

Chattooga County Government

P.O. Box 211 Summerville, Georgia 30747

Telephone (706) 857-0700 Fax (706) 857-0742



Employee Handbook

This packet contains the core forms and notices used to complete new hire onboarding for Chattooga County. Please print clearly, complete all applicable fields, and return any required supporting documents to Human Resources

CHATTOOGA COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICY

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - General-----	Page 2
Chapter 2- Administration-----	Page 4
Chapter 3- Employment Procedures-----	Page 5
Chapter 4- Rules of Conduct-----	Page 15
Chapter 5- Work Attendance and Leaves-----	Page 24
Chapter 6- Disciplinary Action-----	Page 31
Chapter 7- Grievances-----	Page 32
Chapter 8- Separation and Termination -----	Page 33
Chapter 9- Travel Procedures -----	Page 36

CHATTOOGA COUNTY, GEORGIA PERSONNEL POLICY

CHAPTER 1. IN GENERAL.

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

The provisions of this Policy are set forth to ensure that the employees of Chattooga County under the control and direction of the Chattooga County Commissioner are handled equitably and to ensure that the citizens of the county may benefit from work of a productive and competent staff. Violation of this policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with the provisions of federal and state law, and policies of the county as provided in this policy.

SECTION 2. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT.

The provisions of this policy are standards of conduct, are merely guidelines, and are not all-inclusive. The level of discipline used, such as reprimand, suspension or termination will be determined by the frequency and severity of the violation and at the Commissioner's or department head's discretion. The Commissioner also reserves the right to impose a harsher or lesser penalty for any particular case or violation as the Commissioner sees fit. Such action does not imply cancellation of a rule, but is to be interpreted as recognition of an unusual or particular circumstance.

SECTION 3. SCOPE OF PROVISIONS.

- (a) The provisions of this policy represent the personnel policies of those employees working under the control and direction of the Commissioner of Chattooga County, Georgia, except as otherwise provided in the policy. This policy expresses what the Commissioner/County expects from the employee and what the employee can expect from the office of Commissioner/County as an employer. These provisions are guidelines for working together for the benefit of the employees and the County. The primary goal of the County and Commissioner of Chattooga County is to provide the community and its citizens efficient and effective service and ensure the prudent use of public funds.
- (b) The County's personnel policies, rules and regulations, are based on the three general principles which guide the Commissioner in making personnel decisions:
 - (1) Employees are individuals worthy of trust, dignity, and respect.

- (2) Employees will do their best if their rewards are based on individual merit and group achievement.
 - (3) The County's success and long-term effectiveness depends on the efforts, the achievement, attitude, and the teamwork of all employees.
- (c) The rules and regulations set forth herein do not create an employment contract, and all employees governed by this policy are considered at-will employees.

SECTION 4. NONDISCRIMINATION.

No discrimination shall be exercised, threatened, or promised against or in favor of any eligible applicant or employee because of his/her race, color, religion, national origin, political beliefs, age, sex, veteran status, disability and without discrimination on provision of service.

SECTION 5. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

- (a) In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions of the County will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. Except where required or permitted by law, employment practices will not be influenced or affected by an applicant's or employee's race, color, gender, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.
- (b) The county will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.
- (c) Any employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor or department head. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be

subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

SECTION 6. PURCHASING.

No employee may buy or charge any purchase of items of any amount to the account of the county government unless following the procedures established through the county policies and regulations. An exception can be made under genuine emergency conditions, and then such purchase must be confirmed as soon as possible with a purchase order. (Full purchasing regulations are available through the County Commissioner's office.)

SECTION 7. WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

Any employee who sustains an injury on the job must, at the time of the injury or as soon as possible thereafter, notify his supervisor/department head. The supervisor shall immediately file the first report of injury with the County Commissioner's office. The County's workers' compensation carrier shall determine if the employee is eligible for compensation.

CHAPTER 2. ADMINISTRATION.

SECTION 1. ROLE OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER.

The County Commissioner establishes levels of service and appropriates funds to meet the needs of the community. By adopting ordinances and resolutions, pay and benefit programs, and other actions, the County Commissioner provides the basic tools for management to guide, motivate, attract, and retain a productive workforce. The County Commissioner, by issuing rules, regulations, policies, and procedures, provides management direction and guidance and allocates the resources of the county to achieve the desired objectives of the county government.

SECTION 2. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS NOT GOVERNED BY THIS POLICY

The constitutional officers of the county are:

- (a) Probate Judge;
- (b) Clerk of Superior Court;
- (c) Tax Commissioner; and
- (d) Sheriff.

Employees of the constitutional officers, Chattooga County Tax/Property Board of Assessors, Magistrate Court of Chattooga County, Georgia, Chattooga County Board of Registrars, office of State Court Solicitor and the office of any other elected official shall be governed by the

personnel policies established by that constitutional officer, the Board of Assessors, the Chief Magistrate Judge, the Board of Registrars, the office of State Court Solicitor or the office of any other elected official, which policy may include having their employees governed by all or parts of the provisions of this policy. Additionally, any department head reporting directly to the Commissioner may, with the approval of the Commissioner, adopt a separate personnel policy for the employees of said department, which personnel policy may include parts of this policy.

SECTION 3. ROLE OF DEPARTMENT HEAD.

The department head is responsible for ensuring the optimum performance of the department head's department by providing leadership, guidance, and direction to achieve the organizational goals and assure the integrity of the department.

SECTION 4. ROLE OF SUPERVISOR.

The supervisor ensures satisfactory performance, enforces rules, and ensures compliance with regulations. A supervisor or higher-level manager is responsible for showing positive guidance and to correcting or responding to improper action or misconduct witnessed even when the subject is not a direct subordinate.

SECTION 5. ROLE OF EMPLOYEES.

The role of the employee is to perform assigned duties efficiently, effectively, and professionally and to be flexible in adjusting with the changing nature of the county government functions based on the expectations of management and the public.

SECTION 6. DEPARTMENTAL RULE ESTABLISHMENT AUTHORITY.

Each department head has the authority to establish additional policies or standard operating procedures that specifically apply to that department's activity and may not apply to the general employee population. Supplementary departmental policies and standard operations procedures must be consistent and compatible with this policy and be approved by the commissioner. A copy of all rules, regulations, and departmental policies be filed with the County Commissioner's office.

CHAPTER 3. EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES.

DIVISION 1. GENERALLY.

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

The purpose of establishing the following employment practices is to assure fair treatment of applicants and employees without regard to race, sex, color, national origin, age, disability, political beliefs, marital status, or non job-related medical conditions.

SECTION 2. RECRUITMENT.

- (a) Recruitment of candidates for positions within the county government shall be planned to meet the immediate and long-range needs of the County.
- (b) Recruitment efforts shall be directed to assure that all segments of the public have the opportunity to apply and be considered for positions.

SECTION 3. FILLING VACANCIES.

Vacancies may be filled by promotion, demotion, transfer, reinstatement, probationary appointment, or temporary appointment.

SECTION 4. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Public announcements of vacancies shall specify the position title, salary range, general duties to be performed, minimum and/or necessary qualifications, final date on which applications will be received, that the County government is an equal opportunity employer, and that applications are subject to public disclosure under Open Records laws of this State.

SECTION 5. APPOINTMENTS.

The County recognizes two types of appointment procedures that apply to initial appointment and to promotions and transfers. They are closed competitive and open competitive appointment procedures.

- (a) *Closed Competitive.* It will be the County's policy and first preference to promote and transfer from within whenever possible. Closed competitive appointments shall be limited to employees whenever an adequate pool of qualified applicants is available internally. Announcements of such vacancies should be made with the department or on a County-wide basis, based on the nature of the vacancy.
- (b) *Open Competitive.* Open competitive appointment procedures are the normal practice of the County. When a vacancy occurs, the County will attempt to select the most qualified applicants using appropriate screening methods.

SECTION 6. APPLICATIONS.

- (a) *Forms.* Applications shall be made on the forms prescribed and may be supplemented by a resume. Applications shall be completed in full and will require information covering training, experience, education, and other job-related information.
 - (1) Information that might be used for disciplinary purposes shall not appear on the application. Any data required for equal opportunity purposes shall be obtained on documents to be kept separately from the application form.
 - (2) Applications shall be signed by the applicant attesting to the truth of all statements contained in the application form.
 - (3) Incomplete applications may be returned to the applicant with a notice to complete and return (by mail or in person) on or before the established closing date.
- (b) *Denial.* No individual shall be denied the right to file an application for employment for any open position. Certain classified positions may be regarded as open for continuous recruitment of qualified applicants, while other positions may be classified as closed until such time as there is an announced vacancy.
- (c) *Security Clearance.* Security Clearance may be established in employment areas such as public safety and finance where the public has a compelling interest in the security of property and life.
- (d) *Active Status.* Applicants will be active for a period of not more than six months.
- (e) *Disqualification.* The hiring authority may reject any application or refuse to examine an application or, upon examination, may disqualify an applicant when it has been determined that:

- (1) The application was not received on or before the closing date established for receiving applications.
- (2) The application was not filed on the prescribed form.
- (3) The applicant does not possess one or more of the requirements as specified in the job classification or public announcement.
- (4) The applicant falsified or did not complete pertinent information on the application form.
- (5) The applicant has been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude and this conviction could specifically affect performance in the position for which application was made.
- (6) The applicant has used or attempted to use political pressure, gratuity, bribery, or other consideration of value to secure an advantage in the examination or in employment.
- (7) The applicant has an unsatisfactory record of employment either with the County or another employer.
- (8) The applicant is involved in the use of controlled substances.
- (9) The applicant is not eligible for employment in the United States; or
- (10) Any other valid and sufficient reason.

SECTION 7. INVESTIGATION OF CANDIDATE HISTORY

The hiring authority may investigate the candidate's employment, training, educational, criminal, credit, and driver's history to verify the statements contained in the application. Any employee appointed through fraud by misrepresentation or withholding of any information contained in the job application is subject to discharge from employment with the County. An employee dismissed for such fraud shall be ineligible for rehire with the County.

SECTION 8. EXAMINATIONS.

Examinations shall be practical in nature and constructed to reveal the capacity of the candidate as an examinee for the particular class or position, his general background and related knowledge, skills and abilities, and shall be rated impartially. The hiring authority may use any job-related selection methods that maximize validity, reliability, and objectivity. The selection procedures shall measure or sample job behaviors or knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform the job. Examinations may consist of written tests, performance tests, representative work samples, rating of training, education and/or experience, structured oral examinations and physical fitness, either singularly or in combination which, in the judgement of the hiring authority relates to those matters which will test fairly the ability and fitness of all applicants to discharge efficiently the duties of the particular position to be filled.

SECTION 9. POST-EMPLOYMENT HEALTH AND DRUG SCREENING.

- (a) All applicants recommended for employment may be required to successfully complete a post-employment health and drug screening or be recommended by a licensed medical examiner as able to perform the job for which he is being considered. Each applicant may be given the screening by a physician and/or medical facility chosen by the County. The nature of the post-employment health and drug screening shall be uniform and consistent with the position. In complying with state and/or federal requirements established for certain protective services positions, the County will follow the prescribed screening procedures.
- (b) The county is subject to the regulations of the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991, which requires drug and alcohol testing for certain County employees required to have a commercial driver's license. Such testing includes pre-employment/pre-duty, post-accident, random and reasonable suspicion drug and/or alcohol testing.

SECTION 10. EMPLOYMENT STATUS.

The County recognizes six types of active employment status:

- (1) *Probationary.* A probationary appointment is an initial appointment to a position contingent upon the satisfactory completion of the working test period.
- (2) *Regular.* An employee shall acquire regular status upon satisfactory completion of the working test period.
- (3) *Temporary.* A temporary appointment is an

initial appointment to a position for a designated period of time not to exceed six months.

- (4) *Time Limited.* A time-limited appointment is an initial appointment to a position established for special programs or projects normally anticipated as longer than six months, but not regular and continuing in nature.
- (5) *Acting Capacity.* An employee may serve in an acting capacity only in a position that has been duly established and is vacant or temporarily unmanned. Such appointment shall normally not exceed 90 days.
- (6) *Regular Part-Time.* An employee given a regular part-time position shall acquire regular part-time status upon satisfactory completion of the working test period. A regular part-time employee does not work more than 32 hours per week on a regular basis. A regular part-time employee is not eligible for County health insurance or other benefits.

SECTION 11. WORKING TEST AND REGULAR STATUS.

The probationary period, or the working test period, shall be considered an integral part of the selection process. All employees appointed, transferred, or promoted to a position shall be required to satisfactorily complete the working test period prior to achieving regular status.

- (1) *Duration.* The first twelve (12) months of service in a position to which an employee has been appointed, transferred, or promoted shall constitute the legal working test period. If, at the end of this period, the employee's performance has not been adequately proficient and the department head or designee believes that it could be improved during an extension of the probationary period, the department head or constitutional officer or designee may request an extended probation period of not more than six months.
- (2) *Extensions.* Working test extensions shall be considered only when extenuating circumstances exist, or it is believed that any employee deserves the additional working test period for purposes of improvement.

- (3) *Initial Appointment.* During the working test period, an initial appointment employee does not have the right to expect continued employment in his position, and employment can be terminated at any time. Initial appointment working test employees are not covered by progressive discipline or due process procedures.
- (4) *Active Work Status.* Only time in active work status shall be counted toward completion of the working test period. An employee in working test status who is absent on leave without pay, on worker's compensation or disability leave, shall be required to complete the amount of time on the job specified for the working test period.
- (5) *Transfer/Promotion.* A transferred or promoted employee shall be under a working test, or probationary status, for the first year on the new job. If it is determined that the employee is unsuitable for the position, the department head or supervisor officer may return the employee to the position previously occupied if it is vacant. If not vacant, the department head or supervisor shall attempt to place the employee in a comparable position for which the employee meets the requirements. If such placement is not feasible, the employee shall be placed in layoff status and will be considered for placement when a suitable position becomes available. Returning a probationary employee to his previous classification must be done prior to completing the working test period.
- (6) *Promotion.* A vacancy in a higher position in the classification plan may be filled as far as practical by promotion from a lower class. Closed competitive procedures may be held when there appears to be a sufficient number of qualified employees within the current personnel system.
- (7) *Transfer.* A vacancy may be filled by the transfer of an employee from another position of a comparable class, subject to closed competitive procedures. A transfer of an employee from one department to another department shall have the approval of both

department heads concerned.

- (8) *Frequency of Performance Appraisals.* A performance appraisal will be performed for working test employees at the end of six months and not less than 15 calendar days prior to the end of the working test period. Performance evaluations may be completed more frequently upon the discretion of the department head. If the working test period is extended, a performance appraisal will be performed on the employee at the end of each month up to 15 days prior to the end of the extended working test period. A performance appraisal report must be completed and accepted before allowing an employee to attain regular status.

SECTION 12. NEPOTISM.

- (a) *Generally.* Relatives of employees may be employed within the county government; however, relatives of employees cannot be employed within the same department providing services, supervision or control.
- (b) *Elected Public Officials.* Employment of relatives of the County Commissioner, any appointed public official, or any elected constitutional officer, or any other elected County official, is prohibited. For the purpose of this section, the word "relative" means immediate family and family related by marriage, as close as first cousins and including father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, or other relative living in the household.

DIVISION 2. CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION.

SECTION 1. JOB DESCRIPTION.

Each department head shall be responsible for maintaining an official copy of the position classification plan. This plan shall include a current list of job titles, job specifications, and job evaluations. A copy of the plan, shall be available for inspection by the public under reasonable conditions during business hours.

SECTION 2. COMPENSATION PLAN.

The compensation plan shall include:

- (1) Pay grade allocation for each description, and
- (2) Salary ranges schedule consisting of minimum and maximum rates of pay.
- (3) Next review date is established independent of employment anniversary date. It may be based on hire date, promotion, or date of other wage administration factors.

SECTION 3. APPOINTMENT RATE.

The minimum entry rate of pay for a grade shall be paid except for an exceptionally qualified prospective employee or lack of available qualified applicants at the minimum rate. Appointments above the minimum rate shall require the recommendation of the department head.

SECTION 4. WORKING TEST PERIOD.

The first 12 months of employment will be working test period.

SECTION 5. WAGE/SALARY ANNUAL INCREASE.

- (a) After the working test period has been completed, all employees shall receive an annual performance and merit review. All pay increases shall be based upon quality and quantity of work, attendance, work habits, effectiveness, and other just measures of performance. All wage increases must be authorized by the department head and the County Commissioner. Increases are subject to the availability of funds.
- (b) Annually, the County Commissioner may authorize a general wage increase for employees.

SECTION 6. OVERTIME.

- (a) *Classification.* Employees will be classified as nonexempt (eligible to receive overtime pay) or exempt (ineligible for overtime pay), and these classifications shall meet the criteria established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). All nonexempt employees shall be compensated for authorized

overtime worked as specified by the FLSA.

- (b) *Availability, approval.* Overtime shall be those hours actually worked by an employee in excess of 40 hours per week for a seven-day work period. Overtime work shall be limited to meet operational needs of an emergency nature. All overtime must be approved by a department head prior to an employee actually working overtime.
- (c) *Exempt Employees.* For purposes of this rule, exempt employees are considered salaried and shall not be compensated for excess hours worked during the work period.
- (d) *Public Safety Personnel.* For those employees engaged in law enforcement activities who have a work period of at least seven but less than 28 consecutive days, no overtime compensation is required until the number of hours which bears the same relationship to 171 as the number of days in the work period bears to 28.

SECTION 7. RESERVED.

SECTION 8. PROMOTION.

Promotion is the advancement of an employee from a position within one class to a position in another class having a higher salary range. Upon the date of promotion, an employee begins a new probationary period.

SECTION 9. DEMOTION.

An employee who is reclassified by demotion shall have his salary reduced. Exceptions to this provision must be approved by the County Commissioner.

CHAPTER 4. RULES OF CONDUCT. DIVISION I. GENERALLY.

SECTION 1. CODE OF ETHICS.

Each employee of the County governed by this policy, shall understand, acknowledge, and follow the County Code of Ethics:

As a representative of Chattooga County, I subscribe to the following Code of Ethics:

- (1) *Put loyalty to the highest moral principles and to country, state, and county above loyalty to persons, party, or government departments.*
- (2) *Uphold the Constitution, laws and legal regulations of the United States and the state and of all governments therein and never be a party to their evasion.*
- (3) *Give a full day's labor for a full day's pay and give to the performance of my duties my earnest effort and best thought.*
- (4) *Seek to find and employ more efficient and economical ways of getting tasks accomplished.*
- (5) *Never discriminate unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not, and never accept, for myself or my family, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of my government duties.*
- (6) *Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of office, since a government employee or appointee has no private word that can be binding on public duty.*
- (7) *Engage in no business with the government either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of my governmental duties.*
- (8) *Never use any information coming to me confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means for making private profit.*
- (9) *Expose corruption wherever discovered.*
- (10) *Uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.*

SECTION 2. SAFE WORK PRACTICES.

Standard safety procedures as established by the various departments shall be adhered to at all times. Violations of safety regulations such as performing work in an unsafe manner or failure to use required safety equipment is grounds for discipline including but not limited to termination.

SECTION 3. SEAT BELT POLICY.

- (a) The use of seat belts is required by the driver and passenger in all County vehicles equipped with seat belts while said vehicle is in motion on roads and highways. It is highly recommended that seat belts be used for off-road vehicles such as tractors and motor graders.
- (b) Any employee of the County or any person covered under the County's workers' compensation plan, who uses their private vehicle in the conduct of any official County business shall use seat belts and see that all passengers in the vehicle use seat belts.

SECTION 4. ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR.

- (a) County employees shall conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner. Employees shall not use inflammatory, provocative or profane language, racial slurs, or be disrespectful to the public or fellow employees. Language, behavior, and general conduct in the presence of or when addressing other persons will be of the highest order. No employee will in any way be abusive, use foul or curt language, or in any way offend another person.
- (b) Any complaint about the language or behavior of a County employee that is determined to be true and correct will result in disciplinary action of the employee, including but not limited to termination.

SECTION 5. INSUBORDINATION.

Any employee who manifests resistance, verbal, physical or otherwise toward his department head or supervisor in authority shall be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination.

SECTION 6. USE OF COUNTY-OWNED EQUIPMENT OR MANPOWER.

No employee shall take for his/her own personal use any county-owned vehicle, county supplies or equipment or county-paid manpower. Employees shall only use such automobile or equipment in the

manner authorized by his department head or supervisor. Emergency use is authorized in cases of sickness or injury. Emergency use is to be reported as soon as possible.

SECTION 7. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION OR KNOWLEDGE.

County employees, by reason of their position, may at times have confidential or privileged information. Employees are prohibited from releasing confidential information they have learned as a result of their position without specific approval of their department head or the County Commissioner.

SECTION 8. REWARDS OR GIFTS.

No employee shall accept any gift, favor, or reward other than the employee's regular salary as provided for by law for any service rendered as an employee of the County government. Gifts to entire departments or work groups may be received upon approval of the County Commissioner.

SECTION 9. LENDING OR BORROWING MONEY.

No employee shall lend money or borrow money from another county employee who makes a practice of lending money and charging interest to employees.

SECTION 10. FALSIFYING RECORDS.

No employee shall in any way participate in falsifying records including payroll, purchasing, payment approval, receiving or inventory records.

SECTION 11. RECORD KEEPING AND TIME/SHIFT SWAPPING.

The County does not allow time swapping or shift swapping between employees. Employees shall not falsify nor misrepresent the facts of any matter relating to their employment duties, whether oral or written. Violation of this section may result in disciplinary action including immediate termination.

SECTION 12. ASSEMBLY.

No assembly of employees is permitted on County time at County-sponsored events, on County property, without specific authorization by management.

SECTION 13. RIGHT TO SEARCH COUNTY PROPERTY AND VEHICLES.

- (a) The county reserves the right to search an employee's possessions kept in County offices, vehicles, desks, or lockers for appropriate reasons. Employees shall have no right of privacy with respect to County facilities and equipment. Reasons may include, but are not limited to, searches for:

- (1) County documents
- (2) Missing or stolen articles
- (3) Alcohol or drugs
- (4) Firearms or weapons

- (b) A department head or the County Commissioner may approve such a search when reasonable suspicion or investigatory procedure warrants.

SECTION 14. SURRENDER OF PROPERTY.

An employee that is suspended or terminated shall immediately return to the department head or supervisor supervising said employee, all items of equipment including uniforms owned by the County and in the employee's possession. Should an employee be terminated, final payment of wages will be withheld until all County property is returned.

SECTION 15. SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS.

- (a) *On Duty.* Employees are prohibited from soliciting funds for any purpose from the public or from other County employees during on-duty hours, except such charitable causes as are approved in advance by the department head.
- (b) *Solicitation County Uniform.* Employees authorized to wear County uniforms are prohibited from soliciting funds from the public at anytime while wearing the uniform except such causes approved in advance by the department head.

SECTION 16. OTHER EMPLOYMENT.

No employee may engage in any paid employment or outside business which interferes with the efficient performance of the employee's duties and/or which presents a conflict of interest while employed by the County government. If outside employment creates a conflict of interest situation, the employee will be expected to resign one of the positions held. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide evidence from the second employer that the employee is covered under that employer's workers' compensation policy. The employee must also obtain the approval of the appointing authority in writing before accepting outside employment.

SECTION 17. PERSONAL ENTERPRISE ON COUNTY TIME.

Activities involving solicitation for personal business ventures on County time are not permitted. This prohibition includes advertising county phone numbers to sell crafts and scheduling appointments to promote a personal trade.

SECTION 18. UNAUTHORIZED USE OF LONG DISTANCE PHONE SERVICE.

Employees of the County are not authorized to use County telephones for personal calls without authorization of their department head. Unauthorized calls may be cause for dismissal.

DIVISION 2. POLITICAL ACTIVITY.

SECTION 1. SOLICITING POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

Employees are prohibited from soliciting contributions for partisan candidates, political parties, or other partisan political purposes while on duty as a County employee, or under color of office or position.

SECTION 2. PARTISAN CAMPAIGNING.

Employees are prohibited from campaigning or attempting to influence other voters while on duty as a County employee or under color of office or position. At no time may the employee's political activity be disruptive to the normal function of County business. Employees shall not allow any political activity to adversely affect job performance.

SECTION 3. CANDIDACY FOR OFFICE.

No employee shall be a candidate for any public office which directly is responsible for the management or operation of the department of which the employee is a member and upon qualifying for the election to such office, said employee shall immediately resign.

SECTION 4. VIOLATION OF OTHER LAWS.

No employee shall be involved in any political activity that may violate any federal or state laws.

SECTION 5. VOTING RIGHTS.

No employee shall be given or refused employment, suspended, or discharged because of his vote or failure to vote in any primary or election. Employees are encouraged to exercise their individual right to vote.

DIVISION 3. PERSONAL CONDUCT.

SECTION 1. DRUG AND ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE.

- (a) Employees of the County government are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful manufacture, distribution,

dispensation, possession or use of illegal drugs or alcohol in the workplace. Such activity interferes with the ability to perform and may become an increased risk for accidents and injuries involving employees and others. Employees must notify the department head or their supervisor of any criminal drug or alcohol charge or conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace within forty-eight (48) hours after the arrest or conviction.

- (b) The County shall be subject to the regulations of the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991, which required drug and alcohol testing for certain County employees required to have a commercial driver's license. Such testing included pre-employment/pre-duty, post-accident, random and reasonable suspicion drug and/or alcohol testing.

SECTION 2. STORAGE OF ILLEGAL DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.

No employee shall store or allow storage of illegal drugs or alcohol or intoxicants upon any land or within any building owned by Chattooga County Government. No employee shall transport any form of an intoxicant in any County vehicle, equipment, or machine. (County employees who are required to handle intoxicants in the line of duty must do so in accordance with their departmental regulations.)

SECTION 3. SMOKING AND THE USE OF OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

Smoking, vaping, or other use of tobacco products is prohibited in any County building or County vehicle, including office space leased by the County.

SECTION 4. CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE.

- (a) If an employee is arrested and charged with a criminal offense, the following actions will be taken:
 - (1) If the criminal offense is a misdemeanor and does not involve moral turpitude or necessarily relate to the employee's ability to perform the job, no action is necessary.
 - (2) If the criminal offense is a felony or a misdemeanor of such nature that it would interfere with the

employee's ability to effectively perform the job or would cause serious public concern, then a leave of absence would be granted to the employee until charges are resolved or the employee is convicted. The circumstances and length of time involved will determine whether this leave is paid or unpaid.

- (3) Termination may be considered if the criminal offense charge is a felony and directly interferes with the employee's ability to perform the job.
- (4) With regard to any drug/alcohol related felony charge, the County government will require the employee to:
 - a. Seek chemical dependency treatment, or
 - b. Be subject to suspension or termination, depending upon the circumstances surrounding the case. The second offense of drug- related charges will result in termination.
- (b) In making a determination on how the criminal charge relates to the employee's work, the supervisor/department head must consider if a government vehicle is used or if the employee has access to property of the local government or is involved directly with its citizens.

DIVISION 4. HARASSMENT.

SECTION 1. POLICY.

The County is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the County will not tolerate harassing conduct that:

- (1) Affects tangible job benefits
- (2) Interferes with an individual's work performance, or
- (3) Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this division, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Harassment means conduct toward another on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability, and which constitutes discrimination in the terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability, or that of his relatives, friends, or associates, and that:

- (1) Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or
- (2) Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance;
- (3) Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.
- (4) Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts, that relate to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability.
 - b. Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on the employer's premises, or circulated in the workplace.

SECTION 3. SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

- (a) Sexual harassment means inappropriate sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical, verbal, or other visual conduct based on sex constitutes sexual harassment when:
 - (1) Submission to such conduct is either explicitly or

implicitly made a term or condition of an individual's employment,

- (2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
 - (3) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of reasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
- (b) Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual propositions; sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexual oriented "kidding" or "teasing," "practical jokes," jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene language or gestures, displays of foul or obscenely printed or visual material and physical contact, such as patting, pinching, or brushing against another's body.

SECTION 4. COMPLAINT.

All employees are responsible for helping to assure that employees of Chattooga County government avoid harassment. If an employee has experienced or witnessed harassment, notice shall be given immediately (preferably Within 24 hours) to the immediate supervisor and/or the County Commissioner.

SECTION 5. INVESTIGATIONS; CONFIDENTIALITY.

If the allegations of harassment warrant, the County's policy is to investigate all such Complaints. To the fullest extent practicable, the County will keep complaints and the terms of their resolution confidential. If an investigation confirms that harassment has occurred, the County will take corrective action, including such discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment, as is appropriate.

SECTION 6. FALSE ACCUSATIONS.

The County recognizes that false accusations of sexual harassment can have a serious effect on innocent men and women. Individuals falsely accusing another of sexual harassment will be disciplined in accordance with the nature and extent of his or her false accusation. The County encourages any employee to raise questions he or she may have regarding sexual harassment or this policy, With his or her immediate supervisor, a high level manager; or the County Commissioner.

CHAPTER 5. WORK ATTENDANCE AND LEAVES DIVISION 1. GENERALLY.