee terminating who has completed their initial or extended probationary period who is alleged to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery during employment shall have their leave balance held in abeyance until the completion of the investigation. If the investigation reveals the allegations to be unsubstantiated, the County will authorize the payment of terminal annual leave in accordance with this Section. In no case shall the County hold the terminal annual leave in abeyance for more than 180 days from termination.

ii) Any employee terminating who has completed their initial or extended probationary period shall forfeit all rights and benefits under this Section if they are:

(1) Determined by the County, during its internal investigation, to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment; or

(2) Found guilty or entered a plea of guilty or no contest in a court of competent jurisdiction to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment, committed prior to terminating; or

(3) Terminated based upon the employee having admitted they committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment.

iii) If the County, during its internal investigation, determines the employee has committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment, or otherwise meets any of the criteria contained in subsection iii) (1), (2) or (3) above, then the County, through its Human Resources & Risk Management Director, shall issue a written determination setting forth its findings and the basis for that determination. Within five (5) business days of the issuance of the determination by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director, the employee may seek review of that determination by the County Administrator. The County Administrator, or his designee, shall review the

basis for the determination and relevant material submitted by the employee and either uphold or reverse the determination of the County. The decision shall be final.

iv) The appeal and review of any determination relating to the forfeiture of rights and benefits under this Section is separate from any appeal and review of an adverse employment action under the County's grievance process.

Section P – Sick Leave

1) Abuse of sick leave is a serious offense and the use of sick leave will be carefully monitored by department directors and the Human Resources & Risk Management Director. Employees suspected of abusing sick leave may be required to produce a doctor's certification and be examined by a county appointed physician to verify the individual's condition or other appropriate actions. Any employee who is determined to have abused sick leave may be disciplined up to dismissal depending on the circumstances.

2) Rate of Leave

   a) Full-time employees accrue sick leave at the rate of eight (8) hours per month;

   b) Sick leave does not have a maximum accrual.

   c) Upon initial appointment or upon termination, sick leave accrual will be prorated based on the date of employment or date of termination as follows:

Date of Employment	Leave Earned
1-7	100%
8-14	75%
15-21	50%
22-31	25%

Date of Termination	Leave Earned
1-7	25%
8-14	50%
15-21	75%
22-31	100%

   d) Any employee using more than 80 hours leave without pay due to using all available annual or sick leave, will have their anniversary date adjusted for the period of the leave and will not accrue sick leave during the leave of absence without pay.

   e) Any employee making a departmental transfer within the Board of County Commissioners will retain any unused sick leave. Upon initial employment, Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners will not accept accrued sick leave earned from another agency.

   f) Part-time employees do not accrue sick leave.

g) No leave without pay will be allowed when the employee has accrued annual or sick leave to cover the period of leave and is eligible to use this annual or sick leave. However, use of sick leave is strictly prohibited for absences covered by workers' compensation wage reimbursement.

5) Request for Sick Leave

a) A request for sick leave will be submitted to the immediate supervisor. If prior approval is not requested, an employee must call their immediate supervisor for approval, prior to the beginning of the work shift.

b) Accrued sick leave may be taken during an initial or extended probationary period. Sick leave cannot be taken for absences covered by workers' compensation wage reimbursement.

c) Sick leave will not be advanced except when an employee is injured on-the-job during the probationary period. Probationary employees injured on the job will be allowed to charge the first seven (7) days [or less than seven (7)] to their sick leave once it has been established the absence will not be covered by workers' compensation.

d) Any sick leave taken must be reported on biweekly time reports and exception reports.

6) Extended Leave

All extended leave (more than 80 successive hours) will have the approval of the department director and notification of the Human Resources & Risk Management Director.

7) Minimum Charge – One-quarter (1/4) hour is the minimum charge for sick leave and additional leave is charged in multiples of one-quarter (1/4) hour.

8) Use of Sick Leave

Sick leave may be granted for the following purposes:

a) Personal illness or injury not covered by workers' compensation wage reimbursement;

b) Personal medical, dental, or optical appointment, examination, or treatment which is necessary during working hours;

c) Exposure to a contagious disease that would endanger others;

d) Pregnancy and maternity leave;

e) Dependent illness – Up to a maximum of 96 hours annually of the employee's accrued sick leave may be used for dependent illness. For purposes of this section, dependent shall be defined as follows:

i) Parent – biological parent of an employee or an individual who stood in loco parentis to an employee when the employee was son or daughter.

ii) Son or Daughter – biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis who is:

(1) Under 18 years of age; or

(2) 18 years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.

iii) Spouse – husband or wife.

iv) Spouse's parent.

9) Unused Sick Leave

a) Standard Sick Leave Payout Policy

i) Unused sick leave will not be paid at termination for employees terminating service with less than 10 consecutive years of employment with the County.

For employees terminating service with at least 10 consecutive years of employment, payment for unused sick leave will be based on the following schedule:

50% of the first 480 hours
25% of the second 480 hours
20% of all hours over 960 hours

ii) Any employee terminating with at least 10 consecutive years of employment with the County who is alleged to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery during employment shall have their leave balance held in abeyance until the completion of the investigation. If the investigation reveals the allegations to be unsubstantiated, the County will authorize the payment of terminal annual leave in accordance with this Section. In no case shall the County hold the terminal annual leave in abeyance for more than 180 days from termination.

iii) Any employee terminating who has completed their initial or extended probationary period shall forfeit all rights and benefits under this Section if they are:

(1) Determined by the County, during its internal investigation, to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment; or

(2) Found guilty or entered a plea of guilty or no contest in a court of competent jurisdiction to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment, committed prior to terminating; or

(3) Terminated based upon the employee having admitted that they committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment.

iv) If the County, during its internal investigation, determines the employee has committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment, or otherwise meets any of the criteria contained in subsection iii) (1), (2) or (3) above, then the County, through its Human Resources & Risk Management Director, shall issue a written determination setting forth its findings and the basis for that determination. Within five (5) business days of the issuance of the determination by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director, the employee may seek review of that determination by the County Administrator. The County Administrator, or his designee, shall review the basis for the determination and relevant material submitted by the employee and either uphold or reverse the determination of the County. The decision shall be final.

v) The appeal and review of any determination relating to the forfeiture of rights and benefits under this Section is separate from any appeal and review of an adverse employment action under the County's grievance process.

b) Special Sick Leave Payout Policy

i) Any employee terminating with at least 10 consecutive years of employment with the County who is alleged to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery during employment shall have their leave balance held in abeyance until the completion of the investigation. If the investigation reveals the allegations to be unsubstantiated, the County will authorize the payment of terminal annual leave in accordance with this Section. In no case shall the County hold the terminal annual leave in abeyance for more than 180 days from termination.

ii) Any employee terminating who has completed their initial or extended probationary period shall forfeit all rights and benefits under this Section if they are:

(1) Determined by the County, during its internal investigation, to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment; or

(2) Found guilty or entered a plea of guilty or no contest in a court of competent jurisdiction to have committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment, committed prior to terminating; or

(3) Terminated based upon the employee having admitted they committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment.

iii) If the County, during its internal investigation, determines the employee has committed, aided or abetted in any theft, embezzlement, fraud, official misconduct or bribery committed in connection with their employment, or otherwise meets any of the criteria contained in subsection iii) (1), (2) or (3) above, then the County, through its Human Resources & Risk Management Director, shall issue a written determination setting forth its findings and the basis for that determination. Within five (5) business days of the issuance of the determination by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director, the employee may seek review of that determination by the County Administrator. The County Administrator, or his designee, shall review the basis for the determination and relevant material submitted by the employee and either uphold or reverse the determination of the County. The decision shall be final.

iv) The appeal and review of any determination relating to the forfeiture of rights and benefits under this Section is separate from any appeal and review of an adverse employment action under the County's grievance process.

10) Certification by Physician

For the following reasons, a medical certification signed by a licensed physician may be required by the employee's department director to substantiate a request for sick leave:

a) Any period of absence (due to illness) consisting of 32 hours or more, commencing after 24 hours, or at the discretion of the department director.

b) To support a request for sick leave during a period when the employee is on vacation leave, or when taken before or after a holiday or other scheduled day off.

c) Leave of any duration if absence from duty recurs frequently or habitually provided the employee has been notified or warned that a certificate will be required.

d) To support a request for FMLA leave, and a fitness for duty report to return to work.

Section Q – Optional Yearly Sick Leave Pay Out

There will be an optional pay out of unused sick leave in November of each year based on use of leave in the previous fiscal year and in accordance with the following schedule:

Employees who have a balance of at least 200 hours of sick leave may choose to be paid for unused sick leave indexed to the amount of sick leave used as follows:

Sick Leave Hours Used	Maximum Unused Hours Paid at Option of Employee
0-12	24 hours
13-24	16 hours
25-40	8 hours
41+	not eligible for payout

Section R – Bereavement Leave

1) A maximum of 24 regularly scheduled and consecutive work hours with pay will be granted to a full-time employee when a death in the family occurs.

2) The family members to be included as bereavement leave are:

Husband	Father-in-Law	Step Parents
Wife	Brother-in-Law	Step Children
Mother	Sister-in-Law	Step Brother
Father	Son-in-Law	Step Sister
Son	Daughter-in-Law	Uncle & Spouse
Daughter	Grandparents	Aunt & Spouse
Brother	Great Grandparents	Niece
Sister	Grandchildren	Nephew
Mother-in-Law	Great Grandchildren	

3) Bereavement leave will not be charged against the employee's accumulated annual leave or sick leave time.

4) The employee must notify the supervisor/department director of the need for bereavement leave as soon as possible so that your time will not be docked.

5) Part-time employees will be granted bereavement leave only when the death occurs on days previously scheduled as duty hours/days. Any other scheduled days off will not be paid as bereavement leave.

6) The department director will verify the relationship of the deceased family member in accordance with the above relationships. The relationship of the deceased to the employee will be indicated on the biweekly time reports and exception reports.

Section S – Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Leave

The following information is intended to be used as a guide for FMLA leave. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 as amended in 2008 and 2010 is detailed and lengthy; the provisions contained therein shall apply to Okaloosa County employees. Please contact Human Resources for more details.

1) FMLA leave provides up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave during a 12-month period to eligible employees for certain family and medical reasons.

    a) Reasons for taking leave for up to 12 weeks:

        i) To care for the employee's child after birth, placement for adoption or foster care (leave may begin on the date of birth or placement and expires at the end of a 12-month period);

        ii) To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent, who has a serious health condition;

iii) For a serious health condition where the employee is unable to perform the essential functions of their job;

iv) For a "qualifying exigency" when the employee's spouse, child, or parent is in or called to service in a foreign country as a member of the armed forces, National Guard and/or Reserves.

b) For purposes of the 12-week entitlement, the 12-month period shall be defined as beginning on October 1st of any given year and ending on September 30th, of the following year.

2) FMLA leave provides up to 26 weeks of job-protected leave during a 12-month period for an eligible employee to care for a covered service member or covered veteran with a serious injury or illness which occurred while serving on active duty or a preexisting injury or illness which was aggravated in the course of military service and is within five years preceding the date of treatment. To be eligible for this leave the employee must be a spouse, child, parent or next of kin of the covered service member or covered veteran.

a) For purposes of the 26-week entitlement, the 12-month period shall be defined as beginning on October 1st of any given year and ending on September 30th, of the following year.

3) Employees are required to use their available annual, compensatory or sick leave during the family leave in accordance with normal leave policies as outlined in this Policy Manual.

4) Employees are eligible if they have worked for Okaloosa County for at least 12 months, and for 1250 hours over the previous 12 months.

5) Employees should provide 30 days advance notice when the leave is foreseeable.

6) A medical certification is required to support a request for FMLA leave, and a fitness for duty report must be submitted prior to returning to work.

7) The employee's group health insurance will be continued for the duration of FMLA leave; employees must continue to pay their share of health insurance premiums while on leave.

8) Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees will be restored to their original or equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

9) The use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

Section T – Military Leave of Absence

The following information is intended to be used as a guide for military leave of absence. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) is detailed and lengthy; the provisions contained therein shall apply to Okaloosa County employees.

1) Employees are eligible for military leave of absence when they are assigned (volunteered or ordered) to active or inactive duty in connection with U.S. Reserve Forces or the

National Guard. A copy of the member's official orders should be submitted as much in advance of the leave as possible.

2) Compensation for employees called to military training exercises shall be full county pay up to 240 working hours per fiscal year.

3) Compensation for employees called to active military service shall be full county pay for normally scheduled work days within the first 30 calendar days. An employee whose active duty extends beyond 30 days, and whose military pay is less than their county salary, will have their military pay supplemented by the County so their total salary equals their county salary at the time they were called to active military duty. The supplement will continue for one (1) year from the date of military activation. Adequate documentation verifying military pay must be provided to Human Resources before the supplement can be paid. Leave accrual will continue for one (1) year from the date of military activation.

4) Absences exceeding the respective 240 working hours or 30-day caps may, upon request of the employee, be charged to annual leave, floating holiday or compensatory leave and/or leave without pay, provided paid leave combined with any supplemental pay does not exceed the employee's county salary.

5) An employee on military leave of absence may elect to continue group health and dental insurance coverage as if the employee had continued working. The County will continue to pay the premiums up to one (1) year for the employee, while premiums for dependent coverage will continue to be the responsibility of the employee. If an employee called to active military service chooses not to elect continued health and dental insurance coverage, then upon re-employment, the employee's health insurance benefits present before deployment will be reinstated, including family coverage, without any waiting period.

6) Returning employees will retain seniority, status and rate of pay as though the employee on military leave of absence had been continuously employed. Re-employment will be granted pursuant to USERRA.

7) When an employee in a covered position leaves employment with Okaloosa County for the purpose of serving in the Armed Forces of the United States and is separated there from with an honorable discharge, Okaloosa County shall reinstate or re-employ such person to the same or equivalent position within one (1) year and shall be awarded preference in promotion ahead of all other employees who are as well or less qualified for the position. Eligibility for promotion shall apply only to the first promotion after reinstatement or re-employment.

Section U – Civil Leave

1) When an employee has been summoned for jury duty or as a witness in county matters, he/she must notify the supervisor/department director and present the summons.

2) If the employee is in court (or required to remain in the court's jurisdiction) for the entire working day said employee will receive the regular day's pay. The same does not apply on an employee's regular day off; on those days the employee will receive only the court's compensation.

3) Upon release from the court's jurisdiction, an employee will be allowed a maximum of one and one-half (1½) hours to attend to personal matters before returning to duty, if the entire day has not been required by the court.

Section V – Leave of Absence, Without Pay (LOA/WOP)

1) A full-time employee, if valid reasons are presented, may be granted a leave of absence not to exceed six (6) months upon approval of the department director. Each case will be handled on an individual basis on its own merit.

2) An employee on a LOA/WOP, will not receive pay for holidays falling within this period of time.

3) When an employee is placed on or returns from LOA/WOP, annual and sick leave will be prorated in the same manner as a new or terminated employee based on the effective date.

4) All annual leave and compensatory time accumulated will be used before commencement of a LOA/WOP. Annual leave will not accrue during the LOA/WOP.

5) Sick leave may remain intact and be protected. Sick leave will not accrue during the LOA/WOP.

6) Seniority rights are retained but the anniversary date will be adjusted the number of calendar days off on leave of absence.

7) Upon resuming employment, the employee's assignment will be dependent upon the department's needs at that particular time. Positions will not be held vacant until the employee returns to work. Exceptions to this provision will be granted in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act.

8) While on an approved LOA/WOP the employee must pay for their insurance coverage to avoid an interruption of benefits. These amounts should be paid to the Finance Department. Exceptions to this provision will be granted in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act.

9) An employee will be placed on a LOA/WOP if absent more than 80 consecutive hours without pay [or two (2) weeks for employees working 24-hour shifts]. The LOA/WOP will be effective retroactively to the date of the first full shift without pay.

Section W – Fit For Duty

Okaloosa County is committed to providing a safe workplace for the benefit of all employees. In order to provide a safe work environment, employees must be able to perform their job duties in a safe, secure, productive, and effective manner and remain able to do so throughout the entire time they are working. This policy covers those situations in which an employee is having observable difficulty performing their work duties in a manner that is safe for the employee and/or for their co-workers or is posing an imminent and serious safety threat to themselves or others. This policy includes the circumstances under which an employee may be referred for a fitness for duty evaluation.

1) An employee is fit for duty when they are in a physical, mental, and emotional state which enables them to perform their essential job functions - with or without a reasonable

accommodation - in a manner that does not threaten the safety or health of oneself, co-workers, property, or the public at large. An employee's essential job functions are the fundamental duties of the position or the primary reasons the position exists. For all jobs at the County, essential job functions include, but are not limited to: regular attendance, the ability to work without disruption to the workplace, and the ability to comply with applicable conduct standards. An at-risk employee is anyone who is mentally or physically unready or unable to perform essential job functions.

2) Guidelines:

a) Employees are responsible for managing their health in such a way that they can safely perform their essential job functions, with or without reasonable accommodation.

b) The determination by a supervisor to refer an employee for a fitness for duty evaluation must involve consultation with Human Resources unless the nature of the situation dictates immediate attention.

c) The Human Resources & Risk Management Department will be responsible for coordinating the fitness for duty evaluation. These responsibilities include:

i) Identify who will conduct the fitness for duty evaluation

ii) Receive the results of the fitness for duty evaluation

iii) Coordinate payment for the fitness for duty evaluation

iv) Communicate results as necessary to the employee's supervisor

d) The Human Resources & Risk Management Department will pay the cost of fitness for duty evaluations.

e) An impartial, independent healthcare evaluator with appropriate expertise will conduct a fitness for duty evaluation.

f) The Human Resources & Risk Management office must receive a return to work/fitness for duty form saying the employee is "fit for duty" from the independent evaluator before returning to work.

g) An employee referred for a fitness for duty evaluation will be relieved of duties pending completion of the fitness for duty evaluation.

h) An employee's pay status while fitness for duty is being determined will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

i) Application of this policy is not intended to substitute for other County policies or procedures related to performance. In addition, the application of this policy is not a substitute for discipline. In any situation involving misconduct, disciplinary action may occur.

Non-compliance with a request for a fitness for duty evaluation may constitute insubordination and result in disciplinary action if warranted.

3) Confidentiality/Privacy:

   a) Records from the independent healthcare evaluator regarding the fitness for duty evaluations will be treated as confidential medical records and be kept separate from existing department and personnel files.

   b) After an evaluation, information available to the employee's supervisor will be limited to:

      i) Whether a person is fit to resume his/her job duties

      ii) Whether a person needs specific reasonable accommodations

Section X – Unauthorized Leave

1) An employee absent from duty for a day(s) or part of a day, who is not authorized by a specific grant of leave of absence under the provisions of these regulations shall be deemed to be an unauthorized leave.

2) Any such absence shall be without pay and may be subject to disciplinary action.

3) In the absence of disciplinary action, an employee who absents himself/herself for three consecutive work days without leave shall be deemed to have resigned (compulsory resignation, see Separations Chapter).

Section Y – Mentoring Leave Policy

To assist in positive development of community youth, and in support of the Governor's Mentoring Initiative and other mentoring initiatives, Okaloosa County will allow administrative paid time off to employees to volunteer as mentors as outlined below:

1) Each qualified employee may be granted up to one (1) hour of administrative leave per week, not to exceed five (5) hours per month, to participate in Take Stock in Children, Okaloosa County Public Schools Foundation, Inc.'s mentoring initiative and other mentoring initiatives. Any travel time required during work hours, beyond the one (1) hour granted, will be charged to the employee's leave accrual.

2) Each interested employee must complete the Mentoring Initiative Application Form and receive prior written approval on an annual basis from his/her supervisor, department director, and the Human Resources & Risk Management Director in order to volunteer for the program.

3) Employees must be approved by the Okaloosa County Public Schools Foundation, Inc. to participate and must adhere to all school requirements for acceptance into the program and for continued participation.

4) In approving an employee for the program and in granting leave for this program, the supervisor shall take the following into consideration:

   a) Impact of leave on the work unit, and

   b) Employee's performance, attendance, and conduct record.

5) Leave granted under this policy:

   a) Must fall within the employee's regularly scheduled work hours,

   b) Will not be paid at overtime rate, and

   c) Will not result in reimbursement of expenses of any kind by the County.

6) Time spent by employees as mentors under this program will be documented as follows:

   a) On personal calendars and/or department calendars for exempt employees, and

   b) On the biweekly time report for non-exempt employees.

7) The County reserves the right to approve, disapprove, terminate, or limit employee participation in this Mentoring Initiative at any time. The Human Resources & Risk Management Director will coordinate any and all such actions.

Section Z – Domestic Violence Leave

Domestic violence is any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member.

1) In accordance with Chapter 741.313, Florida Statutes, eligible employees are provided up to three (3) working days of job-protected leave during any 12-month period for an employee or a family or household member who is the victim of domestic violence or sexual violence. Employees are required to use their available annual, compensatory or sick leave during the domestic violence leave.

2) Employees are eligible if they have worked for Okaloosa County for at least three (3) months.

3) Reasons for taking leave:

   a) Seek an injunction for protection against domestic violence or an injunction for protection in cases of repeat violence, dating violence, or sexual violence;

   b) Obtain medical care or mental health counseling, or both, for the employee or a family or household member to address physical or psychological injuries resulting from the act of domestic violence;

   c) Obtain services from a victim services organization, including, but not limited to, a domestic violence shelter or program or a rape crisis center as a result of the act of domestic violence;

   d) Make the employee's home secure from the perpetrator of the domestic violence or sexual violence or to seek new housing to escape the perpetrator; or

   e) Seek legal assistance in addressing issues arising from the act of domestic violence or sexual violence or to attend and prepare for court-related proceedings arising from the act of domestic violence or sexual violence.

4) An employee seeking leave from work under this policy must provide appropriate advance notice of the leave, if possible.

5) The department director may require sufficient documentation of the act of domestic violence.

6) Written requests for domestic violence leave and biweekly timesheets or exception reports reflecting domestic violence leave are confidential and exempt from Statute 119.07 (1) and 24 (a), Article 1 of the State Constitution until one (1) year after the leave has been taken.

CHAPTER X – BENEFITS

Section A – Insurance

All regular full-time employees are eligible for group insurance benefits as provided by the Board.

Employees who terminate their employment (unless through gross misconduct) have the option, at the time of their termination, of retaining their health insurance as set forth in the current health insurance benefit plan, under the COBRA law. Health insurance may also be retained under the provision of COBRA when a covered employee no longer qualifies for coverage due to a reduction in work hours.

Section B – Travel Expenses

County employees shall be entitled to reimbursement for expenses which they may incur while performing travel in conduct of county business in accordance with the County's Official Travel: Authorization and Reimbursement Policy.

Section C – Credit Union

Okaloosa County employees are eligible to join the Central Credit Union of Florida and the Eglin Federal Credit Union. For more information, call the County Human Resources Department.

Section D – Workers' Compensation

1) All county employees are covered by and are entitled to the benefits of the Florida Workers' Compensation Law.

2) All employees who sustain an injury arising out of, and in the course of, performing their duties with the County are responsible for immediately advising their supervisor and completing a "First Report of Injury Form."

   The First Report of Injury Form, completed by the employee and signed by the supervisor and/or department director, and the Supervisor's Accident/Incident Investigation Report Form, completed by the employee's supervisor, should be forwarded to the Risk Management Department within 24 hours.

3) Employer sponsored health, life, and dental insurance benefits will continue for a period of six (6) consecutive months.

4) No paid leave may be used in addition to or in lieu of workers' compensation benefits.

5) At the end of six (6) months continued lost time for an on-the-job injury, annual and sick leave accrual will cease. The affected department may refill the position at this time.

Section E – Retirement

1) Complete and up-to-date information on retirement is available; contact the Human Resources Department for facts.

2) At retirement, an employee may be paid for annual leave up to the maximum limits prescribed in this policy. Employees electing to participate in the Florida State Retirement System

Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) may choose to receive payment for unused annual leave up to the prescribed maximum limits upon entry into the DROP. Employees choosing this option will continue to accrue annual leave and may use it in accordance with the Annual Leave (Vacation) Section, but will not then be eligible for payment of any remaining unused annual leave upon actual termination of employment with the County.

Section F – Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Okaloosa County is committed to maintaining and strengthening our most important resources – our employees. In support of this tradition, the Board has initiated an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). We recognize that many kinds of personal and emotional problems which often affect job performance can be resolved more readily if they are properly identified, diagnosed and appropriately treated. Problems included under this program are marital, child or other family problems, persistent anxiety, substance abuse, stress problems, financial, or other distractive concerns. The establishment of the EAP will provide a confidential short-term counseling and referral service for eligible employees and their immediate family members. This EAP reflects the County's concern for the well-being of its employees as well as its dedication to the effective accomplishment of its goals.

The County will not impose or imply any moral judgment on an employee who utilizes or refuses to utilize the EAP.

The County encourages an employee who is experiencing problems to take it upon themselves to seek assistance from the EAP. All communications and information received by the counselors of the program through such a self-referral process will be kept strictly confidential. No one other than the individual and the counselor will know how the program is being used by the individual. Work absences for evaluations or treatments will be handled in accordance with already established benefit programs and policies.

When a supervisor becomes aware of a developing pattern of unsatisfactory job performance that cannot be corrected through the County's corrective procedures or the employee's own efforts, the employee may be encouraged or required to seek help through an administrative referral. It is recognized that it is not the role of any supervisor or manager to attempt to diagnose or resolve the employee's personal problems. However, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to be explicit about the job performance expectations of an employee, and to take appropriate disciplinary action in the event that the employee's job performance fails to meet acceptable standards. The administrative referral is an additional tool that allows the supervisor to assist troubled employees to correct their problems, thus retaining a valuable employee.

In the case of administrative referral, the EAP shall report to the referring administrator whether or not the original screening interview took place. Further information regarding the employee's diagnosis or the fact of the person's further involvement in the program will be released only with prior written authorization from the employee or client. The decision to seek counseling and accept treatment is the responsibility of the individual employee. However, continued employment may be made contingent upon the employee following through on the administrative referral and the EAP provider's resulting recommendations.

Participation in the EAP does not excuse employees from complying with county policies or from meeting normal job requirements during or after receiving assistance. Nor will participation in the EAP prevent the County from taking disciplinary action against any employee for performance problems that occur before or after the employee's seeking assistance through the

program.

1) Procedures

   a) Eligibility – All full-time county employees who have completed their probationary period shall be considered eligible for the EAP. The county I.D. Badge will be required for identification purposes.

   b) Expense to Employee – If the problem focuses on a single issue, or if the client is reasonably in control of his/her situation and if the counselor determines that short-term counseling is required, counseling will be provided by the EAP as a free service up to the maximum number of sessions as outlined in the EAP contract.

If the problem requires a specific type of professional assistance or agency, the counselor will then refer the client to an appropriate referral service. The provisions of the employee's health benefit program govern any possible reimbursement for these services.

   c) Client Records and Confidentiality – A minimum of client records will be maintained by the EAP provider agency. All records will be locked in a secured file cabinet, and only EAP provider staff members will be allowed access to those records.

No records of an employee whose involvement with the EAP is self-referred will appear in the employee's human resources record, nor will his/her program involvement affect, in any way, his/her promotional opportunities or job security.

   d) Program Access – Any employee can directly contact the EAP provider agency for an appointment.

Section G – Educational Reimbursement Program

1) Educational Reimbursement Policy

   a) The County will provide financial assistance, subject to availability of funds, to county employees for educational courses that are applicable to the employee's field of work or of such nature and quality to directly contribute to the employee's value and potential growth in the County.

   b) Where tuition is funded through benefits from the Veterans Administration, a philanthropic source, grants, or government subsidized student loans, qualified employees may participate only in the "time off from work" feature of the program.

   c) This program may be amended or terminated at any time. However, such amendment or termination will not affect any course of study previously approved.

2) Eligibility

   a) An employee will be considered for participation in the Educational Reimbursement Program if he/she has been a full-time regular employee of the County for one (1) year or more and is so approved by his/her department director.

   b) Applications will be considered by the department director based on the benefit to the department or on a first come first served basis.

3) Application

a) Submit a completed Request for Educational Reimbursement Form to the immediate supervisor.

b) The supervisor shall review the application with the department director for participation, eligibility and budget approval, sign the application and forward it to the County Administrator for final approval.

c) The County Administrator will forward the application back to the employee.

d) Employees must submit a completed application and obtain all required approvals prior to the start of the educational course.

4) Time Off From Work

a) Qualified employees shall be permitted to use annual leave or leave without pay if no accrued leave is available, to attend required classes that are not available during non-working hours, if approved by the department director.

b) No more than one (1) period of absence is permissible on any one (1) day.

5) Reimbursement

a) Upon the successful completion ("C" or above) of approved courses, the employee will be eligible for reimbursement of tuition and books. Employees will be eligible for 100% reimbursement for an "A" or "P", 90% reimbursement for a "B", or 75% reimbursement for a "C". Reimbursement based on other grading scales will be considered on a case- by-case basis. The employee must present documentation of successful course completion and a receipt showing payment for tuition and books to the Human Resources Director. Request for reimbursement must be made within 35 days after completion of the course.

b) The Human Resources Director will forward the approved reimbursement request with supporting receipts to the Finance Department for payment.

c) Reimbursement for tuition and books will be made only to employees who are on the active payroll when payment is due.

d) Under some circumstances, reimbursement under the Educational Reimbursement Program constitutes income to the employee. In those situations, the County must withhold taxes from this income and report it to government agencies in the same manner as for other wages.

e) Refunds shall be limited subject to the availability of funds and the number of participants in the program.

f) Transportation must be provided by the employee and is not reimbursable.

g) An employee who voluntarily terminates his/her employment with the County, will be required to repay the County for tuition and books reimbursements made to the employee based on the following scale:

Course completion date vs. termination date	Reimbursement
Less than 1 year	100%
At least 1 year but less than 2 years	75%
At least 2 years but less than 3 years	50%
More than 3 years	0%

Upon severing their relationship with the County, the amount to be refunded may be deducted from the employee's final paycheck or other arrangements must be made for full repayment in accordance with the scale.

CHAPTER XI – TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Section A – Purpose

The Board is interested in the growth and development of all its employees. Training and development programs are provided to assist the County in meeting its goals and objectives.

Section B – Procedure

Each department is responsible for developing and implementing individualized training that affects their particular operations and/or procedures. The Human Resources Department will assist in establishing departmental training and development priorities in conjunction with the needs and objectives of the County.

Upon approval of the department director, an employee may be granted leave with pay to attend professional or technical conferences, meetings or short-time schools relating to their duties, or to visit other counties to obtain information and observe practices related to their duties with Okaloosa County.

Section C – New Employee Orientation

New Employee Orientation has two phases:

Phase I is conducted by a Human Resources Department representative who acquaints new employees with Okaloosa County policies and procedures and coordinates completion of all required employment forms.

Phase II is conducted by the appropriate departmental supervisor who orients new employees to the work site and explains the specific obligations and procedures required for the job.

CHAPTER XII – POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

1) The law does not prohibit a state or local officer or employee from voting as desired or from expressing an individual opinion on political subjects and candidates. The law also does not prohibit an employee from voluntarily engaging in political management or campaigning. What is prohibited generally is coercing other employees to engage in such activity, improper use of official authority or influence.

2) An employee may not:

   a) Take any part in a political campaign while on duty.

   b) Use his/her official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or nomination for office.

   c) Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise a state or local officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency or person for political purposes.

3) Florida Statutes 99.012 or its successor in function places some restrictions on certain county employees qualifying for public office. County employees not affected by F.S. 99.012 may seek any elected position (municipal, county, state or federal) without resigning or taking a leave of absence, providing campaigning does not interfere with their normal job performance.

CHAPTER XIII – CODE OF CONDUCT

Revised and effective – 3-24-2026

Section A – Personal and/or Romantic Relationships

Okaloosa County BCC holds its employees to the highest ethical and professional standards. As such, this policy was created to outline guidelines regarding employees having romantic relationships within the workplace. The goal is to protect the well-being of our employees and retain a professional working environment.

County employees are encouraged to develop and maintain professional relationships in the workplace. This policy does not prevent the development of friendships or even romantic relationships between most coworkers, but it does establish boundaries with regard to those relationships and as to how relationships are conducted during working hours and within the working environment. Romantic relationships are permitted so long as these relationships are not otherwise prohibited herein and do not interfere with the effective functioning of the workplace and goals of the County. Romantic relationships are considered a personal relationship between individuals beyond friendship and otherwise intimate, that generally may involve some or all the following: physical/ sexual contact, potentially lunch or after-hours social dates, cohabitation, and non-work related: phone calls, pictures/emails/texts and other private personal communication between individuals of an intimate nature.

1) Prohibited Personal Relationships
   The following employees are prohibited from being involved in romantic relationships and working for the County based on their positions. Violations may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Progressive discipline shall not be required. Existing relationships in violation of these policies shall be required to be disclosed and the parties to be separated. The following are prohibited romantic relationships:

   a) Any supervisor-subordinate in the same supervisory chain.

   b) Any Director position and above in the County with any other Board of County Commission employee. Existing employees in this situation shall be grandfathered.

2) Disclosure of Consensual, Non-prohibited, Romantic Relationships.
   If two BCC County employees become romantically involved, they must immediately disclose the relationship by completing and submitting a Relationship Disclosure Form to the Human Resources Department. This is not required for existing married individuals already on file with the County. Human Resources will work with the Department(s) housing the employees(s) to determine if accommodation may be made to ensure that County operations are not impacted by the relationship. This may include considering transferring one or both employees to other departments. In cases where a transfer is not viable, the employees involved will either have to determine which is to resign voluntarily, or both may be terminated. Failure to disclose a personal relationship may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination for the first offense.

   Employees who engage in consensual, non-prohibited, romantic relationships must conduct themselves in an appropriate professional manner while on County property and during working hours. They should not engage in any inappropriate behaviors that may cause their coworkers to feel embarrassed, awkward or uncomfortable. This includes, but is not limited to, intimate contact at the workplaces such as kissing*, prolonged hugging,*

hand holding, massaging, and personal texting, emails and calls.

Additionally, employees are prohibited from involvement in all employment actions (i.e., discipline, promotion, and similar actions) related to the person they are having a romantic relationship with. When a conflict or the potential for conflict arises because of a romantic relationship between employees, even if non-prohibited, the employees may be separated by reassignment or termination from employment.

Section B – Ethics, Purchasing and Gifts

1) In the application of the provisions of the Okaloosa County Code of Conduct, the various Advisory Opinions and Recommended and Final Orders issued by the Florida Commission on Ethics relating to the interpretation of the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees, as contained in Part III, Chapter 112, Florida Statutes, may be considered in the interpretation of these provisions.

2) Any attempt by an employee or officer to realize personal gain through conduct which is inconsistent with the proper discharge of the employee's duties shall have committed a breach of public trust which constitutes a conflict of interest. Employees who believe they may have a potential conflict of interest regarding their County employment, regardless of if it is actual or perceived, are required to disclose the details of such conflict on the Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure Form at least annually or more frequently if their situation changes. In addition, Okaloosa County will disclose in writing identified conflicts of interest to the contracting, granting, appropriating, etc. agency in accordance with the awarding agency's policy. Any employee who violates these standards of conduct is guilty of misconduct and may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

3) No employee shall solicit nor accept gifts, gratuities, favors, anything of monetary value or loans from organizations, business concerns, or individuals with whom the employee has official relationships or business of the Okaloosa County government. These limitations are not intended to prohibit the acceptance of articles of negligible value which are distributed generally, not to prohibit employees from accepting social courtesies which promote good public relations, nor to prohibit employees from obtaining loans from regular lending institutions. All employees must guard against relationships that might be construed as evidence of favoritism, coercion, unfair advantage or collusion.

4) No employee or officer of Okaloosa County shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract funded by public financial assistance which includes contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, appropriations, etc. if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved. Such a conflict arises when the employee, officer or agent, any member of his/her immediate family, his/her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from the firm selected for an award. Employees, officers or agents shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts.

5) No employee acting in his/her official capacity as a purchasing agent or officer of Okaloosa County (as defined by F.S. 112.313) shall either directly or indirectly purchase, rent, or lease any realty, goods, or services in excess of $500.00 per calendar year for Okaloosa County from any business entity of which the employee, the employee's spouse or employee's child has a material interest or is an officer, partner, director, or proprietor.

6) No employee or officer of Okaloosa County acting in his/her private capacity shall rent, lease, or sell any realty, goods, or services in excess of $500.00 per calendar year to Okaloosa County.

7) No employee or officer of Okaloosa County shall participate directly or indirectly in any procurement when they know that:

   a) The employee or officer, or any member of their immediate family, is negotiating or has an arrangement concerning prospective employment with any person, business, or organization that will be participating in such procurement; or

   b) The employee or officer or any member of their immediate family has a financial interest pertaining to the procurement. However, any employee or any member of an employee's immediate family who holds a financial interest in a disclosed blind trust shall not be deemed to have a conflict of interest with regard to matters pertaining to that financial interest.

Employees may not present themselves as acting in an official capacity when responding to reference requests for vendors/contractors.

Employees who choose to provide a personal reference (outside of work) must clearly state that the reference is given in a personal capacity only and does not represent the County.

Section C – Vendor/Contractor References

To ensure consistency and fairness of the process, and to avoid any potential or perceived conflicts of interest, employees shall not provide references, recommendations, or endorsements for any vendor or contractor seeking: 1) to provide goods or services to the County; or 2) any other form of approval by the County.

CHAPTER XIV – OUTSIDE WORK

Revised and effective – 06-10-2025

1) No employee shall have or hold any employment or contractual relationship with any entity which:

    a) Is subject to the regulation of, or is doing business with Okaloosa County; or

    b) In any way creates a continuing or frequently recurring moral, legal or technical conflict between his/her private interests and the performance of his/her public duties; or

    c) Would impede the full and faithful discharge of his/her public duties.

2) To request authorization to engage in outside employment, you must fill out the Outside Employment & Contractual Relationship Form and submit it to your department director. The department director shall review it and send a recommendation to the Human Resources Department. Human Resources shall send the department director's recommendation to the County Attorney for a recommendation and to the County Administrator for final approval. The County Administrator's decision shall be final and not subject to grievance.

3) A new request for approval must be submitted if an employee has a change in:

    a) Job description;

    b) Position; and/or

    c) Nature of approved outside employment or enterprise.

4) Any violation of this chapter may cause you to be suspended or dismissed.

5) No employee shall accept outside employment where County time, equipment or material is to be used or where such employment or any part thereof is to be performed on County time.

The County may withdraw authorization for outside employment at any time. Such withdrawal will be provided to the employee in writing. Upon such withdrawal, the employee is required to terminate the outside employment within 15 calendar days.

CHAPTER XV – TIME REPORTS

1) Time reports will be prepared on all non-exempt (hourly) employees. Exception reports will be prepared on all exempt (salaried) employees whenever they take any type of leave other than holiday leave.

2) Reports not received accurately completed will result in paychecks being delayed.

3) Time reports will be typewritten or prepared with an ink pen, no other will be accepted.

4) At the end of each pay period, the supervisor will check for accuracy.

5) The supervisor will sign all time reports or exception reports for employees under his/her jurisdiction and employees will sign for themselves.

CHAPTER XVI – RECORDS AND REPORTS

The Human Resources Department is hereby designated as the official repository of all employee records. Department directors will forward immediately all employee records (active and inactive) in their possession to the Human Resources Director. Employee actions, letters of appreciation and admonishment, requests for leave, matters affecting pay and any other matters of permanent or semi-permanent nature will be forwarded for inclusion in the respective human resources file.

Department directors will report county vehicle accidents, theft, and losses of materials and tools on a Property Damage/Loss Investigation Report Form to the Risk Manager within three (3) working days. Vehicle accidents will also be reported on a Property Damage/Loss Investigation Report Form to the County Administrator within three (3) working days.

Section A – Human Resources Transactions

1) All appointments, separations and other employee transactions shall be made on forms designated by the Human Resources Director.

2) A separate file folder shall be set up and maintained in the Human Resources Department for each employee and shall contain an original or a copy of all pertinent documents.

Section B – Human Resources File Inspection

The human resources information relative to employees and former employees is available for the employee's inspection at reasonable times and in accordance with such procedures as the Human Resources Director may prescribe.

CHAPTER XVII – USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY

Section A – General Statement

All property of the County, real and personal, including vehicles, offices, lockers, etc., are furnished to county employees only for use on the job, and are solely for convenience in performing employment duties. The County may conduct searches of all its property without notice. From time to time, canines trained for detecting drugs and narcotics may be utilized in the searches of county property without notice.

Section B – Theft or Pilfering

All County property is for business use only and shall not be removed or utilized for non-business purposes. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of every employee to report any acts of theft or pilfering of County funds, property, the property of other employees or the property of any citizen.

Theft or pilfering is defined as possessing, taking, destroying, or tampering with County property without proper authorization. Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The following actions are not permitted:

1) Misappropriation of County funds, property, services or personnel for personal or non-business use;

2) Unauthorized use or unauthorized possession of County property, the property of other employees or the property of any citizen;

3) Disposal of County property without authorization from the Department Director and in accordance with the Purchasing Department's *Tangible Personal Property, Commodity Inventory & Accountability Manual*;

4) The removal of any item discarded by the County, including those items discarded in accordance with Department Director approval and the Purchasing Department's Manual listed above. Items that are discarded are to remain discarded and shall not be removed for the personal use of any employee, employee's family member or member of the public without the explicit written approval of the County Administrator;

5) Borrowing County equipment, tools or property.

Section C – Tobacco-Free Workplace Policy

1) The Florida Clean Indoor Air Act prohibits smoking in public places including, but not limited to, government buildings and places of employment. Employees are not permitted to smoke in any County buildings, workspaces or vehicles, to include common areas such as hallways, corridors, entryways and water fountain areas. In addition to prohibiting smoking in public places, the County has implemented a tobacco-free workplace policy for all employees to provide a clean, healthy, productive and safe environment.

2) Definitions

   a) Electronic Cigarette – any electronic device composed of a mouthpiece, heating element, battery and electronic circuits that provides a vapor of liquid nicotine and/or other substances mixed with propylene glycol to the user that he/she inhales in simulation of smoking.

   b) Tobacco – includes any lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, bidi, clove cigarette, cigarillo, hookah, and any other smoking products, and any smokeless or spitless tobacco also knowns as dip, chew, snuff, snus, orbs, and strips, sticks, or electronic cigarette in any form, and all other unapproved nicotine-delivery devices.

3) The use of tobacco by any employee is prohibited in County buildings, facilities and job sites, including but not limited to, workspaces, bathrooms, vehicles, hallways, corridors, entryways, breezeways, exits and water fountain areas.

4) An employee may use tobacco before/after their shift, during an authorized break or during lunch. Tobacco may be used in areas identified as such by signs stating “Smoking Area” or on a job site in an area that does not expose employees and/or the public to the secondhand effects of tobacco use. Tobacco use is not permitted in all other areas.

5) It is the responsibility of department directors, managers and supervisors to ensure all employees within their areas of responsibility are notified of and comply with this policy.

6) Employees who are found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

7) Any person who observes violations of this policy may report these violations to any member of management and will not be retaliated against.

CHAPTER XVIII – UNLAWFUL ACTS PROHIBITED

1) Penalty and Definition

   a) Any employee of Okaloosa County who violates any of the following provisions shall forfeit their position in the County service:

      i) No person shall make any false statement, certificate, mark, rating or report with regard to any test, certification or appointment made under any provisions of these rules and regulations or in any manner commit or attempt to commit any fraud preventing the impartial execution of these rules.

      ii) No person shall directly or indirectly, give, render, pay, offer, solicit, or accept any money, service or other valuable consideration for any service or personal gain.

      iii) No employee of the Human Resources Department, an examiner, or other person shall defeat, deceive or obstruct any certification or appointment under these rules and regulations, or furnish to any person any special or confidential information for the purpose of affecting the rights or prospects of any person with respect to employment in the Okaloosa County government service.

CHAPTER XIX – USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES

Revised and effective – 10-20-2026

It is the policy of Okaloosa County that all possible measures be taken to ensure the safety of its employees, the public, and county property. The complete Loss Control/Safety Policy is included in the Okaloosa County Safety Manual.

Section A – Operation of County Vehicles

1) It is necessary for many county employees to use county vehicles to carry out their official duties. It is essential these vehicles be always used with utmost care and discretion. All county vehicles are distinctively marked (except for vehicles used for conducting investigations), and the way they are operated directly reflects on the public image of all county employees.

2) County employees are permitted to use county owned vehicles for the performance of their official duties only; under no circumstances are they to be used for personal business or pleasure.

3) Anyone other than a county employee riding in a county vehicle must be doing so in the conduct of county business.

4) Any employee driving a county vehicle shall have on his/her person the necessary valid driver's license.

5) Any employee who loses their privilege to drive a vehicle, (has their driver's license suspended or revoked) must notify their department director and Human Resources immediately. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. When driving is a job requirement, loss of the privilege to drive a vehicle may result in dismissal from employment. A valid driver's license shall be exhibited by any employee upon demand of his/her superior, and a record of the license number shall become a permanent part of the employee's human resources file.

6) It is mandatory that all county vehicles be equipped with seat belts, which must be used when the vehicle is in operation.

7) All mechanical defects or malfunctions should be reported as soon as possible to the employee's department.

8) All county equipment must be always operated in a conscientious and safe manner.

9) If a county vehicle is involved in an accident, the employee shall notify law enforcement and his/her department director or supervisor immediately. The department director or supervisor will then notify Risk Management and promptly comply with the post-accident drug and alcohol testing procedures, if applicable, as outlined in the Drug-Free Workplace Policy Chapter.

10) Written reports of all county vehicle accidents will be placed in the human resources file of the employee(s) involved in the accident.

11) Department directors will make a written report of county vehicle accidents on a Property Damage/Loss Investigation Report Form and submit it to Risk Management within three (3) working days.

Section B – Employee Driving Records

1) Employees who drive county vehicles or operate county equipment must maintain a satisfactory driving record in accordance with the following standard:

   a) Driving record cannot have three (3) or more moving violations or two (2) or more at-fault accidents within the past three (3) years;

   b) No reckless driving or DUI citations within the past three (3) years;

   c) Not more than one (1) at-fault accident within the past 12 months.

2) This standard applies to all applicants for employment for positions which require a driver's license. Failure to meet the standard is cause for excluding an applicant for hire.

3) Employees violating this standard will be required by Risk Management to attend a county approved defensive driving course. The employee must present evidence of completing a defensive driving program.

4) When driving is a job requirement, loss of the privilege to drive a vehicle may result in dismissal from employment.

Section C – Assignment of Vehicles

1) County vehicles shall be assigned to individual employees based on work responsibility.

2) The decision to authorize a county vehicle to be driven home shall be left to the discretion of the department director with review and approval by the County Administrator. Vehicles may be authorized for commuting in the following situations:

   a) Be a department director whose regular duties and responsibilities involve evening and/or weekend public appearances; or

   b) Be an employee on call or standby, or regularly subject to call out to respond to emergency situations; or

   c) Be an employee whose responsibilities require he/she perform certain job functions on a regular basis during off-hours; or

   d) When it is more efficient to proceed to a job site directly to or from home rather than from the office location; or

   e) When it is determined by the County Administrator to be in the best interest of the county for an employee to do so.

3) An employee who is assigned a taxable vehicle which will be used for commuting

must complete a Commuting Fringe Benefit Acknowledgement form and return it to Human Resources. Certain vehicles are exempted from taxation under IRS regulations; for example, clearly marked emergency response vehicles, and certain specially modified service vehicles.

4) An employee is responsible for any taxable benefit which may accrue because of the use of a county assigned vehicle for commuting. The county will calculate the value of the benefit using IRS regulations and show such amount as taxable wages on the employee's bi- weekly pay check.

5) County vehicles are not to be used for personal purposes other than authorized commuting to and from the employee's residence and de minimus personal use such as minor stops on the regular route while commuting to and from work and to and from an authorized meal or break.

6) Employees may be authorized to take an assigned County vehicle to their residence when the nature of the employee's position requires on-call availability for emergencies or rapid responses outside the employee's regular work schedule.

7) Take-home vehicle privileges shall be limited to positions for which timely response to emergencies, critical incidents, or other operational needs outside of regular working hours is determined to be necessary.

8) Authorization shall require the approval of both the employee's Department Director and the County Administrator. Approval shall be given upon the completion of the "County Vehicle Agreement for Emergency or Rapid Responses" form. This authorization may be modified, suspended, or revoked at any time by the Director or County Administrator.

9) The take-home vehicle shall only be used for official County business in response to an emergency or rapid response callback. When an employee is not actively serving in an on-call status, the assigned vehicle may be driven between the employee's residence and a designated County staging area, when necessary, to facilitate operational readiness.

10) Eligible employees must be domiciled in Okaloosa County or in a county immediately adjacent to Okaloosa County.

11) Employees shall notify their Department Director of any change in residence which may affect their eligibility.

<u>Section D – GPS Policy</u>

1) The GPS system enables the County to generate information and notifications regarding the use, location, and servicing requirements of the GPS-equipped vehicles. The data will be used to notify supervisory personnel, Risk Management, and Fleet managers of mileage, vehicle location, vehicle idling time, speed, routing, service intervals, hard braking, rapid acceleration, and the like.

2) The use of County-issued vehicles and equipment does not give rise to an expectation

of privacy. Apart from any exempt or confidential information, monitoring data may be subject to public records disclosure under Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.

3) Operators of County-issued vehicles must obey all state and local traffic laws including speed limits.

4) All County-issued vehicles are prohibited from idling for more than 5 minutes unless allowed for under the following conditions:

   a) When detained in traffic;

   b) When necessary for inspecting or servicing the vehicle;

   c) When operating a power take-off device (i.e., operating a lift, crane, pump, or other auxiliary equipment);

   d) When the vehicle cannot move due to adverse weather conditions or mechanical failure;

   e) When necessary to provide air conditioning/heat to prevent a safety or health emergency;

   f) When approved by a supervisor for certain jobs that may require constant in and out of vehicles (i.e., meter readers, ambulance drivers, site visits); or

   g) When detained due to County business; such as work-related phone calls or paperwork.

5) Any tampering or attempts to remove or disable the GPS equipment is strictly prohibited.

6) Only the Fleet Operations Division, or a department delegate, if authorized in writing by the Fleet Operations Division Manager, is authorized to install, service, or remove the GPS equipment. The data derived from the GPS units may be used to schedule vehicle maintenance.

7) County-issued vehicles are to be used for conducting county business within the jurisdiction of Okaloosa County. Operating a vehicle outside the County's jurisdiction, unless previously authorized, is prohibited.

8) Employees are responsible for compliance with all provisions of this policy when operating County-issued vehicles. For purposes of this policy, the actual driver and/or operator of each vehicle shall be the employee responsible for such compliance.

9) It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure the requirements of this policy are understood by their subordinate employees. In the event of a violation, it is the responsibility of the appropriate supervisor to enforce this policy. Any required disciplinary action deemed necessary must be approved and documented by Human Resources and shall be included in the employee’s personnel file.

10) Each department shall be responsible for monitoring their respective department’s GPS

units. Risk Management will monitor the GPS reports for reoccurring policy and safety violations and will coordinate with the individual departments and Human Resources, accordingly.

11) Any violation of the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

CHAPTER XX – DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Section A – Policy

It is the policy of Okaloosa County to:

1) Provide a well-defined system of discipline that sets forth standards of conduct and guidelines for disciplinary actions and which will be applied to all employees equitably, without bias or prejudice.

The Human Resources Department is designated as the official repository of all employee records. All disciplinary actions taken will be forwarded to the Human Resources Department for inclusion in the respective human resources files.

Section B – General Provisions

1) It is the intent of the County that discipline should be characterized as corrective and constructive rather than punitive and that disciplinary actions be utilized as an element of an overall program to educate and motivate employees to exhibit behavior that will contribute to individual growth and development and to the successful operation of county government.

2) Any county employee may be disciplined.

3) The need for disciplinary action may arise as a result of different kinds of action on the part of the employee, such as, but not limited to:

   a) Failure to perform his/her job in a satisfactory manner, that is, unsatisfactory performance as to one or more of the requirements of the job;

   b) Infraction of rules, regulations, policy or procedures as established either by the Board or by the department;

   c) Offenses or misconduct which violate general rules of behavior or are specifically prohibited by law.

4) The following types of infractions, offenses, or misconduct represent typical reasons for disciplinary action and are not meant to be the only permissible reasons for such action:

   a) Absence without calling in;

   b) Disregard or violation of safety rules;

   c) Distracting other employees;

   d) Failure to report an injury;

   e) Failure to keep work area tidy;

   f) Failure to follow instructions, departmental rules, policies or protocols;

g) Leading or participating in a work slowdown;

h) Gambling while on duty;

i) Late for work without valid reason, or habitual tardiness;

j) Leaving work area or job without permission;

k) Incompetence or inefficiency in the performance of assigned duties;

l) Use of another employee's equipment without permission;

m) Involvement in an accident chargeable to employee while operating county vehicles or equipment;

n) Operating a county vehicle or equipment without a proper and valid driver's license;

o) Habitual extension of lunch periods or break periods;

p) Abuse of sick leave privilege or excessive absenteeism;

q) Conduct unbecoming a county employee;

r) Failure to report an accident;

s) Insubordination;

t) Outside employment that interferes with county job;

u) Possession or drinking of alcoholic beverage or illegal use of drugs on the job;

v) Giving falsified information or refusal to give testimony;

w) Reporting to work when intoxicated or under the influence of drugs;

x) Sleeping on the job;

y) Union solicitation on the job that is prohibited by law;

z) Threatening co-worker or supervisor;

aa) Unauthorized posting of notices or distribution of union material on the job;

bb) Unauthorized use or unsafe operation of county property, equipment or vehicle;

cc) Use of abusive, obscene or harassing language to an employee, co-worker, supervisor or public;

dd) Abuse, misuse, damage or loss of county vehicle or equipment;

ee) Conviction and imprisonment for a felony or first-degree misdemeanor directly relating to the position held;

ff) Excessive accidents resulting in injury to self, others or damage to equipment;

gg) Falsifying application or concealing information during screening and processing;

hh) Giving false testimony;

ii) Leading or participating in a strike against the county;

jj) Falsifying attendance or leave records;

kk) Failure to work required overtime assignments or unavailability during stand-by-duty;

ll) Fighting on the job or engaging in any intentional act that may inflict bodily harm on anyone;

mm) Participation in prohibited political activity;

nn) Theft or removal from county locations without proper authorization, any county property or property of any county employee;

oo) Soliciting or accepting an unauthorized fee or gift;

pp) Unauthorized display or possession of a firearm or concealed weapon on property or while performing official county duties (without possession of a concealed weapon license issued pursuant to Chapter 790.06, Florida Statutes or Florida approved reciprocal state, or violations of license restrictions found in the section);

qq) Sale or possession of narcotics or alcohol while on duty;

rr) Alcohol and/or illegal drug influence during working hours;

ss) Any other action that would bring discredit or interfere with the county service;

tt) Refusal to submit to a drug or alcohol test;

uu) Being unavailable for duty while on stand-by;

vv) Failing an alcohol or drug test;

ww) Failure to wear required uniform;

xx) Failure to maintain current licensure or certification;

yy) Causing or contributing to an accident;

zz) Horseplay.

Section C – Application of Disciplinary Action

1) Although internal consistency in administering discipline (both departmentally and county- wide) is desirable, numerous factors should be considered in determining the appropriate level of discipline to be assessed at each successive step.

2) Some of the factors involved include time intervals between offenses, effectiveness of prior disciplinary actions, willingness to improve, overall work performance, job attitudes, and disciplinary actions previously taken with other comparable employees for similar offenses.

3) Some infractions may be more serious in one case, because of the employee's responsibilities than in another case. For example, failure to be at an assigned workstation would be a more serious offense for a dispatcher or watchman than for a secretary or maintenance worker.

4) A repetition of the same offense or other serious offenses indicates that more severe disciplinary measures should be administered.

5) Certain offenses are of such a serious nature that immediate discharge upon first offense is applicable. Prior to any proceedings to dismiss an employee, the department director will contact the Human Resources & Risk Management Director and review that human resources' file.

6) When circumstances permit, department directors are encouraged to pursue a philosophy of "progressive discipline" by administering gradually increasing disciplinary actions for each successive instance of employee misconduct. Each level of progressive discipline shall be fully documented for inclusion in the employee's human resources file.

7) Incidents of misconduct may differ in individual cases from somewhat similar incidents, and the county retains the right to treat each incident on an individual basis without creating a precedent for cases that arise in the future.

8) These provisions are not to be construed as a limitation upon the retained rights of the County, but are to be used as a guide.

Section D – Disciplinary Action Procedures

1) Contact the Human Resources Director prior to administering discipline. All disciplinary actions must be signed by the Human Resources Director or designee prior to administering.

2) All disciplinary actions must be documented on the Okaloosa County Disciplinary Action Form. These forms are available in the Human Resources Department.

3) Authority – Most disciplinary actions are initiated by the immediate supervisor. In general, the final authority to approve a disciplinary action is related to the type of action taken:

TYPE OF ACTION	AUTHORITY TO APPROVE
Written Reprimand	Supervisor
Suspension	Department Director
Dismissal	Department Director
Demotion	Department Director

Section E – Types of Disciplinary Action

1) Written Reprimand

In situations where an oral warning or counseling has not resulted in the expected improvement, or when an employee commits a more serious offense, a written reprimand should be given to the employee. The Okaloosa County Disciplinary Action Form is available in the Human Resources Department and should include incident(s) detailed description, specific times, dates, locations, employees involved, and rules violated. The reprimand should indicate an expected date of improvement or period allowable for improvement.

2) Suspension

In the event of continued and repetitive offenses for which the employee has already received oral or written reprimands, or where the nature of the offense is relatively serious, an employee may be suspended for a specific period of time.

Such suspension shall be without pay and, if for more than one (1) day, shall be issued on a consecutive working day basis. A suspended employee may not be permitted to work on his/her normal day(s) off, nor take paid leave time, nor make up the time by working overtime, in lieu of a payroll loss for the period of suspension. The Okaloosa County Disciplinary Action Form showing the number of days and specific dates of suspension, in order for the appropriate payroll computation to be made, should be sent to Human Resources with an acknowledgement from the employee.

In cases where an investigation may have to be made of the employee's conduct or of the seriousness of the offense, an employee should be placed on indefinite suspension which may later be changed to dismissal depending on the results of the investigation. Such suspension may be with or without pay.

3) Dismissal

For non-remedial lesser offenses, repetition of serious offenses, or on the first occurrence of an extremely serious offense, an employee may be dismissed from county employment. The Okaloosa County Disciplinary Action Form must be sent to the Human Resources Department for the employee's file, to document this action. Prior to any proceedings to dismiss an employee, the department director will contact the Human Resources Director and review that employee's file.

CHAPTER XXI – GRIEVANCE/APPEAL PROCEDURE

Revised and effective – 05-04-2021

Section A – Policy

The County provides a grievance procedure to promote prompt and responsible resolution of issues raised by employees. This procedure may be used freely without fear of retaliation, and the Human Resources Department is available to assist throughout the procedure. The internal process outlined below should be used if an individual disagrees with a supervisor's action including any disciplinary action. If the problem involves prohibited harassment, reference to those policies should be made to initiate a complaint. When unsure which policy applies, contact should be made with a Human Resources HR Representative for assistance.

Section B – Definitions

A "grievance" is defined as a dispute alleging a violation of a policy, rule or procedure contained in the Human Resources Policy Manual.

1) The term "days" as used in this Chapter shall mean working days.

The Grievance Form is the document on which the employee provides the details of the grievance in writing. The form is available on the Human Resources Department page of the Okaloosa County website.

Section C – Eligibility to File a Grievance

Regular full-time and regular part-time employees, excluding department directors, shall be eligible to file a grievance under these provisions. Employees serving in a probationary status are not eligible to file a grievance. Management decisions that are fundamentally subjective in nature, including employee performance appraisals, are not grievable. In the event that there is a conflict regarding whether a dispute is grievable under this policy, the matter shall be resolved by the County Administrator or his/her designee. Employees terminated for cause are not eligible for this internal process.

Section D – Informal Discussion (Immediate Supervisor)

An employee having a grievance should first discuss it on an informal basis with his/her immediate supervisor. If the matter is not resolved by such informal discussion, then the employee has recourse to the grievance procedure, as set forth in this policy. At this time the immediate supervisor should advise the employee(s) of his/her grievance/appeal rights.

Section E – Procedures

Any employee who feels that he/she wishes to file a grievance may contact the Human Resources Department for procedural guidance.

Grievances shall be presented and addressed in the following manner:

Step 1 – Section Level (Non-Director Next level Supervisor/Manager)

a) An employee having a grievance shall, within five (5) days following the date of the grievable issue, submit to the supervisor a Grievance Form, citing in detail (i) the facts on which the grievance is based, (ii) the provision(s) of the HR Policy Manual allegedly violated, and (iii) the relief requested. Failure to include any of these aspects on the grievance form may result in the grievance being dismissed.

b) The supervisor and/or department senior manager may have a meeting with the employee to discuss the grievance.

c) The supervisor and/or senior department manager shall communicate a decision in writing to the employee within five (5) days following receipt of the Grievance Form, with copy to the Director and Human Resources Department.

Step 2 – Department Level (Director)

a) If the grievance is not resolved at Step 1, and the employee desires additional review, the employee shall submit the original grievance form and the official outcome from step 1 in writing to the department director within five (5) days after receipt of the decision at Step 1.

b) The department director may have a meeting with the employee to discuss the grievance. The supervisor and/or senior department manager may also be requested to attend this meeting.

c) The department director shall communicate a decision in writing to the employee within five (5) days following receipt of the written grievance, with copy to the appropriate Deputy County Administrator and the Human Resources Department.

d) The grieving employee is responsible for ensuring grievances not resolved in steps 1 or 2 are forwarded in the process as outlined in step 3.

Step 3 – County Administrator Level

a) If the grievance is not resolved at Step 2, and the employee desires additional review, the employee must submit the grievance form along with the official decisions rendered in steps 1 and 2 in writing to Human Resources, within five (5) days after receipt of the decision at Step 2.

b) The Human Resources Department will coordinate with the County Administrator to appoint a designee to review the grievance. The designee shall review the record to date and the facts of the matter and make a recommendation in writing within 10 days to the County Administrator with feedback from Human Resources. The reviewer may seek various documents, consult with other parties (i.e., HR or legal) and/or meet with involved employees as necessary.

c) The County Administrator, or designee, will review the factual determination and recommendation of the reviewer and will either sign as concurring with that

recommendation or render another decision, in writing. The decision at this step shall be final. The County Administrator shall provide his/her decision within ten (10) business days from the date HR presents the recommendation for consideration.

Section F – Time Limits

1) Failure to initiate a grievance within the time limit in the previous section shall be deemed a waiver of the grievance.

2) Failure at any step of this procedure, by the employee, to submit a grievance to the next step within the specified time limit shall be deemed to be acceptance of the decision at that step.

3) Failure at any step by the supervisor/department director, of this procedure to communicate the decision of a grievance within the specified time limit shall permit the employee to proceed to the next step.

4) The number of days indicated at each step should be considered as a maximum, and every effort should be made to expedite the process. However, the time limits specified in any step of this procedure may be extended, in any specific instance, by mutual agreement.

Section G – General Provisions

1) If a grievance arises from the action of an official higher than the supervisor, the grievance may be initiated at Step 2 or 3, as appropriate, by submitting a Grievance Form within the time limit as set forth in Step 1.

2) The filing or pendency of any grievance under the provisions of this chapter shall in no way operate to impede, delay, or interfere with the right of the County to take the action regarding the matter complained of, subject to the final disposition of the grievance.

3) An employee who resigns from employment shall be deemed to have waived the right to initiate or to process a grievance under the provisions of this chapter.

4) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent or discourage informal discussion between an employee and his/her supervisor(s) on matters of concern to the employee.

5) Employees are not entitled to representation during this process.

6) Employees working in positions represented by a union are not eligible to utilize this process and should follow the grievance process as outlined in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

CHAPTER XXII – SEPARATIONS

All employees separating their employment will personally go to the Human Resources Department to process out. Failure to complete this separation process and return all issued county property will result in the final pay check being held. An employee may be separated from the service of Okaloosa County by any one of the methods as described below.

Section A – Types of Separation from County Service

Separations and/or terminations from positions in the county service shall be designated as one of the following types:

1) Resignation;

2) Compulsory Resignation;

3) Layoff or Reduction in Force;

4) Disability;

5) Loss of License or Other Requirements;

6) Dismissal or Unsatisfactory Service Separation;

7) Death;

8) Retirement.

Section B – Resignation

To resign in good standing, an employee will give notice in writing to the department director or appointing authority at least 14 calendar days prior to termination date. Department directors must give one (1) months' notice. Normally, failure to comply with this rule shall be entered on the service record of the employee and result in a denial of re-employment rights. However, the department director or appointing authority, with the approval of the Human Resources Director, may exempt from any or all of these penalties an employee who has given less than the required notice, if in their judgment, exceptional circumstances warrant such exemption.

Section C – Compulsory Resignation

An employee who, without valid reason, fails to report to work for three (3) consecutive work days without authorized leave shall be separated from the payroll and reported as a compulsory resignation.

Section D – Reduction in Force (Layoff) Policy

1) An employee may be laid off when it becomes necessary by reason of, but not limited to: lack of work, shortage of funds, abolishment of a position, or changes in organizational structure. This action does not reflect discredit upon the service of the

employee. Employees affected by such reductions in force shall receive not less than two (2) weeks written notice of termination of employment, if possible.

The order of such layoffs shall be based on overall performance record, disciplinary record, training and experience, attendance, length of service with the County, and other valid and appropriate criteria. When two (2) employees are relatively equal with respect to these factors, the less senior employee will be laid off.

Laid off regular employees will receive full payment for all accrued annual leave at the employee's current rate of pay, up to the maximum limits prescribed in this policy.

Regular employees with less than 10 years of continuous services with Okaloosa County who are laid off shall receive payment for twenty-five percent (25%) of accrued sick leave, up to a maximum of 240 hours. Regular employees with more than 10 years of continuous service with Okaloosa County who are laid off shall receive payment for accrued sick leave in accordance with the schedule stated in this policy.

Employees who are laid off may apply for internal vacancies for a period equal to one-half (½) of the employee's service of employment with the County at the time of layoff or one (1) year, whichever is less.

2) Recall

The anniversary date for a laid off employee who is recalled shall be adjusted forward by the number of days that the employee was laid off.

For purposes of annual and sick leave accrual rate, recalled employees shall retain credit for prior service. Recalled employees shall have any accrued annual and sick leave for which the employee did not receive any payment at the time of layoff restored. The employee may have all annual and sick leave restored if the employee repays the full amount of payment received within 60 days following reinstatement.

The employee may be paid at a rate comparable to others in the same job classification with a comparable length of service, if the department budget will permit.

Recalled employees shall be granted first day coverage in health, life and dental insurance.

Section E – Loss of License or Other Job Requirements

Any employee, who is unable to do his/her job adequately because of loss of a necessary license or other requirement, shall be separated by a layoff or placed in a class not requiring same license or requirements.

Section F – Dismissals

Dismissals are involuntary terminations of county employment.

Prior to any proceedings to dismiss an employee, the department director will contact the Human Resources Director and review that employee's human resources file.

Section G – Death

Separation shall be effective as of the last day paid prior to the employee's death or the date of death, if it was paid. All compensation due to the employee as of the effective date of separation shall be paid to the beneficiary, surviving spouse, or to the estate of the employee as determined by law or by executed form in the employee's human resources file.

Section H – Retirement

All full-time and part-time employees are covered by the Florida Retirement System.

A person must have separated their employment with the County (or have a foreseeable separation date) to apply for retirement benefits.

There are several types of retirement and the Human Resources Department has up-to-date information concerning retirement.

CHAPTER XXIII – DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

Revised and effective – 07-01-2025

Okaloosa County is committed to maintaining a drug-free workplace. There are three separate policies governing the federally and state defined drug-free workplace programs.

1) Section A covers both the federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and the 1990 amendments to the Florida Workers' Compensation Law.

2) Section B implements the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) regulations for covered employees.

3) Section C implements the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) regulations for covered employees.

Some employees are required to follow the procedures in more than one section of this policy, depending on the capacity that they are working in at the time of the event.

Section A – Drug-Free Workplace Policy (Effective September 9, 1997)

1) Statement of Policy

Okaloosa County strives to provide a safe work environment and encourages personal health. In this regard, the County considers the abuse of drugs on the job to be an unsafe, counter-productive work practice. Furthermore, we see substance abuse as a serious threat to our staff and community. With these objectives in mind, the County has established the following policy with regard to the use, possession, and sale of illegal drugs and alcohol at work. Anyone observing a violation of this policy must report it to his or her immediate supervisor and/or Human Resources.

Drug addiction is a complex, yet treatable condition. For this reason, our substance abuse program is targeted at alleviating the problem at the community level by involving both our employees and their families. Our commitment to eradicating substance abuse in the community reflects our firm belief that by building this community, we build our county.

The ultimate goal of this policy is to balance our respect for individual privacy with our need to keep a safe and drug-free environment. Our intention is to prevent and treat substance abuse. We encourage those who use drugs or abuse alcohol to seek help in overcoming their problem.

Any employee found with the presence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol in his/her system, in possession of, using, selling, trading, or offering for sale illegal drugs during working hours, shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Substance abuse includes possession, use, purchase or sale of drugs on county premises (includes all buildings, facilities, grounds, parking lots, vehicles, equipment and other real and personal property under the control of the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners). It also includes reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or with illegal drugs in an employee's system.

It is the responsibility of county supervisors to counsel an employee whenever they see changes in performance that suggest an employee may have a drug or alcohol problem. The supervisors should suggest that the employee seek appropriate professional help with the problem.

Any and all information gathered as a result of the drug testing program is confidential and shall not be disclosed except in accordance with procedures allowed under the Federal/State statutes, professional licensing regulations, or county policy.

Prior to testing, employees and job applicants shall be given a written policy statement. The ultimate goal of this policy is to balance our respect for individual privacy with our need to keep a safe and drug free environment within government through fair and reasonable drug testing methods for the protection of public employees and employers. Our intention is to prevent and treat substance abuse.

2) CBD Products

The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, Pub. L. 115-334, (Farm Bill) removed hemp from the definition of marijuana under the Controlled Substances Act. Under the Farm Bill, hemp-derived products containing a concentration of up to 0.3% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) are not controlled substances. THC is the primary psychoactive component of marijuana. Any product, including “Cannabidiol” (CBD) products, with a concentration of more than 0.3% THC remains classified as marijuana, a Schedule I drug under the Controlled Substances Act.

The labeling of many CBD products may be misleading because the products could contain higher levels of THC than what the product label states. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not currently certify the levels of THC in CBD products, so there is no Federal oversight to ensure that the labels are accurate. The FDA has cautioned the public that: “Consumers should beware purchasing and using any [CBD] products.” The FDA has stated: “It is currently illegal to market CBD by adding it to a food or labeling it as a dietary supplement.” Also, the FDA has issued several warning letters to companies because their products contained more CBD than indicated on the product label.

Drug Screens test for marijuana and not CBD. Since the use of CBD products could lead to a positive marijuana drug test result, employees should exercise caution when considering whether to use CBD products.

3) Over the Counter or Prescription Medications

An employee who has been prescribed or issued a drug or who is otherwise taking a non-prescribed drug which could impair their ability to perform their job must immediately notify their supervisor so a determination can be made about whether the employee can safely perform his or her job. Employees may be required to provide evidence of valid prescriptions.

Note: While medical marijuana is legal in the state of Florida, it remains an illegal Schedule I controlled substance under federal law. In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act and County policy, the use of marijuana, including medical marijuana, is

strictly prohibited for all County employees. Employees are not permitted to work under the influence of marijuana, and a positive drug test result for marijuana will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Possession or issuance of a valid medical marijuana card will not be accepted as a valid explanation for a positive drug test result.

4) Requirement to Report Conviction

As a condition of employment, employees must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify the County in writing of any conviction of a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) calendar days after such conviction.

5) Definitions

a) Drug - alcohol, including distilled spirit, wine, a malt beverage or an intoxicating liquor, a cannabinoid, marijuana (THC metabolite), cocaine, opiates or opioids, amphetamines, phencyclidine (PCP and analogs) hallucinogens, methaqualone, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, a synthetic narcotic, stimulants, club drugs, dissociative drugs, hallucinogens, designer drug or a metabolite of any of the substances listed in this paragraph.

b) Prescription or nonprescription medication – a drug or medication obtained pursuant to a prescription as defined by s. 893.02 or a medication that is authorized pursuant to federal or state law for general distribution and use without a prescription in the treatment of human diseases, ailments, or injuries.

c) Job Applicant – Means a person who has been offered a position with the County, conditioned upon meeting the requirements of the Drug Free Workplace Policy.

d) Detectable Amount – The cut-off levels established by the governing authority for screening and confirmation.

e) “Safety-Sensitive” or “Mandatory Testing” position – a job assignment which requires the employee to carry a firearm, work closely with an employee who carries a firearm, perform life-threatening procedures, work with heavy or dangerous machinery, work as a safety inspector, work with children, work with detainees in the correctional system, work with confidential information or documents pertaining to criminal investigations, work with controlled substances, or a job assignment which requires an employee security background check, pursuant to s. 110.1127, or a job assignment in which a momentary lapse in attention could result in injury or death to another person.

f) “Special Risk” position – a position that is required to be filled by a person certified under Chapter 633 Firefighter, or Chapter 943 Law Enforcement and Correctional Officer.

g) Medical Review Officer (MRO) – a licensed medical physician, employed with or contracted with the County, who has knowledge of substance abuse disorders, laboratory testing procedures, and chain of custody collection procedures; who verifies positive, confirmed test results; and who has the necessary medical training

to interpret and evaluate an employee's positive test result in relation to the employee's medical history, and other relevant biomedical information.

6) Policy and Work Rules

The county policy is to employ a workforce free from the use of illegal drugs either on or off the job and the abuse of alcohol in the workplace. Any employee in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action, to include termination, even for the first offense. It is a standard of conduct of the employees of this County that employees shall not use illegal drugs or abuse legal ones. In order to maintain this standard, the County shall establish and maintain the programs and rules set forth in this policy.

a) General Procedures

Employees and applicants will be required to provide a blood, breath, or urine specimen (or any other approved specimen which detects the presence of drug or alcohol) for testing. The County will pay for required drug and alcohol tests. The applicant or employee shall pay costs of non-required tests.

b) Prohibited Conduct

This county policy specifically prohibits employees from possessing, using, consuming, transferring, selling, buying, or attempting to buy, sell or transfer any illegal drug or alcohol while at work or while on county property. Possession includes having the substance on the employee's person, vehicle or other personal property and/or in the employee's body, blood or urine in an amount above the threshold levels established by the Florida Department of Health and Human Services. This prohibition applies while an employee is on county business or at any time between the beginning and the end of the employee's workday, whether on county property or not. Furthermore, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace.

Any employee who violates this policy is guilty of misconduct and is subject to discipline including termination or suspension without pay from employment, even for a first offense. Failure to submit to a required medical or physical examination or test is misconduct and is grounds for termination.

c) Refusal to Test

Refusal to submit to testing includes, but is not limited to:

i) Failure to provide an adequate specimen for testing without valid medical explanation.

ii) Providing an adulterated or substituted specimen.

iii) Delaying or failure to appear or remain at the testing facility within a reasonable time after being instructed to do so; and

iv) Leaving the scene of an accident or failing to remain available for testing after an accident.

A refusal to test will be treated as a positive test result. Applicants who refuse to

test will not be offered employment and employees who refuse to test will be disciplined, up to and including termination. Refusal to take a drug or alcohol test may result in the employee forfeiting his or her eligibility for medical and indemnity benefits under State Workers' Compensation; and is cause for automatic termination of the employee which may also cause denial of Unemployment Compensation.

d) Initial Test

The initial screen for all drugs except alcohol shall use an immunoassay or other scientifically accepted method approved by the Agency for Health Care Administration. For alcohol, the initial test may be the enzyme methodology or other approved method. For alcohol testing, all levels equal to or exceeding .02% shall be considered presumptively positive.

e) Confirmation Test

A positive finding will generate a confirmation test through a scientifically accepted method approved by the Agency for Health Care Administration and the results will be kept confidential. A copy of any positive can be received by the employee by submitting his/her request in writing.

f) Confidentiality

All information, interviews, reports, statements, memoranda, and drug and alcohol test results may not be received in evidence, discovery, or disclosed without a written consent by the donor, except when compelled by a hearing officer or a court of competent jurisdiction, or where otherwise permitted by law.

g) Pre-Employment Drug Screening

Consistent with the county policy opposing drug abuse and our commitment to a safe working environment, we have implemented a pre-employment drug testing policy. Safety-sensitive job applicants shall undergo screening for the presence of illegal drugs as a condition of employment. Safety-sensitive job applicants will be required to voluntarily submit to a urinalysis test at a laboratory chosen by the County after signing a consent and release form. Safety-sensitive job applicants must successfully pass the drug screen urinalysis prior to beginning work.

The County will not discriminate against applicants for employment because of past drug abuse. This Drug-Free Workplace Policy concerns current abuse of drugs that may prevent employees from properly and safely performing their job duties.

All testing will be done by certified laboratories. All test results will be checked by an MRO to assure accuracy. All testing, sample collection, storage, handling and chain of custody will be done in accordance with the Florida Agency on Health Care Administration rules and regulations.

h) Active Employee Drug Testing

i) This County has adopted screening practices to identify employees who use illegal drugs. As a condition of continued employment, no employee shall report

to work, or perform work, with illegal drugs or alcohol in his/her body. Every employee shall submit to drug screening:

(1) When there is reasonable suspicion to believe that an employee is using or has used illegal drugs;

Circumstances that could indicate a drug problem and considered reasonable suspicion are:

(a) Observed drug use during work hours on county premises;

(b) Observable physical signs;

(c) Incoherent mental state;

(d) Marked changes in personal behavior that are otherwise unexplainable;

(e) Deteriorating work performance that is otherwise unexplainable;

(f) Accidents or other actions that provide reasonable cause to believe the employee may be under the influence;

(g) Other behavior associated with possible drug use.

(2) When there is a report of drug use, provided by a reliable and credible source;

(3) When there is any mishap or accident involving, caused by, or contributed to by an employee in which injury to a person or persons (requires a physician) occurs;

(4) Where damage to property in the amount of $1,000 or greater has occurred;

(5) Upon return from extended absence of six (6) months;

(6) As part of a general physical, if required, to ensure fitness for duty.

Our County is a drug-free workplace for the benefit of all employees, customers and the community. State law provides for the possible denial of workers' compensation benefits for employees who are injured while working and subsequently test positive (Florida Rule 38F-9.001 (2) (a)) (W.C. Act 440.102 (5)) and the denial of unemployment compensation. The use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated or subsidized.

i) Testing

All testing will be done at certified laboratories. An MRO will analyze all results. All testing, sample collection, storage, handling, and chain of custody will be done in accordance with appropriate federal and state regulations. All test results will be maintained in a confidential file.

The County will provide an employee [upon request within seven (7) days] a written

report regarding the circumstances that formed the basis for reasonable suspicion. The original and signed report will be maintained in a confidential file.

If a test is not conclusive because of possible tampering or adulteration, a second test will be requested. The second sample collection may be observed. If a test is rejected because of purposeful adulteration, the employee shall be terminated.

Documentation of a positive drug test result will be placed in the employee's confidential file within five (5) working days of notification of the positive test result.

If an employee is tested for reasonable suspicion, documentation of this test, regardless of the test result, will be placed in the employee's confidential file within five (5) working days of receipt of the test results.

All information received in regard to drug testing results will be maintained in separate confidential files and only be used for the purposes of complying with the Drug-Free Workplace Policy.

i) Reasonable Suspicion Testing

Where reasonable suspicion exists that an employee is using or has used drugs in violation of this policy, the employee may not be allowed to work. The employee may be provided safe transportation to a collection facility, and depending on the extent of the observed impairment, accompanied by the supervisor or another employee.

If an employee is tested for reasonable suspicion, documentation will be placed in the employee's confidential file within five working days of the reasonable suspicion test. The County will provide an employee (upon their request) with a written report regarding the circumstances that formed the basis for reasonable suspicion. The original and signed report will be maintained in the confidential human resource records.

ii) Random Drug Testing

All designated safety-sensitive employees will be randomly tested for drugs. Human Resources shall maintain a list of job descriptions classified as safety-sensitive by the County. A computer program or other independent, bias-free method shall be used to select names of employees for random testing.

iii) Unscheduled Drug Testing

All regular safety-sensitive employees shall be tested for drugs at unscheduled intervals.

iv) Extended Absence Drug Testing

Safety-sensitive employees who return to work after an extended absence of six (6) months will be required to take a drug test comparable to the pre-employment screening.

v) Rehabilitative Drug-Testing

Employees who are afforded the opportunity to complete a rehabilitation or employee assistance program and who successfully complete the program will be required to submit to a Return-to-Duty test and Follow-up testing for up to two years following completion of the program. Follow-up testing will be unannounced and on a quarterly, semiannual, or annual basis for up to two years thereafter. Employees not complying with these conditions, or testing positive at any time during or following the rehabilitation or employee assistance program, will be terminated from employment.

vi) Routine Fitness for Duty

The County will require an employee to submit to a drug test if the test is conducted as part of a routinely scheduled fitness for duty medical examination that is required for all members of an employment classification or group.

j) Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The management of Okaloosa County is aware that many personal or health problems can and do interfere with an employee's ability to perform on the job.

The County offers an EAP for employees and their dependents as part of its employee benefits. The EAP provides confidential assessment, referral, and short-term counseling to the employees whose personal health problems are interfering with their job performance.

The EAP can be accessed by an employee through self-referral or as a referral by a supervisor. Refer to the section on Employee Assistance Program for the complete county EAP policy and procedures.

Human Resources has a list of contacts of the EAP and other mental health facilities available in the area.

k) Grounds for Discipline or Termination

This county policy specifically prohibits employees from possessing, using, consuming, transferring, selling, buying, or attempting to buy, sell or transfer any illegal drug or alcohol while at work or while on county property. Possession includes having the substance on the employee's person, vehicle or other personal property and/or in the employee's body, blood, or urine in an amount above the threshold levels established by the Florida Department of Health and Human Services. This prohibition applies while an employee is on county business or at any time between the beginning and the end of the employee's workday, whether on county property or not. Any employee who violates this policy is guilty of misconduct and is subject to discipline including termination or suspension without pay from employment, even for a first offense.

Failure to submit to a required medical or physical examination or test is misconduct and is grounds for termination. The County will use the Federal Department of Transportation guidelines to determine a refusal to test in the case of shy bladder or

shy lung. In the case of shy bladder or shy lung, the employee will have seven (7) working days to secure documentation from a physician establishing the physical condition. In the case of psychological cause, the diagnosis must have been made prior to the test. Diagnosis such as typical anxiety is not acceptable.

An employee who purposely tampers with or alters a specimen is guilty of misconduct and is subject to discipline including termination or suspension without pay from employment, even for a first offense.

Employees tested for reasonable suspicion may be suspended without pay or placed in non-safety-sensitive jobs pending the results of the required test and/or investigation. An employee with a negative result will be reinstated (if suspended) with full back pay and/or return to previous duties. A positive test will result in immediate action up to, and including, termination of employment.

l) Responsibilities of the Employee

i) As a condition of employment, employees must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify the County in writing of any conviction of a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) calendar days after such a conviction.

ii) The employee must notify his/her supervisor of any drug or medication that may affect or impair his/her judgment or job performance or safety.

iii) The employee or job applicant must notify the laboratory of any administrative or civil action planned as a result of a positive test within five (5) working days from receipt of notification.

The employee has the right to contest the result of a positive drug test, in writing, within five (5) working days of being notified in writing of the positive test result. The employee has a right to a copy of the test result, upon request, and to have the sample taken to a certified lab to be re-tested at the employee's expense.

m) Rights of the Employee/Job Applicant

i) An employee or job applicant who receives a positive confirmed drug test may contest or explain in writing the result to the MRO within five (5) working days of receipt of the written test results.

ii) The employee or job applicant has the right to consult the MRO for technical information regarding the effects of prescription medication on the drug test.

iii) An employee or job applicant may, by written request, have his/her specimen re-tested at the laboratory of their choice, at their expense.

iv) The employee can request, in writing, within seven (7) days a written report regarding the circumstances that formed the basis for their reasonable suspicion testing.

n) Drugs that May be Tested For

The County may test for any or all of the following (they are listed by chemical name and brand or common name):

Alcohol	(booze, drink)
Amphetamines	(biphetamine, desoxyn, dexedrine, speed)
Cannabinoids	(marijuana, hashish, hash, hash oil, pot, joint, roach, grass, weed, reefer)
Cocaine	(coke, blow, nose candy, snow, flake, crack)
Phencyclidine	(PCP, angel dust, hog)
Methaqualone	(quaaludes, ludes)
Opiates	(opium, Dover's powder, paregoric, parepectolin)
Barbiturates	(phenobarbital, tuinal, amytal)
Benzodiazepines	(ativan, azene, clonopin, dalmane, diazepam, halcion, librium, poxipam, restoril, serax, tranxene, valium, veratrine, xanax)
Methadone	(dolophine, methadose)
Propoxyphene	(darvocet, darvon N, dolene)

7) Conclusion

The county Drug-Free Workplace Policy is not intended to be abusive or discriminatory nor to come into conflict with any public policy. This County considers drug testing to be only one of several steps to achieve a safe, healthy, and productive atmosphere for its employees. This policy is available for inspection by the job applicant or employees during regular business hours. This policy supersedes any information provided to applicants and/or employees either written or oral and reserves the right to change the provisions of this policy and testing program at any time in the future without prior notice and does not constitute a contract for employment.

Section B – Substance and Alcohol Misuse Policy DOT FMCSA for CDL Holders

Effective – 01-01-2025

1) Statement of Policy

Okaloosa County has a firm commitment to provide employees with a safe and drug/alcohol-free work environment. In order to accomplish this goal, and comply with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulations (49 C.F.R. Part 40 and 382), all employees (and applicants for employment) that perform duties covered by DOT/FMCSA regulations are covered by these policies and procedures IN ADDITION TO all other County policies and procedures related to alcohol and drug use. Individuals performing the following duties or in the following positions are covered by these regulations and this policy summary.

Individuals are covered by these policies and procedures at any time when there is any possibility that they may be required to perform any duties for the County which are covered by DOT/FMCSA regulations. This means all provisions of this policy apply, including those requiring no use of alcohol in any form within 4 hours of performing any such duties, depending upon the applicable DOT/FMCSA prohibition based upon the individual's duties.

All DOT/FMCSA alcohol and drug testing performed on individuals will be in accordance with required DOT/FMCSA procedures. These include the use of special testing forms, trained personnel, and special processes and handling to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the testing process. Information related to testing will be treated as confidential except as required to comply with DOT/FMCSA requirements, safeguard the safety of personnel and the public, or as otherwise legally required.

DOT/FMCSA drug testing includes taking urine and/or oral fluid samples which are sent to Federally certified testing laboratories to test for the presence of amphetamines, marijuana, cocaine, opioids, and phencyclidine (PCP). Positive test results will be reviewed by a qualified physician a Medical Review Officer (MRO), to determine if the individual has a legitimate medical explanation for a positive test result.

2) Applicability

County employees subject to the provisions of this policy, are those DOT/FMCSA covered employees who hold CDL's and include, but are not limited to:

a) Full-time, regularly employed drivers;

b) Casual, intermittent or occasional drivers;

c) Leased drivers;

d) Independent, owner-operator contractors who are either directly employed by or under lease to Okaloosa County or who operate commercial motor vehicles (CMV's) at the direction of or with the consent of Okaloosa County.

3) Definitions

Many of the following terms are used throughout this Policy and may be helpful in better understanding the alcohol/drug testing procedures.

a) Driver – any person who operates a commercial motor vehicle. This includes, but is not limited to: Full-time, regularly employed drivers; casual, intermittent, or occasional drivers; leased drivers and independent owner-operator contractors.

b) Performing (a safety-sensitive function) – a driver is considered to be performing a safety-sensitive function during any period in which he or she is actually performing, ready to perform, or immediately available to perform any safety-sensitive functions.

c) Safety-sensitive function – all time from the time a driver begins to work or is required to be in readiness to work until the time he/she is relieved from work and all responsibility for performing work. Safety-sensitive functions shall include:

i) All time at an employer or shipper plant, terminal, facility, or other property, or on any public property, waiting to be dispatched, unless the driver has been relieved from duty by the employer.

ii) All time inspecting equipment as required by §§ 392.7 and 392.8 of this subchapter or otherwise inspecting, servicing, or conditioning any commercial motor vehicle at any time;

iii) All time spent at the driving controls of a commercial motor vehicle in operation.

iv) All time, other than driving time, in or upon any commercial motor vehicle except time spent resting in a sleeper berth (a berth conforming to the requirements of § 393.76 of this subchapter);

v) All time loading or unloading a vehicle, supervising, or assisting in the loading or unloading, attending a vehicle being loaded or unloaded, remaining in readiness to operate the vehicle, or in giving or receiving receipts for shipments loaded or unloaded; and

vi) All time repairing, obtaining assistance, or remaining in attendance upon a disabled vehicle.

d) Commercial motor vehicle – a motor vehicle or combination of motor vehicles used in commerce to transport passengers or property if the vehicle:

i) Has a gross combination weight rating or gross combination weight of 11,794 kilograms or more (26,001 pounds or more), whichever is greater, inclusive of a towed unit(s) with a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of more than 4,536 kilograms (10,000 pounds), whichever is greater; or

ii) Has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of 11,794 or more kilograms (26,001 or more pounds), whichever is greater; or

iii) Is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or

iv) Is of any size and is used in the transportation of materials found to be hazardous for the purposes of the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act (49 U.S.C. 5103(b)) and which require the motor vehicle to be placarded under the Hazardous Materials Regulations (49 CFR part 172, subpart F).

e) Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) – a FMCSA database that requires employers and service agents to report information to and to query regarding drivers who are subject to the DOT/FMCSA controlled substance and alcohol testing regulations.

f) Alcohol Use – the drinking or swallowing of any beverage, liquid mixture or preparation (including any medication), containing alcohol.

g) Alcohol Concentration/Content – alcohol in a volume of breath (shown as grams of alcohol/210 liters of breath) as indicated by an evidential breath test (EBT) or a 0.02 -0.04 or greater in an initial alcohol screening using saliva ASD.

h) Alcohol Confirmation Test – a subsequent test using an EBT, following a screening test with a result of 0.02 or greater, provides quantitative data about the alcohol concentration.

i) Breath Alcohol Technician (BAT) – an individual who instructs and assists individuals in the alcohol testing process and operates an evidential breath testing (EBT) device.

j) Collection Site – a place selected by the employer where employees present themselves for the purpose of providing a specimen for a drug test.

k) Collector – a person who instructs and assists employees at a collection site, who receives and makes an initial inspection of the specimen provided by those employees, and who initiates and completes the CCF.

l) Confirmatory drug test – a second analytical procedure performed on a urine or oral fluid specimen to identify and quantify the presence of a specific drug or drug metabolite.

m) Drugs, Controlled Substances – for purposes of this policy, the terms "drugs" and "controlled substances" are interchangeable, and have the same meaning unless otherwise specified, these terms refer to:

- Marijuana (THC)
- Cocaine
- Opioids
- Phencyclidine (PCP)
- Amphetamines, including methamphetamine.

n) Evidential Breath Testing (EBT) Device – a device that is approved by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for the evidential testing of breath at the .02 and .04 alcohol concentrations and appears on ODAPC's Web page for “Approved Evidential Breath Measurement Devices” because it conforms with the model specifications available from NHTSA.

o) Medical Review Officer (MRO) – a licensed medical physician, employed with or contracted with the County, who has knowledge of substance abuse disorders, laboratory testing procedures, and chain of custody collection procedures; who verifies positive, confirmed test results; and who has the necessary medical training to interpret and evaluate an employee’s positive test result in relation to the employee’s medical history, and other relevant biomedical information.

i) MRO responsibility includes:

(1) Overseeing the accuracy and integrity of the drug testing process, serving as an impartial gatekeeper.

(2) Conducting quality assurance reviews of specimens, providing feedback as necessary, and reporting issues to relevant authorities.

(3) Determining if there's a legitimate medical explanation for positive,

adulterated, substituted, or invalid results.

(4) Investigating and rectifying problems, ensuring timely communication of results to employers, and safeguarding confidentiality.

(5) Ensuring compliance with DOT/FMCSA regulations.

(6) For negative drug test results, reviewing documentation for errors, verifying consistency, and reporting results confidentially.

(7) For positive, adulterated, substituted, or invalid results, reviewing documentation, conducting verification interviews, and reporting results in accordance with regulations.

(8) Contacting employees directly to discuss test results and informing them of their rights regarding split specimen testing within a 72-hour window.

(9) Providing necessary information for employees to request split specimen tests and ensuring accessibility for their inquiries.

(10) Informing employees that additional tests beyond the split specimen are not authorized.

Richard A. Weaver M.D., AAMRO
Drug Free Workplaces, LLC
4013 Bayou Blvd., Suite 13
Pensacola, FL 32503
800-430-3782

p) Refuse to submit (to an alcohol or controlled substances test)

A driver:

i) Fails to appear for any test (except a pre-employment test)

ii) Fails to remain at the testing site until the testing process is complete.

iii) Fails to provide adequate breath for testing without a valid medical explanation after he or she has received notice of the requirement for breath testing in accordance with federal regulations, or

iv) Fails to provide adequate urine or oral fluid for controlled substances testing without a valid medical explanation after he or she has received notice of the requirement of drug testing in accordance with Federal regulations, or

v) Engages in conduct that clearly obstructs the testing process.

q) Saliva Alcohol Test (initial test only) – in alcohol testing: the Screening Test Technician may use the saliva ASD in the initial test, if positive, the confirmation must be a breath alcohol test.

r) Screening Test (initial test):

i) In alcohol testing: a procedure to determine if an employee has a prohibited concentration of alcohol in his or her system by a saliva ASD or a breath test.

ii) In drug testing: an immunoassay screen to eliminate "negative" urine specimens from further consideration.

s) Substance Abuse – refers to patterns of use that result in health consequences or impairment in social, psychological, and occupational functioning.

t) Stand Down – employers are prohibited from standing employees down, except consistent with a waiver from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration as required under this section.

u) Substance Abuse Professional (SAP) – a licensed physician or a licensed or certified psychologist, social worker, employee assistance professional, or addiction counselor (certified by the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC)] with knowledge of and clinical experience in the diagnosis and treatment of alcohol and controlled substances-related disorders.

4) Prohibitions

The Department of Transportation (DOT) defines the restrictions for the use of both alcohol and controlled substances.

a) Alcohol Use

i) Since alcohol is a legal substance, the prohibitions for its use are closely tied to the performance of FMCSA safety-sensitive functions. The DOT/FMCSA regulations prohibit a driver from reporting for duty or remaining on duty requiring the performance of FMCSA safety-sensitive functions while having an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater. No employer having knowledge that a driver has an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater shall permit the driver to perform or continue to perform FMCSA safety-sensitive functions.

ii) An employee with an alcohol concentration of 0.02 or greater but less than 0.04, must be removed from performing FMCSA safety-sensitive functions for an employer, including driving a commercial motor vehicle, nor shall an employer permit the driver to perform or continue to perform FMCSA safety-sensitive functions, until the start of the driver's next regularly scheduled duty period, but not less than 24 hours following administration of the test. The employer is prohibited from taking additional action under FMCSA authority against an employee based solely on the employee’s behavior and appearance. The County may have, however, additional policies under the County's own authority.

iii) Prohibitions for Alcohol

(1) An employee may not report to duty or stay on FMCSA safety-sensitive duty

(a) with an alcohol concentration of 0.02 or greater,

(b) while in possession of alcohol

(c) if using alcohol; or

(d) within four (4) hours of using alcohol.

(2) An employee may not perform an FMCSA safety-sensitive function who has a concentration of 0.04 or greater for any DOT/FMCSA employer until an evaluation by an SAP and has completed the recommended treatment.

(3) An employee who has had an accident may not use alcohol until post-accident testing is done or for a period of eight (8) hours, whichever comes first. Employees cannot refuse to submit to alcohol testing. The County reserves the right to take disciplinary action against any employee who refuses to be tested.

b) Drug Use

The FMCSA prohibits the use of controlled substances by covered employees. Employees who use drugs are considered medically unqualified to perform FMCSA safety sensitive functions. Anyone observing a violation of this policy must report it to his or her immediate supervisor.

i) Prohibitions for drugs, controlled substances:

(1) Employees may not report for duty or stay on FMCSA safety-sensitive duty while using any controlled substance. The exception to this prohibition is if a physician has prescribed the substance and has advised the employee that it does not interfere with the performance of FMCSA safety-sensitive duties.

(2) Employees may not report for duty or stay on FMCSA safety-sensitive duty if they have tested positive for a controlled substance.

(3) The County reserves the right to require employees to report the use of any therapeutic drugs. Also, the County reserves the right to remove employees from FMCSA safety-sensitive duties until a physician's opinion can justify safe resumption of FMCSA safety-sensitive functions.

c) Consequences

An employee who has violated any of the prohibitions concerning alcohol misuse with a concentration of 0.04 or greater or a positive drug test, including a refusal to be tested, will be removed from any FMCSA safety-sensitive function and will not be allowed to return to a FMCSA safety-sensitive function with the County until an evaluation by a Substance Abuse Professional (SAP) has been done and any recommended treatment has been completed. The County reserves the right to take disciplinary action against an employee who violates these alcohol/drug prohibitions. The employee shall not be disciplined until a positive test result is communicated to the County. However, if the employee's conduct in connection with the substance/alcohol abuse amounts to conduct for which the County may otherwise discipline the employee, the County may take action prior to knowing a positive test result. If the employee fails to complete the program, or fails to or cannot be rehabilitated, they may be terminated from their employment with the County.

An employee found to have an alcohol concentration of 0.02, but less than 0.04, will not be allowed to return to an FMCSA safety-sensitive position for 24 hours.

d) Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse

The Clearinghouse is a secure online database that gives employers, FMCSA, State Driver Licensing Agencies, and State law enforcement personnel real-time information about CDL driver drug and alcohol program violations.

i) Pre-employment Query

ii) Requirement: Employers must query the Clearinghouse before employing a driver for FMCSA safety-sensitive functions to check for any violations related to controlled substances and alcohol testing.

iii) Details the query should reveal:

(1) Verified positive, adulterated, or substituted drug test results.

(2) Alcohol tests with a concentration of 0.04 or higher.

(3) Refusal to submit to a test.

(4) Knowledge of on-duty, pre-duty, post-accident alcohol use, or controlled substance use.

iv) Process: A full query requires the driver's specific consent, releasing detailed information to the employer.

e) Annual Query

i) Requirement: Employers must query the Clearinghouse annually for all drivers subject to testing.

ii) Details:

(1) A limited query can be used with the driver's consent, indicating if information exists without revealing specifics.

(2) If a limited query shows information, a full query must be conducted within 24 hours, or the driver must cease FMCSA safety-sensitive functions until cleared.

f) Notification and Recordkeeping

i) Employer Notification: FMCSA will notify employers if any violations are reported within 30 days following a query.

ii) Prohibition: Employers must not employ or allow a driver to perform FMCSA safety-sensitive functions if the Clearinghouse shows unresolved violations unless the driver has completed the required return-to-duty process.

iii) Recordkeeping: Employers must retain query records and responses for three years.

g) Driver Consent and Access

i) Consent: Employers must obtain written or electronic consent from drivers before querying the Clearinghouse. The driver must provide consent through the Clearinghouse for full queries.

ii) Driver Notification: Drivers will be notified by FMCSA of any entry, revision, removal, or release of information concerning them in the Clearinghouse.

iii) Access: Drivers can review their information in the Clearinghouse after registering.

h) Reporting Requirements

i) MRO Reporting: Medical Review Officers must report drug violations, including verified positives and refusals.

ii) Employer Reporting:

(1) Controlled Substances: Refusals not requiring MRO determination, actual knowledge of drug use, and negative return-to-duty test results.

(2) Alcohol: Tests with 0.04 concentration or higher, refusals, actual knowledge of use, and negative return-to-duty test results.

For more detailed information, refer to https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov/Learn

i) Required Testing

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) requires drug and alcohol testing for commercial driver's license (CDL) holders. There are five situations in which testing can be done to determine the presence of alcohol and/or drugs. Here is a brief description of each:

i) Pre-employment Testing

Pre-employment testing for drugs is required:

(1) Before a new hire is permitted to perform any FMCSA safety-sensitive function.

(2) When a person transfers into an FMCSA safety-sensitive function from elsewhere in the County that is non-safety-sensitive.

(3) If a driver is removed from a random testing pool for more than 30 days, he must again be pre-employment tested.

(4) Pre-employment testing for alcohol is permitted only if it applies to all CDL drivers.

ii) Post-accident Testing

Post-accident drug and alcohol testing is required:

(1) Following an accident where there is a fatality.

(2) A driver receives a citation and there is bodily injury requiring medical treatment away from the scene.

(3) A driver receives a citation, and a vehicle is towed away from the scene.

NOTE: Post-accident alcohol testing should be done within two (2) hours of the accident. If it cannot be done within eight (8) hours, it should not be done.

NOTE: Employees must submit to post-accident drug testing within 32 hours.

iii) Random Testing

Unannounced random testing of the County employees engaged in FMCSA safety-sensitive functions will be done each year. Drivers, who are randomly selected from a pool, must be tested just before, during or immediately after performing an FMCSA safety-sensitive function. Random testing is done on a percentage basis:

(1) Ten percent (10%) of the Random Pool must be tested for alcohol annually.

(2) Fifty percent (50%) of the Random Pool must be randomly tested for controlled substances annually.

iv) Reasonable Suspicion

Drug and/or alcohol testing can be performed if a County management official or supervisor has reasonable suspicion to believe that a covered employee's behavior or appearance may indicate drug or alcohol use.

The determination to test for reasonable suspicion must be based on:

(1) The observation of a trained supervisor or County official who has received the training required by the alcohol and drug ruling (supervisor training).

(2) Specific, clearly stated observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech or body odors of the driver.

(3) Observations made just before, during or just after the performance of FMCSA safety-sensitive functions.

v) Return-to-duty and Follow-up Testing

A driver who violates this policy and/or federal requirements for continuing to perform FMCSA safety-sensitive functions. The employer must order direct

observation for Return-to-duty collections.

The following test results are required:

(1) An alcohol concentration of less than 0.02

(2) A verified negative controlled substances test

The employer must order direct observation for Follow-Up collections when the driver does return to a FMCSA safety-sensitive function. The federal rules and this policy call for a minimum of six (6) unannounced tests during the first year back in a FMCSA safety-sensitive position and can extend up to five years as recommended by the Substance Abuse Professional.

j) Refusal to Test

i) A refusal to be tested for alcohol or controlled substances constitutes a violation, and the County reserves the right to take additional disciplinary action against an employee who refuses to be tested. Employees who are directed by the County or a supervisor to report to an approved collection facility, for a drug/alcohol test under the conditions noted as “Required Testing” and who refuse to submit, or who fails to appear within a reasonable time as determined by the County, are considered a "no show" and will be deemed a positive drug screen.

5) Alcohol Testing Procedures and Employee Safeguards

a) Breath Alcohol Technician (BAT)

i) A “breath alcohol technician” is an individual who instructs and assists individuals in the alcohol testing process and operates an “evidentiary breath testing” device (EBT). The BAT is required to be properly trained, as follows:

ii) Proficiency shall be demonstrated by successful completion of a course of instruction that, at a minimum, provides training in the principals of EBT methodology, operation, and calibration checks; the fundamentals of breath analysis for alcohol content; and the procedures required in this part for obtaining a breath sample, and interpreting and recording EBT results.

iii) Only courses of instruction for operation of EBT’s that are equivalent to the Department of Transportation (DOT) model course, as determined by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), may be used to train BATs to proficiency.

iv) The course of instruction shall provide documentation that the BAT has demonstrated competence in the operation of the specific EBT(s) he/she will use.

v) Any BAT who will perform an external calibration check of an EBT shall be trained to proficiency in conducting the check on the particular model of EBT.

vi) The BAT shall receive additional training, as needed, to ensure proficiency, concerning new or additional devices or changes in technology that he/she will use.

vii) Okaloosa County will establish documentation of the training and proficiency test of each BAT it uses to test County employees.

viii) A BAT-qualified supervisor of an employee may conduct the alcohol test for that employee only if another BAT is unavailable.

ix) A supervisor or management official, who makes a “reasonable suspicion” determination as to a DOT/FMCSA covered employee, shall not test that employee.

b) Evidential Breath Testing (EBT) Device

i) EBT's used to perform alcohol tests on the County employees are approved by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and are placed on the "Conforming Products list of Evidential Breath Measurement Devices" (CPL).

ii) An EBT used for a screening test of a County employee will be capable of printing out results and numbering each result sequentially. A logbook may also be kept.

iii) The EBT used will have a Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) developed by the manufacturer and approved by NHTSA. Okaloosa County will remove from service any EBT that fails a calibration check as set forth in the QAP.

c) Breath Alcohol Testing Form/Logbook

A federally approved alcohol testing form will be used to ensure the integrity of the test result, properly identify the employee with the test result, and serve as a documented record of the testing event.

The logbook, if used, will become additional documentation of the testing event by providing a sequential test number, date, name of BAT, location of test, quantified test result and initials of the employee for each test.

d) Preparation for Testing

Alcohol testing will be conducted in a location that affords, to the greatest extent practicable, visual and aural privacy to the County employee being tested.

The employee is required to show positive identification (picture I.D.) to the BAT and may request the BAT to also show positive identification. Employees who have no I.D. on their person shall have their identity confirmed by their supervisor.

The BAT must supervise only one (1) employee’s use of the EBT at a time and must not leave the testing site while the test is in progress.

e) Screening Test Procedure

After the employee has been positively identified, the alcohol screening test procedure will be conducted using any federally approved method. With breath alcohol testing:

i) The employee will provide the STT or BAT with identifying information and employer information to be entered onto the Breath or Saliva Alcohol Testing Form. The employee will be asked to certify, by signature, that the information provided is correct. A refusal by an employee to sign the certification will be regarded as a refusal to take the test.

ii) An individually sealed mouthpiece will be opened in view of the employee and attached to the EBT or ASD.

iii) The BAT will instruct the employee to blow forcefully into the mouthpiece for at least six (6) seconds or until the EBT indicates that an adequate amount of breath has been obtained.

iv) After showing the employee the quantitative alcohol concentration results printed out by the EBT or ASD, the BAT will enter the results, test number, testing device, serial number of the EBT, time, and date on the proper section of the Breath or Saliva Alcohol Testing Form. The BAT may also record the test number, date, name of BAT, location, and quantified test result in the logbook. The employee will then initial the logbook.

v) Depending on the result, the following procedures apply:

(1) Depending on whether the result is less than 0.02 or greater, the following procedures will be done:

(a) If the result is less than 0.02, the BAT or STT will date the form and sign the certification to the effect that all procedures were followed as required by DOT/FMCSA regulations. No further testing is required. The BAT will transmit the result of less than 0.02 to the County designated official in a confidential manner, and the County official will receive and store the information and ensure that confidentiality is maintained. The employee will receive a copy of the alcohol form.

NOTE: Failure of the employee to sign the alcohol test form or initial the logbook after a test has been conducted will be noted by the BAT in the remarks section of the alcohol form.

NOTE: If a test result printed by the EBT does not match the displayed result, the BAT shall note the disparity in the remarks section, both BAT and employee will initial the remarks. The test result will be considered invalid, and the employee and the County will be notified.

(b) If the result is 0.02 or greater, a confirmation test will be performed. If the confirmation test is performed by a different BAT, the BAT who conducted the screening test will complete and sign the form and logbook entry. The BAT will give the employee a copy of the alcohol form.

f) Confirmation Testing Procedures

If a different BAT is conducting the confirmation test, the new BAT will require positive identification of the employee, explain the testing procedure, and initiate a new Breath Alcohol Testing Form, requiring a repetition of information and certification by signature. In addition, the following instructions must be followed:

i) The BAT will instruct the employee not to eat, drink, or put any object or substance in his/her mouth and, to the extent possible, not belch, for at least 15 minutes. The BAT will explain that the reason for these instructions is to ensure against an artificially high reading. The BAT will note in the “Remarks” section of the form any non-compliance with instructions.

ii) The confirmation test will be conducted between15 and 20 minutes after the completion of the screening test.

iii) A new mouthpiece will be opened and used for the confirmation test.

iv) Before the confirmation test is administered for each employee, the BAT will ensure that the EBT registers 0.00 on an air blank. If the reading is greater than 0.00, after two (2) attempts, that EBT will not be used for testing.

v) Any EBT taken out of service because of failure to register 0.00 on an air blank will not be returned to service until an external calibration is conducted and the EBT is, once again, to be found within tolerance limits.

vi) In the event that the screening and confirmation test results are not identical, the confirmation test result is to be deemed to be the final result upon which any action will be taken in compliance with federal rules or County authority.

vii) The BAT will affix the confirmation test printout to the Breath Alcohol Test Form using tamper-evident tape.

viii) Following completion of the test, the BAT will date and sign the form. The employee will also sign the certification statement at the designated place.

ix) The refusal of the employee to sign the alcohol form will not defeat the test result, but will be noted by the BAT in the “Remarks” section.

x) Disparity between the displayed result and the printed result will be “noted,” signed by employee and BAT, and will be considered an invalid test.

xi) The BAT will transmit all results to Okaloosa County in a confidential manner. The BAT will ensure immediate transmission to Okaloosa County of results that require Okaloosa County to prevent an employee from performing a FMCSA safety-sensitive function.

xii) Okaloosa County will designate one or more representatives for the purpose of receiving and handling alcohol testing results in a confidential manner. All communications by BATs to Okaloosa County concerning the alcohol testing results of employees will be to a designated Okaloosa County representative.

k) Employee Test Information

The County will maintain employee test information records in a secure manner, so that disclosure of information to unauthorized persons does not occur. Employee test information will only be released as required by law or as expressly authorized. The release of employee test information is allowed in the following instances:

i) An employee will have access to any of his/her alcohol testing records upon written request.

ii) The County will allow any DOT-authorized agency access to facilities and records in connection with the County alcohol misuse prevention program,

iii) When requested, the County will disclose post-accident testing information to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as part of an accident investigation.

iv) The County may disclose information to the employee or to a decision-maker in a lawsuit, grievance, or other proceeding initiated by or on behalf of the employee.

v) The County will release information regarding an employee's alcohol testing records as directed by the specific, written consent of the employee authorizing release of the information to an identified person.

l) Drug Testing Procedures and Employee Safeguards

i) Chain of Custody

The Okaloosa County employee drug testing program will utilize a clear and well-documented procedure for collection, shipment and accession of urine specimens from the specimen collection site to the laboratory. For this purpose, a standard drug testing Custody and Control Form will be used.

ii) Definition of Chain of Custody

Federal regulations define chain of custody as “procedures to account for the integrity of each urine specimen by tracking its handling and storage from point of specimen collection to final disposition of the specimen.”

iii) The Custody and Control Form

The drug testing Custody and Control Form is used to document the chain of custody to the laboratory. These forms are multiple-part carbonless forms to allow for copies to be retained by the laboratory, to be shared by the MRO, the employee, and the Okaloosa County designated representatives. These forms will be maintained as a permanent record on which all necessary identifying data and the collection process are retained.

iv) Preparation for Testing

In addition to using a custody and control form, other safeguard procedures, in preparation of testing, include:

(1) Use of clean, single use collection container

(2) Use of a tamper-evident system

(3) Shipping Container designed to adequately protect the specimen bottles from shipment damage in the transport of specimens from the collection site to the laboratory.

(4) Written procedures and instructions for collection site person.

m) Written Procedures

Employees shall give either a blood sample, breath sample, saliva sample and/or a urine sample at a hospital, clinic, approved collection facility, or accredited testing laboratory, as designated by the County.

The written procedures for the collection site person emphasize that the collection site person is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the specimen collection and transfer process.

Unless it is impractical for any other individual to perform this function, a direct supervisor of an employee will not serve as the collection site person for testing purposes.

In any case, where a collection is monitored or directly observed, the collection site person will be of the same gender as the employee/donor.

n) Specimen Collection Security Procedures

The collection site will be in a secure location, closed to allow for maximum privacy. Security procedures require restricted access to collection materials and specimens. No unauthorized individuals will be permitted access to the collection site. No one other than the collection site person may handle specimens prior to their being placed securely in the mailing container.

To minimize the chance of error, the collection site person will collect only one specimen at any given time. The collection procedure for each specimen is completed when the specimen has been sealed and initialed, the custody and control form has been executed, and the employee has departed the collection site.

o) Laboratory Analysis

In compliance with the DOT/FMCSA drug testing regulations, Okaloosa County will only authorize laboratories certified by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to be used for the analysis of urine specimens for the Okaloosa County drug-testing program.

Certified laboratories, utilized by Okaloosa County, will take security measures to ensure accurate identification of each specimen. Internal Custody and Control Forms will be used at all times to track each specimen from the time it is received to the time it is destroyed.

LabCorp of America #0082

1912 Alexander Drive

Research Triangle Park, NC 27701

800-833-3984

NOTE: See Appendix A for more information on initial screening and confirmation testing.

p) Reporting of Results

The certified laboratory, chosen by the County to analyze specimens of covered employees, will report the test results directly to the County designated Medical Review Officer (MRO). Both positive and negative results will be reported in a secure and confidential manner, and never verbally.

The report, as certified by the responsible laboratory individual, will indicate the drug/metabolites tested for, whether the results are positive or negative, the specimen number signed by the County and the drug testing laboratory identification number.

The laboratory will also transmit to the MRO the certified copy of the chain of custody and control form and will identify the individual at the laboratory responsible for the day-to-day management of the laboratory process.

As the Medical Review Officer (MRO), it's imperative to maintain confidentiality when reporting results. Verified positive tests, immediate collection orders, adulterated or substituted specimens, and refusals to test must be reported to the Designated Employer Representative (DER) on the same day or the next business day of verification. Direct telephone contact with the DER is preferred, followed by appropriate documentation. You must ensure proper identification when contacting the DER and provide a comprehensive report containing all necessary information. Transmission of MRO reports to the DER must occur within two days of verification, using fax, courier, mail, or electronic means, with security measures in place to protect data integrity. These reports cannot be modified by anyone other than the MRO.

q) Review of Results/MRO

The MRO, designated by Okaloosa County to review drug test results, will be a fully licensed physician and possess knowledge of drug abuse disorders. It is the primary responsibility of the MRO to review and interpret positive results obtained from the laboratory. The MRO will assess and determine whether alternate medical explanations could account for the positive test results.

To accomplish this task, the MRO may conduct medical interviews of the individual, review the individual’s medical history and review any other relevant bio-medical

factors. Additionally, the MRO will examine all medical records and data made available by the tested individual, such as evidence of prescribed medications. The MRO will not consider any drug test results that arise from collection or analysis that do not comport with regulations.

The MRO will give the individual testing positive an opportunity to discuss the test results prior to making a final decision. After the final decision is made, the MRO will notify Okaloosa County.

r) Testing of Split Sample

The MRO will notify each employee who has a confirmed positive test that the employee has 72 hours in which to request a test of the split specimen. If the employee makes such a request, the MRO will direct, in writing, the laboratory to provide the split specimen to another certified laboratory for analysis. If the analysis of the split specimen fails to reconfirm the presence of the drug(s) or metabolite(s) found in the primary specimen, or if the split specimen is unavailable, inadequate for testing or unsuitable, the MRO will cancel the test and report cancellation and the reason for it to the DOT/FMCSA, Okaloosa County, and the employee.

s) MRO Unable to Contact Employee

If Okaloosa County's' designated MRO, after making and documenting all reasonable efforts is unable to contact a tested employee, the MRO will contact a designated management official of the County to arrange for the individual to contact the MRO prior to going on duty. The MRO may verify a positive test without having communicated with the employee about the results of the test if:

i) The employee expressly declines the opportunity to discuss the results of the test, or

ii) If the DER has successfully made and documented a contact with the employee and instructed the employee to contact the MRO and more than 72 hours have passed since the time the DER contacted the employee.

iii) If neither the MRO nor the DER, after making and documenting all reasonable efforts, has been able to contact the employee within ten (10) days of the date on which you received the test result from the laboratory.

- DOT tests take precedence over non-DOT tests and must be completed before any non-DOT testing begins. After a DOT urine drug test, any leftover urine must be discarded, and a separate sample collected for non-DOT testing.

- Only tests explicitly authorized by DOT regulations are permitted on DOT specimens. Additional drug testing or DNA testing on DOT specimens is prohibited.

- During a DOT urine drug test conducted as part of a DOT-required physical examination, medical tests related to the examination may be performed on remaining specimens after the DOT portion is sealed.

- Non-DOT drug or alcohol tests conducted as part of a physical examination to assess medical qualification for a license or certificate are not considered DOT tests and do not fall under DOT regulations.

- Results of non-DOT tests cannot override or invalidate DOT test results. Employers must not disregard a positive DOT test based on negative non-DOT results or DNA test results questioning specimen identity.

- The DOT Custody and Control Form (CCF) and Alcohol Testing Form (ATF) must not be used for non-DOT testing, and vice versa. Employers must always use the appropriate form for DOT-mandated tests.

- DOT drug or alcohol tests cannot be conducted on individuals who are not considered DOT-regulated employees according to DOT regulations.

6) Referral, Evaluation, and Treatment

The DOT drug testing rules, following the Omnibus Act of 1991, require employees to be provided with an opportunity for alcohol and/or drug abuse treatment. The rules, however, do not require that the employer pay for rehabilitation or hold a job open for an employee who violates a DOT drug and alcohol regulation. The County will provide a listing of SAPs readily available to the employee with names, addresses, and telephone numbers.

a) Specifically, the alcohol and drug ruling require:

i) That the employee who violates alcohol or drug prohibitions be advised of the resources available to evaluate and resolve the problem.

ii) That the employee be evaluated by a substance abuse professional (SAP) to determine what assistance is necessary.

iii) That before returning to FMCSA safety-sensitive duties an employee must:

(1) if assistance was recommended, the employee must be follow-up evaluated by a Substance Abuse Professional (SAP) to determine if treatment recommendations were followed.

(2) produce a return-to-duty alcohol test of 0.02 alcohol concentration or less if violation was alcohol related; and/or produce a verified negative return-to-duty drug test if the violation was drug related.

(3) be subject to a minimum of six (6) unannounced follow-up tests within the first year back to work.

NOTE: Follow-up testing can be required for up to five (5) years after return to work.

b) Employee Test Information

Okaloosa County will maintain records relating to employee test information, and related to violations of this policy, in a secure manner, so that disclosure of

information to unauthorized persons does not occur. Employee test information will only be released as required by law or as expressly authorized by the employee.

The release of employee test information is allowed in the following instances:

i) An employee will have access to any of his/her alcohol testing records upon written request;

ii) Okaloosa County will allow any DOT-authorized agency access to facilities and records in connection with the alcohol misuse prevention program;

iii) When requested, Okaloosa County will disclose post-accident testing information to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as part of an accident investigation;

iv) Okaloosa County may disclose information to the employee or to a decision-maker in a lawsuit, grievance, or other proceeding initiated by or on behalf of the employee arising from the results of an alcohol/drug test pursuant to this policy, or from the county's determination that the employee engaged in prohibited conduct.

Okaloosa County will release information regarding an employee's alcohol testing records as directed by the specific, written consent of the employee authorizing release of the information to an identified person. All DOT results will be released to prospective employer(s) upon request.

c) DOT Drug and Alcohol Policy Addendum – Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse.

Beginning January 6, 2020, a repository created by the FMCSA will collect information on drivers' DOT drug and alcohol violations occurring under the County's FMCSA DOT testing program.

i) The County must report DOT/FMCSA drug and alcohol testing program violations to the Clearinghouse. Motor carriers, medical review officers, third-party administrators (TPA/Consortiums), and substance abuse professionals (SAPs) must provide information when a driver:

ii) Tests positive for drugs or alcohol;

iii) Refuses required drug and or alcohol testing;

iii) Undergoes the return to duty drug and alcohol rehabilitation process.

d) The following records will be collected and maintained in the Clearinghouse:

i) A verified positive adulterated or substituted drug test result;

ii) An alcohol confirmation test with a concentration of 0.04 or higher;

iii) A refusal to submit to any test;

iv) An employer's report of actual knowledge, as defined, including:

(1) On duty alcohol use;

(2) Pre-duty alcohol use;

(3) Alcohol use following an accident;

(4) Control substances use.

v) A substance abuse professional report of the successful completion of the return-to-duty process;

vi) An employer's report of completion of the follow-up testing.

FMCSA requires motor carrier employers to:

(1) Query the system for information on drivers and applicants;

(2) Search the database annually for current employees.

Before the County may gain access to the information in the Clearinghouse, the driver must grant consent. Failure to provide consent will prevent the County from using the CDL driver in a FMCSA safety-sensitive function.

Civil Penalties for an employer, employee, medical review officer, or service agent who violates the regulations implementing the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse will cost $5,833 for a single DOT violation.

Section C – Substance and Alcohol Misuse Policy DOT FTA – For Employees Performing Maintenance on Revenue Service Vehicles or Equipment

Effective – 01-01-2025

1) Statement of Policy

This policy complies with 49 CFR Part 655, as amended and 49 CFR Part 40, as amended. Copies of Parts 655 and 40 are available in the drug and alcohol program manager's office and can be found on the internet at the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Drug and Alcohol Program website http://transit-safety.fta.dot.gov/DrugAndAlcohol/.

All covered employees are required to submit to drug and alcohol tests as a condition of

employment in accordance with 49 CFR Part 655.

Portions of this policy are not FTA-mandated but reflect Okaloosa County's policy. These additional provisions are identified by bold text.

In addition, DOT has published 49 CFR Part 32, implementing the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, which requires the establishment of drug-free workplace policies and the reporting of certain drug-related offenses to the FTA.

All Okaloosa County employees are subject to the provisions of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the covered workplace. An employee who is convicted of any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace shall notify the County no later than five days after such conviction.

2) Employee Applicability

This policy applies to every person, including an applicant or transferee, who performs or will perform a "safety-sensitive function" as defined in Part 655, section 655.4.

You are a covered employee if you perform any of the following:

i) Operating a revenue service vehicle, in or out of revenue service

ii) Operating a non-revenue vehicle requiring a commercial driver's license

iii) Controlling movement or dispatch of a revenue service vehicle

iv) Maintaining (including repairs, overhaul and rebuilding) of a revenue service vehicle or equipment used in revenue service.

v) Carrying a firearm for security purposes

a) The County positions classified as FTA safety-sensitive include:

i) Equipment Technician;

ii) Certified Equipment Technician;

iii) Master Equipment Technician;

iv) Lead Equipment Technician;

v) Transit Shop Foreman;

vi) Shop Supervisor;

3) Prohibited Behavior

Use of illegal drugs is prohibited at all times. Prohibited drugs include:

i) Marijuana (THC)

ii) Cocaine

iii) Phencyclidine (PCP)

iv) Opioids

v) Amphetamines

All covered employees are prohibited from performing or continuing to perform FTA safety-sensitive functions while having an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater.

All covered employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol while performing FTA safety-sensitive job functions or while on-call to perform FTA safety-sensitive job functions. If an on-call employee has consumed alcohol, they must acknowledge the use of alcohol at the time that they are called to report for duty. If the on-call employee claims the ability to perform his or her FTA safety-sensitive function, he or she must take an alcohol test with a result of less than 0.02 prior to performance.

All covered employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol within four (4) hours prior to the performance of FTA safety-sensitive job functions.

All covered employees required to take a post-accident test are prohibited from consuming alcohol for eight (8) hours following involvement in an accident or until he or she submits to the post-accident drug and alcohol test, whichever occurs first.

4) Consequences for Violations

Following a positive drug or alcohol (BAC at or above 0.04) test result or test refusal, the employee will be immediately removed from FTA safety-sensitive duty and provided with contact information for Substance Abuse Professionals (SAPs).

Following a BAC of 0.02 or greater, but less than 0.04, the employee will be immediately removed from FTA safety-sensitive duties until the start of their next regularly scheduled duty period (but for not less than eight hours) unless a retest results in the employee’s alcohol concentration being less than 0.02.

5) Treatment/Discipline

Per Okaloosa County policy, any employee who tests positive for drugs or alcohol (BAC at or above 0.04) or refuses to test will result in termination of employment.

6) Pre-employment Drug and Alcohol Background Checks

In accordance with 49 CFR Part 40.25, the County must make and document good faith efforts to perform drug and alcohol background checks for all applicants applying for an FTA safety-sensitive position and all current employees applying for transfer into an FTA safety-sensitive position. Testing information will be requested from each of the applicant's previous FTA covered employers during the two (2) years prior to the date of application. The County must obtain the applicant's written consent for the release of their drug and alcohol testing information from their previous FTA covered employers to the County. Applicants refusing to provide written consent are prohibited from performing FTA safety-sensitive functions for the County.

FTA Safety-sensitive applicants who have previously violated the USDOT testing program must provide documentation that they have successfully completed the USDOT's Return-to-Duty process with a DOT-qualified Substance Abuse Professional (SAP). Failure to provide satisfactory documentation will exclude the applicant from being hired or transferred into an FTA safety-sensitive position with the County.

7) Circumstances for Testing

a) Pre-Employment Testing

A negative pre-employment drug test result is required before an employee can first perform FTA safety-sensitive functions. If a pre-employment test is cancelled, the individual will be required to undergo another test and successfully pass with a verified negative result before performing FTA safety-sensitive functions.

If a covered employee has not performed an FTA safety-sensitive function for 90 or more consecutive calendar days and has not been in the random testing pool during that time, the employee must take and pass a pre-employment test before he or she can return to an FTA safety-sensitive function.

A covered employee or applicant who has previously failed or refused a DOT/FTA drug and/or alcohol test must provide proof of having successfully completed a referral, evaluation, and treatment plan meeting DOT requirements.

b) Random Testing

Random drug and alcohol tests are unannounced and unpredictable, and the dates for administering random tests are spread reasonably throughout the calendar year. Random testing will be conducted at all times of the day when FTA safety-sensitive functions are performed.

Testing rates will meet or exceed the minimum annual percentage rate set each year by the FTA administrator. The current year testing rates can be viewed online at www.transportation.gov/odapc/random-testing-rates.

The selection of employees for random drug and alcohol testing will be made by a scientifically valid method, such as a random number table or a computer-based random number generator. Under the selection process used, each covered employee will have an equal chance of being tested each time selections are made.

A covered employee may only be randomly tested for alcohol misuse while the employee is performing FTA safety-sensitive functions, just before the employee is to perform FTA safety-sensitive functions, or just after the employee has ceased performing such functions. A covered employee may be randomly tested for prohibited drug use anytime while on duty.

Each covered employee who is notified of selection for random drug or random alcohol testing must immediately proceed to the designated testing site.

c) Reasonable Suspicion Testing

All covered employees shall be subject to a drug and/or alcohol test when Okaloosa County has reasonable suspicion to believe that the covered employee has used a prohibited drug and/or engaged in alcohol misuse. A reasonable suspicion referral for testing will be made by a trained supervisor or other trained County official on the basis of specific, contemporaneous, articulable observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or body odors of the covered employee.

Covered employees may be subject to reasonable suspicion drug testing any time while on duty. Covered employees may be subject to reasonable suspicion alcohol testing while the employee is performing FTA safety-sensitive functions, just before the employee is to perform FTA safety-sensitive functions, or just after the employee has ceased performing such functions.

d) Post-Accident Testing

Covered employees shall be subject to post-accident drug and alcohol testing under the following circumstances:

i) Fatal Accidents

As soon as practicable following an accident involving the loss of a human life, drug and alcohol tests will be conducted on each surviving covered employee operating the public transportation vehicle at the time of the accident. In addition, any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by Okaloosa County using the best information available at the time of the decision, will be tested.

ii) Non-fatal Accidents

As soon as practicable following an accident <u>not</u> involving the loss of a human life, drug and alcohol tests will be conducted on each covered employee operating the public transportation vehicle at the time of the accident if at least one of the following conditions is met:

(1) The accident results in injuries requiring immediate medical treatment away from the scene, unless the covered employee can be completely discounted as a contributing factor to the accident.

(2) One or more vehicles incurs disabling damage and must be towed away from the scene, unless the covered employee can be completely discounted as a contributing factor to the accident.

(3) The vehicle is a rail car, trolley car or bus, or vessel, and is removed from operation, unless the covered employee can be completely discounted as a contributing factor to the accident.

In addition, any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by Okaloosa County using the best information available at the time of the decision, will be tested.

A covered employee subject to post-accident testing must remain readily available, or it is considered a refusal to test. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the delay of necessary medical attention for the injured following an accident or to prohibit a covered employee from leaving the scene of an accident for the period necessary to obtain assistance in responding to the accident or to obtain necessary emergency medical care.

8) Testing Procedures

All FTA drug and alcohol testing will be conducted in accordance with 49 CFR Part 40, as amended.

a) Dilute Urine Specimen

If there is a negative dilute test result, Okaloosa County will accept the test result and there will be no retest, unless the creatinine concentration of a negative dilute specimen was greater than or equal to 2 mg/dL, but less than or equal to 5 mg/dL.

Dilute negative results with a creatinine level greater than or equal to 2 mg/dL but less than or equal to 5 mg/dL require an immediate recollection under direct observation (see 49 CFR Part 40, section 40.67).

b) Split Specimen Test

In the event of a verified positive test result, or a verified adulterated or substituted result, the employee can request that the split specimen be tested at a second laboratory. Okaloosa County guarantees that the split specimen test will be conducted in a timely fashion. The County may seek reimbursement for the cost of the split specimen test.

9) Refusal to Test

As a covered employee, you have refused to test if you:

a) Fail to appear for any test (except a pre-employment test) within a reasonable time, as determined by Okaloosa County.

b) Fail to remain at the testing site until the testing process is complete. An employee who leaves the testing site before the testing process commences for a pre-employment test has not refused to test.

c) Fail to provide a specimen for a drug or alcohol test. An employee who does not provide a specimen because he or she has left the testing site before the testing process commenced for a pre-employment test has not refused to test.

d) In the case of a directly observed or monitored urine drug collection, fail to permit monitoring or observation of your provision of a specimen.

e) Fail to provide a sufficient specimen for a drug or alcohol test without a valid medical explanation.

f) Fail or decline to take a second drug test as directed by the collector or Okaloosa County.

g) Fail to undergo a medical evaluation as required by the MRO or Okaloosa County's Designated Employer Representative (DER).

h) Fail to cooperate with any part of the testing process.

i) Fail to follow an observer's instructions to raise and lower clothing and turn around during a directly observed urine drug test.

j) Possess or wear a prosthetic or other device used to tamper with the collection process.

k) Admit to the adulteration or substitution of a specimen to the collector or MRO.

l) Refuse to sign the certification at Step 2 of the Alcohol Testing Form (ATF).

m) Fail to remain readily available following an accident.

As a covered employee, if the MRO reports that you have a verified adulterated or substituted test result, you have refused to take a drug test.

As a covered employee, if you refuse to take a drug and/or alcohol test, you incur the same consequences as testing positive and will be immediately removed from performing FTA safety-sensitive functions and provided with contact information for SAPs.

10) Reporting of Results

The certified laboratory, chosen by the County to analyze specimens of covered employees, will report the test results directly to the County designated Medical Review Officer (MRO). Both positive and negative results will be reported in a secure and confidential manner, and never verbally.

The report, as certified by the responsible laboratory individual, will indicate the drug/metabolites tested for, whether the results are positive or negative, the specimen number signed by the County and the drug testing laboratory identification number.

The laboratory will also transmit to the MRO the certified copy of the chain of custody and control form and will identify the individual at the laboratory responsible for the day-to-day management of the laboratory process.

As the Medical Review Officer (MRO), it's imperative to maintain confidentiality when reporting results. Verified positive tests, immediate collection orders, adulterated or substituted specimens, and refusals to test must be reported to the Designated Employer Representative (DER) on the same day or the next business day of verification. Direct telephone contact with the DER is preferred, followed by appropriate documentation. You must ensure proper identification when contacting the DER and provide a comprehensive report containing all necessary information. Transmission of MRO reports to the DER must occur within two days of verification, using fax, courier, mail, or electronic means, with security measures in place to protect data integrity. These reports cannot be modified by anyone other than the MRO.

11) Role of the Medical Review Officer (MRO)

The role of the MRO is to review and verify laboratory confirmed test results obtained through a DOT-covered employer's testing program. When a non-negative drug test result is received, the MRO will communicate with the donor (employee) to determine if a legitimate medical explanation exists. When a legally prescribed medication has produced a non-negative result, the MRO will verify the prescription and report the result as “negative” to the County. Medical conditions and other information obtained by the MRO during the interview with the donor will be maintained in a confidential manner. However, if the MRO believes that a medication prescribed to the donor may pose a significant safety risk, the MRO will require the donor to contact his/her prescribing physician and request that the physician contact the MRO within five (5) business days. The MRO and prescribing physician will consult to determine if the employee’s medication use presents a significant safety risk. The County will be notified by the MRO when the outcome of the consultation results in a determination that the donor’s medication use presents a significant safety risk. If the employee’s prescribing physician fails to respond, the safety concern will be reported to the County. Based on the MRO recommendation, the County may deem the employee medically disqualified from performing FTA safety-sensitive functions. The MRO assigned to review and verify laboratory drug test results for the County is:

Dr. Richard Weaver M.D. AAMRO

4300 Bayou Blvd., Suite 13

Pensacola, FL 32503

(850) 434-3782

12) Voluntary Self-Referral

Any employee who has a drug and/or alcohol abuse problem and has not been notified of the requirement to submit to reasonable suspicion, random or post-accident testing or has not refused a drug or alcohol test may voluntarily refer her or himself to a supervisor or to Human Resources, who will refer the individual to a substance abuse counselor for evaluation and treatment.

The substance abuse counselor will evaluate the employee and make a specific recommendation regarding the appropriate treatment. Employees are encouraged to voluntarily seek professional substance abuse assistance before any substance use or dependence affects job performance.

Any FTA safety-sensitive employee who admits to a drug and/or alcohol problem will immediately be removed from his/her FTA safety-sensitive function and will not be allowed to perform such function until successful completion of a prescribed rehabilitation program.

13) Prescription Drug Use

The appropriate use of legally prescribed drugs and non-prescription medications is not prohibited. However, the use of any substance which carries a warning label that indicates that mental functioning, motor skills, or judgment may be adversely affected must be reported to your supervisor and the Human Resource Division. Medical advice should be sought, as appropriate, while taking such medication and before performing FTA safety-sensitive duties.

14) County Testing Program Contacts

The following individuals are designated to answer questions about Okaloosa County's anti-drug and alcohol misuse program:

Designated Employer Representative (Drug & Alcohol Program Manager)

Kelly Bird, Human Resources & Risk Management Director

(850) 689-5870

kbird@myokaloosa.com

Alternate Program Manager

Shannon Clowes, Human Resources & Risk Management Assistant Director

(850) 689-5870

sclowes@myokaloosa.com

APPENDIX A

Every specimen is required to undergo an initial screen followed by confirmation of all positive screen results. This screen-confirmation process utilizes highly sophisticated techniques to detect minute levels of prohibited substances in urine.

Federal drug testing rules require the use of immunoassay in the initial screening process. The following table shows the initial cutoff levels that are to be used by the laboratory when screening specimens to determine whether they are negative.

Urine Testing Cutoff Concentrations

As a laboratory, you must use the cutoff concentrations displayed in the following table for initial and confirmatory drug tests. All cutoff concentrations are expressed in nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL). The table follows:

Initial test analyte	**Initial test cutoff[1]**	**Confirmatory test analyte**	**Confirmatory test cutoff concentration**
Marijuana metabolites (THCA)[2]	50 ng/mL[3]	THCA	15 ng/mL.
Cocaine metabolite (Benzoylecgonine)	150 ng/mL[3]	Benzoylecgonine	100 ng/mL.
Codeine/ Morphine	2000 ng/mL	Codeine Morphine	2000 ng/mL. 2000 ng/mL.
Hydrocodone/ Hydromorphone	300 ng/mL	Hydrocodone Hydromorphone	100 ng/mL. 100 ng/mL.
Oxycodone/ Oxymorphone	100 ng/mL	Oxycodone Oxymorphone	100 ng/mL. 100 ng/mL.
6-Acetylmorphine	10 ng/mL	6-Acetylmorphine	10 ng/mL.
Phencyclidine	25 ng/mL	Phencyclidine	25 ng/mL.
Amphetamine/ Methamphetamine	500 ng/mL	Amphetamine Methamphetamine	250 ng/mL. 250 ng/mL.
MDMA[4]/MDA[5]	500 ng/mL	MDMA MDA	250 ng/mL. 250 ng/mL.

[1]For grouped analytes (i.e., two or more analytes that are in the same drug class and have the same initial test cutoff):

Immunoassay: The test must be calibrated with one analyte from the group identified as the target analyte. The cross-reactivity of the immunoassay to the other analyte(s) within the group must be 80 percent or greater; if not, separate immunoassays must be used for the analytes within the group.

Alternate technology: Either one analyte or all analytes from the group must be used for calibration, depending on the technology. At least one analyte within the group must have a concentration equal to or greater than the initial test cutoff or, alternatively, the sum of the analytes present (i.e., equal to or greater than the laboratory's validated limit of quantification) must be equal to or greater than the initial test cutoff.

[2]An immunoassay must be calibrated with the target analyte, ∆-9-tetrahydrocannabinol-9-carboxylic acid (THCA).

[3]Alternate technology (THCA and Benzoylecgonine): When using an alternate technology initial test for the specific target analytes of THCA and Benzoylecgonine, the laboratory must use the same cutoff for the initial and confirmatory tests (i.e., 15 ng/mL for THCA and 100ng/mL for Benzoylecgonine).

[4]Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA).

[5]Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA).

(b) On an initial drug test, you must report a result below the cutoff concentration as negative. If the result is at or above the cutoff concentration, you must conduct a confirmation test.

(c) On a confirmation drug test, you must report a result below the cutoff concentration as negative and a result at or above the cutoff concentration as confirmed positive.

(d) You must report quantitative values for morphine or codeine at 15,000 ng/mL or above. [65 FR 79526, Dec. 19, 2000, as amended at 75 FR 49862, August 16, 2010; 77 FR 26473, May 4, 2012; 82 FR 52244, November 13, 2017]

Oral Fluid Testing Cutoff Concentrations

As a laboratory, you must use the cutoff concentrations displayed in the following table for initial and confirmatory drug tests for oral fluid specimens. All cutoff concentrations are expressed in nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL). The table follows:

INITIAL TEST ANALYTE	INITIAL TEST CUTOFF[1]	CONFIRMATORY TEST ANALYTE	CONFIRMATORY TEST CUTOFF CONCENTRATION
Marijuana (THC)[2]	4 ng/mL[3]	THC	2 ng/mL.
Cocaine/Benzoylecgonine	15 ng/mL	Cocaine Benzoylecgonine	8 ng/mL. 8 ng/mL.
Codeine/Morphine	30 ng/mL	Codeine Morphine	15 ng/mL. 15 ng/mL.
Hydrocodone/Hydromorphone	30 ng/mL	Hydrocodone Hydromorphone	15 ng/mL. 15 ng/mL.
Oxycodone/Oxymorphone	30 ng/mL	Oxycodone Oxymorphone	15 ng/mL. 15 ng/mL.
6-Acetylmorphine	4 ng/mL[3]	6-Acetylmorphine	2 ng/mL.
Phencyclidine	10 ng/mL	Phencyclidine	10 ng/mL.
Amphetamine/Methamphetamine	50 ng/mL	Amphetamine Methamphetamine	25 ng/mL. 25 ng/mL.
MDMA[4]/MDA[5]	50 ng/mL	MDMA MDA	25 ng/mL. 25 ng/mL.

[1] For grouped analytes (*i.e.,* two or more analytes that are in the same drug class and have the same initial test cutoff):

Immunoassay: The test must be calibrated with one analyte from the group identified as the target analyte. The cross reactivity of the immunoassay to the other analyte(s) within the group must be 80 percent or greater; if not, separate immunoassays must be used for the analytes within the group.
Alternate technology: Either one analyte or all analytes from the group must be used for calibration, depending on the technology. At least one analyte within the group must have a concentration equal to or greater than the initial test cutoff or, alternatively, the sum of the analytes present (*i.e.,* with concentrations equal to or greater than the laboratory's validated limit of quantification) must be equal to or greater than the initial test cutoff.
[2] An immunoassay must be calibrated with the target analyte.
[3] *Alternate technology (THC and 6-AM):* The confirmatory test cutoff must be used for an alternate technology initial test that is specific for the target analyte (*i.e.,* 2 ng/mL for THC, 2 ng/mL for 6-AM).
[4] Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA).
[5] Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA).

APPENDIX B

Educational materials about the effects of substance abuse, including alcohol, signs and symptoms of alcohol and controlled substance problems and available methods of intervening, including confrontation, referral to an employee assistance program and/or referral to management are available to all employees at the following location:

Okaloosa County Human Resources & Risk Management Department
302 N. Wilson Street, Suite 203
Crestview, FL 32536

In addition, all employees will receive as new hires a copy of an alcohol fact sheet. Distribution of the fact sheet is a requirement of FTA. The sheet includes the signs and symptoms of alcohol use, health effects, and social issues associated with misuse of alcohol.

A copy of the Substance Abuse and Alcohol Misuse Policy is available to representatives of employee organizations. Specifically, this Appendix will serve as written notification to such representatives regarding the availability of educational materials for employees.

APPENDIX C

Help for Substance Abuse Problems:

Employees who want help with a substance abuse problem (self or other) can begin the helping process by calling the following telephone number

ASAP (American Substance Abuse Professionals)
866-566-7692 Ref. Code 472
www.go2asap.com

APPENDIX D

Procedures for the Release of Alcohol and Controlled Substances Test Information by Previous Employer:

The County must obtain from any previous employer of a FTA covered employee any information concerning the employee's participation in a controlled substances and alcohol testing program.

The County must obtain and review the information listed below from any employer for which the employee performed FTA safety-sensitive functions in the previous two (2) years for covered employees. The information obtained must include:

1) Information on the employee's alcohol test in which a breath alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater was indicated.

2) Information on the employee's-controlled substances test in which a positive result was indicated.

3) Any refusal to submit to a required alcohol or controlled substances test.

If the employee stops performing FTA safety-sensitive functions for the County before the expiration of the 14-day period or before the County has obtained the information listed above, the County must still obtain the information.

The County must provide to each of the FTA covered employee's previous employers a written authorization from the employee for release of the required information. The release of this information may take the form of personal interviews, telephone interviews, letters, or any other method which ensures confidentiality. The County must maintain a written, confidential record with respect to each past employer contacted.

The County may not use a FTA covered employee to perform FTA safety-sensitive functions if the County obtains information indicating the employee has tested positive for controlled substances, tested at or above 0.04 breath alcohol concentration, or refused to test, unless the County has evidence the employee has been evaluated by and complied with the recommendations of a Substance Abuse Professional and passed a return-to-duty test.

APPENDIX E

Over-the-counter or prescription drugs which could alter or affect the outcome of a drug test*

The following list contains the most common drugs/medications by brand name, common name, or chemical name which may alter or affect the outcome of a drug test. All or some of these drugs may be tested for under the employer's drug testing policy. The Agency for Health Care Administration list of common drugs/medications are:

Alcohol:	All liquid medications containing ethyl alcohol (ethanol). Please read the label for alcohol content. As an example, Vick's Nyquil is 25% (50 proof) ethyl alcohol, Comtrex is 20% (40 proof), Contac Severe Cold Formula Night Strength is 25% (50 proof) and Listerine is 26.9% (54 proof).
Amphetamines:	Obetrol, Biphetamine, Desoxyn, Dexedrine, Didrex, Ionamine, Fastine
Cannabinoids:	Marinol (Dronabinol, THC)
Cocaine:	Cocaine HCI topical solution (Roxanne)
Phencyclidine:	Not legal by prescription
Methaqualone:	Not legal by prescription
Opiates:	Paregoric, Parepectolin, Donnagel PG, Morphine, Tylenol with Codeine, Emprin with Codeine, APAP with Codeine, Aspirin with Codeine, Robitussin AC, Guiatuss AC, Novahistine DH, Novahistine Expectorant, Dilaudid (Hydromorphone), M-S Contin and Roxanol (morphine sulfate), Percodan, Vicodin, Tussi-organidin, etc.
Barbiturates:	Phenobarbital, Tuinal, Amytal, Nembutal, Seconal, Lotusate, Fiorinal, Fioricet, Esgic, Butisol, Mebral, Butalbital, Butabarbital, Phenrinin, Triad, etc.
Benzodiazepines:	Activan, Azene, Clonopin, Dalmine, Diazepam, Librium, Serax, Tranxene, Valium, Verstran, Halcion, Paxipam, Restoril, Centrax, etc.
Methadone:	Dolphine, Metadose
Propoxphene:	Darvocet, Darvon N, Dolene, etc.

**Several of the above drugs have nicknames and trade names other than what is mentioned. If in doubt about a drug, please ask a medical professional. Due to the large number of obscure brand names and constant marketing of new products, this list cannot and is not intended to be all-inclusive.*

CHAPTER XXIV – HEALTH CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Effective – 05-04-2021

Section A – Pandemic Disease/Virus

1) Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide employees with sufficient understanding of their employment related duties and responsibilities when a pandemic disease/virus has been determined. To minimize the effect of any disease outbreak, disease control measures may be ordered to include a broad array of actions: isolation and quarantine orders and social distancing measures are likely to be used.

The Okaloosa County Health Department Director will recommend activation and deactivation of contingency plans to County officials, and the County Administrator will determine when the provisions of this pandemic disease/virus policy become effective and end. During periods of pandemic disease/virus, the County Administrator shall have authority to vary from established policies and procedures to the extent necessary to carry on efficient operations of the county to include approving and authorizing separate pandemic and infectious disease policies related to departments with unique characteristics to be required to provide enhanced protective measures for the public and employees.

2) Staffing During a Pandemic

In the event of a pandemic disease/virus, staffing and backfill of existing positions will be of primary concern in order to provide essential services and other services to the public. In order to adequately meet the staffing needs, the following may occur:

a) Approved leave may be rescinded.

b) Employees may be required to work from home, may be assigned special duty, or be assigned to other work units, locations or shifts with minimal notice.

3) Leave and Pay During a Pandemic Disease/Virus

a) Pandemic diseases/viruses are serious because most or all people would not have immunity and a large number of persons can be affected. In order to prevent the spread of disease/virus, the following measures will be taken:

i) Any employee with designated symptoms during a pandemic disease/virus epidemic will be required to stay at home to prevent the spread of disease/virus.

ii) Any employee who reports to work with designated symptoms during a pandemic disease/virus will be sent home upon approval of the department director or designee.

iii) Administrative leave is not an entitlement but may be granted if a department is forced to close due to a pandemic disease/virus and those employees cannot be redeployed to another location. Administrative leave may also be considered for those employees forced to isolate or quarantine either due to exhibiting symptoms, potential exposure, or as a result of guidance issued from a healthcare professional in order to provide for the safety of the workforce and stop potential spread of the disease/virus. The decision to grant such leave and the length of the leave will be handled on a case-by-case basis as requested by the Department Director where the employee is assigned and as approved by the County Administrator or designee.

b) A pandemic would not be a short, sharp event leading immediately to commencement of a recovery phase. Instead, a pandemic will be a weeks-long to months-long event, and there could be more than one wave of infections during a pandemic period. For these reasons, the emergency leave and pay procedures outlined in the Pay for Work During Emergencies or Disasters section of the Compensation Plan Chapter of this policy do not apply.

c) To the extent possible, compensation provisions will not be suspended but may be streamlined in order to administer payroll in a timely manner. Employees are to ensure the appropriate pay codes are used in order to allow for proper documenting of time as applicable.

d) In the event of day care and/or school closures:

i) Employees should have a family care succession plan in place and make every effort to come to work; however, in the event the employee cannot report to work, leave must be taken for time off in accordance with the Attendance and Leave Chapter.

ii) Employees will not be allowed to bring their children to work.

iii) Sick leave may not be used by healthy parents taking care of healthy children.

CHAPTER XXV – EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM

Section A – Objective

To establish a method for rewarding Okaloosa County employees for making suggestions that result in improved productivity, safety, and/or operating savings for the County.

Section B – Eligibility

1) Employees – Full-time and part-time regular employees, excluding department directors.

2) Suggestions related to the following subjects are not eligible for consideration:

   a) Grievances;

   b) Classification and pay of positions;

   c) Normal duties and responsibilities of the position;

   d) Suggestions for a change that is already under consideration.

3) Determination of final eligibility shall be made by the County Administrator or designee.

Section C – Program Administration

The program is administered by the Board with the County Administrator or designee acting as the coordinator for the program and the moderator of the suggestion committee. All the paperwork involved will be handled by the County Administrator's Office or designee.

Section D – The Suggestion Committee

1) The suggestion committee shall be composed of: the County Administrator or designee, the Human Resources Director or designee, the Risk Manager or the County Safety Officer, a management employee appointed by the County Administrator who is knowledgeable of the suggestion's subject, and two (2) non-supervisory county employees appointed by the County Administrator. Technical advisors may be asked to serve on the committee, as deemed appropriate by the County Administrator.

2) The committee shall meet quarterly, or at the discretion of the County Administrator or designee.

Section E – Program Procedures

1) The employee will write down a suggestion on the Employee Suggestion Form, giving details of how the suggestion can be utilized and the amount of savings, tangible or intangible. The suggestion should include a complete breakdown of savings and how this figure is reached. If there are no monetary savings, the suggestion should indicate how the suggestion could improve productivity or make the area a safer place to work. The suggestion must be signed in order to be considered valid.

2) The employee should forward one (1) copy of the suggestion to the County Administrator or designee, one (1) copy to the department director responsible for the

area affected by the suggestion, and one (1) copy to the Human Resources Department.

3) The employee's department director will meet with the employee to discuss the suggestion (if the suggestion involves another department, both department directors will meet with the employee) and determine if the suggestion is the first of its kind to be submitted; if the suggestion is something that the department director has already been directed to implement; whether or not the suggestion has merit; indicate whether or not the suggestion will be implemented if it has merit; and make comments supporting this decision.

4) The Suggestion Feedback Form will be completed and signed by the department director and the employee after the above referenced meeting. This Form and the Employee Suggestion Form will be forwarded within 30 days to the County Administrator's Office for referral to the suggestion committee.

5) The suggestion committee will evaluate the employee's suggestion, the Suggestion Feedback Form, and make a recommendation regarding the appropriate award. The County Administrator will request approval from the Board for monetary awards recommended by the committee and/or advise the Board of time off with pay or recognition certificate plaque awards.

Section F – Awards for Suggestions

1) Tangible savings – Monetary awards of ten percent (10%) of the projected first year's net savings or net increase in revenue with a maximum award of $1,000, will be recommended to the Board, who has final authority in payment of awards. All cost saving ideas or suggestions must be verified and validated by the committee before payment is made. Savings do not have to be incurred by the County before the award payment is made.

2) Intangible savings – Time off with pay [eight (8) – 40 hours maximum] or recognition certificate plaque.

3) Group awards – The amount of an award for a suggestion made by a group of employees will be determined on the same basis as if the suggestion was submitted by one (1) employee. The amount of the award will be prorated among the eligible employees suggesting who signed the suggestion form.

Section G – Awards Drawing for Participation in the Suggestion Program

1) All employees who submit an eligible suggestion, whether it is implemented or not, will participate in a random drawing for a paid day off.

2) The pool of names to be drawn from will include all employees who have submitted an eligible suggestion between January 1st through December 31st of each year.

3) Employees' names will be entered into the pool once for each eligible suggestion submitted in the calendar year. There is no limit on the number of suggestions that may be submitted by an employee.

4) One (1) employee's name will be drawn at random during the month of January. That employee will be entitled to a paid day off during the calendar year to be scheduled through and approved by their department director.

Section H – Other Information

1) The employee suggestion program is excluded from the county grievance procedure.

2) Time off awards must be taken at a time approved by the supervisor and within the calendar year of the date awarded.

3) The acceptance of an award for any suggestion adopted through the Employee Suggestion Program shall constitute an agreement by the employee that all claims, immediate and future, on Okaloosa County, regardless of the use, shall be waived.

4) Nothing in this program shall be construed to require Okaloosa County to provide a specific cash award. Any award is at the discretion of Okaloosa County.

CHAPTER XXVI – EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Section A – Objective

To establish a process for recognizing employees' contributions to the overall objectives and efficient operation of Okaloosa County. While this policy provides formal guidelines for recognition, each department is encouraged to implement employee recognition practices on a regular basis.

Section B – Eligibility

1) Employees – all full-time and part-time employees, excluding department directors.

2) Performance contributions that are considered to be "above and beyond" those required within the normal confines of the position. Requires written or verbal recommendations that have been transcribed from sources as outlined below.

Section C – Types of Awards

1) P.R.I.D.E. – Public Recognition Involving Dedicated Employees

   a) Recognizes employees whose performance is cited as above and beyond the duty requirements defined in the job description. Recommendations must be received in writing by employees, citizens or customers and will be referred to as comment cards. In areas where phone calls are accepted, the call must be transcribed. Recognition may be:

      i) Customer Service;

      ii) Teamwork;

      iii) Initiative;

      iv) Unsolicited written feedback/Other.

   b) Each department will be responsible for documenting verbal feedback and collecting comment cards.

   c) Comments must be specific and include the situation and action(s) of the employee. General comments such as "Employee provided good customer service" or "Employee is a great team player" will be accepted but will not qualify for the P.R.I.D.E. award, although cards must be forwarded to Human Resources and Directors are encouraged to provide positive verbal recognition for all comments received.

   d) Based on the criteria outlined above, it is the responsibility of the department director to complete the P.R.I.D.E. Feedback Form and forward with the comment card or other documentation (if applicable) to the Human Resources Director who will coordinate final approval with the County Administrator.

e) Upon approval from the County Administrator or his/her designee, employees will receive a P.R.I.D.E. award certificate, recognition in the County Newsletter, and four (4) hours of recognition leave for each qualifying recommendation.

f) The County Administrator or his/her designee will forward a copy of the P.R.I.D.E. award certificate, along with the original comment card, to Human Resources for the employee's file.

g) A request to use recognition leave shall be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor and approved by the department director. Recognition leave may be accumulated; however, there will be no cash payment in lieu of use.

2) H.E.R.O. – Humanitarian Efforts Recognized by Okaloosa County

a) Recognized by the Board of County Commissioners, this award is based on any and all single deeds, acts, or events in which an employee not only goes above and beyond the scope of his or her job description but is in some way considered to be of a humanitarian or heroic nature.

b) Employee actions of a humanitarian or heroic nature that occur outside of regularly scheduled working hours may be recognized the same as those actions occurring during working hours.

c) Recommendations must be specific, in writing, and include the situation and action(s) of the employee.

d) It is the responsibility of the department director to complete the H.E.R.O. Feedback Form and forward with documentation, if applicable, to the Human Resources Director who will coordinate final approval with the County Administrator. Approved nominees will be recognized with:

i) Picture on the County website (with agreement of employee);

ii) Press release;

iii) Public recognition at a Board meeting;

iv) Recognition in the County Newsletter;

v) Eight (8) hours of recognition leave. Recognition leave may be accumulated; however, there will be no cash payment in lieu of use. A request for recognition leave shall be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor and approved by the department director.

CHAPTER XXVII – UNIFORMS

Section A – Mandatory Wearing of Uniforms

1) Department directors will determine appropriate workplace attire for employees, and employees are generally required to purchase their own clothing.

2) For employment positions designated as requiring uniforms, employees in these positions shall wear the approved uniforms. Any employee not wearing the required uniform will not be allowed to work until such time as he/she is wearing the approved uniform. Refusal to wear the uniform may result in disciplinary action. Uniforms must not be worn for general usage when not at work or on-call. Any department director, division director, or supervisor failing to enforce the provisions of these guidelines shall also be subject to disciplinary action.

3) Exceptions

    a) An employee may not be required to wear the approved uniforms when he/she has obtained a certification from his/her doctor stating that the wearing of the uniforms is precluded due to physical reasons or creates extreme physical hardship or the wearing of such uniforms may cause the employee further injury.

    In either case, it shall be the responsibility of the department to ensure that the employee is not wearing personal clothing that would unreasonably expose him/her to job hazards wherein he/she may be injured by wearing inappropriate clothing.

    b) For employees waiting on delivery of uniforms, they may provide their own clothing, provided the clothing does not unreasonably expose them to the likelihood of injury due to the hazards of the job. This will be the responsibility of the department to determine and monitor.

Section B – Termination/Transfer – Reimbursement for Cost of Uniforms

Any employee who has been issued uniforms and terminates employment or transfers to a position in an employee category not eligible for uniforms is expected to return all uniforms issued no later than the next regularly scheduled uniform service period.

If within two (2) weeks of the employment action, the employee has not submitted all issued uniforms, the employee is to be billed and shall reimburse the County for the cost of uniforms not returned.

Section C – Taxation

1) Uniforms are non-taxable if they are:

    a) Required as a condition of employment; and

    b) Are not worn or adaptable to general usage as ordinary clothing.

c) Examples of non-taxable uniforms are:

i) EMS and Correctional Officer uniforms with clearly identifying County logos;

ii) Garments in ANSII approved colors for safety conditions (florescent orange or safety green/chartreuse);

iii) Shirts for field employees with identifying features such as prominent County logos and department names; and

iv) Safety shoes or boots.

2) Uniforms are taxable if the items of clothing are general in nature and can be worn away from the employee's place of work and would not identify the employee as a County worker.

a) Examples of taxable uniforms are: blue jeans; and non-safety shoes or boots.

b) The taxable value of uniform items shall be determined by the Purchasing Manager.

3) Uniform taxation rules apply to taxable items whether purchased or leased by the county. The method of payment, including credit card purchases, does not affect whether the items are taxable or not under IRS regulations.

4) Upon issuance of uniform items, the employee and their department representative will complete and sign a Uniforms Issuance, Return and Fringe Benefit Acknowledgement Form and return it to the Human Resources Department. For taxable items, the County will calculate the fringe benefit valuation using IRS regulations and show such amount as gross taxable wages on the employee's next biweekly pay check.

Uniform purchases will be subject to audit by the Purchasing and Finance Departments to ensure compliance with taxing requirements.

CHAPTER XXVIII – LOST OR DAMAGED PROPERTY, EQUIPMENT OR VEHICLES

Section A – Policy

It is the policy of Okaloosa County government that financial costs incurred by loss or damage to county property, equipment or vehicles be recovered.

Section B – Intent

Okaloosa County employees will be financially responsible for loss or damage to county property, equipment or vehicles if any of the following conditions apply:

1) There was gross negligence on the part of the employee;

2) County policies were not followed which resulted in loss or damage;

3) Equipment was lost or damaged while the employee had responsibility for that equipment.

Section C – Procedures

When property, equipment or vehicles are lost or damaged, the department director or designee will initiate an immediate investigation. This does not include traffic accidents where the employee is not found at fault or unavoidable acts of nature.

An employee will be held financially accountable if any of the following conditions are met:

1) Equipment is lost while in the care of an employee and that loss is due to gross negligence on the part of the employee;

2) Equipment is not returned by an employee in a specified period of time or is damaged upon its return, provided there is written documentation that the equipment was issued to the employee;

3) An employee causes equipment damage due to improper adherence to maintenance or operational policies that are written and clearly communicated by management.

Section D – Assessment for Damages

If a department investigation results in findings of employee responsibility for equipment loss or damage, the following actions shall be taken by the department director:

1) Investigative findings will be submitted to the Risk Manager and the Human Resources Director for review and concurrence;

2) The employee will be provided with the results of the investigation for his/her review;

3) Formal disciplinary procedures will be followed according to the Human Resources Policy Manual;

4) As a condition of the disciplinary process, the employee will be assessed for the cost of the loss or damage;

5) The assessed amount will be deducted from the employee's biweekly pay check until the fiscal assessment is repaid;

6) Assessments will not exceed $50 per pay period, unless the employee so desires;

7) The employee will have the right to appeal any decision in accordance with the county's established grievance policy as outlined in the Human Resources Policy Manual.

CHAPTER XXIX – COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Section A – Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the Information Technology Department as the responsible authority for directing technology and data management for the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners. This policy specifies or outlines the responsibilities of the Information Technology Department and of authorized users.

The purpose of the Information Technology Department is to provide and maintain an organized, shared information infrastructure that enables our County to share data, services and reduce duplication of effort. The management of technology and data in a coherent, organized county-wide effort is necessary to ensure limited money, resources, and time are wisely allocated and efficiently utilized to provide effective, efficient government in Okaloosa County.

A centralized Information Technology Department ensures users the maximum benefit of technology without having to acquire the expertise to setup, configure and maintain networks, operating systems, application software and databases. Therefore, employees are allowed to use computer equipment to do their jobs in the most efficient manner possible.

Section B – Scope and Applicability

All County employees, contract employees, contingent workers, volunteers, interns and vendors using County computer equipment shall use the equipment for authorized business purposes and in accordance with this policy. This policy does not cover the use of office automation equipment such as calculators, typewriters, radios or televisions unless these devices are attached to County computer equipment or the County network. All employees using computer equipment are required to read and comply with this policy. By using any item of computer equipment, County employees consent to all provisions of this policy.

Section C – Policy

The Information Technology Department is responsible for directing the management of all technology and data for the County. This policy defines the responsibilities of Information Technology Department personnel and of authorized users. Just as Information Technology Department personnel are not required to perform authorized users' jobs, authorized users are not required to perform Information Technology Department personnel jobs. Therefore, all employees can use computer equipment to do their jobs in the most efficient manner possible.

The Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners' networks will be protected by one (1) or more firewalls which are controlled exclusively by the Information Technology Director. There will be no access to the County networks except through these firewalls without the expressed, written approval of the Information Technology Director. Conversely, there will be no access from within the County networks to resources outside the networks except through these firewalls or with the expressed, written approval of the Information Technology Director. The objective is to ensure that the Information Technology Department controls all access that exists either into or out of the network and to ensure that the Information Technology Department has the opportunity to enact acceptable

solutions that are consistent with security objectives of the County. Any network equipment utilized on County's networks must be configured by Information Technology Department personnel. County employees will not access another network, (e.g., Public Patron Internet or wireless networks) with County equipment or on County time.

Computer equipment, networks and data must be protected from internal sources as well as external sources. It is the responsibility of the Information Technology Director and each department director to ensure that each individual is given the access to the computer equipment and data that he/she needs to do his/her job. Department director approval is required, with the documented need for "at home" or off-site use. A current list of equipment at employees' residences must be kept by the respective department directors and submitted to the Information Technology Director. Conversely, it is the Information Technology Director and each department director's responsibility to allow employees access to only the computer equipment, networks and data that he/she needs to do his/her job. Therefore, only authorized computer equipment and peripherals purchased and/or supported by the County and approved by the Information Technology Department will be allowed to connect to County networks. For example, but not limited to, no Universal Serial Bus (USB) thumb drives, portable drives, cameras, video, telephones or wireless devices of any type are to be purchased or connected by any means without the Information Technology Department's approval. County users with "Aircards" or access to other wireless devices of this type (including when traveling) must be used for official County business only. Non-County devices must follow the guidelines and procedures established by the Information Technology Department.

It is the policy of the County that the use of the Internet by County employees is permitted and encouraged where such use is suitable for business purposes and supports the goals and objectives of the County and its departments. Employee access to the Internet must be with a browser installed by the Information Technology Department. The Internet is to be used in a manner that is consistent with the normal execution of an employee's job responsibilities. Computer networks designed for public use, such as wireless, the Library Cooperative, Conference Center and Airport patron Internets, are not for County employees' use on County time. Internet traffic must pass through firewall and filtering software. Exceptions are made for County employees travel with prior approval from the Information Technology Department.

Section D – Cellular and Mobile Devices

1) An employee may be provided a mobile device or other wireless communication service if it is determined to be necessary under one or more of the following criteria:

   a) Availability of device and service is integral to the performance of specific duties within the employee's job description.

   b) A substantial portion of the employee's work is conducted outside of the building or buildings where the employee is assigned to work.

   c) The employee does not have an assigned office or workspace and needs to be contacted on a regular basis by the department or division for assigned services or to provide needed information.

d) It is a job requirement that the employer be able to reach the employee outside of the employee's normal work hours.

2) To be approved for a mobile device and associated service plan, the following procedures are applicable:

a) The supervisor of an employee requesting the device and/or plan must determine if the employee meets the eligibility requirements.

b) Documentation to support the decision to issue the device and plan must be provided on an Okaloosa County Mobile Device Request Form, approved by the department director and forwarded to the Human Resources Department.

c) All procurement of mobile devices and approval of designated rate plans are made by Purchasing with input from department directors.

d) Usage of mobile devices must be in accordance with the county's current personal use policy.

3) Personal use of mobile devices is permitted if it:

a) Does not interfere with existing departmental rules, policies or protocols.

b) Does not disrupt or distract the conduct of Okaloosa County business due to the volume or frequency of calls; or involve or support illegal activities.

c) Is compliant with county policy.

d) Is authorized by the department director on an Okaloosa County Mobile Device Request Form with a payroll deduction to offset the cost of personal use.

e) All mobile devices used for county business are subject to monitoring.

4) Restrictions:

a) Access to Board of County Commissioners' network data is prohibited.

b) The county is not supporting or authorizing the use of any personal devices for business purposes.

c) Access and use of MiFi hotspots are allowed only if approved by the Information Technology Director.

d) Employees driving county vehicles are required to comply with all laws regarding the use of mobile devices while driving. Texting and email use while driving are prohibited.

e) Commercial drivers covered by the Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations are prohibited from using hand-held mobile devices while driving. Employees operating non- commercial vehicles should keep mobile device use to a minimum while driving and use hands free if possible.

f) Motor vehicle operators on Eglin and Hurlburt Air Force Bases are prohibited from using cell phones while operating a vehicle on base (unless there is imminent danger or to report an accident).

5) Operational and administrative procedures:

a) Department directors will provide a copy of the communications policy to all employees who are assigned a mobile device.

b) Employees must read and abide by the communications policy.

c) Department directors are responsible for enforcing the communications policy and monitoring the usage of all electronic equipment used in the department to include usage of minutes and personal use.

d) Mobile device group leaders may be designated by department directors to manage electronic equipment within departments and divisions.

e) Employees must return mobile device equipment to their supervisors upon termination of employment, transfer to a position that does not require a mobile device, or upon request.

f) Employees must report to their supervisors, lost, stolen or damaged devices as soon as possible.

Section E – Text Messaging

All Okaloosa County electronic business communication should be completed primarily through County e-mail. Due to the County's obligation to comply with Florida's Public Records law and its technology limitations, County employees may only communicate by text message when the message being sent and/or received is considered transitory in nature and has no archival value as defined by the Department of State, Division of Archives, Bureau of Records Management.

"Transitory" refers to short-term value based upon the content and purpose of the message, not the format or technology used to transmit it. Examples of transitory messages include, but are not limited to, reminders to employees about scheduled meetings or appointments; most telephone messages (whether in paper, voice mail, or other electronic form); announcements of office events such as holiday parties or group lunches; and recipient copies of announcements of agency-sponsored events such as exhibits, lectures, workshops, etc. Transitory messages are not intended to formalize or perpetuate knowledge and do not set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, certify a transaction, or become a receipt.

Using a wireless communication device to text while driving presents an unsafe condition and employees shall not compose, read or send text or e-mail messages while driving.

Furthermore, County employees should have no reasonable expectation of privacy when texting from a County issued wireless device.

Section F – Use of Equipment

Telephones, cellular phones, voicemail systems, fax machines, and computers, including electronic mail systems (e-mail) and Internet are provided for county business use and personal use of these devices is generally prohibited except as expressly authorized. (See "Personal Use Defined" below).

Also prohibited is the use of any of these systems to transmit or receive inappropriate messages, to access inappropriate information, or to harass or annoy another party. Inappropriate messages and information include, but are not limited to, those that are for personal benefit and those involving discriminatory, hostile, suggestive, obscene, or otherwise unsuitable language and content.

Violations of this policy will be considered grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal of employment. Employees are prohibited from e-mailing the entire County directory. Only the County Administrator and approved personnel may e-mail the entire Okaloosa County directory.

Section G – Monitoring

Communications through county devices is subject to monitoring by the county for business purposes.

Section H – Personal Use Defined

While communications equipment is generally provided for county business only, the County recognizes there may be occasional situations in which an employee needs to use such equipment for brief periods of time for personal reasons. Employees are required to obtain their department directors' permission before they engage in personal use of any communications equipment. In addition, employees must reimburse the County for any cost of personal use upon department receipt of itemized billing.

In an effort to reduce staff time in reconciling monthly itemized cell phone bills to identify personal calls, employees may authorize a bi-weekly payroll deduction amount determined by the County Administrator to cover personal calls. The bi-weekly deduction will continue until such time the employee and department initiates an action to discontinue personal use.

Section I – Public Records

Information generated on e-mail and by computer is a public record subject to public inspection and is not confidential, unless specifically cited by statute. Users are responsible for assuring that any public records that are confidential by statute are safeguarded in a manner consistent with the practices normally provided for public records in a paper format.

To ensure full compliance with the Public Records Law, Chapter 119 Florida Statutes, and the governing public's right to access public records, all employees and elected officials with current or existing County e-mail accounts are required to use County e-mail accounts for all County business. No other e-mail accounts may be used to conduct County business. Employees or officials who receive business related e-mail at another account must forward that e-mail to their County e-mail accounts with a response to senders to

please use the employee's or the official's County e-mail account for further business purposes.

Logins and passwords are issued solely for the use of employees in conducting official county business. All employees are prohibited from:

1) Disclosing or transferring logins or passwords to unauthorized persons or entities; and

2) Sharing logins or passwords with other county employees without prior authorization from their department director.

Section J – Retention of Electronic Mail

The State of Florida requires the retention of "all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of the physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency" [F.S. 119.011(1)]. As it is for all documents, requirements for retention of e-mail are determined by content. It is each department's responsibility to evaluate e-mail for content to determine the length of time and how the message must be retained, just as it does with paper documentation. Methods of retaining e-mail documents include saving messages to files on floppy disk, hard drive, or printing messages and filing in a paper file. The Information Technology Department is available to advise users in the specifics of different methods. Retention schedules must be followed in accordance with the State Library and Archives of Florida.

Section K – Software, ITunes, and Domain Registration

Okaloosa County purchases and licenses the use of computer software. Employees shall use that software only in accordance with the license agreement for that software. All software developed in-house or by vendors for Okaloosa County is the sole property of Okaloosa County. "Shareware", "Freeware", and all other similar software, unless pre-approved by the Information Technology Director, are not permitted on the network.

Applications software, such as ITunes, must be approved by the county Information Technology Department in the same manner as software on a personal computer. An ITunes Gift Card must be purchased for application software transactions unless otherwise authorized by Information Technology.

No domain name can be registered on behalf of Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners or their reporting departments without the approval and inclusion of the Information Technology Department. The Information Technology Department shall manage domain name services (DNS) and shall be listed as at least one of the administrative and technical contacts.

Section L – Information Technology Project Management

1) Lack of planning is a primary cause of schedule slippage, cost overruns, poor quality, and high maintenance costs. An information technology project becomes better understood as it progresses through the following processes: problem definition; system

justification; analysis and conceptual design; implementation planning; implementation and testing; and operations and maintenance.

2) In order to ensure a well-planned and designed approach to information technology projects, the problem definition must be submitted to the Information Technology Director for review and approval. Approved projects will follow the process established by the Information Technology Department.

   a) The Information Technology Department responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

      i) Directing and coordinating all information technology related activities for the County;

      ii) Directing and managing all computer equipment and networks;

      iii) Directing and managing enterprise-wide projects such as e-mail services, security systems, the County imaging system and enterprise licensing agreements;

      iv) Directing and managing all departmental level applications and departmental licensing agreements that involve technology;

      v) Initiating and implementing all contract negotiations and grants involving an information technology component;

      vi) Specifying the appropriate operating environment for all computer equipment;

      vii) Coordinating development, maintaining and managing web-based solutions;

      viii) Reviewing and approving all new computer equipment acquisitions;

      ix) Installing and configuring all computer equipment for all departments;

      x) Delegating software administration responsibilities to departmental software administrators for each departmental level as needed;

      xi) Directing and coordinating computer equipment training;

      xii) Directing and coordinating all Geographic Information System (GIS) related activities for the County;

      xiii) Managing the County Aerial Photography and Digital Mapping projects;

      xiv) Managing the County Geodetic Control Network.

b) Department responsibilities include the following:

i) Coordinating with the Information Technology Department during the budgetary process for any new computer equipment, information technology projects, data acquisitions, applications and upgrades;

ii) Channeling all communication agreements, contracts and grants through the Information Technology Department prior to and for negotiation;

iii) Ensuring the use of all computer equipment and data in accordance with this policy;

iv) Providing the specified environment for computer equipment;

v) Reporting computer equipment and data problems;

vi) Logging out at the end of the day;

vii) Protecting all logins and passwords to ensure security;

viii) Maintaining an inventory of all licensed software for each PC and the associated disc or CD containing the software for backup purposes (this is not applicable to enterprise-wide software);

ix) Providing at least one (1) departmental software administrator for each departmental level application, when applicable;

x) Designating at least one (1) liaison between the user department and the Information Technology Department;

xi) Providing access or an appropriate contact that can allow access to network communication equipment at any time;

xii) Coordinate the need for application software with the Information Technology Department.

Section M – Compliance

Computer equipment is provided to fulfill the mission of the County. All computer equipment is owned by Okaloosa County. Any modification of computer hardware or software to circumvent this policy is strictly prohibited. Improper use of computer equipment in violation of this policy is grounds for counseling or disciplinary action. The type of action taken will be based on the frequency and/or severity of the incident in question. Actions can include counseling, written reprimand, loss of the privilege of using computer equipment, employee suspension and dismissal from employment.

Section N – Definitions

1) Computer Equipment – Any hardware or software device under purview of the County that exchanges data with or connects to any County computer, device or network.

2) Information Technology Department Personnel – Any person who works under the direction of the Information Technology Director.

3) Authorized User – Anyone authorized by a department director to use computer equipment to do his/her job.

4) Authorized Administrator – Any person who has been granted administrative access to one (1) or more pieces of computer equipment by the Information Technology Director. Authorized administrators must be appointed by the department director and approved by the Information Technology Director. This will only be done where it is absolutely compelled by the circumstances. The Information Technology Director is the final authority.

5) Departmental Software Administrator – Any person who is designated by his/her department director and approved by the Information Technology Director to assist Information System Department personnel in administering departmental applications. These applications normally run on one (1) or more departmental servers and are department specific software applications. Departmental Software Administrators are provided the access allowed by the Information Technology Director.

6) Liaison – One or more individuals within a department who is designated to act as a liaison between Information Technology Department personnel and the department director for matters involving computer equipment. Liaisons may be appointed at the discretion of the department director. At least one (1) liaison per department must be designated.

7) Data – Information that can be digitally transmitted or process by County computer equipment.

8) County Networks – Components or circuitry owned or leased by the County that inter-connects computer equipment.

9) Information Technology Project – Any work effort or plan that requires computer equipment and Information Technology Department personnel resources.

10) Information Systems Component – Any hardware or software item that would fall under the Information Technology Department's support, whether related to Geographic Information Technology (GIS), Systems and Networks or Applications divisions. This is to include wireless and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) peripherals.

11) Contingent Workers – Individuals hired through temporary staffing agencies.

12) Network Equipment – Any switch, hub, router, sniffer or copper-based device.

13) Mobile Device – A cell phone, push to talk (PTT) radio, tablet, 3G or 4G iPad, or internet/email capable equipment. This device is characterized by the fact that a service plan cost generally is determined by the amount of use and/or capabilities. BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) is not supported on the Okaloosa County network.

14) Department Mobile Device – A mobile device purchased and maintained by an Okaloosa County department or division for use by more than one employee or other

authorized user while engaged in their assigned duties.

15) Mobile Device Group Leader – Designated by each department director, an employee assigned responsibility for authorizing and managing all mobile devices and applications for the department. This person will also evaluate usage and device types and advise Purchasing if any new devices are needed and/or if adjustment is needed to plans.

16) Reasonable Secondary Personal Use – mobile devices are intended for County purposes. Personal use is authorized if employees select to reimburse the county for usage on the Okaloosa County Mobile Device Request form.

17) Wifi Hotspot – A device that provides Internet access via Wi-Fi.

CHAPTER XXX – WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Section A – General Statement

Okaloosa County strives to provide a safe and secure workplace for all employees. Threats, threatening behavior or acts of violence against employees, visitors, or other individuals by anyone on county property without lawful justification will not be tolerated. These violations of policy will lead to disciplinary action which may include dismissal, and may lead to arrest and prosecution, as determined by appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Section B – Prohibited Conduct

The County will not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against employees. The following list of behaviors, while not all inclusive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited:

1) Causing physical injury to another person (except in cases of lawful self-defense or defense of others from death or great bodily harm);

2) Making threatening remarks;

3) Stalking;

4) Use of e-mail to threaten, intimidate or cause fear;

5) Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress;

6) Intentionally damaging employer property, property of another employee or property of any other person or entity;

7) In keeping with the protections granted by the 2nd Amendment to the United States Constitution and Florida law, employees may carry concealed firearms on duty if properly licensed by the State of Florida or a Florida approved reciprocal state, and in strict compliance with provisions and restrictions set out in Chapter 790.06, Florida Statutes, reciprocal states' license regulations and any federal law or rule. Possession of any weapon, including a firearm, while on county property, in a county owned, leased, or rented vehicle while performing county business is prohibited unless the employee possesses a valid license to carry a concealed weapon issued under section 790.06, Florida Statutes or Florida approved reciprocal state. This prohibition shall not apply to anyone legally certified to carry weapons in the performance of their lawful duty or those employees who meet the private vehicle storage requirements of Section 790.251, Florida Statutes;

8) Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or domestic violence.

Section C – Reporting and Investigating Threats or Incidents

1) If the incident constitutes an emergency, CALL 9-1-1. In instances that are not emergency situations, contact a supervisor or manager. After 9-1-1 is contacted, contact department or division management immediately.

2) If possible, separate the parties involved in the altercation. If the parties cannot be separated, or if it would be dangerous to do so, CALL 9-1-1.

3) Contact the appropriate department director. The department director, together with the Risk Manager and Human Resources Director, will assess and investigate the incident and take appropriate action.

4) In instances that involve emergency situations or criminal activity, the Human Resources Director will contact the County Administrator and the appropriate law enforcement agency for assessment and, if advisable, investigation and prosecution.

5) As warranted by the seriousness of the incident, the County Administrator may assemble a Threat Management Team, consisting of staff from the offices of the County Administrator, Risk Management, Public Safety, Human Resources and others as deemed appropriate. The Threat Management Team is responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

    a) Evaluating potential violence problems;

    b) Assessing an employee's fitness for duty (using mental health professionals);

    c) Selecting intervention techniques;

    d) Establishing a plan for protection of workers and potential targets;

    e) Coordinating with affected parties such as victims, families, employees, media, or law enforcement employees;

    f) Assuring that immediate (within 24 hours) and on-going counseling is available to traumatized individuals.

Section D – Reporting Situations with Potential for Violence

While employees are not expected to be skilled at identifying potentially dangerous persons, employees are expected to exercise good judgment and to inform either their supervisor or the Human Resources Department if any employee or county business related contact exhibits behavior that could be a sign of potential violence. Such behavior includes:

1) Being armed without being licensed to carry a concealed firearm pursuant to Section 790, Florida Statutes or Florida or Florida approved reciprocal state, or violations of permit restrictions found the section;

2) Displaying overt signs of extreme stress, resentment, hostility, or anger;

3) Making threatening remarks;

4) Sudden or significant deterioration in performance;

5) Displaying irrational or inappropriate behavior;

6) Repeated suicidal comments;

7) Increased frequency of domestic problems or domestic violence.

Section E – Employee Training

Department directors or their designees will orient all employees to department and division procedures concerning responding to and reporting threats or incidents of violence in the workplace.

Section F – Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Should an employee become the victim of an incident of workplace violence or threatened violence, the services of the EAP may be offered to assist in coping with any effects of the incident. Should an employee commit an act of violence or threaten violence, he/she may be required to attend EAP counseling, depending on the circumstances. In these cases, failure by the employee to keep any appointments with the EAP or cooperate fully with EAP treatment recommendations will be grounds for discharge from employment. See Section on Employee Assistance Program.

CHAPTER XXXI – WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION POLICY

The Board of County commissioners is committed to providing a workplace and citizen service arena in which there is open discussion of operations and practices. Accordingly, anyone who has reason to believe the County is violating or not complying with state or federal statutes, rules or regulations is encouraged to report the concern to the County Administrator, any member of County management, or to a County Commissioner.

Any staff member, volunteer, vendor, or member of the public who reports suspected misconduct, fraud, or abuse will not be terminated or otherwise retaliated against for making the report.

The report will be investigated and even if determined not to be misconduct, fraud, or abuse, the individual making the report will not be retaliated against. There will be no punishment for reporting problems – including no termination, demotion, suspension, harassment, or any other type of discrimination.

There are several ways to make a report:

- Verbally submit the report to the County Administrator or any member of management;
- Verbally submit the report to a County Commissioner; or
- Submit the report in writing to one of the following:
    - humanresources@myokaloosa.com;
    - bocc@co.okaloosa.fl.us;
    - County Administrator, Okaloosa County BCC, 1250 N Eglin Pkwy, Suite 102, Shalimar, FL 32579.

NOTE: Florida's "Whistle-blower's Act" provides protection against retaliatory action to those reporting information. See F.S. 112.3187 to 112.31895 for detail.

CHAPTER XXXII – BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ANTI-FRAUD POLICY

Section A – Purpose

The Okaloosa County Anti-Fraud Policy ("Policy") is hereby established to facilitate the development of controls that will aid in the detection and prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the County's financial resources, property, information and other assets, as more fully described herein; provide for the investigation of suspected fraud, waste or abuse; and provide for consequences for engaging in any manner of fraud, waste or abuse. It is the intent of the County to promote consistent organizational behavior by providing guidelines and assigning responsibility for the development of controls and conduct of investigations involving allegations of fraud, waste or abuse. The County will not tolerate the commission or concealment of acts involving fraud, waste, or abuse. Allegations of such acts will be fully investigated, which may result in legal action if warranted. All employees are responsible for reporting suspected instances of fraud, waste, and abuse in accordance with this Policy.

Section B – Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to any suspected fraud, waste or abuse involving employees, elected officials, members of advisory boards, consultants, vendors, contractors, and/or any other parties or entities that have a business relationship with the County.

Any investigative activity required will be conducted without regard to the suspected wrongdoer's length of service, position, title, or relationship to the County or any elected official, consultant, vendor, contractor, or employee.

Matters concerning an employee's actions or conduct should be resolved by the management of that employee's department and the Human Resources Department.

If there is any question as to whether an action constitutes fraud, waste or abuse, please contact the Human Resources Director or County Administrator for guidance.

Section C – Policy

Management is responsible for the effectiveness and efficiency of County operations, including protection of County assets from fraud, waste and abuse. Management has the primary responsibility for the implementation of internal controls to deter and detect fraud.

1) Definitions

   a) Fraud: There are two basic categories of wrongdoing which would constitute fraud: (i) the intentional misstatement of financial information; and (ii) the misappropriation of assets (or theft). Fraud consists of an illegal act (the intentional wrongdoing) and/or the concealment of such act and deriving a benefit from such acts.

   b) Waste: Waste means the thoughtless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, use or squandering of resources owned or operated by the County to the detriment or potential detriment of the County.

c) Abuse: Abuse means the excessive or improper use of something, or the use of something in a manner contrary to the natural or legal rules for its use; the intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, maltreatment, or misuse or resources owned or operated by the County.

Not all instances of waste and abuse necessarily would constitute fraud but they could. Each member of management for the County and each department will be familiar with the types of improprieties that might occur within his/her area of responsibility and be alert for any indication of fraud, waste or abuse.

2) Actions Constituting Fraud, Waste or Abuse

The terms fraud, waste and abuse include, but are not limited to:

a) Any dishonest or fraudulent act;

b) Misappropriation of funds, securities, equipment, supplies, or other assets;

c) Impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions;

d) Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of County activities;

e) Forgery or alteration of documents (checks, contracts, purchase orders, invoices, etc.);

f) Accepting or seeking anything of material value (more than $100) from contractors, vendors, or persons providing services/materials to the County;

g) Destruction, removal, or inappropriate use of records, furniture, fixtures, vehicles and equipment;

h) Misrepresentation of information on documents (employment history, timesheets, leave records, travel reimbursement requests, financial records, etc.);

i) Serious abuse of County time such as unauthorized time away from work, falsification of work hours reported, or excessive use of County time for personal business;

j) Authorizing or receiving payment for goods not received or services not performed;

k) Vendor kickbacks;

l) Misuse of authority for personal gain;

m) Any computer related activity involving the alteration, destruction, forgery, or manipulation of data for fraudulent purposes;

n) Inappropriate use of County provided electronic devices such as computers, tablets, cell phones, pagers, or email;

o) Any violation of local, state and federal laws related to dishonest activities or fraud.

3) Reporting

a) Any fraud, waste or abuse that is detected or suspected must be reported immediately to the Human Resources Director, the County Administrator, a County Commissioner, or the County Attorney.

b) Anyone who receives a report of fraud, waste or abuse must immediately notify the Human Resources Director who shall coordinate all investigations with the County Administrator.

c) Law Enforcement, external auditors and/or other professionals may also be involved as appropriate.

d) The County also has a whistleblower policy that provides a confidential method to file complaints. The County website contains a whistleblower icon which provides reporting options to several members of management to include the Board of County Commissioners, Human Resources Department and the County Administrator.

e) It shall be a violation of this Policy for any person to make a baseless allegation of fraud, waste or abuse that is made with reckless disregard for truth and that is intended to be disruptive or to cause harm to the County or another individual.

Section D – Prohibition Against Retaliation

No person who has acted in accordance with the requirements of this Policy shall be dismissed, or threatened with dismissal; disciplined, suspended or threatened with discipline or suspension; penalized, intimidated or coerced for reporting any suspected fraud, waste or abuse. This provision shall not be construed as an exemption from any other County policies, rules or regulations.

Section E – Reporting Procedures

Great care must be taken in the investigation of suspected fraud, waste or abuse, so as to avoid mistaken accusations or alerting suspected individuals that an investigation is under way.

Anyone who discovers or suspects fraud, waste or abuse shall contact the Human Resources Director, the County Administrator, a County Commissioner, or the County Attorney immediately and should not attempt to personally conduct investigations or interviews/interrogations related to any suspected fraud, waste or abuse. The reporting individual may remain anonymous and file a complaint via the website icon. All inquiries concerning the activity under investigation from the suspected individual, his/her attorney or representative, or any other inquirer should be directed to the Human Resources Department. The proper response to any inquiries concerning the status of an investigation is: “I am not at liberty to discuss this matter.” Under no circumstances should any reference be made to “the allegation,” “the crime,” “the fraud,” “the forgery,” “the misappropriation,” or any other specific reference.

The reporting individual should be informed of the following:

1) Do not contact the suspected individual in an effort to determine facts or demand restitution;

2) Do not discuss the case, facts, suspicions, or allegations with anyone unless specifically asked to do so by the County Administrator or Human Resources Director.

Section F – Investigation Responsibilities

The County Administrator and the Human Resources Department has the primary responsibility for conducting the preliminary investigation of all suspected acts as defined in the Policy. If the preliminary investigation or assessment of the situation indicates that fraud, waste or abuse may have occurred, senior management will involve law enforcement, the Clerk of Court's Inspector General, the external auditors or other Certified Fraud Examiners (CFE), and/or other professionals as appropriate. These parties shall issue reports to appropriate designated personnel and, if appropriate, to the Board of County Commissioners.

Decisions to prosecute or refer the investigation results to the appropriate law enforcement and/or regulatory agencies for independent investigation will be made in conjunction with the County Attorney, senior management, and the County Administrator as will final decisions on disposition of the matter.

The County Administrator and Human Resources Department shall treat all information received confidentially to the extent permitted by law.

Section G – Sanctions

Employees found to have violated this Policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. The type of discipline administered will depend on the severity of the conduct as well as any other factors presented in the particular circumstances, and will be administered in accordance with prevailing County policy.

The contractual or other business relationship of individuals or entities associated with the County found to have violated this Policy shall be subject to review, with the possible modification or termination of such contractual or business relationship.

Section H – Authorization for Investigating Suspected Fraud, Waste or Abuse

The County Administrator, Human Resources Director and their designees shall have:

1) Free and unrestricted access to all County records and premises, whether owned or rented;

2) The authority to examine, copy, and/or remove all or any portion of the contents of files, desks, cabinets, and other storage facilities on the premises without prior knowledge or consent of any individual who might use or have custody of any such items or facilities when it is within the scope of their investigation.

Section I – Administration

The Human Resources Director, with guidance from the County Administrator, is responsible for the administration, revision, interpretation, and application of this Policy. The Policy shall be reviewed periodically and revised as needed.