

Walton County Personnel and Policy Manual



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Section A – Purpose

The Board of County Commissioners hereinafter referred to as the BCC, believing it to be in the public interest and of most benefit to the employees of the County, has an established policy:

- 1) That fair and equitable treatment of all employees will be maintained in all areas of personnel matters.
- 2) That the administration of County services will be conducted with integrity and concern for the individual employee.
- 3) That the public interest will be best served by having a personnel system that recognizes individual worth and applies objective and equitable policies, procedures and practices.
- 4) That the BCC, or their designee, will review the qualifications of everyone making application for employment and extend offers of employment that is in the best interest of Walton County.
- 5) That the BCC encourages, when feasible, the advancement and training of present employees to prepare for furtherance of career and personal goals.
- 6) The BCC and all within their employment will comply with the state and federal EEO statutes and regulations.
- 7) 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.

Revisions

Policy revisions may be initiated by any Commissioner, County Administrator, Deputy County Administrator, or Division Director and will become effective upon adoption by the BCC.

Chapter 1 – AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT, HARASSMENT POLICY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN

Section A – Americans With Disabilities Act Statement

It is the intent of Walton 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, both in any pre-employment testing and/or with respect to the job applied for. 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 Human Resources Director.

Section B – Harassment Policy

The Walton County BCC, in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local anti-discrimination and harassment laws and regulations, enforces this policy in accordance with the following definitions and guidelines:

1) Discrimination

It is a violation of the Walton County BCC's policy to discriminate in the provision of employment opportunities, benefits or privileges; to create discriminatory work conditions; or to use discriminatory evaluative standards in employment if the basis of that discriminatory treatment is, in whole or in part, the person's race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, or any other protected status.

Discrimination in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including termination.

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 race, national origin, color, religion, sex, genetic information, age, physical or mental disability, 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, inappropriate 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 Human Resources Director or any suitable member of management.

2) Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment

Walton 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.

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 Human Resources Director or the County Administrator, or designee, who will discuss the matter. Such report should be made as soon as possible after the incident, or, if a series of incidents is involved, as soon as possible after the latest occurrence. The complaint may be made verbally or in writing. If such report is first made verbally, then it will be the responsibility of the Human Resources Director or his/her designee to document the same in writing and to have the same signed in his/her presence by the complainant. The Human Resources Director or designee shall forthwith begin an investigation of such written complaint. Every effort will be made to resolve such complaint to the satisfaction of both parties.

Confidentiality will be maintained to the greatest extent possible while still allowing for full, complete and adequate investigation. Because of the importance of the investigation, the matter cannot be kept absolutely confidential. Communications will be made to others only on a limited "need to know" basis. There will be no retaliation against any employee for filing a complaint of sexual harassment.

Section C – Prohibition Against Retaliation

Walton 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) Reporting harassment;
- 2) Filing, testifying, assisting, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding or hearing conducted by the County or a government enforcement agency.

Section D – Equal Opportunity Plan

It is the policy of the BCC to provide equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, disability, sex, national origin, political affiliation, religious action or any other protected category. The BCC is fully committed to assuring equal opportunity and equal consideration to all applications and employees in personnel matters. This includes recruitment, selection, hiring, compensation, and benefits. In the implementation of this policy, the County will aggressively seek personnel for all job levels within the organization through upgrading and recruitment from minority group members and women.

Section E – Workplace Violence

General Statement

Walton 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 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.

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;
- 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 of 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 state's license regulations and any federal law or rule with the exception of employees whose job requires them to supervise state or county inmates. Employees may not leave any weapon in an unoccupied county vehicle. 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 possess 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 lawfully 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.

Reporting and Investigating Threats or Incidents

- 1) If the incident constitutes an emergency, CALL 9-1-1. After 9-1-1 is contacted, contact department or division management immediately. In instances that are not emergency situations, contact a supervisor or manager.
- 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 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 or Deputy County Administrator and the appropriate law enforcement agency for assessment and, if advisable, investigation and prosecution.

CHAPTER 2 – CLASSIFICATION PLAN

Section A – Purpose

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

- 1) As a guide in recruiting and examining candidates for employment;
- 2) To provide a systematic arrangement and inventory of positions;
- 3) To determine appropriate salary ranges;
- 4) To provide uniform terminology of jobs; and
- 5) To aid in perfecting and revising organizational structure, clarifying lines of authority and identifying responsibility.

Section B – Class Specifications

- 1) Each class specification lists the minimum requirements or qualifications needed to perform the job such as education, work experience, and other qualifications.
- 2) Class specifications are descriptive and explanatory and are not necessarily inclusive of all duties performed. They are designed to indicate the types of duties and level of responsibilities assigned to the class. Employees can be required to perform duties that are not included within their job description.
- 3) The Human Resources Director shall maintain a master set of all approved class specifications which shall constitute the official Classification Plan. The official copy shall show all amendments to the original plan. The copies of the specifications may include the date of adoption and/or the last revision of the class specification.

Section C – Class Titles

The title of an official class position 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.

Section D – Classification of New Positions

- 1) The Human Resources Director shall create new class specifications for positions upon receipt of the prescribed forms indicating a statement of duties, responsibilities, and requirements of such positions from the department director. Whenever a new position is created, a Job Description Questionnaire must be submitted to the Human Resources Director to describe in detail the duties of such position. A desk audit and/or interview with the incumbent or department director may be required by the Human Resources Director after a new position is created and occupied, in order to verify that the position has been appropriately allocated.
- 2) The Human Resources Director reviews and recommends approval or disapproval to the Deputy County Administrator all proposed position creations, allocations, reallocations, and abolishment.

Section E – Reclassification of Positions

The Human Resources Director shall recommend changing the classification of existing positions when it is determined that the position is incorrectly classified. Such action is called reclassification and must be reviewed and approved by the County Administrator or Deputy County Administrator. If an employee has facts that indicate that his/her position is improperly classified, the employee may request the Human Resources Director to review the classification of the position, with the knowledge of his/her department director. Such request shall be submitted in writing and shall contain a statement of justification. For this or any other type of request for reclassification from any source, the Human Resources Director shall thereupon investigate actual or suggested duties of the position and reclassify the position to its appropriate grade if warranted. Reclassification may occur as the result of the conditions described below.

- 1) The position was incorrectly classified and there has been no substantial change in duties from those in effect when the position was originally categorized.

If the position is occupied at the time of reclassification, the employee shall be entitled to serve therein and retain the corresponding status after the position is reclassified.

- 2) There has been a substantial change in the duties and responsibilities associated with a position since it was classified to a particular grade.
 - a) If the position is assigned a higher pay grade than the current position, such action is considered an upgrade for the position. If the position is occupied at the time of an upgrade, the incumbent may be reclassified, but does not have to meet the minimum qualifications of the new position if they are changed. A salary adjustment may be granted in accordance with the promotional increase policy.

Section F – Position Control

All positions in the County are established and maintained through a budget each fiscal year in accordance with established budget and accounting procedures. The establishment of additional positions not approved through the budget process shall be coordinated through the Human Resources Department and will be accomplished at the discretion of the County Administrator upon approval of the Board of County Commissioners. Changes to position allocations that do not result in an increase in the current approved budget of a department may be authorized by the County Administrator.

Section G – Abolishment of Positions

Whenever there is justification for abolishing a position such as lack of work, reorganization, lack of funds, or other reason, the department/division director shall make such recommendation to the Human Resources Director. The Human Resources Director shall review and present such recommendations for approval by the County Administrator. In no case will a position be abolished as means of terminating an employee.

Section H – Maintenance of the Classification Plan

- 1) Each time a unit or department is substantially reorganized, the department director will submit new Job Description Questionnaires for all affected positions to the Human Resources Director.
- 2) The Human Resources Director may require department directors to submit Job Description Questionnaires at any time when there is reason to believe there has been a change in duties and responsibilities of one or more positions.
- 3) Any change in the Classification Plan, such as establishing new positions, abolishing positions, reclassifying positions, or pay grade changes for positions require the prior review by the Human Resources Director and the approval of the Deputy County Administrator.

Annually, the Human Resources Director shall review the Classification Plan with Administration to determine if changes need to be made.

CHAPTER 3 – COMPENSATION PLAN

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 performance awards.

Section B – Market Adjustment

The market adjustment is the cost of living adjustment (COLA) and is the component that is used to ensure that the salary structure is adjusted to reflect changes in the wage index. This review is done annually as a part of the budget process and if approved, will normally take effect on October 1. The review is based upon information provided by Human Resources, the Office of Management and Budget, and the County Administrator or designee, with approval by the BCC.

Section C – Starting Rates for New Employees

- 1) In most cases, a new employee shall be paid the minimum rate of pay for the position. Exceptions may be granted based on experience and qualifications with the approval of the department director, the Human Resources Director, and the Deputy County Administrator.
- 2) The minimum rate for each position is based upon the assumption that a new employee meets the minimum qualifications stated in the class specifications.

Section D– Promotional Increases

- 1) Policy
 - a) When an employee is promoted to a position in 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 recommended by the department director and approved by the Human Resource Director and the Deputy County Administrator.
- 2) Procedures for Determining Promotional Increase
 - a) The appropriate hiring authority shall recommend an increase within the standards stated in the policy. The promoted employee's most recent performance evaluation shall accompany the request and be submitted to the Human Resources Director for review and final approval.
 - b) The decision regarding a promotional increase shall reflect the promoted employee's experience and qualifications in comparison with other employee's backgrounds in the same job.

Section E – Effects of Demotion

When an employee is demoted to a lower position, the employee shall be paid at a rate that is within the approved range for the lower position. The rate of pay shall be set by the Human Resources Director, and the Department Director taking into consideration the circumstances surrounding, and the reasons for, the demotion. An employee receiving a demotion will be required to serve a new probationary period pursuant to the Probationary Policy. If a demotion is based on performance, said employee will be requested to serve a new probation.

Section F – Employee Transfers (Lateral)

The BCC encourages employee transfers for the purpose of increasing job knowledge and skills in preparation for advancement within the organization. Post-probationary, regular employees may apply for transfers to regular BCC positions. Employees should contact Human Resources to complete a transfer form.

Section G – 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 at the discretion of the Division Director or County Administrator. Any such temporary assignment shall not affect the employee's eligibility for normal merit advancements. Documentation of employee temporary assignments should be included in the personnel records. The employee may receive a temporary salary increase not to exceed 10% at the discretion of the County Administrator or Deputy County Administrator while working at a higher classification.

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

- 1) Overtime Compensation
 - a) Exempt Employees
Executive, professional, and administrative, as defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act, are normally exempt from overtime except during emergencies or disasters. All department directors are included in this exemption. When a state of emergency has been declared or in the opinion of County

Administrator with direction of the Board, Exempt employees may be authorized for overtime pay.

b) Non-Exempt Employees

All hourly/non-exempt salaried employees will be paid 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 shall receive time and one half (1½) their regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 40 per workweek.

c) General Requirements

1. Overtime is to be avoided except during peak loads or in emergencies. Employees are strictly prohibited from working overtime without permission in advance from their supervisor.
2. Overtime hours must be submitted on the time sheet and should include the total number of hours and the date the overtime was worked.

2) Compensatory Time

Exempt employees are not eligible to earn or accrue compensatory time. 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 may only be accrued pursuant to an understanding between the department director and the employee prior to the actual performance of work;
- b) Compensatory leave must be used prior to use of annual leave or sick leave.
- c) Employees may choose to receive payment for accrued compensatory time upon the employee's separation of employment or upon entry into the Florida State Retirement System Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP);
- d) Compensatory time off will be allowed within a reasonable period of time after requesting its use, so long as it does not unduly disrupt the operations of the department;
- e) 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.

3) Violations and Reporting Procedures

- a) It is a violation of the County's policy for any employee to falsify a time sheet or to alter another employee's time sheet. It is also a violation of County policy for any employee or manager to instruct another employee to falsely report hours worked or to alter another employee's 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 accurate corrections to a time card or time sheet in order to ensure compliance with county policies.
- b) Non-exempt employees must not work any hours outside of their scheduled work day 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 time card or timesheet. Employees are prohibited from performing any "off-the clock" work. "Off-the- clock" work means work performed but not reported on biweekly timesheets. Any employee who fails to report or inaccurately reports any hours worked may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- c) Exempt/Salaried employees must claim leave on their timesheets if they work less than 4 hours of an 8 hour workday or less than 5 hours of a 10 hour workday.

CHAPTER 4 - EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PROMOTIONS/TRANSFERS

The selection of all employees will be based upon proper and legal consideration of the following criteria in no order of importance:

- 1) Qualifications;
- 2) Previous work history;
- 3) Objectives to provide affirmative action for equal employment opportunity;
- 4) Experience;
- 5) Ability to successfully represent Walton County BCC's cultural goals and objectives, written or otherwise.

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

Section A – Announcing of Vacant Positions

- 1) Job Vacancy Postings
 - a) Upon a department's request, the Human Resources Department will distribute a Job Vacancy for posting, for a minimum of fourteen (14) calendar days, to all county departments.
 - b) Prior to transferring internally, County employees will be required to complete an Internal Transfer Form and submit it to the County Human Resources Department prior to the closing date of the position.
 - c) After the final date to apply, and in accordance with the County's program of Affirmative Action for Equal Opportunity, the Human Resources Director or designee will contact interested employees and schedule an interview, if appropriate, or advise the employee of the Human Resources Director's decision.
 - d) At the discretion of the Human Resources Director or designee, applications of the apparently qualified interested County employees will be referred to the department. County employees should be given consideration before outside applicants.
 - e) All vacant County positions will be advertised internally and/or externally concurrently and for fourteen (14) calendar days. If necessary, the position may be posted for longer than 14 days.
 - f) If a comparable position has filled within the prior (60) days, the department director (with approval from the Human Resources Director) may elect to forego a posting of the comparable vacancy and select a qualified applicant from the prior group or groups of qualified internal or external applicants.
 - g) Upon a conditional offer, background, driver's license checks and reference checks will be conducted on the selected candidate. For all positions requiring college degrees, the candidate must request that an official sealed, transcript be mailed directly from the educational institution to the Human Resources Department as part of the pre-employment process. Until the official transcript is received by Human Resources, the offer of employment will remain conditional.
 - h) At the close of all interviews, the department director shall make a recommendation to the Human Resources Director and explain the criteria and basis for their selection. The Human Resources Director will examine the department's selection and recommend a decision. When the department director and the Human Resources Director do not concur in their recommendations, the respective Deputy County Administrator will review the recommendations and make a final decision.

Section B – Filing of Applications

- 1) All applications for positions shall be made on a standard form prescribed by the Human Resources Director. The application form shall request details covering training, experience, and other pertinent information.
- 2) Applicants claiming veteran's preference must indicate it on the application and provide necessary documentation.
- 3) All applications shall be signed by the applicant attesting to the truth of all statements contained in the application form (this includes online submissions). An electronic signature is sufficient. Any false statement or misrepresentation by an applicant may be cause for denying employment consideration or for discharge from County employment if discovered at any time after being employed.
- 4) Applications will be accepted only for positions that are posted, during the posting period. A completed application form and proof of education and training will be required for each position applied for.
- 5) It is the objective of Walton County to provide consideration to internal candidates for their proven qualities as County employees.

Section C – New Employees

All new employees must report to the Walton County Human Resources Department to complete all required employment forms, prior to reporting for duty. The employee must bring his/her social security card and driver's license to meet I-9 requirements. Walton County participates in E-Verify.

Section D – Employment of Relatives

Florida Statutes, Chapter 112.3135, severely restricts the employment of relatives (in the same political subdivision) of public officials. "Public Officials" is defined as including any employee with authority to make recommendations for the appointment, employment, etc. The statute definition of "relative" is as stated in Florida Statute 112.3135. Compliance with the statute is mandatory and penalties are provided. The BCC confirms that Walton County will comply with the statute in its employment practices.

Moreover, one family member shall not have supervisory authority over the other. (Walton County Resolution 2000-75, 1/27/01)

Section E – Promotion/Transfer

- 1) All full-time and part-time employees after successfully completing the initial probationary period of (6) six months of employment, shall be eligible for promotion and/or transfer to another department with the approval of both department directors. Inter-departmental transfers may be approved before the initial probationary period is completed at the director's discretion.
- 2) Employees desiring a promotion and/or transfer to another position may apply for a posted position by completing a Walton County Transfer Form and submitting it to the Human Resources Department prior to the final date to apply.
- 3) Veteran's preference in promotion will be given in accordance with Chapter 295, Laws of Florida. Eligibility for preference in promotion shall apply only to a Veteran's first promotion after reinstatement or re-employment, without exception.

Section F – 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.

Section G – Probationary Period

Objective

All employees shall serve a probationary period before their status may be considered permanent. Any probationary period shall be considered an integral part of the examination process and shall be utilized for evaluation of an employee's performance and adaptability to the position, and for separating from employment an employee who does not meet the appointing authority's expectations.

- 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 period. 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 six (6) months for all employees based on any continuous employment whether it is full-time or part-time.
- 2) Probationary Period (Extended) – An employee may be placed on an extended probationary period due to a disciplinary action or documented work performance deficiencies for a specified period of time at management's discretion. Any employee placed on an extended probationary period will not be eligible to be paid any annual leave if termination occurs prior to the end of the extended probationary period.
- 3) Probationary Period (Promoted, Demoted, or Reclassified) – An employee may be placed in a probationary status, at the discretion of the department director, due to a change in their job title or classification.
- 4) Dismissal During Probationary Period – At any time during any probationary period, the appointing authority may remove an employee when deemed to be in the best interest of the County.

Section H – Regular Appointment

An employee given an original probationary appointment shall be given a regular appointment upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period.

Section I – 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. Temporary appointments may exceed six (6) months when needed to replace or supplement employees incapacitated by workers' compensation injuries. 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.

CHAPTER 5 – DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

Walton County is committed to maintaining a drug-free workplace. All employees are covered by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and will sign and acknowledge a Drug Free Workplace Summary Sheet. Employees may be sent for drug testing as follows:

- a) Pre-employment if the position is a safety sensitive position such as a truck driver or equipment operator.
- b) When there is reasonable suspicion to believe that they are using or have used illegal drugs; or
- c) When there is a report of drug use, provided by a reliable and credible source; or
- d) Post –accident when there is any mishap or accident involving a County vehicle and/or caused by, or contributed to by an employee in which injury to a person or persons.

CHAPTER 6 – EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Section A – Purpose of Evaluations

The performance evaluation program is intended to inform employees how well they are performing their work and how they can improve their work performance. The program is also intended to:

- 1) Be used as a guide for determining merit pay increases;
- 2) Be considered in selecting employees for promotion;
- 3) Provide essential information for employee career development;
- 4) Be used to transition an employee from probationary to regular status;
- 5) Be used in determining whether an employee's work is deficient as to warrant corrective action, up to and including dismissal.

Section B – Evaluation Program Policy

The Human Resources Director shall be responsible for the establishment and administration of a performance evaluation program for all employees of the Board. The performance evaluation shall be administered in a standard written form or electronically as prescribed by the Human Resources Director.

Section C – Evaluation Periods

- 1) Probationary Reviews – All part-time and full-time employees shall be evaluated at the end of their initial or extended probationary period.
- 2) Annual Reviews – All full-time and part-time employees shall be evaluated annually on their anniversary dates or the adjusted anniversary dates.

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 must provide feedback on the evaluation forms in order for them to be considered complete.
- 3) The evaluator shall discuss each performance evaluation with the employee.
- 4) The employee, supervisor and department director shall sign the evaluation.

Section E – Evaluation Processing

- 1) Completed evaluations shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Department for processing at least 14 days prior to the effective date.
- 2) Performance Evaluation Forms will be maintained in the employee’s permanent human resources record.

CHAPTER 7 –LEAVE

Section A – Holidays

- 1) Observed Holidays
 - a) The Board of County Commissioners approves the holiday schedule annually.

Those eligible for paid holidays are full-time probationary or regular employees who have that date as a regularly scheduled workday. In order to receive pay for the observed holiday, an employee must have been present and/or on approved paid leave, on the workday before and after the holiday.

Section B – Annual Leave (Vacation)

- 1) Accrual of Annual Leave
 - a) Employees classified as Full-Time, or Regular, earn the annual leave benefit. Continuous service is calculated from the date of original employment, with leave being accrued from that date. Annual leave cannot be taken until earned and per-approved through the appropriate supervisor. Employees regularly scheduled to work 40 hours per week (2080 hours per year) or 80 hours per two (2) weeks accrue annual leave based on years of service as follows:

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Leave Accrued Per Year</u>
0<5	Up to 104 hours annual leave per year
5<8	Up to 130 hours annual leave per year
8+	Up to 160.16 hours annual leave per year

- 2) Request for Leave

Leave request forms, properly executed for paid and unpaid leave time, must be turned in a minimum of seven (7) days in advance of the leave date. In the event of an emergency situation, the supervisor will handle the leave request on a case-by-case basis. All requests for paid leave must be signed by the employee and approved by the Division Director. The Board of County Commissioners Chairman shall approve all leave and travel requests for the County Administrator, County Attorney, and TDC Executive Director. Exempt employees must claim leave on their timesheets if they work less than 4 hours of an 8 hour workday or less than 5 hours of a 10 hour workday.

- 3) Payment for Unused Annual Leave

- a) One (1) year of service is required before any employee leaving the employment of the County can be paid for annual leave. Any employee leaving the employment of the County will be paid for their annual leave accrued, up to a maximum of 120 hours. In the event of a death of a County employee, the death payment of annual leave shall be made to the spouse or family as provided by Florida Statutes, Chapter 232.15 and in accordance with BCC policy.
- b) Continuous Service

- i) Continuous service is defined as including those periods when an employee is on authorized paid leave. Employees on authorized leave (military, medical, or other) are credited for the leave time in determining the length of service for advancement to the higher accrued level.

Section C: Sick Leave

- 1) Paid sick leave is a benefit extended to provide the security of continued pay within certain limitations. Paid sick leave provides for a genuine need of the employee and is not an automatic entitlement to days off with pay. The employee shall call the supervisor or other designated employee prior to or at the beginning of the work day or work shift, when sick and unable to work.
- 2) Definition
 - a) Sick leave is defined as:
 - b) Illness, injury, incapacitation, or quarantine of the employee or immediate family.
 - c) Routine medical, dental, or optical examinations that cannot be scheduled for the employee any time other than working hours.
 - d) Part-time employees do not accrue sick leave.
- 3) 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, within one-half (1/2) hour after the beginning of the work shift.
 - b) Any sick leave taken must be reported on biweekly time sheet.
- 4) Unused Sick Leave
 - a) Standard Sick Leave Payout Policy
 - i) Upon separation, the employee may receive pay for one-half of their sick leave accrued up to a maximum payment of one hundred twenty (120) hours. Employees who are terminated for cause may not receive pay for sick leave.
- 5) Medical Certification

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

- a) Any period of absence (due to illness) for three or more consecutive days requires a doctor's note.
- b) To support a request for FMLA leave.
- c) A fitness for duty report to return to work from leave when applicable.

Section D – Sick Leave Pool

1) Purpose

The purpose of the sick leave pool is to permit eligible employees to pool portions of their sick leave benefits to members who have exhausted their leave.

2) Eligibility

- a) In order to be eligible for membership in the sick leave pool, an employee must:
 - i) Be a full-time employee; and
 - ii) Have completed six (6) months of employment with the Board prior to application for membership; and
 - iii) Have a minimum of 48 hours of accumulated sick leave at the time of application for membership.
 - iv) Must have exhausted all sick and annual leave hours before hours from the sick leave pool can be used.

- b) Eligible employees can apply to join the sick leave pool during the annual open enrollment period.
 - i) All employees should contact Human Resources for the enrollment form and for more information on the sick leave pool.
- c) The County Human Resources Director shall serve on the sick leave pool committee and along with the Benefits Coordinator and the Director of Finance.
- d) The maximum hours available for use in the sick leave pool is 1040.

3) Abuse of Sick Leave Pool Policy

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

Section E – 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) Immediate family is defined as the employee’s spouse, parents or grandparents of either, children of either, guardians of either, brothers or sisters of either, or relatives residing in the same household.
- 3) You must notify your supervisor/department director of this bereavement leave so that your time will not be docked.
- 4) Evidence of death and funeral attendance may be required.

Section F – 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 is detailed and lengthy; all provisions contained therein shall apply to Walton County employees.

Pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), the Walton County BCC shall grant Family and Medical Leave to eligible employees. Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least one year, and for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months. Please contact the Human Resources Department for more details on the FMLA policy.

Section G – 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 Walton 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.

CHAPTER 8 – BENEFITS

Section A – Insurance

All regular full-time employees are eligible for group insurance benefits as provided by the Board. Dual employed family members on the insurance plan may not be paid for one to opt out of the plan.

Employees who terminate their employment 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

- 1) Walton County employees should use County issued vehicles for county business and travel if at all possible. Attempts to use a County issued vehicle should be exhausted before proceeding with private vehicle use.
- 2) County employees shall be entitled to reimbursement for the use of their private vehicles and for expenses which they may incur while performing travel in conduct of County business.
- 3) Mileage reimbursement rates for travel by privately owned vehicles will be paid in accordance with the IRS optional standard mileage rate.
- 4) Department director travel out of the County must receive prior approval of the County Administrator or Deputy County Administrator.
- 5) Department directors can approve out of County travel for their employees.

Section C – 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, or 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 Human Resources Department within 24 hours.

Section D – Retirement

- 1) Walton County BCC employees may be eligible to participate in the Florida Retirement System (FRS). Complete and up-to-date information on retirement is available; contact the Human Resources Department and/or FRS directly.
- 2) For those employees who are not eligible to participate in the Florida Retirement System (FRS), that employee may elect to contribute 3% of their gross income to an International County Managers Association (ICMA) 401(b) account. That payment shall be accomplished through a payroll deduction each pay period. If the employee elects to make such a contribution, the County will contribute to that employee's ICMA account a percentage equal to that which the County contributes to FRS for its regular employees.

Section E – Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Walton 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 encourages an employee who is experiencing problems to take it upon themselves to seek assistance from the EAP. For more information on the EAP, contact Human Resources.

CHAPTER 9 – 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, and 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 10– TIME SHEETS

- 1) Time sheets will be prepared for all employees.
- 2) Inaccurate timesheets will result in paychecks being delayed.
- 3) Time sheets must be written in ink or electronically printed; 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 sheets for employees under his/her supervision and employees will sign for themselves.

CHAPTER 11 – DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Section A – Policy

It is the policy of Walton County to:

- 1) Provide a well-defined system of discipline that sets forth standards of conduct and specific 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 personnel 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 established rules, regulations, policies and procedures.
 - c) Offenses or misconduct which violate general rules of behavior or are specifically prohibited by law.
 - d) Being convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor.
 - e) Being absent three (3) consecutive days without approval and without prior notification to the supervisor or division director.
 - f) Excessive tardiness or absences.
 - g) Incompetence, inefficiency, negligence, or failure to follow orders.
 - h) Abuse, misuse or theft of public property, equipment facilities or supplies.

- i) Willfully making false statements to supervisors, the BCC, or to the public, or falsification of records or misrepresentation of uniform, badge or position.
- j) Violation of departmental rules, safety work habits, personnel or policy regulations, safety rules or County ordinances.
- k) Possession, or use of alcoholic beverages or narcotic drugs (not prescribed by a physician) during working hours on County property or in a County vehicle.
- l) Reporting to work under the influence of alcoholic beverages or narcotic drugs (whether or not prescribed by a physician) or any other drug, which affects the employee's ability to carry out their duties.
- m) Acceptance of gratuity in violation of County policy and of Florida Statutes of Conduct and Ethics.
- n) Political activity prohibited by law.
- o) Violation of State and/or Federal Statutes and regulations pertaining to public employees.
- p) Refusal to work overtime when necessary.
- q) Conduct that is disruptive, insubordinate, antagonistic, offensive or injurious to the County whether in relation to co-workers, other employees, superiors, elected officials or general workers.
- r) Failure to promptly report injuries or accidents through proper channels to supervisors.
- s) When required by the job description, failure to maintain a valid driver's license.
- t) Any gambling activity of any kind while on duty or while on County owned property.
- u) Smoking in County buildings and/or County vehicles.

Section C – Application of Disciplinary Action

- 1) Although internal consistency in administering discipline 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.
- 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 action to dismiss an employee, the department director will contact the Human Resources Director and review that personnel 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.

CHAPTER 12 – GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Section A – Policy

Grievances

A grievance is defined as a formal complaint made by an employee when they feel the application of a rule, policy or procedure has been applied unjustly, or when some condition of employment is believed to be unfair or unjust.

If an employee believes a rule, policy or procedure has been applied unjustly, the following procedure may be used to resolve such concerns. The County has special grievance procedures to resolve such complaints. In order to use these procedures the employee must have completed their probationary period

and have attained permanent status. Employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement shall follow the procedure set forth in the agreement.

The following areas of personnel administration are considered management prerogatives and will not be subject to grievance:

- 1) Scheduling and assigning work, work hours and work stations.
- 2) Establishing work standards and quality.
- 3) Size of workforce and reorganizations.
- 4) Reductions to the work force.
- 5) Appropriations and budgets.
- 6) Scope of work within job classification except when an assignment is clearly determined not to be within the job classification.
- 7) Performance evaluations.
- 8) Salary scales and rates of pay falling within officially established ranges.
- 9) The right to discipline.
- 10) The missions of the County.

It is the responsibility of supervisory and management employees to hear and consider any valid employee grievance, and take necessary corrective action when indicated, or provide a reasonable explanation as to why the complaint is not justified.

Each employee has the responsibility to ensure any grievance filed is reasonable and based upon factual information and not abuse the purpose and intent of the system.

Section B - Disciplinary Actions

Pre-Disciplinary Hearings

When a supervisor has determined that an employee's actions may require discipline above a written reprimand, a pre-disciplinary hearing will be scheduled and the employee notified in writing at least 24 hours in advance. At the hearing, the supervisor explains the charges and the type of disciplinary action being considered. The employee will be given an opportunity to offer any contrary evidence, explanation and/or comments. The employee is notified of the decision after management discusses and decides upon the appropriate disciplinary action.

CHAPTER 13 –APPEAL PROCEDURE

Appeal Procedures (Employment Action)

For appeals concerning terms or conditions of employment or discipline up to and including a written reprimand, the decision of the director or division director is final and non-appealable.

For appeals concerning suspension with or without pay, demotion, involuntary reduction in pay or disciplinary probation, an employee who feels that he/she has a legitimate appeal shall first discuss it on an informal basis with their immediate supervisor. The employee should allow the supervisor sufficient time to review the matter and offer a response.

If the informal resolution process fails, the employee shall submit to the supervisor a written appeal, stating the facts of the complaint and the relief requested. The supervisor may have a meeting with the employee to discuss the appeal. The supervisor shall communicate a decision in writing to the employee within seven (7) calendar days following receipt of the written appeal.

If the appeal remains unresolved and the employee desires additional review, the employee shall submit it in writing to the division director within seven (7) working days after receipt of the supervisor's decision. The division director may have a meeting with the employee to discuss the appeal. The division director will provide a written response to the employee within seven (7) calendar days following receipt of the appeal.

If the appeal is not resolved by the division director and the employee desires additional review, the employee shall submit it in writing to the Human Resources Director within seven (7) calendar days after receipt of the division director's decision. The employee and the division director will meet with the Human Resources Director to discuss the grievance. The Human Resources Director may request additional information at this time including obtaining statements from other pertinent sources. The Human Resources Director will provide a written response to the employee within seven (7) days following receipt of the appeal.

If the appeal is not resolved by the Human Resources Director and the employee desires additional review, the employee shall submit it in writing to the County Administrator or their designee within seven (7) calendar days after receipt of the Human Resources Director's decision. The Human Resources Director will make arrangements for the employee to meet with the appropriate level of Executive staff or their designee and be given the opportunity to explain his/her position. After considering all the information, the County Administrator or their designee shall make a decision which shall be final. The County Administrator or their designee will provide a written response to the employee within seven (7) calendar days following receipt of the appeal.

Time Limits

Failure to initiate an appeal within the time limits indicated prohibits the employee's eligibility to participate in appeals process.

Failure at any step by the supervisor/department head of this procedure to communicate the decision of an appeal within the specified time limit shall permit the employee to proceed to the next step.

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 written agreement.

General Provisions

If an appeal arises from the action of an official higher than the supervisor, the appeal may be initiated at the appropriate level/step, by submitting the appeal within the established time limit.

If an appeal meeting is held during the work hours of any required participant, such participant shall be excused without loss of pay for that purpose. Attendance at appeals meetings outside regular working hours shall not be deemed time worked.

The filing or pendency of any appeal under the provisions of the section shall in no way operate to impede, delay, or interfere with the right of the County to take the action complained of, subject to the final disposition of the appeal.

An employee who resigns from County employment forfeits the right to initiate or to process an appeal under the provisions of this section.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent or discourage informal discussion between an employee and his/her supervisors on matters of concern to the employee.

The appeals procedure only applies to current employees for issues related to discipline.

CHAPTER 14– SEPARATIONS

All employees separating their employment will personally go to the Human Resources Department to process out. An employee may be separated from the service of Walton 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) Layoff or Reduction in Force;
- 3) Disability;
- 4) Loss of License or Other Requirements;
- 5) Dismissal or Unsatisfactory Service Separation;
- 6) Retirement;
- 7) Death

CHAPTER 15 -Communications and Technology Policy

Telephones, cellular phones, voice mail systems, fax machines, tablets and computers, including electronic mail systems (e-mail) and Internet are provided for Walton County business use and personal use is prohibited.

Also prohibited is 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 downloading of software onto the County's computers.

Internet Service/Access: The BCC believes in empowering the staff with resources necessary to complete their work as well as grow in their current positions. Therefore, we do not limit employee access to the internet as there are many resources such as state and local government websites as well as research sites that provide valuable tools to the staff.

It is the responsibility of each individual employee to utilize these resources in an effective, ethical, and lawful manner. Improper use of these resources could result in the immediate termination of internet service for the employee by his/her supervisor or approving authority, and will be subject to disciplinary action.

The IT Department does monitor internet activity. Any improper use is reported to the employee's director.

As an employee of a government organization, all messages, web pages, files, and other documents accessed using the Internet services are subject to Public Records Requests.

Email: The BCC uses email to manage internal affairs and communications on a daily basis. These records are subject to public records disclosure unless explicitly exempt by law.

All email users are responsible for the content of the messages they send. Each message should be courteous, professional, businesslike, and written in language and tone acceptable for general public review. Messages should never be transmitted that would create an atmosphere of discomfort for another person or that may be perceived as harassment.

Email Security: Users are responsible for the security and maintenance of their local area network password. In order to maintain security, passwords will be changed as prompted by network administrators. Users will not disclose their passwords to others or record/post their password where it can be viewed by others.

Email Access By Management: Management reserves the right to monitor and review all email content without the consent of the employee.

While emails generated for incidental personal purposes may not qualify as public record(s), BCC employees should not consider any email to be immune from review by management.

Personal Responsibility: Email, unless specifically exempted by Florida Statute, is a public record. Retention of email is a responsibility of both the sender and the receiver. Email messages originating within the BCC are

the responsibility of the originator. Therefore, email that is received from a sender within the BCC may be assumed to have been retained by the sender and may therefore be deleted. The receiver must retain email that originates outside the BCC and falls under the definition of a public record listed above. In addition, the receiver is responsible for assigning the appropriate retention tag to all email messages.

Retention: Each employee using the e-mail system is responsible for understanding this policy, applying the appropriate retention tag, and determining whether e-mail messages are personal, transitory, and/or public records. Each employee is responsible for the appropriate retention of e-mail.

Guidelines for the proper retention of documents as well as the destruction of documents are outlined by the Florida Department of State. Most of the records for BCC fall under General Records Schedule GS11.

Message management: Senders and receivers are responsible for the periodic deletion of personal and transitory messages so that the e-mail system is not overburdened.

Privacy: E-mail users should have no expectation of privacy in the content of their e-mail. All e-mail, whether personal, transitory, or public record, is subject to inspection by BCC Administration. Minor personal use is acceptable, but BCC e-mail systems should not be used for private business.

Violations: Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination, in accordance with the policies and guiding principles.

CHAPTER 16 – SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The purpose of the Social Media and Digital Marketing Policy is to ensure the proper use of County social sites, web based marketing and technologies by establishing guidelines for County owned social media and marketing tools.

The term social media encompasses a broad spectrum of online activities which can evolve on a daily basis. Social networking on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Vine, Snapchat, YouTube, Flickr, blogs and other platforms, as well as those not in existence at the time of the adoption of these guidelines, leave a virtual footprint – one that is immediate and is not easily erasable.

Publicly posted information must be professional as it reflects on Walton County, its elected officials, employees, volunteers, programs, policies and services. County social media accounts are not a substitute for or a replacement of available public information, or a platform for the expression of political speech and policy opinion or for the communication on any subject matter unrelated to the programs, regulations and services of the County.

All social media communications messages that are composed, sent or received on the County's IT equipment or used in official County business or representing Walton County, are the property of Walton County and are subject to public disclosure. Walton County reserves the right to not publish any posting or to remove it. All postings will be preserved as public record.

The County's website of www.co.walton.fl.us shall remain the primary and predominant Internet presence. The appropriate County uses of social media as tools fall generally into two categories:

- As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency information).
- As marketing or outreach channels which increase the ability to broadcast messages and goals to the widest audience possible.

Social media content submissions should meet the goals and expectations of the County as a whole. Departments may not develop separate social media networks and all new sites must be approved by the County Administrator and County Attorney before they are created. Content should fall within the parameters of County policies and state and federal law, including copyright laws.

Postings on any official County social networking site must not violate any federal, state or municipal laws. For example, they may not”

- Reveal information about ongoing investigations
- Discuss deliberative materials
- Violate the regulatory process
- Circumvent Public Records & Open Meetings Laws
- Violate privacy, confidentiality or copyright
- Violate other legal issues that may not apply

All content on the county’s social media sites are subject to the public records law, Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.

When using social networking sites, County postings will:

- Use appropriate language and not use discriminatory slurs, personal insults, obscenity, profanity, rudeness or engage in any communication that is not acceptable in the county’s workplace.
- Demonstrate proper consideration for others’ privacy.
- Not post topics that are considered objectionable or inflammatory.
- Not comment on business partners or their competitors’ practices or services or use such as part of content added to a site.
- Not post material that could be construed as promoting private commercial interests.

CHAPTER 17 – 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 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, retaliation or any other type of discrimination for reporting problems.

There are several ways to make a report:

- Submit the report verbally or in writing to the County Administrator; or
- Submit the report verbally or in writing to any member of management;

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 18 – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No employee or official shall have a direct or indirect financial, personal, business or other interest that conflicts, or appears to conflict, with public duties and responsibilities or engage in financial, personal, business, or other transactions as a result of relying on information obtained through employment. Florida Statutes, Chapter 112.311, provides penalties for Conflict of Interest violations. Any outside personal economic relationship which affords present or future financial benefits to an employee, his family, or to individuals with whom he has business or financial ties, may be considered a conflict of interest requiring an evaluation by the County Administrator and Finance Director. County employees and vendors are required to disclose any potential conflict to the Finance Director.

CHAPTER 19 – OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employment with Walton County will take precedence over any outside or secondary employment.

No employee shall engage in any outside employment or activity which interferes in any way with the full performance of job duties, or which reflects discredit on the County and its work force. Notice of outside employment should be submitted to Human Resources for approval. No regular status employee may receive payment for services from any other public or private organization receiving county connected local, state and/or federal financial support.

CHAPTER 20 – PERSONAL ACTIVITIES DURING WORK TIME

Personal activities must be accomplished before work, during lunch or after work, not on County time, and not in County vehicles. If an employee has an emergency and needs to accomplish a personal task during County time, the employee's supervisor is to be made aware of the situation and the employee will be charged for annual leave or sick leave.

CHAPTER 21 – LOYALTY OATH

Florida Law requires all County employees to take an Oath of Loyalty at the time they are hired. It is illegal for the County to issue a pay check to employees who have not signed a loyalty oath.

CHAPTER 22 – DRESS CODE AND APPEARANCE

The purpose of the policy is to further insure the safety and personal hygiene of each employee by reducing the risk of injury and/or illness through exposure as well as the issue of appropriate dress and grooming. Exceptions will be made for legitimate medical and/or religious reasons where appropriate.

No visible forms of jewelry may be worn in the facial area to include but not be limited to the nose, tongue, cheek, lip and eyebrow.

Employee are required to conceal tattoos which could be sexually harassing, racially, religiously or ethnically offensive.

The determination of specific, appropriate employee dress and personal appearance standards are the responsibility of management.

An employee not meeting the standards of this policy or the departmental operating procedures may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include requiring the employee to leave the premises. Employees will be required to use available Annual Leave and non-exempt employees will be required to use Leave without Pay for time missed because of failure to comply with the policy.

If uniforms are issued by the county, they should be worn to work. If an employee terminates employment, they should turn their county issued uniforms to their supervisor.

CHAPTER 23 – VEHICLE USE POLICY

It is the policy of Walton County that all possible measures be taken to ensure the safety of its employees, the public, and county property.

Operation of County Vehicles

- 1) It is necessary for many county employees to use county vehicles to carry out their duties. It is essential that these vehicles be used with utmost care and discretion at all times.
- 2) County employees are permitted to use county owned vehicles for the performance of their official duties only.
- 3) No employee shall use or allow the use of a county vehicle of any kind for other than officially approved activities. Misuse will not be tolerated and may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including

recommendation for discharge.

- 4) Any employee driving a county vehicle outside the county shall obtain written prior approval from his or her supervisor. At the discretion of the BCC or their designee, designated employees on twenty-four (24) hour call, may be allowed at the end of a workday to drive their County assigned vehicle from their workstation to their home within Walton County.
- 5) Employees who are not subject to twenty-four (24) hour call will park their County vehicle at the nearest County facility at the end of the workday.
- 6) Anyone other than a county employee riding in a county vehicle must be doing so in the conduct of county business.
- 7) Any employee driving a county vehicle shall have on his/her person the necessary valid driver's license.
- 8) 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.
- 9) It is mandatory that all county vehicles be equipped with seat belts and that they be used with the vehicle is in operation.
- 10) All mechanical defects or malfunctions should be reported as soon as possible to the employee's department.
- 11) All county equipment must be operated in a conscientious and safe manner at all times.
- 12) If a county vehicle is involved in an accident, the employee shall notify the Police or Sheriff's department and his/her supervisor immediately. The supervisor will notify human resources and risk management and promptly comply with the post-accident drug test procedures and complete necessary first report of injury forms for worker's compensation if applicable.
- 13) Written reports of all county vehicle accidents will be placed in the human resources file of the employee(s) involved in the accident.

CHAPTER 24 – GENERAL CONDUCT

No employee shall engage in criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or other conduct injurious or prejudicial to the County work force or the general public.

CHAPTER 25 – AUTHORITY OF COMMISSIONERS

No commissioner, acting on his or her own individual authority, may hire, transfer, raise the pay of, demote or terminate the employment of any county employee other than their respective aides or executive assistants. Such actions can only be accomplished after the approval of the appropriate Division Director or the County Administrator in accordance with established personnel policy.