



Bedford County Government Employee Handbook

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Note The content of a manual does not constitute nor should it be construed as a promise of employment or as a contract between Bedford County Government and any of its employees.

Bedford County at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue parts of the policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document has been developed by the Directors of Bedford County Government, the contract Human Resources Director, and the County Mayor in order to familiarize employees with Bedford County Government and provide information about working conditions, key policies, procedures, and benefits affecting employment at Bedford County Government.

Business necessity requires that some of the departments reporting to the County Mayor function differently due to the nature of the service each provides. It is imperative that each and every employee be familiar with this handbook and that of her/his respective department. There will be specific policies in which the department manual overrides the County manual.

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to Bedford County Government!

The purpose of this manual is to provide employees with a general understanding of the policies related to your employment with Bedford County. We cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question about each individual's employment. The goal is to provide a broad overview of County policies. Individual departments may also have a supplemental handbook that will discuss areas not included in this handbook or, for legitimate business reasons, differ.

This handbook revokes and supersedes all prior handbooks, amendments, and any policy or communication related to the employee handbook. The handbook, while providing general guidelines for employees, does not contain promises to any employee about how any particular situation will be handled.

1.2 At-Will Employment Policy

Employees are considered to be "at will". At-will employment means that employees have the right to terminate their employment with Bedford County Government at any time, for any reason or for no reason. Similarly, the County has the right to terminate the employee's employment at any time for any reason or for no reason.

These Guidelines, or any other policy, procedure, practice or form do not create or shall not be construed as an expressed or implied contract of employment or as a guarantee of any fixed term(s) or condition(s) of employment. While the County will generally attempt to follow the procedures and policies outlined in these Guidelines, these procedures and policies are not a contract of employment.

1.3 Changes in Policy

This manual supersedes all previous employee manuals and memos unless specified through departmental manuals.

The County retains the right to change or cancel the policies, procedures, practices, or benefits contained in these Guidelines (or any other manual or form) in any manner, with or without notice and with or without consideration. The County will attempt to give notice, however, of such changes whenever practical.

It is the intention of Bedford County Government to adhere to all State and Federal laws. Any personnel policy found to be in conflict with a State and Federal law will be changed to ensure compliance with the law.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the most up-to-date version of the Handbook. All questions pertaining to information found in this handbook should be referred to the County Mayor.

1.4 Policies for Employees of Elected Officials/Constitutional Officers

Elected Officials, also known as Constitutional Officers, have the jurisdiction to create, maintain, and administer separate personnel policies and procedures, and at their discretion may supplement the policies set out in this handbook. In these cases, the Elected Officials will provide the handbook and policies for their employees. A copy of these documents will be on file in the County Mayor's Office.

The use of the term Department Head throughout these policies refers to all Directors under the direct responsibility of the County Mayor. Since certain elected or constitutionally appointed officials are permitted to have alternative policies, the term "Constitutional Officer" will be used when it is appropriate to differentiate those individuals from all other department heads.



2 EMPLOYEE DEFINITION AND STATUS

An employee of Bedford County is a person who regularly works directly for Bedford County Government on a wage or salary basis but does not include Independent Contractors or employees of any temporary staffing service that may be used to provide assistance to the County.

- Full-Time Regular Employees are those that work a normal, full-time work schedule of thirty (30) hours or more per week on a regular basis. These employees may be exempt or non-exempt, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). All employees can access the policy document via www.dol.gov/whd/flsa.
- Part-Time Regular Employees are those who work less than thirty (30) hours per week on a regular basis. These employees may be exempt or non-exempt.
- Temporary or Seasonal Employees are those who work either full time or part time with the understanding that their employment will terminate upon the completion of a specific assignment. These employees may be exempt or non-exempt. Temporary or Seasonal County Employees do not include workers who are employed by a temporary staffing service that may be used to provide assistance to the County.

2.1 Employment Classification

Employees of Bedford County are classified as either “exempt” or “non-exempt.” This is necessary because, by law, employees in certain types of jobs are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek.

If you are classified as a **nonexempt** employee, you are covered by the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Typically, you will receive time and one-half in compensatory time or overtime pay for any time actually worked beyond forty (40) hours in one week. Time off, such as holidays, annual leave, or sick leave does not count as time worked. Section 7(k) of the FLSA provides that employees engaged in fire protection or law enforcement may be paid overtime (or compensatory time) on a “work period” basis that may be from seven (7) consecutive days to 28 consecutive days in length. For work periods of at least seven (7) but less than 28 days, overtime pay is required when the number of hours worked exceeds the number of hours that bears the same relationship to 212 (fire) or 171 (police) as the number of days in the work period bears to 28. See specific policies related to Overtime in this handbook as well as in the department handbooks of those departments with these employees for further clarification.

If you are an **exempt** employee, you are generally not covered by the overtime provisions of the FLSA. There are several categories of exempt employees, including executive, administrative and professional positions. Exempt employees do not receive compensatory time regardless of time worked. There are circumstances where an exempt employee may receive comp time for working overtime. Criteria for this exemption would include employees who, as required by their current position, are required to work during major emergencies to restore services and who perform essential services to benefit the safety and welfare of the County. In emergencies, Department Head may request payment of straight-time overtime to those exempt employees necessarily working to restore or maintain vital services. These circumstances must be

classified as a disaster either through the County, State, or Federal Government. (See Policy 4.4)

Classification of jobs is made on the basis of comparing actual job duties with criteria set forth in the FLSA. A job title is not sufficient data to classify a job as exempt from overtime status. Responsibility for classifying Bedford County positions as exempt or nonexempt lies with the Finance Department in consultation with the manager/supervisor/with responsibility for the position and the County Attorney.

2.2 Introductory Period for New Employees

Bedford County Government is committed to the premise that the County and the employee benefit through long term relationships. Our future success and stability require us to hire, train, and develop employees who will, in turn through their experience, knowledge, and commitment, maintain long term relationships with our customers and residents of the County. However, we realize that no interview process can be extensive enough to ensure compatibility between the individual and the County.

All new County employees work on an introductory basis for the first 90 calendar days after their date of hire. Due to the nature of work scheduling, some departments utilize 120 calendar days introductory period. Please refer to your departmental policy manual to know which affects you.

This introductory period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance, and to determine whether the new position meets both the employee's expectations and the County's expectations. Bedford County uses this period to evaluate employee capabilities, work habits and overall performance. Employees working in the Introductory Period are not necessarily subject to all of the recommended steps within the Corrective Action policy.

Your employment relationship with the County is "at will", and is in effect at all times during your employment with the County. Completion of the introductory period does not alter the at-will terms of your employment.



3 EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

3.1 Equal Employment Opportunity

Our goal at Bedford County Government is to recruit, hire, and maintain a diverse workforce. Equal employment opportunity is good business as well as being the law and applies to all areas of employment, including recruitment, selection, hiring, training, transfer, promotion, termination, compensation, and benefits.

As an equal opportunity employer, Bedford County Government does not discriminate in its employment decisions on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, military status, disability, genetic information, status as a Vietnam-era veteran or special disabled veteran or on any other basis that would be in violation of any applicable federal, state, or local law.

3.2 Americans with Disabilities Act

Bedford County makes every effort to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability in order to provide employment opportunities for them. Applicants and employees are not required to identify themselves as having a disability. Self-identification is strictly voluntary. The job related skills and experience of all applicants and employees are evaluated without regard to disability or any reasonable accommodations that may be necessary.

The ADA prohibits discrimination in all aspects of employment against "qualified individuals with disabilities." A qualified individual with a disability is an applicant or employee who can perform the essential functions of the job in question with or without reasonable accommodation.

The ADA and the subsequent revisions under the ADAAA define a "disability" as:

- a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- a record of a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity; or
- When an employer takes an action prohibited by the ADA because of an actual or perceived impairment that is not both transitory and minor.

Employees requesting accommodation should speak directly with their Supervisor to discuss reasonable accommodations necessary to perform the essential functions of his or her job, providing medical documentation as necessary to the County Mayor's office. The County expects the reasonable accommodation process to be a process by which the County and employee search for a mutually acceptable, reasonable accommodation.

Should employees have additional questions, or need further consultation as to the County accommodation process, they should seek advice from the County Mayor's Office or reference www.ada.gov.

3.3 Immigration Law Compliance

Bedford County is committed to employing only individuals with authorization to work in the U.S., and does not discriminate against any individuals on the basis of citizenship, national origin, or other unlawful grounds. Furthermore, the County follows the regulations established in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (ICRA) and the Tennessee Lawful Employment Act of 2011 when hiring new employees. This act requires all new employees to provide proof of their eligibility to work in the United States.

Each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employee Eligibility Form (I-9) and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are hired within three (3) years of initially completing an I-9 form are not required to complete a new I-9 form if the individual is still authorized to work in the United States. This form must be completed directly following an acceptance of employment, or in no event more than three business days after you begin work. Employees who are authorized to work in the U.S. under certain visas will be required to show proof of continued authorization to work in the U.S. upon expiration of the visas shown when employment began.

3.4 Personnel Records and Administration

The central personnel files are public record and are maintained in the Finance Department. To review a file, contact the Finance Department to complete a Public Records Request Form.

Tennessee law (TCA §§10-7-502 through 10-7-507) requires that “all state, county, and municipal records...shall at all times, during business hours, be open for...inspection by any citizen of Tennessee.” The statute applies to personnel records and allows you to review your personnel file, as well as allowing any member of the public to do so. Medical records are not part of the personnel file and will be maintained in a separate confidential file.

For the full Open Records Policy of Bedford County Government employees are directed to <http://www.bedfordcountyttn.org/pdf/finance/Open-Records-Policy.pdf>.

3.5 Anti-Harassment Policy

Bedford County Government is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment, including unwelcome sexual conduct. It is the policy of the County to prohibit discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation in any form. Therefore, Bedford County Government prohibits discrimination and/or harassment that is sexual, racial, or religious in nature or is related to anyone’s gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, disability, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law. This policy applies to all employees throughout the County and to all individuals who may have contact with any employee of the County.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a harassing and/or discriminatory nature will constitute harassment and/or discrimination when the person involved feels compelled to submit to that misconduct in order to keep his/her position, to receive appropriate pay, or to benefit from certain employment decisions. If this type of misconduct interferes with an employee’s work or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, it also may be considered harassment and/or discrimination. This behavior can include but is not limited

to suggestive or insulting noises, facial expressions, vulgar language, nicknames, slurs, derogatory comments, cartoons, jokes, written materials, and offensive gestures or touching.

Behaviors which qualify as “bullying” also create a hostile working environment and will not be tolerated within Bedford County Government.

Employees are not to assume that behavior he/she believes is humorous or socially acceptable will be acceptable to another employee or customer. All employees are expected to be aware of how people respond to what is said and done. If an individual objects to another employee’s behavior toward him or her, listen to and heed the objections.

It is important that employees report sexual harassment and other kinds of discrimination and harassment. The County cannot do anything to remedy the situation if we do not know it exists.

Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Normal, courteous, mutually respectful, non-coercive interactions between employees that are acceptable and welcomed by both parties are not considered to be harassment.

3.5.1 Complaint Procedure

Bedford County encourages all employees, but does not require them, to communicate directly with anyone whose behavior may be offensive or inappropriate, but unknowingly so to them, and request that he/she stop such behavior. If such behavior does not cease, or if an employee believes he/she that is being harassed, or subject to other discrimination, he/she should report the incident immediately to her/his Department Head, the County Mayor, or to another County official with whom he/she feels most comfortable within five calendar days of the offense or at the beginning of the employee’s next work shift. Complaints of sexual or other unlawful harassment or discrimination will be investigated in a thorough and timely manner.

Bedford County will conduct its investigation in as confidential a manner as possible. Interviews, allegations, statements, and identities will be kept confidential to the extent possible and allowed by law. However, Bedford County will not allow the goal of confidentiality to be a deterrent to an effective investigation. A timely resolution of each complaint will be reached and communicated to the employee. Appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination, will be taken promptly against any employee engaging in discrimination and/or harassment. The corrective action issued will be proportional to the severity of the conduct. The alleged harasser’s employment history and any similar complaints of prior unlawful discrimination and/or harassment will be taken into consideration.

3.5.2 No Retaliation

There will be no retaliation against any individual who, in good-faith, reports harassment and/or discrimination or assists in investigation such complaints, even if the investigation produces insufficient evidence to support the complaint. If an employee feels he/she has been subjected to any form of retaliation, the employee should report that conduct to his/her immediate supervisor, another member of management, or the County Mayor within five calendar days of the offense or at the beginning of your next work shift. Employees are not required

to approach the person who is retaliating against them, and they may bypass any offending member of management.

3.5.3 False Claims of Harassment or Retaliation

Bedford County Government does not condone acts of harassment or retaliation. Unfortunately, there may be instances in which an employee knowingly makes false claims. After an investigation is conducted to assess the validity of the claim, if the claim is proven to be false, the complaining employee will be counseled on what constitutes harassment and retaliation. Subsequent claims will be managed within the corrective action policy.

3.6 Employment of Relatives (Nepotism Policy)

Bedford County is pleased to consider for employment qualified applicants who are related to employees. This policy is intended to ensure effective supervision, internal discipline, security, safety, and positive morale in the workplace. It also seeks to avoid the perception of favoritism, conflict in loyalty, discrimination, the appearance of impropriety, and conflicts of interest.

Bedford County prohibits any employees who are family members from working in the same chain of command whether it is through direct or indirect supervision, authority or control. Family members are defined as an employee's parent, child, spouse, domestic partner, brother, and sister, grandparent, and any step or in-law relationships within the preceding categories. Employees are required to disclose changes in their personal situations, which may be covered under this policy.

Exemptions under this policy include:

- Demonstrated shortages of qualified applicants in areas regarding specialized expertise,
- Emergency vacancies that must be filled on a temporary basis,
- Relatives who are employed prior to May 1, 2012 and work in areas where movement to another chain of command is impossible.



4 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

4.1 General Guidelines

All employees of Bedford County are urged to become familiar with the County rules and standards of conduct and are expected to follow these rules and standards faithfully in doing their own jobs and conducting the County's business.

4.2 Work Schedule

The normal workweek consists of (40) hours and runs from Monday through Sunday. Core business hours are 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Some jobs and departments may require other hours of service. Employees and supervisors of such departments are expected to discuss work schedule requirements in keeping with specific departmental policies.

4.3 Inclement Weather

It is Bedford County's policy to continue operations despite weather conditions unless an emergency threatens to make employee transportation to or from work impossible or dangerous. Employees are expected to show up for work regularly and on time except when transportation is impossible.

In case of severe weather, employees must look out for their own safety. However, this doesn't mean a free day off. Unless management has closed the county facility, employees who choose, for their own safety, to not work, will be charged vacation or comp time.

If the county facility opens and is forced to close early because of the weather, all employees who reported to work will be paid. Employees who did not come in to work will not be paid. All employees are urged to make every possible effort to get to work if the facility remains open.

When weather conditions make it hazardous for employees to report for work, they should:

- call the department head or designated contact; or
- listen to local radio and television stations for closure announcements.

The following payroll guidelines have been established for non-exempt employees reporting to work when the County opening is delayed due to bad weather conditions.

- Employees reporting before 10 a.m. will receive a full day's pay.
- Employees reporting after 10 a.m. will be paid for hours worked.
- Employees who do not report to work will not be paid for the day. With supervisory approval, they may take the day as a vacation or comp time day.
- Overtime pay will apply to only those employees who have worked over 40 hours that week (unless state regulations dictate otherwise).

4.4 Attendance and Punctuality

All employees are important members of the Bedford County Government team. We are committed to providing the highest level of government services and functions to better serve the community. In order to accomplish this, prompt and regular attendance is required.

If an employee must be late for work or absent because of illness or for an unforeseen circumstance, he/she must call the Department Head or supervisor and report the reason prior to the start of work.

Tardiness or absenteeism that is unexcused or excessive, or failure to call in prior to being absent or late, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Absence from work for three (3) consecutive days without notifying departmental management will be considered a voluntary resignation. Exempt employees must notify their supervisor if they must leave for a discretionary matter (example sick time, vac. Time, personal time, etc.). Exempt employees are expected to work the set weekly schedule, set an example for and supervise hourly employees.

Departments which utilize nontraditional work shifts may have different policies to determine when an absence results in a voluntary termination. Please refer to the policy manual of those departments.

Timecards should be completed daily, and accurately reflect time worked, not the designated work schedule. Example: Work hours are from 8 to 4. If the employee's start time on Wednesday is 8:15, that specific time must be recorded on the time sheet. If the employee checks out at 4:03 that specific time must be recorded on the time sheet. Accuracy of timesheets is required to fully manage departmental attendance policies, determining the correct pay, and documenting overtime or comp time.

4.5 Meal and Break Periods

It is Bedford County Government's policy that each department is responsible for implementing a procedure for meals and break periods. It is the responsibility of each Department Head or supervisor to implement a fair and equitable plan for breaks that meets or exceeds TCA 50-2-103(h).

4.6 Confidential Information and Nondisclosure

In the course of your work, you may have access to confidential information about Bedford County Government, County officials or other employees. It is your responsibility to keep any confidential information confidential. Under no circumstances are employees or other agents of the County Government to convey information protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). This does not include information that is routinely made open to the public.

If you have any doubt, don't disclose the information and contact your direct supervisor or the County Mayor's Office. (See Policy 4.12, Social Media)

4.7 Ethical Standards

All employees have an individual responsibility to deal ethically in all aspects of the County's business and to comply fully with all laws and regulations. Employees, in the course of or in relation to their official duties, shall not directly or indirectly receive or

agree to receive any payment of expense, compensation, gift, reward, gratuity, favor, service, or promise of future employment or other future benefit from any source, except the county, for any activity related to their duties as county employees unless otherwise provided by law.

4.8 Dress Code and Personal Appearance

All employees are expected to maintain a professional standard of dress and grooming that reflects good taste and common sense. Employees who work in a business environment and assist the general public in business transactions are expected to dress in a manner conducive to good business, with appearance and apparel appropriate to a business environment. If an employee works with the public, all tattoos must be covered or not visible, and other than professionally worn ear piercings, no visible body piercings are allowed while on duty. Any employee who has a question about whether a particular item or outfit is appropriate should discuss the matter with a supervisor before wearing it. Employees who are inappropriately dressed will be sent home and directed to return to work in proper attire.

This is an overview of the employer's policy on dress. Employees are requested to ask their department heads for more specific dress standards for their department.

4.9 Use of Equipment

Bedford County Government will provide employees with the equipment needed to do their job. None of this equipment should be used for personal use, nor removed from the physical confines of the County—unless it is approved for a job that specifically requires use of county equipment outside the physical facility. Employees have a duty to conserve and protect government property. Employees should not directly, or indirectly, use or allow the use of governmental property, including telephones and computers, vehicles, equipment, facilities, personnel, supplies, or services of any kind for other than approved activities. This includes anything leased to the department or otherwise paid for by the department. All county issued equipment and clothing must be returned upon separation.

4.9.1 Vehicle Use Policy

Bedford County Government has adopted a Vehicle Use Policy that all departments and agencies shall follow. The full policy can be found at <http://www.bedfordcountyttn.org/pdf/finance/Vehicle-Use-Policy.pdf>.

4.10 Travel Policy

Bedford County Government will follow the state travel policy. Employees should be as conservative as circumstances allow when incurring travel related expenses. Travel shall not be taken without approval of the proper authority. The employee is considered to be on official travel status, and eligible for reimbursement, at the time of departure from his/her official station or residence, whichever is applicable. For a full text of the State Travel Policy adopted by Bedford County Government employees should refer to <http://www.bedfordcountyttn.org/pdf/finance/State-Travel-Policy.pdf>.

When a County employee travels on business, he/she assumes significant responsibilities as a County representative. To the many persons with whom he or she comes in contact during his or her travel, he or she is BEDFORD COUNTY

GOVERNMENT. Appearance, attitude and conduct reflect directly upon the public image of the County. Each employee is expected to use discretion and exercise sound professional judgment when traveling on County business.

4.11 Use of Computer, Phone, and Mail

Bedford County property, including computers, phones, electronic mail, and voice mail, should be used only for conducting county business. Incidental and occasional personal use of county computers, phones, or electronic mail and voice mail systems is permitted, but information and messages stored in these systems will be treated no differently from other business-related information and messages.

Employees do not have personal privacy rights or any reasonable expectation of privacy when it comes to information composed, created, received, downloaded, retrieved, stored, transmitted, viewed or sent using Bedford County Government's electronic communication devices. While the county respects the privacy and security needs for all individuals, authorized County representatives have the right to access and review electronic files, messages, mail, websites accessed, etc. for legitimate business reasons.

As business needs dictate, Bedford County Government may provide cellular telephones (cell phones) for the purpose of conducting County business. County cell phones are not intended to replace personal cell phones or land lines and the associated phone numbers are the property of Bedford County Government.

Using a cell phone is strongly discouraged while operating a personal or county vehicle. Safety must come before all other concerns. Regardless of the circumstances, including slow or stopped traffic, and employees are urged to pull to the side of the road and safely stop the vehicle before placing or accepting a call. If deemed necessary to use a cell phone for voice communication while driving, the use of hands free technology is required. Under no circumstances are employees allowed to place themselves at risk to fulfill business needs.

Any use of an electronic wireless device while driving to write, send, or read a text-based communications is strictly prohibited under Tennessee law and Bedford County policy. Employees, whether on county business in their own vehicle or a County vehicle, are prohibited from texting while driving.

Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their phone while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions and will be considered to be acting outside the scope of employment. Violations of this policy will be subject to the highest forms of discipline, including termination.

4.12 Social Media Policy

This policy applies to every employee, whether part-time, full-time, currently employed by the County in any capacity who posts any material whether written, audio, video or otherwise on any Web site, blog or any other medium accessible via the internet. For purposes of this policy, social media is content created by individuals using accessible and scalable technologies through the internet. Examples include: Facebook, blogs, MySpace, RSS, YouTube, Yelp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google⁺, etc.

All county social media sites directly or indirectly representing to be an official statement of the County must be created pursuant to this policy and approved by the appropriate County Official. The County's primary and predominant internet presence shall remain www.bedfordcountyttn.org and no other Web site, blog or social media site shall characterize itself as such. The Information Technology Department is responsible for

the content and upkeep of any social media sites created pursuant to this policy. In addition to this policy, all social media sites shall comply with any and every other applicable County policy including but not limited to the Open Records Policy, Internet Use Policy, and Ethics Policy.

A social media site is subject to Tennessee's Public Records Act (T.C.A. § 10-7-101, *et seq.*) and Open Meetings Act (T.C.A. § 8-44-101, *et seq.*) and no social media site shall be used to circumvent or otherwise in violation of these laws. All information posted on a social media site shall be a public record and subject to public inspection. All lawful records requests for information contained on a social media site shall be fulfilled by the Information Technology Director and any employee whose assistance is necessitated. Every social media site shall contain a clear and conspicuous statement referencing the aforementioned state laws. All official postings on a social media site shall be preserved in accordance with the County's records retention schedule.

A social media site shall also contain a clear and conspicuous statement that the purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between the County and its constituents and that all postings are subject to review and deletion by the County. The following content is not allowed and will be immediately removed and may subject the poster to banishment from all County social media sites:

- Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
- Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
- Profane language or content;
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- Solicitations of commerce;
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- Content which violates the privacy protections assured by HIPPA.

Guidelines for Personal Use of Non-County Social Media

- An employee may not characterize him or herself as representing the County, directly or indirectly, in any online posting unless pursuant to a written policy of the County or the direction of a County Official.
- The use of a County email address, job title, official County name, seal or logo shall be deemed an attempt to represent the County in an official capacity. Other communications leading an average viewer to conclude that a posting was made in an official capacity shall also be deemed an attempt to represent the County in an official capacity.
- Any postings on a non-County social media site made in an official capacity shall be subject to the Tennessee Open Records Act and the Tennessee Open Meetings Act.
- Employee postings may not violate any of the policies set forth in the Employee Handbook. Employees are personally responsible for their web postings and solely liable for web postings found to be defamatory, harassing, an invasion of privacy, or in violation of any other applicable federal or state law.

- Employees should respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure, and other applicable laws.
- If a member of the news media contacts an employee regarding an employee's posting concerning Bedford County Government, the employee should refer them to the appropriate Constitutional Officer, Department Head, or County Mayor.

A violation of this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination. For any questions about these guidelines or any matter related to web postings, contact the IT department or the County Mayor's office. This policy should not be interpreted to restrict or interfere with any employee's federal or state labor law rights, free speech, or any whistleblower protections under federal or state law. Nothing in this policy is intended to or will be applied in a manner that limits employees' right to engage in protected concerted activity as prescribed by the National Labor Relations Act.

4.13 Substance Abuse Policy

Bedford County Government is committed to providing a safe work environment and to fostering the well-being and health of its employees. That commitment is jeopardized when any Bedford County employee illegally uses drugs on or off the job, comes to work under their influence, possesses, distributes or sells drugs in the workplace, or abuses alcohol on the job. Therefore, Bedford County Government has established the following policy, pursuant to T.C.A. Section 50-9-100 et. seq.:

- (1) It is a violation of County policy for any employee to use, possess, sell, trade, offer for sale, or offer to buy illegal drugs or otherwise engage in the illegal use of drugs on or off the job,
- (2) It is a violation of County policy for any employee to report to work under the influence of or while possessing in his or her body, blood or urine, illegal drugs in any detectable amount.
- (3) It is a violation of County policy for any employee to report to work under the influence of or impaired by alcohol.
- (4) It is a violation of the County policy for any employee to use prescription drugs illegally, i.e., to use prescription drugs that have not been legally obtained or in a manner or for a purpose other than as prescribed. However, nothing in this policy precludes the appropriate use of legally prescribed medications.
- (5) Violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

It is the responsibility of the County's supervisors to counsel employees whenever they see changes in performance or behavior that suggest an employee has a drug problem. It is not the supervisor's job to diagnose personal problems. Instead, the supervisor should encourage such employees to seek help and advise them about available resources for getting help. Everyone shares responsibility for maintaining a safe work environment, and co-workers should encourage anyone who has a drug problem to seek help.

The goal of this policy is to balance our respect for individuals with the need to maintain a safe, productive and drug free environment. The intent of this policy is to offer a helping hand to those who need it, while sending a clear message that the illegal use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol are incompatible with employment at Bedford County Government.

As a condition of employment, employees must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify the County in writing of any conviction of a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction.

The County offers an Employee Assistance (EAP) benefit for employees and their dependents. The EAP provides confidential assessment, referral and short-term counseling for employees who need or request it. If an EAP referral to a treatment provider outside the EAP is necessary, costs may be covered by the employee's medical insurance; but the cost of such outside services are the employees' responsibilities.

Confidentiality is assured. NO information regarding the nature of the personal problem will be made available to supervisors, nor will it be included in the permanent personnel file.

Participation in the EAP will not have an effect on an employee's career advancement or employment, nor will it protect an employee from disciplinary action if substandard job performance continues. The EAP is a process used in conjunction with discipline, not a substitute for discipline.

The EAP can be accessed by an employee through self-referral or through referral by a supervisor. We will distribute information about the EAP to employees for their confidential use.

4.13.1 General Procedures

Any employee reporting to work visibly impaired will be deemed unable to perform required duties and will not be allowed to work. If possible the employee's supervisor will first seek another supervisor's opinion to confirm the employee's status. Next, the supervisor will consult privately with the employee to determine the cause of the observation, including whether substance abuse has occurred. If, in the opinion of the supervisor, the employee is considered impaired, the employee will be sent home or to a medical facility by taxi or other safe transportation alternative - depending on the determination of the observed impairment - and accompanied by the supervisor or another employee if necessary. A drug or alcohol test may be in order. An impaired employee will not be allowed to drive.

4.13.2 Opportunity to Contest or Explain Test Results

Employees and job applicants who have a positive confirmed drug or alcohol test result may explain or contest the result to the medical review officer within five (5) working days after receiving written notification of the test result from the medical review officer; if an employee's or job applicant's explanation or challenge is unsatisfactory to the medical review officer, the medical review officer shall report a positive test result back to the county; a person may contest the drug test result pursuant to rules adopted by the Tennessee Department of Labor.

4.13.3 Confidentiality

The confidentiality of any information received by the employer through a substance abuse testing program shall be maintained, except as otherwise provided by law.

4.13.4 Job Applicant Drug Testing

In the interest of Public Safety, several County offices have Substance Abuse Policies that may require employees to have pre-employment drug testing as well as random drug screens. In those offices, any applicant with a confirmed positive test result will be denied employment. Applicants will be required to submit voluntarily to a urinalysis test at a

laboratory chosen by this County, and by signing a consent agreement will release Bedford County from liability. If the physician, official or lab personnel has reasonable suspicion to believe that the job-applicant has tampered with the specimen, the applicant will not be considered for employment. The County will not discriminate against applicants for employment because of a past history of drug or alcohol abuse. It is the current illegal use of drugs and/or abuse of alcohol, preventing employees from performing their jobs properly, that the County will not tolerate.

4.13.5 Employee Drug Testing

Bedford County Government has adopted testing practices to identify employees who use illegally use drugs on or off the job or who abuse alcohol on the job. It shall be a condition of employment for all employees to submit to substance abuse testing under the following circumstances:

1. When there is reasonable suspicion to believe that an employee is illegally using drugs or abusing alcohol. 'Reasonable suspicion' is based on a belief that an employee is using or has used drugs or alcohol in violation of the employer's policy drawn from specific objective and articulated facts and reasonable inferences drawn from those facts in light of experience. Among other things, such facts and inferences may be based upon, but not limited to, the following:

- (A) Observable phenomena while at work such as direct observation of substance abuse or of the physical symptoms or manifestations of being impaired due to substance abuse;
- (B) Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior while at work or a significant deterioration in work performance;
- (C) A report of substance abuse provided by a reliable and credible source;
- (D) Evidence that an individual has tampered with any substance abuse test during his or her employment with the current employer;
- (E) Information that an employee has caused or contributed to an accident while at work; or
- (F) Evidence that an employee has used, possessed, sold, solicited, or transferred drugs while working or while on the employer's premises or while operating the employer's vehicle, machinery, or equipment.

2. When employees have caused or contributed to an on-the-job injury that resulted in a loss of work-time, which means any period of time during which an employee stops performing the normal duties of employment and leaves the place of employment to seek care from a licensed medical provider. An employer may send employees for a substance abuse test if they are involved in on-the-job accidents where personal injury or damage to county property occurs.

3. As part of a follow-up program to treatment for drug abuse.

4. Routine fitness-for-duty drug or alcohol testing. A covered employer must require an employee to submit to drug or alcohol test if the test is conducted as part of a routinely scheduled employee fitness-for-duty medical examination where the examinations are required by; law, regulation, are part of the covered employer's established policy, or one that is scheduled routinely for all members of an employment classification group.

5. Bedford County Government reserves the right to drug test at any random time. Bedford County will pay for the drug testing.

4.13.6 Alcohol Testing

The consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages on the premises is prohibited. (County sponsored activities which may include the serving of alcoholic beverages are

not included in this provision.) An employee whose normal faculties are impaired due to alcoholic beverages, or whose blood alcohol level tests .10% by weight for non-safety sensitive positions, or .04% for safety sensitive positions, while on duty/county business shall be guilty of misconduct, and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

4.13.7 Refusal to Submit

Failure to submit to a required substance abuse test also is misconduct and also shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

4.13.8 Important Information for Job Applicants and Employees

When an employee or job applicant submits to a drug and/or alcohol test, they will be given a form by the specimen collector that contains a list of common medications and substances which may alter or affect the outcome of a drug or alcohol test. This form will also have a space for the donor to provide any information that he/she considers relevant to the test, including the identification of currently or recently used prescription or non-prescription medication or other relevant information. The information form should be kept by the job applicant or employee for their personal use. If the job applicant or employee has a positive confirmed test result a medical review officer will attempt to contact the individual in order to privately discuss the findings with that person. The job applicant or employee should keep the form as a "reminder" to discuss this information at that time. The medical review officer will take this information into account when interpreting any positive confirmed test results. The information provided shall be treated as confidential and will not be given to the employer. Employees and job applicants have the right to consult with a medical review officer for technical information regarding prescription and non-prescription medicine.

It is the responsibility of every employee or job applicant to notify the testing laboratory of any administrative or civil action brought pursuant to TCA Section 50-9-100 et. seq.,

Substance abuse testing for job applicants and employees will include a urinalysis screen for the following drugs:

Alcohol: (not required for job applicant testing)

Any "Alcoholic Beverage", all liquid medications containing ethyl alcohol (ethanol). Please read the label for content. For example; Vicks Nyquil™ is 25% (50 proof) ethyl alcohol, Comtrex™ is 20% (40 proof), Contac Severe Cold Formula Night Strength™ is 25% (50 proof) and Listerine™ is 26.9% (54 proof).

Amphetamines: "speed," "uppers," etc.

Cannabinoids: THC, marijuana, hashish, "pot," "grass," "hash," etc.

Cocaine: "coke," "crack," etc.

Phencyclidine: PCP, "angel dust."

Opiates: Narcotics, Heroin, Codeine, Morphine, "smack, dope, etc..."

Barbiturates

Benzodiazepines: Ativan, Valium, Xanax, etc.

Methaqualone: Quaaludes

4.14 Smoking Policy

As required by the Tennessee Non-Smokers Protection Act, smoking is prohibited in county owned enclosed spaces, including County owned vehicles. Smoking is only allowed in designated outdoor areas, which can be identified by asking your supervisor or appropriate signage.

4.15 Outside Employment

Employees are hired and continue in the County's employ with the understanding that the County is their primary employer and that other employment or commercial involvement that interferes with their ability to meet performance standards and work requirements of their position with the County. Outside employment will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours. Employees must not work outside employment while on any type of county approved leave other than military or disaster leave.

4.16 Disciplinary and Corrective Actions

Behaviors contrary to the County's expectations and policies will be dealt with through disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. Violations will be evaluated by management before appropriate corrective action is taken. Unless the performance mandates a different response by management, employees will be verbally notified/warned that her/his performance is inadequate and given instructions and/or education to improve. This warning is documented and kept in the supervisor's file. Absent a correction in behavior, management may issue a written warning, signed by the employee and witnessed by a third party, or as circumstances warrant, management may choose to suspend the employee without pay. Allowing the employee to utilize vacation or comp time to avoid loss of income is discouraged.

Involuntary discharge is the result of the employee's inability to improve her/his performance in a timely manner. **All involuntary terminations should be reviewed by the County Mayor prior to implementation. Employees should be provided an opportunity to appeal her/his termination during the termination conversation and prior to paperwork** being submitted to the Finance Department. All involuntary terminations should be documented, including the termination conversation.

4.17 Separation from Employment

Bedford County Government makes every effort to retain, to the extent consistent with County requirement, the services of all employees who perform their duties efficiently and effectively. However, it may become necessary under certain conditions to terminate employment for the good of the employee and/or the County, and can be initiated by the county or the employee, with or without cause or notice. The types of separation that exist are:

Voluntary Resignation

If for personal or professional reasons an employee elects to resign from the County, Bedford County Government requests that the employee provides at least two weeks' advance notice of the departure date. Professional staffs are expected to provide four weeks' notice. A resignation letter should be prepared and submitted to the immediate supervisor or Department Head whenever possible.

When there are instances in which a voluntary resignation seems irregular or illogical, the Department Head should ask the County Mayor to review the issues associated with the voluntary termination. Doing so might prevent a future EEOC charge or lawsuit.

Failure to provide adequate notice of resignation will result in the employee not receiving vacation for the accrued month of the resignation unless authorized by the County Mayor. Employees working in departments which utilize PTO are subject to the specific departmental policies.

Layoff:

Termination of employees due to a reduction in the workload will be avoided if at all possible. If a layoff is necessary, at least two weeks' notification will normally be given. Personnel affected may continue their duties during this period. In some cases, an immediate release from duties is desirable to allow the employee to seek new employment.

Discharge:

Under a variety of circumstances, an employee may be discharged with or without notice for offenses which include, but are not limited to, failure to adequately perform the duties and responsibilities of the job; flagrant neglect of work; insubordination; possession of or being under the influence of alcohol or narcotics while on County business or property; harassment, theft, or for any action having an adverse impact on the work and/or the reputation of the County.

Employees leaving involuntarily will be paid for any accrued unused vacation time. Employees working in departments which utilize PTO are subject to those specific policies.

Final Paycheck Upon Separation:

If you have used more than your accrued allowance at the time of separation, the difference will be deducted from your final paycheck. Holidays and Vacation time cannot be used to extend your last day worked. You will not be reimbursed for unused sick time.

If an employee voluntarily or involuntarily terminates her/his employment, the final paycheck will be made available on the next regular payday.



5 COMPENSATION POLICIES

5.1 Pay Periods

County employees are paid based on the schedule within their department. Bi-weekly employees are paid on Fridays. County Commissioners are paid on the 25th of the month. If the pay date falls on a non-working day, employee will be paid on the last business day before the pay date.

5.2 Timekeeping Procedures

Employees shall work set schedules as established by the County Official or Department Head. Employees are required to record their hours on the forms provided for this purpose. Employees are required to fill in this form daily and, at the end of the pay period, sign and forward them to your supervisor for review and processing. Please ensure that your actual hours worked and leave time taken are recorded accurately. Falsifying these records is a crime under T.C.A. §39-16-504 and is grounds for immediate termination. Incorrectly completed time sheets prevent accurate recordkeeping for pay and recording earned overtime pay or comp time.

5.3 Overtime Pay

Overtime compensation is paid to non-exempt employees in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. Employees shall earn overtime for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours during the workweek. Hours worked is defined as time that is actually spent on the job and does not include vacation, jury duty, sick time, holiday, or similar compensation. Employees working nontraditional shifts and/or utilizing PTO are subject to the policies of that specific department.

Generally, the County grants compensatory time off instead of payment for the time worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a workweek for non-exempt staff. Compensatory time will be granted at time and one-half for all time worked in excess of forty (40) hours. Any employee who wishes to receive overtime payment in lieu of compensatory time must have approval from their Department Head prior to working the overtime. Failing to do so will result in comp time being given and may be cause for disciplinary action.

Compensatory time is cumulative to a maximum of 240 hours (160 hours of actual overtime worked) for all eligible County employees. No hours of compensatory time may be accrued beyond the maximum of 240 hours unless your additional work hours were for public safety activity, an emergency response activity, or a seasonal activity. In those circumstances you may accrue no more than 480 hours of compensatory time (320 hours of actual overtime worked).

Employees working in departments with nontraditional shifts and/or PTO should refer to the specific departmental policies.

Any employee who has accumulated the maximum hours of compensatory time shall be paid for any additional overtime that is worked. The County reserves the right, at any time, to pay an employee in cash for any or all accrued compensatory time. The use of compensatory time is subject to approval by the Department Head. Such approval will not be denied unless undue disruption to the office or department will occur. Request for compensatory time shall be in writing and in advance of taking the compensatory time. Employees are expected to utilize earned compensation time within the fiscal year unless

approved by the Department Head. With approval, the compensation time will carry over to the next fiscal year. Department Heads are expected to document the accumulation of comp time. Employees are expected to refer to their respective departmental policies and confer with the management of that department.

5.4 Deductions from Pay

The law requires deductions to cover federal, state, and local income taxes and Social Security/Medicare (FICA). These deductions are made automatically and will be itemized on your check stub. The amount of the deductions may depend on your earnings and on the information you furnish on your W-4 form regarding the number of dependents/exemptions you claim.

Any change in name, address, telephone number, marital status or number of exemptions must be reported to Finance immediately to ensure proper credit for tax purposes. The W-2 form you receive for each year indicates precisely how much of your earnings were deducted for these purposes.

5.4.1 Pay Garnishments

Bedford County will comply with all state and federal laws concerning garnishments, bankruptcy payments, court ordered garnishments, IRS wage levies, or child support orders, if necessary. Finance will provide an explanation to you whenever the County is ordered to make such deductions.

5.4.2 Errors in Pay and Improper Deductions

Every effort is made by the County to avoid errors in each employee's paycheck. If an error appears to have been made, the Department Head is to be notified immediately. He or she will take the necessary steps to research the problem to determine if the County has made an improper deduction from an employee's paycheck, and to ensure that any necessary correction is made properly and promptly.

In addition, Bedford County is committed to ensuring that its salaried employees are paid in full for the services they perform. The County does not tolerate or condone any improper deductions from a salaried (exempt) employee's paycheck. Subject to some exceptions, salaried employees must receive the full salary for any week worked without regard to the number of days or hours worked (less any applicable Federal, state or local taxes withheld). Deductions from an employee's pay can be made when he/she is absent from work for one or more full days for personal reasons. Deductions from pay can also be made for absences occasioned by sickness or disability if the deduction is made in accordance with a bona fide plan, policy or practice of providing compensation for loss of salary occasioned by illness.

Deductions from an employee's pay may be made for unpaid disciplinary suspensions of one or more full days imposed in good faith for infraction of workplace conduct rules (for example, violation of the County's Harassment Policy) or infractions of safety rules of major significance. Deductions from pay

may also be made for weeks in which the employee takes an unpaid leave of absence.

If an employee believes he/she has been subjected to an improper deduction from her/his paycheck, the direct supervisor and/or department head is to be notified of the problem. If an employee is uncomfortable going to her/his supervisor, he/she may inform the County's Finance Department. An investigation will be conducted by the supervisor and the Finance Department to determine if the County has made an improper deduction from an employee's paycheck. If the County determines that an improper deduction was made, the employee will be promptly reimbursed for the improper deduction.

Retaliation against any employee who comes forward to report any claims of improper salary deductions is strictly prohibited.

6 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

6.1 Insurance

Bedford County Government makes health insurance, life insurance, dental and vision available to eligible employees and their eligible family members. The County pays a portion of the premiums for the group benefits, with the employee sharing the balance of the cost. The low cost of these benefits is an important part of each eligible employee's compensation package. Eligible employees may also purchase optional life insurance, disability, dental, specific illness, or accident policies for themselves, spouses, and dependents.

Eligible employees are all full-time employees at least 30 hours per week and have been employed at least ninety (90) days. Specific details on coverage and benefits are outlined in the New Employee Benefits Orientation Package and the Employee Benefit Summary Plan Document. These materials are provided to employees during New Employee Orientation in the Finance Department. Employees receive authorization forms for all benefits at orientation.

6.2 COBRA Notification

According to the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1985, in the event of termination of employment with Bedford County or loss of eligibility to remain covered under Bedford County's group health insurance program, employees and their eligible dependents may have the right to continued coverage under Bedford County's group health insurance program for a limited period of time at their own expense upon occurrence of qualifying events. These events include:

1. The employee's death.
2. Voluntary or involuntary termination of employment or reduction in hours.
3. Divorce or legal separation.
4. A dependent child ceasing to be eligible under the applicable plan provision.
5. Covered employee's entitlement to Medicare.

If one of these events occurs, a qualified beneficiary must notify the Finance Department within 60 days from the date of the qualifying event. If he/she does not, all rights under COBRA will end. When the Finance Department is notified of a qualifying event the qualified beneficiaries will receive notification of their right to purchase continuation coverage. Each qualified beneficiary has 60 days from the date of written notification to decide to make an election to continue the coverage.

Premiums for continuing coverage equal the full amount the County pays plus 2% of the premium cost to cover administrative costs. In addition to the premium rate cost, the individual is responsible for retroactive payment from the date of insurance termination. Additional details may be obtained from the Finance Department.

6.3 Worker's Compensation

All employees are entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits paid by Bedford County Government. This coverage is automatic and immediate and protects employees from work-related injury or illness. If an employee cannot work due to a work-related injury or

illness, Workers' Compensation insurance pays his or her medical bills and provides a portion of his or her income until he/she can return to work. An employee's group health plan coverage cannot be used for work-related injuries or illnesses that are covered under the Workers' Compensation Act.

It is the employees' responsibility to notify her/his immediate supervisor, Department Head or the County Mayor's office immediately if he/she has a work-related injury or illness, regardless of its severity. Bedford County Government encourages injured employees to seek prompt medical attention if necessary. Employees are required to select from a Panel of Physicians provided to them by the County.

For further information regarding benefits under this program, please contact the Finance Department or the County Mayor's Office.

6.4 Retirement Plan

Bedford County is a member of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System. All General Fund full-time employees are non-contributory to the system. Enrollment in the System is mandatory for all full-time (30+ hours/week) employees. Employee contributions are made at 5% of annual wages. If an employee was employed by the County prior to June 30, 1987 he/she may have the option to withdraw her/his contributed funds on pre-retirement departure from County employment subject to the rules and regulations of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System. Bedford County employees attain vesting rights with five years of service.

7 TIME-OFF BENEFITS

7.1 Holiday Policy

Regular, full-time employees of Bedford County Government will receive the following fourteen (14) paid holidays unless working in a department with nontraditional shifts. Those employees should refer to the specific departmental policy.

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	3 rd Monday in January
President's Day	3 rd Monday in February
Good Friday	Friday before Easter Sunday
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	1 st Monday in September
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	4 th Thursday in November
Friday after Thanksgiving	4 th Friday in November
Christmas Eve	December 24
Christmas Day*	December 25

*The County Mayor will assign a third day for Christmas vacation.

New Year's Eve	December 31
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- When a recognized holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday will be observed as the holiday. When a recognized holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday will be observed as the holiday. Holiday pay is not counted as hours worked or included in an employee's regular rate of pay.
- Unless otherwise stated, all holidays will be considered eight (8) hours days. Regardless of the length of an employee's daily shift, holiday pay will not exceed eight (8) hours. Employees working in nontraditional shifts should refer to the specific departmental policy.
- Where possible, every eligible employee is given time off on recognized holidays, except those required to maintain essential or emergency County operations. When an employee is required to work on a recognized holiday, the employee will receive up to eight (8) hours holiday pay and, in addition, any work performed on the holiday is compensated at the employee's regular pay. At the discretion of their Department Head, employees who are required to work on a holiday may receive the equivalent time off on another day. When possible, the equivalent time off should be granted within the same or subsequent pay period in which the holiday occurs. Employees working in nontraditional shifts should refer to the specific departmental policy.
- Employees who are in an inactive status are not eligible for holiday pay. Employees on a leave of absence for any reason are not entitled to paid holidays.
- Paid time off for holidays will not be counted as hours worked for the purposes of determining overtime.

7.2 Vacation Leave

All employees who work 30 or more hours per week on a regular basis are eligible to accrue vacation leave after the probation period. Employees working in departments with nontraditional work shifts should refer to their specific department policy. The following guidelines apply:

1. Vacation may be used only at times approved in advance by the Department Head. Vacation leave requests will be honored to the extent possible.
2. Employees accrue leave at 6.67 hours per month, not to exceed a total of 80 hours in a year. Authorized days off for vacation leave will not be considered as working time for calculating overtime. Employees who are on any type of unpaid leave will not accrue annual leave during leave.
3. Payment is based on the rate of compensation received on the last day worked. Payment is computed on the next payroll date following the employee's last day. No checks will be issued in advance. Employees who leave employment will receive accrued leave up to the maximum accumulated **provided** they have given the proper notice, returned all County property, and leave in good standing with the County.
4. Employees may take annual leave in increments of quarter-hours. This means that the minimum amount of leave employees may take is 15 minutes.
5. The number of accrued leave hours to be used for one day of leave is equal to the number of scheduled paid hours of work for that day of leave. For example, if an employee works four 10-hour days per workweek, they must use 10 hours of annual leave to have the entire day off. If they work 7.5 hours per day, then 7.5 is the number of hours of annual leave they must use to equal one day. All leave is taken in hours.
6. Employees may take annual leave in the year earned. All employees who have completed one full year may carry over up to 40 hours vacation leave. An employee hired before Jan. 1, will receive 40 hours vacation time. After the next fiscal year starts (July1) 80 hours will be given. If you use accrued leave and have not accrued it you must pay it back out of your last pay check.

7.3 Sick Leave

All full-time, regular employees accrue sick leave from the date of hire, effective after completing the introductory period. Each full time employee shall be entitled to accrue 7 hours of sick leave per month of employment. Employees hired on or before the 15th of the month accrue 7 hours of sick leave for that month. Employees hired after the 15th of the month do not accrue any sick leave for that month. While absent due to personal illness, employees continue to accrue sick leave credit as long as they are receiving sick leave or vacation pay. Sick leave will not be accrued when an employee is on any unpaid leaves of absences. Sick leave shall not exceed 84 hours per year.

Sick leave may be used for an employee's personal illness, well-care, and medical appointments. Sick leave may also be used for illness and well-care of an employee's immediate family. Immediate family includes parents, spouse, children, siblings, mothers or fathers-in-law, daughters or sons-in-law, sisters or brothers-in-law, grandparents, grandparent-in-law, grandchildren, foster families, and Step families.

For absences more than three (3) days to care for a sick or injured member of an employee's family the event must be considered an FMLA qualifying event and requires the employee to submit an FMLA application along with a Medical Certification.

When possible, employees are expected to schedule planned medical appointments in a manner that minimizes disruption of workflow. Further, employees must use sick leave for its intended purpose. Employees are required to notify their Department Head or supervisor as early as possible on the first day of the absence and in advance when foreseeable. The Department Head may request a doctor's verification of the illness if you are absent three (3) or more consecutive workdays or if your absences are excessive. Employees may be required to furnish a certificate for Fitness for Duty from their current treating physician before the employee is able to resume work.

Sick leave cannot be carried over at the end of the year or paid out, any balance of sick leave is lost. It will not be paid out if the employee is terminated or resigns.

Paid Sick Leave

Employees who qualify for FMLA, and have exhausted all of their sick time will be given six weeks' paid sick leave. Employees working in departments which utilize PTO should refer to the departmental policy.

Sick Leave Donation

Realizing that catastrophic events occur relating to illness and injury, Bedford County Government, upon approval, provides for employees to donate sick time to other Bedford County Government employees who are on FMLA for themselves. (In an *extreme* situation the Mayor/Dept. Head/ and Finance Dept. / HR in agreement together, can grant approval otherwise). The request for donated sick time must be received and approved by the Department Head. The Department Head must solicit employees for sick time with the approval of the County Mayor's Office. Donations may not be used until all approvals have been met and the affected employees notified. The following conditions must be met:

- The recipient must exhaust all of his/her personal sick time, vacation time, compensatory time and six weeks' paid leave prior to utilizing donated sick time.
- Requests are considered for catastrophic events, illness resulting in a medical condition or injury that will require a loss of 30 days or more work days in a calendar year.
- No more than 40 hours per calendar year may be donated by any employee.
- Recipient must have been employed full time for one year.
- Donated hours cannot extend FMLA protection or other leaves and will not be paid out to the recipient in any form.

7.4 Bereavement Leave

In the event of a death in a regular full-time employee's immediate family, the employee will be allowed up to three (3) normally scheduled consecutive working days off immediately following the death to arrange for and/or attend the funeral.

Those individuals who are considered immediate family members under this policy are as follows: spouse, parents, siblings, grandchildren, parents-in-law, children, step children, grandparents, foster parents, step parents.

The use of sick leave for death of a family member is limited to two (2) days. Time over the five (5) allotted days (three days of bereavement leave and two days of sick leave) must be taken using the employees' available compensatory/vacation time.

7.5 Jury Duty

County employees who are subpoenaed to serve as jurors will be granted civil leave. Civil leave is granted for any day or days an employee is required, by summons, to report for jury duty, provided such responsibility for jury duty exceeds three (3) hours during the day for which the excuse is sought. If the employee serves less than three (3) hours per day, the time served is considered civil leave and the employee must return to work or use compensatory or annual leave for the remaining work hours. An employee may retain any compensation received for jury duty from the courts. Civil leave includes the time required to travel to and from jury duty... Time spent on jury duty will not be counted as hours worked for the purpose of computing overtime pay in any given week.

Employees must provide proof of jury duty before being paid for those days spent in jury duty. Employees' pay will be adjusted to account for payment by the court system.

The above provision does not apply if the employee is involved in private litigation as a plaintiff, defendant, or for non-subpoenaed court appearances. In those instances, the employee must take vacation leave or compensatory time.

7.6 Voting Leave

Any employee entitled to vote in an election held in this state may take a reasonable time (not over three hours) off from work on Election Day to vote. T.C.A. § 2-1-106. If the polls are open for more than three hours before or after the employee's shift begins or ends, the employee is not entitled to take time off to vote. If time off must be given, the employee is required to give the employer notice by noon on the day before the election and the employer can specify the voting hours.

It is unlawful to coerce or direct an employee to vote or not vote for a candidate or measure, or to vote for any candidate, or to circulate any statement or report intended to coerce or intimidate an employee to vote in a particular way, or to discipline or discharge an employee for the way he or she votes. T.C.A. § 2-19-134.

7.7 Family/Medical Leaves of Absence

Bedford County employees who have been employed for at least 12 months, and have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours during the previous 12-month period, are entitled to take leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). Bedford County has elected to use the "rolling" 12-month period allowed by the FMLA. Any FMLA leave taken by an employee during the preceding twelve (12) months will be used to determine the amount of available leave pursuant to the FMLA.

For example, if an employee used six weeks of FMLA leave beginning June 1, 2011, two weeks of FMLA leave beginning September 1, 2011, and four weeks of FMLA leave

beginning November 1, 2011, the employee would not be entitled to any additional FMLA leave until June 1, 2012. On June 1, 2012, the employee would be entitled to an additional two weeks, etc. If an employee took twelve weeks of FMLA leave beginning September 1, 2012, the employee would not be entitled to any additional FMLA leave until September 1, 2013.

Family and Medical Leave may be taken for:

- The birth of a child or to care for a child within the first 12 months after birth;
- The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care and to bond with and care for the child (within the first 12 months of placement);
- To care for an immediate family member who has a serious health condition;
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his/her position; or
- If the employee experiences a qualifying exigency that arises out of the fact that a spouse, parent, or child has been called to or is on active duty in the Armed Forces.

Injured Service member Leave. An employee who is the spouse, parent, child, or next of kin of a member of the Armed Forces who was injured in the line of duty ("injured service member") may be eligible for up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period, including the types of leave listed above.

Notice of Leave. When requesting leave, the employee must provide notice of the need for leave at least 30 days in advance or as soon as practicable. In the event of an emergency, the request should be submitted to the supervisor no later than 48 hours following the commencement of the injury, illness, or disability. If the employee cannot contact the Supervisor personally, the employee should have someone contact the County of his/her behalf. Bedford County may designate an absence as FMLA leave, if the employee is eligible, even if employee did not specifically request FMLA leave.

Medical and other Certifications. Employees will be required to provide a medical certification if the leave request is: 1) for the employee's own serious health condition, 2) to care for a family member's serious health condition, or 3) military caregiver leave. Failure to provide the requested medical certification within 15 calendar days may result in denial of the leave. If an employee refuses to provide a medical certification, his or her leave request may be denied and the employee may be disciplined.

Bedford County, at its expense, may require a medical examination by a health care provider of its own choosing if it has a reasonable question regarding the medical certification provided by the employee. In lieu of a second opinion, Bedford County may contact the health care provider directly to clarify or authenticate a medical certification, including certifications for military caregiver leave. Second opinions may not be required for military caregiver leave.

Separate certification may also be required regarding the nature of the family member's military service and/or the existence of a qualifying exigency.

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits employers and other entities covered by GINA Title II from requesting or requiring genetic information of employees or their family members. In order to comply with this law, we are asking that you not provide any genetic information to the County or its representatives.

Definition of Serious Health Condition. A serious health condition is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves (a) inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility of more than 3 days; or (b) continuing treatment by a health care provider.

Under the family leave portion of the policy, a seriously ill family member is defined as a parent, child or spouse who has a physical or mental condition that warrants the participation of the employee during the period of medical treatment.

Fitness for Duty Certifications. Because Bedford County wishes to ensure the well-being of all employees, any employee returning from FMLA leave for his/her own serious health condition will need to provide a Fitness for Duty (FFD) statement signed by his/her treating physician. Any employee who fails to provide an FFD statement will be prohibited from returning to work until it is provided. An employee who fails to provide an FFD certification may be disciplined or terminated.

Maintenance of Benefits. Bedford County will maintain health care benefits for the employee while on FMLA leave, but the employee is responsible for paying the normal monthly contribution. If the employee elects not to return to work at the end of the leave period, the employee will be required to reimburse Bedford County for the cost of premiums paid for maintaining coverage during the leave period. All other benefits cease to accrue during the unpaid portion of the leave.

Concurrent Leave. Employees must use any accumulated sick leave or comp time to the extent available during FMLA leave unless such leave is covered under Workers' Compensation, in which case the employee may only use accumulated leave time for the purpose of satisfying any waiting period. Absences in excess of these accumulated days or the provisions listed in the next section will be treated as FMLA leave without pay.

Employees working in departments which utilize PTO should refer to that specific departmental policy.

Paid Leave Provisions. In order to receive pay during FMLA, the employee must be paid out with these provisions in the designated order:

1. Use of all Sick and Comp Leave
2. Six weeks' paid leave
3. Personal leave
4. Vacation leave
5. Donated sick leave hours

At the time that all of the paid leave provisions are exhausted, an employee will have leave without pay. Employees not utilizing the full six weeks' paid leave will not receive compensation for unused paid leave. Employees who qualify for subsequent FMLA will be afforded the six weeks' paid leave as necessary with no deduction for previously used paid leave.

Employees working in departments utilizing PTO should refer to her/his departmental policy for guidance.

Married Couples Who Work for Bedford County. If an employee and his/her spouse both work for Bedford County, they are both eligible for leave. The amount of leave allowed for the employee and the employee's spouse may be limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period if the leave is taken for:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child;
- To care for and bond with such child who does not suffer from a serious health condition;
- To care for a parent with a serious health condition; or

- A combination of the above.

For injured service member leave, the employee and his/her spouse may be limited to a combined total of 26 weeks of leave in a 12-month period, including the types of leave listed above in this paragraph.

Intermittent Leave. It may be medically necessary for some employees to use intermittent FMLA leave. Bedford County will work with employees (and employees are required to work with the County) to arrange reduced work schedules or leaves of absence in order to care for a family member's serious medical condition or due to the employee's own serious medical condition. Fitness for Duty statements are not required when an employee returns from intermittent FMLA leave. Employees utilizing intermittent leave are afforded the same paid leave provisions as those utilizing full time FMLA within the twelve month period.

Leave because of the birth or adoption of a child must be completed within the 12-month period beginning on the date of birth or placement of the child. It may not be taken intermittently. See also the Tennessee Maternity Leave policy.

Return from Leave. Employees who do not return to work will be administratively discharged when they have exhausted their FMLA leave unless they are entitled to additional leave as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Attendance Policy. Qualifying FMLA leave will not be counted as an absence under the county's attendance policy.

State and Local Laws. When state and local laws offer more protection or benefits, the protection or benefits provided by those laws will apply.

7.8 Tennessee Maternity Act

As mandated by Tennessee law, both female and male employees of Bedford County Government who have been employed full-time for 12 consecutive months will be eligible for up to four months of unpaid maternity leave for pregnancy and the birth, adoption and nursing of a child.

Except in an emergency, an employee is required to give three months advance notice to his or her supervisor as to the anticipated date of departure for maternity leave, the length of maternity leave he or she plans to utilize, and his or her intentions to return to full-time employment following the leave. However, in cases of a medical emergency requiring the maternity leave to begin immediately, employees may choose to use accrued time for maternity leave. For adoption, leave begins upon the employee receiving custody of the child.

Employees are responsible for maintaining their share of the insurance premium payments while on maternity leave. Arrangements must be made prior to departure for timely payments of insurance premiums during the leave time.

It should be noted that maternity leave, family and medical leave and any paid leave an employee utilizes to supplement the unpaid portion of the leave shall all run concurrently.

Employees returning from maternity leave will be reinstated to their previous position if at all possible. If their previous position is not available, a similar position with similar pay generally will be provided.

7.9 Military Leave

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, Bedford County Government is committed to providing the basic employment and reemployment services and support as set forth in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) as well as T.C.A. § 8-33-109, Reservist's Leave of Absence.

An employee who is called to military service, voluntarily or involuntarily, will be granted a leave of absence for the time necessary to fulfill the military obligations. Advance notice of military service is required, unless military necessity prevents such notice or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable. Such notification to the County should include written verification of duty call from military authority, date the leave is to commence, and the expected date of return.

Employees who are members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces of the United States, including members of the Tennessee National Guard, receive leave without pay for up to twenty (20) days or 160 hours maximum in one calendar year. Leave without pay is granted for periods of active duty or training activity with the U.S. Armed Services, (both regular and reserve components) or the Tennessee National Guard for authorized periods exceeding the twenty (20) days of paid leave.

Upon completion of their military service, employees who apply for reinstatement within the stated time period as required by USERRA based on length of leave are entitled to be restored to their former jobs with no loss of service time, or to a position offering the same pay with no loss of service time.

Additionally, while on a military leave of absence, employees taking military leave are entitled to elect to continue health care coverage; to the extent such coverage is otherwise provided, for a period of up to 31 days. After 31 days, continuation of health insurance benefits, at the employee's own expense, is available as required by USERRA for a period of up to 24 months, and subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of the applicable plans for which the employee is otherwise eligible. Upon re-employment from military leave, the employee will be exempt from insurance waiting periods or limitations on coverage for the employee and all covered family members.

7.10 Personal Leave

Employees get 21 hours personal leave. If you encounter circumstances that are not covered by the other leaves listed, you may apply for a personal leave of absence. Personal leave is with pay and may be granted by an employee's the Department Head at their discretion. Personal leaves are available to employees who have worked for the County at least 90 days and are in good standing at the time the leave is requested. In the event your absence may cause undue hardship to the County or the department, your request can be denied. Personal Leave cannot be carried over at the end of the year or be paid out.

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge I have received a copy of Bedford County Government's Employee Handbook. I understand it contains important information about the County's general policies and about my privileges and obligations as an employee. I further understand and acknowledge I am governed by the contents of the Employee Handbook and I am expected to read, understand, familiarize myself with and comply with the policies contained in them.

I also understand that my individual department may have supplemental policies that I must also be familiar and which may replace specific policies in this manual.

I also understand the County may change, rescind, or add to any of the policies, benefits, or practices described in the Employee Handbook, except the employment-at-will policy in its sole and absolute discretion, with or without prior notice.

I also understand the County will advise employees from time to time of material changes to the policies, benefits, or practices described in the Employee Handbook.

Furthermore, I understand, acknowledge and agree the Employee Handbook is not a contract of employment. I also understand my employment with the County is not for a specified term and employment with the County is at the mutual consent of the employee and the County. Therefore, I hereby acknowledge either the County or I can terminate my employment relationship at will, with or without cause or notice.

Employee's Printed Name

Position

Employee's Signature

Date



Notes