

DIXIE COUNTY EMPLOYEE POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

EFFECTIVE DATE

This revised version of the Employee Policy and Procedures Manual was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on 17 February 2022 and made effective February 17, 2022. All prior policies and procedures in conflict are hereby repealed.

Resolution No. 2022-29: Dated 2/17/2022

WELCOME

It is a pleasure to welcome you as an employee of Dixie County. We would like you to know that you are with us because we believe that you will make a valuable contribution in serving the people of our county. The special abilities or skills that you bring to us can make you an integral member of our team.

We have an obligation to our fellow citizens to provide a system of good government. To do this we must give them the best, most efficient and courteous service possible. People are our most valuable asset and we never forget that our personnel are responsible for our accomplishments.

In an effort to help you adjust to your new job, this Employee Policy and Procedures Manual has been prepared to acquaint you with some of the important policies and benefits.

This manual guides you through what is expected of you as an employee. It does not create an employment contract and does not alter the nature of your employment with Dixie County. No employee has a property interest in employment and employment remains at-will at all times.

This manual supersedes all previously issued memoranda that may conflict with its provisions. As the need arises, the County may amend, revise, modify or delete provisions or policies without prior notice. Any amendments or modifications will be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

While this Employee Policy and Procedures Manual is intended to apply to all employees, collective bargaining agreements or practices may differ. Whenever there is a conflict between an applicable collective bargaining provision and a provision in this manual, the collective bargaining agreement will control.

In closing, we hope you will take pride in working here and wish you the best.

Sincerely,

Board of County Commissioners

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1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 Scope and Intent of Manual

These rules and regulations set forth the personnel policies of Dixie County. This is a guideline to familiarize everyone with some of the basic policies of the County. None of the policies are fixed terms of employment, and Dixie County reserves the right to modify any such policies or to make exceptions to them, at any time, without notice.

Dixie County makes a substantial investment in its employees and appreciates how valuable each individual is to the team. The County will make every effort to work with members of the team to apply its policies fairly and to resolve job performance or other problems.

This Handbook supersedes all previous handbooks, policies and practices which are in any way inconsistent with the contents of this Handbook. Finally, this Handbook should not be construed as creating any kind of "employment contract," since Dixie County reserves the right to add, change or delete benefits and policies as it deems appropriate.

These rules are not intended to, and do not create a contract of employment, nor does any policy statement herein or otherwise constitute a guarantee of future employment. Additionally, these policies do not guarantee a promise of specific treatment or any particular term of employment. Any oral or written statements to the contrary are hereby expressly disavowed and should not be relied upon by any current or prospective employee.

1.2 Code of Employment

In order to communicate to all employees the fundamental principles and mutual rights and obligations comprising the relationship of employment between Dixie County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and its personnel, it is the policy of the County to employ people on the basis of their qualifications and with assurance of equal opportunity and treatment regardless of an individual's race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, medical condition, mental and/or physical disability, marital status, gender, age, veteran status, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law.

Procedure

- A. In its continuing effort to implement fair and effective personnel policies, guidelines and practices, the County:
1. Employs people on the basis of their qualifications and with assurance of equal opportunity and treatment regardless of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, medical condition, mental and/or physical disability, marital status, gender, age, or veteran status or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law.
 2. Provides salaries and employee benefits which bear a fair and reasonable relationship to the work performed.
 3. Establishes reasonable hours of work.
 4. Maintains safe and healthful working conditions.
 5. Provides systematic work-related training during normal duty hours whenever possible, for those whose needs, capabilities and desires warrant such training.
 6. Welcomes constructive suggestions which relate to methods, procedures, working conditions and the nature of the work performed.
 7. Establishes procedures for employees to discuss freely any matter of interest or concern with their immediate Supervisors or Department Heads.
 8. Permits each employee as much discretion and responsibility in performing their duties as is consistent with a well-coordinated and effective operation.

B. The County expects all employees:

1. To perform a productive day's work.
2. To arrive at their departments or work assignments on time.
3. To demonstrate a considerate, friendly, and constructive attitude toward all people.
4. To adhere to the Policies and Guidelines adopted by the County.
5. To conduct themselves in accordance with Dixie County Core Values:
 - a. **Integrity** - We are honest. We do the right thing when no one is watching. We stand up for what is right. We own mistakes and learn from them.
 - b. **Respect** - We earn this. We treat everyone with courtesy, consideration, and compassion. We appreciate all regardless of position or title. We resolve conflicts to help others and improve team unity.
 - c. **Service Excellence** - We serve to make our community better. We place our citizens' and customers' interests first. We deliver at the highest standards. We are always learning and improving.
 - d. **Innovation** - We are open to change. We minimize complexity and simplify processes. We embrace creativity and encourage participation. We implement cost-effective solutions.

1.3 Management Rights

In order to communicate to all employees, the fundamental principles and mutual rights and obligations comprising the relationship of employment between Dixie County BOCC and its personnel, it is the policy of the county to establish certain managerial rights and responsibilities.

Procedure

The County retains the following rights, in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and Human Resources rules and guidelines including, but not limited to, the following:

1. To determine and change work hours.
2. To determine and change the size of and qualifications of the work force.
3. To establish and change its policies, guidelines, practices, rules, and regulations.
4. To determine and change methods by which its operations are to be carried out.
5. To assign duties to employees in accordance with the County's needs and requirements and to carry out all ordinary administrative and operational functions.
6. To designate special hours and work rules which may be in conflict with these policies and guidelines for the person performing critical job functions such as Emergency Services or a job that directly affects public health and safety.
7. To determine the organization of County Government and the purpose of each of its constituent agencies.
8. To exercise control and discretion over the organization and efficiency of operations of the County.
9. To set standards for services to be offered to the public.
10. To hire, examine, classify, promote, train, transfer, assign, schedule, and retain employees in positions with the County.
11. To suspend, demote, discharge, or take other disciplinary action against employees for cause.
12. To increase, reduce, change, modify, or otherwise alter the composition and size of the workforce, including the right to relieve employees from duties because of lack of work, funds, or other legitimate reasons.
13. To determine the number of employees to be employed by the County.

14. To establish, change, or modify the number, types, and grades of positions or employees assigned to an organization, unit, department, division, or project.
15. To establish, change, or modify duties, tasks, responsibilities, or job requirements, in the interest of efficiency, economy, technological change, or operating requirements.

1.4 Dixie County Manager

Has the authority to amend the rules and regulations from time to time as necessary to sustain County operations. Is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Employee Policies and Procedures in cooperation with the Human Resources Administrator. Establish hiring practices to be followed by County administration and management personnel. Establish procedures for the suspension, removal, or termination of employees. The authority to suspend, remove, or terminate, with, or without the approval of the Board of County Commissioners, any exempt or non-exempt employee under the control of the County Manager. Performs such other duties and exercises such other powers in the personnel administration as may be prescribed by law or the personnel policies and procedures.

1.5 Human Resources (HR) Administrator

The Human Resources Office is responsible for maintaining employee records and shall keep the master copy of the Employee Policy and all adopted Supplements and supporting Resolutions and provide updates to employees. The Human Resources Administrator shall:

Administer the Human Resources rules and regulations, and issue operating instructions and interpretations of the rules to employees. Prepare and recommend to the County Manager a Classification Plan and amendments to the plan so that it will reflect on a current basis the duties being performed by each position in the County Service and the classification to which the position is allocated. Administer the Compensation Plan, including the periodic study of wage and salary levels in the labor market, and make recommendations to the County Manager for amendments to the Compensation Plan. Prepare and recommend such rules or amendments to the Personnel Policy & Procedure Manual to the County Manager as necessary to carry out the intent and purposes of the personnel administration system. Establish and maintain a roster of all employees in the County Service under the Board of County Commissioners. Develop and implement, at the direction of the County Manager, appointing authorities, employees, and others, such training and educational programs for the purpose of improving the quality of services rendered to the citizens and of aiding employees to equip themselves for advancement in the Career Service System. Perform such other duties and activities with reference to personnel administration, as may be necessary or desirable to enforce the provisions of these Rules, as the County Manager may direct or as may be required.

(History: Resolution No. 2011-41)

1.6 Department Heads/Supervisors/Division Chiefs

The Department Head is responsible for the day-to-day operations of their department. Duties shall include but are not limited to:

Identify areas of improvements and concerns to County Manager. Provide job trainings to employees to improve their technical skills. Evaluate staff performance and provide feedback for improvements. Analyze department issues and provide appropriate corrective actions. Determine resource requirements and perform resource allocations to execute assigned work on-time. Maintain department records and generate routine and ad-hoc reports for management as requested. Ensure department staffs follow standard operation procedures. Follow and enforce Dixie County policies and procedures. Monitor timesheets of employees and approve leaves for employees as needed. Address employee grievances and maintain positive and safe working environment for employees.

1.7 Department Policies and Procedures

Departmental/Divisional policies and procedures shall serve as supplements to these Rules and Regulations.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Departmental/Divisional policies and procedures will be submitted, as a WORD document, to the County Manager and Human Resources Administrator for approval regarding conformity to and inclusion in the Dixie County Employee Policy & Procedure Manual.

Standard Operating Guideline (SOG). Departmental/Divisional guidelines and procedures will be submitted, as a WORD document, to the County Manager and Human Resources Administrator for approval regarding conformity to the Dixie County Employee Policy & Procedure Manual and must be on file with the Human Resources Department.

1.8 County Information/Records/Confidentially

All requirements for information about records, procedures or other internal matters are to be referred to the Department Head. No records, official documents, material, manuals, or other properties of the County are to be loaned, given, or sold to any outside person or concern by any employee without approval of the Department Head.

Department employees may have access to information regarding Department business and individual members of the public as they interact with the Department and/or Board. At no time should an employee allow access to personally identifiable information from or about an employee or a person's use of Department facilities or programs for any purpose without advance written authorization from the County Manager. If in doubt regarding the disclosure of specific information, employees should ask his/her supervisor or Human Resources for assistance in determining whether information should be released.

Public Records Act: All requests for records pursuant to Florida's Access to Public Records Act shall be immediately forwarded to the Department Head for response.

1.9 Employment Reference Prohibition

Dixie County BOCC prohibits supervisors and employees alike from providing employment reference information to third parties, including prospective employers. Any and all solicitations for reference information should be immediately directed to the human resource office for appropriate management. The human resource office shall only provide a former employee's position title, dates of employment, and whether such employee is eligible to be rehired absent court mandate or a contractual agreement to the contrary. Such policy has been designed to protect both employees and Dixie County BOCC departments from liability.

1.10 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy Statement

The **Human Resources Administrator** is designated the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer to administer, coordinate, and supervise all equal employment opportunity projects and concepts.

Dixie County will not discriminate in employment or employee development because of an individual's race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, medical condition, mental and/or physical disability, marital status, gender, age, veteran status, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation, or any other protected status in accordance with the requirements of all federal, state, and local laws.

Dixie County will not tolerate discrimination in any form. All levels of management are responsible for implementing and enforcing our EEO policy. All employees are likewise expected to share in our commitment to this program by immediately reporting any suspected violations or mistreatment directly to the Immediate Supervisor, Department Head, County Manager, or HR Department.

The full EEO Policy is available from the Human Resources Administrator.

1.11 Americans with Disabilities Act - Reasonable Accommodations Policy

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The County will provide a reasonable accommodation to an otherwise qualified disabled employee or applicant, unless or until the accommodation imposes an undue hardship on the County. Human Resources will assist departments in the reasonable accommodation process for those employees with a qualifying disability, in order to enable them to perform the essential functions of their job.

- A. Employees who are diagnosed by a health care provider as having a disability, as that term is defined by applicable law, and who want a reasonable accommodation to enable performance of essential job functions, should inform Human Resources of their need as soon as possible. The employee's medical condition will be kept confidential as required by law. It is the employee's responsibility to request the accommodation(s) desired.
- B. Employees who have a disability and who want an accommodation must provide Human Resources with any pertinent medical records regarding diagnosis, and those records requested by the County to make decisions regarding job assignments, ability to continue working or ability to return to work.
- C. The County will also require a doctor's certification of an employee's ability to perform duties safely. Additionally, the County may request that an employee submit to a medical examination if it believes the employee is a direct health or safety threat to himself/herself or others.
- D. In attempting to reach a reasonable accommodation with a person with a qualifying disability the County will consult with the person with the disability in a sincere effort to reach an accommodation that will permit the employee to perform the essential functions of the job. While Dixie County cannot make all requested accommodations, it will work with the employees to define reasonable terms and supply such terms to the employee. If the employee cannot perform the essential functions with the requested accommodation, the employee may be separated from Dixie County.

1.12 Veterans Preference Policy

The County will comply with the provisions of Chapter 295, Florida Statutes, regarding Veteran's preference.

1.13 Inclusion, Diversity, Access and Equity (IDEA) Policy

Dixie County is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In Dixie County a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace is one where all employees and volunteers, whatever their gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation or identity, education or disability, veteran's status, socio-economic status, feels valued and respected.

Our human capital is the most valuable asset we have. We are committed to a nondiscriminatory approach and provide equal opportunity for employment and advancement in all our departments and worksites. We respect and value diverse life experiences and heritages and ensure that all voices are valued and heard.

Our diversity initiatives are a part of, but not limited to our practices and policies on recruitment and selection; compensation and benefits; professional development and training; promotions; transfers; social and recreational programs; layoffs; terminations; and the ongoing development of a work environment that encourages diversity, inclusion, and equity.

1.14 Anti-Nepotism Policy

The employment of relatives of public officials is restricted under Section 112.3135, Florida Statutes. "Public Officials" include any employee with authority to appoint, employ, promote or advance individuals or with authority to make recommendations for the appointment, employment, etc. For the purpose of this policy, family member is defined as a spouse, domestic partner, romantic partner, children, parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, first cousins, and corresponding in-law or step relationships. No relatives are permitted to work in the same department or in any other positions in which the County believes an inherent

conflict of interest may exist. If neither individual has direct supervision, control, or jurisdiction over the other nor do not work in the same work unit, the County may decide whether to permit both employees to retain their positions with the County.

If, while employed by the County, individuals become related by marriage or adoption, the following shall apply:

1. If neither individual has direct supervision, control, or jurisdiction over the other nor do not work in the same work unit, the County may decide whether to permit both employees to retain their positions with the County.
2. Should marriage or adoption occur between the supervisor and a subordinate employee, one of the employees must transfer to end the supervisory relationship, if possible, or if not possible, be terminated from the position.
3. If the affected employees cannot decide who is to be transferred or terminated the County reserves the right to make the decision.

1.15 Breastfeeding Accommodation

We recognize the needs of new mothers and provide a reasonable unpaid break time for employees needed to express breast milk for their nursing child for up to one year from the child's date of birth. If such need arises, simply contact human resources and necessary breaks and corresponding office space, free from intrusion, will be provided.

1.16 Promissory Note Policy

By executing the acknowledgment form attached to this Handbook, the employee accepts and understands that it may be utilized as an enforceable promissory note. If the employee fails to return any equipment, money, credit cards, or other property assigned to the employee during employment, Dixie County may first withhold the value of such amount from any final compensation due to the employee including paychecks, paid time off accrual, or any other such earned benefit. If such compensation does not exist or is insufficient to offset the value of the property due, the employee understands and agrees that Dixie County has legal entitlement to such property and will be responsible for such value and the cost of all attorney fees and costs expended in pursuing such property.

2 EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Florida is an "at-will" employment state, meaning that either you or your employer can terminate your employment at any time and without any advance warning. In an "at-will" state, both you and your employer are presumed to be working through your own volition, "at will," with no long-term contractual obligation to each other.

All employees of Dixie County are "at-will" employees, and the employee or Dixie County may terminate this relationship at any time, with or without notice. There is no property interest in any employment position.

2.1 Employee Hiring, Discipline, and Termination

Starting pay shall be in accordance with the current Policy and will not be exceeded unless specifically approved by the Board of County Commissioners. (*History: Resolution No. 2011-451*)

The Dixie Board of County Commissioners are responsible for the hiring and termination of BOCC Attorney, Engineering Firms, Medical Director, Other Contractual Services, and County Manager. All disciplinary actions, suspensions and terminations shall include the Human Resources Department or BOCC appointed representative. The County Manager is responsible for the hiring, disciplining, suspension, and termination of Department Heads and no action is necessary from the Board of County Commissioners. Department Heads are responsible for the hiring, disciplining, suspension, and termination of personnel within their department and no action is necessary from the Board of County Commissioners. Department Heads shall notify the County Manager of their decision at the time it is made. **This Section is to be read in conjunction with the Employee Disciplinary Measures Section of this manual.**

2.2 Employment Classifications

An employee is an individual who is actively carried on Dixie County payroll records and who receives wages or a salary from the County.

If an employee changes his/her employment status from one classification to another, the employee shall be subject to any resulting changes in benefits eligibility effective at the beginning of the next pay period. For employees who transfer from Part-Time to Full-Time or Full-Time to Part-Time, the date of transfer is treated as the hire date for purposes of benefits eligibility.

Employee appointments are as follows:

- A. **Exempt vs Non-Exempt.** The primary difference in status between exempt and non-exempt employees is their eligibility for overtime. Under federal law, that status is determined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Exempt employees do not qualify for minimum wage, are paid a salary, and are not entitled to overtime. Non-exempt employees are those who are eligible for minimum wage and overtime compensation is calculated at 1.5 times their hourly rate of pay.
- B. **Probationary.** During the probationary/introductory period an employee is required to demonstrate competency in the knowledge, skills, abilities, and character necessary to successfully perform the job and become a regular hire employee.
- C. **Full-Time.** A County employee who has satisfactorily completed the probationary period of service as required and who are regularly scheduled to work at least thirty (30) hours per week.
- D. **Part-Time.** A County employee who has satisfactorily completed the probationary period of service as required and work less than thirty (30) hours per week. Also, Emergency Services Department Uniform Employee who works a scheduled twenty-four (24) hour shift.
- E. **Fill-in/Temporary.** Positions (whether part-time or full-time) anticipated to be of comparatively short duration or definitely limited in duration for special projects or programs. Appointments to temporary positions will not exceed a six-month period unless specified by the project program. Emergency Services Department employees shall be required to work at minimum a twenty-four (24) hours within a six (6) month timeframe to remain active.

2.3 Job Descriptions/Classifications

It is the policy of the Dixie County BOCC that all employees will have accurate, written, and signed job descriptions in their personnel file. Job descriptions will reflect duties of the positions within each department. Departments will be responsible for writing and updating their respective job descriptions and forwarding them to the County Manager and Human Resources for approval. For all new positions and any positions in which job duties have significantly changed, it will be the responsibility of the department to write a new job description, which will then be forwarded to the County Manager and Human Resources for approval. No changes will be made to job descriptions without approval from Human Resources. Human Resources will be responsible for the classification of the job description and for ensuring the accuracy of each job description, including compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity and other regulatory guidelines.

2.4 Employee Promotions

When two or more employees are considered for promotion or other recognition and their qualifications and job performance are equal as determined by the Supervisor, the most senior employee shall be selected. That employee's seniority shall not be affected, but he/she shall serve the required probationary time in the new classification for six (6) months. (*History: Resolution No. 2011-18*)

2.5 Filling Vacancies

The Dixie County BOCC is committed to recruiting and selecting qualified applicants to fill vacant positions from internal and/or external applicants for each open position. An applicant must meet the minimum qualification standards for a position in order to be considered a candidate for that position. Qualification standards may include education and training, licenses, certifications, work experience, skills, and abilities. All hiring shall be conducted in accordance with the County's policy of equal employment opportunity to ensure open and fair competition for all applicants.

All jobs with an estimated duration of greater than 30 days will be posted internally for 3 working days and then, if necessary, externally in the newspaper or any other public area for 2 weeks. (*History: Resolution No. 2011-18: Dated 3/3/2011*)

The decision will be made by the County Manager/Department Head, based on the nature of the position, the required qualification standards, applicant's qualifications, and other relevant considerations. Applicants must meet a position's qualification standards to be considered for it. The posting process does not guarantee that a qualified internal applicant will be given preference over an external applicant to fill a position.

All applicants, including internal applicants and former employees, must submit an application or letter of intent, as directed by the posting notice or advertisement.

2.5.1 Procedure for Filling Vacancies

- A. **External Applicants.** When filling vacancies, the County will afford preference to qualified applicants who are Dixie County residents. This helps to ensure that our employees are in touch with the needs of our constituents: the citizens of Dixie County. In addition, residence in Dixie County reduces transportation related problems for our staff.
- B. **Internal Applicant Advancement.** When it is in the best interest of the County, an effort will be made to promote employees to higher level positions as these openings occur. However, the County promotes employees based on merit and qualifications. If you take additional courses or training to increase your present knowledge or learn a new skill, this information should be provided for inclusion in your personnel record so it may be considered when promotional opportunities arise.
- C. **Applicant Pool.** If an existing applicant pool exists from a previous requisition, and the applicant pool is less than 180 days old, departments are encouraged to revisit the existing applicant pool to seek qualified candidates. For example, if an applicant is a runner up in an interview, and the same position becomes available within 180 days, the department can return to that applicant without having to re-advertise the position.

2.5.2 Processing Applicants

- A. **Pre-Screening Applicant.** Review of a candidate's employment application and resume by HR Administrator.
- B. **Employment Application and Resume Review.** Employment application and resume review by Department Management or County Manager and HR to screen out applicants who do not meet the basic requirements for a position.
- C. **Preliminary Assessment of Eligible Candidates.**
 - Telephone Prescreening Assessment. Although not required, phone interviews are a quick, lower-cost alternative to conducting a first-round interview in person. An initial phone conversation can give the employer a wealth of information about a candidate's overall communication skills, sense of humor, ability to listen, attitude and professionalism. A typical pre-screening telephone interview lasts 20 to 30 minutes and includes questions designed to eliminate candidates who are not eligible for consideration. Examples of questions include the following: Is the salary range for this position within your acceptable range? Why are you searching for a new position? What are the top three duties in the job you now have or in your most recent job? What is your highest degree? What do you see as your strongest skills, and what are your key challenges?
 - Background/Reference Checks. Including but not limited to Employment History, Criminal History, and Motor Vehicle Records.
- D. **Interview.** When it has been determined that a successful applicant(s) has the necessary qualifications, an interview may be scheduled with the appropriate Department Heads/County Manager.
- E. **Job Offer.** The department/division head will notify the Human Resources Department if the applicant is or is not to be offered employment.

2.5.3 Pre-Employment Screening/Paperwork/Orientation

Before final processing, the applicant shall complete a pre-employment screening including but not limited to the following:

A. **Employee Loyalty Oath**

Florida law requires that each County employee take the following oath before a Notary Public:

As a citizen of the State of Florida and of the United States of America or a legal alien, being employed by or as an officer of the Dixie County Board of County Commissioners and a recipient of public funds as such, I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support the Constitution of the United States and of the State of Florida.

A copy of this oath must be signed by each employee and filed in the records of the County before the Board can approve any voucher for the payment of salary, expenses, or other compensation to the employee. Any person who fails to execute this oath shall be immediately discharged and shall not be permitted to receive any payment as an employee of the County. Any person subsequently found to have made a false statement in the above oath may be guilty of the crime of perjury under Florida law.

B. **Employee Physical Examination**

Applicants given a conditional offer of employment will be required to satisfactorily pass a physical examination before beginning work, including a urinalysis, blood or other test for illegal drugs or alcohol. The cost of this examination shall be paid by the County so that the County may obtain the original results (which shall be kept confidential).

The employee may be asked for other physical examinations after employment if he or she has been sick or injured on the job, with the physical examination to be conducted by a medical service provider approved by the County. - As deemed necessary, this policy may be extended to temporary employees or those who are working for the County under special State or Federal employment/training programs.

C. Employee Drug and Alcohol Testing

Any applicant given a conditional offer of employment to a County position will be tested for both alcohol and drugs before they perform any functions of their job description for the first time.

D. Background Check

All job classifications in Dixie County will require a FDLE background investigation. Certain job classifications in Dixie County will require a higher level of background investigation, such as a level 2 FBI background check. These can include jobs in health care, childcare, education, park attendants, and public transportation, among others.

Dixie County must be able to employ individuals who are trustworthy and able to properly interact with key organizational partners. Employees agree, by signing the acknowledgment provision verifying agreement to this handbook, that Dixie County may conduct occasional criminal, employment, driving and educational backgrounds on employees as it deems necessary to conduct its operation in a profitable and legal manner. Dixie County reserves the right to take any and all action it deems necessary to act upon the results of such ongoing screening.

E. Responsibility For Accurate and Truthful Information

Employees of Dixie County are responsible for providing accurate and truthful information to Dixie County in all aspects of the employment relationship. This obligation begins with an employee's application and all information submitted to Dixie County prior to hire and is a continuing obligation through an employee's tenure with Dixie County. This includes, but is not limited to, all information an employee submits regarding his or her internal administrative and benefit-related documentation, all records of time worked, all input regarding any form of performance evaluation or corrective action plan, and as related to an employee's performance of his or her job duties. Any violation of this obligation on the part of the employee will result in discipline upon discovery of the false information, with the likelihood such actions will lead to termination of employment.

F. New Hire Payroll

The County has a direct deposit program for pay purposes. It is mandatory for all new hires to utilize this program, at a bank of their choosing.

G. Acknowledgement of Receipt

This Employee Policy and Procedures Manual is not considered a contract or a guarantee of continued employment with the County. I understand that I serve at the pleasure of Dixie County and that either the County or I can terminate employment at any time with or without cause. I understand that the County has the authority and discretion to revise this Manual with or without notice. I will observe all current policies and rules.

____ I understand the County's Drug Free Workplace Policy and that I am subject to random testing at any time.

____ I understand the County's Information Systems Policy, Social Media Policy, Cellular Phone and Camera Use Policy, and I agree to abide by the policies herein.

____ I understand the County's Vehicles and Motorized Equipment Use and Record Policy and that I have a Duty to Notify all alleged traffic violations that involve speed, DUI, reckless driving or suspension or loss of license.

____ I understand the County's Prevent Spread of Contagious Illness at Work Policy and I agree to abide with the Staying Home When Ill Policy.

____ I understand the County's Promissory Note Policy and that I have an obligation to return any equipment, money, credit cards, or other property assigned during employment.

____ I understand Dixie County has a Zero Tolerance Policy on Sexual Harassment, Workplace Violence, and Other Illegal Harassment. A violation of these policies will lead to termination.

____ I understand the Dixie County utilizes recording equipment for security as well as in-person and online meetings/trainings may be recorded for the County's subsequent use. By signing the acknowledgement of this Employee Handbook, you affirm that you are aware of, and provide your consent for, the recording of these sessions.

____ I understand that if I am a nonexempt employee, the County may ask me to work over (40) hours in a work week, with the County having the option of paying compensatory time off at a rate not less than one and one-half hours for each hour of overtime worked or paying time and one-half for hours worked over forty (40) hours in a work week.

By my signature below I acknowledge receipt of this Manual and that I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions that I may have concerning the policies herein.

I also understand that as a condition of employment and as required by State law, I must take the following oath as prescribed by Section 876.05(1), Florida Statutes:

I, _____, a citizen of the State of Florida and of the United States of America, or a legal alien, and being employed by Dixie County, receiving public funds as such employee or officer, do hereby solemnly swear or affirm that I will support the Constitution of the United States of America and of the State of Florida.

2.6 Employee New Hire Orientation

The Department Head and new employee will meet first with the Human Resources Office, followed by and introduction to the County Commissioner Board Office and the County Manager's Office. New Hires will also be required to attend a daytime Commission meeting with their supervisor within 60 days of hire. The New Employee Orientation Flowsheet will be utilized and placed in their personnel file. This procedure applies to all new employees, including part-time and temporary positions. (*History: Resolution No. 2011-451*)

2.6.1 Emergency Services Department

When new employee is hired, they will also complete the orientation process as laid out in the Emergency Services Standard Operating Policies and Procedures Section of the Dixie County Employee Policy and Procedure Manual. (*History: Emergency Services #18-45 Effective Date: 1/30/18 – D. Brown*)

2.7 Employee Introductory/Probationary Period

All Employees shall serve an introductory period during for at least -

- The first one hundred eighty (180) days or
- Emergency Services Department Employees, the first three hundred sixty-five (365) days of their employment.

This period of time is established to evaluate the employee's work quality, attendance and other performance factors and to determine how well the employee fits in with our organization. It also gives the employee an opportunity to look at the County and decide whether the employee likes the new job and surroundings. Successful completion of the introductory period does not affect the at-will nature of employment.

During the introductory period, more experienced employees will share their knowledge and help you adjust to your duties and various procedures at Dixie County. Meanwhile, you should not hesitate to ask questions to learn as much as possible about the County.

At any time during an introductory period, an employee may be terminated if deemed in the best interest of the County. Satisfactory completion of the probationary period shall not be construed to mean that the employee has been given a property interest in his or her employment with the County.

The employee's supervisor will submit a written evaluation of the employee's performance a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the end of the employee's introductory period. Said evaluation shall be submitted to the Human Resources Administrator to be placed in the employee's personnel file, with a copy being provided to the County Manager.

Requests for extensions may be made for any just reason and should be made in writing by the Department Head/Emergency Services Director/Chief to the County Manager. Extension will take effect upon written approval by the County Manager.

Department Heads have the authority to extend an employee's introductory period, for any just cause, from an additional thirty (30) days to an additional ninety (90) days.

The Emergency Services Director/Chief shall have the authority to extend an employee's introductory period, for any just cause, from an additional thirty (30) days to an additional one hundred eighty (180) days.

2.8 Employee Records

Each employee has a personnel file in the Human Resources Department. A sound records management system enables the Department to establish and maintain a uniform, complete and accessible employment record of all employees, develop clear and efficient procedures for processing all employee transactions, and create a bank of data for evaluating personnel management policies and procedures. At the same time, it controls access to employee information that is defined as confidential under law.

- A. **Contents of Files:** Human Resources Department maintains a personnel file on each employee which contains, but not limited to, new hire, payroll, benefits, advancement, and discipline information.
- B. **Personnel Records:** Employees should be aware of the importance of keeping their personnel record current. You should promptly notify the Human Resources Administrator of any change of address, phone number, number of dependents, etc. This is your responsibility and failure to do so may result in the loss of benefits. You should also advise the County of any special training courses completed. Copies of diplomas or certificates should be forwarded to the Human Resources Administrator to become a permanent part of your personnel file. Personnel files are public record.

Certain Departments may also require you to maintain up to date contact information. Check with your immediate supervisor concerning departmental policies.

- C. **Access to Files:** Employees may view his/her personnel files in the Human Resources Office. Employees may also give written authorization for another person to view his/her files. Department Heads/County Manager are allowed to view pertinent documents of those employees who work under his/her supervision or those who have applied for a position under his/her supervision. Other access to personnel files is governed by applicable law, and all such requests must be made to the Human Resources Administrator in writing.

Personnel files shall be viewed under general supervision and shall not be removed from the Department's Human Resources Office. Copies will be made at the request and the expense of the employee, or any person authorized to view a file pursuant to Department policy or applicable law.

- D. **Public Information in Employee Personnel Files:** The following information in an employee's personnel file is public information: an employee's name, compensation, job title, business address and telephone number, job description, education and training background, previous work experience, first and last dates of employment, information relating to the status of any formal charges against the employee, and the factual basis for disciplinary action in which final action has been taken and that resulted in the employee being suspended, demoted, or discharged. Generally, all other employee information is confidential, and shall not be disseminated without the employee's prior written consent or first confirming the appropriateness of such with the Board's attorney.

2.9 Employee Trainings and Meetings

On-Line Trainings/Meetings: Dixie County will periodically use resources available on-line to provide training for employees. When required, these trainings will be conducted as part of your assigned work duties. You will be expected to participate and will be appropriately compensated for all time spent on the trainings, whether conducted during or outside of your normal work schedule.

Additionally, we may use on-line resources to conduct meetings among management and staff as well as with our clients/customers. It is expected that you will participate in these meetings as part of your assigned work duties the same as you would an in-person meeting.

2.10 Employee Separation

Subject to the at-will provision outlined in the Florida Statutes and within this policy, the following are conditions relating to different types of employee separation:

- A. **Death:** The employee's spouse, if any, is to receive all benefits due to the deceased. If there is no surviving spouse, benefits will be paid to the estate, unless otherwise designated in writing by the employee and filed with the Human Resources Administrator.
- B. **Disability:** Employee is determined to have a qualified disability and is unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job, despite reasonable accommodation.
- C. **Personal Leave of Absence:** The BOCC has the discretion to grant extended leave of absence without pay as described under Employee Benefits Section of this manual.
- D. **Resignation:** Employees who decide to leave the County are required to provide two (2) weeks written notice unless otherwise agreed to by all parties. Employees who fail to provide this written notice forfeit unused sick leave.
- E. **Termination:** Employee is discharged or dismissed at will, as provided herein.

2.10.1 Employee Exit Process

Exit Interviews. Whenever an employee separates from the Department, except in cases of immediate termination, each employee who resigns from the County will be interviewed by the staff of the Human Resources Office and must complete an Exit Interview form. The purpose and intent of the Exit Interview is to provide the County with information as to why and in what areas employees are leaving their jobs. This information will be used to improve the County and reduce the turnover rate.

Return of Company Property. Following the Promissory Note Policy in this manual, at the time of separation all records, insurance, and prescription I.D. cards, books, uniforms, keys, tools, and other items of County property in the employee's custody shall be provided, returned, and/or transferred to the department/division. Certification to this effect shall be by the department/division supervisors. Any payment due the County because of any shortages will be collected through appropriate action defined in the Promissory Note Policy.

Continuation of Benefits. Insurance coverage will continue to the end of the month. After this coverage ends, former employee is responsible for their own insurance payment and premiums that are not paid within 30 days will cancel policy. Human Resources Department can provide additional information upon request.

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)

On April 7, 1986, a federal law was enacted (Public Law 99-272, Title X) requiring that most employers sponsoring group health plans offer employees and their families the opportunity for a temporary extension of health coverage (called "continuation coverage") at group rates in certain instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end. This notice is intended to inform you, in a summary fashion, of your rights and obligations under the continuation coverage provisions of the law.

If you are an employee of the Organization, covered by the Organization's medical insurance plan, you have the right to choose continuation coverage if you lose your group health coverage because of a reduction in your

hours of employment or the termination of your employment (for reasons other than gross misconduct on your part). Your eligible dependents may also have the right to elect and pay for continuation coverage for a temporary period in certain circumstances where their coverage under the Plan would otherwise end. If you have any questions concerning your rights under COBRA, please contact the Plan Administrator for details.

3 EMPLOYEE POLICIES AND PERSONAL CONDUCT

3.1 Customer Relations

It is the policy of the County to provide members of the public with the best possible service. Employees are expected to treat members of the public in a courteous, respectful manner at all times.

Procedure:

1. Employees should always remember that members of the public come first and are entitled to the same thoughtful treatment that the employee would like to receive. Members of the public should always be treated in a polite and courteous manner.
2. When a member of the public approaches an employee with a question or complaint, the employee will give the matter his/her immediate attention. If a member of the public becomes abusive or argumentative and the employee cannot properly handle the situation, the employee should contact their supervisor immediately. If the employee feels threatened, the proper authorities should be contacted.
3. Employees should be particularly careful to exercise courtesy and thoughtfulness in using the telephone. Unless department procedures dictate otherwise, the following procedures are to be followed:
 - When answering the telephone, give the name of the department and the identity of the speaker.
 - If the person with whom the caller wishes to speak is on another line, ask the caller if he desires to be placed on hold.
 - If a caller has been placed on hold, offer to have the call returned if the person with whom he wishes to speak is not available within a reasonable time.
 - When a caller leaves a name, number, or message, make sure it is recorded correctly with date, time, call back information and name of employee taking the message. Ensure the intended recipient receives the message.
 - When placing calls, all employees should take and place their own calls.
4. When an employee is in the field or needs to enter the residence of a citizen, the employee should: always show his/her identification, state the nature of his/her business, and always treat the citizen in a polite and courteous manner.

3.2 Dress Code and Uniforms Standard

An Immediate Supervisor or Department Head has the discretion to determine whether an employee's attire, grooming and overall appearance is appropriate considering the employee's position and job function.

An Immediate Supervisor or Department Head also has the authority and discretion to decide whether an employee should be sent home to correct their attire or be disciplined. Employees should use appropriate safety equipment as required by the County or other agencies as it applies to their job.

A. Dress Code:

1. Employees must always present a clean, professional appearance, dressed modestly, and appropriately to his or her position or job function at all times.
2. Everyone is expected to be well-groomed and wear clean clothing, free of holes, tears, or other signs of wear.
3. Clothing should not be too revealing. No bare midriffs. Shorts (if appropriate to job) shall be at least fingertip length when arms are extended.
4. Closed-toed shoes are required. Office personnel may wear office professional sandals/slides.
5. Clothing with offensive or inappropriate designs or stamps are not allowed.
6. Clothing and grooming styles dictated by religion or ethnicity are exempt.

B. **Uniforms**

It is an option that County employees wear uniforms. The Board of County Commissioners will pay one-half the cost of uniform rentals for employees. The employee will pay the other one-half the cost of uniform rentals as well as all of the set-up fees for the uniforms.

C. **Departmental Dress Code**

Departments may have additional establish standardized personal appearance guidelines and standards for the correct wear of departmental uniforms. Supervisors/Chiefs will provide employees with Departmental Standard Operating Policies and Procedures.

3.3 Employee Ethical Code of Personal Conduct

Each employee is a representative of the County to the public and should bear in mind that public taxes pay his or her salary. Questions regarding this policy are to be directed to the Human Resources Administrator. The Board's Attorney will advise on the appropriateness of a gift or the existence of a conflict of interest.

As a basic condition of employment, all employees have an obligation to conduct their official duties in a manner that serves the public interest, upholds the public trust, and protects the department's resources.

In order for any group to work together efficiently and safely, it is necessary to have a reasonable Ethical Code of Personal Conduct based on honesty and fair play. If an employee is not considerate of others and does not observe reasonable rules of conduct, disciplinary action may be taken. Because all persons do not always have the same ideas about good conduct, it is necessary to adopt and enforce certain rules. Depending on the severity of the disciplinary problem, disciplinary probation or termination of employment may be necessary for serious or repeated violations.

We have listed below standards expected of a Dixie County employee and offenses which we consider to be serious enough to result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment. However, this is not intended to be all inclusive list of such standards and offenses. The list may be supplemented at any time.

1. **Standard Departmental Operating Procedures and Guidelines:** Employees shall read and become familiar with their department's Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines. No plea of ignorance of the SOP/SOG will be accepted as an excuse for any violation.
2. **Acceptance of Money or Gifts:** No employee shall seek or accept anything of value that would cause a reasonably prudent person to be, or seem to the public to be, influenced in the discharge of official duties.
 - a. Accepting a gift, loan, reward, promise of future employment or personal service that may represent a conflict of interest in the performance of official duties.
 - b. Receiving any fee, gift, or other valuable asset in the course of employment or in connection therewith from any person, firm or corporation which such fee, gift or asset is accepted with the understanding or implication that the donor shall or actually does receive favors or services not customarily accorded to the general public.
3. **Financial Interest:** No employee shall have a direct or indirect financial interest that conflicts substantially or appears to conflict substantially with his or her official duties and responsibilities or engage in financial transactions as a result of relying on information obtained through employment.
4. **Use of Government Information:** No employee shall use or allow the use of official information gained through employment which has not been made available to the general public, for furthering a private interest. Disclosure or use of information not available to the public for any employee's personal gain or benefit or the gain or benefit of any other person or business entity.
5. **Use of Government Property:** No employee shall use or allow the use of County, State or Federal property of any kind for other than officially approved activities.

6. **Lost/Damaged Public Property:** All employees shall immediately report to their Immediate Supervisor or Department Head any accident, loss or damage to public property or equipment assigned to or used by them. Employees also shall notify their Immediate Supervisor or Department Head of any defects or hazardous conditions existing in any public equipment or property. Immediate Supervisors/Department Heads are expected to promptly take appropriate action to correct these conditions.

An employee who causes or contributes to the cause of a motor vehicle accident will be tested for alcohol and drugs. In addition, any County employee that is involved in an accident concerning a publicly owned vehicle will be required to appear before their Immediate Supervisor or Department Head to ascertain whether the employee is responsible for the damages. Should the employee be found responsible, the Board may require the employee to appear to determine the amount of liability and establish the amount of reimbursement to the County. The reimbursement required may be in full or in part.

7. **Gambling:** No employee shall participate in any gambling activity of any kind while on duty or while on County owned or leased property.
8. **Civil Disorders:** No employee shall engage in a riot or civil disorder.
9. **Violation of Established Policies:** Each employee is responsible for reading and understanding this Manual and abiding by its provisions.
- a. Including annual leave, sick leave, medical or general testing requirements.
 - b. Absenteeism, tardiness, and/or leaving the job during working hours without permission from your Immediate Supervisor/Department Head.
 - c. Taking an active part in a political campaign while on duty or within any period of time during which the employee is expected to perform services and for which the employee receives compensation from the County.
 - d. Falsification of written records or reports, including, but not limited to, false statements on applications for employment, expense records or travel account forms.
 - e. Violation of or disregard of safety rules or common safety practices.
 - f. Engaging in offensive or disrespectful language or conduct toward the public, toward other County officers or toward other employees.
 - g. Failure to maintain proper licensure or certification.
10. **General Conduct:** No employee shall engage in criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or obviously disgraceful conduct or other conduct injurious or prejudicial to the County.
- a. Conviction of a felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or dishonesty.
 - b. Insubordination or refusal to obey instructions.
 - c. Refusal to work overtime, when requested.
 - d. Filling out another employee's timecard without authorization or falsification of time records.
 - e. Smoking in prohibited areas.
 - f. Fighting, disorderly conduct, horseplay, practical jokes, or pranks on premises or during working time.
 - g. Possession of any unauthorized fireworks, weapons, ammunition, or explosives on the job.
 - h. Unauthorized use of telephones or violation of the long-distance policy.
 - i. Any other misconduct prejudicial to the interests of the County.
 - j. Misappropriating, damaging, or destroying County property, property of other employees or property of the public.

11. **Drugs and Alcohol:** No County employee may manufacture, possess, distribute, purchase, consume or be under the influence of any alcohol or controlled substance while on the job or on County property. Possession

or use of any intoxicant or illegal drugs, including alcohol or marijuana, during the workday, including immediately before or during lunch periods, or reporting to work under the influence of such substances.

Any employee taking a legally prescribed medication that may alter his or her ability to safely perform their job duties must report these medications to their Immediate Supervisor or Department Head prior to coming to work with the drugs in their system. In such case, the employee may be subject to restrictions in their work duty status. An employee's failure to report any medication that may cause drowsiness or impair his or her ability to perform his or her job duties will be considered a violation of this policy and the employee shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

12. **Conflict of Interest:** No County Employee shall have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect; engage in any business transaction or professional activity; or incur any obligation of any nature which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his/her duties in the public interest (F.S. 112.311 (5).)
13. **All paper and electronic files** prepared in the course of County business are the property of the County and may not be reproduced, altered or removed outside the normal course of business without the consent of the Department Head/County Manager.
14. **Modification of computer hardware and software** must be approved by the Department Head/County Manager. The installation of additional software on a department computer must be approved in an e-mail by the Department Head/County Manager.
15. **Property of the Department** shall be disposed in accordance with Florida law; specifically, in accordance with a Board-adopted policy. Questions regarding such are to be directed to the Department Head/County Manager.

3.4 Duty of Notify Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any alleged criminal activity or traffic offenses are reported. This policy shall apply to all employees including members of the Department of Emergency Medical Services.

As a condition of employment with Dixie County Board of County Commissioners, employees are required to notify their department head/division chief or his/her designee within 24 hours, when an employee has been served, arrested or when information has been filed by a prosecuting official against him/her for an offense or violation of law (including moving traffic violations) and/or when the employee is indicted by a Grand Jury. Including but not limited to any of the following alleged offenses:

- A. Any activity that is alleged to be criminal in nature by law enforcement personnel, including all misdemeanor offenses.
- B. All alleged traffic violations that involve speed, DUI, reckless driving or suspension or loss of license.
- C. All alleged boating violations that involve BUI and other citations.
- D. All alleged criminal activity that has or may lead to arrest, detention, or conviction.
- E. All criminal court outcomes that may result in the conviction for DUI or reckless driving or the suspension or loss of license and any outcome that may result in detention.
- F. **Failure to report any of these incidents as required shall result in disciplinary action.**

Department Heads are required to submit a written incident report to the Human Resources Office.

3.5 Workplace Health and Cleanliness

All employees are asked to keep their areas and surrounding areas clean and maintained in a professional manner. It is the expectation of the county and its departments that all employees will work cooperatively to ensure our workspaces consistently remain clean and sanitary. This does not mean that, unless specifically designated, any employee will be solely responsible for the cleanliness of work areas. However, each employee will be individually responsible for making sure that his or her specific work area is maintained appropriately. At a minimum, this requires every employee to do the following:

- Do not come to work ill. You will be sent home.
- If you become ill while at work, disinfect all surfaces with which you come into contact.
- Practice good hygiene on a consistent basis, including regular handwashing and coughing or sneezing in a manner that avoids transmission of germs to others.
- If designated, disinfect common areas, including frequent touch surfaces, such as doorknobs and/or keypads on a daily/weekly basis.
- Properly dispose of all garbage, including food-related items when an employee's meal is complete. Do not leave garbage or uneaten food out.
- Clean or remove all dirty dishes from your work area shortly after completing your meal. Do not leave dirty dishes in any breakroom area or sink.
- Cooperatively maintain the cleanliness of all common areas.

Failure to comply with the above requirements may result in the transmission of illness to your coworkers or to customers. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary measures.

3.6 Use Of Employee Photo, Likeness And Voice

Dixie County may take pictures or make recordings of its activities, including specific work tasks or Dixie County events to be used in educational, recruiting, or promotional materials. Such materials may be in different media, including the internet. Dixie County has provided a Photo and Publicity Release Form to all employees at hiring and will comply with the preference indicated on that form in the use of any employee's Photo, Likeness, or Voice. It is incumbent on the employee to ensure that the form is appropriately completed and, if the employee wishes to change his or her preference, that he or she complete an updated form. The Photo and Publicity Release Form is available from human resources.

3.7 Consensual Romantic Relationships

Dixie County prohibits romantic or sexual relationships between a management or other supervisory employee and his or her staff (an employee who reports directly or indirectly to that person) because such relationships tend to create compromising conflicts of interest or the appearance of such conflicts. In addition, such a relationship may give rise to the perception by others that there is favoritism or bias in employment decisions affecting the staff employee. Moreover, given the uneven balance of power within such relationships, consent by the staff member is suspect and may be viewed by others or, at a later date, by the staff member him/herself as having been given as the result of coercion or intimidation. The atmosphere created by such appearances of bias, favoritism, intimidation or coercion or exploitation undermines the spirit of trust and mutual respect that is essential to a healthy work environment.

Additionally, Dixie County discourages romantic or sexual relationships between all employees. Such relationships can complicate working associations with other employees, limit an employee's eligibility for transfer or promotion and personal conflicts from outside the work environment can be carried over into day-to-day working relationships. Employees in a close personal relationship should refrain from public workplace displays of affection or excessive personal conversation.

If any supervisory or management employee enters into a consensual relationship that is romantic or sexual in nature with a member of his or her staff (an employee who reports directly or indirectly to him or her), or if one of the parties is in a supervisory capacity in the same department in which the other party works, the parties must notify the Supervisor. Although the parties may feel that what they do during non-working hours is their business and not the business of the office, because of potential issues regarding "quid pro quo" harassment, this is a mandatory requirement. This requirement does not apply to employees who do not work in the same department or parties who do not supervise or otherwise have management responsibilities over others.

Once the relationship is made known to Dixie County, Dixie County will review the situation in light of all the facts (reporting relationship between the parties, effect on co-workers, job titles of the parties, etc.) and will determine

whether one or both parties need to be moved to another job or department. That decision will be based on which move will be least disruptive to Dixie County as a whole.

If it is determined that one or both parties must be moved, but no other jobs are available for either party, one or both parties may be terminated. This policy applies to all employees without regard to gender.

3.8 County Logo, Trademark, and Brand

This policy governs the use of all Dixie County's trademarks for any purpose and applies to all employees. Consistency in the use of our brand strengthens our value and our ability to be instantly recognized by our clients and other stakeholders. Our logo may only be used in strict accordance with this policy and the graphics requirements of the approved brand. Our logo may not be altered or combined with any other mark or element. Our logo must appear prominently on all official communication and marketing materials such as brochures, letterhead, and business cards.

Any use of our logo, trademark or brand in print and electronic materials including email and social media must conform to our brand requirements. Our logo may not be used on commercial merchandise except as expressly approved by the County Manager.

Our logo may not be used in any way that states or implies endorsement of a commercial product or service, gives a false impression, is misleading, or could cause confusion regarding Dixie County's relationship with any person or entity.

Neither our name nor our logo may be used in any manner that could adversely affect our image or standing in the community. Such proscribed uses include, but are not limited to, the use of our logo in connection with alcoholic beverages, cigarettes or other tobacco products, sexually oriented products or services, religious products, political parties or organizations, gaming or games of chance, and firearms.

We expect our employees to respect all copyright and other intellectual property laws—for the protection of Dixie County as well as the employees. Proper respect for the laws governing copyright, fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, trademarks and other intellectual property, including our own logo, copyrights, trademarks and brands is critical to continued employment.

3.9 Vehicle and Motorized Equipment Use and Record Policy

Some employees are assigned or drive County vehicles and/or motorized equipment. Some employees with departmental approval use their own vehicles when performing work for the County. The County will periodically review motor vehicle reports of these employees to ensure that they are maintaining valid driver's licenses and safe driving records. **IT CANNOT BE STRESSED STRONGLY ENOUGH THAT VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT SHALL BE USED FOR COUNTY BUSINESS ONLY.**

Duty to Notify: Employees are required to notify their immediate supervisor of any moving violations within 24 hours after the citation is received. If this prevents an employee from performing his or her duties, the employee may be reassigned to another position, suspended, or be terminated from employment at the discretion of the Immediate Supervisor/Department Head.

Travel: All travel must be by County vehicle unless prior authorization from the Department Head is given to use other means of transportation. Travel by commercial common carrier and the use of rental cars must have prior approval by the Department Head or County Manager. Preferred Dixie County Policy is to share transportation, if possible.

Assignment of Vehicles: The Board of County Commissioners, through the budgetary process, will approve the purchase, assignment, and usage of all County vehicles. Employees' licenses must be valid at all times in the State of Florida. Those employees with poor driving records will not be allowed to drive County vehicles. Drivers with unsatisfactory motor vehicle reports or who have had their licenses suspended are prohibited from driving County vehicles and/or from using their personal cars when performing work for the County.

Usage of Vehicles: No individuals, other than employees will be transported in County owned vehicles without prior approval from the appropriate Department Head or the County Manager. The general-public riding in a county vehicle must be on official county business.

1. The use of County vehicles requires a valid Florida Operator's license or a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL). The employee will provide evidence of this upon renewal and a copy will be placed in their personnel file.
 - a. Any person who receives a DUI or BUI citation, or whose license is suspended, will be immediately ineligible to drive a County vehicle or any vehicle while on County business. If driving is an essential part of the job, the employee may be immediately reassigned or allowed to use annual or compensatory leave or be suspended without pay.
 - b. Any person whose license is suspended for more than 45 calendar days or who pleads guilty or nolo contendere or is found guilty of a DUI or BUI will be reassigned to a non-driving position or terminated from employment with the County. Such person may be ineligible for a driving position for a period of no less than three (3) years from the date of the offense. Reinstatement of driving privileges depends on the availability of positions for which the employee is eligible and a clean driving record during the three-year period.
2. In addition to official business transportation during working hours, the use of an assigned vehicle can include meal breaks during the workday and personal in-route stops (10 minutes or less). Any other personal use must be with the specific consent of the Department Head.
3. Personal use of a County vehicle that is not authorized by these policies set forth will constitute unauthorized use of the vehicle.
4. Driving or boating under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance will result in termination of employment. As reference above, in Usage of Vehicles 1a.
5. Only qualified County employees are permitted to drive County vehicles. Unless specifically assigned to drive a vehicle, a Department Head's approval must be obtained for employee vehicle use. Vehicles will be marked with a County decal.

Employee Responsibility:

1. The employee is responsible for understanding and obeying all Florida traffic laws. Citations received while operating a county vehicle are the employee's responsibility.
2. The employee will operate the vehicle in a safe manner, drive defensively and wear seat belts at all times.
3. The driver will ensure the safety of authorized passengers and require the use of safety belts. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
4. Employees who are assigned vehicles must ensure that the vehicle is kept clean and in a safe driving condition to include the appropriate maintenance of fuel, oils, etc. Reporting needed maintenance is the assigned driver's responsibility. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
5. The employee will ensure that the proof of insurance card and other appropriate documents (such as accident information forms and checklists) are kept in the vehicle.
6. The vehicle must be turned off and always locked when not in use or occupied.

Take Home/Commuting Vehicles:

1. Any County vehicle that is to be taken home by an employee after working hours requires the written approval of the appropriate Department Head and the County Manager.
2. All take home vehicles will be issued only to those employees who live in Dixie County, unless preauthorized by the County Manager, and have potential on call or call up status. The employee will be considered to be on duty when entering the vehicle to leave and off duty when arriving at his/her home.

3. The County Manager may from time to time designate certain employees who are allowed commuting use of County owned vehicles. Such commuting use will only be allowed when there exists a bona fide benefit to the County for such commuting use.
4. Employees who are allowed commuting use of vehicles are prohibited from using the vehicles for other personal use except on a de minimis basis. Such de minimis use might include such things as a stop for lunch between two business locations, or a brief stop at a convenience store on the way to or from home from work.
5. Managerial employees who are salaried, have job responsibilities that require work beyond a typical 40-hour week, or who are on call may be allowed personal use beyond de minimis use with full Board of County Commissioners approval, with limitations set forth by the Board.
6. All vehicle uses which is not in the normal daily business hours of operations will be documented by the employee and kept on file for proof of County use. This is NOT required of vehicles used for 911 emergencies.
7. In addition to these procedures, County employees who are assigned County owned vehicles must comply with all other County policies, and state and federal laws applicable to the utilization of such vehicles.
8. Before assignment of a vehicle a memorandum of understanding will be signed by the employee, specifying the IRS benefit that will be charged back to that employee based on the current IRS definitions for vehicle use. The Take Home Vehicle Benefit is listed under Employee Benefits Sections.

3.10 Social Media Policy

The County appreciates that social media can be a rewarding way for employees to share information about themselves, and to interact with people in the community and around the world. Because County employees serve the public, however, and potentially are subject to public scrutiny of their on and off-duty conduct, use of social media carries with it risks and responsibilities of which employees must be aware. This is especially true for those employees who are employed in a supervisory or managerial capacity, although it applies to everyone.

This policy sets forth the County's guidelines on employee social media usage.

1. "Social media" shall include all ways of communicating with others via internet, including, but not limited to, use of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, Reddit, or Instagram; communications on blogs, bulletin boards, wikis, chat rooms and on-line journals; file-sharing including, but not limited to, Dropbox, Airdrop, or One Drive, Google Drive; and items posted in comment sections to stories published on-line by traditional media outlets such as newspapers and television stations.
2. Employees are solely responsible for what they post on social media. Remember that many postings can be viewed worldwide and are archived "forever," meaning that they cannot be deleted once posted, or are archived even if deleted and that seemingly "private" posts can easily be shared with a wide audience via a single contact in your closed network. It is also easy to capture short lived messages (like Snapchat) and rebroadcast them in a more permanent format despite the originator's intent.
3. Unless communications via social media are part of an employee's regular job duties, employees are not to represent themselves as spokespeople for the County. Similarly, if commenting about the County or its policies or services, employees whose job duties do not include social media communications must make clear that they are speaking in a personal capacity, rather than in an official capacity, and that their views do not represent those of the County or of other County employees. Employees may not post something about the County, or about County employees, that they know to be false.
4. In general, while employees have the right to comment freely on social media about matters of public concern—issues or events of political, social, or other importance to our community—the comments must not be unduly disruptive to the County's operations or interfere with the employee's job duties.
5. Whether a comment is on a matter of public concern or not, employees must always be courteous when interacting on social media with citizens and fellow employees. The County's policies on discriminatory remarks, unlawful harassment, and threats of violence all apply to employee posts on social media.

6. Employees are not prohibited from using social media to communicate with each other about pay and working conditions. However, employees must avoid posting material about work that reasonably could be construed as malicious, obscene, or threatening, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. An example of prohibited conduct would be offensive or obscene posts deliberately intended to harm a co-worker's reputation, or the use of racial, ethnic, or gender slurs to refer to other employees or County officials. Do not engage in conduct on-line that would be prohibited in the workplace.
7. Employees may not use County e-mail addresses to register on social networks or blogs that are not official Dixie County social media accounts. Official Dixie County social media accounts should be registered to a Dixie County e-mail address as approved by the Department Head, County Manager, and Human Resources Administrator.
8. Employees may not use social media or file sharing applications to evade the requirements of Florida's Public Records Law, or the Government-in-the-Sunshine Law, or to reveal information which is confidential or exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Law.
9. Unless social media postings are part of an employee's regular job duties, employees may only post to social media consistent with Limited Personal Use guidelines set forth in County Information Systems Policy while on duty.
10. Employees may not evade these guidelines by posting anonymously or under a screen name.

3.11 Cellular Phone and Camera Use Policy

The purpose of this policy is to prevent distractions in the workplace and help ensure the safety and privacy of all personnel and the customers/patients we serve.

Cellular Telephone Use

1. Cellular phone use and use of personal digital assistants (PDAs) while on duty shall be limited to necessary work-related calls made on work-issued phones.
2. Personal cellular telephones are permitted to be carried while on duty, but must be placed on silent mode, and allow voice mail to answer the call while employee is engaged in work related functions. Personal phone calls received on an employee's personal cell phone should be limited to times when the employee is not on County time.
3. Personal use of cell phones – whether personal or company-issued – is only permitted during limited times when work responsibilities are not being performed. Personal telephone calls and Texting, both incoming and outgoing, whether on a County phone or personal cell phone, should be restricted to emergencies only and must be kept brief.
4. Texts and Messages may be checked on "down time" when employee is not actively involved in a call or about to perform or in the process of performing work duties.
5. Cellular phones may be used for personal purposes only on a limited basis and Personal cell phone use must never be cause for delay in responding to a customer/patient or beginning an assignment and should never be used while completing an assignment.
6. Personal long-distance calls shall not be made from County phones without prior approval of the Supervisor or Department Head and then in emergency situations only.
7. While attending to a customer/patient or while operating a Company vehicle, personnel shall not, under any circumstances, respond to (or make) a personal cellular telephone call, send text messages, or check electronic mail on PDAs or other such devices.
8. Emergency Services Department Additional
 - a. A cellular phone is provided for each staffed apparatus. This phone shall be carried at all times when on duty and out of station and monitored when in station. This phone is provided for on duty, job related functions and as a secondary means of contact in the event of radio/pager failure.

- b. Personnel are prohibited from using personal cellular telephones or PDAs between the dispatch of a call and the time that the call is cleared. This is to prevent any distractions while engaged in patient care, and to avoid any possible interference with equipment that may occur based upon the cellular activity.

Example: Use of a personal cell phone is prohibited while at the hospital and while getting the unit ready to respond or while completing necessary paperwork. But once all post-run activities at the hospital are completed and the unit is back in service, the personal cell phone may be used, if necessary, in an appropriate location as long as the use does not delay movement of the vehicle back to base or to the next assignment.

Camera Use

1. Personnel are only permitted to use cameras or other picture taking or image generating devices authorized and issued by Dixie County or Dixie County Emergency Services while on duty. Under no circumstances shall any personnel be permitted to use the camera function of a personal cellular telephone while on duty.
2. The company issued devices are intended to be used for
 - a. Emergency Service medical purposes only such as to document the position of vehicles and patients at the scene of an accident or to document mechanism of injury for use by the receiving facility to assist in guiding treatment.

All on-scene photography shall be for clinical and/or documentation purposes only and conducted only at the direction of Dixie County Emergency Services personnel in charge at the scene or by medical command.
 - b. Non-Emergency Service personnel to document activities and events in relation to their duties.
3. No other picture taking devices including personal electronic devices, PDA's, cameras, or other personal computers (not issued or authorized by Dixie County Manager or Dixie County Emergency Services for patient care or departmental business purposes) shall be used by personnel while on duty.
4. Any photographs containing individually identifiable information are covered by the HIPAA Privacy Rule and must be protected in the same manner as patient care reports and other such documentation.
5. Any on-scene images and any other images taken by an employee in the course and scope of their employment are solely the property of Dixie County and not the property of the individual staff member. This includes any image inadvertently taken with a staff member's personally owned cell phone camera or other digital imaging device.
6. No images taken by an employee in the course and scope of their employment may be used, printed, copied, scanned, e-mailed, posted, shared or distributed in any manner without the express, written approval of Dixie County Emergency Services Director, Dixie County Manager or Dixie County Department Head.

Example: This prohibition includes posting photos on personal web sites, social media, or on other public safety agency web sites, or e-mailing images to friends, colleagues, or others in the EMS industry.

3.12 Workplace Sexual And Other Illegal Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure

Dixie County has a zero tolerance for workplace harassment and discrimination. This policy applies to management and non-management employees alike, as well as non-employees (such as a customer or vendor with whom Dixie County does business) who harass our employees. All employees have an obligation to report sexual harassment—even if he or she is not the victim. All workers, including supervisors and managers, will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge, for any act of sexual harassment they commit.

Harassment is a form of predatory sexual behavior in which a person targets another employee(s) relating to an individual's age, race, color, sex (including same-sex sexual harassment), religion, national origin, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation, or disability. It constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, "sexual harassment" is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 recognizes two types of sexual harassment: a) quid pro quo and b) hostile work environment. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples of Prohibited Conduct

Though sexual harassment encompasses a wide range of conduct, some examples of specifically prohibited conduct include the following:

- Physical assaults of a sexual nature, such as rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults, and intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against another employee's body or poking another employee's body.
- Unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or other sexual comments, such as sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience.
- Preferential treatment or promises of preferential treatment to an employee for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any employee to engage in sexual activity for compensation or reward.
- Subjecting, or threats of subjecting, an employee to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct or intentionally making performance of the employee's job more difficult because of that employee's sex.
- Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in our workplace by our employees.
- Retaliation for sexual harassment complaints.

Responding to Violations of this Policy

- If an employee believes that he or she has been subject to sexual harassment or any unwelcome sexual attention, he or she may address the situation directly and immediately to the harasser, if possible.
- If the inappropriate conduct does not cease, or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the alleged harasser directly, he or she should report the incident to his or her own supervisor or manager.
- If the inappropriate conduct does not cease, or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the situation with the supervisor or manager, he or she should report the incident to the Human Resources Administrator.
- If the Human Resource Administrator is not available or the employee is uncomfortable addressing the situation with the Human Resources Administrator, the employee may report the incident to the County Manager or another Department Supervisor.

Internal Reporting Harassment

It is important to report any and all concerns of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual conduct to the HR Administrator or a supervisor/manager as soon as possible. Management must be made aware of the situation so that it can conduct an immediate and impartial investigation and take appropriate action to remediate or prevent the prohibited conduct from continuing.

Employees who violate this policy are subject to appropriate discipline. If an investigation results in a finding that this policy has been violated, the mandatory minimum discipline is a written reprimand. The discipline for very serious or repeat violations is termination of employment. Persons who violate this policy may also be subject to civil damages or criminal penalties.

All inquiries, complaints and investigations are treated discreetly. Information is revealed strictly on a need-to-know basis. Information contained in a formal complaint is closely contained. All information pertaining to a sexual harassment complaint or investigation is maintained by the HR director in secure files. The HR director can answer any questions relating to the procedures for handling information related to sexual harassment complaints and investigations to complainants and respondents.

3.13 Workplace Violence

Definition

The County recognizes that workplace violence can and does affect all aspects of our work and preventing acts of workplace violence is the responsibility of all employees. It is the Policy of the County to provide a safe and productive environment for all employees. Therefore, the County neither condones nor tolerates any act of violence in the County. Each act of violence will be dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Workplace Violence is defined as any verbal or physical action that is communicated or perceived as a threat, harassment, abuse, intimidation, or personal contact that produces fear, causes bodily harm, damage to County property, or the property of employees. Workplace Violence may involve family, friends, strangers, co-workers, or customers.

Any employee who commits, or threatens to commit, any violent act against any person while on County property or while on duty, may face administrative actions against them, up to and including termination of employment. Any employee who commits, or threatens to commit, any violent act against another person off duty may face administrative action against them, up to and including termination of employment, if that threat or violent act could or does adversely affect the County or its reputation within the community.

Any employee who is threatened with or subjected to any violent act shall immediately notify their Immediate Supervisor/Department Head, County Manager, or the Human Resources Administrator. Any employee who becomes aware that another employee has been threatened with or subjected to any violent act shall immediately notify their Immediate Supervisor/Department Head, County Manager, or the Human Resources Administrator.

Internal Reporting Acts of Violence

Department Heads or the County Manager will investigate any reports or complaints of Workplace Violence. Based on the facts established from the investigation, a determination will be made as to further action that may be taken, including notifying local law enforcement authorities of actual threats or acts of violence.

An employee who reports conduct prohibited under this Policy will not be disciplined, suspended, retaliated against, or terminated from employment based upon their reporting of a Workplace Violence incident. However, an employee who intentionally files a false or fabricated report of Workplace Violence or an employee who intentionally testifies falsely in a Workplace Violence investigation shall be subject to disciplinary action against them, up to and including termination of employment.

3.14 Weapons In The Workplace

Consistent with applicable Florida law, including Section 790.251 of the Florida Statutes, employees, contractors, volunteers, or other individuals doing business with the County may not carry or otherwise possess a weapon or firearm while at work, on duty, or on County property, even if the person possesses a license to carry such firearm or weapon. Provided, however, that a legally-owned firearm may be kept securely locked and out of sight within a private vehicle in a parking lot so long as the individual and the vehicle are lawfully on the premises; the employee, contractor, or volunteer has a license to carry the concealed firearm; the possession of the firearm is not for an

unlawful purpose; and the firearm is never exhibited on County property for any reason other than a lawful defensive purpose.

Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. This policy does not apply to employees who are expressly required or authorized to carry a weapon or firearm as part of his or her express job responsibilities or who have obtained express authorization from the County Manager.

3.15 Outside Employment Policy

No employee shall engage in any outside employment or other activity which interferes in any way with the full performance of his or her duties and responsibilities to the County. No employee shall be absent from work for outside employment when he or she does not have the accrued annual or compensatory time available to use for this absence.

What an employee does off duty is usually personal business; however, before accepting outside employment, he/she must have the permission of the County. Employees are requested to submit in writing the name and location of the employer, the type of business he or she is engaged in, the duties as an employee, and the number of days and hours the employee will be expected to work for the outside employer. This information will help determine that the outside employment is not in violation of County Policy or the State Conflict of Interest Law and will not affect or restrict the employee's availability for work or efficiency of the employee's work for the County and does not cause embarrassment to the County in any way, directly or indirectly.

3.16 Prohibition of Political Activity

Florida Statutes govern political activity of all County employees. It is in the public interest and of County benefit to remove employees from the arena of partisan political activity while on the job. All County employees are encouraged to be politically aware and active, and to exercise their right to vote. However, active political campaigning or solicitation for political contributions while on duty is prohibited. Any employees undertaking such activity must first receive written approval from the Board of County Commissioners and the County Manager, who will be guided by the decision by the County Attorney.

3.17 Solicitation and Distribution

It is the policy of the County to restrict solicitation and distribution on its premises by employees and non-employees. To ensure that all employees are permitted to devote their full attention to their duties and to prevent unnecessary interference with our operations, it is the Policy of the County that:

- There will be no solicitation of employees or distribution of literature, job related or otherwise, during working time or in working areas unless previously approved. There will be no solicitation or distribution of literature on office premises at any time by persons who do not work for the County. Public information, provided by a particular County department for benefit to citizens, is exempt from this Section.

Solicitations which are prohibited include, but are not limited to, solicitation for magazines subscriptions, membership in organizations and political contributions.

Distributions which are prohibited include, but are not limited to, political literature, advertising, brochures, leaflets, information bulletins, or packages of materials except in designated areas, if any. Strict compliance with this rule is required by all employees.

Violation of this rule will be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

4 EMPLOYEE HEALTH & SAFETY

4.1 Fit For Duty Policy

*According to OSHA, fit for duty means that an individual is in a physical, mental, and emotional state which enables the employee to perform the essential tasks of his or her work assignment in a manner which does **NOT** threaten the safety or health of oneself, co-workers, property, or the public at large.*

Dixie County is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all employees and citizens. For Dixie County to maintain a safe environment, every employee must be able to perform his/her job duties in a safe, secure, and effective manner in order to preserve the health and safety of those around them. This policy applies to all county employees. Certain employment positions may have additional fit for duty requirements pursuant to law or other requirements.

This policy does not limit Dixie County's right to take employment action under its normal disciplinary policies and procedures. Employees who fail to perform his/her job functions and/or engage in misconduct may face disciplinary action up to and including termination notwithstanding a referral for a fitness for duty evaluation.

Fitness for Duty Evaluation

A fitness for duty evaluation may be required when the County has a reasonable belief, based on objective evidence, that a) an employee's ability to perform essential job functions will be impaired by a medical condition; or b) an employee will pose a direct threat due to a medical condition. The grounds for seeking a fitness for duty evaluation may come from a supervisor's own observations and/or receipt of a reliable report of the employee's possible lack of fitness for duty from a third party.

Examples of some of the types of impairments that may warrant the County to request a fitness for duty evaluation include:

- use, possession, or influence of alcohol or drugs;
- use of legal drugs that adversely affect the employee's ability to perform his/her job functions safely;
- slurred or incoherent speech;
- observed problems with vision, awareness, coordination or dexterity;
- aggressive or threatening behavior;
- unpredictable mood or behavioral changes;
- drowsiness, sleepiness, or other signs of fatigue; or
- any other physical or psychological condition or behavior that affects the employee's ability to practice his or her job functions successfully and safely.

4.2 Prevent Spread of Contagious Illness at Work Policy

Dixie County strives to ensure a clean workplace, including the regular cleaning of objects and areas that are frequently used. Both Dixie County and our employees have equal responsibility to prevent the spread of contagious illness, such as Coronavirus, Flu, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, HIV/Aids, Measles, MRSA, Tuberculosis, Strep, and more in the workplace.

4.2.1 Staying Home When Ill

Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. **Dixie County provides paid sick time and other benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness.** It is critical that employees do not report to work while they are ill and/or experiencing the following symptoms:

- fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.

Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people with an infectious illness such as the flu remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Employees who report to work ill, without a doctor's release, will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines.

4.2.2 Requests for Medical Information and/or Documentation

If you are out sick or show symptoms of being ill, it may become necessary to request information from you and/or your health care provider. In general, we would request medical information to confirm your need to be absent, to show whether and how an absence relates to the infection, and to know that it is appropriate for you to return to work. As always, we expect and appreciate your cooperation if and when medical information is sought.

4.2.3 Confidentiality of Medical Information

Our policy is to treat any medical information as a confidential medical record. In furtherance of this policy, any disclosure of medical information is in limited circumstances with supervisors, managers, first aid and safety personnel, and government officials as required by law.

4.2.4 Infectious Disease Outbreak Control

Dixie County will take proactive steps to protect the county workplace in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. It is the goal of Dixie County during any such time-period to strive to operate effectively and ensure that all essential services are continuously provided and that employees are safe within the workplace.

A. Preventing the Spread of Infection in the Workplace

Dixie will ensure a clean workplace, including the regular cleaning of objects and areas that are frequently used, such as bathrooms, break rooms, conference rooms, door handles and railings. A committee will be designated to monitor and coordinate events around an infectious disease outbreak, as well as to create work rules that could be implemented to promote safety through infection control.

Dixie County is committed to providing authoritative information about the nature and spread of infectious diseases, including symptoms and signs to watch for, as well as required steps to be taken in the event of an illness or outbreak.

We ask all employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of infectious disease in the workplace. The best strategy remains the most obvious—frequent hand washing with warm, soapy water; covering your mouth whenever you sneeze or cough; and discarding used tissues in wastebaskets. We will also install alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas.

Unless otherwise notified, our normal attendance and leave policies will remain in place. Individuals who believe they may face particular challenges reporting to work during an infectious disease outbreak should take steps to develop any necessary contingency plans. For example, employees might want to arrange for alternative sources of childcare should schools close and/or speak with supervisors about the potential to work from home temporarily or on an alternative work schedule.

B. Temperature Screening

All employees will have their temperature taken upon reporting to work. Employees should report to Department Head Office upon arrival at work and prior to entering any other areas of Dixie County property. Each employee will be screened privately using a touchless forehead/ temporal artery thermometer. The employee's temperature will be documented, and the record will be maintained as a private medical record. An employee who has a fever at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit will be sent home. Time spent waiting for this health screening should be recorded as time worked for nonexempt employees.

C. Limiting Travel

Employees who travel as an essential part of their job should consult with management on appropriate actions. Business-related travel outside the United States will not be authorized until further notice. Employees should avoid crowded public transportation when possible. Alternative scheduling options, ride-share resources and/or parking assistance will be provided on a case-by-case basis. Contact human resources for more information.

D. Alternative Work Location (AWL)

Alternative Work Location requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis. While not all positions will be eligible, all requests for temporary AWL should be submitted to your supervisor for consideration.

E. Social Distancing Guidelines for Workplace Infectious Disease Outbreaks

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, Dixie County may implement these social distancing guidelines to minimize the spread of the disease among the staff.

During the workday, employees are requested to:

1. Avoid meeting people face-to-face. Employees are encouraged to use the telephone, online conferencing, e-mail or instant messaging to conduct business as much as possible, even when participants are in the same building.
2. If a face-to-face meeting is unavoidable, minimize the meeting time, choose a large meeting room and sit at least one yard from each other if possible; avoid person-to-person contact such as shaking hands.
3. Avoid any unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops and training sessions.
4. Do not congregate in work rooms, pantries, copier rooms or other areas where people socialize.
5. Bring lunch and eat at your desk or away from others (avoid lunchrooms and crowded restaurants).
6. Encourage members and others to request information and orders via phone and e-mail in order to minimize person-to-person contact. Have the orders, materials and information ready for fast pick-up or delivery.

F. Outside Activities

Employees might be encouraged to the extent possible to:

1. Avoid public transportation (walk, cycle, drive a car) or go early or late to avoid rush-hour crowding on public transportation.
2. Avoid recreational or other leisure classes, meetings, activities, etc., where employees might come into contact with contagious people.

4.3 Tobacco Free Workplace Policy

It is the policy of the County to regulate the smoking of tobacco products in facilities operated and maintained by the County, in compliance with the Florida Clean Indoor Air Act (FCIAA) Florida Statutes Sections 386.201. This Act creates and protects areas that are free from the hazards of tobacco smoke.

Definitions:

Tobacco - cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, chew, dip, or snuff

Tobacco Substitute - vapor pipes, electronic cigarettes, herbal chew or snuff

Procedure:

1. The Florida Clean Indoor Air Act (FCIAA) provides specific requirements for the regulation of smoking in all government buildings and facilities (Including County vehicles).
2. The Act is applicable to all County owned, operated, maintained, leased, or otherwise controlled facilities.

3. Use of tobacco or tobacco substitute products is expressly prohibited in both employee and Public use areas including, but not limited to: waiting rooms, lobbies, lounges, rest rooms, elevators, hallways or any other areas of common use by the public.
4. Use of any tobacco or tobacco substitute product in a county vehicle is strictly prohibited.
5. This policy is meant to protect the health, comfort, and environment of County employees and of the general public using County facilities.
6. Each Supervisors, Department Head, County Manager shall post no-smoking signs as required by this policy. The Act provides substantial penalties against the person in charge of a public area who does not comply with the Act.

4.4 Drug/Alcohol Free Workplace Policy

The County acknowledges the importance of establishing and maintaining a drug free workplace, complying with all Federal and State regulations related to drug use, including the Federal Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, Florida Statute 440.102 on Drug-Free Workplace Program requirements and the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991.

Definitions

Drug/Substance Abuse: Includes the use of illicit substances or misuse of controlled substances, alcohol, or other psychoactive drugs.

Safety Sensitive Positions: A position in which having illicit drugs in one's system or a blood-alcohol level equal to or in excess of .04 percent constitutes an immediate and direct threat to public health and safety.

- Where such position requires the employee:
- To use of a commercial driver's license.
- To carry a firearm.
- To perform life-threatening procedures.
- Work with confidential information or documents pertaining to criminal investigations.
- Work with controlled substances.
- Work in a position in which momentary lapse in attention could result in injury or death to another person.

This shall also include those positions where the employee is subject to security background checks, including fingerprinting.

Controlled Substances

A drug, alcohol, narcotic, or mind-altering substance which includes, but is not limited to: alcohol, amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, hallucinogens, methadone, methaqualone, opiates, morphine, cocaine, cannabinoids, phencyclidine, propoxyphene, narcotics, steroids, synthetic narcotics, designer drugs or any metabolite of the previously mentioned substances.

Procedure

The manufacture, use, possession, or distribution of illicit or controlled substances on the job or on County property is strictly prohibited. Employees are required to report to work in a fit condition for duty. Having illicit drugs in one's system or a blood alcohol level equal to, or in excess of .04 percent is strictly prohibited.

Employees who manufacture, possess, use, or distribute drugs shall be immediately suspended without pay pending termination of employment. Any confiscated drugs or contraband will be turned over to local law enforcement officials.

An employee taking a legally prescribed medication that may alter his or her ability to safely perform their job duties must report these medications to their Supervisor prior to reporting to work with the drugs in their system. An employee's failure to report any medication that may cause drowsiness or impair his or her ability to safely perform his or her job duties will be considered a violation of this Policy and the employee shall be subject to administrative action, up to and including termination of employment.

Drug abuse and alcoholism are recognized as an illness or disorder. Therefore, any employee who seeks help on a voluntary basis will be offered treatment through the County's contract providers under the benefits specified under the County's group health insurance program. The employee will be asked to sign an agreement authorizing the Human Resource Administrator to receive notification of attendance, progress and recommendations from their Substance Abuse Professional concerning the employee's work duty status and follow-up-controlled substance screening.

An employee who fails to comply with a treatment program and/or has a positive follow-up-controlled substance screen will not be offered further job protection and shall be immediately suspended without pay pending termination of employment.

Employees who do not voluntarily seek help, but whose work performance or behavior indicates possible substance abuse, will be required to submit to a reasonable suspicion drug/alcohol test.

Any employee who refuses to submit to a test for drugs or alcohol pursuant to this Policy shall be presumed, in the absence of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, as having illicit drugs in his or her system or a blood alcohol level equal to or in excess of 0.04 percent.

- The provisions of Section 440.102(8), Florida Statutes, will govern the release of any information, interviews, reports, statements, memoranda, and drug and/or alcohol testing results by the County through the Drug Free Workplace and Testing Program.

Employee Testing

Pre-employment: Any applicant made a conditional offer of employment for a position with the County will be required to take a post-offer drug urinalysis test. Those applicants whose confirmed test results indicate a presence of an illegal substance or the presence of a controlled substance that has not been prescribed by their physician will be notified by the County Manager that the job offer has been withdrawn.

Commercial Driver's license positions (CDL): Any applicant conditionally offered a position requiring a CDL will be required to take a drug urinalysis test. A negative test result must be received from the Medical Review Officer (MRO) before the applicant can perform any functions of their job description as mandated in the Omnibus Transportation Employee Act of 1991. Those applicants whose confirmed test results indicate the presence of a controlled substance that is an illegal substance or one that has not been prescribed by a physician will be notified by the County Manager that the job offer has been withdrawn.

Applicants who fail drug/alcohol tests as indicated in paragraphs (1) or (2) above may not apply for a position with the County unless they submit proof of completion in an approved Alcohol/Drug Rehabilitation Program since their job offer was withdrawn.

Current employees being promoted or those being reclassified to a position requiring a CDL will be required to take a drug and alcohol test in accordance with paragraph (2) above. Those employees whose confirmed test results indicate the presence of a controlled substance that is an illegal substance or one that has not been prescribed by a physician shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Any applicant given a conditional offer of employment to a County position will be tested for both alcohol and drugs before they perform any functions of their job description for the first time.

Any employee causing or contributing to the cause of a motor vehicle accident or workplace incident will be tested for alcohol and drugs immediately following the accident. If the cause of an accident is uncertain, a drug urinalysis and breath alcohol test will be done immediately.

All employees are required to undergo a random testing program. Employees will be tested based upon random drawings of names. The selected employees will be tested for alcohol and drugs on an unannounced basis just before, during or just after performance of their job functions. Not less than 25% of the total number of employees will be tested for alcohol and 50% of the total number of employees will be tested for drugs each calendar year, or in accordance with percentages established by Federal law. Employees refusing to test or testing positive for drugs or alcohol shall be immediately suspended without pay pending termination of employment.

Follow-Up Testing

1. Controlled substance screening will be conducted on a quarterly basis for (2) years or longer as recommended by their Substance Abuse Professional. Any subsequent positive drug or alcohol screens will be considered a violation of this Policy.
2. **Voluntary Employee Assistance.** If an employee seeks voluntary employee assistance for a drug or alcohol-related problem, they will be required to submit to a drug and/or alcohol screening before returning to duty and upon completion of an employee assistance program with the County's contract providers or the employee's preferred substance abuse professional.

Reasonable Suspicion

Reasonable Suspicion is based on a belief that an employee is using or has used drugs and/or alcohol in violation of this policy. The belief is drawn from specific objective and articulated facts and reasonable inferences drawn from those facts in light of experience. Approval for such testing may be authorized by the County Manager or his or her designee. If testing is conducted based on Reasonable Suspicion, the Supervisor or their designee will immediately document the circumstances which formed the basis of determination that Reasonable Suspicion existed to warrant the testing. The Supervisor will notify the approving authority of the documented circumstances. Upon determination by the approving authority that Reasonable Suspicion testing is warranted, the approving authority will notify the County Manager. Among other things, such facts and inferences in determining reasonable suspicion may be based upon:

- Observable documented phenomena while at work, such as observation of drug or alcohol use or of physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of a drug or alcohol.
- Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior while at work or a significant deterioration in work performance.
- A report of drug or alcohol use provided by a reliable and credible source.
- Evidence that an individual has tampered with any drug or alcohol test during his or her employment with the County.
- Information that an employee has caused or contributed to a motor vehicle or workplace accident while on duty.
- Evidence that an employee has used, possessed, sold, solicited, or transferred drugs or alcohol while working or while on County premises, or while operating County vehicles, machinery, or equipment.
- Reports that an employee has been arrested for use (including driving under the influence), possession, selling, solicitation of or transferring illicit drugs while on or off duty.

Alcohol Testing Results

In conjunction with the Federal requirements concerning the treatment of CDL employees who test positive for alcohol, the following will be adhered to for all employees:

An employee with a confirmed breath alcohol level of .02 or .03 while at work will receive a written reprimand and counseling on the use of alcohol within four (4) hours of the workday. The employee will be offered referral by the Human Resources Administrator to a Substance Abuse Counselor if they feel they have an alcohol or drug addiction.

An employee with a confirmed breath alcohol level of .04 or higher while at work will be considered impaired and will be immediately removed from their position for at least twenty-four (24) hours, without pay, and shall be recommended for termination of employment to the County Manager.

4.5 Workplace Safety

The County is vitally interested in the safety and wellbeing of each employee. It is our intent to provide safe and healthful working conditions. The County's goal is to perform the tasks of government operation and public service without incidents/accidents. No job assignment is so critical that time cannot be taken to do it safely. Safety procedures must be adhered to by all employees, at all levels and at all times.

Employees are expected to comply with all safety and health requirements whether established by management or by federal, state, or local law.

1. All County employees are encouraged to incorporate safety and loss prevention in their daily activities.
2. We ask the cooperation of each employee in the following:
 - a. Taking precautions in the prevention of accidents to yourself and others.
 - b. Bring conditions you feel to be dangerous to the attention of your Immediate Supervisor.
 - c. Proper and safe operation of any equipment you may use in the performance of your work.
 - d. Observing all safety regulations at your workplace.
3. Employees must immediately report to their supervisor all observed safety and health violations, as well as potentially unsafe conditions.
4. **Employees must IMMEDIATELY report to their Immediate Supervisor/Department Head, or Human Resources Administrator, any accidents resulting in property damage or injuries to County employees or others. Per department operating guidelines employee may be responsible for completing incident report.**
 - a. **The Immediate Supervisor/Department Head has the responsibility of seeking medical attention, completing an accident report, and reporting incident to the Human Resources Administrator within 24 hours after the occurrence of any injury to a County employee. FAILURE TO ADHERE TO THIS POLICY WILL RESULT IN LOSS OF WORKER'S COMP BENEFITS.**
 - b. For motor vehicle accidents involving County Vehicles, the Loss/Accident Report shall be completed and returned to Human Resources Administrator within 24 hours after the occurrence of the accident.
5. Supervisors' safety responsibilities include:
 - a. Familiarizing themselves with all safety and health procedures relevant to the operations under their supervision;
 - b. Inspecting their work areas and equipment periodically;
 - c. Training their employees in safety matters or arranging for such training where appropriate and keeping logs of such training activities;
 - d. Identifying conditions that are recognized in the County as being unsafe; and e) Completing accident reports and submitting them to Human Resources Office within 24 hours.
6. The County will provide special clothing or equipment, when such clothing or equipment is required by regulation or by County policy. Such clothing and equipment, if provided, must be used. Employees are responsible for the proper use and maintenance of such clothing and equipment and will be subject to disciplinary action for failure to comply with this obligation.
7. To the extent permitted by law, an employee may be required to pay up to the full replacement cost for any Dixie County equipment or property that is lost or damaged due to misconduct, misuse or neglect on the part of the employee.

8. Each department must meet state and federal rules and standards and be responsible for developing a set of safety rules, policies and regulations that pertain to their own particular operations. It is the responsibility of every employee to know and adhere to the safety rules and regulations, which apply to the area in which he or she is working or may be visiting.
9. While operating any motorized equipment or vehicle for county business, employees should do so free from voluntary distractions to include but not limited to eating, drinking, reading, talking and texting on cell phones, preparation of personal appearances, etc.
10. All County employees required to drive County vehicles or their own vehicle for County business, must possess a valid Florida operator's or commercial license as appropriate and maintain a safe driving record. The supervisor must certify that the employee is capable of operating all motor-powered and self-propelled equipment required in the performance of the employee's work.
11. The use of tobacco products in a motor vehicle or motorized equipment owned or leased by Dixie County is prohibited.
12. Employees and volunteers are prohibited to use electronic devices while operating any motorized equipment unless operationally required. Cell phones equipped with "Hands free" devices (e.g.: bluetooth) may be allowed at the discretion of the Department Head or designee for safety or emergency purposes or to facilitate effective County operations.
13. Employees and volunteers will discontinue their use of any motorized equipment prior to using an electronic device for any necessary non-operational reasons.
 - a. Electronic Devices includes but is not limited to: cell phones, pagers, computers, hand held radios, and any other battery operated devices that are not intentionally installed in a vehicle by the County. Operating an MP3, iPod, or other electronic device using earphone is prohibited while operating motorized equipment.
 - b. Motorized Equipment includes but is not limited to: driving a county vehicle or personal vehicle for county business, construction equipment, and any other motor driven equipment which would require the operator's full attention.
14. To protect the public, employees shall cultivate the habit of being cautious when doing work on public streets or private property. Every precaution must be taken to warn and protect the public from damage, which would result from construction or working repairs of job site conditions. Barricades, warning signs must protect dangerous areas or persons designated to watch the area.

4.6 Workers Compensation

- A. **Reporting Requirements:** All employees are covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance from the first day of employment. If an employee is injured on the job, he or she is required by law to report any injury immediately to his or her Immediate Supervisor/Department Head, regardless of the extent of the injury.

The Supervisor or Department Head will refer the employee to the Human Resources Administrator who will advise the employee of approved medical facilities. If an employee is unable to return to work, the employee must provide his or her supervisor with verification of treatment by an approved physician for each separate incident. A return to work or return to work with restrictions notice is required from the approved medical provider before the employee may report back on the job.
- B. **Failure to Observe Safety Rules:** Safety appliances are provided for all employees. Where injury is caused by the willful refusal of the employee to use a safety appliance or observe a safety rule required by Statute or lawfully promulgated by the Division of Workers' Compensation and the Department of Labor and Employment Security, and brought to the employee's attention prior to the accident, the compensation shall be reduced 25% as stated in Section 440.09(4), Florida Statutes.
- C. **Substance Abuse and Testing:** An employee that causes or contributes to the cause of an employment related accident or who is injured on the job, will be required to submit to a drug test at the time of

occurrence, at the County's expense. If the employee was under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the employment related injury, the employee will forfeit all Workers' Compensation benefits.

D. Workers' Compensation Payments:

1. If an employee is unable to return to work due to a job-related injury which was not caused under "B" or "C" of this Section as above written, the County will pay the employee his or her full wages for the first seven (7) calendar days of the disability if the employee has the available sick leave credits.
2. If the disability continues for an eighth day, Workers' Compensation payments will begin.
3. If the disability continues for more than twenty-one (21) calendar days, then the first seven (7) days paid by the County will be picked up by Workers' Compensation and sick leave credits will be adjusted.

E. Supplement to Workers' Compensation Payments:

1. If an employee is unable to return to work due to an on-the-job injury which results in a disability that lasts for more than seven (7) days, he or she may elect to use available accrued sick leave. If the employee chooses this option, he or she will receive a County payroll check for leave time and the normal deductions will be taken. The County will pay the employee the difference between Workers' Compensation received and the employee's regular wages and the employee's sick leave will be changed accordingly.
2. Employees may not use more than sixty (60) days of accrued sick leave under this Section.
3. Once an employee has exhausted all available sick leave or has used sixty (60) days of available sick leave as provided above, he or she will no longer receive a County payroll check and will only receive a Worker's Compensation check, unless the employee petitions the Board of County Commissioners and is approved for additional time.

F. Insurance Plans and Premiums:

The County will continue to contribute to life and health insurance premiums as budgeted for the applicable year, with the employee paying their normal employee contribution for spouse or dependent coverage. The employee's contribution will be payable the first of each month for that month. Upon the employee's return to work, applicable payroll deductions will commence immediately.

G. Accrual of Leave:

Employees who are unable to work due to an on-the-job injury shall continue to accrue sick and annual leave benefits as provided in this handbook.

**This Section 4.6 is to be read in conjunction with the
Family and Medical Leave Section set forth in this manual.**

5 EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE AND WORK SITES

5.1 Attendance and Promptness Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set forth policy and procedures for handling employee absences and tardiness to promote the efficient operation of departments and minimize unscheduled absences.

Punctual and regular attendance is an essential responsibility of each Dixie County BOCC employee. Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled, on time and prepared to start working. Employees also are expected to remain at work for their entire work schedule. Late arrival, early departure or other absences from scheduled hours are disruptive and must be avoided.

This policy does not apply to absences covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or leave provided as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These exceptions are described in separate policies.

This Policy outlines the minimum attendance and promptness guidelines governing all County departments, however, due to certain work schedules within some departments, a more stringent attendance/promptness policy may be initiated for those employees. Those policies must be approved by the BOCC and incorporated herein as an Addendum to this Employee Manual.

5.1.1 Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are the most important part of your job. The County and your co-workers are counting on you to report to work on your scheduled days at the scheduled time. Failure to maintain good attendance will result in appropriate corrective action, up to and including discharge.

- Attendance work ethic includes being ready to start work on time, remaining on the job during the workday to complete duties, limited use of leave and completing work schedules.
- "Absenteeism and tardiness" are defined as lost time from work without permission.
- Each department shall be responsible for informing the employees in his/her department of the designated starting and quitting time.
- All County employees are expected to report for duty on time, ready to work at their designated time, and to complete a regularly scheduled workday. If a non-exempt employee is late reporting for duty, or leaves duty early, he or she will be docked for time lost.
- When you know in advance that you must be absent from work (doctor appointments, etc.), pre-schedule the day off with your Immediate Supervisor/Department Head.
- If you find it necessary to be absent due to illness, you should directly notify your Immediate Supervisor, Department Head or Division Chief at least 3 hours prior to the beginning of their shift scheduled starting time. In emergency situations, notify as soon as possible. If the employee is unable to call, he or she must have someone make the call.
- If circumstances require you to be late or leave early, it is your responsibility to personally notify your Immediate Supervisor at once.
- The requirements of notification within each County department must be strictly adhered to.
- Repeated tardiness and/or absenteeism are grounds for disciplinary action, including termination.
- A doctor's release slip may be required if you are absent from work due to a medical condition for three (3) or more consecutive workdays. A physical examination may also be requested if deemed necessary.
- Employees who are out of work because of an illness or injury must still call in daily unless on a preapproved leave of absence.

5.1.2 Job Abandonment

Any employee who is absent for three (3) consecutive scheduled workdays without notice will be considered to have voluntarily resigned unless you were unable to call in due to circumstances beyond your control. Reinstatement of employment will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Department Head, County Manager and Human Resources Department.

5.1.3 Tardiness and Early Departures

Tardiness is defined as being late, in any time increment.

1. Employees are expected to be at work on time, to return from scheduled breaks on time, be ready to work when their shift begins, and work their entire shift.
 - If employees cannot report to work as scheduled, they must notify their supervisor in advance, and no later than their regular starting time.
 - Employees who must leave work before the end of their scheduled shift must notify a supervisor immediately.
 - The above notifications do not imply an excused tardiness or early departure, but simply notifies the supervisor that a schedule change may be necessary.
2. Excessive Excused Tardiness and Early Departures is defined as three (3) or more events of tardiness or early departures in any ninety (90) day period. Excessive tardiness or early departures are each one occurrence for the purpose of discipline.
3. Unexcused Tardiness and Early Departures are each one occurrence for the purpose of discipline.

5.1.4 Absence

Absence is defined as the failure of an employee to report for work when he or she is scheduled to work. When you are not at work, your absence is either excused or unexcused. Excused absences are expected occasionally.

The three (3) types of absences are defined below:

1. Excused Absence occurs when all the following conditions are met:
 - The employee provides to his or her supervisor sufficient notice at least 48 hours in advance of the absence.
 - The absence request is approved in advance by the employee's supervisor.
 - The employee has sufficient accrued paid time off (Annual and Sick Leave) to cover the absence.
 - Excused Absences are Personal Illness, Death in Family, Serious Illness in Immediate Family, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), The County reserves the right to determine if other reasons exist that justify an excused absence.
2. Unexcused Absence occurs when any of the above conditions are not met or not approved as excused in advance. An unexcused absence counts as one occurrence for the purposes of discipline under this policy.
3. Excessive Excused Absences is defined as three (3) or more events of absenteeism in any ninety (90) day period. Excessive absenteeism counts as one occurrence for the purposes of discipline under this policy.

5.1.5 Disciplinary Action

Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, and early departures will lead to the following corrective action, up to and including termination of employment. All disciplinary action (verbal or written) must be documented in writing and submitted to the Human Resources Department for inclusion in the employee's file. The employee has the right to read the report and dispute the disciplinary action.

- a. The first occurrence in a twelve (12) month period will result in verbal counseling.

- b. A second occurrence in a twelve (12) month period will result in a written warning.
- c. A third occurrence in a twelve (12) month period will result in discharge.

Department of Emergency Services. Applies as specified to both non-uniform and uniform personnel. Employees are also expected to be at work on time and to be ready to work when their shift begins.

Tardiness

- a. The first unexcused tardy in a twelve (12) month period will result in written warning.
- b. A second unexcused tardy within a twelve (12) month period will result one (1) shift suspension without pay.
- c. A third unexcused tardy within a twelve (12) month period will result in three (3) shifts of suspension without pay or discharge.

Absences

- a. The first unexcused absence in a twelve (12) month period will result in a written reprimand and an unpaid suspension of up to three (3) shifts.
- b. The second unexcused absence in a twelve (12) month period will result in discharge.

In addition, a combination of one (1) unexcused absence and two (2) unexcused tardiness in a twelve (12) month period may result in termination of employment.

5.2 Remote Work/Telecommute/Alternate Work Location (AWL) Policy

This policy establishes standards for remote work locations for employees of the Dixie BOCC and applies to all employees under the Dixie County Manager. It is the policy of the Dixie BOCC to allow designated employees to telecommute where it is reasonable and practical to do so and where the operational needs of county departments will not be adversely affected. For more information on the provisions and requirements of this policy contact the Human Resources Office.

6 EMPLOYEE HOURS AND COMPENSATION

It is the policy of the County to pay employees within the funds available in an equitable manner both internally and externally while complying with all applied laws and regulations.

Pay policy and guidance is developed by the Human Resources Department and the County Manager and approved by the BOCC. This policy will be in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, Florida Statutes Chapter 119, and the General Records Schedule for local Government Agencies issued by the State of Florida.

Failure to follow these rules will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

6.1 Work Hours, Schedule, and Week

Each Department should maintain an office open to the public from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM unless otherwise authorized by the Board of County Commissioners.

6.1.1 Scheduling of Hours

The work week will begin at 12 AM on Monday and end at 11:59 PM the following Sunday. Those employees who are normally scheduled to work hours that are split between Sunday and Monday will split their hours between workweeks accordingly unless an alternative method is approved by Human Resources.

1. "Normal work hours" are those hours which the employee is regularly scheduled to work.
2. Employees may be called out beyond their normal work hours or have their schedule changed due to operational needs.
3. All County employees may be required to work overtime if necessary.
4. The scheduling of work is the responsibility of the department in which the employee works. No employee is guaranteed any fixed number of hours per work week.
5. Required training or educational seminars are conducted during the normal work week. Employees will be paid for the time traveling to and from the location of the seminar, as well as for hours attending the seminar or hours for a normal scheduled workday.

6.1.2 Hours of Work

With BOCC approval, the County Manager and Department Management shall establish the hours of work, which, as practicable, shall be uniform within occupational groups, shall be determined in accordance with the needs of the County Service, and shall consider the needs of the public who may be required to do business with various departments/divisions.

1. The normal business hours for County offices are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. This provision does not prevent the County from scheduling employees on Saturday or Sunday, as necessary. This provision does not guarantee an employee will be entitled to work 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week.
2. **Lunch breaks** are scheduled in a manner to best meet the needs of each department and at the discretion of the department management. Employees are required to take from 30 minutes up to one hour for lunch as scheduled by their department. All hourly employees are required to take a lunch break away from their work site that separates them from performing job duties. Two 15-minute breaks are permitted which are included in the eight hours paid time. Lunch and other breaks cannot be accumulated for later use.
3. Non-exempt employees must not work over 40 hours in any 7-day work week without the express approval of their Department Head/Chief. If overtime is required, you will receive compensatory time at one and one-half your regular hourly rate or be paid at time and one-half your regular hourly rate.
4. Employees must not take work home to be completed unless written authorization is obtained in advance. All County work should be performed during regularly scheduled or authorized work hours.
5. Employees working on a shift basis will work the hours as determined by departmental policy.

6.1.3 Emergency Services Department Work Week and Shift Trades

Emergency Services Department Standard Work Week. The purpose of this policy is to define the average shift configuration. This policy shall apply to all Uniform Shift Employees of the Department of Emergency Medical Services. The standard work week for Emergency Services Uniform Shift employees the traditional 24 hours on and 48 hours off. The days in the rotating schedule vary throughout the month. Example:

- If the employee works on a Monday 24 hours, they will be off 48 hours and return to work on Thursday.
- The employee also has the ability to work up to 48 hours which is two consecutive shifts, but is required to have a 12-hour break from shift before working another 24 hours; unless the county is under state of emergency (Hurricanes or natural disasters).

Emergency Services Department Shift Trades. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for personnel shift trades. At no time will minimum staffing be compromised to accommodate a shift swap. This policy shall apply to all operational members of the Department of Emergency Medical Services. The complete policy is available in the Emergency Services Standard Operating Policies and Procedures Section of the Dixie County Employee Policy and Procedure Manual. Revised Date: 2/7/2018 – D. Brown

6.2 Timesheet, Payroll and Paycheck

To be compensated for hours worked, employees must report all hours worked. The County has a direct deposit program for pay purposes. It is mandatory for all new hires to utilize this program. This portion of the Employee Policy may be amended as needed.

Timesheet

Timesheets will be used to record the amount of time an employee has spent working during a fixed time-period. All Employees are responsible for accurately maintaining their own time records. Employees must fill out their timesheets daily, indicating the time they begin work, take a lunch break and ends each workday. Should you need to leave work area during working hours for any reason not pertaining to County business, you must indicate start and stop time on your timesheet. Employees should not report to their work area until they are required to begin work.

- It is the responsibility of the employee to verify that leave time is reported correctly on their timesheet before signing.
- Leave request form must be signed and attached to time sheets for the applicable period.
- Compensatory time earned or used must be attached, approved by the immediate supervisor, and logged by the Human Resources Administrator.
- If a timesheet is not received in a timely manner, a paycheck will not be issued to that employee until the following pay period.
- Employees who have a take home vehicle must indicate days of usage on their respective timesheet.

Payroll

Payroll is processed in the Clerk of Court Finance Department bi-weekly. Each pay period is from Monday to the second following Sunday. Pay day is the following Thursday.

- Timesheets are due to the supervisor per department policy.
- Supervisors must review and submit timesheets with any necessary forms to Human Resources by 10:00 AM on the Monday prior to Thursday pay day.
- Human Resources reviewed timesheets are due to the Finance Department by 4:00 PM on the first business day after the close of the pay period.
- Timesheets may be requested earlier if circumstances warrant.
- Changes to timesheets after deadlines MUST be immediately reported to Human Resources and Finance Department by department supervisor.

Paycheck

Pay Checks are available to be picked up by the supervisor of each department by 2:00 PM each pay day; however, checks are not to be given to employees for deposit until after 3:00 PM on pay day. A Paycheck Release Authorization will need to be signed by the employee and placed in their personnel file for any person authorized to receive a paycheck on their behalf other than employee or employee's supervisor.

6.3 Wage and Hour Policies and Procedures

New Hires will be employed at a rate in accordance with the current policy or at a rate agreed to by both the employer and employee as approved by the Dixie Board of County Commissioners. (*History: Resolution No. 2011-18, 2011-41*)

Holiday, Annual, and Sick Leave that occur during an employee's normally scheduled workweek are not used in the calculation of the overtime rate of pay.

6.3.1 Fair Labor Standards Act Status

All employees will be notified as to whether they are exempt or non-exempt upon hire or upon change of position.

1. **Exempt Status:** Employees in positions that are classified as being Exempt according to the Fair Labor Standards Act will be compensated on a salary basis and are therefore not subject to standby, **on-call, call-out, or recall to duty** overtime compensation. This does not preclude employees from **being recalled to duty**.

Exempt employees earn a specified minimum salary, perform certain duties, often work more than 40 hours a week and can be required to adhere to a specific schedule for a variety of reasons, such as being available to other team members and to achieve department goals and objectives.

Being exempt can offer more flexibility for work schedules, such as being able to schedule a personal appointment without loss of time or leave if the total pay period reported time is equal to or greater than their fulltime work status. But if an exempt employee continuously fails to work a required schedule, Dixie County will follow its regular progressive discipline process including termination.

2. **Non-Exempt Status:** Employees in positions that are classified as being Non-exempt according to the Fair Labor Standards Act are compensated on an hourly basis and are therefore subject to standby, **on-call, call-out, or recall to duty**, and overtime compensation. Such pay will be paid in addition to the employee's base wage/payrate. All hours must be recorded and submitted for each pay period.

Regular pay is received for scheduled hours worked when an employee actually-works those hours.

Unless otherwise authorized by management, non-exempt employees will not work or conduct work related activities outside of their normal scope of compensable hours. This includes but is not limited to checking work emails from any electronic device, making, or receiving work related phone calls, sending, or receiving faxes, or operating county owned equipment. In such cases where this activity is deemed necessary and authorized by management, hours of work will be logged and appropriately compensated in accordance with the employee's regular hourly or overtime hourly rate of compensation. Non-exempt employees, who conduct unauthorized work outside of their normal work hours, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

6.3.2 Compensatory Time Pay

Exempt employees who have actually worked 40 hours shall only be allowed to accrue compensatory time at a rate of 1½ times their normal rate of pay during a local declared State of Emergency or unless specifically authorized by the County Manager for hours earned outside of normal work duties.

Non-exempt employees who are asked to work overtime (over 40 hours in a 7-day work week) may receive compensatory time in lieu of overtime. Acceptance of employment with the County signifies an employee's agreement to being paid in compensatory time in lieu of time and one-half (1½) the employee's hourly rate.

1. Compensatory time is paid time off which is earned and accrued by a non-exempt employee in lieu of an immediate cash payment for work performed over 40 hours in a 7-day work week.
2. Non-exempt employees earn compensatory time at one and one-half hours for each hour of work performed for which overtime compensation is required.
3. A non-exempt employee:
 - Accumulated Compensatory time may not exceed 240 hours.
 - Emergency Services Shift Personnel may not exceed 240 hours.
 - *(History: Resolution No. 2019-29)*
4. Compensatory time earned for hours worked on a county observed holiday, will be granted time at the rate of two (2) hours for each hour of work. Overtime, time and one-half (1½), only occurs after employee has actually worked 40 hours.
5. Compensatory time off will be scheduled jointly by the employee and the Department Head to alleviate adverse effects on the operations of the activity and normally will be taken within the next pay period.
6. Compensatory Time shall be used in accordance with Annual Leave requirements.

6.3.3 Auxiliary Work Hours and Pay

On-Call Pay

In order to provide services during off-duty hours, it may be necessary to assign and schedule certain employees to standby duty.

1. A standby duty assignment is made by County Manager/Department Head/Chief who requires an employee to be available for work due to an urgent situation on off-duty time which may include nights, weekends, or holidays.
2. The department/division will seek volunteers whenever possible, to serve standby duty, consistent with equitable distribution of standby time within a work area, classification, shift, and consistent with skill and ability. In the event volunteers are not available, qualified employees will be required to serve standby duty in order to maintain effective, proper, and superior service to the community.
3. Employees assigned to standby duty by their supervisors are entitled to standby pay in addition to any pay received for call-out work. Any employee, who is on standby duty and fails to respond to a call to work, will be subject to disciplinary action. Standby duty time away from work shall not count as hours "worked" for the purpose of computing overtime pay.

Call-Out Pay

Due to the nature of the County's services, it may be necessary to call-out employees in unusual or emergency conditions. To be eligible for call-out pay, all callouts must be determined and approved by the Department Head and County Manager. Types of Call-Out:

1. Non-exempt employees, who are called out and who physically report for duty, will be compensated two (2) hours of pay, or pay for actual hours worked during the on-call period, whichever is greater.
2. For non-exempt employees called-out to work during an official holiday, pay will be calculated at the regular rate of pay in addition to earned holiday pay.
3. When an employee is in an official "on-call" status, travel time is compensable and considered hours worked from the time the employee leaves their home for an emergency call.
4. If an emergency requires an employee to be called into work during a pre-approved leave request (vacation, funeral, etc.), pay will be calculated at the regular straight time and/or appropriate overtime rate and leave will be adjusted accordingly.

Recall to Duty Pay

All County employees on annual leave or regular days off are subject to recall by the County in the event of an emergency which necessitates their services. Employees called into work during a pre-approved leave request will have leave adjusted accordingly.

1. Non-exempt employees recalled to duty will be compensated at the rate of one and one-half (1½) times that of the straight hourly rate with a minimum pay equal to two (2) hours of straight time, regardless of lesser time actually worked.
2. Exempt employees recalled to duty during a locally declared state of emergency will be compensated at the rate of one and one-half (1½) times that of the straight hourly rate for hours worked over 40 in a work week, in addition to their normal salaries.

6.4 Wage Increase/Decrease

Based on the County's ability to sustain such increases, at the beginning of each fiscal year the County may award pay increases. Dixie County Board of County Commissioners will follow Federal and Florida State Statutes for minimum wage. A payroll change notice must be signed and submitted to and processed by the Human Resources Department before pay rate change is effective.

6.4.1 Hourly Increase/Stipend Pay

- When receiving the certification for a mandatory class initiated by the Employer.
- For obtaining certification with prior written authorization from their Supervisor/Department Head and the County Manager before initiating any elective training.
- For successful completion of an employee Training Class/Degree with prior written authorization from their Supervisor/Department Head and the County Manager before initiating any elective training.
- Certifications that qualify the employee for the increase shall be relevant to their position, utilized in the performance of job duties and have departmental approval.
- This provision does not apply to those classes which are necessary for the employee to retain certification, CEU, CTE or to meet new guidelines which are required for that position.
- The employee must always keep their certification current. Lapse of certification will result in the hourly increase being rescinded.

| Pay Increase/Stipend | Rate | Qualifying Event | History |
|--|-------------|---|--|
| Acting Assignment | TBA/TBD | Commencing on the 31st day of the acting assignment capacity the employee may be intitled to additional compensation. | - |
| Acting Assignment Emergency Services | 5% | Commencing on the 31st day of the acting assignment capacity, the employee's salary shall be increased by 5% of his/her regular salary (if career). | <i>Effective 1/5/2012 T. Alexander</i> |
| Class A-Commercial Driver's License | \$0.25/Hour | Employees who receive authorized Class A CDL Certification. | <i>Resolution 2019-27</i> |
| Employee Certifications | \$0.25/Hour | Authorized Burn School, Inmate Training, Mining, Spotter, C & D Operator, Other Certifications, and Clerical Hourly Employee. | <i>Resolution 2012-08</i> |
| Emergency Services New Hire Base Pay Job Related Experience | \$0.10/year | New full-time hires with 1 to 20 years of job-related experience. May be offered an additional \$0.10/year of service. | <i>5/6/2021 Minutes</i> |

| Pay Increase/Stipend | Rate | Qualifying Event | History |
|--|------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Full-Time Motor Grader Operator | \$2,400.00 Annually | Eligible employees who satisfactorily fulfill the duties of a full-time Motor Grader Operator shall be entitled to stipend, not to exceed \$2,400.00 annually. Payment will be made based on six (6) consecutive month intervals of satisfactory performance as a full-time Motor Grader Operator. At the end of the six (6) month interval the Employee may be compensated in the amount of \$1,200.00. | <i>Resolution 2019-27</i> |
| On-Call Pay | \$15.00/day | Assigned and schedule employees on standby duty. | - |
| Call-Out Pay | Employee/ Hour | For every hour worked over 40 in a 7-day workweek compensatory time will be granted as define herein. | - |
| Trade School/College Degree | \$0.50/Hour | For completing an educational program to obtain a degree. | - |
| Training Class/CTE | \$0.25/Hour | Successful completion of an employee training class/course. | - |
| Transfer Station Operator | \$0.50/Hour | Must include C & D Operator and Spotter Training | - |

6.4.2 Acting Assignment Policy

The purpose is to establish guidelines for personnel to be assigned in an "acting" assignment position.

Expanded duties or responsibilities resulting from organizational changes, attrition or downsizing, or job rotations or trial periods to provide cross training and experience, shall not constitute acting assignments, and shall not be considered within the intent of the policy.

An employee shall be defined as performing in "acting assignment capacity" when he/she is directed by management to fulfill the complete responsibilities of a position at a higher pay range, for a temporary period of time, such as during the recruitment and selection process to fill a vacancy or during an extended personal or medical leave.

An eligible employee shall be designated as performing in an official "acting assignment capacity" when he/she is assigned by management to perform the full responsibilities of a position at a higher pay range, for a temporary period of time.

If the "acting assignment capacity" is greater than 30 days a salary adjustment will be effective commencing on the 31st calendar day of the assignment to the higher position and terminating on the date of the employee's return to his/her regular position.

The acting assignment capacity shall not exceed one year. Any extension of the period of the acting assignment capacity must be approved by the County Manager.

The employee's salary shall revert to that of his/her regular position effective on the date of the completion of the acting assignment capacity. If the employee is expected to fulfill the responsibilities of his/her regular position in addition to that of the higher position, he/she shall be paid only the one, higher salary (if career).

6.5 Employee Reimbursements

Employees are responsible for submitting reimbursement requests and paperwork in a timely manner.

6.5.1 Fire Services Reimbursement

All Fire service members will be subject to reimbursement per call by the county. The amounts set will be based on current training levels and attendance of required monthly trainings, along with participation in department activities, to include fires, meetings, special events and departmental functions. Distributions of funds will be conducted on a monthly basis. Members shall also be eligible for reimbursement for training rides as well. Firefighter I/First responder shall be required for ride-a-longs. Each member shall be limited to five or fewer rides each month. Date: March 2013

Reimbursement Amounts:

Training Ride (12 Hour) - \$35.00 per 12-hour shift
Fire Fighter (160 Certified) - \$15.00 per call
Non 160 Certified Support Staff - \$10.00 per call

Reimbursement Requirements

1. Member must attend one hour per month of company training, which must be documented by the Chief Officer of their respective district.
2. Member must remain active with the department. This will require that the member attend emergency calls and activities that the district is participating in. Due to the varying call load for each district, no specific numbers will be set, however if the member does not attend any fires or meetings for a three-month period, they will be considered inactive. If the member fails to become active, they will be removed from the rosters at the end of a six-month period. Consideration will be given for unusual circumstances; however, it will be the responsibility of the member to notify the Division Chief of Fire Operations of the situation prior to the end of the six-month period.
3. Members with documented disciplinary action during the year will be exempt from reimbursement for that year.

6.5.2 Travel Reimbursement

Mileage may be claimed for personal vehicle use only, and only when a County vehicle is not available. All mileage must be shown from point of origin to destination and return, and when possible, must be computed on the basis of the Official Road Map published by the State Department of Transportation. Time of departure and time of return must be shown. When an individual is in travel status, vicinity mileage necessary to conduct official business is allowable, but must be shown as a separate item on the expense voucher and is limited to a maximum of ten (10) miles per day unless additional vicinity miles are approved by the Department Head in advance of travel. Mileage is allowable to the airport from the office or home, whichever is less, when performing authorized travel. Mileage is not allowable for commuting to and from work. Mileage will be reimbursed at the currently approved Board of County Commissioners' rate.

1. **Authorization** - All travel which has a total cost of more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) per occurrence must have prior authorization. Employee requests are approved by their Immediate Supervisor/Department Head. Department Head requests are approved by the County Manager.
2. **Documentation and Instructions** - Reimbursement documentation, allowable expenditures and instructions will be the same as provided in the most current Section of 112.061, Florida Statutes.

6.5.3 Tuition Reimbursement

The Board of County Commissioners believes that it is in the best interest of Dixie County to establish a Tuition Reimbursement Plan for employees of the Board of County Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners has enacted the following policy:

1. Tuition and textbook reimbursement are available for employees of the Board of County Commissioners who successfully complete a course of study for which the employee had received prior written approval to take by the employee's Department Head and the Board of County Commissioners. Such approval must have been obtained within six (6) months of the starting date of the course.

2. The course must be job-related or enhance the abilities and talents of the employee for his/her job.
3. The Board of County Commissioners may reimburse employees only if funds are available. This policy does not guarantee that tuition and/or textbook costs will be reimbursed.
4. The employee must make a request for reimbursement within sixty (60) days of successful completion of the course to the Board of County Commissioners through the employee's Department Head. Successful completion means either a pass in a pass/fail situation or a C or above in a graded situation. Successful completion also means that, if the course was taken to permit the employee to take a licensing examination, the employee passed that licensing examination within one (1) year of the completion of the course. In a case involving a licensing examination, the employee must make a request for reimbursement within sixty (60) days of passing the licensing examination.

Any employee who accepts reimbursement must sign a note and an agreement that requires the employee to reimburse the County on a pro-rated basis for any amount paid for tuition and/or textbooks if the employee voluntarily leaves or is terminated from employment within two (2) years of receiving reimbursement pursuant to this policy.

7 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

7.1 Holidays and Early Closures

- A. **Normal Holidays** - A list of approved Holidays will be published annually by the Board. This list will be distributed to all County offices. The holiday itself will be the day off with pay or if:
 - 1. The holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, an alternate day will be established by the Board as a paid holiday.
- B. The employee is required to work on the scheduled or alternate holiday due to job requirements, the employee will be paid his or her regular rate for working the holiday in addition to their normal work hours of holiday pay, based upon the number of hours worked not to exceed their normal work hours. **EMS Holiday Policy:** Each full-time Paramedic or EMT working a full shift on a department designated holiday will receive twelve (12) hours of pay, in addition to their regular wages.
- C. **Excused Absence on Holiday** - A full-time employee's excused absence on the day of a holiday may only be taken in sick leave or annual leave for hours above or beyond their normal work hours scheduled.
- D. **Unexcused Absence Before or After Holiday** - An employee's unexcused absence either on the day immediately preceding or following a holiday will result in the forfeiture of said employee's right to be paid for the holiday.
- E. **Special Administrative Leave Events** – The Dixie BOCC may authorize early closing of county office departments for special events such as states of emergency, parades, or other events they deem necessary.
 - 1. The County Manager, Department Head, and Emergency Services will determine if a county department provides essential services on the day of the special administrative leave event.
 - 2. NO department may close if such closure would comprise the health, safety, and wellbeing of Dixie County.
 - 3. ONLY employees scheduled to work on the day of the event are eligible for this leave. However, eligibility does not guarantee early closure leave to essential employees.

7.2 Emergency Related Closings

It is our policy to consider the safety of our employees and those we serve when making decisions regarding remaining open during periods of emergency situations, such as adverse weather. Where extraordinary circumstances warrant, we will close the facility.

- If the facility is closed, a non-exempt employee will receive administrative leave with pay to cover the absence.
- If the facility remains open, but you are unable to report to work, you should follow our standard procedures for notification of an unscheduled absence.
- If the facility remains open, employees who report to work will receive their normal pay for the day. Those not reporting to work on a facility open day, will be required to use any available paid time off for the missed day.
- If a non-exempt employee does not have sufficient available paid time off to cover the absence, the absence will be without pay.
- In accordance with federal regulations, exempt employees will receive their regular pay for the day of closure.

Even if a facility is closed, there may be key positions that will need to report to work. Individuals in those positions will be notified by management with the details of the assignment. Employees who are required to work when a facility is closed will receive their normal pay for the hours worked.

During periods of adverse weather, employees are required contact their supervisor to find out if their work location is closed on a given day.

7.3 Leave Time Policies and Procedures

7.3.1 Accrual of Annual Leave and Usage

- Leave time is received the last payroll of each month.
- Within a 30-day period no more than the following annual and/or compensatory time may be used: 80 consecutive hours or for Emergency Services Shift Personnel 120 consecutive hours.
- Annual leave may not be advanced.
- Accumulated annual leave in excess of 240 hours on January 1st of each year will be rolled over to sick leave.
- Employees will be paid for unused annual leave upon voluntary termination, not to exceed 240 hours.
- Employee requests for annual leave will be made on approved leave request form to the Department Head/Chief. Department Heads/Chief will submit leave requests to the Human Resources Administrator. Department Heads/Chief will submit leave requests to the County Manager. Seniority will be one factor considered in considering a leave request. The Department Head/Chief has full authority to establish the leave schedule which is subject to change as the Department Head/Chief deems necessary.

| Annual Leave | Accrual Rate/Month of Employment |
|--|--|
| Full-time employees | 1 day/month |
| Emergency Services Full-time non-shift employees | 1 day (8hrs)/month |
| Emergency Services Full-time uniform shift employees | 0 to 72 months of services = 10 hours/month 73 months to 999 months of service = 14 hours/month |

7.3.2 Accrual of Sick Leave and Usage

- Leave time is received the last payroll of each month.
- Sick leave may not be used to substitute annual leave.
- Sick Leave will be charged in the amount used and cannot be advanced prior to being earned.
- Sick Leave will not be granted for any sickness, injury or disability arising from a felonious act on the part of the employee.

| Sick Leave | Accrual Rate/Month of Employment |
|--|--|
| Full-time employees | 1 day/month |
| Emergency Services Full-time non-shift employees | 1 day (8hrs)/month |
| Emergency Services Full-time uniform shift employees | 0 to 72 months of services = 10 hours/month 73 months to 999 months of service = 14 hours/month |

Notification Procedure

- Employee must directly notify their Immediate Supervisor/Department Head or Division Chief at least 3 hours prior to the beginning of their shift on the first day of absence from the job and must sign a statement concerning the circumstances of said sickness upon returning to work.
- Failure to do so may result in a loss of pay for the period of absence. Each Department Head or Division Chief must approve or disapprove of Sick Leave. Medical proof may be required by the Immediate Supervisor or Division Chief from the employee before approving payment for Sick Leave of more than two (2) days.

Accrued Sick Leave

- A. **Accrued Sick Leave** - Any employee who has accrued 480 hours or less on the date this policy is adopted (December 16, 2010) shall continue to accrue hours as stated above. However, 480 hours shall be the maximum number of hours available for pay-out upon separation.
- B. **Grandfathering** - Employees who have over 480 accrued hours of Sick Leave on the date this Policy is effective (February 1, 2011) shall be grandfathered in and may continue to accrue Sick Leave in accordance with hours as stated above.
- C. **Donation of Sick Leave** - Any employee with accrued Sick Leave may donate leave to another employee who has exhausted all sick leave and annual leave. It is recommended that the employee donating leave have a minimum of 240 hours accrued but must maintain a minimum balance of 80 hours of unused sick leave. The maximum donation shall not be more than one (1) pay period. Employees shall not solicit leave from other employees. The donation of Sick Leave must be presented in writing to the Department Supervisor, who shall provide the request to the Human Resources Administrator.
- D. **Payment** - The employee may opt to be paid for unused Sick Leave of up to 80 hours during their anniversary month of each year. However, the employee must maintain a minimum balance of 80 hours of unused sick leave. (*History: Resolution No. 2019-28*)

No payment shall be made for unused Sick Leave upon involuntary dismissal of an employee, or if the employee fails to give two (2) weeks written notice prior to resigning or retiring.

Employees who are not grandfathered under (B) above and provide proper notice to the County shall be paid for unused sick leave up to 480 hours maximum. The County shall have the option to pay out the amount of leave to any employee in twelve (12) equal monthly installments. Employees shall not accrue additional leave during this period of pay-out.

7.3.3 Accrued Leave Transfer

- A. **BOCC Department Employees** accrued sick and annual benefits will transfer with employee when employee transfers between BOCC departments.
- B. **Other County Departments** accrued sick and annual benefits may transfer with employee when employee transfers from a BOCC department to another county department.

7.3.4 Administrative Leave

Administrative Leave with Pay.

- Employees may receive paid administrative leave when approved by the Immediate Supervisor/Department Head or County Manager.
- Administrative Leave with Pay may be approved when employees are attending official meetings, conferences, and seminars away from the workplace. The meeting, conference or seminar must be job related or in the performance of a professional association related to the employee's position. Documentation of the meeting shall be provided and attached to the time sheet for that period.
- Administrative Leave with Pay shall not be taken in conjunction with any other form of paid leave without prior approval from the County Manager.

Administrative Leave without Pay.

- Administrative Leave without pay can occur in conjunction with an official investigation or disciplinary action.
- An employee with a justifiable need may request unpaid Administrative Leave from their Department Head if the leave is for a short period of time and the employee does not have any available accrued leave. Refer to Personal Leave of Absence in this handbook for extended leave of absence requests.

7.3.5 Bereavement/Funeral Leave

A full-time employee who has a death in the immediate family may be granted up to three (3) workdays paid leave charged against Administrative Leave. Immediate family is defined as spouse, parents, parent's siblings, grandparents, brothers, sisters, children, and grandchildren of both the qualified employee and the spouse of said employee.

Each qualified employee requesting Funeral Leave due to death in the family shall submit a statement to their Immediate Supervisor/Department Head stating the name of and the relationship to the deceased. The County will require a copy of the death certificate or other proof of death before approving the leave request, and such documentation shall be attached to the time sheet for that period.

7.3.6 Civil Duty Leave

An employee who is called for jury duty or is summoned to appear as a witness on behalf of any local, state, or federal government shall be granted Administrative Leave with pay upon presentation of the summons. Witness fees and jury fees received by the employee while on full pay status shall be turned over to the County.

When an employee has been granted leave for court attendance and is excused by proper court authority, he/she will contact their supervisor for return-to-work orders. Failure to do so may cause loss of pay and/or disciplinary action.

Leave with pay for court attendance shall not be granted when the employee is the defendant or is engaged in personal litigation, except when the personal litigation is a result of an act performed by the employee as part of official duty; however, annual leave may be granted for such purposes. Leave with pay for court attendance will not be granted to an employee who brings an action against the County.

7.3.7 Florida Domestic Violence Leave

In addition to the rights granted by the FMLA, Florida employees have the right to take time off to handle issues relating to domestic violence. Employers with at least 50 employees must allow eligible employees who are victims of domestic or sexual violence or who have a family or household member who is a victim of domestic or sexual violence to take up to three days off in a 12-month period to:

- seek an injunction,
- get medical care or counseling,
- get services from a victims' rights group, shelter, or rape crisis center,
- relocate or make the home more secure, or
- seek legal assistance.

7.3.8 Military Duty Leave

Dixie County provides Military Leave as required by State and Federal laws. It is the employee's responsibility to notify his/her Immediate Supervisor/Department Head as far in advance as possible so that the arrangements can be made for the employee's absence. Copies of Military Orders are to be provided.

7.3.9 Personal Leave of Absence

The Board of County Commissioners has the discretion to grant extended leave of absence without pay to an employee when it finds that sufficient personal reasons exist unrelated to FMLA which is described in this policy. In such cases, an unpaid Leave of Absence may be granted for an initial period of up to sixty (60) days and employees may request extensions of up to thirty (30) days which may be granted at the Board's discretion. No leave will be extended beyond one (1) year from the beginning date of the leave.

The Board may continue to make its regular payment to continue to cover the employee under its group health plan through the end of the month in which the employee requests leave or whatever employee selects. Thereafter, employees on unpaid Personal Leave may continue their benefits under the County's group health insurance plan provided the employee pays the entire monthly premiums due during the leave. Employees who wish to continue

their insurance coverage should so advise the County's Human Resources Administrator before beginning their leave.

Leaves will be without pay; except that employee will be required to use any unused Vacation days or Sick Leave during a Personal Leave. While on Leave of Absence, employees will not accrue paid leave days of any kind.

Because operations sometimes require that vacant positions be filled, a Personal Leave of Absence does not guarantee that the job will be available when the employee returns from a Leave. An effort, however, will be made to place an employee seeking to return from Personal Leave in his/her previous position or a comparable job which he/she is qualified to perform. If no such position is available, the employee seeking to return from Personal Leave may be eligible for rehire as a new employee if he or she is qualified and if prior work history warrants consideration of rehire.

7.3.10 Family and Medical Leave

When applying for FMLA, an employee is required to produce supporting paperwork for their claim in the form of an advanced leave notice and/or medical certification. An employee must have approved paperwork before leave can begin. A request for leave under FMLA might be denied if the following requirements are not met:

Employee Eligibility

To be eligible for family or medical leave, you must:

1. have worked at least 12-months for the Organization;
2. have worked at least 1,250 hours for the Organization over the previous 12 months; and,
3. work at a location where there are at least 50 employees within 75 miles.

Conditions Triggering Leave

Family and medical leave must involve one or more of the following reasons:

1. For the birth of a child, to care for a newly born child, or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care.
2. To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, employee's parent, or domestic partner) with a serious health condition.
3. Because of the employee's serious health condition which makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's job.

Note: The definition of "son or daughter" under the FMLA includes not only a biological or adopted child, but also a foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis. The definition of loco parentis is construed to ensure that an employee who actually has day-to-day responsibility for caring for a child is entitled to leave even if the employee does not have a biological or legal relationship to that child.

Duration Of Leave. Eligible employees may receive up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during any "rolling" 12-month period, measured backward from the date of any family or medical leave. Family and medical leave involving the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care must be concluded within 12 months of the birth or placement.

You may take family and medical leave intermittently -- which means taking leave in blocks of time, or by reducing your normal weekly or daily work schedule -- whenever it is medically necessary to care for a seriously ill family member, or because you are seriously ill and unable to work. Intermittent leave is not permitted for birth of a child, to care for a newly born child, or placement of a child for adoption or foster care.

Depending on the purpose of your leave request, you may choose (or the Organization may require you) to use accrued paid leave, if available, as a substitute for some or all of the family and medical leave.

Military Caregiver Leave. Effective immediately, up to 26 weeks of military caregiver leave may be taken to care for a spouse, child, parent or next of kin who is a "covered servicemen" with a serious injury or illness. A covered

service member may be either a current service member or a veteran of the Armed Forces, provided the discharge was anything other than dishonorable and occurred within the past five years.

For a current service member, a serious injury or illness is one that was incurred by a service member in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank, or rating. A serious injury or illness also includes injuries or illnesses that existed before the service member's active duty and that were aggravated by service in the line of duty on active duty.

For a veteran, a serious injury or illness is one that was incurred by the veteran in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces or that existed before the veteran's active duty and was aggravated by service in the line of duty on active duty, and that is either:

- a continuation of a serious injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated when the veteran was a member of the Armed Forces and rendered the service member unable to perform the duties of the service member's office, grade, rank, or rating; or
- a physical or mental condition for which the veteran has received a Department of Veterans Affairs Service-Related Disability Rating (VASRD) of 50 percent or greater. (The rating may be based on multiple conditions).
- A physical or mental condition that substantially impairs the veteran's ability to work because of a disability or disabilities related to military service, or would do so absent treatment; or
- an injury that is the basis for the veteran's enrollment in the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

Qualifying Exigency Leave. Additionally, close family members of military personnel (defined as spouse, child, or parent) may take up to twelve (12) weeks of job protection leave, if eligible, if the member of the military's is on covered active duty or called to covered active duty.

For members of the regular Armed Forces, "Covered Active Duty" means duty during deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country.

For members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces (members of the National Guard and Reserves), "Covered Active Duty" means duty during deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country under a call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation.

Maintenance Of Health Benefits. If you and/or your family participate in a group health plan, the Organization will maintain coverage under the plan during your family and medical leave. This coverage will be provided if you or your family were covered under the plan before the leave was taken and on the same terms as if you had continued to work. Where appropriate, you must make arrangements to pay your share of health plan premiums while on leave.

In some instances, the Organization may recover premiums it paid to maintain health coverage for an employee and family.

Job Restoration. Upon returning from a family and medical leave, you will normally be restored to your original job, or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions. In addition, your use of family and medical leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that you earned or were entitled to before using family and medical leave.

Notice And Medical Certification

When seeking family and medical leave, you must provide:

1. 30 days advance notice of the need to take family and medical leave, if the need is foreseeable.
2. Medical certifications supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting you or an immediate family member. Second or third medical opinions and periodic recertifications at the Organization's expense may also be required.

3. Such periodic reports as deemed appropriate during the leave regarding your status and intent to return to work.
4. Medical certification of fitness for duty before returning to work, if the leave was due to your serious health condition.

When leave is needed for a planned medical treatment for your own serious health condition or that of an immediate family member, you must try to schedule treatment so that it will not unduly disrupt the Organization's operation. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in delay or denial of leave.

Other Employment. We prohibit any outside or supplemental employment at all times. Accordingly, outside employment during your leave period is prohibited, and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Exceeding FMLA Leave. Any employee who exceeds their FMLA entitlement may be subject to termination of employment.

Non-Contractual Nature Of This Policy. The duration of leave, availability of benefits, opportunity for job restoration, and other rights and privileges associated with FMLA Leave are limited by the requirements of applicable state and federal law. No express or implied contractual rights should be inferred from this policy. The Organization reserves the right to modify this or any other policy as necessary, in its sole discretion.

7.4 Benefits Continuation During Unpaid Leave of Absence

There are specific requirements for continuation of benefits under FMLA and COBRA. Please see those policies for details about benefit continuation under those programs.

During any other unpaid leave of absence, it is the expectation that you will pay the full cost of your benefits (Dixie County and employee share.) Coverage can only be continued if you arrange in advance to pay for your benefits.

To maintain any of your benefits (health, life, disability, etc.), you are responsible for paying the entire premium amount by the first of every month for the month of coverage. If you fail to make the payments as prescribed, coverage will be cancelled. If coverage is cancelled, your benefits will end on the last day of the month for which a premium has been paid. As a courtesy, you will be provided a notice of intent to cancel with a 15-day grace period in which to get premiums current prior to cancellation.

7.5 Take Home Vehicle Benefit

Employees who commute in vehicles other than "Qualified Non-Personal Use Vehicles" will be considered as receiving taxable fringe benefit income subject to federal income and employment (FICA) taxes. Based upon current IRS regulations, the taxable fringe benefit for these employees will be computed based upon \$3.00 per day commuting round trip.

The employee will be required to write in the number of vehicle days that the vehicle is used on their bi-weekly time sheet. This taxable benefit will be added to the taxable income of affected employees on a bi-weekly basis.

7.6 Retirement Benefits

Dixie County participates in the Florida Retirement System (FRS). All full time and part-time employees, in regularly established positions, are members of the FRS. The County contributes the majority of the FRS retirement plan savings; however, a mandatory fixed 3% pretax contribution is made by all eligible employees via payroll deduction. The State of Florida Department of Management Services' rules and regulations determine positions qualified, and percent paid under the Retirement Plan.

Employees will have the option of two plans, an investment plan or a pension plan. Employees are encouraged to use the Choose My FRS Retirement Plan Tool and choose the plan that best suits their financial and career goals.

- Employees should be aware there may be important deadlines associated with selecting a retirement option and are encouraged to research this within their first 90 days of employment.

- For more information or to register please visit: <https://www.myfrs.com> or
- My FRS Financial Guidance Line toll-free at 1-866-446-9377

Retired or severed County employees may choose to discontinue participation in the group medical insurance programs provided by COBRA and the Florida Retirement System, as applicable.

Deferred Compensation – 457(B) Plan

For those who wish to contribute more to their retirement, employees have the option to participate in Deferred Compensation (457) retirement plans. These are 100% employee-funded plans which allow employees to have a set amount of money deducted from each paycheck and invest in a fund or funds of their choosing. Employees can enroll at any time, throughout the year, in a Deferred Compensation plan with any of our participating companies.

7.7 Group Insurance Benefit

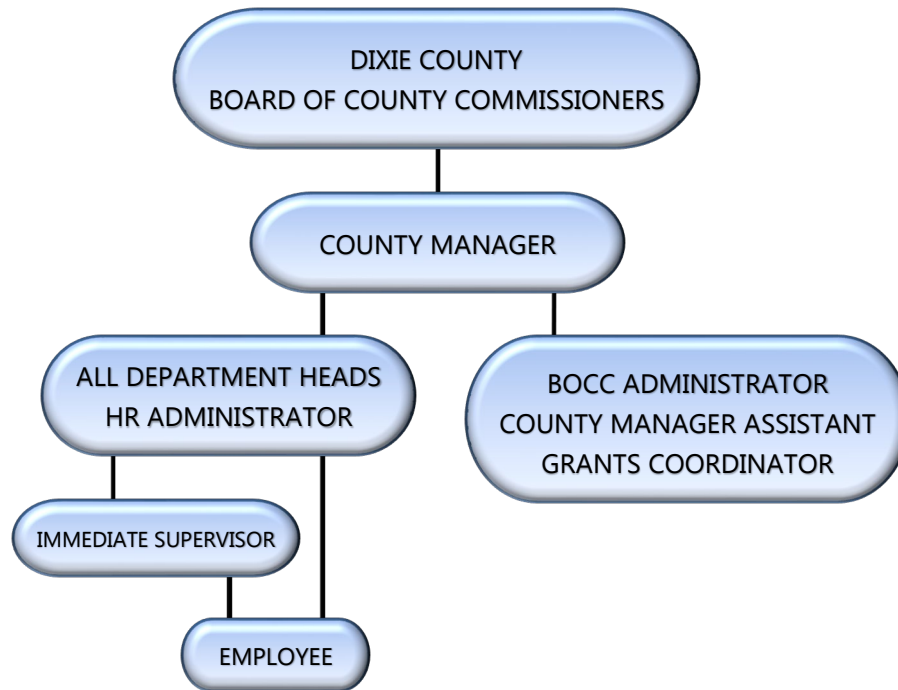
The County will determine its contribution, if any, toward employee life and health insurance on an annual basis. As this benefit can change from year to year, the Dixie County Human Resource Department will provide employees current programs available upon request. Any retiring employee may elect to continue their insurance coverage, with the premium being assumed by the employee.

8 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

8.1 Open Door Policy And Team Approach

The County maintains an open-door policy under which all employees are encouraged to deal directly with their supervisors with respect to all working conditions. The County recognizes and accepts its obligation to provide employees with good working conditions, good wages and benefits, fair treatment, and the personal respect which each employee deserves. The employee is directed to deal directly with his or her supervisor, except as otherwise provided in these policies.

8.2 Organizational Flow Chart/Chain of Command



8.3 Problem Solving/Grievance

Employee Relations at Dixie County are based on mutual understanding and trust between the County Officials, its Supervisors and its Employees. We will continue to treat our Employees as individuals of dignity and will handle any problem or complaint without prejudice.

We encourage each employee to use this procedure for any work-related problem or interpretation of this handbook. Our Supervisors and Department Heads have been advised to encourage the use of this Policy and we assure all County Employees that no adverse action will be taken due to use of this Policy.

If an Employee has a job-related problem, he or she should first discuss this problem with their Immediate Supervisor/Department Head. If at that time the Employee does not feel that he or she has received an adequate response, or the Employee feels that the source of the job-related problem is the Employee's Immediate Supervisor/Department Head, the matter may be discussed with the County Manager. If the problem is still not resolved, the Employee should submit the problem in writing to the Board of County Commissioners. After the Board of County Commissioners has a chance to investigate the matter, a final decision will be reached.

Employee appeals to the Board of County Commissioners of decisions made by the County Manager should be made in writing within thirty (30) calendar days after determination by the County Manager.

8.4 Employee Disciplinary Measures

The Dixie County Manager has the authority to discipline all exempt and non-exempt employees. Department Heads have the authority to discipline all exempt and non-exempt employees under their supervision. Disciplinary measures which may be taken are verbal counseling, written reprimand, suspension without pay and termination of employment. Any of these actions may be taken at any time depending upon the severity of the offense and after careful consideration of the frequency of violations, the length and quality of service and the overall performance of the employee being disciplined.

Administrative Suspension

An employee may be placed on an administrative leave, with or without prior notice and with or without pay, to permit Dixie County to review or investigate circumstances including dishonesty, theft or misappropriation of county funds or property, violence on the job, gross safety, negligence or acts endangering others, insubordination or any other conduct that warrants removing the employee from the worksite.

Management, in consultation with human resources (HR), may place an employee on administrative leave for periods not to exceed 15 calendar days to review or investigate actions in breach of the above-stated guidelines.

The County Manager and Human Resources Administrator should tell the employee that he or she is being placed on a [paid/unpaid] administrative leave, the reason for the leave and that an investigation will occur. Company property (e.g., keys, electronic equipment, files, records) should be collected from the employee before the employee leaves the worksite.

The administrative leave must be confirmed in writing to the employee no later than two working days after the leave commences. This written notice must explain the reasons for the administrative leave, state the expected length of the leave and that the leave may be extended, if necessary, and request the employee to remain available during the leave to participate in investigative interviewing. A copy of the letter will be placed in the employee's personnel file. At the conclusion of the investigation, and pending the outcome of the investigation, a decision will be made whether to retain this letter in the file or to remove it.

Management, in consultation with the HR department, will conduct, or appoint a person to conduct, a prompt and thorough investigation of the circumstances. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the department head will determine if the employee will be reinstated, subject to disciplinary action or terminated from employment. Management will inform the employee in writing of the decision.

At the County's discretion, vacation leave credits may be paid in lieu of suspension without pay for full-time employees.

- An employee who is arrested for a felony or misdemeanor may be suspended from County employment without pay. The suspended employee shall be given an opportunity to meet with the County Manager and Human Resources to provide reasons as to why the County should not take further disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. This meeting shall occur within forty-five (45) days of the date of suspension. Following the meeting, the County retains the discretion to terminate the individual's employment, reinstate the employee pending the outcome of the criminal charge or render such other disciplinary action that may be appropriate to the situation. If found guilty or if circumstances warrant, an individual's employment may be terminated.

Employee appeals to the Board of County Commissioners MUST follow the Problem Solving/Grievance Policy Procedure.

8.5 Demotion

It is the policy of the County to provide Department Managers with authority to demote employees for reasonable cause. The demotion may be in the form of: (a) a reduction in pay; and/or (b) a lesser job classification.

8.5.1 Disciplinary Demotion

Any employee demoted for disciplinary reasons may be required to serve a new introductory period of up to one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days beginning the effective date of the demotion. Requests for extensions may be made for any just reason and should be made in writing by the Department Head to the County Manager. Extension will take effect upon written approval by the County Manager.

8.5.2 Inability to Perform Job or Voluntary Demotion

Any regular or probationary period employee, who demonstrates an inability to satisfactorily perform the duties and responsibilities required of their position, may be demoted to a job classification with a lower maximum pay rate in the pay grade assigned to such job classification. Employees shall retain their current anniversary date whenever this type of demotion occurs.

This Demotion Section is to be read in conjunction with the Employee Introductory/Probationary Period Section set forth in this manual.

8.6 Whistle Blowing Policy

The Florida public-sector Whistle-Blower law protects employees who report, to specific authorities and in a specific way, certain types of misconduct by public officials and employees. The County has established an initial administrative process for employees who allege that they have been retaliated against in response to activity protected by the law.

Florida's public-sector Whistle-Blower law protects a County employee from retaliation when he or she has reported the following information, in a written and signed complaint, to a state or local agency, or federal government entity, having the power to investigate or take action:

1. Violation(s) of law on the part of an employee, official, or independent contractor of the County that create a substantial and specific danger to the public's health, safety, or welfare;
- or
2. Improper use of governmental office, gross waste of funds, or any other abuse or gross neglect of duty on the part of a County employee, official, or independent contractor.

The law also protects a County employee who is asked to participate, as a witness or otherwise, in an investigation, hearing, or other inquiry into the above, or who refuses to retaliate against an employee who has made a protected complaint.

The law does not protect a county employee who reports information that the employee knows to be false, or who has committed or participated in the conduct forming the basis of the report.

For reports alleging misconduct by the County's employees, officers, or independent contractors, the employee must report the information, in a written and signed complaint, to the County Manager, or to any other County official with the authority to investigate or take action, in order to be covered by the Whistle-Blower law. (Please note that, pursuant to the County's Charter, the Board of County Commissioners, or any individual commissioner, is not an appropriate local official to whom a report can be made.) This reporting may be the employee's only form of complaint, or it may be supplemented by a further complaint to outside authority.

An anonymous letter, e-mail, or text is not a "written and signed complaint."

Administrative Remedy

This policy establishes an initial administrative remedy for a Dixie County employee who, after making a complaint, believes that he or she has been subjected to retaliation in violation of the Whistle-Blower law, as follows:

1. Within sixty (60) days of the alleged retaliatory action, the employee must file a complaint with the County's Human Resources Department.

2. Upon receipt of the complaint by the Human Resources Department, the County promptly shall contract with the Florida Division of Administrative Hearings ("DOAH") to schedule and conduct an evidentiary hearing, pursuant to the Florida Administrative Procedure Act, on the complaint before a neutral DOAH hearing officer. During the hearing, the employee may be represented by legal counsel and shall have the right to present and cross-examine witnesses.
3. The hearing officer shall make written findings of fact and conclusions of law, and shall recommend a remedy, if appropriate.
4. The hearing officer's findings, conclusions and recommendation shall be transmitted to the County Manager, who shall make a final decision choosing to accept or reject them in whole or in part and shall communicate the same in writing to the employee.
5. If the employee does not agree with the County Manager's final decision, he or she may proceed with legal action as allowed by the Whistle-Blower law.

8.7 Policy And Procedure Forms

Forms, Guidelines and Procedures which are to be used when contemplating Dixie County operations.

8.7.1 BOCC Employment Application (Revised)

8.7.2 Employee Loyalty Oath and Acknowledgement of Receipt

8.7.3 New Employee Orientation Flowsheet

8.7.4 Dixie County Employee Exit Checklist

8.7.5 Photo and Publicity Release Form

8.7.6 Employee Timesheet

8.7.7 Employee Change in Pay Notice

8.7.8 Employee Verbal and Written Warning

8.7.9 Duty To Notify Incident Report

8.7.10 Incident Report

8.7.11 Annual/Compensatory/Sick Leave Request Form

8.7.12 Transfer Sick Leave Request Form

8.7.13 Buy Out of Anniversary Sick Leave

8.7.14 Take Home Vehicle Memorandum of Understanding

8.7.15 Travel Reimbursement Form

8.7.16 Remote Work Location Agreement

8.7.17 Remote Work/Telecommute/Alternate Work Location (AWL)

8.7.18 Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan (MERP) Form

8.7.19 Health Savings Account (HSA)

9 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

9.1 IT Systems Policy

Dixie County considers access to electronic information resources to be a privilege granted on the condition that each employee uses these resources responsibly and in accordance with professional and lawful standards. Any employee who violates this policy or uses the system for improper purposes will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

This document provides guidelines for appropriate use of electronic information systems and services at Dixie County. It is not a comprehensive document covering all aspects of use and will be modified as new questions and situations arise.

For purposes of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

- **Electronic Communications.** Includes the use of information systems in the communicating or posting of information or material by way of electronic mail, bulletin boards, World Wide Web (internet) or other such electronic tools.
- **Electronic Mail ("E-Mail").** An office communication tool whereby electronic messages are prepared, sent and retrieved on computers.
- **Information Systems.** Includes software, electronic communications, computers, networks, servers, and other similar devices that are determined by Dixie County and for which Dixie County is responsible.
- **Networks.** Includes video, voice and data networks, routers, and storage devices.
- **On-Line Service.** (i.e. the Internet, World Wide Web, AOL, etc.) A communication tool whereby business information, reference material and messages are sent and retrieved electronically on computers.
- **Text Messaging or Texting.** is the act of composing and sending electronic messages, between two or more users of mobile devices, desktops/laptops, or other type of compatible computer.
- **Social Media.** Includes all ways of communicating with others via internet, including, but not limited to, use of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, Reddit, or Instagram; communications on blogs, bulletin boards, wikis, chat rooms and on-line journals; file-sharing including, but not limited to, Dropbox, Airdrop, or Google Drive; and items posted in comment sections to stories published on-line by traditional media outlets such as newspapers and television stations.

The policies and guidelines set out in this, and associated policy documents apply to all Dixie County systems, whether on-site and connected directly to Dixie County network, or on or off-site and connected to Dixie County network by the telephone system or other means. The policies and guidelines cover these systems no matter who is the owner or the method of connection to the network.

All computer resources are the property of Dixie County, not the personal property of the individual employee and are intended to be used for approved County business purposes. Users are permitted access to the computer system to assist them in the performance of their jobs. Limited personal use of the computer system is permitted when the use does not (1) interfere with the user's work performance; (2) interfere with any other user's work performance; (3) have undue impact on the operation of the computer system; or (4) violate any other provision of this policy or any other policy, guideline, or standard of Dixie County. At all times, users have the responsibility to use computer resources in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner. Personal use of the computer system is a privilege that may be monitored, restricted, or revoked at any time.

Employees and registered users are responsible for their own actions, as well as the actions of any person whom they permit to access a Dixie County system. The following are not all inclusive and shall apply, but is not limited to cell phones, computer, computer accounts, software, internet, and e-mail use:

No Expectation of Privacy

1. **No Expectation of Privacy.** The computers and computer accounts given to users are to assist them in the performance of their jobs. Users should not have an expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive on the computer system. The computer system belongs to the Board of County Commissioners and is intended for business purposes. A computer's hardware content may be deleted and/or cleaned with the approval of the Department Head/County Manager and in accordance with Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.
2. **Routinely Monitor.** Employees should also be aware that Dixie County reserves the right to routinely monitor, without prior notice, on-line services access and usage to ensure that the system is being used for County office purposes according to this Policy. Dixie County also reserves the right to ensure that its policies prohibiting harassment and inappropriate behavior are being followed. Therefore, employees should access sites that are necessary for corporation business. Inappropriate use may subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
3. **Waiver of Privacy Rights.** Users expressly waive any right of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive on the County's computers or computer network, or on County issued electronic devices. Users consent to allowing personnel of the County to access and review all such materials. Users understand that Dixie County Government may use human or automated means to monitor use of its computer resources.
4. **Public Records.** Generally, documents that are created to formalize knowledge or transact business of the County are considered public records open to the review and copying of the general public. This includes, but is not limited to, all such records created, stored, sent, or received on the County computer system, and created, stored, sent, or received on a cell phone or similar personal electronic device, whether the device belongs to the employee or is issued by the County. Records of e-mail messages, text messages, and records of inbound and outbound calls must be retained in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 119, Florida Statutes. Do not delete a public record! If you have any question whether a particular item is a public record, please consult the Human Resources Department.
 - Since Chapter 119, Florida Statutes states that all documents/work product made or received in connection with the transaction of official County business are to be considered public records, any County related work done on a computer at home or away from County facilities must be saved to disk, transferred to the employee's office computer, or produced in another media where the public may have access (e.g., on paper).

Prohibited Activities

Violations of any portion of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

1. **Unauthorized Access to Information Systems is Prohibited.** No one should use the ID or password of another; nor should anyone provide his or her ID or password to another, except in cases necessary to facilitate computer maintenance and repairs and then only to the Supervisor or designated IT personnel.
2. **Inappropriate or Unlawful Material** Foul, offensive defamatory, pornographic, or other inappropriate communication is strictly prohibited. Material that is abusive, fraudulent, harassing, threatening, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate may not be sent by email or other form of electronic communication or displayed on or stored in the County's computers, including, but not limited to, messages and material with sexual comments, obscenities, pornography, abusive or degrading language, antisocial behavior, or inappropriate comments concerning race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, or disability. Users encountering or receiving this kind of material must immediately report the incident to their supervisors. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment. If the employee is receiving inappropriate email, as described, from their supervisor or management personnel it must be reported to Human Resources.

3. **Prohibited Uses.** Dixie County's computer resources may not be used for dissemination or storage of commercial or personal advertisements or solicitations, promotions, destructive programs (that is viruses or self-replicating code), political material, gambling, illegal activities, or any unauthorized use deemed inappropriate by the County.
4. **Social Media.** Without prior written permission from the County, users may not use instant messaging, text messaging, social networking sites, including but not limited to Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Linked In, for any official County communication. Please see the Manual's social media policy for additional guidance.
5. **Waste of Computer Resources.** Users may not deliberately perform acts that waste computer resources or unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others. These acts include, but are not limited to, sending mass mailings or chain letters, spending excessive amounts of time on the Internet, playing games, engaging in online chat groups, sending and/or receiving personal (non-business) instant messages, printing multiple copies of documents, using hard drive or network space to store personal data, or creating unnecessary network traffic.
6. **Misuse of Software.** Most of the software used by Dixie County is licensed with a limitation that it may be used by Dixie County employees. It should not be treated as "shareware" even with consultants and/or other government employees. Without prior written authorization from the County, users may not do any of the following: (1) copy third party software for use on their home computers; (2) provide copies of third party software to any independent contractor, client, or third person; (3) install any software on Dixie County's workstations or servers; (4) download any software from the Internet or other online service to any Dixie County workstation or server; (5) modify, revise, transform, recast, or adapt any software; or (6) reverse-engineer, disassemble, or decompile any software. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including discharge, and possible civil and/or criminal penalties. Employees who become aware of any misuse of software or violation of copyright law must immediately report the incident to the Administrator of Human Resources.
7. **Unauthorized Software** - No software other than authorized software is to be loaded onto the PC. Dixie County does not condone the illegal duplication of software. The law protects the exclusive rights of the copyright holder and does not give users the right to copy software unless the manufacturer does not provide a backup copy. Unauthorized duplication of software is a federal crime.
8. **Disguising Identity.** Users must not alter the attribution-of-origin information, or "From:" line, in e-mail messages or postings. Anonymous or pseudonymous electronic communications are forbidden. (Users may not, under any circumstances, use "spoofing" or other means to disguise their identity in sending e-mail.)
9. **Personal Computer Modifications.** Users may not attempt to repair personal computers and peripherals when the repairs involve changing or replacing internal component parts. Users may not make changes that affect the personal computer setup, network settings, or overall operation. Users are authorized to change consumables such as toner cartridges, ribbons, paper, etc.

Passwords

1. **Passwords or Access Codes** will be established with an appropriate e-mail address for new employees and must not be shared with others. Individual passwords to access the Information Systems belonging to Dixie County and information regarding usage of Dixie County Information Systems is accessible at all times by Dixie County's management for any purpose and such information shall be stored in the Departmental Log.
2. No passwords will be allowed that block entry to the PC or to specific applications or files without prior approval from the employee's Supervisor.
3. **Responsibility for Passwords.** Employees are also reminded that log-on and passwords may not be shared with any third party, nor may they be shared with another employee, unless an authorized management official of Dixie County requests such password(s). Users are responsible for safeguarding their passwords for access to the computer system. Individual passwords may not be printed, stored online, or given to others. Users are responsible for all transactions made using their User Identification. No user may access the

computer system with another user's password or account. Violations of this policy are subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

4. **Passwords Do Not Imply Privacy.** Use of passwords to gain access to the computer system or to encode particular files or messages does not imply that users have an expectation of privacy in the material they create or receive on the computer system. Dixie County has global passwords that permit access to all material stored on its computer system – regardless of whether that material has been encoded with a particular user's password.

Security

1. **Accessing Other User's Files.** Users may not alter or copy a file belonging to another user without first obtaining permission from the creator of the file. Ability to read, alter, or copy a file created by another does not imply permission to read, alter, or copy that file. Users may not use the computer system to "snoop" or pry into the affairs of other users by unnecessarily reviewing their files or e-mail.
2. **Accessing Other Computers & Networks.** A user's ability to connect to other computer systems through the network or by a modem does not imply a right to connect to those systems or to make use of those systems unless specifically authorized by the operators of those systems.
3. **Computer Security.** Each user is responsible for ensuring that use of outside computers and networks, such as the Internet, does not compromise the security of Dixie County's computer resources. This duty includes taking reasonable precautions to prevent intruders from accessing the County's network without authorization and to prevent introduction and spread of viruses.
4. **Remote Access.** Employees may only access data for which they have been authorized. Employees may not share access methodologies and/or access with others.
5. **Virus Scanners.** Computer workstations (PC's) shall be protected with virus scanners. Users are not allowed to bypass virus scanners when logging onto a PC. If a virus is found, the user should immediately call assigned IT personnel. Turn off the computer and do not use it until IT personnel has examined and remedied the situation.

Viruses

1. **Virus Detection.** Viruses can cause substantial damage to computer systems. Each user is responsible for taking reasonable precautions to ensure he or she does not introduce viruses to the County's network. To that end, all material received on floppy or other magnetic or optical medium and all material downloaded from the Internet or from computers or networks that do not belong to Dixie County MUST be scanned for viruses and other destructive programs before being placed onto the computer system. Users should understand that their home computers and laptops might contain viruses. All disks transferred from these computers to the County's network MUST be scanned for viruses.
2. **Accessing the Internet.** To ensure security and avoid the spread of viruses, users accessing the Internet through a computer attached to the County's network must do so through an approved Internet firewall. Accessing the Internet directly, when connected to the County network (ex: by modem), is strictly prohibited.

Encryption Software

1. **Use of Encryption Software.** Users may not install or use encryption software on any of the County's computers without an appropriate business justification and written permission from their supervisor. Approved users may not use encryption keys that are unknown to their supervisors.
2. **Export Restrictions.** The Federal government has imposed restrictions on export of programs or files containing encryption technology (such as e-mail programs that permit encryption of messages and electronic commerce software that encodes transactions). Software containing encryption technology is not to be placed on the Internet or transmitted in any way outside the United States without prior written authorization from the County Manager and County Attorney.

9.2 E-mail/Internet Records

1. **County Email Address.** If necessary, employees will be issued a county email address such as firstname.lastname@dixie.fl.gov.
2. **E-mail Signature.** Users must sign all e-mail and all other electronic correspondence in accordance with the protocol established: Full Name/Title & Department, E-mail address (name@dixie.fl.gov), Phone Number/Fax Number.
3. **Permanency of E-mail.** Employees are encouraged to give careful thought and consideration to what is communicated via e-mail (especially externally). Do not send an email that would differ in content or expression from a formal memorandum.
4. **Prohibited Uses** as defined under Prohibited Activities in this policy.
5. **County Records.** All e-mail/internet records are considered County records and should be transmitted only to individuals who have a business need to receive them. This applies to both County proprietary information and confidential material protected by the attorney-client privilege. In some cases, sensitive information should not be sent via e-mail. Additionally, as County records, e-mail/internet records are subject to disclosure to law enforcement or government officials or to other third parties through subpoena or other process. Consequently, employees should always ensure that the business information contained in e-mail or internet messages is accurate, appropriate, and lawful.

Dixie County reserves the right to disclose employee e-mail messages or internet records to law enforcement or government officials or to other third parties without notification to or permission from the employees sending or receiving the messages. As a condition of initial and continued employment, all employees consent to Dixie County review and disclosure of e-mail messages and internet records. In addition, e-mail messages for which the computer system has a record will be stored and retained in accordance with Dixie County records management policy.

6. **E-mail/Texting/Internet Messages** sent by employees may not necessarily reflect the view of Dixie County, its officers, directors, or management. Abuse of the e-mail/internet systems through unacceptable personal use or use in violation of law or Dixie County policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees should be mindful that when they browse the internet or send e-mail containing Dixie County domain addresses, they are representing Dixie County - not merely themselves - in a public medium. Under no circumstances should employee use of the internet compromise the legitimate business interests of Dixie County or give rise to illegality.

9.3 Additional Provisions

1. **Disclaimer of Liability for the Use of the Internet.** Dixie County is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded by users from the Internet. The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that contains millions of pages of information. Users are cautioned that many of those pages include offensive, sexually explicit, and inappropriate material. In general, it is difficult to avoid at least some contact with this material while using the Internet. Even innocuous search requests may lead to sites with highly offensive content. In addition, having an e-mail address on the Internet may lead to receipt of unsolicited e-mail containing offensive content. Users accessing the Internet do so at their own risk.
2. **On-line services sites** can and do monitor access and usage and can in some cases identify individuals accessing their services. Thus, Dixie County employees should be mindful that accessing a particular bulletin board or Web site leaves corporation identifiable electronic tracks, even if the employee merely reviews or downloads the material and does not post any message.
3. **Compliance with Applicable Laws and Licenses.** In their use of computer resources, users must comply with all software licenses; copyrights; and all other state, federal, and international laws governing intellectual property and online activities.

4. **Ownership Rights.** All computer hardware, software, peripherals, disks, and data purchased by the County, created for use by the County, or created in the execution of County business, are the sole property of the Dixie County Board of County Commissioners.
5. **Termination/Separation.** Should an employee separate from the County for any reason, all files on their PC are the property of Dixie County. Copying of such files for personal use is prohibited. When any user terminates his or her relationship with Dixie County, his or her access and use of Dixie County Information Systems is prohibited.
6. **Amendments, Revisions & Unspecified Aspects of Policy.** Any interpretation of this policy as it relates to the computer system will be provided by the Department of Human Resources with guidance from County Manager and the County Attorney's Office.

9.4 Computing Environment

1. **Software/Hardware Procurement.** All software and hardware must be obtained (free software, grant, normal purchase, etc.) through existing purchasing procedures.
2. **Software and Hardware Installation.** All software must be installed with Supervisor or designated IT personnel permission. Any personal or test software/hardware installed by any individual may be removed from the computer resource at any time. There should be no expectation for non-approved software/hardware to remain in the computer resource after maintenance, upgrades, or replacement.

10 ADOPTED SUPPLEMENTS AND SUPPORTING RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2022-29: Dated 2/17/2022

Supplement #7 Resolution No. 2019-30: Dated 5/2/2019

Supplement #6 Resolution No. 2019-29: Dated 5/2/2019

Supplement #5 Resolution No. 2019-28: Dated 5/2/2019

Supplement #4 Resolution No. 2019-27: Dated 5/2/2019

Supplement #3 Resolution No. 2012-08: Dated 5/3/2012

Supplement #2 Resolution No. 2011-451: Dated 10/6/2011

Supplement #1 Resolution No. 2011-41 Dated 9/15/2011

Resolution No. 2011-18: Dated 3/3/2011

11 HUMAN RESOURCES STANDARD OPERATION PROCEDURES

11.1 Training Schedule

12 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

12.1 Building Department:

12.2 Zoning Department:

12.3 Code Enforcement:

13 EMERGENCY SERVICES STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

13.1 Emergency Services:

13.1.1 New Employee Orientation Policy #18-45

13.2 Fire Department:

14 PUBLIC WORKS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

14.1 Mosquito Control:

14.2 Road Department:

14.3 Solid Waste:

14.3.1 Site Attendants

15 PARKS AND RECREATION STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

15.1 Dixie County Public Library System:

15.2 Dixie County Parks:

15.2.1 Park Attendants

The seal of the Board of County Commissioners for Dixie County, Florida, is a circular emblem. The outer ring contains the text "BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS" at the top and "DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA" at the bottom, separated by two stars on each side. Inside this ring is a smaller circle featuring a map of Florida. Overlaid on the map is a shield with a sun rising over a body of water, with palm trees on either side. Below the shield, the text "HEART OF THE NATURE COAST" is written in a curved path. The year "1894" is inscribed at the bottom of the inner circle.

DIXIE COUNTY EMPLOYEE POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL