

CHAPTER 2 GENERAL POLICIES AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES

SECTION A EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENT

1. Kitsap County is an equal opportunity employer. The County believes the participation of employees of diverse ages, races, religions, cultures, abilities, genders, gender identity, abilities, and backgrounds, shall add to personal development and organizational success. By express policy, the County is committed to promoting and protecting the rights and opportunities for equal employment for all and to ensure that no discrimination is committed against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, marital status or sexual orientation, HIV status, genetic information, or sensory, mental or physical disability. This policy extends to all areas of employment and to all relations with employees including recruitment, selection and placement, compensation, promotion and transfer, disciplinary matters, demotions, layoffs and terminations, testing and training, working conditions, awards and benefits, and all other terms and conditions of employment.
2. If County employees believe they are being discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, marital status or sexual orientation, HIV status, genetic information, or sensory, mental or physical disability they may follow the complaint procedure set forth in [Appendix H](#) to this Manual.

SECTION B POLICY PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Kitsap County is committed to eradicating discrimination and harassment of County employees in the workplace because of an employee's race, color, religion, religious affiliation, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, veteran's status, marital status, HIV status, genetic information, or presence of a sensory, mental or physical disability. The Kitsap County Board of Commissioners has established a policy prohibiting discrimination, harassment and other inappropriate conduct based upon a person's protected status. (See [Appendix H](#))

SECTION C REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA)

Kitsap County is committed to complying fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal, state, and local laws. The County is also committed to ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. The County makes employment decisions based on the merits of the situation in accordance with defined criteria, not the disability of the individual. Further, the County is committed to not discriminating against any qualified employee because the person is related to or associated with a person with a disability. (See [Appendix N](#))

SECTION D WASHINGTON STATE HEALTHY STARTS ACT

Pregnant workers have the right to the following accommodations without written certification from a health care professional:

1. Frequent, longer, or flexible restroom breaks;
2. Modifying a no food or drink policy;
3. Providing seating or allowing the employee to sit more frequently; and
4. Limit lifting to 17 pounds or less.

In addition, pregnant employees may request additional accommodations, as such:

1. Job restructuring, including modifying a work schedule, job reassignment, changing a work station, or providing equipment;
2. Providing a temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position
3. Scheduling flexibility for prenatal visits;
4. Providing any further accommodation the employee may need.

The County may request medical documentation regarding the need for these additional accommodations.

SECTION E EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES

1. EMPLOYER RIGHTS

The County reserves all legal rights with respect to matters of general legislative or managerial policy, which include, but are not limited to:

- a. Determine the mission of its constituent departments and commissions.
- b. Select standards for employment and promotion.
- c. Direct its employees.
- d. Take disciplinary action.
- e. Relieve its employees from duty because of lack of work or other legitimate reason.
- f. Contract out work.
- g. Maintain the efficiency of governmental operation.
- h. Determine the methods, means and personnel by which government operations are to be conducted.

- i. Take all necessary actions to carry out its mission in an emergency.
- j. Exercise complete control and discretion over its organization and the technology of performing its work.

The County also reserves the right to deviate from the statements or policies in this handbook in individual situations to avoid disruptions in the public employer function, or to achieve its primary mission.

2. EMPLOYEE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Employees have the right and shall be protected in the exercise of such right, freely and without fear of penalty or reprisal, to form, join and assist any employee organization.
- b. Employees shall be protected from discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status and sexual orientation.

SECTION F JOB PERFORMANCE AND ATTENDANCE

In order to allow for a variety of employee needs, Kitsap County has established a number of leave policies, which are detailed in the chapter on “Employee Benefits.” These policies are balanced by employee responsibility. Kitsap County expects all employees to assume diligent responsibility for the reliable, predictable performance of their job functions. The ability to perform job functions requires predictable and reliable attendance and the prompt notification of the supervisor, or other appropriate person, in the event of an illness or personal emergency that interferes with the ability to attend work. Performance and productivity problems stemming from a lack of attendance, including failure to follow proper call in procedures, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1. An authorized absence requires the employee to comply with all the reporting requirements specified in this Manual and in accordance with individual department procedure.
2. An unauthorized absence occurs if an employee fails to notify the supervisor or designee of the reason for not reporting to work prior to or at the beginning of the work shift in the method as established by the Employing Official, or if the employee leaves work during his/her shift without permission from a supervisor. The employee shall not be compensated for unauthorized absences. Such absences may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. An Employing Official may establish different notification standards for various work units.
3. Three consecutive work days of unauthorized, unjustified absence shall constitute job abandonment and the employee shall be terminated. Termination for job abandonment is not grievable.

SECTION G DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Kitsap County performs a vital public service to our community. To ensure that this service is delivered safely, we are dedicated to providing and maintaining a drug and alcohol-free working environment. It is Kitsap County's policy to:

- Assure that employees have the ability to perform assigned duties in a safe, healthy and productive manner;
- Create a workplace free from the adverse effects of drug and alcohol abuse or misuse; and
- Prohibit the unlawful distribution, possession or use of controlled substances.

All Kitsap County employees are responsible for reading and following the requirements of the complete *Drug and Alcohol Policy*.

Kitsap County cares about the health and well-being of its employees. We urge employees who believe they are having an alcohol or chemical dependency problem to seek treatment before job performance and employment is endangered. (See [Appendix E](#))

For detailed information regarding Commercial Driver's License testing procedures see KITSAP COUNTY DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY AND PROCEDURES on the Human Resources Intranet page.

SECTION H SMOKING POLICY

In the interest of the health and well-being of all employees, and in compliance with the Clean Indoor Air Act and Kitsap Public Health District regulations, smoking is not allowed inside, or within twenty-five feet of, any Kitsap County facility or vehicle. This includes the use of "e-cigarettes" and/or "vaping." Employees who wish to smoke must use designated smoking areas and dispose of their smoking materials properly in designated cigarette receptacles/outdoor ashtrays.

SECTION I WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

The Washington State Legislature has enacted legislation, referred to as the Whistleblower Act, to protect local government employees who, in accordance with the provisions of the Act, report improper governmental actions. Kitsap County has adopted a policy based on the provisions of the Whistleblower Act. For full details regarding the protections afforded by the County's Whistleblower policy as well as the procedures to be followed when reporting improper governmental actions, employees should refer to [Appendix P](#).

SECTION J NEPOTISM POLICY

Employment of Relatives: Employees' relatives ("relatives" include an employee's parent, child, spouse, brother, sister, in-laws and step relationships) shall not be employed by the County under any of the following circumstances:

- a. Where one of the parties would have authority (or practical power) to supervise, appoint, remove, or discipline the other;
- b. Where one party would be responsible for auditing the work of the other;
- c. Where both parties would report to the same immediate supervisor;
- d. Where other circumstances might lead to potential conflict among the parties or conflict between the interest of one or both parties and the best interests of the County; or
- e. Where one of the parties is a policy level official of the County.
- f. If two employees marry, become related or are in a romantic relationship and begin sharing living quarters with one another, and in the County's judgment, the potential problems noted above exist or reasonably could exist, only one of the employees shall be permitted to stay with the County, unless reasonable accommodations, as determined by the Employing Official, can be made to eliminate the potential problem. The decision as to which employee shall remain with the County must be made by the two employees within thirty (30) calendar days of the date they marry, become related, or begin sharing living quarters with each other. If no decision has been made during this time, the County reserves the right to terminate either employee.

SECTION K MEDIA CONTACT

Only designated personnel are authorized to represent the County to the media. Employees contacted by the media should refer media personnel to an appropriate spokesperson.

SECTION L WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

It is Kitsap County's policy to promote a safe environment for its employees. The County is committed to working with its employees to maintain a work environment free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior.

Violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior in our workplace will not be tolerated; that is all reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. Such behavior can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action, criminal penalties, or both.

Every employee is responsible for implementing this policy effectively and for maintaining a safe working environment. Do not ignore violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or other disruptive

behavior. Any person who observes or experiences any such behavior on County premises, whether he or she is a County employee or not, should report it immediately to a supervisor or director. Supervisors and directors who receive such reports should seek advice from the Human Resources Department regarding investigation of the incident and appropriate action. (See [Appendix L](#))

PLEASE NOTE: *Threats or assaults that require immediate attention by police should be reported first to police by calling 911.*