

CHAPTER 9 – EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

SECTION A EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Purpose: The orderly and efficient operation of the County government requires that employees accept certain responsibilities. Work rules covering personal standards of conduct as well as standard operating procedures are necessary to protect the health and safety of all employees, to maintain uninterrupted service and to protect the County's property.
2. Work Rules: The following work rules are applicable to all County employees. This Manual is not intended to be all-inclusive and Employing Officials may establish additional rules which are unique to their department/organization. It is the expectation that all employees shall abide by these work rules and any other work rules/departmental policies and procedures. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
 - a. Employees shall be at their designated work area on time and ready to work at the start of their shift. Employees shall remain at their work area, at work, except during lunch and rest periods, until the end of their shift, unless permission to leave is granted by the supervisor or the duties of the position require absence from the work area.
 - b. Where operations are continuous, employees are not to leave the work area until replaced by the next shift employee or until relieved by the supervisor.
 - c. Employees are required to follow all safety regulations to include the wearing of safety articles and the use of protective equipment. Employees are required to immediately report safety hazards, accidents or injuries to their supervisor.
 - d. Employees are responsible for and shall not misuse County property, records or other materials in their care, custody or control.
 - e. Employees are required to deal with the public, County officials and other County employees in a courteous and professional manner.
 - f. Employees are required to immediately report to their supervisor their inability to report to work and the reason thereof in accordance with the rules set forth in Chapter 9 - Sick Leave Reporting.
 - g. Employees are required to notify the Human Resources Department whenever there is a change in their personal data affecting their personnel or payroll records.
 - h. Employees shall not restrict or interfere with the work of others.
 - i. Employees are required to report for and remain at work only in a fit physical and mental condition which shall enable them to perform their regular duties.
 - j. Employees shall not engage in political activity while on duty. An employee shall at no time use their position title or represent their employment with the County in making political endorsements.

- k. Employees shall not use their position for personal gain, to solicit or conduct personal business or to coerce others.
- l. Employees shall not audio record any meeting without the knowledge and permission of all persons being recorded, in accordance with RCW 9.73.030.
- 3. Dress and Grooming: An important part of the image presented to citizens is the appearance of Kitsap County employees. It is the County's policy to require staff members to dress and groom in a manner that inspires confidence and conveys professionalism to our customers. The manner of dress may vary according to the amount and nature of public contact. It is the responsibility of the Employing Official to establish the appropriate dress standards for the positions under their supervision. It is the employee's responsibility to maintain a neat and businesslike appearance.

SECTION B PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

- 1. Policy: Employee performance evaluation is intended to promote productivity and strengthen employer/employee relations. The performance evaluation system provides employees and supervisors with a tool for establishing communication regarding performance standards and expectations, identification of problems and concerns, identification of training needs, and the provision of positive reinforcements for areas of excellence. Evaluations are used for wage step increases, promotional considerations, employee discipline, reduction-in-force actions, and other employment decisions.
- 2. Evaluation System:
 - a. The Director may develop and maintain performance evaluation systems for all groups of employees.
 - i. The performance evaluation system should be based on standards related to an employee's individual work assignments.
 - ii. The performance evaluation system provides the employee with an opportunity to submit a written response to the contents of his/her evaluation.
- 3. Performance Evaluation Process:
 - a. Employing Officials shall evaluate all new employees after 180 calendar days, or six (6) months of employment. Employing Officials may evaluate new employees after the 90th day, or third (3) month at their discretion. Probationary employees may be evaluated at any time during their probationary period. A performance evaluation shall be completed on a probationary employee prior to termination. Every regular full-time or regular part-time employee should be evaluated annually prior to the month the employee is eligible for a step increment or the anniversary of the step increment date or at an additional date set by the Employing Official. Additional personnel evaluations may be used when deemed appropriate by the Employing Official. An employee may also request an additional evaluation if a work-related problem exists that may be resolved through the formal evaluation process. Evaluations are used as a factor in granting regular status, promotions, merit increases, transfers, demotions, layoffs and terminations. For further

information on evaluation procedure, see the "Performance Evaluation Guidelines for Employees and Supervisors" in the Human Resources Department.

- b. The employee may file a rebuttal statement. The statement becomes a permanent part of the employee's personnel file.
 - c. Employees are encouraged to be active participants in the evaluation process.
 - d. The performance evaluation, together with related correspondence, is forwarded to the Human Resources Department for placement in the employee's official personnel file. A copy shall be provided to the employee upon request.
4. Retroactive Step Increases: Step increases are retroactive to the date of eligibility if delays in granting of the step increases are due to the lack of a current evaluation or failure to submit to the Human Resources Department the required paperwork within designated time frames.
 5. Does Not Meet Score Requirements for a Step Increase: If an employee receives an evaluation score that does not meet the score requirements to be eligible for a step increase, at the discretion of the Employing Official, the employee may be re-evaluated in 60-90 days. If the employee receives an evaluation score that meets the score requirements at a later date, the employee shall be granted the step increase effective on the date that they become eligible.

SECTION C HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is the policy of Kitsap County to provide safe and healthful work environments. This can be accomplished if every employee observes all rules for health and safety, which is both a protection for himself/herself as well as for co-workers and the public.

1. Kitsap County Risk Management Guidelines: The Kitsap County Risk Management Guidelines have been prepared to provide supervisors and employees of Kitsap County with written accident prevention program policies. Included in the Guidelines are such topics as: Accident Prevention and Safety; Fundamentals of Accident Prevention; Hazard Communication Program; Blood borne Pathogens Control Program; Fire Safety; Bomb Threats; Security; and Vehicle Use Policies. A copy of the Guidelines shall be available in every County department and is also available on the County Intranet.
2. Orientation: In addition to the Guidelines, all new employees receive a required orientation on many of the topics covered in the Guidelines. This training, along with a supervisory orientation, shall allow new employees to perform their new work responsibilities safely and efficiently.
3. Responsibilities: Employees are responsible for their own safety at Kitsap County. Questions regarding safety issues should be directed to the employee's supervisor. Other resources for safety information include: the Risk Manager and members of the Risk Manager's staff; the Central Safety Committee; Employing Officials, and department heads, managers, supervisors; and departmental safety teams. Check the County website or your department's copy of the Kitsap County Risk Management Guidelines for more information on safety and accident prevention responsibilities.
4. Procedure for Reporting Employee Injuries: All occupational injuries must be reported to the employee's supervisor and Risk Management within 24 hours.

- a. The following items must be reported:
 - i. Name of employee.
 - ii. Date and time of accident or illness.
 - iii. Nature of injury.
 - iv. Did employee receive medical care?
 - v. Was employee hospitalized?
 - vi. Was the accident preventable?
 - vii. Description in detail of how the accident occurred.
 - viii. Did accident involve a third party?
 - ix. Witnesses name, addresses, telephone numbers and a statement of what they witnessed.
5. Anytime an accident causes illness or injury requiring treatment by a health care provider, the employee must inform his/her supervisor and the following two forms must be completed:
 - a. Self-Insurer Accident Report (SIF-2)
 - b. Supervisor's Report of Accident

These forms are available from the employee's supervisor or from Risk Management, and are completed by the employee and his/her supervisor. For more information on completing these reports, refer to the Kitsap County Risk Management Guidelines.

SECTION D CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. Purpose: Public confidence of the citizens of Kitsap County in the operation of their County government is built on integrity. Accordingly, each employee must maintain high standards of personal conduct in his/her relationships with the public and with working associates.
2. Confidential Information: Many of the operations of the County are considered public information, but some are not. The confidential business of the County should not be discussed with anyone who does not need to be consulted with or made aware of the confidential information to further the County's interests. Providing confidential information to unauthorized persons may be grounds for disciplinary action. If you are unsure, contact your supervisor. Even if the information is subject to public disclosure, employees may not independently disclose such information. See RCW 42.23.070.
3. Loans, Gifts, Gratuities, Etc.: Kitsap County employees must not directly or indirectly give or accept or agree to accept any compensation, gift, reward or gratuity in the course of their work responsibilities from any source other than Kitsap County. See RCW 42.23.070

4. Outside Employment:

- a. Employees shall not directly or indirectly engage in any outside employment of financial interest which may conflict, in the County's opinion, with the best interests of the County or interfere with the employee's ability to perform his/her assigned County job. Examples include, but are not limited to, outside employment which:
 - i. Prevents the employee from being available for work beyond normal working hours, such as emergencies or peak work periods, when such availability is a regular part of the employee's job.
 - ii. Is conducted during the employee's work hours.
 - iii. Utilizes County telephones, computers, supplies or any other resources, facilities or equipment.
 - iv. Is employment with a firm which has contracts with or does business with the County.
 - v. May reasonably be perceived by members of the public as a conflict of interest or otherwise discredit public service.
 - vi. Which might require or induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of the employee's official position.
 - vii. An employee who chooses to have an additional job, contractual commitment or self-employment, may do so provided he/she obtains prior written approval from their Employing Official.

5. Political Activities: Kitsap County employees have the same right to campaign in support of, or in opposition to, a candidate or a ballot proposition as any other citizen. However, since the County receives federal funds, employees whose compensation is derived in part from those funds are subject to the Hatch Act, which places restrictions on their political activities. Regardless of funding source, no public funds and facilities may be used, nor may an employee campaign on County time or while representing the County in any way.

- a. Examples of prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Using County stationery, letterhead, postage or copying equipment to prepare and mail campaign literature.
 - ii. Publishing a statement supporting a candidate in the County newsletter or other departmental newsletters, or including such a statement on or with any utility billing.
 - iii. Campaigning by County employees on County time.
 - iv. Using County telephones to make calls in support of a candidate at any time.

- v. Using County vehicles to attend rallies, drop off mailers at a printer or distribute campaign materials.
 - vi. Holding campaign meetings in any County building or office.
 - vii. Wearing a County uniform or badge while campaigning.
6. The use of County facilities for non-county business is prohibited.

SECTION E ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICIES

Kitsap County provides telephones, voice mail systems, e-mail, faxes, and access to the Internet for internal and external business communication purposes. Kitsap County's electronic communications are for official business and are not to be used for employee personal gain or to support or advocate for non-County related business. The County reserves the right to monitor the use and content of electronic communications. Electronic communications are not private or confidential.

The Kitsap County Board of County Commissioners have adopted policies for the use of Electronic Communications and Social Media. The Electronic Use policy applies to Kitsap County employees and contractors who create or contribute to social networks, blogs, wikis, or any other kind of social media on and off the kitsap.gov domain for work purposes. Employees and contractors using social media are subject to County policies, standards, and procedures including but not limited to non-discrimination, personal use of County resources, public records retention and disclosure, electronic communications privacy and confidentiality, campaign activities and conduct unbecoming a County employee. (See [Appendix F](#) and [Appendix O](#)).

SECTION F EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY

Although Kitsap County maintains a high degree of respect for the personal privacy of its employees, each employee should be aware that the following guidelines may affect their privacy in the workplace. The communication systems, as well as the equipment, data, messages, and files stored, are and remain at all times the property of the County. The County thus has the right to monitor their use.

The County reserves the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all messages created, received or sent over the email system for any purpose. At any time and without prior notice, Kitsap County's management reserves the right to examine any and all types of electronic communication methods provided by Kitsap County, including but not limited to email, personal file directories, and other information stored on its computers. Internet messages are public communication and are not private. All communications, including text and images, may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver.

No employee should consider his or her messages or files to be private or confidential. It should be noted that even if a message is erased, it is still possible to retrieve and read that message. The use of passwords for security does not guarantee confidentiality. It is also possible for messages to be retrieved and viewed by someone other than the intended recipient. Aside from performance of normal job duties, employees

are not permitted to modify, copy, remove, or destroy any County equipment, data, or files, unless specifically authorized or directed by the Information Technology Director or department Director.

PERSONAL USE

Equipment provided to employees by Kitsap County is County property and is provided for County business purposes. County property includes, but is not limited to, computers, phones, and office equipment (e.g., copiers, faxes, etc.), offices, lockers, desks, cars, and cell phones. Kitsap County employees should have no expectation of privacy in regards to County owned property. The County reserves the right to monitor and/or search the workplace with reasonable suspicion of workplace policy violation.

Email and Internet access through Kitsap County's network are also provided for business purposes. Limited personal use is permitted; however, it must not interfere with County operations or with the individual employee's job responsibilities, nor should it cause any harm or embarrassment to Kitsap County or its employees. Sending chain emails is strongly discouraged. Furthermore, personal use is subject to the appropriate use guidelines above.