



BEAUFORT COUNTY

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

THIS IS NOT A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Employee Handbook Revisions

Revision Date	Section	Type
2/15/2024	4.4 Overtime and Compensatory Time	Language update regarding overtime law.
2/15/2024	4.13 Bereavement Leave	Language update regarding allowable use.
12/09/2024	4.2 Holidays & Holiday Pay	Addition of Juneteenth National Independence Day Holiday
9/22/2025	A- 9 County Emergency Disaster policy	A resolution amending the Beaufort County personnel handbook section A-9 County Emergency Disaster policy
9/22/2025	A-10 County Emergency Attendance & Pay Policy	A resolution amending the Beaufort County personnel handbook section A-10 Beaufort County Emergency Attendance & Pay Policy
01/26/2026	4.1 Compensation Plan	A resolution amending the Beaufort County personnel handbook section 4.1 Compensation Plan
02/09/2026	3.3 Remote Work	A resolution amending the Beaufort County personnel handbook section 3.3 Remote Work
07/01/2026	4.31 Merit Pay	Addition of Merit Pay Policy.
07/01/2026	A-13 Merit Pay Policy	Addition of Merit Pay Policy Appendix

DISCLAIMER

ALL EMPLOYEES OF BEAUFORT COUNTY ARE EMPLOYED AT-WILL AND MAY QUIT OR BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME AND FOR ANY OR NO REASON. NOTHING IN ANY OF BEAUFORT COUNTY'S RULES, POLICIES, HANDBOOKS, PROCEDURES OR OTHER DOCUMENTS RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT CREATES AN EXPRESS OR IMPLIED CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT. NO PAST PRACTICES OR PROCEDURES, WHETHER ORAL OR WRITTEN, FORM AN EXPRESS OR IMPLIED AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE SUCH PRACTICES OR PROCEDURES. NO PROMISES OR ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE LIMITATIONS SET FORTH IN THIS PARAGRAPH, CREATE A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT UNLESS: 1) THE TERMS ARE PUT IN WRITING, 2) THE DOCUMENT IS LABELED "CONTRACT", 3) THE DOCUMENT STATES THE TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT, AND 4) THE DOCUMENT IS SIGNED BY THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR.

I acknowledge receipt of this handbook and **UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS NOT A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT**. I further understand that this Employee Handbook supersedes and replaces all earlier handbooks, policies, and practices which are contrary to this document.

Signature of Employee

Printed Name of Employee

Date

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BEAUFORT COUNTY'S MISSION AND VISION

Mission

Beaufort County government exists to serve the people of Beaufort County in a cost-effective manner, so all our citizens may enjoy and appreciate a protected quality of life, natural and developed resources in a coastal environment, a diverse heritage, and economic well-being.

Vision

Beaufort County will continue to be one of the most desirable places in the United States to live, work, and enjoy a sense of community in a culturally diverse coastal setting.



IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR EMPLOYEES

The information contained in this handbook has been prepared to acquaint you with employment at Beaufort County. It contains information about working conditions regarding your employment. The policies in this handbook are generally intended to apply to all County employees. However, some departments may have departmental policies addressing these same issues with more stringent rules or requirements. To the extent that such departmental rules exist and are more stringent than County policy, they will govern as to that Department. Where departmental rules are less stringent than County policy, affected employees must comply with both. **This employee handbook, and any departmental rules are vehicles of information only, and not contracts of employment.**

As a new employee, one of your first assignments is to read, understand, and comply with all provisions of this handbook. Most important, if you have any questions, you are encouraged to review it with your immediate supervisor. As an existing employee with the County, you will probably find this handbook to be a quick reference source.

This handbook is intended as a source of information concerning the benefits, guidelines, and rules of employment for all employees. The County is dedicated to continually reviewing its policies to deal with the ever-changing times. The benefits and information contained in this handbook may change from time to time and at any time without prior notice. Additionally, the County reserves the right to revise, supplement, or withdraw any policies, guidelines, benefits, or portions of this handbook or any departmental rules as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion, with or without prior notice.

It is not possible to describe all acts or omissions that constitute unacceptable conduct. However, at a minimum, the County expects that your conduct and performance will be compatible with its Code of Conduct (see Section 3.5 of this handbook) and policies. You are also expected to conduct yourself in such a way as not to violate any local, state, or federal laws. Such conduct or activity will be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the County in its sole discretion. No director, manager, supervisor, or other employee has the authority to enter into any agreement contrary to, or in conflict with, any provisions of this handbook, unless the agreement is in writing and signed by the County Administrator. The County reserves the sole discretion to interpret its own policies and to designate a County Official to do so. The County's failure to enforce any of its policies shall not constitute a waiver of the County's future right to enforce any or all of its policies.

While you are expected to comply with the contents of this handbook, all information that you may need during the course of your employment may not be contained in the handbook. Your supervisor is the best source of information not contained in this handbook or on matters specific to your individual circumstances. If you have any questions regarding any aspect of your employment, please contact your supervisor. If your questions cannot be answered locally, please contact the Human Resources Department.

This employee handbook supersedes all previous employee handbooks, as well as all management memorandums that may have been issued on subjects covered herein.

At the beginning of this handbook is an acknowledgement page. Make sure that you sign and return this page to the Human Resources Department for inclusion in your personnel file.

We hope that your experience with us will be challenging, satisfactory, and rewarding.



SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Equal Employment Opportunity

Beaufort County is an Equal Opportunity Employer that does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, pregnancy-related conditions and lactation), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, military service and veteran status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local laws and ordinances. Beaufort County's management team is dedicated to this policy with respect to recruitment, hiring, placement, promotion, transfer, training, compensation, benefits, employee activities, access to facilities and programs and general treatment during employment.

Beaufort County will endeavor to make a reasonable accommodation of an otherwise qualified applicant or employee related to an individual's physical or mental disability, sincerely held religious beliefs and practices, and/or any other reason required by applicable law, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship upon Beaufort County's business operations.

Any applicant or employee who needs an accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of the job should contact Human Resources to request such an accommodation. The individual should specify what accommodation is needed to perform the job and submit supporting documentation explaining the basis for the requested accommodation, to the extent permitted and in accordance with applicable law. Beaufort County then will review and analyze the request, including engaging in an interactive process with the employee or applicant, to identify if such an accommodation can be made. Beaufort County will evaluate requested accommodations, and as appropriate, identify other possible accommodations, if any. The individual will be notified of Beaufort County's decision regarding the request within a reasonable period. Beaufort County treats all medical information submitted as part of the accommodation process in a confidential manner.

Any employees with questions or concerns about equal employment opportunities in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Human Resources Department. Beaufort County will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who raise issues of equal employment opportunity. If employees feel they have been subjected to any such retaliation, they should contact the Human Resources Director immediately. To ensure our workplace is free of artificial barriers, violation of this policy including any improper retaliatory conduct will lead to discipline, up to and including discharge. All employees must cooperate with all investigations conducted pursuant to this policy.

1.2 Employment At-Will

Employees may leave employment at any time with or without a reason. Likewise, the County reserves the right to terminate any employee at any time with or without reason.

1.3 Anti-Harassment Policy

It is Beaufort County's policy to prohibit intentional and unintentional harassment against job applicants, contractors, interns, volunteers or employees by another employee, supervisor, vendor, customer or any third party on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status,



age, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, military service and veteran status, physical or mental disability, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local laws (referred to as "protected characteristics"). Such conduct will not be tolerated by Beaufort County.

The purpose of this policy to ensure that no one harasses another individual in the workplace, including while on Beaufort County premises, while on Beaufort County business (whether or not on Beaufort County premises) or while representing Beaufort County. In addition to being a violation of this policy, harassment or retaliation based on any protected characteristic as defined by applicable federal, state, or local laws is also unlawful. For example, sexual harassment and retaliation against an individual because the individual filed a complaint of sexual harassment or because an individual aided, assisted or testified in an investigation or proceeding involving a complaint of sexual harassment as defined by applicable federal, state, or local laws are unlawful.

Harassment Defined

Harassment generally is defined in this policy as unwelcome verbal, visual or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual because of any actual or perceived protected characteristic or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Harassment can be verbal (including slurs, jokes, insults, epithets, gestures or teasing), visual (including offensive posters, symbols, cartoons, drawings, computer displays, text messages, social media posts or e-mails) or physical conduct (including physically threatening another, blocking someone's way, etc.). Such conduct violates this policy, even if it does not rise to the level of a violation of applicable federal, state or local laws. Because it is difficult to define unlawful harassment, employees are expected to behave at all times in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of this policy.

1.4 Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment can include all of the actions previously defined in Section 1.3, as well as other unwelcome conduct, such as unwelcome or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, conversations regarding sexual activities and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to that conduct or those advances or requests is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
- submission to or rejection of conduct or advances or requests by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or
- the conduct or advances or requests have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Examples of conduct that violate this policy include:

1. Unwelcome flirtations, leering, whistling, touching, pinching, assault, blocking normal movement;
2. Requests for sexual favors or demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment;
3. Obscene or vulgar gestures, posters or comments;
4. Sexual jokes or comments about a person's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies;
5. Propositions or suggestive or insulting comments of a sexual nature;
6. Derogatory cartoons, posters and drawings;
7. Sexually-explicit e-mails, text messages or voicemails;
8. Uninvited touching of a sexual nature;



9. Unwelcome sexually-related comments;
10. Conversation about one's own or someone else's sex life;
11. Conduct or comments consistently targeted at only one gender, even if the content is not sexual; and
12. Teasing or other conduct directed toward a person because of the person's gender.

1.5 Harassment Complaint Procedure

Every report of perceived harassment will be fully investigated, and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. Investigatory procedures may vary from case to case, depending upon the circumstances. All complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. All employees must cooperate with all investigations conducted pursuant to this policy. In appropriate situations, employees may be asked to submit to a polygraph (lie detector) examination.

The proper procedure is as follows:

1. Report the incident(s) to your supervisor or to a higher level member in your "chain of command." Complaints against the County Administrator should be made to the Chairman of County Council.
2. Report the incident(s) to the Human Resources Director.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, complaints made to members of management or to the Human Resources Director involve the completion of a written complaint report, either by the employee or by the person to whom the complaint is made, which summarizes the allegations and lists any witnesses to the alleged harassment. Supervisors and managers who receive complaints of or become aware of harassment have a duty to notify and coordinate with the Human Resources Director immediately.

Corrective Action

If, after proper investigation, management concludes that a complaint of harassment has merit, appropriate action will be taken. Employees may be disciplined. Non-employees may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or barred from the premises. These procedures have been established to provide relief to employees who feel they have been the victim of harassment. The U.S. Supreme Court has said that, as a general rule, employees may not sue their employer for a violation of rights unless the employee first gives notice to the employer and provides them with the opportunity to end the harassment. These procedures are intended to establish a clear record of what has been reported.

Retaliation Prohibited

In addition, Beaufort County will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report unwelcome conduct to management or who cooperate in the investigations of such reports in accordance with this policy. If the employee has been subjected to any such retaliation, the employee should report it in the same manner in which the employee would report a claim of perceived harassment under this policy.

Violation of this policy including any improper retaliatory conduct will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

1.6 Whistleblower Policy



Beaufort County is committed to complying with all laws, regulations and ethical requirements applicable to the services we provide to our citizens. Therefore, Beaufort County calls on and values the assistance from its employees to uphold this commitment. Any employee of Beaufort County who believes that:

- (1) some policy, practice or activity of Beaufort County violates a law, or
- (2) an employee, officer or official is violating the law, Beaufort County policies or misusing Beaufort County resources,

should bring this belief to the attention of the individuals described below in the “Reporting” section of this Policy.

The support of all employees is necessary to achieve compliance with laws and policies. Beaufort County appreciates employees reporting issues of this nature and helping Beaufort County comply with the law and the County’s policies, and to protect its resources so they may be used for the purposes they were intended.

Reporting. If any employee reasonably believes that a violation of the law or Beaufort County’s policies and procedures has occurred, that employee may report the alleged policy, practice, or activity to the Director of Human Resources, the County Attorney, or the County Administrator. An employee making such a report shall hereinafter be referred to in this Whistleblower Policy as a “Reporting Employee”. If the Reporting Employee is uncomfortable making a report to any of the foregoing individuals, or if the Reporting Employee is not satisfied with the response of the foregoing individuals after a reasonable period of time following the report of misconduct has occurred, the Reporting Employee may provide the report to the Beaufort County Council Chairman or Vice-Chairman. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent reasonably possible, consistent with the parameters of an adequate investigation and applicable law.

Retaliation. No Beaufort County official, officer or employee, or any person acting on behalf of Beaufort County, shall influence, restrain, or prevent any Reporting Employee from disclosing information that the Reporting Employee has reasonable cause to believe relates to or is evidence of misconduct. Any Reporting Employee acting in good faith and upon a reasonable belief as a whistleblower that misconduct has occurred will be protected from threats or retaliation, including but not limited to, discharge, demotion, suspension, harassment, reduced compensation, changes in the terms and conditions of employment, or other forms of discrimination. Any County employee who threatens or retaliates against a Reporting Employee who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Acting in Good Faith. Falsely or maliciously reporting a whistleblowing allegation under this policy will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

1.7 Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace

Beaufort County has instituted a Drug-Free Workplace Policy and complies with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. Employees are required to comply with the policy and notify the County of any conviction for a drug-related offense within five (5) calendar days of the conviction.

The policy also prohibits being in possession or under the influence of any illegal drug or unauthorized controlled substance while working and/or on County premises or in County vehicles.

The County reserves the right to test employees it reasonably suspects to be in violation of this policy.



Alcohol presents a similar problem and is subject to the same prohibitions and testing as listed above. An employee is deemed to be "under the influence" if any detectable amount of alcohol is in his/her system.

For a list of reasons deemed appropriate to initiate reasonable suspicion testing and for a complete copy of the Beaufort County Drug and Alcohol policy, refer to **Appendix A-2**.

1.8 Workplace Violence

The County takes seriously the issue of workplace violence. Violence in the workplace will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This includes, but is not limited to, actual physical violence, threats of violence, fights or arguments between employees and others, use of abusive language or bringing unauthorized weapons of any type into the workplace. Any employee who sees a threatening or uncomfortable situation or feels threatened should not try to handle the situation by themselves. Instead, they should immediately remove themselves from possible danger and contact a Supervisor, Human Resources, or the Police Department (911). Any incident will be investigated, and the employee(s) involved will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1.9 Pregnancy Accommodations

In compliance with South Carolina law (S.C. Code Ann. §1-13-80), Beaufort County will not discriminate against an individual because of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, including, but not limited to, lactation. Beaufort County will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations for the employee's medical needs arising from pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the business.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

1. Making existing facilities readily accessible to, and usable by, such employees, including acquiring or modifying equipment or devices necessary for performing essential job functions;
2. Providing more frequent or longer break periods;
3. Providing more frequent bathroom breaks;
4. Providing a private place, other than a bathroom stall for the purpose of expressing milk;
5. Modifying work schedules;
6. Providing seating or allowing the employee to sit more frequently;
7. Providing assistance with manual labor and limits on lifting;
8. Temporarily transferring the employee to a less strenuous or hazardous vacant position, if qualified; or
9. Providing job restructuring or light duty, if available.

Beaufort County will not:

- Deny employment opportunities to the employee based on the need to make such reasonable accommodations;
- Require the employee to accept an accommodation that the employee chooses not to accept, if the employee does not have a known limitation related to pregnancy, or if the accommodation is unnecessary for the employee to perform the essential duties of their job;
- Require the employee to take leave under any leave law or Beaufort County policy if another reasonable accommodation can be provided to the employee; or



- Take any adverse action against the employee in the terms, conditions, or privileges of employment for requesting or using a reasonable accommodation.

If employees have any questions concerning this policy or if they wish to request an accommodation, they should contact Human Resources.

1.10 Lactation Accommodations

Pursuant to the South Carolina Lactation Support Act, Beaufort County supports the legal right and necessity of employees who choose to express milk in the workplace. This policy is to establish guidelines for promoting a breastfeeding-friendly work environment and supporting lactating employees at Beaufort County.

Beaufort County will make reasonable efforts to provide a reasonable amount of unpaid break time to accommodate employees desiring to express breast milk for their child. If possible, the lactation break time must run concurrently with break time already provided to employees. Lactation break time that cannot run concurrently with paid break time already provided will be unpaid, subject to applicable law.

Beaufort County will make reasonable efforts to provide employees with use of a room or location in close proximity to their work area, other than a toilet stall, in order to express milk in private.

Employees will not be discriminated against or retaliated against for choosing to express breast milk in the workplace in compliance with this policy and the law. Employees may contact Human Resources with questions regarding this policy.

1.11 Reasonable Accommodations and Interactive Dialogue

Beaufort County is committed to complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws governing reasonable accommodations of individuals, including, but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To that end, we will endeavor to make a reasonable accommodation to applicants and employees who have requested an accommodation or for whom Beaufort County has noticed may require such an accommodation, without regard to any protected classifications, related to an individual's:

- Disability, meaning any physical, medical, mental, or psychological impairment, or a history record of such impairment;
- Sincerely held religious beliefs and practices;
- Needs as a victim of domestic violence, sex offenses, or stalking;
- Needs related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions; and/or
- Any other reason required by applicable law unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of Beaufort County business.

Any individual who would like to request an accommodation based on any of the reasons set forth above should contact Human Resources. Accommodation requests should be made in writing. If an individual who has requested an accommodation has not received an initial response within five (5) business days, the employee should contact Human Resources.



After receiving a request for an accommodation or learning indirectly that the employee may require such an accommodation, Beaufort County will engage in an interactive dialogue with the employee.

Even if the employee has not formally requested an accommodation, Beaufort County may initiate an interactive dialogue under certain circumstances, such as when Beaufort County has knowledge that employee's performance at work has been negatively affected and a reasonable basis to believe that the issue is related to any of the protected classifications set forth above, in compliance with applicable law. In the event Beaufort County initiates an interactive dialogue with an employee, it should not be construed as Beaufort County's belief an individual requires an accommodation but will serve as an invitation for the employee to share with Beaufort County any information the employee desires to share, or to request an accommodation.

The interactive dialogue may take place in person, by telephone, or by electronic means. As part of the interactive dialogue, Beaufort County will communicate openly and in good faith with the employee in a timely manner in order to determine whether and how Beaufort County may be able to provide a reasonable accommodation. To the extent necessary and appropriate based on the request, Beaufort County will attempt to explore the existence and feasibility of alternative accommodations as well as alternative positions for the employee. Beaufort County is not required to provide the specific accommodation sought by the employee, provided the alternatives are reasonable and either meet the specific needs of the employee or specifically address the employee's limitations.

As part of the interactive dialogue, Beaufort County reserves the right to request supporting documentation, to the maximum extent permitted by applicable law.

Beaufort County will endeavor to keep confidential all communications regarding requests for reasonable accommodations and all circumstances surrounding the employee's underlying reason for needing an accommodation.

Beaufort County will not allow any form of retaliation against employees who have requested an accommodation, for whom Beaufort County has notice may require such an accommodation, or who otherwise engage in the interactive dialogue process.

Employees with questions regarding this policy should contact Human Resources.

SECTION 2 – YOUR EMPLOYMENT

2.1 Personnel Records

The County maintains a personnel file for each employee. Employee files are the property of Beaufort County, and do not belong to the employee. An employee's personnel record begins with the completed employment application, resume and any other information submitted at the time of application. From time to time, information may be added to this personnel record.

Personnel records are the property of Beaufort County.

Contents of Personnel Files

Employee personnel records may include the following (but may be filed separately):



- Original employment application and resume.
- I-9 Form (filed separately).
- Performance appraisal reports.
- Disciplinary actions.
- Special commendations.
- Educational achievement and certifications.
- Status changes impacting work and salary history.
- Benefit information.
- Other relevant documents as determined by management.

Changes to Personal Information reporting Requirements

Employees are expected to keep the County informed about any major change which may affect their employment status. These changes include, but are not limited to:

- Name
- Home address
- Primary telephone number
- Marital status
- Number of dependents
- Any important health information which could create a safety concern or impede the employee's ability to perform essential functions of their job
- Emergency telephone numbers and whom to notify in case of an emergency
- Change of beneficiary
- Authorized payroll deductions
- Additional education and special training course certifications
- Change in status or loss of any licenses or certifications required for the employee's position

Access to Personnel Files

All information in employee personnel files is considered confidential. This information is available to the Human Resources Department, senior management personnel, supervisors, or managers who are responsible for the employee, and the employee.

The supervisor of the department to which an employee may be transferred or promoted (or hired if previously employed) is also permitted to review the employee's file by coordinating with the Human Resources Director.

Employee Review of Personnel File

The following provisions apply with respect to an employee's request to review his/her personnel record:

1. The employee has the responsibility to schedule a review of his/her file with Human Resources. If the review is scheduled during the employee's work hours, the time away must be coordinated with his/her supervisor.
2. A member of the Human Resources Department must be present while the employee reviews his/her personnel file.



3. The employee may take notes or request copies of certain documents, but may not remove, deface, or otherwise make notations on the documents in his/her personnel file. An employee may add comments to the personnel file if there is a disagreement with the contents of any document.

2.2 References

Beaufort County will respond to personnel reference requests through the Human Resources Department. Beaufort County will provide general information concerning the employee such as date of hire, date of discharge, salary and positions held. Requests for reference information must be in writing, and responses will be in writing. Please refer all requests for personnel references to the Human Resources Department.

Only the Human Resources Department may provide personnel references.

2.3 Employee Categories and Classification

Employee Categories

County pay policies apply to all County employees and employees of elected or appointed officials. Employees are divided into the following categories for the purpose of compensation and benefits. Only full-time employees are eligible for benefits.

- **Full-Time:** Employees hired to work 40 hours or more per week are considered full-time employees for compensation and benefit purposes.
- **Variable Hour:** Part-time employees who average 30 hours or more per week in a one-year lookback period are eligible for health insurance benefits only (prior approval required from County Administrator).
- **Part-Time:** Employees whose average work schedule is less than 30 hours per week are part-time employees and are not eligible for benefits.
- **Temporary:** Employees hired as a temporary replacement for full-time or part-time employees, or for short periods of employment such as summer months, peak periods, and vacations are considered temporary employees. Temporary employees generally are not eligible for benefits. However, if a temporary employee fills a benefits-eligible position, he/she may be eligible for select benefits when employment is expected to last 6 months or longer and is approved by the County Administrator.
- **Seasonal:** Employees hired to work during a specific season each year are seasonal employees. These employees may work a full-time or part-time schedule during the season. Seasonal employees are not eligible for benefits.

Employee Classification

The County maintains standard definitions of employment status and classifies employees for purposes of personnel and benefits administration and related payroll transactions.

All employees fall into one of the following two categories:

Exempt

Exempt employees are those whose positions and duties meet specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to be exempt from the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the law. Whether a



particular position qualifies as exempt will be determined through Human Resources. Exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis.

Exempt employees are expected to work the number of hours needed to perform the job and are not entitled to overtime pay or compensatory time off. However, the County Administrator may grant additional paid time off to an exempt employee who has worked an inordinate number of hours, such as due to a storm. This is a privilege to be granted at the discretion of the County Administrator, and not a right. It is intended to be utilized only in unusual situations.

Exempt employees are also treated differently than non-exempt employees for purposes of partial-day absences. Please see **Section 4.11 Partial Day Absences** for further information.

The FLSA restricts the circumstances under which an employer may make deductions from the salary of an exempt employee. The County's practices and policies are established and intended to ensure that improper deductions are not made. In the event of any inadvertent deduction, the employee will be fully reimbursed. If you believe that any amount has been deducted in violation of the law or our policies, you should file a complaint through Human Resources. If an improper deduction has been made, you will be reimbursed for the deduction and appropriate steps will be taken as needed to correct the problem in order to facilitate future compliance.

Non-Exempt

Non-exempt employees are those whose positions do not meet FLSA exemption tests and who are paid applicable overtime pay. Human Resources establishes an employee's non-exempt status. See section 4.4 - Overtime and Compensatory Time for more information.

2.4 Timekeeping Procedures

Employees must record their actual time worked for payroll and benefit purposes on a time-keeping system and in a manner currently utilized by the County for such purposes. Non-exempt employees must record the time work begins and ends, as well as the beginning and ending time of any departure from work for any non-work-related reason, including lunch breaks.

Non-exempt employees may not begin work until their scheduled starting time. Time worked beyond their regular schedule must have prior authorization from their supervisor.

Altering, falsifying, or tampering with time records is prohibited and subjects the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Exempt employees may be required to record their daily work attendance and are expected to work core business hours and any additional time before and after core hours as needed.

2.5 Employee Service Credit

County service credit is earned from the employee's first day through their last day of employment (any extended leave such as the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or Administrative Leave may cause an adjustment to service credit for time missed).



If an employee leaves County employment for any reason and is later re-employed, prior service credit is not retained unless the employee meets both of the following conditions:

1. Prior service was at least five (5) consecutive years; and
2. The employee returns to County employment within one (1) year of prior separation.

2.6 Probationary Period

During the first one hundred eighty (180) days of employment, the County and the new employee are given an opportunity to evaluate whether the employment relationship should continue. However, the probationary period is not a guarantee of employment for six (6) months. During this period, employees will not have access to PLT (paid leave) hours unless otherwise approved by the County Administrator. Probationary employees will not have grievance rights.

Employees will be evaluated at the end of their initial probationary period of employment and a recommendation will be provided by the supervisor to the department director for one of the following actions:

1. Removal from probationary status and continued employment; or
2. Continued employment with an extension to the probationary status, not to exceed an additional six (6) months, only for the purpose of further evaluation; or
3. Termination of the employment relationship with Beaufort County.

The department director will consider the recommendation and will present it to the County Administrator, or designee, for a final decision.

2.7 Employment of Relatives

Persons who are related by birth or become related by marriage will not be employed or continued to be employed if one directly supervises another, interacts with another in the handling of money or compensation, works in a department where adequate separation is not possible, or in any other situation that administration deems inappropriate.

If employees become related by marriage and create a situation prohibited by this policy, one of the employees must give up his/her position. If employees cannot choose which one of them it will be, management will make the decision based on such factors as business needs, performance, longevity, etc.

Unrelated employees, such as domestic partners, cohabitants, or significant others, will be treated as being family for the purposes of this nepotism policy. Conflicts of interests, situations which at the County's sole discretion create the appearance of a conflict of interest, and situations not specifically noted in the policy will be handled by the County at its sole discretion.

2.8 Fraternization

A "personal relationship" is defined as a relationship between employees who have or have had a continuing relationship of a romantic or intimate nature.



An employee who is involved in a personal relationship with another employee may not supervise directly or work for the employee with whom he or she is involved.

Beaufort County reserves the right to take prompt action if an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest arises concerning individuals who engage in any relationship with another employee that may affect terms of employment or create a distraction or disruption of business.

2.9 Transfer of Employees

Transfer of employees by the County from one department to another, or one location to another, may be made at any time at the County's discretion to support the operational needs of the County.

Employees may request transfer by applying for other advertised positions within the County. Employees are encouraged to discuss their desire to transfer with their current supervisor; however, this is not a requirement. Transferring employees must provide at least a 14-day notice to their current supervisor unless the current supervisor agrees to a lesser timeframe. Transfers must be approved by the County Administrator or designee and will be made effective at the beginning of a pay period.

2.10 Separation of Employment

Employees may be separated from employment at any time, with or without notice, by retirement, voluntary resignation, involuntary termination, or abandonment of employment. An employee will be deemed to have abandoned their job if they fail to report for work at the regularly scheduled time for three (3) consecutive working days without the consent of the employer.

Employees choosing to voluntarily separate are asked to provide at least two (2) weeks advance notice of departure. All Beaufort County property including, but not limited to, keys, security cards, parking passes, laptop computers, fax machines, uniforms, etc., must be returned at separation. Employees also must return all of Beaufort County's Confidential Information upon separation.

Any amounts owed the County and the cost of any property issued by the County and not returned may be deducted from the final paycheck as an advance of wages.

As noted previously, all employees are employed at-will and nothing in this handbook changes that status.

2.11 Exit Interviews

Employees who resign are requested to participate in an exit interview with a Human Resources Representative, if possible.

Please contact the Human Resources Department for more information.

2.12 Workforce Reductions

In the event that a reduction in the County's workforce becomes necessary, the number of employees over and above those needed to perform the available work will be laid off. In determining those employees to be retained, consideration may be given to the quality of each employee's past performance, the need for the position held by



the employee, employee qualifications for other County positions, and the length of service of each employee. The County will provide reasonable notice of layoffs.

2.13 Secondary Employment

If an employee desires to engage in employment in addition to his/her employment with the County, he must first obtain written authorization via an "Outside Employment Request Form" from his Department Head and the Human Resources Director for each secondary employment. Authorization must be renewed as of January 1 of each calendar year.

If, in the County's sole opinion, an employee's outside employment conflicts with or gives the appearance of a conflict of interest or is deemed incompatible with his County employment, he may be asked to choose between the two jobs. Beaufort County employees may only hold one Beaufort County position at a time.

Employees are not permitted to have dual employment within the County.

Employees may not engage in secondary employment or any personal business activity while on County work time or in County workplaces. Employees may not use County materials or facilities for private or secondary employment purposes.

2.14 Employee Discipline

General Guidelines

Instances may arise when an employee's conduct, or other actions or inactions warrant formal disciplinary measures.

When the discipline involves suspension, demotion or termination, the supervisor must coordinate with the Human Resources Director and gain approval from the County Administrator or designee prior to informing the employee of the decision.

For all written reprimands, the supervisor must turn in an "Employee Counseling Form" to the Human Resources Department, in which he/she outlines the circumstances involved and the action being taken. The supervisor must review the report (with the exception of oral warnings) with the employee for his/her signature with the understanding that the signature only acknowledges that the employee has seen the report or the action taken. The employee's signature does not mean that the employee necessarily agrees with the report and does not prevent the employee from appealing the action.

The employee must sign the counseling form at the time it is presented. Failure to do so will result in immediate suspension without pay. If the employee fails to sign the counseling form by 5:00 p.m., or by the end of their scheduled work day, the employee may be deemed to have resigned and the County, at its discretion, may proceed with termination of employment.

Employees will be given a copy of the signed report. The employee may submit a rebuttal and/or request to appeal within ten (10) calendar days. Employees are encouraged to reference the Grievance Process section of this handbook for further guidance in appealing a decision by management resulting in disciplinary action.

Types of Disciplinary Action



Disciplinary Action which may be taken without any regards to a specific order includes, but is not limited to:

- Oral counseling
- Written reprimand
- Suspension without pay
- Reduction in leave balances
- Performance Improvement Plan
- Probation
- Demotion / Reduction in pay
- Dismissal / Termination of employment

2.15 Examples of Conduct Warranting Disciplinary Action

It is not possible to list all acts and omissions, which may result in disciplinary action. The disciplinary action which is administered for any particular act or acts of misconduct rests in the sole discretion of the Administrator. The following list is merely a GUIDELINE of some of the more obvious types of misconduct, which may result in disciplinary action. **The disciplinary action that is administered for any particular act or acts of misconduct rests in the sole discretion of Beaufort County without regard for the way it has treated other employees and without regard to the way it has handled similar situations. Each act of misconduct is considered a separate offense.**

- a. Conviction of, or plea of guilty or no contest to a violation of the law, which may affect County's reputation, or which could create concern on the part of fellow employees or the citizens.
- b. Failure to report an arrest to Human Resources/County Administration.
- c. Loss of certification or license that is a requirement for the position.
- d. Unauthorized or excessive absence, tardiness.
- e. Insubordination, including disrespect for authority, or other conduct which tends to undermine authority.
- f. Failure or refusal to carry out lawful instructions; failure to follow chain-of-command (except in instances of wrongdoing by a supervisor).
- g. Unauthorized possession or removal, misappropriation, destruction, theft or conversion of County property or the property of others (includes information and electronic files and data).
- h. Violation of safety rules, neglect, or engaging in unsafe practices.
- i. Interference with the work of others.
- j. Threatening, coercing, harassing, bullying, or intimidating fellow employees, including "joking" threats.
- k. Physical aggression while on duty or on County premises.
- l. Inappropriate or offensive language.
- m. Unauthorized possession of a weapon in County facilities.
- n. Unprofessional behavior when dealing with the public or coworkers.
- o. Dishonesty.
- p. Failure to report wrongdoing of a fellow county employee while on duty.
- q. Failure to provide information; misrepresentation, alteration, or falsification of information for County records.
- r. Failure to report personal injury or property damage.
- s. Negligence or carelessness.



- t. Introduction, possession, or use of illegal or unauthorized prescription drugs or intoxicating beverages on County property or while on duty anywhere; working while under the influence of illegal drugs or intoxicating beverages; or the off-the-job illegal use or possession of drugs. For purposes of this policy, an employee is presumed to be "under the influence" if he has any detectable amount of any such substance in his/her system.
- u. Unsatisfactory performance.
- v. Violation of policies and procedures; violation of department work rules.
- w. Violation of state or federal laws or regulations.
- x. Any other reason, which, in the County's sole discretion, warrants disciplinary action.

Employees may be disciplined or discharged for any reason which, in the County's sole discretion, warrants discipline or discharge. The county reserves the right to treat each employee individually without regard for the way it has treated other employees and without regard to the way it has handled similar situations.

2.16 Grievance Process

This procedure is adopted in accordance with the "County and Municipal Employees Grievance Procedure Act," Section 8-17-110, et seq., Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended.

A grievance is defined as any complaint by an employee that he/she has been treated unlawfully or in violation of County policies with regard to any matter pertaining to his employment by the County. This definition includes, but is not limited to, discharge, suspension, involuntary transfer, promotion, and demotion. An employee's level of compensation or classification is not the proper subject for a grievance except as it applies to alleged inequities within the employee's department. If an employee believes that he has not received or been credited with or has otherwise lost wages or benefits to which he is entitled, he must present his grievance in accordance with this procedure, or such wages or benefits may be forfeited. Written warnings are not grievable.

An employee who believes that he has a grievance must conform with the following procedure:

1. The employee must discuss the grievance with his immediate supervisor within ten (10) calendar days of the event giving rise to the grievance or his knowledge of such event. If his supervisor is unable or unwilling to adjust the grievance to the satisfaction of the employee, the employee must take Step 2.
2. The employee must follow the chain-of-command in his/her department, appealing to each successive level of supervision. All Step 1 and Step 2 appeals may be oral or written. At each level, each supervisor has four (4) calendar days to render a decision. If no decision is made within this time, the grievance is considered denied. If a supervisor at a particular level is unavailable to consider the grievance, it is considered denied and the employee may appeal to the next level of supervision.
3. If the Department Director denies the grievance, this decision is final as to any grievance brought by a probationary employee. For the purpose of grievance filing, a new employee is considered probationary until he has completed six (6) months of employment.

Non-probationary employees may appeal to the Employee Grievance Committee the denial of their grievances by the department heads by filing a written request for appeal at the Human Resources Department. This must be done within seven (7) calendar days of the department head's denial of the grievance. The written request for appeal must include the following information:

1. The purpose of the appeal and what recommendation is requested of the Grievance Committee; and



2. Statement that the chain-of-command has been followed in the appeal as is required by the grievance procedure.

Human Resources Department staff will review the prepared appeal, if requested by the employee.

The Employee Grievance Committee

The County Administrator appoints a committee composed of five (5) employees to serve for terms of three (3) years, except that the members appointed initially shall be appointed so that their terms will be staggered, and approximately one-third of the terms shall expire each year. The Administrator may appoint two (2) alternate members to serve in the event a member cannot attend or is disqualified from serving. A member continues to serve after the expiration of his term until a successor is appointed. Any interim appointment to fill a vacancy for any reason prior to the completion of a member's term shall be for the unexpired term. Any member may be reappointed for succeeding terms at the discretion of the County Administrator. All members are selected on a broadly representative basis from among County employees. Members employed in the same department as the grieving employee and members having formed an opinion on the issues prior to the hearing, may not participate in that employee's hearing.

1. The committee annually selects its own chairman from among its members. The chairman serves as the presiding officer at all hearings which he attends but may designate some other member to serve as presiding officer in his absence. The chairman has authority to schedule and to reschedule all hearings.
2. A quorum consists of a minimum of four (4) committee members, and no hearings may be held without a quorum.
3. The chairman of the grievance committee has ten (10) days from the date the grievance is received by the Human Resources Department to schedule the requested hearing, and to inform the employee requesting the hearing, the affected department, as well as the Human Resources Department, of the date of the hearing.
4. The presiding officer has control of the proceedings. He may take whatever action is necessary to ensure an equitable, orderly, and expeditious hearing. Parties abide by their decisions except when a committee member objects to a decision to accept or reject evidence, in which case the majority vote of the committee will govern.
5. The committee has the authority to call for files, records, and papers which are pertinent to any investigation, and which are subject to the control of the County Administrator; to call for or consider affidavits of witnesses; to request and hear the testimony of witnesses; to consider the results of polygraph examinations; and to secure the services of a recording secretary at its discretion. The committee has no authority to subpoena witnesses, documents, or other evidence, nor shall any county employee be compelled to attend any hearing. All proceedings are recorded. Witnesses, other than the grieving employee and the department representative, are sequestered when not testifying. All witnesses testify under oath.

Hearings

1. All hearings are held in executive session unless the grieving employee requests, at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the hearing, that it be held in open session. The official recording of all hearings shall be subject to the control and disposition of the County Administrator.
2. Neither the grieving employee nor the department may be assisted by advisers or by attorneys during the hearing itself. However, the committee may have an attorney available to it at any and all times it considers necessary, and the Human Resources Department may provide assistance in reading written materials to the committee at the request of a grieving employee.



3. In disciplinary actions by department directors and their subordinate supervisors, the employee must receive in reasonable detail written notice of the nature of the acts or omissions which are the basis for the disciplinary action. This notice may be amended at any time twenty-four hours or more before the commencement of the hearing. The department must demonstrate that the disciplinary action is for the good of the County. The department makes the first presentation. The committee may base its findings and recommendations on any additional or different grounds developed from the employee's presentation.
4. In non-disciplinary grievances, the employee must establish that a right existed and that it had denied him unlawfully, or in violation of a County policy. The employee makes the first presentation.
5. In all grievances, the grieving employee and the department are each limited to one hour of initial presentation. The party required to make the first presentation is entitled to a ten-minute rebuttal of the other party's presentation. The chairman appoints himself or another member of the committee as timekeeper.
6. In all grievances, presentations may be oral, in writing, or both; and may be supported by affidavits or unsworn signed statements from witnesses, by records, other documentary evidence, photographs, and other physical evidence. Presentations shall be made by the grieving employee (with reading assistance from a member of the Human Resources Department, if the employee desires), and by a directorial employee of the affected department. Parties may request that the committee call witnesses, and a list of potential witnesses should be submitted to the committee five (5) days prior to the hearing. However, neither party may call witnesses or question the other party, or question any witness called by the committee.

Findings and Recommendations

1. Except as provided in paragraphs 2 and 3 below, the committee, within twenty (20) days after hearing an appeal, must make its findings and recommendations and report such findings and recommendations to the County Administrator. If the County Administrator approves the recommendation of the committee, this shall be his decision and copies of the decision are transmitted to the employee and to the department director involved. If the Administrator rejects the recommendations of the committee, the County Administrator makes his own decision without further hearing, and that decision is final. Copies of the decision are transmitted to the employee, the department director involved, the grievance committee and the Human Resources Department.
2. In grievances in which the complaint is lodged against the County Administrator directly, the committee, within twenty (20) days after hearing an appeal, must make its findings and report such findings and recommendations to the Chairman of County Council through the Human Resources Director. If the Chairman of County Council rejects the recommendations of the committee, the Chairman of County Council will make his own decision without further hearing, and that decision is final. Copies of the decision are transmitted to the employee, the County Administrator, the grievance committee, and the Human Resources Department.
3. In grievances involving either the failure to promote or transfer, or the discipline or discharge, of personnel employed in or seeking assignment to a department under the direction of an Elected Official or an official appointed by an authority outside County government, the committee, within twenty (20) days after hearing an appeal, makes and reports such findings and recommendations to such official. If the official approves, he shall endorse the recommendations of the committee, and a copy of the decision is transmitted by the official to the employee. If, however, the official rejects the recommendations of the committee, the official makes his own decision without further hearing, and that decision shall be final. A copy of the decision is transmitted to the employee, the grievance committee, and the Human Resources Department.

Nothing in this grievance procedure creates a property interest in employment or a contract of employment, nor does this procedure limit the authority of the County or an Elected or Appointed Official to terminate any employee



when the County or respective Elected or Appointed Official considers such action to be necessary for the good of the County.

2.17 Performance Review

Depending on the employee's position and classification, Beaufort County endeavors to review performance annually. However, a positive performance evaluation does not guarantee an increase in salary, a promotion or continued employment. Compensation increases and the terms and conditions of employment, including job assignments, transfers, promotions, and demotions, are determined by and at the discretion of management.

In addition to these formal performance evaluations, Beaufort County encourages employees and supervisors to discuss job performance on a frequent and ongoing basis.

2.18 Promotions

Promotions within the County are generally based on such factors as quality of work, prior job performance, experience, educational background, attendance, safety record, and the ability to work well with others. While most vacant positions are advertised, the County may give first consideration for position vacancies to current employees. However, nothing in County policy restricts the County's right to review external candidates prior to making a decision.

SECTION 3 – EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Working Hours and Schedule

Beaufort County normally is open for business from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Work schedules shall be established by department directors and supervisors in a manner to ensure staff are performing the business of the County in the most efficient way possible.

Flexible Work Schedule Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for assistant county administrators, department directors and supervisors when considering alternative work schedules, also known as flexible scheduling.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to all employees who are under the operational authority of the County Administrator and whose duties and responsibilities allow for flexible scheduling. Certain functions of government may not lend themselves to flexible scheduling, e.g., EMS personnel on 12 or 24-hour shifts or Detention Center personnel on 12-hour shifts.

Guidelines



- Flexible scheduling shall not result in staffing shortages during the County's core business hours of Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., nor shall it impair customer service functions.
- Under normal circumstances, most employees are expected to work no more than 10 hours on any given workday.
- Full-time employees are expected to work 40 hours a week, which begins on Saturday and ends on the Friday that follows. Accrual of overtime in excess of 40 hours worked per week should not occur as a result of flexible scheduling.
- Department directors and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees maintain a consistent and predictable work schedule. Under normal circumstances, an employee's work schedule should not vary from week to week or from pay period to pay period.
- Decisions regarding flexible scheduling shall be made fairly and equitably.
- The County Administrator reserves the right to terminate flexible scheduling for any individual employee, as well as the right to recall this policy which allows for flexible scheduling, at any time.

Working Hours

The County's regular work week begins on Saturday and ends on the Friday that follows. Regular working hours are as follows:

- Core business hours for providing service to the public are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- EMS: Rotating 24-hour shift schedule (24-on / 48-off). Part-time employees may be on a 12- hour or 24-hour schedule.
- Detention Center, Sheriff & Communications: 8- & 12-hour shift schedules, as determined by current staffing levels and resident census.

Management will inform employees of scheduled breaks and lunch periods. Normally, lunch or meal periods are scheduled for no more than one (1) hour between the fourth (4) and sixth (6) hour of each workday. A fifteen (15) minute break or rest period may be scheduled for the first half of the workday and the second half of the workday. Employees may not combine meal/break periods or use meal/break periods to leave early. While lunch and break periods will be provided whenever possible, situations such as high work volume and staffing shortages may make it occasionally necessary to eliminate some break periods.

Employees are expected back at their workstations ready to start work at the end of each scheduled break and lunch period.

All non-exempt employees may not work beyond their scheduled hours without prior approval from their supervisor.

3.2 Punctuality and Attendance

Employees are hired to perform important functions at Beaufort County. As with any group effort, operating effectively takes cooperation and commitment from everyone. Therefore, attendance and punctuality are very important. Unnecessary absences and tardies are expensive, disruptive and place an unfair burden on fellow employees and Supervisors. We expect excellent attendance from all employees. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.



The County does recognize, however, there are times when absences and tardiness cannot be avoided. In such cases, employees are expected to notify Supervisors as early as possible, but no later than the start of the workday. Asking another employee, friend or relative to give this notice is improper and constitutes grounds for disciplinary action. Employees should call, stating the nature of the illness and its expected duration, for every day of absenteeism.

Unreported or unexcused absences of three (3) consecutive workdays generally will be considered a voluntary resignation of employment with Beaufort County.

3.3 Remote Work

Beaufort County employees may be allowed to work remotely when their job duties and work performance are determined to be suitable for remote work. Eligibility will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Department Head and must receive approval from Beaufort County Administration. Employees who report to an Elected Official must obtain approval from their respective Elected Official.

Additionally, employees may be required or permitted to telecommute during declared emergencies where county facilities are closed to the public.

This policy provides general information regarding remote work. Employees who are approved to work remotely should consult their individual Remote Work Agreement for specific details of their remote work arrangement, such as expected work hours, equipment provided, and other important information.

Remote work arrangements are at the discretion of management and may be modified or discontinued at any time. Such decisions are final and are not subject to the grievance procedure.

At-Will Employment

This policy and any individual Remote Work Agreement does not create a contract of employment and is not intended to be considered or construed as a promise of continued employment. Employment is at will and may be discontinued at any time by Beaufort County or employee without notice, cause, or liability.

Definitions

Alternate Workplace: A location outside of a county facility where an employee performs work, typically the employee's home, and within a reasonable commuting distance to their primary workplace.

Primary Workplace: The employee's designated office located within a county facility.

Telecommuting: Short-term or occasional work performed from an alternate workplace. Telecommuting does not require a formal Remote Work Request Form or Agreement.

Hybrid Remote Work: A recurring, part-time remote work arrangement where an employee performs duties from an alternate workplace on certain days while reporting to their primary workplace on other days.

Virtual Work: A work arrangement in which an employee performs all job duties from an alternate workplace without regularly reporting to a county facility. Out-of-State Virtual work is not permitted for Beaufort County employees.



Employees that report to Beaufort County Administration are not eligible for Virtual Work.

Reasonable Commuting Distance: The distance between an employee's alternate work location and their primary worksite that can be reasonably traveled within approximately one hour by car under normal driving conditions.

Remote Work Request Form: A formal document submitted by an employee to request authorization to work remotely on a planned and recurring basis.

Remote Work Agreement: A formal agreement between an employee and management that outlines the terms and conditions of a remote work arrangement. The remote work agreement should be reviewed and updated if there is a permanent change to the employee's job duties and are not transferable from one position to another.

Remote Work Rules

1. **Discretionary Nature:** Remote work is a privilege granted at the sole discretion of Beaufort County Administration or the applicable Elected Official. It is not an entitlement or guaranteed benefit. Remote work may not be suitable for all employees or positions. Approval is determined on a case-by-case basis, and management retains the authority to modify or revoke any remote work arrangement at any time, with or without notice. Decisions regarding approval, modification, or discontinuation of remote work are final and are not subject to grievance procedures.
2. **Hybrid Remote Work Limitations:** Hybrid Remote Work may occur at a maximum of two days or shifts per workweek.
3. **Hybrid Schedule Restrictions:** Hybrid Remote Work cannot be scheduled on the following consecutive days:
 - Monday and Tuesday
 - Thursday and Friday
 - Friday and the following Monday
4. **Telecommuting Documentation:** Telecommuting does not require a formal Remote Work Agreement or request form. However, all telecommuting arrangements must be documented by the employee's supervisor or management to ensure clarity regarding the duration, expectations, and responsibilities of the assignment. Documentation should include:
 - a. Dates and times the employee will telecommute
 - b. Expected work tasks or assignments
 - c. Any special instructions or resources provided
5. **Performance Standards:** Remote work must not negatively affect the quantity or quality of work produced or the level of services provided by the department.
6. **On-Site Requirements:** Employees working remotely may be required to report to the office for training, face-to-face meetings, or other work-related activities. Employees are expected to be available to attend such events within a reasonable commuting distance. Management will provide as much notice as practicable when requesting on-site attendance.
7. **Compliance with Laws:** County employees are subject to all applicable State and Federal laws while performing work under a remote arrangement. Employees are responsible for ensuring that their remote



work practices comply with these laws, including but not limited to labor, tax, confidentiality, and data security requirements.

Eligibility for Remote Work

To be considered for remote work, an employee must meet the following criteria:

- Have been employed with the County for a minimum of twelve (12) months;
- Maintain a record of satisfactory job performance, as determined by management; and
- Not currently on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

Exclusions: Department Directors and Deputy Directors are not eligible for Hybrid Remote Work, but may telecommute on an as-needed basis, as approved by management.

Meeting these criteria does not guarantee approval. Each request will be evaluated based on operational needs, job responsibilities, and the employee's ability to work independently while meeting performance expectations.

Requests for remote work as a reasonable accommodation for a disability will be considered separately in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Beaufort County's reasonable accommodation process.

Remote Work Request Process

Employees seeking approval to work remotely must complete and submit a Remote Work Request Form, available through the Human Resources Department.

All requests must be reviewed and approved in the following order:

1. The employee's Department Head or Elected Official
2. The employee's Assistant County Administrator, if applicable
3. The County Administrator, or designee

Exclusion: Employees who report to an Elected Official only require approval from their Elected Official.

Employees are responsible for submitting the completed Remote Work Request Form, along with any required supporting documentation—including, but not limited to, a Remote Work Agreement—to the Human Resources Department **prior to the anticipated start date** of remote work.

Hours of Work

Scheduled hours of work will be set by the employees' manager or supervisor. Employees should maintain regular contact with their supervisors and managers.

Non-exempt employees must accurately record all hours worked pursuant to Beaufort County's timekeeping system and take rest and meal breaks as if in Beaufort County's primary workplace and as required by law. Non-exempt employees may not work beyond scheduled working hours (including working more than 40 hours in a workweek) without prior, written authorization from their manager or supervisor.



Alternate Workplace

Alternate workplace locations should be within a reasonable commuting distance to the employee's primary workplace. Employees will provide, at their expense, a secure, dedicated work area. Employees are responsible for maintaining the work area in a safe, secure, and nonhazardous condition at all times. Employees will maintain security devices and procedures necessary to prevent use by unauthorized persons, including by preventing the connection of any Beaufort County furnished computer system, network, or database to any computer, network, or database other than a computer, network, or database to which connections are provided or authorized by Beaufort County.

Duties

Employees are expected to follow all existing Beaufort County policies and procedures. The duties, obligations, responsibilities, and conditions of employment with Beaufort County remain unchanged.

Employees must stay engaged with work throughout the workday and be fully available during normal business hours. Employees may not hold business visits or host in-person meetings with business colleagues or customers at their alternate workplace. If employees do not successfully perform their job duties remotely, this arrangement will be revoked. Employees are expected to follow existing Beaufort County policies with respect to scheduled and unscheduled time off, including the obligation to speak with their manager or supervisor before the scheduled start time in the event of an unscheduled absence, tardy, or early departure.

Accidents and Injuries

Employees agree to maintain safe conditions in the alternate workplace and to practice the same safety habits and rules applied on Beaufort County premises. If employees incur an injury arising out of the course and scope of the assigned job duties while working in the alternate workplace, the workers' compensation provisions in place for the state in which the employees are working will apply. Employees must notify their supervisor or manager immediately and complete all necessary and/or requested documents regarding the reported injury. Beaufort County assumes no responsibility for injuries occurring in the alternate workplace outside normal working hours or for injuries that occur as a result of a reasonably recognizable unsafe alternate workplace.

Equipment

Employees agree to use electronic equipment that has been encrypted and meets all of Beaufort County's security requirements. If Beaufort County provides equipment for home use, employees agree to provide a secure location for Beaufort County-owned equipment and will not use, or allow others to use, such equipment for purposes other than Beaufort County business. Employees have no expectation of ownership in such equipment, linkages, property, or other items installed or provided by Beaufort County. Beaufort County will bear the expense of removal of any such equipment, linkages, and installations provided by Beaufort County upon the termination of the remote work arrangement but not modification of or repairs to the alternate workplace location. Employees hereby release Beaufort County from any damage or liability incurred in the installing or removal of the equipment provided by Beaufort County.

Return of Beaufort County Property

All equipment, records, and materials provided by Beaufort County will remain Beaufort County property. Employees agree to return Beaufort County equipment, records, and materials upon request. All Beaufort County



equipment will be returned by employees for inspection, repair, or replacement as needed or requested or immediately upon termination of the remote work arrangement. All equipment must be returned within five (5) business days of written notice to the employees.

Expenses

Upon presenting of receipts and in accordance with the Business Expense Reimbursement policy, Beaufort County will reimburse employees for certain preapproved expenses.

Regular household utility charges, such as electricity, water, phone, Internet service, auto, homeowners' insurance, etc., are not reimbursable unless state law requires reimbursement.

Confidentiality

Employees acknowledge that they are subject to Beaufort County policies prohibiting the unauthorized use or disclosure of the County's confidential information. Employees must take all reasonable steps to safeguard such information, including keeping it separate from personal materials, restricting access to non-employees, and securing it in locked cabinets or other secure storage when not in use.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: information related to Beaufort County's operations, programs, services, policies, personnel, financial records, strategic plans, client or constituent information, correspondence, data, technical materials, research and development efforts, proposals, project reports, and any other proprietary or sensitive information acquired through County employment. Employees must not use or disclose this information for personal gain or for the benefit of unauthorized parties.

Contact

If employees have any questions concerning this policy or would like to apply to work remotely, they should contact their supervisor and coordinate with the Human Resources Department to obtain the Remote Work Request Form and Remote Work Agreement.

3.4 Fitness for Duty

An employee must be physically and mentally fit to perform essential job functions.

Evaluation for Fitness

When it is reasonably suspected that the physical or mental impairment of an employee constitutes a hazard to individuals or property or may prevent the employee from effectively performing the essential functions of the position, the employee may be required to submit to an evaluation of fitness for duty by a physician of the County's choosing and expense. All such testing must be approved and coordinated by the Human Resources Director, or designee.

Periodic Evaluation

An employee may be required to submit to periodic examinations and/or undergo a program of treatment to qualify for continued employment, to the extent allowable by law.

Disclosure Required



An employee who is notified or otherwise becomes aware of a physical or mental impairment that affects or reasonably threatens to affect his/her ability to perform essential job functions shall report the condition immediately to their Department Head or to the Human Resources Director.

3.5 Code of Conduct

Public Trust

Public trust is essential for any successful governmental entity. To that end, employees are expected to conduct themselves (both on and off the job) in a way that is respectful to citizens, coworkers, and all others associated with the County. Employees should demonstrate good judgment, discretion, and high ethical standards in everything they do that pertains to County business and/or could affect the County's reputation.

Employees should remember at all times that they are employed to serve the public and should at all times do so with a high level of professionalism and respect.

Employees should also remember that public funds are being used, and should conduct business effectively and efficiently and protect the resources of the County.

Employees should avoid any activity which could be considered or perceived to be a conflict of interest. This includes any action which is contrary to the best interest of the County, whether for personal gain or the benefit of other unintended parties. Particular care must be given in dealing with any person or organization with whom the County is either currently conducting business or has the potential to conduct business.

Employees shall not use County property or position for personal gain.

Workplace Conduct

Because everyone may not have the same idea about proper workplace conduct, it is helpful to adopt and enforce rules all can follow. Unacceptable conduct may subject the offender to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, in Beaufort County's sole discretion. The following are examples of some, but not all, conduct which can be considered unacceptable:

1. Obtaining employment on the basis of false or misleading information.
2. Stealing, removing or defacing Beaufort County property or a co-worker's property, and/or disclosure of confidential information.
3. Completing another employee's time records.
4. Violation of safety rules and policies.
5. Violation of Beaufort County's Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy.
6. Fighting, threatening or disrupting the work of others or other violations of Beaufort County's Workplace Violence Policy.
7. Failure to follow lawful instructions of a supervisor.
8. Failure to perform assigned job duties.
9. Violation of the Punctuality and Attendance Policy, including but not limited to irregular attendance, habitual lateness or unexcused absences.
10. Gambling on Beaufort County property.
11. Willful or careless destruction or damage to Beaufort County assets or to the equipment or possessions of another employee.



12. Wasting work materials.
13. Performing work of a personal nature during working time.
14. Violation of the Solicitation and Distribution Policy.
15. Violation of Beaufort County's Harassment or Equal Employment Opportunity Policies.
16. Violation of the Communication and Computer Systems Policy.
17. Unsatisfactory job performance.
18. Any other violation of Beaufort County policy.

Obviously, not every type of misconduct can be listed. Note that all employees are employed at-will, and Beaufort County reserves the right to impose whatever discipline it chooses, or none at all, in a particular instance. Beaufort County will deal with each situation individually and nothing in this handbook should be construed as a promise of specific treatment in a given situation. However, Beaufort County will endeavor to utilize progressive discipline but reserves the right in its sole discretion to terminate the employee at any time for any reason.

The observance of these rules will help to ensure that our workplace remains a safe and desirable place to work.

3.6 Conflict of Interest and Business Ethics

It is Beaufort County's policy that all employees avoid any conflict between their personal interests and those of Beaufort County. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Beaufort County's honesty and integrity, and therefore its reputation, are not compromised. The fundamental principle guiding this policy is that no employee should have, or appear to have, personal interests or relationships that actually or potentially conflict with the best interests of Beaufort County.

It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of situations that might involve violations of this policy. However, the situations that would constitute a conflict in most cases include but are not limited to:

1. Holding an interest in or accepting free or discounted goods from any organization that does, or is seeking to do, business with Beaufort County, by any employee who is in a position to directly or indirectly influence either Beaufort County's decision to do business, or the terms upon which business would be done with such organization;
2. Holding any interest in an organization that competes with Beaufort County;
3. Being employed by (including as a consultant) or serving on the board of any organization which does, or is seeking to do, business with Beaufort County or which competes with Beaufort County; and/or
4. Profiting personally, e.g., through commissions, loans, expense reimbursements or other payments, from any organization seeking to do business with Beaufort County.

A conflict of interest would also exist when a member of the employee's immediate family is involved in situations such as those above.

It is the employee's responsibility to report any actual or potential conflict that may exist between the employee (and the employee's immediate family) and Beaufort County.

3.7 Political Participation by Employees

The County supports its employees' efforts in exercising their civic duties and privileges in the democratic process. Employees are free to engage in political activities or join civic organizations, subject to guidelines and the following provisions: Employees of Beaufort County are expected to avoid public political activities that would



have the effect of endorsing, promoting, or disparaging any Beaufort County elected or appointed official during working hours. While employees are encouraged to otherwise express their political opinions by voting for the candidate of their choice in any political election, employees shall not use their positions of employment with the County or other County resources for political purposes.

3.8 Confidential County Information

During the course of work, employees may become aware of confidential information about Beaufort County's business, including but not limited to information regarding Beaufort County finances, pricing, products and new product development, software and computer programs, marketing strategies, suppliers and customers and potential customers. Employees also may become aware of similar confidential information belonging to Beaufort County's customers, to include but not limited to citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders. It is extremely important that all such information remain confidential, and not be publicly disclosed except as part of a required disclosure pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Any employee who improperly copies, removes (whether physically or electronically), uses, or discloses confidential information to anyone outside of authorized personnel may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are responsible to determine with their supervisors as to what information they receive in their position would be considered confidential.

3.9 Publicity/Statements to the Media

All media inquiries regarding the position of Beaufort County as to any issues must be referred to the Public Information Officer. Only the Public Information Officer is authorized to make or approve public statements on behalf of Beaufort County. No employees under the operational purview of the County Administrator, unless specifically designated by the Public Information Officer, County Administrator or other appropriate designee are authorized to make those statements on behalf of Beaufort County. Any employee wishing to write and/or publish an article, paper, or other publication on behalf of Beaufort County must first obtain approval from Public Information Officer.

3.10 Dress Code, Appearance, and Cleanliness

As representatives of Beaufort County, employees are expected to maintain a neat, well-groomed and professional appearance, in addition to good hygiene habits, while at work. County provided identification badges must be worn at all times on an approved lanyard around the neck or clipped to the lapel area so that it is readily visible.

Some departments provide uniforms for employees. These employees should follow certain guidelines to maintain a neat and professional appearance. Uniform trousers and shorts should be worn at the waistline with a belt. Shirt tails should be tucked in. Hats, if provided, should be worn with the bill over the eyes (pointing forward). Uniformed personnel are expected to follow all guidelines provided by their department.

Non-uniformed personnel shall wear clothing and shoes that are clean, properly fitting, and appropriate to the work situation. The wearing of tight-fitting, suggestive or see-through attire, jeans, shorts, jogging suits and T-shirts is generally not permitted.



Dress down days when jeans are permitted are allowed with the approval of the Department Head.

Management attire should include dress shirts, ties, jackets and/or suits for certain meetings and public functions.

Televised meetings warrant special attention to attire. Employees participating in televised meetings should ensure that they project a professional image as a Beaufort County representative.

Management makes the final determination of appropriateness of attire and appearance. Employees may be asked to go home and change if deemed inappropriate for the workplace. Time spent away from your workstation changing attire is unpaid time.

Clean Workplace:

A clean work environment everywhere in the County is essential for smooth and productive operations. Employees are expected to keep their workstations neat and orderly. The work area should be kept professional in appearance; personal or non-business materials should be kept to a minimum and not offensive or controversial to anyone with access to the area.

3.11 Transportation and Travel

Motor Vehicle and Workplace Equipment Operation

Employees authorized to drive a County vehicle must obey all traffic laws and are completely responsible for fines resulting from traffic violations. Only County employees are authorized to ride in or operate a County vehicle and only to conduct County business (some exceptions apply with written approval from the County Administrator). Please see the County Vehicle Usage Policy below. Employees whose job requires that they possess a driver's license must immediately report all traffic violations (on or off the job) and/or suspensions to their supervisors.

All employees operating a county vehicle that encounters any accident, traffic citation, or other event involving law enforcement must immediately report the incident to their immediate supervisor, Risk Management, the Fleet Manager and the Legal Department.

Vehicle Usage Policy

The County maintains a fleet of vehicles necessary to conduct County business. With few exceptions, vehicles are assigned to specific departments for use by employees of these departments to conduct County business. Vehicles are not assigned to individuals, and individuals are not permitted to keep personal items in County vehicles beyond the workday. Upon exiting the vehicle, the employee is responsible for ensuring that the interior of the vehicle is clean and orderly, with all trash and personal belongings removed. The vehicle should be locked, and keys should be submitted to the department designee after use. Department Directors are responsible for ensuring the cleanliness of vehicle exteriors, as well as ensuring that safety and maintenance protocols are followed. All County vehicles will be parked at an assigned County facility at the end of each business day. Vehicles must be parked at the facility most centrally located to its normal business use. Arrangements contrary to this policy and/or for the benefit of any employee are prohibited.

County vehicles are to be used exclusively for County business. Employees are not permitted to use these vehicles for personal business, nor are they permitted to combine County business and personal business while in a County vehicle unless doing so is in the best interest of the County (this would most often apply to those who



routinely spend the majority of their day in the field - it is often more efficient to take lunch at a location near the worksite than to travel back for a personal vehicle).

Vehicle usage will be audited to ensure adherence to these policies.

Employees who use their personal vehicle to conduct County business will be reimbursed for mileage provided they submit required documentation, including a signed confirmation form from their department director that no department vehicle was available. Department Directors are responsible for ensuring that compensable mileage is managed, and travel is conducted as efficiently as possible. Reimbursable mileage should be submitted with proper documentation within 30 days (as opposed to submitting multiple small claims frequently). Employees are not reimbursed for travel from home to their worksite, regardless of whether or not it is their normal reporting site, and regardless of whether it is during business hours or for emergencies after business hours. Likewise, mileage from work to home is not reimbursable.

Travel from one worksite to another is reimbursable with proper documentation as listed above.

While mileage is not reimbursable from home to work or work to home for after-hour emergencies, employees are compensated for after-hours emergencies from the time they leave home until the time they arrive back at home after the emergency, provided they travel directly from work to home.

Business Travel Outside the County

Administration recognizes that employees who travel outside of the County to represent the County's business interests must forego their living accommodations and may forfeit personal time. Accordingly, the County will make efforts to provide comfortable and secure accommodations for lodging, meals, and travel for employees.

However, these items are not intended to be perquisites, and the County reserves the right to deny reimbursement of expenses that are considered lavish or extravagant. Expenses are to be within established County guidelines and will be reimbursed with proper documentation. Employees are expected to spend the County's money as carefully and judiciously as they would their own.

All out-of-state travel must be approved by the County Administrator or designee.

See the full Beaufort County Fleet policy in Appendix A-11.

3.12 Travel Expense Policy

Clear, honest, well-documented and organized expense reports are of vital importance to the County. Due to this importance, every employee should be familiar with all aspects of the current expense policies. **See the full County Travel/Expense Policy in Appendix A-1.** All questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Finance Department.

3.13 Business Expense Reimbursement

Employees will be reimbursed for reasonable approved expenses incurred in the course of business. These expenses must be approved by the employee's Supervisor, and may include air travel, hotels, motels, meals, cab



fare, rental vehicles, or gas and car mileage for personal vehicles. All expenses incurred should be submitted to the Finance Department along with the receipts in a timely manner.

Employees are expected to exercise restraint and good judgment when incurring expenses. Employees should contact their supervisor in advance if they have any questions about whether an expense will be reimbursed.

See the full County Travel Expense Policy in Appendix A-1.

3.14 County Credit Cards

Employees authorized to use a County credit card are responsible for protecting the use of the credit card and for submitting all credit card charge tickets to the proper department for validation before payment of the credit card invoice. Credit cards are to be used exclusively for business purchases.

Please contact the Purchasing/Procurement Department for the full policy regarding purchase cards.

3.15 Health and Safety

In General

The health and safety of employees and others on Beaufort County property are of critical concern. Beaufort County intends to comply with all health and safety laws applicable to our business. To this end, we must rely upon employees to ensure that work areas are kept safe and free of hazardous conditions. Employees are required to be conscientious about workplace safety, including proper operating methods, and recognize dangerous conditions or hazards. Any unsafe conditions or potential hazards should be reported to management immediately, even if the problem appears to be corrected. Any suspicion of a concealed danger present on Beaufort County's premises, or in a product, facility, piece of equipment, process or business practice for which Beaufort County is responsible should be brought to the attention of management immediately.

Periodically, Beaufort County may issue rules and guidelines governing workplace safety and health. Beaufort County may also issue rules and guidelines regarding the handling and disposal of hazardous substances and waste. All employees should familiarize themselves with these rules and guidelines, as strict compliance will be expected.

Any workplace injury, accident, or illness must be reported to the employee's supervisor as soon as possible, regardless of the severity of the injury or accident.

Medication

Any employee taking medication that may impact his/her work or create a safety issue is required to report such use to their supervisors prior to their shift. Employees may be required to present a release form from the physician indicating that the individual is able to safely perform their daily work routine prior to working while on certain medications and in certain positions.

Safety Equipment

The County provides certain employees with safety equipment. This safety equipment (e.g., safety glasses) must be worn on the job. This equipment will be signed for by the employee and replaced at their expense if lost or



stolen. The County will bear the cost of replacing equipment if the equipment is shown to be defective or no longer effective due to normal wear and tear.

Safety Rules

Besides the following listed safety rules, each employee should make himself familiar with the work place and check for any additional special safety rules in the designated work area.

- First aid supply kits are provided in the work area. It is the responsibility of the supervisors to see that the kits remain well stocked.
- Know where the fire extinguishers are located and how to use them.
- All defective materials or tools must be brought to the attention of the supervisor and not remain on the job.
- The County, if necessary, provides safety glasses. They should be used at all times while working.
- The County provides hearing protection for jobs that require such devices and should be used at all times for these jobs.
- Wear clothes and shoes suited for the job.
- Practice good housekeeping. Keep the work area clean and free from stumbling hazards, grease, etc.
- Learn to lift the correct way. Bend knees. Keep back erect. Get help for heavy loads.
- No scuffling or horseplay on the job.
- Do not run within the work area.
- Employees must be sure that their actions do not endanger other employees, or damage County or personal property.
- Keep guards and protective devices in place at all times.
- Use tools only for their intended purposes. Do not use broken or dull tools. Report broken tools to management.
- Do not attempt to operate special machinery or equipment without permission and training.
- Do not repair or adjust machinery while it is in operation and never oil moving parts except on equipment fitted with safeguards for this purpose.
- Employees are expected to control hazardous waste and know how to handle exposure to hazardous waste, including blood-borne pathogens. If any employee suspects that the waste they may encounter as an employee is hazardous, they should inform management immediately.

Reporting Injuries and Accidents

Employees must advise management of all accidents, injuries or illnesses that occur while at work. All accidents, injuries or illnesses that occur while at work must be reported immediately, no matter how slight they may appear.

The County provides the proper forms for reporting job related accidents, injuries, and illnesses.

In the event of a vehicular accident involving a County-owned vehicle, or while on County business, employees should report all information immediately to management. Employees involved in an accident with a County vehicle will be required to submit to drug and alcohol screening. Exceptions to this requirement are accidents in which the employee is deemed not at fault by law enforcement authorities responding to the accident scene, or when management deems necessary due to reasonable suspicion or other departmental policies and/or requirements.



3.16 Tobacco Use (Including Electronic Smoking Devices)

All forms of tobacco use and smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes/vapes, is prohibited on Beaufort County premises, per Beaufort County ordinance. It is also prohibited in all Beaufort County vehicles. As part of the County's health benefits package, smoking cessation programs are available to employees.

3.17 Workplace Privacy

The workplace is intended to be a place of work. An important part of work is communications and record keeping. No employee is at work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and there are times when management needs access to communications or records maintained by employees in their individual workplaces. Each employee must understand that personal items and personal communications received or stored on County premises are **NOT** entitled to an expectation or guarantee of privacy.

Management reserves the right to search County property and documents in employee desks, lockers, County-owned vehicles, file cabinets, etc. Further, to help provide for the safety and security of County employees, guests, and property, the County may conduct video surveillance of County property.

Electronic media raises similar issues. The County provides electronic and telephonic communication devices and, when necessary, computers and mobile devices to employees. Although assigned to the employee, these items still belong to the County. Similarly, electronic files created on a County computer or mobile device belong to the County. Employees should not use County computers and devices for personal business without the express written permission of the County. Unauthorized programs and files may not be used or installed on County computers without the written permission of the County. Additionally, employees may not encrypt work and may not use passwords other than those assigned to them by the County. Employees may not destroy or delete files from County computers or mobile devices except pursuant to the County's record retention policy.

Employees of Beaufort County should have no expectation of privacy regarding any information or property used, accessed, sent or received, in both hard copy and electronic format, on any County equipment including telephones, cell phones, computer files, email, uploads and downloads from the internet, whether business related or personal.

The County reserves the right to review voice mail, electronic mail, computer and mobile device files, text messaging, and other electronic information generated by, passed through, or stored in the County's electronic system. The County also reserves the right to report the findings of such reviews to appropriate agencies.

The following uses are absolutely forbidden:

1. To access any material the County considers to be pornographic; to transmit or knowingly accept receipt of any communication that is pornographic, obscene, or in the County's opinion might contribute to a hostile work environment in that it demeans individuals on the basis of race, sex, age, national origin, disability or some similar distinction.
2. To conduct business for outside employment or a side-business.
3. To solicit others for non-work-related reasons.

County employees may not use personal electronic equipment (including but not limited to personal laptop computers, mobile devices, and cellular phones) on County property or at County work sites to engage in conduct that would be prohibited if using County equipment.



Important Notice: The County has the capacity to examine the computer and mobile device usage of individual employees in detail. Even though an item has been "deleted" and the employee cannot retrieve it, this does not mean that the County cannot do so. It is also possible to generate a report of every internet connection made by each user and of how much time was spent in each connection.

See the Computer Usage and Email Retention Policy in Appendix A-3 and A-4 for more information.

3.18 Parking

An adequate parking area is provided for employees. The County assumes no responsibility for employee's vehicles or their contents while on County property. Parking personal vehicles in unauthorized areas without prior approval is prohibited and could result in disciplinary action.

3.19 Personal Telephone Use

County telephones are important to our everyday operation and are provided to facilitate official business. Employees should restrict their personal telephone calls to urgent matters only, keeping them brief and as quiet as possible. Employees should never engage in personal calls while with a customer or while a customer is waiting to be assisted.

The use of County phones for personal calls, faxes, or other electronic communication is discouraged. In the event that charges are incurred for the use of County resources, the employee must reimburse the County, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Except in emergency situations, the use of personal cell phones to conduct personal business except while on a bona fide break or lunch is prohibited. Personal cell phone use should be conducted away from the work area and as discretely as possible if on County property.

3.20 County Tools and Equipment

The County may furnish necessary tools and equipment to complete job assignments. Each employee is reminded that all items purchased by the County remain the property of the County and represent a valuable asset of the County. The costs of County issued tools and equipment is considered an advance of wages which may be deducted from the employee's paycheck if lost, stolen or damaged while under the employee's control. Unreturned property at the time of separation of employment may be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

It is the responsibility of the employee to whom tools and equipment are assigned to maintain and safeguard these assets as if they were their personal property. It is the policy of this County to hold the individual financially responsible for tools and equipment lost, stolen, or damaged through negligence.

A periodic inventory of tools and equipment may be made. When leaving a work area, it is recommended that all tools that cannot be secured in locked storage be removed from the work area.

County departments may have internal policies regarding tools and equipment and employees are expected to follow their department rules. It is the responsibility of the employee to review these policies with their supervisor.



3.21 Personal and County-Provided Portable Communication Devices

Beaufort County-provided Portable Communication Devices (PCDs), including cell phones and personal digital assistants, should be used primarily for business purposes. Employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy in regard to the use of such devices, and all use is subject to monitoring, to the maximum extent permitted by applicable law. This includes, as permitted, the right to monitor personal communications as necessary.

Some employees may be authorized to use their own PCD for business purposes. These employees should work with the IT department to configure their PCD for business use. Communications sent via a personal PCD also may be subject to monitoring if sent through Beaufort County's networks and the PCD must be provided for inspection and review upon request.

All conversations, text messages and e-mails must be professional. When sending a text message or using a PCD for business purposes, whether it is a Beaufort County-provided or personal device, employees must comply with applicable Beaufort County guidelines, including policies on sexual harassment, discrimination, conduct, confidentiality, equipment use and operation of vehicles. Using a Beaufort County-issued PCD to send or receive personal text messages is prohibited at all times and personal use during working hours should be limited to emergency situations.

If employees who use a personal PCD for business resign or are discharged, they will be required to submit the device to the IT department for resetting on or before their last day of work. At that time, the IT department will reset and remove all information from the device, including but not limited to, Beaufort County information and personal data (such as contacts, e-mails, and photographs). The IT department will make efforts to provide employees with the personal data in another form (e.g., on a disk) to the extent practicable; however, the employee may lose some or all personal data saved on the device.

Employees may not use their personal PCD for business unless they agree to submit the device to the IT department on or before their last day of work for resetting and removal of Beaufort County information. This is the only way currently possible to ensure that all Beaufort County information is removed from the device at the time of termination. The removal of Beaufort County information is crucial to ensure compliance with Beaufort County's confidentiality and proprietary information policies and objectives.

Please note that whether employees use their personal PCD or a Beaufort County-issued device, Beaufort County's electronic communications policies, including but not limited to, proper use of communications and computer systems, remain in effect.

Portable Communication Device Use While Driving

Employees who drive on Beaufort County business must abide by all state or local laws prohibiting or limiting PCD (cell phone or personal digital assistant) use while driving. "Use" includes, but is not limited to, talking or listening to another person or sending an electronic or text message via the PCD.

Regardless of the circumstances, including slow or stopped traffic, if any use is permitted while driving, employees should proceed to a safe location off the road and safely stop the vehicle before placing or accepting a call. If acceptance of a call is absolutely necessary while driving, and permitted by law, employees must use a hands-free option and advise the caller that they are unable to speak at that time and will return the call shortly.

Under no circumstances should employees feel that they need to place themselves at risk to fulfill business needs.



Since this policy does not require any employee to use a cell phone while driving, employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their PCDs while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.

Texting and e-mailing while driving is prohibited in all circumstances.

See **Appendix A-3 Beaufort County Computer and Information Systems Acceptable Use Policy** for further details.

3.22 Camera Phones/Recording Devices

Due to the potential for issues such as invasion of privacy, sexual harassment and loss of productivity, as well as inappropriate disclosure of confidential information, no employee may use a camera phone function on any phone on Beaufort County property or while performing work for Beaufort County.

The use of tape recorders, Dictaphones, or other types of voice recording devices anywhere on Beaufort County property, including to record conversations or activities of other employees or management, while performing work for Beaufort County, is also strictly prohibited, unless the device was provided to you by Beaufort County and is used solely for legitimate business purposes.

An exclusion to this policy may only exist if the use of such devices are required to perform an essential function or duty of the employee's job, or if such exclusion has been expressly granted by the Beaufort County Administrator or designee.

3.23 Solicitations/Gambling

Solicitation, gambling (including athletic pools) distributions, are prohibited on County property and work-sites. Soliciting for or engaging in gambling activities, athletic pools or any other illegal activities are specifically prohibited. Employees may not solicit friends and co-workers for personal activities, clubs, charities, and other social organizations during either the employees' work time or in work areas frequented by the public. Written approval from the County Administrator is required for any exception to this policy.

Additionally, County computer and communications resources may only be used for conducting County business. Games such as "fantasy football" or unauthorized "bulletin board" or "blogging" activity involving computer and communication resources are prohibited.

3.24 Security

All doors, files, desks, gates, and any other equipment with locks must be kept locked securely when not in direct use and at each day's end. Locks should be checked regularly. County vehicles should be kept locked at all times. Lost keys or equipment must be reported to the supervisor immediately. Any concerns about security should be directed to your supervisor and / or the Risk Management Department.

3.25 Use of Social Media



Beaufort County acknowledges the evolving communication landscape of the 21st century. To provide clear direction to our employees when engaging in online social media activities, Beaufort County has developed the following policy. The decision of whether an employee chooses to participate in activities such as blogging, wiki editing, online social networking, or any other form of online publishing or discussion is entirely their own.

Content produced by Beaufort County employees reflects upon the entire County and is subject to the County's Acceptable Use Policy and all other Policies established in the Beaufort County Employee Handbook. This includes personal posts, even if marked as private, which may still be subject to applicable Beaufort County policies and procedures, as well as relevant local, state and federal laws. By accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, podcasts or other social media platforms for County purposes, you are committing to adhering to these guidelines.

Any violation of this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to termination.

What is Social Media?

Social media refers to user-generated content shared within a collaborative online environment where individuals exchange opinions, knowledge and information. This digital landscape encompasses various tools, including but not limited to:

- Blogs (e.g., Blogger, WordPress)
- Wikis (e.g., Wikispaces, Google Sites)
- Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Ning, YouTube, LinkedIn)
- Photo and video sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube, Flickr)
- Social bookmarking services (e.g., Diigo, Delicious)
- Podcasting and Vodcasting

Content. For purposes of this Policy, the term “Content” is defined as any materials, documents, photographs, graphics and other information that is created, posted, or transmitted using social media.

Use of Social Media

Employment Information. An employee may choose to provide information regarding employment on social media. Any information regarding employment must be truthful and accurate.

County Employee and Respectful Content. Understand that you are always considered a Beaufort County employee online, and whether intended or not anything you do or say can reflect on the County. Posts and content shall not infer, directly or indirectly, that content or statements made are being made on behalf of the County. Employees are prohibited from posting statements or content containing personal attacks on coworkers, reasonably calls into question coworkers’ judgment, violates the County Employee Handbook, creates hostility or disrupts the workplace.

Any expression of ideas or opinions must be respectful. Employees shall not post any content on social media which may be considered degrading, insulting, offensive, harassing, obscene, unlawful, hostile, or may be considered cyberbullying.

Confidential Information. Understand that online postings and conversations are not private, and under no circumstance shall confidential information be shared.



Posting Content Requires Permission. Employees must obtain written approval from the County Administrator, or its designee, prior to posting any content taken in County facilities or at County activities. An Employee must obtain consent before posting any content of other County Employees or citizens participating in County activities.

Seek written authorization from the Public Information Officer before using any County logo or image. County logos should only be used in professional contexts. When using social media on behalf of Beaufort County or for County-related purposes, adhere to the Beaufort County Style Guide, available from the Public Information Officer.

3.26 Compliance Training

County employees are required to complete annual compliance trainings, to include but not limited to, the following topics: Harassment Prevention, Diversity in the Workplace, Beaufort County EMS Stop the Bleed, Information Technology Security, and Workplace Safety.

SECTION 4 – COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

4.1 Compensation Plan

Beaufort County Compensation Philosophy:

Beaufort County is committed to providing a fair, equitable, and competitive total compensation program that attracts, retains, and rewards employees who help the County achieve its mission. Our compensation program is designed to support internal equity, reflect market conditions, and operate within the County's fiscal resources.

Key principles include:

- **Equitable and Competitive Pay:** Compensation is based on job responsibilities, education, experience, and market benchmarks. Pay ranges provide flexibility to maintain equity and respond to market changes.
- **Recognition and Advancement:** Employees may receive pay adjustments for promotions, reclassifications, or equity considerations. Starting pay reflects both market conditions and individual qualifications.
- **Compliance and Fair Practices:** Pay and benefits comply with applicable laws and regulations, including Fair Labor Standards. Part-time and temporary employees may have different eligibility for benefits.
- **Ongoing Review:** Pay ranges and structures are reviewed regularly, but not less than every four years by an external study, to ensure alignment with internal and external standards.

This philosophy reflects the County's commitment to being an employer of choice that inspires excellence, supports employees, and provides high-quality services to the community.

Beaufort County Compensation Policies:

Beaufort County offers employees opportunities for varied work experiences and career growth. Pay changes associated with promotions, reclassifications, or other changes are administered according to the category of change and in alignment with the assigned pay grade.

All final decisions regarding pay adjustments are subject to approval by the County Administrator or their designee, with input from the Human Resources Director. Employees placed in a new position or reclassified will be compensated within the pay range for that position and will not exceed the maximum of the range unless specifically authorized.



Approved pay changes will become effective with the next full pay period following all required approvals from management, Human Resources, and Administration. Pay changes shall **not be** retroactive without approval from the County Administrator or their designee.

A. Reclassification

1. When a job has been reclassified to a higher pay grade, the employee's pay shall increase at least 5% and rounded to the next step in the new pay grade, but not more than the maximum salary of the new pay grade.

If the reclassification results in an upgrade of one pay grade, the employee's pay will be moved upward by the aforementioned 5% and rounded to the next step. An upgrade of two or more pay grades will increase the employee's pay by an additional 2.5% increase for each additional pay grade and rounded to the next step, up to a maximum of 20% or the minimum of the new grade, whichever is higher.

2. When a job is reclassified to a lower pay grade, the affected employee's salary will be adjusted to align with the new grade. The employee's pay will be placed within the new range at a step or spread equivalent to their previous position within the former grade.

If the employee's new salary exceeds the maximum of the new pay range, their salary will be frozen at the higher rate. In this case, the employee is typically ineligible for further pay increases until the pay range "catches up" and allows for movement within the range.

Employees whose pay is reduced as a result of reclassification will be provided with at least seven (7) calendar days' notice prior to the effective date of the change.

3. When a job is reclassified, the employee's performance appraisal date remains unchanged.

B. Promotion

1. When an employee advances to a higher pay grade through promotion, the employee's pay shall increase at least 5% and rounded to the next step in the new pay grade. An upgrade of two or more pay grades will increase the employee's pay by an additional 2.5% increase for each additional pay grade and rounded to the next step in the new pay grade, up to a maximum of 20% or the minimum of the new grade, whichever is higher.
2. There may be times when the unique responsibilities, required skills, or level of the position warrant placement at a higher step within the assigned pay grade. In such cases, the County Administrator may approve a higher salary step to reflect these factors.
3. When an employee is promoted, their performance appraisal date will be updated to the effective date of the promotion.

C. Lateral Transfer

A lateral transfer occurs when an employee is transferred from one job class to another in the same pay grade. When there is no change in pay grade there shall be no adjustment in base salary. A



lateral transfer is not considered a reclassification or a promotion, and it does not affect the employee's performance appraisal date.

D. Temporary Assignment(s)

1. "Interim" or temporary assignment(s) occurs when the County recognizes a critical job assignment need that must be met and cannot be met through the normal recruitment process. This can occur when an unexpected vacancy occurs; when a mission critical job cannot be filled in a timely fashion; or when a mission objective changes abruptly and requires immediate action.
2. Temporary or "interim" assignment(s) would be anticipated to last more than 30 days, but less than 6 months. A temporary or "interim" assignment is to fill a vacancy and not to assume the duties of another employee who is on approved leave, i.e., vacation, holiday, medical, or other short-term absence(s).
3. If the position assigned is lower in pay grade (or equivalent pay range) this would not result in a lower salary for the assigned employee even if the employee's salary exceeded the maximum of the new pay range.
4. If the position assigned is higher in pay grade **and** extends beyond 30 days, but less than 6 months, there should be a 5% temporary assignment pay adjustment for the first pay grade rounded to the next step, and 2.5% for each additional pay grade rounded to the next step, to a maximum of 20% or the minimum of the new grade, whichever is higher. The employee's salary shall not exceed the maximum of the assigned range.

Employees receiving temporary assignment pay shall sign a Personnel Action Form acknowledging the understanding that they are receiving "Temporary Assignment Pay" and acknowledging that when the temporary assignment ends, the temporary assignment pay will also end.

E. Hiring

1. The hiring rate for a new employee with less than 3 years of equivalent and/or relevant level experience is typically step 1 of the salary range to which the job classification is assigned.
2. New hires or rehires with prior experience that is directly relevant or verifiable by the County may be considered for a starting salary above the minimum. Prior relevant experience will be credited according to the chart below. Employees who are being rehired after an official separation from the County will have their starting salary determined using this same formula and will not automatically be reinstated at their previous salary.



Years of Experience	Starting Pay
1 to < 3	Pay Grade Step 1
3 to < 5	Pay Grade Step 3
5 to < 7	Pay Grade Step 4
7 to < 11	Pay Grade Step 6
11 to < 15	Pay Grade Step 7
15 to < 20	Pay Grade Step 8
20 or more	Pay Grade Step 10

3. Internal Equity is an equally important consideration in filling a vacant position. Before a salary offer is made, Human Resources will also consider the current salaries, level of education, relevant licenses/certifications, and length of service in the same/similar job class or classes of current incumbents. It is the policy of the County to make every *effort* to avoid inverted salary relationships by bringing in newly hired employees at a salary that exceeds the current salaries of comparably placed existing employees in the same/similar job class.
4. The Human Resources department may additionally consider a higher salary offer if the open position is determined to be a “hard to fill” position.
5. “Hard to fill” positions may be designated by the Human Resources Department based on factors such as the length of time the position has remained vacant, the difficulty of recruitment, the mission-critical nature of the work, and current market conditions. Management should submit a request to Human Resources if they believe a position qualifies for this review.
6. For most positions, the hiring range typically spans from the minimum of the salary range up to the market point, defined as 20% above the minimum. For Director-level positions and above, hiring decisions may consider the applicant’s qualifications and the needs of the County, allowing discretion to hire above the standard hiring range.

In all cases, consideration will be given to the salaries of other employees in comparable leadership positions to maintain internal equity and consistency. Any such hiring decision above the standard hiring range must be approved by the County Administrator or their designee.

F. Maximum of the Range

Ranges are established to reflect the market value of a given job profile and not an incumbent. Once an employee reaches the maximum of his/her assigned range, the salary is frozen, and the employee is not eligible for any additional compensation unless there is a range movement that would result in a higher maximum.



G. Demotion

1. Voluntary Demotion

Employees must submit a written request for a voluntary demotion. Placement at the appropriate level within the new salary grade would be based on experience and prior performance and must be approved by the Department Head, Assistant County Administrator and the Human Resources Department. In a voluntary demotion, the performance appraisal date remains unchanged.

2. Involuntary Demotion

When an employee is involuntarily demoted due to disciplinary action or unacceptable job performance, the following guidelines apply:

Approval:

- All involuntary demotions require the approval of the County Administrator or their designee, following a recommendation from the Department Head and Assistant County Administrator and a review by the Human Resources Department.

Salary Adjustment:

- The employee's pay will be reduced by at least one step within the new pay grade, with a minimum reduction of 5%.
- The employee's salary may be placed anywhere within the lower pay grade, provided the reduction meets the minimum one-step/5% decrease requirement.
- The salary cannot exceed the maximum of the lower pay grade.
- The employee will not be eligible for any salary increases during the twelve-month conditional period or at its conclusion.

Conditional Status:

- The employee will be placed on conditional status for a period of twelve (12) months.
- Continuation in the position is subject to satisfactory performance during the conditional period.

Performance Appraisal:

- A performance appraisal must be completed within twelve months of the demotion.
- A proficient or better performance rating will result in the employee's release from conditional status and continuation in the position, subject to continued satisfactory performance.
- Following release from the conditional status, the employee's next performance appraisal date will be established one year from the date of release.

4.2 Holidays & Holiday Pay

The following days are observed as holidays for Beaufort County employees:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
President's Day
Good Friday
Memorial Day



Juneteenth National Independence Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Veterans' Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
Personal Floating Holiday

**A holiday schedule will be produced annually and distributed to employees for planning purposes.*

1. In addition to the above, employees receive any other days off that are designated as holidays by the County Council.
2. For administrative employees, when a recognized holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday is observed as the holiday. When a recognized holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday is observed as the holiday.
3. For employees who work non-standard or "shift" hours, the following governs: When an actual holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the employees who work Saturday or Sunday receive holiday pay for the Saturday or Sunday and not for the Monday or Friday which are designated as holidays for standard-schedule County employees. Shift employees who do not work the actual holiday are not paid holiday pay.
4. Temporary employees are not eligible for holiday pay.

Holiday Pay

- a. Standard-schedule employees, full-time and part-time, who are scheduled to work, but perform no work on a County recognized holiday, are paid a holiday allowance equal to their regular pay without overtime. Employees who are not scheduled to work on a holiday (due to being non-standard schedule employees or those in an inactive status (FMLA, etc.)) will not receive holiday pay.
- b. Employees required to work on a County recognized holiday are paid as follows: Regular employees receive holiday pay in the amount of one day's pay and regular pay for hours actually worked. Shift or nonstandard scheduled employees, including some law enforcement, EMS, and firefighters, receive holiday pay and regular pay for hours worked on the *actual* holiday.

Under no circumstances will an employee receive holiday pay for both the County recognized and the actual holiday.

4.3 Payment of Wages

Employees are paid every two weeks on Friday, by direct deposit. Employees should examine their pay stubs immediately to ensure they have been properly paid for all hours and that no improper deductions have been made.

The County deducts from employee's gross pay, federal and state income taxes, social security taxes, elective health coverage, court-ordered withholdings, required retirement withholding, and other county-approved voluntary deductions, as well as deductions for loss or destruction of County property. The County does not make unauthorized deductions and will reimburse employees if such deductions are made inadvertently and reported to payroll.



Cash, debts owed the County, fringe benefits, uniforms, tools, equipment, vehicles, instruction manuals, keys, County identification badges and other items belonging to the County that are advanced or issued to an employee but not repaid or returned by him at the time of his termination/resignation are considered advances of wages, the value of which may be deducted from the employee's pay.

Questions regarding deductions should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

4.4 Overtime and Compensatory Time

Overtime

Like most successful organizations, Beaufort County experiences periods of extremely high activity. During these busy periods, additional work is required from all of us. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring business activity and requesting overtime work if necessary. Effort will be made to provide employees with adequate advance notice in such situations.

Any non-exempt employee who works overtime will be compensated at the rate of one and one-half times (1.5) their normal hourly wage for all time worked in excess of 40 hours each week, unless otherwise allowable by law. (All types of leave hours are not considered time worked.)

Employees may work overtime only with prior management authorization.

For purposes of calculating overtime for non-exempt employees, the workweek begins at 12 a.m. on Saturday and ends at 11:59 p.m. on the following Friday.

Compensatory Time

In lieu of overtime, the County may award compensatory time at a rate of time and one-half to employees who work in excess of the statutory maximum hours. **Every effort will be made by the employee and management to ensure that any compensatory time accrued is used within 90 days of accrual.** In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), public employees may accrue no more than the following number of compensatory hours:

- Public Safety and Emergency Response Personnel: 480 hours
- All Others: 240 hours

However, departments may institute an internal policy that institutes lower limits as deemed necessary.

4.5 Payroll Errors

If an employee believes there is an error in pay, he/she should notify the Human Resources Department within fifteen (15) days of receiving the paycheck. The County will attempt to adjust the error immediately or no later than the employee's next pay period.

4.6 Garnishment of Employee Wages



Deductions may be made from wages when ordered by a court or when otherwise permitted or required by law.

4.7 Payment at Time of Separation

Any employee terminating their employment is expected to return any County property in his/her possession.

Any outstanding debt owed the County and the value of any property (e.g. credit cards, uniforms, tools, etc.) is deducted from the final check as an advance of wages. A payment agreement will be made if the final paycheck does not fulfill the outstanding debt.

After a full accounting of the employee's and the County's accounts (as determined by the County) is completed, a final paycheck is issued to the employee, normally on the next regular pay date.

Upon resignation or termination, the employee is encouraged to consult the Human Resources Department to address any questions regarding post- employment benefits and final paperwork.

Should employee's separation be due to death, final payment will be direct deposited into the bank account on file with the payroll department at the time of death. Should payment be sent back to the County by the financial institution, the payroll department will issue a paper check payable to "The Estate of" the deceased employee, or as ordered by applicable Probate Court.

4.8 Payment of Accumulated PLT & Compensatory Time at Separation

An employee's last day worked (except in cases of unpaid leave such as FMLA) is his/her last day of employment. Accrued PLT time and compensatory time will be paid out with the departing employee's final pay. Employees will not be paid for any unused accrued Disability Leave hours, Sick Leave hours, or Bereavement Leave hours upon separation from County employment.

4.9 Personal Leave Time (PLT)

The Personal Leave Time account is established for regular full-time employees. Personal Leave Time is accrued by eligible employees receiving pay from Beaufort County for any of the following: 1) days worked, 2) days taken as PLT, 3) days taken for jury duty, or 4) any other approved time off with pay.

Full-time employees accrue PLT provided they are "in pay status" at least fifty percent of the pay period.

Accrual rates for regular employees:

Length of Service	Hours / Pay Period	Hours / Year	Days / Year
0 months – 1 year*	3.693	96	12
1 year – 5 years	4.616	120	15
5 years – 10 years	6.154	160	20
10 years and over	7.692	200	25

**Probationary employees will accrue leave at the rate of 3.693 hours per pay period. However, they will not be awarded their personal leave balance until the following pay period from the date they have successfully completed their probationary period of employment.*



Accrual rates for employees who work 12-hour shifts:

Length of Service	Hours / Pay Period	Hours / Year	Days/ Year
0 months – 1 year*	4.615	120	10 shifts
1 year – 5 years	6.000	156	13 shifts
5 years – 10 years	7.846	204	17 shifts
10 years and over	9.692	252	21 shifts

**Probationary employees will accrue leave at the rate of 4.615 hours per pay period. However, they will not be awarded their personal leave balance until the following pay period from the date they have successfully completed their probationary period of employment.*

Accrual rates for employees who work 24-hour shifts:

Length of Service	Hours / Pay Period	Hours / Year	Days/ Year
0 months – 1 year*	5.5390	144	6 shifts
1 year – 5 years	6.4615	168	7 shifts
5 years – 10 years	8.3077	216	9 shifts
10 years and over	11.077	288	12 shifts

**Probationary employees will accrue leave at the rate of 5.539 hours per pay period. However, they will not be awarded their personal leave balance until the following pay period from the date they have successfully completed their probationary period of employment.*

Maximum Accrual Balance

A maximum of three hundred and twenty (320) hours may be accumulated in the PLT account. All PLT hours in excess of three hundred and twenty (320) hours, will automatically be transferred to the Disability Leave (DL) account, up to a maximum of three hundred and sixty hours (360). See **Section 4.12 Disability Leave** for more information.

Scheduling Leave (Mandatory)

Employees must submit a request to their immediate supervisor for the use of PLT at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance (except for illness or emergency). Leave will be granted whenever possible and practical, but may be denied in cases of business need or excessive requests during a certain time period, etc.

All full-time County employees with more than one year of service are required to take at least five days/forty hours of their accrued PLT each year. In order to maintain a healthy, productive work force, employees are encouraged to take at least one week off, i.e., five or more consecutive workdays, each year using PLT. Department directors and/or supervisors are responsible for monitoring this process to ensure that every employee has used this opportunity to take a vacation each year.

In case of absences due to accidents, sudden illness or emergencies, employees must notify their supervisor or department directors at least thirty minutes prior to their regular time for reporting to work, whenever possible.

4.10 Sick Leave

The County recognizes that employees and their immediate family members sometimes become ill. Thus, the County offers a sick leave benefit that provides paid time away from work during illness and recovery, for full-time and part-time employees.



Accrual and Carryover

Sick leave accrues at the end of each payroll period and is reflected on your paycheck stub as "Sick Leave Balance." Sick leave may not be used until it has been accrued but is available as soon as it is accrued.

Full-time employees accrue 3.69 hours each bi-weekly pay period. A maximum of 720 hours may be carried over from the last pay period in one year to the first pay period in the following year.

Employees working a 12-hour shift accrue sick leave at the rate of 3.87 hours per pay period and may carry over up to a maximum of 756 hours.

Employees working a 24-hour shift accrue sick leave at the rate of 5.2 hours per pay period and may carry over up to a maximum of 1008 hours.

Regular part-time employees whose position is designated to work at least 20 hours per week accrue sick leave on a pro-rata basis. Regular part-time employees working an average of less than 20 hours per week, P.R.N., and similar classes of employees do not accrue sick leave.

While on authorized sick leave with pay, an employee continues to accrue annual and sick leave benefits. If an employee is on authorized sick leave without pay, annual and sick leave benefits do not accrue, and the employee is responsible for payment of any authorized payroll deductions. Failure to submit prompt payment may result in termination of benefits.

Use and Approval

Sick leave may be used for personal or an immediate family member's (spouse, child, or parent including children in the care of a legal guardian) illnesses, medical appointments, and like purposes provided the employee's presence is required. Management reserves the right to require appropriate certification or confirmation that the employee's presence is in fact required.

In the case of FMLA leave, that requirement is automatically met when the physician's certification is submitted. For information about requesting FMLA, see the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) section of this handbook or contact the Human Resources Department.

Unless department policy dictates otherwise, in the event an employee cannot attend work due to illness, injury or emergency, the employee must notify their supervisor as soon as possible and, except under extreme circumstances, one (1) hour before the scheduled start time. Unless the employee is on an approved and excused leave of absence, this notification shall be made daily to the supervisor if the absence exceeds one day.

Annual leave may be used in lieu of sick leave at the employee's request. Unpaid leave will be granted only when all available paid leave is exhausted.

Notification to supervisor

An employee who is ill must advise his/her immediate supervisor as soon as possible and no later than one hour before the start of the work shift. Employees in law enforcement, emergency services, security, solid waste, and other departments that operate around the clock must follow procedures set up by their department heads. In case of extended illness, the employee is responsible for keeping his/her supervisor informed of his/her progress.



For twelve (12) hour and twenty-four (24) hour shift employees, the employee's supervisor may at any time request a doctor's statement before excusing the absence. For regular eight (8) hour employees, an employee must provide a doctor's statement for sick leave absences after three (3) consecutive days of sick leave. Just because the County has allowed an employee to accrue sick leave does not mean that any absence will be excused and/or paid. All accrued leave usage must be requested by the employee and approved by the employee's supervisor. Excessive absences or failure to properly follow leave rules and procedures can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. FMLA leave and other protected absences are not counted for the purposes of evaluating whether absenteeism is excessive. Under some circumstances, annual leave may be donated for use as sick leave. See the Employee Emergency Leave Transfer Bank (EELTB) section of this handbook. Sick leave is not intended to extend the employment status beyond the last date of the individual's availability to work.

Payment at Separation

Unused sick leave has no cash value and is not paid out upon termination of employment.

4.11 Partial-Day Absences

Exempt Employees:

Salaried exempt employees often must work outside of regular office hours on nights, weekends, holiday, etc. In recognition of that, the County generally permits them to take certain small increments of time off during office hours without requiring that the hours be charged against paid leave.

The general rule is: If the salaried exempt employee will be out of the office for LESS THAN FOUR HOURS during the regular work day for personal reasons, the absence normally is not charged against paid leave. If the exempt employee is absent for FOUR HOURS OR MORE during regular office hours for personal reasons, the leave must be charged to the appropriate paid leave balance.

In extenuating circumstances, the appropriate supervisor may make an exception to the general rule to permit additional partial day absences of four or more hours without charging leave to offset an inordinately high number of work hours, such as after a storm or completion of a large project.

This leave practice is a courtesy and not a right. If any employee has abused the privilege or where otherwise appropriate, a supervisor may impose a requirement that all leave be charged to paid leave balances.

Non-exempt Employees:

All additional work hours for non-exempt employees result in additional pay. All leave hours are charged against paid leave balances.

4.12 Disability Leave (DL)

The Disability Leave account is established for employees to use in the case of a debilitating injury or physical/mental illness. Regular employees may not use this account until accrued hours in their Sick Leave and PLT account have been used down to eighty hours. A maximum of three hundred and sixty hours may be retained in the DL account. The employee must present a doctor's certificate verifying the disability or illness in order to use this account.



When an employee has consecutive days off due to a debilitating injury or illness which has been certified by a doctor, and time off extends past the allowable limits of withdrawal for Sick Leave and PLT, the County reserves the right to request a second medical opinion from a doctor who is qualified to render it.

4.13 Bereavement Leave

The death of a family member is a time when employees wish to be with their families. If the employee is full-time and loses a close relative, the employee will be allowed paid time off up to five (5) workdays to assist in attending to obligations and commitments. The employee shall be allowed up to five (5) days for each occurrence of loss with no annual limit to instances of Bereavement Leave in any given year.

For the purposes of this policy, a close relative includes a spouse, domestic/civil union partner, child, parent, sibling, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, grandchild or any other relation required by applicable law, including step-family. Paid leave days only may be taken on regularly scheduled workdays following the day of death. Employees must inform their supervisor prior to commencing bereavement leave. In administering this policy, Beaufort County may require verification of death.

4.14 Jury Duty

Beaufort County realizes that it is the obligation of all U.S. citizens to serve on a jury when summoned to do so. All employees will be allowed time off to perform such civic service as required by law. Employees are expected, however, to provide proper notice of a request to perform jury duty and verification of their service.

Employees also are expected to keep management informed of the expected length of jury duty service and to report to work for the major portion of the day if excused by the court. If the required absence presents a serious conflict for management, employees may be asked to try to postpone jury duty.

A regular employee may receive leave with pay for up to ten (10) calendar days per calendar year when the employee is subpoenaed to serve on jury duty and the hours of jury duty conflict with the hours of their County work. If the jury duty extends beyond the ten working days, the employee may use personal leave, if available. If not available, then the employee will be placed on leave of absence without pay.

A copy of the subpoena must be submitted to the department director and forwarded to the Human Resources Department within five (5) working days prior to the actual day of duty. When an employee is excused from service on a jury during working hours, he shall report for duty at his regular place of work if within reasonable commuting distance, or he shall be charged PLT for time excused. If an employee is excused from jury because of illness, sick leave or PLT should be charged in accordance with policy. Employees are entitled to all fees received as a juror.

4.15 Voting Leave

Beaufort County employees may be granted one hour administrative leave with pay, preferably between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., or 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., for the purpose of voting in any general, primary, County or city election. However, scheduling the administrative leave to vote is at the discretion of the Department Director.



4.16 Military Leave

All regular employees who are members of the South Carolina National Guard or any reserve unit of the United States Armed Forces are entitled to military leave for training or deployment in accordance with state and federal law.

Employees are eligible for up to 15 days (shifts) of military pay for training per year (October - September). For emergency deployments such as those required per operation "Enduring Freedom", an additional 30 days (shifts) will be paid.

An employee going on military leave should present a copy of his/her orders to his Department Director within three (3) days of receiving them. The orders must accompany the application for leave to the Human Resources Department for documentation purposes. For extended leave, employees must contact Human Resources prior to deployment for important benefit information.

4.17 Administrative Leave with Pay

Administrative Leave with Pay may be granted when an employee is denied the opportunity to work, or is directed to not report for work, at the direction of the County Administrator for reasons other than employee discipline. Under no circumstances should employees receive administrative leave with pay without prior written approval from the County Administrator or designee, or unless in accordance with another policy, i.e. Voting Leave.

Administrative Leave with Pay is only intended to make an employee's work-week whole and shall not result in overtime.

4.18 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

FMLA applies only to employees who have been employed twelve (12) months or longer and who have worked one thousand two-hundred fifty (1,250) hours or more in the preceding 12 months, both prior to commencement of leave. Beaufort County uses a rolling year method to determine FMLA eligibility.

General

Employees who meet the length of service and hours worked requirement described above have rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act. As a general rule, employees must request leaves of absence under this law and policy, but in appropriate situations, employees may be placed on FMLA leave status without application.

Reason for Leave of Absence

1. Medical and Family Leave - An eligible employee may be entitled to a leave of absence under this law and policy if a serious health condition, including disability resulting from an on-the-job injury, prevents the employee from being able to perform his job; if the employee's spouse, child, or parent has a serious health condition and the employee must be absent from work in order to care for that relative; or to care for a natural child, adopted child, or formally placed foster child, provided that entitlement to leave to care for a child who is newly born or newly received in the employee's household shall end twelve (12) months



after a natural child is born or 12 months after an adopted or foster child is received in the employee's household.

2. **Military Caregiver Leave** - An eligible employee whose spouse, parent, child, or next-of-kin is a covered service member or covered veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States may be entitled to a leave of absence to care for the service member or veteran if he is, or was, injured while on covered active duty, including if the aggravates an existing injury.
3. **Qualifying Military Exigency Leave** - An eligible employee whose spouse, parent, or child is a member of the regular Armed Forces of the United States and is on active duty or called to active duty on a foreign deployment, or who is a member of the National Guard or Reserves and is on or called to qualifying active duty in federal service may be entitled to a leave of absence due to one or more qualifying exigencies arising out of the active duty or call to active duty. Qualifying exigencies are: (1) Short-notice deployment (i.e., notice of 7 days or less); (2) Military events and related activities; (3) Childcare and school activities (regular or routine childcare by the employee does not count); (4) Financial and legal arrangements; (5) Counseling; (6) Rest and recuperation; (7) Post-deployment activities; (8) Parental care (regular or routine parental care by the employee does not count); and (9) Additional activities not encompassed in the other categories, but agreed to by the employer and employee.

Proof of need for leave of absence may be required regardless of the type of leave taken.

Under the FMLA, a "serious health condition" (SHC) is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either of the following:

- Inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility.
 - Inpatient care requires an overnight stay at a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility. In addition to the actual overnight stay, inpatient care also includes any period of incapacity in connection with the inpatient care.
 - The term "incapacity" means inability to work, attend school or perform other regular daily activities because of the SHC, treatment for the SHC or recovery from the SHC.
 - An employee may also take FMLA leave for any subsequent treatments related to the inpatient care, such as follow-up doctor visits or physical therapy.

Continuing Treatment by a Health Care Provider

The FMLA regulations include five categories of continuing treatment.

1. The first category of continuing treatment is for "incapacity and treatment." This is defined as a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days, including any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition that also involves either of the following:
 - Treatment two or more times by a health care provider, by a nurse or by a physician's assistant under direct supervision of a health care provider, or by a provider of health care services (a physical therapist, for example).
 - Treatment by a health care provider on at least one occasion that results in a regimen of continuing treatment under the supervision of the health care provider. A "regimen of continuing treatment" may include, for example, a course of prescription medication or therapy requiring special equipment to resolve or alleviate a serious health condition. A "regimen of continuing treatment" does not include taking over-the-counter medications (such as aspirin or antihistamines), bed rest, drinking fluids, exercising or similar activities that can be initiated without a visit to a health care provider.
2. Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy and prenatal care.



3. Any period of incapacity, or treatment for such incapacity, due to a chronic condition. A chronic condition is a condition that meets all the following conditions:
 - Requires periodic visits for treatment by a health care provider or by a nurse or physician's assistant under direct supervision of a health care provider.
 - Continues over an extended period of time (including recurring episodes of a single underlying condition).
 - May cause an episodic (rather than a continuing) period of incapacity.
4. Any period of permanent or long-term incapacity for which treatment may not be effective.
5. Continuing treatment under the FMLA is any period of absence to receive multiple treatments by a health care provider, by a provider of health care services or on referral by a health care provider for either of the following:
 - Restorative surgery after an accident or other injury.
 - A condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days in the absence of medical intervention or treatment (e.g., chemotherapy or radiation for cancer, physical therapy for severe arthritis and dialysis for kidney disease).

Some, although very few, conditions are explicitly excluded by the FMLA regulations from recognition as serious health conditions:

- Conditions for which cosmetic treatments are administered (e.g., acne or plastic surgery unrelated to an injury or illness).
- The common cold, the flu, earaches, upset stomach, minor ulcers, headaches (other than migraine), routine dental or orthodontia problems and periodontal disease—unless complications arise that lead to a temporary incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days.

Please reach out to the Human Resources Department for further explanation regarding the FMLA regulations.

Length of Leave

- **Medical and Family Leave** - An eligible employee may take the equivalent of a total of 12 work weeks of leave during any 12 consecutive months for his own serious health condition, that of a parent, spouse or child, or to care for a newly born or newly received child. Leave to care for a newly born or newly received child must be taken consecutively. Leave required because of the employee's own serious health condition or that of a spouse, child, or parent, may be taken intermittently or by means of a modified work schedule when necessary.
- **Military Caregiver Leave** - Leave to care for an injured service member or covered veteran may be taken for up to 26 work weeks in a single 12-month period. Any leave taken by the employee for any other FMLA-qualifying reason will count against the 26 weeks of leave permitted to care for an injured service member.
- **Qualifying Military Exigency Leave** - Leave taken because of a qualifying exigency is available for up to 12 work weeks in any 12 consecutive months. Leave taken because of a short notice deployment is limited 7 days from the date of notice, and leave taken to be with the service member during periods of rest and recuperation are limited to 5 days per period of rest and recuperation. Leave taken to attend post-deployment activities must be taken within 90 days of the end of active duty service.

Coordination of Leave and Paid Time Off



An employee who must be absent for an FMLA qualifying reason will be paid for time lost from work from accrued paid time off balances, if any. Leave taken under this policy counts towards the employee's 12 weeks of leave (or 26 weeks, where appropriate) regardless of whether all or part of the employee's leave is paid.

Effect of Leave on Accrual of Fringe Benefits

1. Health benefit plan - Employees taking leave under this policy must continue to pay their portion of health benefit plan premiums on the same date that such portion of premiums would be deducted from the employee's wages.
2. Accrual of paid leave - Unpaid time lost from work due to leave granted under this policy is not considered time worked for the purpose of accrual of paid time off.

Employee Responsibility

Employees who request leave under this policy must give 30 days advance notice or such lesser amount of notice as is possible in the particular circumstances. When the need for leave is unforeseeable, the employee must follow the normal procedure for reporting an absence. Employees may not engage in side employment or work for another employer without the express written permission of County Administrator.

Termination of Leave of Absence

A leave of absence under this policy will end when the need for the leave of absence ends, or when the maximum leave described above has been taken, whichever occurs first.

Reinstatement

At or before the conclusion of the FMLA leave of absence the employee is entitled to reinstatement to his former position or to a position equivalent to his former position. The employee must demonstrate that he is fit for duty and must give reasonable notice of intent to return to work.

Extension of Leave Without Benefits

An employee who is unable to perform the duties of his position due to his own disability and who has exhausted his entitlement to leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act by taking 12 consecutive weeks of leave may, in the discretion of the County Administrator, upon written application, be granted up to an additional 12 weeks of leave. This additional leave of absence does not entitle the employee to reinstatement or to payment of any portion of his health benefit plan premiums. If the employee is able to return to work prior to the exhaustion of his extended leave, he may be returned to his previous position if it is vacant and is to be filled, or to some other position of equal or lesser compensation for which he is qualified and where there is a vacancy to be filled. If the employee is not returned to active employment, he may be continued on extended leave of absence status until he is returned to active-duty status or his extended leave of absence expires, whichever occurs sooner.

Employees who have exhausted their FMLA leave under other circumstances, but who continue to require leave which would qualify for FMLA leave if such leave had not been exhausted, may apply for an extended leave of absence for personal reasons. Such extended leaves are granted only at the discretion of the County Administrator.

Separation of Employment



An employee's employment may terminate if he does not return to full active employment status at the conclusion of his leave of absence or extended leave of absence. This does not affect the employee's ability to reapply for a position at a later time.

Further, employees with circumstances that warrant special consideration should bring those circumstances to the attention of management.

Special Situations

1. Spouses - When both a husband and a wife are employed, their combined right to a leave of absence because of the birth or placement of a child, or to care for a newly born or placed child or to care for a parent with a serious health condition is 12 weeks in a 12 month period, or 26 weeks in a single 12 month period to care for an injured service member or covered veteran.
2. Key Employees (salaried employee in highest paid 10% of all employees) - Such employees may be denied reinstatement rights if reinstatement would cause substantial and grievous economic injury to operations.

Notice of Rights

Federal law requires that we provide you with the notice of your rights that appears in **Appendix A.5**.

4.19 Paid Parental Leave

Paid Parental Leave is a paid benefit that provides Beaufort County employees up to six (6) weeks of pay at their base rate. This benefit is to support parents as they expand their family and to provide support as they assist children in transition. This leave is provided to support parents as they bond and provide care for a newborn child, newly adopted child, or newly placed foster child. Paid Leave Time will continue to accrue, and any elected benefits will continue with the customary payroll deductions during the period of Paid Parental Leave. The leave described herein shall hereinafter be referenced as "Parental Leave".

Parent Defined. For purposes of Parental Leave, a parent is defined as any individual who has become the legal guardian of a minor child via birth, adoption, or fostering of a child in their household.

Foster Care Defined. For the purposes of Parental Leave, Foster Care is defined as a new, temporary living arrangement in the employee's home for a minor child provided through a state-certified Foster Care program. Placement in the employee's home is made by or with the agreement of the State, and involves a minor child who is in the legal or physical custody and care of the State.

Eligibility

Employees eligible for Parental Leave are those in budgeted positions, and those who in accordance with the Beaufort County Ordinances and Beaufort County Employee Handbook receive all other Beaufort County employee benefits. Temporary and part-time employees are specifically not eligible for Parental Leave. Employees of elected officials and employees in other classifications designated as "at-will" are also eligible for Parental Leave. Parental Leave shall only be available to an eligible employee after 180 consecutive calendar days of employment.



If both parents to a child are employed by Beaufort County, then each parent may receive six (6) weeks as provided for by Parental Leave.

Approval

Employee shall provide written notification to their supervisor and submit a request for Parental Leave no later than thirty (30) calendar days prior to the period of Parental Leave beginning. Employees must notify Human Resources for the request of the Family Medical Leave packet at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the anticipated date of the leave, if possible.

An exception to the required notification period as set forth in this Section may be made for emergency situations only, which shall be reviewed and determined on a case by cases basis by the Human Resources Director.

Employees shall be required to furnish applicable documentation certifying that the request to use Parental Leave is for the purpose of providing care for or bonding with a child. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, the following:

Event	Acceptable Documentation
Adoption	• Adoption Order • Proof of Placement
Birth	• Report of Birth or copy of Birth Certificate • Custody Order • Proof of Placement
Foster Care	• Placement Agreement • Custody Order

Documents provided by employee must show the employee's name as the parent or legal guardian, and date of birth or date of placement of the minor child.

Use

Parental Leave shall not be used prior to a qualifying event, and must be taken within the first six (6) weeks following birth, adoption, or foster care placement. Eligible employees may receive up to a maximum period not to exceed six (6) calendar weeks in a twelve (12) month period ("Paid Leave Period").

The Paid Leave Period may be split between two (2) separate events in a twelve (12) month period. For purposes of this section, an event is defined as any single occurrence where birth, adoption, or fostering of a newborn or child under the age of eighteen (18) is placed in the employee's household. All other requirements of the Parental Leave policy remain in effect.

The birth, adoption, or foster care placement of multiple children that is part of the same event does not increase the length of Parental Leave granted (e.g., birth of twins, adoption or Foster Care placement of more than one baby or child). The amount of Parental Leave taken for the new Foster Care placement of a child cannot exceed the duration of the placement.

While on Parental Leave, employees shall not engage in any work activity for compensation, including job-related training, nor shall an employee perform service for the County for compensation in any other capacity. Engaging



in a work activity or employment for compensation while on Parental Leave will be deemed an interruption of paid parental leave and any remaining Parental leave approved for that event will be forfeited.

Parental Leave runs concurrently with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), as applicable. Employees using Parental Leave are afforded the remaining job protection under FMLA for an absence up to a total of twelve (12) weeks. An employee who exhausts all available FMLA entitlements for a different reason will still be eligible for the Parental Leave benefit.

Conditions of Repayment of Paid Parental Leave

If the Human Resources Director determines that an employee has abused or falsified information, or was otherwise not eligible for leave, the employee will be required to repay any leave previously approved and will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Unused Parental Leave

Parental Leave shall not accrue and may not be donated to another Beaufort County employee. Unused Parental Leave has no cash value and is not reimbursable upon termination of employment.

4.20 Physical Disability and Personal Leave

(Applies to employees whose reasons for leave are not covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act.).

An employee who has completed his/her initial probation (and any extension thereof) is eligible to apply for a leave of absence for up to three months when unable to work because of sickness, pregnancy or injury on or off the job. Such an employee may also apply for leave of absence for personal reasons. Personal leave is granted only at the discretion of the County Administrator upon recommendation by the employee's department head and the Human Resources Director.

Employees are requested to apply for leave of absence as far in advance of need as is possible, but an employee may be placed on leave status without application when the circumstances warrant such action.

Physical disability leaves begin on the first day of absence. Employees not covered by FMLA will be responsible for the full cost of their insurance benefits.

After the employee has exhausted his paid leave time, sick leave and/or disability leave, as a general rule an employee on leave of absence is not entitled to wages or fringe benefits and does not accrue fringe benefits. Certain exceptions may be established by law. Employees approved for this leave are responsible for payment of the full cost of any benefits and do not generally have job protection except where required by law.

Employees on leave of absence may not engage in other employment*.

Employees desiring to return to work from an unpaid leave of absence should notify the Human Resources Director in writing at least ten (10) days prior to their desired date of return. If the County finds that the employee is fit to resume his duties, the employee may be placed in his former job if a vacancy exists which is to be filled. If no such vacancy exists, the employee may be placed in any job in which there is a vacancy which is to be filled and for which he is qualified. If no such vacancy exists at the time the employee desires to return to work, or by



the end of the 3-month leave of absence, employment is subject to termination. This action does not affect the employee's eligibility to be considered for hire as a new employee at some future time.

*Employees with circumstances that warrant special consideration should bring those circumstances to the attention of management.

4.21 Workers Compensation

Employees must report all work-related accidents and injuries immediately to his/her supervisor. Beaufort County provides Workers Compensation Insurance to provide medical benefits and/or compensation (indemnity) benefits for a covered worker who sustains a disabling injury as a result from an accident arising out of and in the course of employment. See **Worker's Compensation Policy Appendix A-7** for the complete policy.

4.22 Education Leave Policy

All regular employees are encouraged to take advantage of educational and vocational courses which will help improve their current positions and better prepare them for promotion to related and higher-level positions in County service. County Administrator approval is required prior to unpaid educational leave and may be granted when it is in the best interest of the County and when it will not cause undue disruption or hardship in the department.

Employees may also be granted leave with pay to attend seminars, briefing sessions, or other functions of a similar nature that are intended to improve or upgrade the individual's skills or professional ability.

Virtual participation, when applicable, is encouraged for out-of-town attendance in continuing education courses, seminars, etc.

4.23 Recertification Reimbursement

Beaufort County will reimburse employees for recertifications required to maintain specific job-related functions. This reimbursement should be paid for by the Department's Training and Education budget line item. Employees are required to inform their supervisors at least six (6) months prior to their certification expiring.

4.24 Employee Emergency Leave Transfer Bank (EELTB)

County employees who have experienced a personal or immediate family medical or other hardship emergency situation may share in the employee leave bank if the employee meets eligibility requirements. The emergency must necessitate the employee's absence for a prolonged period of time and be anticipated to result in a substantial loss of income due to the unavailability of adequate paid leave time and/or sick leave time.

See **Appendix A-8** for a complete copy of the EELTB policy.

4.25 Benefits Overview



In addition to good working conditions and competitive pay, it is Beaufort County's policy to provide a combination of supplemental benefits to all eligible employees. In keeping with this goal, each benefit program has been carefully devised. These benefits include paid time-off benefits, such as vacations and holidays, and insurance and other plan benefits. We are constantly studying and evaluating our benefits programs and policies to better meet present and future requirements. These policies have been developed over the years and continue to be refined to keep up with changing times and needs.

The next few pages contain a brief outline of the benefits programs Beaufort County provides employees and their families. Of course, the information presented here is intended to serve only as guidelines.

The descriptions of the insurance and other plan benefits merely highlight certain aspects of the applicable plans for general information only. The details of those plans are spelled out in the official plan documents, which are available for review upon request from Human Resources. Additionally, the provisions of the plans, including eligibility and benefits provisions, are summarized in the summary plan descriptions ("SPDs") for the plans (which may be revised from time to time). In the determination of benefits and all other matters under each plan, the terms of the official plan documents shall govern over the language of any descriptions of the plans, including the SPDs and this handbook.

Further, Beaufort County (including the officers and administrators who are responsible for administering the plans) retains full discretionary authority to interpret the terms of the plans, as well as full discretionary authority with regard to administrative matters arising in connection with the plans and all issues concerning benefit terms, eligibility and entitlement.

While Beaufort County intends to maintain these employee benefits, it reserves the absolute right to modify, amend or terminate these benefits at any time and for any reason.

If employees have any questions regarding benefits, they should contact the Human Resources Department.

4.26 Insurance Programs

The County offers a comprehensive benefits package to serve as your foundation for good health, peace of mind and financial security. Unless specifically noted, each benefit is available only to regular full-time employees. Certain benefits such as medical, dental and vision are available to employees who average 30 or more hours per week. The County anticipates that its benefit programs will be offered on a continuing basis but it reserves the right to modify or terminate any program at any time as its needs change, subject to applicable law.

Since the specific details of any benefit plan depend upon the insurance carrier, plan design, and governmental regulations, all benefits are subject to change at any time. This Employee Handbook should only be looked to as a general statement regarding what benefits are offered at the time it was published. Further, this Employee Handbook should not be relied upon for determining the requirements for enrollment, for making changes in coverage or similar issues. You should refer to the specific plan policy or handbook issued for each benefit to determine plan details.

The employee portion of your premiums for coverage you elect will be deducted from your pay. In the event of unpaid leave, you will be given the option to either pay all amounts due in a lump sum before the leave or to make monthly payments to cover required premiums during the leave. In the event that any premium should go into arrears, the County has the right to deduct them from future paychecks or other balances. By enrolling in any of the County's benefit programs, you are expressly authorizing the County to make these premium deductions.



Medical and Dental Insurance

All regular full-time employees and employees who average 30 or more hours per week are eligible to participate in the County's medical plan only on the first day of the calendar month on or following the employee's date of hire. Part-time or temporary employees who transfer to a full-time position will be eligible on the first day of the calendar month on or following the date on which they begin work in the full-time position. Within 30 days of the employee's date of hire or transfer to an eligible position, the employee must complete the appropriate enrollment forms and provide any additional information that may be required by Human Resources.

If you elect plan coverage, your cost for this coverage will be deducted from each paycheck. The coverage you elect including covered dependents will remain the same throughout the plan year. Employees can update coverage once a year during the Annual Open Enrollment Period. Otherwise, changes may only be made during the plan year due to a "qualifying event". Examples of special enrollment events include a marriage, the birth of a child, a spouse's loss of employment, or similar events that cause coverage needs to change.

Any changes, additions, or deletions to the employee's coverage due to a qualifying life event must be reported in writing by the employee on a plan-approved enrollment form and must include appropriate supporting documentation. The health insurance enrollment form and supporting documentation must be received by Human Resources within 31 days of the special enrollment event. Note that changes in coverage may be subject to evidence of eligibility/insurability and that the County reserves the right to require the necessary documentation to verify that the employee's dependents are eligible for coverage. Failure to provide appropriate documents within the above stated deadlines may result in denial of coverage. Further information and details are included on the intranet and in the current edition of the Benefits Guide and any amendments issued thereto. An employee may access this information on the intranet or contact Human Resources to request information. In case of a conflict between this Employee Handbook and any formal plan summary or documents, the plan documents will govern.

Section 125 Plan

This plan offers a tax-sheltered means for employees to pay premiums for medical, dental insurance, and vision. Your medical, dental and vision premiums will be deducted from your gross pay prior to taxes being deducted thus reducing the amount of federal and state income taxes and FICA (Social Security) contributions you are required to pay.

Flexible Spending Accounts

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) are a tax-saving way to pay health care and dependent care expenses that you would typically pay out-of-pocket. Expenses such as deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, prescriptions, dental procedures and eyeglasses can quickly add up, and dependent or elder care expenses can add up even more. The FSAs let you pay these expenses with pretax dollars.

To enroll, you must decide how much to contribute to either or both accounts for the plan year. You may contribute to the Health Care FSA and/or a Dependent Care FSA subject to certain rules. Each account functions separately. For the most current guidelines, please refer to your benefits guide or the intranet page. Please refer to the federal regulations for more details. Once you enroll, you cannot change your contribution amounts during the plan year unless you have a qualified work or family status change.

Contributions are deducted from your pretax pay in equal amounts during the year. This means you save money, as contributions are not subject to Social Security tax, federal income tax or state income tax.



When you have an eligible expense, you submit a claim for reimbursement from the appropriate account. You can use the Health Care FSA to pay for eligible expenses for yourself and your dependents.

Health Care FSA and Dependent Care FSA enrollments are only valid for one year and must be reenrolled during the Annual Open Enrollment Period in order to continue. Your account(s) will not automatically renew each year.

4.27 Retirement Plan

Beaufort County is a participant in the State of South Carolina Public Employment Benefit Authority (PEBA) retirement plans. As such, eligible employees are participants in the PEBA retirement plan applicable to their vocation. Details of these plans are found in the compensation and benefits guide published annually by Human Resources.

4.28 Long-Term Disability Benefits

Full-time employees are automatically enrolled in the long-term disability program and become eligible for disability benefits after one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days of continuous **unpaid leave** due to sickness or accident disability according to the provisions of the plan.

4.29 Employee Assistance Program

Employees of Beaufort County and their family members are eligible to utilize the Employee Assistance Program. The EAP provides counseling in both individual and group settings to assist employees or their family members with personal problems that may be affecting the employee's job performance or just life in general. The EAP can help with personal problems such as drug or alcohol abuse, marital issues, financial problems and many others. Contact with the EAP is held strictly confidential and not reported to the County in any manner whatsoever except in the case of a mandatory referral by management as explained below.

The County reserves the right to require employees through a "management referral" to attend the EAP as a condition of their continued employment. In such cases, the EAP will report the employee's progress to Human Resources. If a management-referred employee fails to complete the program or to comply with the instructions of the EAP counselor, further disciplinary action up to and including discharge may be taken.

4.30 County Emergency Disaster Policy, Pay and Procedures

The Emergency Disaster Policy is provided as guidance to members of the Emergency Operations Team as well as other employees who may be affected by area emergencies or disasters including floods, hurricanes, epidemics, riots, or other public calamity. The policy defines threat levels, pay policies for EOT members, etc., as well as guidelines for various readiness levels.

Please see Appendix A-9 for the complete Emergency Disaster Policy and Appendix A-10 for Pay and Attendance Policy.



4.31 Merit Pay

Beaufort County maintains a merit-based compensation program designed to recognize and reward employee performance. Merit increases are administered through the County's adopted compensation plan and are directly tied to the employee's annual performance evaluation.

Employees are evaluated annually based on their anniversary date in their current position. Merit increases are not automatic and are contingent upon individual performance, available funding, and administrative approval.

To ensure consistency, equity, and fiscal responsibility, merit increases are administered in alignment with County guidelines regarding performance rating distributions and overall compensation planning.

Additional details regarding eligibility criteria, evaluation procedures, and administration of the merit program are outlined in **Appendix A-13 Merit Pay Policy**.

APPENDIX

A-1 County Travel/Expense Policy

General Policy

Employees of the county shall be reimbursed for travel and expenses incurred in the course of their employment only when such travel has been authorized by the County Administrator, Deputy Administrator, CFO, or Division Head, as appropriate. Travel taken without prior approval may not be eligible for reimbursement.

All **out-of-state travel** must be approved by the County Administrator or its designee.

A Travel Request must be completed, approved and submitted to the Finance Department with all necessary documentation attached. A Travel Request is required for a day trip if a registration fee is required. All overnight stays require Travel Requests.

A Travel Request is NOT required for on-line or virtual training. Once attendance is approved by the department head, the registration may be paid for with a County p-card. A receipt must be obtained to submit with the monthly p-card report. If an employee does not have a p-card, the employee must obtain an invoice for the training and submit it to Finance Department, Accounts Payable, for payment to the vendor.

All Travel Requests must be followed up with a Travel Reconciliation after travel is completed.

Travel Request must include organization number (department) to be charged. XXXXXXXX-51320.

Indicate method of travel (personal vehicle, car pool, county vehicle, etc...). A county vehicle should be used if possible. Personal mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS rates at the time of travel.

Travel arrangements (registration fees and hotel accommodations) may be paid for with a County p-card only after travel has been approved. Use of personal credit cards is prohibited if employee has been issued a p-card. P-cards should not be used for food purchases while traveling. If hotel charges are deemed not related to County



business i.e.movies, room service, internet access, or alcohol purchases, then cardholder will be responsible for reimbursing the County within 10 days upon return from travel.

Travel Request Forms

Approved Travel Requests must be received in the Finance Department Friday, no later than 5:00 pm, to be included in the following weeks check run. Travel checks are cut once per week as part of the accounts payable run. Plan ahead to avoid late payment of registration, hotel, etc... Call Finance if you have any concerns about the date your check will be cut.

Registration

Please spell out the entire name of the organization to be paid. (Example, SCSCJA- South Carolina Summary Court Judges Association). Always attach conference schedule/itinerary, and any other backup information pertaining to the requested travel. Please provide mailing address and indicate if registration fee is to be mailed or hand delivered by employee. If registration has been paid using p-card, it is imperative that this is noted on the Travel Request so that a check is not sent.

Lodging

Lodging expenses will be prepaid in full by County check to the applicable hotel/ motel listed on the Travel Request. A correct address and confirmation number are required. If a p-card is used for lodging, report the amount charged on the Travel Request form and indicate that the p-card was used so that a County check will not be sent. A copy of the hotel receipt will be required as a part of the reconciliation process. It will also be needed for the p-card monthly report.

When a double or higher occupancy rate is charged, only the covered traveler's lodging costs will be reimbursed.

Per Diem

For overnight trips, per diem is either paid in advance or upon return. If paid in advance, the proper Travel Request Form must be submitted to Finance. Meal receipts are NOT required to be turned in with employee's Travel Reconciliation form upon return. Per Diem will be paid according to the rates herein, and all meals included in the registration agenda will be exempt from per diem allowance. Include estimated time of departure and return on your Travel Request form if asking for an advance. Employees are entitled to reimbursement for breakfast expense if they depart prior to 6:30 a.m. and for dinner expense if they return home later than 7:30 p.m. This entitlement is based on the premise that early departure and late return times as provided above are out of necessity and not at the discretion or convenience of the employee.

For day trips, reimbursement for out of pocket meal expenses will be reimbursed upon submission of a properly completed Travel Expense/Reconciliation Report. If a Travel Request is not required (no registration fee or overnight stay), then meal reimbursements will be made after receipt of a completed Travel Expense/Reconciliation Report. Itemized receipt(s) for meals and detailed reasons for the meal(s) (who, what, when, why, where) are required. Reimbursements for meals will be made for the actual amounts expended, up to the maximum per diem allowance stated herein.

If a check is being printed for reimbursement (opposed to EFT payment to employee's bank account), please specify if the check is to be mailed, sent inter-office, or held for pickup.



If per diem is issued (advanced) to an employee who can no longer attend training, please return the check to Finance. Do not allow employee to cash the check and give money to another employee taking who will be taking their place. A new check will be issued to the employee who will be attending. If the check has already been cashed, please forward to Finance a check from employee made payable to the Beaufort County Treasurer for the per diem amount paid to them immediately. Also, employees are REQUIRED to attend conference or training sessions which justify said travel and expenses. Abuse of this travel policy could result in disciplinary action. All travel reimbursement forms and all receipts are to be submitted to the Finance Department within five (5) working days from the date of return of said travel.

Mileage

Employees should seek the use of a County vehicle for all travel first; however, if such vehicle is unavailable, employees may use their personal vehicles for travel/training. Reimbursement will be made at the approved IRS rate at the time of travel, calculated from either the employee’s home or office address, whichever is CLOSER to the meeting or conference destination. Mileage may be verified by Finance through tools available on the internet or otherwise (MapQuest, GoogleMaps, etc.)

Breakfast	\$12.00
Lunch	\$17.00
Dinner	\$26.00 *Replaces the gsa.gov method
Total	\$55.00

A detailed hotel receipt, however, is ALWAYS required. Reimbursement will be made at the rates outlined above less any meals provided by the organization/facility during training. Meals which are INCLUDED in the registration/training fees are NOT reimbursable, under any circumstance. For instance, if an organization provides lunch for one of the days of training in which the employee attends, and the employee chooses NOT to take advantage of the provided meal, Beaufort County will NOT provide reimbursement to the employee of any meal purchased by the employee.

Personal Mileage

County employees shall be reimbursed for mileage at the rate set by the Federal Government upon Beaufort County Council approval. Under no circumstances will mileage be prepaid for any travel. A county vehicle should be used if possible. If a county vehicle is available and not used, personal mileage will be reimbursed at half the normal rate. Car pool when possible. For example, if five employees are traveling to the same location for the same purpose and length of time, employees should car pool. Each employee should not be requesting mileage reimbursement. Only the owner of the vehicle being used shall be reimbursed mileage. Do not use the county gas card or your p-card to fuel your personal vehicle. No employee shall be reimbursed for travel between his normal work site and his home.

Miscellaneous

Use this area for additional fees, such as memberships, parking, estimated taxi costs. Internet connection for business use is reimbursable. Internet for personal use is not.

Public Transportation



The County shall pay round-trip coach fare for employees attending county-related functions. In the event that coach fare is not available on any reasonable travel schedule, the county shall pay full fare. Upon approval of Travel Request, public transportation must be purchased with a p-card if the employee has been issued one. Public transportation purchased with personal funds may be reimbursed upon presentation of appropriate documentation of purchase. For example, a printed receipt showing the charge made to a personal credit card. Airfare prices must be checked on travel sites, such as Expedia or Travelocity in order to find the best rate. Keep in mind, personal airline points have no bearing over the flight chosen. If a higher priced airline is chosen for the purpose of personal points, the employee must provide a print-out of airline prices from Expedia or Travelocity on the day their purchase was made. Reimbursement will be based on the best price available at that time.

If taxi expenses are incurred, the county shall reimburse the employee for actual cost of trips from airports to hotel/motel and return, as well as hotel/motel to place of function (if not the same) and return. Reimbursement will be made upon completion of a Travel Reconciliation with receipts attached. Employees may use p-card for taxi fares if employee has been issued one.

Travel Reconciliations

All Travel Requests must be followed up with a Travel Reconciliation which must be presented to the Finance Department within five working days after return. Indicate your TR (travel request) number on your Travel Reconciliation. To be reimbursed for travel expenses, the traveler must submit all required receipts and documentation. If additional expenses were incurred during travel that were not included on the original Travel Request, those expenses must be approved for reimbursement by the appropriate County Administrator, Deputy Administrator, CFO, or Division Head. When completing Travel Reconciliation form, indicate dates in which travel occurred. Record registration fees under miscellaneous expenses. If payment was made with county p-card, please note on Travel Reconciliation.

Mileage Reimbursement

Mileage reimbursement is subject to Finance Department verification. MapQuest inquiries may be used for verification purposes. Any additional mileage should be noted or explained. Mileage occurring for daily travel to and from various county duties must be reported separately from mileage pertaining to a Travel Request.

Lost Receipts

In cases where receipts cannot be obtained or have been lost, a Missing Receipt Statement may be attached to the Travel Reconciliation form with the reason given. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the amount involved may not be allowed.

A-2 Drug and Alcohol Policy

To help ensure a safe, healthy and productive work environment for our employees and others, to protect Beaufort County property, and to ensure efficient operations, Beaufort County has adopted a policy and complies with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 of maintaining a workplace free of drugs and alcohol. This policy applies to all employees and other individuals who do work for Beaufort County.

The policy prohibits being in possession or under the influence of any illegal drug or unauthorized controlled substance while working and/or on County premises or in County vehicles.



All employees of the County are prohibited from swallowing, inhaling, injecting, dealing in, or otherwise using illegal drugs and substances (such as marijuana, cocaine, LSD, heroin, CBD Oil or any other product that contains THC, etc.). Further, this prohibition applies to the misuse, abuse or any unlawful use or possession of otherwise legal drugs. This prohibition applies to use at any time, both on the job and off the job. County employees are permitted to possess any substance when required by their jobs or for the purpose of lawful delivery to another person.

All employees of the County are prohibited from using or possessing alcoholic beverages on County premises or time. (The term "County premises or time" includes: County vehicles and private vehicles on County premises; parking lots and recreation areas; and any circumstances in which an employee is representing the County, such as attending off-premises business meetings or conferences. Employees are not prohibited, however, from having unopened containers of alcoholic beverages in their personal vehicles.) The County Administrator may approve moderate alcohol use at designated social or business functions.

All employees of the County are prohibited from reporting to or being at work while under the influence of alcohol. (An employee is considered to be "under the influence of alcohol" if he has any detectable amount of alcohol in his system). An employee taking prescribed medication which might affect their ability to perform their job is required to advise their supervisor. The County will determine whether the employee may continue to work. Employees may be required to submit to a drug screen.

These prohibitions also apply to leased employees and contractors employed by the County or working on County property.

The County reserves the right to test employees it reasonably suspects to be in violation of this policy. Refusal to submit to a drug screening test may result in termination of employment.

Applicants for Employment

Applicants tentatively selected for employment must undergo a pre-employment drug test. The County does not hire applicants tentatively selected for employment who refuse to submit to a drug test or who test positive for use of illegal or unauthorized substances or the illegal use of authorized substances. An applicant who is rejected under this policy may not be considered for future vacancies within one year of a failed drug screening, or until the applicant can demonstrate that they are no longer a user of any such substances. For example, the applicant may successfully complete a drug abuse treatment program and pass a more thorough drug test conducted at the applicant's expense. (This may include participation in and successful completion of a rehabilitation program as well as a negative drug test result on a more thorough drug test).

Current Employees

All County employees are subject to drug testing by urinalysis where "particularized suspicion" of drug use in violation of this policy exists or under other lawful conditions.

Particularized suspicion for drug testing is deemed to exist when:

1. Information that an employee has used drugs or substances in violation of this policy is provided by a reliable informant.
2. An accident occurs. "Accident" is defined as an incident involving a fatality and/or causing personal injury and/or involving property damage. Exceptions to this requirement are accidents in which the employee is deemed not at fault by law enforcement authorities responding to the accident scene. Department of



Transportation (DOT) regulated employees (CDL Drivers) are subject to special rules for post-accident testing and will be tested following an accident in accordance with DOT regulations.

3. An employee exhibits extreme mood swings; slurred speech; unusual clumsiness; staggering; dilation of pupils; sleeping on the job or lethargy; excessive unexplained sweating; or other aberrational behavior.
4. Employees are also subject to testing when they have been arrested for or convicted of a violation of drug laws; or when an employee has tested positive for drugs or otherwise violated this policy within the past five years.

All County employees are subject to alcohol testing where "particularized suspicion" of alcohol use in violation of this policy exists.

Particularized suspicion for alcohol testing is deemed to exist when:

1. Information that an employee has used or possessed alcohol in violation of this policy is provided by a reliable informant;
2. An accident occurs. "Accident" is defined as an incident involving a fatality and/or causing personal injury and/or involving property damage. Exceptions to this requirement are accidents in which the employee is deemed not at fault by law enforcement authorities responding to the accident scene. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulated employees (CDL Drivers) are subject to special rules for post-accident testing and will be tested following an accident in accordance with DOT regulations.
3. An employee exhibits behavior consistent with alcohol use such as, but not limited to, erratic behavior (mood swings, slurred speech, staggering, bloodshot eyes, sleeping on the job or lethargy, excessive unexplained sweating, etc.); the apparent odor of an alcoholic beverage on an employee's breath; or other aberrational behavior such as but not limited to excessive absenteeism or tardiness, significant deterioration in job performance, repeated errors or rules, violations, etc.
4. An employee has admitted to violating the County's alcohol policy;
5. An employee is arrested for or convicted of an alcohol related offense;
6. An employee has tested positive for alcohol in violation of this policy, or otherwise violated this policy, within the past five years.

Particularized suspicion testing is conducted upon the approval of the County Administrator or his designee.

All sworn law enforcement officers, fire suppression personnel, employees who are required by their jobs to possess a Commercial Driver's License or employees whose jobs the County regards as "safety-sensitive" are subject to random testing to determine compliance with this policy. A list of safety-sensitive positions is available in Human Resources. Random selection testing is unannounced.

Employees may be tested for the use of controlled substances as part of any "fitness for duty" physical examination mandated by federal/state law or by the County, or as otherwise allowed by law.

Employees who refuse to submit to an alcohol or drug test when ordered to do so or who adulterate or substitute test samples are in violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Refusal to test includes failure to appear for a test, failure to remain until testing is complete, failure to provide an adequate amount of urine, saliva or breath, failure to undergo a medical examination to evaluate your ability to provide an adequate urine, saliva or breath specimen, or failure to sign a required certification form.

Testing Procedure

Drug Testing:



1. Drug testing will be by urinalysis.
2. The collection of urine samples is performed under reasonable and sanitary conditions.
3. Urine is normally collected under conditions of semi-privacy - that is, a person of the same gender will be in a position to observe obvious attempts to substitute or adulterate a urine sample. Collection of the urine sample may be directly observed by a person of the same gender. However, where the person supervising the collection believes an employee has tampered with an earlier urine sample or the employee has previously admitted or been proved to have used drugs in violation of this rule. In addition, direct observation will be used in DOT-mandated testing for DOT-regulated employees when allowed or required by DOT regulations.
4. Urine samples are sealed, labeled, and documented in accordance with the procedure of the drug testing collector or laboratory. Tests performed pursuant to DOT regulations will follow the procedures required by those regulations. Labeling, storage, and transportation of samples are performed so as reasonably to preclude the probability of erroneous identification, sample contamination, or sample adulteration.
5. Specimens are checked for at least the following drugs: marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, phencyclidine and barbiturates. (Note: Tests performed pursuant to DOT regulations check for only those substances mandated by the DOT regulations).
6. Applicants and employees are provided an opportunity to provide any information which they consider relevant to the test, including identification of currently used prescription or nonprescription drugs, or other relevant information.
7. Samples which initially result in a positive finding for drug use are re-tested by gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GCMS) or an equivalent method. If the confirmatory test results in a positive finding of drug use, and is verified by the Medical Review Officer, the written report of the Medical Review Officer is conclusive for all employment-related purposes.
8. The County's Medical Review Officer normally allows an employee whose drug test results have been confirmed as positive the opportunity to justify the result before the Medical Review Officer notifies the County.
9. A positive-dilute result is treated as positive. A negative-dilute result will result in a retest. Absent satisfactory explanation, a second negative-dilute result may result in the test being considered adulterated. Dilute test results in DOT-mandated tests will be handled according to DOT regulations.

Alcohol Testing:

1. A non-evidential screening device may be utilized to initially determine compliance with this policy. If the screening device indicates the presence of alcohol, or if the results of the screening device are deemed questionable by the County, then a confirmatory test is conducted utilizing an EBT (evidential breath testing) device or blood test. The County uses only DOT approved non-evidential screening devices and DOT approved evidential breath testing (EBT) devices for DOT-mandated alcohol testing. The County reserves the right to utilize blood testing for non-DOT alcohol tests.
2. Employees will have an opportunity to provide any information which they consider to be relevant to the test.
3. The EBT confirmatory test is conducted by an individual properly certified to use the equipment. (In situations involving DOT regulated employees, the EBT operator should be properly certified in accordance with applicable DOT regulations).
4. A confirmatory test result generated through the use of an EBT or blood test which indicates the presence of alcohol in violation of this policy is conclusive for purposes of this policy.

Notice to Employees



The County attempts to distribute to all employees a copy of this policy. Additional copies of this policy are available upon request. By continuing to work, the employee agrees to abide by the policy as a condition of employment.

Notice to Employer, State and Federal Grantor / Contracting Agencies and Law Enforcement Authorities

As a condition of employment, employees agree to notify the County within five (5) calendar days after any criminal conviction for the workplace manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of illegal drugs and prescription drugs not prescribed for the individual employee's use. The County will notify all state and federal grantors/contracting agencies of such employee convictions within ten days as required by the state and federal Drug Free Workplace Acts. "Conviction" means a finding of guilt, imposition of a sentence, a plea of no contest, or a plea of guilty.

The County will notify law enforcement authorities whenever illegal drugs are found in the workplace.

Consequences of Violation

Employees who violate this policy are subject to immediate termination of employment. Except for sworn law enforcement officers, in lieu of terminating an employee, the County may, in its sole discretion, condition the continued or future employment of an employee who tests positive for or admits to the use of illegal drugs, upon the successful completion of an alcohol or drug counseling/rehabilitation program.

If the County, after considering all of the relevant circumstances, agrees to allow an employee who is found to be in violation of this policy to continue as an employee, the employee's continued employment will be subject to the following:

1. Referral of the employee for alcohol or drug abuse counseling;
2. Retesting the employee for alcohol or controlled substances before allowing the employee to return to duty;
3. Requiring the employee to authorize any rehabilitation facility to report periodically to the County during the course of treatment/counseling;
4. Placing the employee on probation for at least six months following the employee's return to duty; and
5. Requiring the employee to submit to unannounced follow-up alcohol and/or drug testing for a period of up to five years.

An employee whose continued or future employment is conditioned upon the successful completion of a counseling or rehabilitation program and who refuses or fails to participate in a single counseling or treatment session is in violation of this policy and subject to immediate termination of employment.

An employee whose return to duty test sample does not indicate that the employee has discontinued illegal use of drugs or indicates that the employee is in violation of this policy is subject to immediate termination of employment.

Self-Reporting of Substance Abuse Problems

Employees, other than sworn law enforcement officers, who have substance abuse problems and report them to the County before being selected for testing, and before the occurrence of an event which normally would result in testing, in the County's sole discretion may be, upon the first violation, be subject to the provisions outlined in the Consequences of Violation above, with the exception of immediate termination of employment.



An employee who admits to a violation of this policy or tests positive for drugs in violation of this policy but seeks counseling and remains an employee of the County, is subject to immediate termination of employment if they again either admit to, or is otherwise found to be in violation of this policy.

Confidentiality

Any alcohol or drug test results or information supplied by the employee and applicant as part of the County's alcohol and drug testing program are kept as confidential as possible, consistent with the purposes of this policy.

A-3 Beaufort County Computer and Information Systems Acceptable Use Policy

This policy is established to optimize the effective, efficient, and secure utilization of Beaufort County's information systems. County Council has entrusted the Information Technology and Communications Division (IT) with the responsibility of overseeing the development, deployment, installation, maintenance, service, and security of the County's information systems. IT is mandated to establish and communicate approved standards, protocols, policies, and procedures to be adhered to by County officials and employees. These measures are put in place to prevent security breaches, safeguard the County from potential liabilities, minimize business disruptions, and mitigate service failures arising from inappropriate use of computers and other information systems. Under the purview of this policy, information systems encompass equipment and software such as computers, tablets, phones, servers, hard drives, thumb drives, files, cloud storage, and any other equipment or software utilized for the collection, recording, processing, display, and transmission of information.

All software and hardware purchases must be approved by the Information Technology Department to ensure compatibility with County information systems. County employees are not authorized to install hardware or software or otherwise make changes to County electronic systems. Installation of hardware and software is to be performed by the Information Technology Department. Violation of any part of this policy may result in withdrawal of access to information systems and devices, and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees who have any questions regarding acceptable use of information systems should consult with their supervisor or contact the IT Help Desk at helpdesk@bcgov.net.

Contact Information and Technology Support

For all inquiries, technology-related questions, or requests for technology support, including reporting any issues or suspicious computing activities, please contact our dedicated support team at helpdesk@bcgov.net. Our Help Desk is here to assist you promptly with any technology-related concerns or assistance you may require. Your proactive communication with the Help Desk helps ensure the continued efficiency and security of our computing environment.

Authorized Access

Employees will receive access to the information systems essential for the performance of their specific job responsibilities. To obtain access, Department Heads and Elected Officials are responsible for granting authorization to the Information Technology department on behalf of their employees.

Additionally, Department Heads and Elected Officials shall initiate requests for information systems equipment, including but not limited to computers, mobile phones, and other necessary devices, for their office's employees. Such requests must follow the established budget and county procurement processes.



It is incumbent upon employees to exercise due diligence in the appropriate use, maintenance, and security of all systems and devices entrusted to them in accordance with this acceptable use policy. It is imperative to recognize that all information systems and devices remain the property of the County and are not considered the personal property of individual employees. Access to these systems and devices can be revoked at any time if an employee fails to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this policy.

Acceptable Use

Improper utilization of Beaufort County Information Systems may expose the County to various risks, including the introduction of malicious software, compromise of network systems and services, loss of assets, exposure of protected information, and potential legal liabilities. As such, the following activities are strictly prohibited, and engaging in these activities may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive:

- Violating intellectual property rights, including but not limited to, installing, or distributing software products without appropriate licensing for use by Beaufort County.
- Unauthorized use of copyrighted material in cases where Beaufort County or the end user does not possess an active license.
- Accessing user accounts, data, or information systems for any purpose other than official County business, even with authorized access.
- Intentionally introducing malicious programs into the County network or on information systems (e.g., worms, viruses, Trojans, etc.).
- Disclosing one's account password to others or allowing another individual to use one's account.
- Deliberately causing security breaches or disruptions in network communication.
- Conducting unauthorized port scanning or security scanning unless expressly permitted.
- Intercepting data not intended for the employee's host unless such activity is part of the employee's regular job.
- Bypassing user authentication or the security measures of any information system.
- Implementing honeypots or similar technology designed to lure cyber attackers for the purpose of detecting, deflecting, or studying unauthorized access attempts.
- Using any program, script, command, or sending messages of any kind with the intent to interfere with, disable, or deny a user's access to an information system, by any means, locally or otherwise.
- Altering the operation systems (e.g., jailbreaking) of County-issued devices.
- Installing unauthorized remote desktop software (e.g., TeamViewer, Chrome Remote Desktop). (Please note that certain County employees, such as law enforcement or IT personnel, may engage in the above activities as part of their legitimate job duties, but only with authorization from the Department Head or Elected Official and the Director of Information Technology Systems.)

Public Accountability and Limited Right to Privacy

County employees are granted access to information systems and equipment to fulfill their assigned duties in the service of the public. As stewards of resources entrusted to them by the public, employees must exercise careful consideration regarding the most appropriate use of these resources. Personal use of County information systems should be minimal and should not hinder productivity or disrupt information systems access for others.

Employees should be aware that they have no expectation of privacy for any information contained on County information systems, including communications of a personal nature. The County reserves the right to view or monitor all activity conducted on County information systems. All information stored on County information systems may be subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act.



Employees are prohibited from utilizing County information systems for any of the following activities:

- Using unprofessional, abusive, profane, or offensive language.
- Expressing personal views on topics such as religion, politics, sexuality, or other unrelated personal matters.
- Using information systems to transmit fraudulent, libelous, or threatening information or engaging in activities such as discrimination, harassment, degradation, or bullying of individuals or groups.
- Using information systems to conduct personal business for financial gain.
- Using County information systems to campaign for public office.
- Using information systems to engage in criminal activities, gamble, view, download, or transmit explicit content, or participate in any activity that contravenes County policies.

Information Storage and Transmission

Information stored on local devices (e.g., hard drives or desktops) is not covered by routine backups and cannot be recovered in case of data loss. Therefore, it is essential that all County data and work-related content be stored on network drives to prevent data loss, theft, or disruptions to business operations. County data should not be saved on personal cloud storage, or any unapproved cloud storage service not explicitly authorized by IT for County business use. Departments are not permitted to establish new cloud services without prior approval from IT. Please contact the Beaufort County Help Desk at helpdesk@bcgov.net to determine a list of managed and approved software and cloud storage locations.

Sensitive and regulated data, such as Protected Health Information (PHI) and Personally Identifiable Information (PII), must be handled with the utmost care and should not be stored on computer hard drives unless the information is encrypted in compliance with Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 197. Moreover, sensitive information should not be shared or transmitted to external parties outside the County network via email, fax, instant messaging, text message, or voicemail without appropriate security controls in place. These controls include encryption, recipient authentication, and proper designation as confidential or sensitive.

Email Usage

County-provided email accounts are the exclusive means for conducting Beaufort County business via email. These accounts should not be used for sending or receiving non-business-related emails. The use of third-party email services, such as Gmail or Yahoo, including the auto-forwarding of County email to external email services for County-related communication, is strictly prohibited.

Employees should incorporate a Privacy or Confidentiality Statement in any email that may contain confidential, regulated, or sensitive information. Emails containing such information, such as PHI or PII, should not be transmitted outside the organization without the implementation of appropriate security measures, as detailed in the section above.

Given the sensitivity of email communications, a new County email address will be assigned to employees when they transition to new positions outside their current departments. Please note that these email addresses are County property and are associated with the respective positions. Emails sent or received by users while conducting County business are considered Beaufort County records, and therefore, they are subject to records retention, open records, and security requirements.

Protection of County-Issued Devices



County information systems devices and equipment are the property of the County and remain distinct from the user they are assigned to. Users are accountable for the safety and security of all equipment entrusted to them. In cases of device loss, theft, or damage, an assessment of the circumstances may be conducted by Risk Management, Human Resources, IT, and the relevant department head or elected official.

Employees are encouraged to follow these fundamental best practices to ensure the protection of all County devices, including mobile devices:

- Avoid exposure to liquids and corrosive substances and store devices in stable and secure locations.
- Keep devices out of reach of children and pets and do not permit unauthorized use.
- Record the device's make and serial number, which may be necessary for filing a police report in the event of loss or theft.
- Keep mobile devices in personal possession whenever possible or store them in secure locations.
- If devices must be left in a vehicle, ensure they are locked in a trunk, glove box, or concealed from view.
- When passing a device through airport or security screening, maintain vigilant oversight during the process, and remember to retrieve the device afterward.
- Store all data, particularly sensitive information, on County network drives rather than the device's hard drive.
- Secure access to all County devices with passwords, dual authentication, Face or Touch ID, etc., and refrain from disabling or attempting to bypass these security, or antivirus protection measures.

Mobile Device Management (MDM)

All County-owned mobile devices will have Mobile Device Management (MDM) software installed to uphold compliance and manage access to County information effectively. Beaufort County's Information Technology Department will oversee the inventory, review, and management of all County-provided mobile devices. In the event of a lost, stolen, or damaged device, employees should promptly notify their supervisor and the IT Department. This notification should be accompanied by the filing of a Risk Management Incident Report. Additionally, for any lost or stolen County device, a police report must be filed.

When requesting a replacement County cell phone (whether due to damage or an upgrade), the currently assigned County cell phone must be returned to IT before the new one is provided. It is crucial to recognize that County cell phones and their associated phone numbers are County property and are designated for official County use only. Consequently, County cell phones and phone numbers cannot be transferred when an employee leaves the County, changes departments, or transitions to a position where a cell phone is no longer required. Instead, County cell phones (along with accessories like power cords) should be returned to IT. The device will be wiped and reassigned to another County employee if appropriate.

Employees will be held responsible for the replacement cost of any lost, stolen, or damaged hardware.

Passwords and User Accounts

Unauthorized access to County information systems or the facilitation of unauthorized access by others is strictly prohibited. Any attempt to tamper with systems for unauthorized access is also prohibited.

Password requirements will be established and communicated by the IT department. These requirements will be made accessible to all employees, including new hires during their orientation. All employees are obligated to adhere to these password complexity requirements, which include the use of strong passwords, especially in cases where the system does not enforce password requirements. Compliance includes changing passwords within the stipulated timeframe and refraining from sharing passwords with anyone, including system



administrators. Employees are prohibited from using their Beaufort County user id and password combination at non-Beaufort County sites.

Employees possessing local administrative privileges on County devices should be mindful of the inherent responsibilities and elevated risks associated with such privileges. These risks encompass potential data loss, the need to adhere to copyright laws, and an increased vulnerability to compromise. The granting of local administrative rights should be approached with caution.

IT will periodically review accounts that have been inactive for 21 days and may consider disabling them. Accounts that remain inactive for 90 days will be disabled by IT. Additionally, when using an account, if a session is idle for more than 15 minutes due to inactivity, users will be prompted to re-authenticate.

Restrictions and Limitations on County Information Systems Usage

To maintain the proper use of County information systems, employees should be aware of the following constraints and regulations:

- **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)**
 - Personal Owned Devices (PODs) such as personal computers, smartphones, tablets, or USB drives are not permitted on the County network unless expressly approved by the IT Department, Department Director, and ACA.
- **Personal Mobile Device Use**
 - County employees may request permission to use their personal mobile devices (e.g., mobile phones) to access the County's primary wireless network, County email, or interact with County equipment.
 - To ensure compliance with access to County information systems, Mobile Device Management (MDM) software will be installed on the device. Compliance with software requirements specified by the IT Department is mandatory for access.
 - MDM software allows the IT Department to remove County information from a personal mobile device, when necessary, without affecting the employee's personal data and applications.

Lost or Stolen Mobile Devices

In the event of a lost or stolen personally owned mobile device, employees must promptly notify their supervisor and the Information Technology service desk to safeguard County information systems. Upon separation from County employment, all County data will be remotely removed from the mobile device. Personal data and applications on the device will remain unaffected.

Access to County Guest Wireless Network

Personal Owned Devices can access the County guest wireless network, which is subject to monitoring and inspection. Unauthorized activities, data breaches, viruses, or threats to County security may result in denial of access to the guest network. Connecting devices like iPads, tablets, mobile phones, or cameras to the County network infrastructure without proper approval is strictly prohibited, as these devices can introduce unnecessary risks to County systems and data.

Internet of Things (IoT) Devices

Use of IoT devices (e.g., Google Nest, Alexa devices) on the County network requires prior approval from IT.

Removable Media



Personally owned removable media devices, including thumb drives, SD cards, cameras, mobile phones, PDAs, and removable hard drives, are not allowed on the County network unless explicitly approved by County IT. These devices must comply with County security policies. Any unapproved, non-compliant, or potentially threatening devices will be barred from connecting to County devices or the network.

County Virtual Private Network (VPN)

County VPN services are exclusively intended for use on County devices and are not to be used on personal or non-County devices. Access to County VPN will be exclusively granted by the Beaufort County Information Technology Systems Department. The IT Department will annually specify a certified training course that employees and officials are required to complete by a designated deadline. Non-compliance with the training requirement may result in denial of access to County information systems and potential disciplinary action, including termination. Employees seeking clarification regarding the training should contact their supervisor or the Information Technology Help Desk.

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

When attempting to access county resources such as email, network services, and storage from locations that are not under the direct management of the county, the implementation of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is a critical security measure. MFA adds an extra layer of protection by requiring users to provide multiple forms of verification, typically something they know (e.g., a password) and something they have (e.g., a smartphone app or a security token), to authenticate their identity. This robust authentication process significantly enhances the security of county data and systems, particularly when users are accessing them from remote or non-traditional settings.

Separation of Employment

Upon separation of employment with the County, regardless of the reason, an employee's access to County information systems will be immediately revoked. It is mandatory for departing employees to return all County-issued information system devices, which may include cell phones, tablets, laptops, desktops, flash drives, and similar equipment, on or before their last day of employment.

In instances where an employee is unable to return County devices on their final day of employment, they may be granted a grace period of up to two business days to facilitate the return of the devices. During this transitional period, the departing employee assumes responsibility for the secure handling and safekeeping of these County assets.

Failure to return County equipment within the stipulated timeframe may result in the employee being charged for the cost of the unreturned equipment. The County will employ any necessary measures to ensure the prompt return of the devices and safeguard the security of any County information contained therein.

A-4 Email Retention Policy

Purpose

The Email Retention Policy is intended to help employees determine what information sent or received by email should be retained and for how long.



The information covered in these guidelines includes, but is not limited to, information that is either stored or shared via electronic mail or instant messaging technologies.

Questions about the proper classification of a specific piece of information should be addressed to your manager. The IT Department can address questions regarding these guidelines.

Scope

This email retention policy is secondary to State and Federal policy on Freedom of Information and County Procedures for Record Keeping. All BEAUFORT COUNTY email information is categorized into two main classifications with retention guidelines:

- Public Records (5 years)
- Ephemeral Correspondence (Retain until read, destroy)

All state and local government records, regardless of their format, must be kept for as long as needed for legal, fiscal, administrative, and historical reference needs. As with paper records, the retention value of electronic records depends upon their content, not their format. The legal retention and disposition of all state and local government records, including those in electronic formats, is managed through the establishment of record retention schedules prepared and approved in accordance with the South Carolina Public Records Act (Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, Section 30-1-10 through 30-1-140, as amended).

Most retention schedules vary between 3 or 5 years depending on classification. In order to simplify the archiving of email categorized as a public record, a default retention period of 5 years will be used.

Policy

One official copy of all email used in or relating to the transaction of government business is a public record and, just like all public records, must be retained and disposed of in accordance with properly approved record retention schedules. While Beaufort County IT will provide applicable technology to facilitate the identification, categorization, and archival retention of electronic documents, it is still the end user's responsibility to categorize these documents properly.

Public Records Correspondence

Beaufort County Public Records Correspondence is all information encompassed but not limited to the South Carolina Public Records Act disseminated in the course of official County business. To ensure Public Records Correspondence is retained, **you should "CC" relevant email to archive@bcgov.net**. This will automatically classify the email as a public record with a 5-year retention period.

Although identification of email records relating to the activities of public organizations will always be subjective, certain categories of records will typically be important to identify and manage.

These include:

- Policies and directives
- Work schedules and assignments
- Drafts of documents circulated for approval or comment
- Any document that initiates, authorizes, or completes a business transaction.



- Final reports or recommendations
- Correspondence, memos, or messages about agency or local government business.

Ephemeral Correspondence

Beaufort County Ephemeral Correspondence is by far the largest category and includes:

- Incoming list serve messages
- Personal emails unrelated to County business
- Spam or unsolicited advertisements or sales promotions
- Non-policy announcements
- Telephone messages
- Published reference materials
- Invitations and responses to meetings, etc.
- Thank you emails
- Replies to routine questions, "we're open 8 - 5", "our address is.", "the deadline is."
- Scheduling meetings
- Out of Office auto-replies
- Attachments to email that are identical to records that are stored and managed outside the email system pursuant to approved record retentions schedules

These will be retained for no more than 90 days and may be deleted from your email at any time.

Instant Messenger Correspondence

Beaufort County Instant Messenger General Correspondence may be saved with logging function of Instant Messenger, or copied into a file and saved. Instant Messenger conversations that are deemed a public record should be copied to an email and sent to archive@bcgov.net.

Recovering Deleted Email Via Backup Media

Beaufort County maintains backup records from the email server. These records will only cover the prior 30 days; however, all email is retained on a separate archive for a minimum of 90 days.

REFERENCES

- General Records Retention Schedules for SC Counties
- SC Public Records and Freedom of Information Act
- SC Department of Archives Email Management Guidelines

A-5 Family Medical Leave Act

Employee Rights and Responsibilities under the Family and Medical Leave Act

Basic Leave Entitlement



FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or childbirth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

Military Family Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees whose spouse, son, daughter or parent is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings. FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy; or is in outpatient status, or is on the temporary disability retired list.

Benefits and Protections

During FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work.

Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

Eligibility Requirements

Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least one year, for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and if at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities. Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Use of Leave



An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave

Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures. Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

Employer Responsibilities

Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility. Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the employer must notify the employee.

Unlawful Acts by Employers

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

Enforcement

An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

*** Please refer to the Family Medical Leave Act section of this handbook for County-specific requirements for FMLA.**



A-6 Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)

Throughout a career, workers will face multiple life events, job changes or even job losses. A law enacted in 1986 helps workers and their families keep their group health coverage during times of voluntary or involuntary job loss, reduction in the hours worked, transition between jobs and in certain other cases. The law - the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) - gives workers who lose their health benefits the right to choose to continue group health benefits provided by the plan under certain circumstances.

COBRA generally requires that group health plans sponsored by employers with 20 or more employees in the prior year offer employees and their families the opportunity for a temporary extension of health coverage (called continuation coverage) in certain instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end.

The law generally covers group health plans maintained by employers with 20 or more employees in the prior year. It applies to plans in the private sector and those sponsored by state and local governments. Provisions of COBRA covering state and local government plans are administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Several events that can cause workers and their family members to lose group health coverage may result in the right to COBRA coverage. These include:

- Voluntary or involuntary termination of the covered employee's employment for reasons other than "gross misconduct";
- Reduced hours of work for the covered employee;
- Covered employee becoming entitled to Medicare;
- Divorce or legal separation of a covered employee;
- Death of a covered employee; or
- Loss of status as a "dependent child" under plan rules.

Under COBRA, the employee or family member may qualify to keep their group health plan benefits for a set period of time, depending on the reason for losing the health coverage. The following represents some basic information on periods of continuation coverage:

Qualified Beneficiary	Qualifying Event	Period of Coverage
Employee Spouse Dependent Child	Termination Reduced Hours	18 months*
Spouse Dependent Child	Employee entitled to Medicare Divorce of legal separation Death of covered employee	36 months
Dependent Child	Loss of dependent child status	36 months

****This 18-month period may be extended for all qualified beneficiaries if certain conditions are met in cases where a qualified beneficiary is determined to be disabled for purposes of COBRA.***

However, COBRA also provides that your continuation coverage may be cut short in certain cases.

Notification Requirements:



An initial notice must be furnished to covered employees and spouses, at the time coverage under the plan commences, informing them of their rights under COBRA and describing provisions of the law. COBRA information also is required to be contained in the plan's summary plan description (SPD). See fact sheet "Workers' Right to Health Plan Information (ERISA, Claims Procedures and SPD Regulation)"

When the plan administrator is notified that a qualifying event has happened, it must in turn notify each qualified beneficiary of the right to choose continuation coverage. COBRA allows at least 60 days from the date the election notice is provided to inform the plan administrator that the qualified beneficiary wants to elect continuation coverage.

Under COBRA, the covered employee or a family member has the responsibility to inform the plan administrator of a divorce, legal separation, disability or a child losing dependent status under the plan.

Employers have a responsibility to notify the plan administrator of the employee's death, termination of employment or reduction in hours, or Medicare entitlement.

If covered individuals change their marital status, or their spouses have changed addresses, they should notify the plan administrator.

Premium Payments:

Qualified beneficiaries may be required to pay the entire premium for coverage up to 102% of the cost to the plan. Premiums may be higher for persons exercising the disability provisions of COBRA. Failure to make timely payments may result in loss of coverage.

Premiums may be increased by the plan; however, premiums generally must be set in advance of each 12-month premium cycle.

Individuals subject to COBRA coverage may be responsible for paying all costs related to deductibles, and may be subject to catastrophic and other benefit limits.

A-7 Worker's Compensation Policy

A. General Policy

Title 42, of the South Carolina Code of Laws contains the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Act. The Rules and Regulations of the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission provide the basic legal foundation for administration of the Act. Beaufort County maintains Workers' Compensation Insurance to provide medical benefits and/or compensation (indemnity) benefits for employees who sustain an injury or death by accident, occupational disease or ionizing radiation, arising out of and in the course of his or her employment subject to, and in accordance with, the terms and provisions of the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Act. As it relates to the payment of medical and compensation under the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Act, the following provides a summary of benefits that may be available; however, the payment of Workers' Compensation benefits shall be in accordance with, and subject to, Title 42 of the South Carolina Code of Laws (1976, as amended).

B. Medical Treatment and Compensation



Workers' Compensation Insurance provides medical and compensation benefits. However, in accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws 42-15-60 and 42-15-80, failure to use the services of Beaufort County's appointed physicians or changing physicians without prior approval of the South Carolina State Workers' Compensation Commission, may result in denial of payment for such unauthorized medical expenses.

1. **Medical Treatment:** An employee who sustains an injury by accident arising out of and in the course of his employment is entitled to all necessary medical, surgical, and hospital attention, as well as original artificial members and medical supplies. Medical treatment will continue until the authorized treating physician determines that the employee has obtained Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI) and such further treatment as may tend to lessen disability in the judgment of the Workers' Compensation Commission.
2. **Compensation:** An employee who sustains an injury by accident arising out of and in the course of employment, which causes him/her to be absent from work for 7 calendar days or less, is not entitled to temporary disability compensation. **Temporary disability compensation will begin on the eighth day of disability; however, if the disability lasts longer than fourteen calendar days, the employee will also be compensated for the first seven days.** Temporary disability compensation will be terminated, suspended, or reduced in accordance with the terms and provisions of the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Act. The injured employee is entitled to compensation at the rate of **sixty-six and two-thirds percent (66-2/3%)** of his/her average weekly wage subject to the statutory maximum compensation rate. Permanent disability compensation may also be payable for certain injuries in accordance with the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Act.

For days not worked, when the employee is entitled to temporary disability compensation, Personal Leave (PLT), Disability Leave (DL), or Salary Continuation Account (SCA) may be used until the earned leave time is exhausted. The employee's timekeeper and the Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator should coordinate leave-time reporting. Those hours will be reinstated at sixty-six and two-thirds percent (66-2/3%) or less if the employee qualifies for the maximum compensation rate for Workers' Compensation, if the insurance carrier reimburses the County.

Also, employees receiving temporary disability compensation under the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Act may elect to voluntarily utilize accrued Personal Leave (PLT), Disability Leave or Salary Continuation Accounts (SCA) in conjunction with receiving temporary disability compensation under the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Act, not to exceed normal bi-weekly paychecks. During this time employees will not accrue PLT. Nor will employees receive reimbursement for leave time taken except which is applicable within the law. In addition, required deductions and any voluntary deductions will be deducted from the paycheck. Required deductions consist of: Federal, State, Social Security (FICA), Medicare, and court-ordered child support payments.

In addition, the employee is entitled to mileage reimbursement if the mileage to and from the facility exceeds ten (10) miles round trip.

- a. **Health Benefits Payments:** While receiving Workers' Compensation payments, **the employee is responsible for paying health insurance benefits premiums, out of pocket.**
- b. **Light-Duty (Transitional) Work:** An employee on Workers' Compensation must accept reasonable transitional work when it is offered to him/her, provided the employee is able to do the work offered. If the employee does not accept such work, all compensation payments may be denied for the hours he/she refuses to do the transitional work. If the transitional work is at a lower wage, the employee is entitled to compensation at the rate of sixty-six and two thirds' percent (66-2/3%) of



the difference between the employee's pre-injury average weekly wage and the post injury weekly wage subject to the statutory maximum compensation rate.

C. Procedure to Follow When an Injury Occurs

When an employee receives an injury arising out and in the course of employment, the employee should immediately inform his/her immediate Supervisor and the Supervisor must contact Beaufort County's Risk Management Department. Failure by the employee to give prompt notice of the injury by accident within the statutorily prescribed period can result in denial of claims for Workers' Compensation benefits and can also cause a penalty to the County and/or its Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator.

When the **Workers' Compensation Authorization Form** is not sent to the medical provider, the injured employee will be given a copy of the **Form** and sent to the County's appointed physician (s). The physician's office should be notified that the injured employee is on the way.

Exceptions: In an emergency, when an employee is out of the area, or when the appointed physicians are not available, the employee may **use the nearest physician or the emergency room at a hospital. Beaufort County's Risk Management Department is to be notified when this occurs.** In the Beaufort area, when an employee is seen in the emergency room or by another physician, the employee is to be referred to the Beaufort County Workers' Compensation authorized physician for follow-up treatment.

If the employee goes to a hospital emergency room for treatment that employee must submit all of their hospital paperwork to Risk Management and their Supervisor as soon as possible.

In non-emergency situations, a physician other than the appointed physician(s) may see employees with approval from the designated Workers' Compensation physician(s) and the County's Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator.

1. Upon notification of the alleged injury, a **First Report of Injury (12A), Medical Release Form, and Authorization Form** must be completed and sent to the Risk Management Office for submission to the Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator.

Injuries need to be reported immediately. Failure to report an injury may result in a delay in processing benefits and possible denial of a claim by the Workers' Compensation Commission. The County's Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator must receive this report from Risk Management within three days after the accident or the Workers' Compensation Commission may fine the County. The Insurance Claims Administrator must receive the First Report of Injury, if there is lost time, prior to any bills being paid.

2. The Department Director or Supervisor, along with Beaufort County's Risk Management Department investigates the accident immediately. Afterwards, the Department Director or Supervisor completes the **Accident Investigation Form**.
3. If the employee is incapacitated and absent from work, the employee should submit a written statement from the County's appointed physician, as soon as possible. This statement should give the name of the employee being treated, the diagnosis, expected length of disability and expected date the employee can return to his normal work or return to transitional work. **Without this written notification from the physician, the employee may not be considered absent due to a Workers' Compensation injury and all medical bills may be**



submitted to the employee for payment. Without this written notification, the Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator may not pay the employee temporary disability compensation for lost time due to the injury or reimburse the County for compensation paid the employee during his/her absence.

4. If there is lost time and the employee has submitted the physician's written notification, the Department Director will, upon the return of the employee to normal work or transitional work, submit to Human Resources a Personnel Action Form showing date of return.
5. The authorized treating physician may assign an impairment rating for an injury by accident, arising out of and in the course of employment. After the authorized physician assigns an impairment rating, the employee will be invited to participate in an informal conference before the Workers' Compensation Commission to consider settlement of the employee's entitlement to further compensation. At this time the employee is encouraged to express his/her opinion about his/her condition and the impairment rating given by the physician. Following payment of further compensation awarded at an informal conference, the employee will have one year to file a claim for additional benefits based on a change of condition in accordance with §42-17-90 of the South Carolina Code (1976, as amended).
6. When mileage to and from the medical facility exceeds ten (10) miles round trip, the employee is entitled to mileage reimbursement at a rate set by the Workers' Compensation Commission and should submit to Risk Management a completed **Mileage Reimbursement Form**.
7. **In case of death, the Department Director will notify Beaufort County's Risk Management Department and the Human Resources Office immediately. OSHA needs to be notified immediately.** Submit the **First Report of Injury** as soon as possible. Funeral expenses, not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00), and death compensation benefits will be paid to the deceased employee's dependents or other beneficiaries as determined at a hearing before the Workers' Compensation Commission.
8. **Compensation for Seven Days or Less of Lost Time:** When an employee is incapacitated and absent from work by written notification of the County's appointed physician, for seven days or less, the employee will be charged Personal Leave for days not worked. If the employee has no accrued leave days, he/she will be Leave Without Pay from their job. Employees do not receive Workers' Compensation benefits for the first seven days of lost time.
9. The Department must submit information (either Timekeeping System or Payroll) as soon as possible to Risk Management showing the date of return and days away from work.
10. Beaufort County employees' **health insurance cannot be used to pay a Workers' Compensation medical claim**, unless this claim was refused by Workers' Compensation, and this refusal must be supported with written documentation.

D. Third Party Claims

If the employee files a claim or lawsuit against a third party, in connection with an injury by accident arising out of and in the course of employment for which Workers' Compensation benefits are claimed or paid, the employee or his/her attorney should complete Form SF 110 and return it to Risk Management for submission to our Claims Administrator and make all notice filings with the County's Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator and the Workers' Compensation Commission as required by the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Act.

1. The employee or his/her attorney can negotiate and settle his claim with the third party and not involve Beaufort County or the Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator.



- In this case, neither the County nor the Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator will pay any compensation or medical benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act.
- 2. The employee can accept Workers' Compensation benefits and reserve the right to pursue action against the third party. The County and its Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator will maintain a lien equal to the amount of Workers' Compensation benefits paid in connection with the injury by accident less its share of attorney fees and costs subject to the terms and provisions of §42-1-560 of the South Carolina Code (1976, as amended). No settlement of the third-party claim should be made without notice to, and the consent of, Beaufort County's Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator.
- 3. The employee can accept the Workers' Compensation benefits and assign his/her rights towards any action against the third party to the Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator who would be responsible for action against the third party to recover the losses that have occurred, in accordance with §42-1-560 of the South Carolina Code (1976, as amended).

The employee should notify the Risk Management Department of his/her attorney's name and address if he/she is filing a third-party claim.

A-8 Employee Emergency Leave Transfer Bank (EELTB)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide for a program that allows County employees to donate a specified number of accrued leave time hours to an emergency leave bank. County employees who have experienced a personal or immediate family medical or other hardship emergency situation may share in this bank. The emergency must necessitate the employee's absence for a prolonged period of time and be anticipated to result in a substantial loss of income due to the unavailability of any paid leave time.

Creation of Leave Bank

The transfer of leave to the bank by the employee occurs on an annual basis. Beaufort County employees may donate from their accrued personal leave time or sick leave account. The annual minimum for the transfer of donated leave time is eight (8) hours. This donation of time is strictly voluntary.

Definitions

- **Leave Donor** - A Beaufort County employee who has voluntarily, in writing, authorized a transfer of eight (8) or more hours of personal leave or sick leave time to the EELTB.
- **Leave Recipient** - A Beaufort County employee who has experienced a personal or immediate family medical or hardship emergency situation and has been approved to receive additional paid leave time from the emergency leave transfer bank.
- **Personal Emergency** - An emergency situation that requires an employee's absence from duty for a prolonged period of time and that is anticipated to result in a substantial loss of personal income due to the unavailability of any form of paid leave. A catastrophic and debilitating personal or immediate family medical situation, severely complicated disability, severe accident or an illness of a terminal nature - any of which requires a sustained recuperative medical period.
- **Immediate Family Member** - A spouse or minor child for whom the employee has the legal custody and care.

Employee Eligibility for EELTB



1. Must be an employee of Beaufort County with twelve (12) continuous months of service and have a minimum of 40 hours paid leave time or sick leave on December 31 of each year, and donate a minimum of eight (8) hours or more of personal leave time or sick leave during the annually designated donation period for the following calendar year.
2. County employees eligible for other paid benefits during their extended absence from work are ineligible to receive donated leave time from the EELTB unless they sign a waiver attesting to the fact that they will not file for other benefits while receiving EELTB benefits. Examples of other paid benefits may include, but are not limited to, paid leave, Workers' Compensation, short and long-term disability, and disability retirement benefits.
3. Employees actively receiving leave donations from the EELTB may have their eligibility requirements waived until such time as they have been returned to work with Beaufort County. Once the employee has accrued sufficient leave time equal to the hours necessary for continued plan eligibility, then the employee's leave may be drafted and he/she will have satisfied the conditions for the current eligibility year.
4. Unused portions of donated leave time to an EELTB recipient cannot be used to satisfy annual eligibility requirements.
5. All paid personal leave, sick leave, disability leave, and/or compensatory time must be utilized before an eligible employee receives leave from the transfer bank.
6. The maximum annual amount of transferred leave time an employee may withdraw from the EELTB is a total of 240 hours.
7. Leave time received from the transfer bank is granted in increments of two (2) weeks at a time and the employee should provide a physician's statement before leave bank time is authorized. The County limits the total hours received by an employee for the duration of employment to 480 hours. Any unused donation not utilized by an employee is credited back to the EELTB.
8. Donated leave time, duly authorized to be transferred to the EELTB, is not restored or returned to the donor.
9. When the County employs family members, two or more members of the same family may not simultaneously benefit from the leave bank for the same emergency or hardship.
10. An employee receiving donated leave time from the EELTB does not accrue leave.
11. All requests for receiving emergency leave time must be reviewed by the Human Resources Director and approved by the County Administrator.
12. An employee receiving benefits in accordance with this policy does not acquire any rights - including job restoration- greater than those to which he/she is entitled under the Family and Medical Leave Act or any County policy.

Documentation

The following forms can be obtained from Human Resources and completed documents must be submitted to Human Resources to be considered for EELTB hours:

1. EELTB Donation Request Form
2. EELTB Physician's Statement (to be completed by an attending physician)
3. "Other Benefits" waiver if applicable

Incomplete paperwork will not be considered.

If hours are exhausted in the Leave Bank, no further requests will be considered until the bank is replenished during the annual donation period (or special donation period if approved by County Administration).



A-9 County Emergency Disaster Policy

This policy is to provide guidance to the employees of Beaufort County regarding responsibilities, expectations and pay policies during declared emergencies / disasters. Beaufort County is mandated to provide services to the citizens of the county during emergencies and disaster situations in accordance with Section 25-1-420, South Carolina Code of Laws. An emergency, as defined by the Code, shall mean "actual or threatened enemy attack, sabotage, conflagration, flood, storm, epidemic, earthquake, riot, or other public calamity."

The following is provided as a general description of activation levels and emergency related activities:

Normal Operations

- Day-to-Day operations to include normal training and exercises.
- Review of the department's hurricane plan and make any necessary improvements.
- Routine watch and warning activities.

Enhanced Steady State / Partial Activation

- Certain members of the Emergency Operations Team ("EOT") / organizations are activated to monitor a credible threat, risk or hazard and/or to support the response to a new and potentially evolving incident.
- At this time, certain employees may be placed on "standby" status and will be expected to be ready to report to work in accordance with the dictated response time requirements.
- Possibility of an emergency that may require a limited or partial activation.
- Disaster or emergency likely or imminent.
- Activation of the Emergency Operation Plan or appropriate plan for the specific hazard if deemed necessary.

Full Activation

- Identified EOT positions should report to their designated duty station and come prepared to stay for an extended period of time (i.e, more than one day) at the appointed worksite if necessary.
- Emergency Operation Center ("EOC") is activated, including personnel from all assisting agencies, to support the response to a major incident or credible threat.
- Disaster or an emergency in effect and/or occurring emergency operations are underway
- Evacuations may or may not be in progress
- Maximum preparedness level with the highest State of Emergency Operations

The following County procedure follows the general guidelines provided.

Procedure:

Responsibility

Administration

- The Chairman of Beaufort County Council may activate the **Beaufort County Emergency Operations Plan/ Disaster Recovery Plan** as necessitated by an actual or imminent disaster or incident.
- Under the direction of the Beaufort County Emergency Policy Group, consisting of the Chairman of



County Council, the County Administrator, and the County Sheriff, are responsible for the administration of this policy and coordination of all procedures herein. The Policy Group is the authorized party to declare an emergency for Beaufort County.

Management

- Identify and notify those employees whose presence is essential in responding to the Emergency Event and/or support the EOC during Full / Partial Activation.
- Compile and maintain a listing of employees' current telephone information so they may be contacted during hazardous weather or other emergency conditions.
- Ensure timesheets and activity logs are properly documented for payroll and reimbursement purposes.
- Convey policy to new or prospective employees.

Employees

- Check County email for any updates regarding hazardous weather or emergency conditions.
- Come prepared to stay at the appointed workstation for an extended period of time (i.e., more than one day) if designated to report to work during emergency conditions.
- Provide supervisors with current telephone information so contact may be made during hazardous weather or emergency conditions.

Emergency Operation Team (EOT)

The EOT consists of personnel who are assigned positions in which have been identified as essential and have a role in supporting a disaster or Emergency Event (natural or man-made) that affects Beaufort County. This includes, but is not limited to, those who hold a position in the EOC and those who may be required to stay during an evacuation or evacuate with the County. Some departments may not have a role in the EOT and others may require their entire department to provide support during an Emergency Event.

The EOT will be structured into two tiers:

- Tier 1: Employees who may be called to work **on-site** during an Emergency Event.
- Tier 2: Employees who may be called to work **remotely** during an Emergency Event.

Each tier reflects the employee's designated role and location of duty during an event. Tier assignments will be based on departmental needs, job functions, and the nature of the emergency.

The Chief Financial Officer (or designee), Human Resources Director, and Recovery Manager will provide a recommendation to the County Administrator of identified personnel for the Emergency Operation Team prior to hurricane season.

The County Administrator, or designee, shall provide final approval of county personnel to be assigned to the Emergency Operations Team (EOT). No employee shall be eligible for Emergency Event pay provisions of this policy unless designated by the County Administrator, or designee, as a member of the EOT. The names of all approved EOT members shall be specifically listed on the approved EOT Roster. The EOT Roster will be reviewed and amended annually and will be provided to the Emergency Management Division prior to the start of hurricane season. The EOT Roster will be updated throughout the remainder of the year on an as needed basis to reflect staffing changes. The County Administrator will make the final determination as to who will report to duty during any individual activation. Individuals that are assigned to the EOT are not guaranteed automatic approval to report



to duty for each individual event. Only individuals that are identified and approved by the County Administrator for an individual event are to report to duty at their designated workstation.

The County Administrator, or designee, reserves the right to revise the EOT Roster at any time should the Emergency Event require additional support.

Compensation During an Emergency

The County may be operating under an abbreviated schedule, closed or under a Declaration of Emergency. An Emergency Event is in effect when one of the following conditions are met:

The County has suspended normal County operations or is operating under emergency conditions, as determined by the County Administrator; **or**

The Policy Group has declared that a state of emergency exists in the County, or a state of emergency for an area encompassing the County has been declared by the Governor or other competent authority.

Employees designated as EOT Tier 1 will be eligible for Disaster Pay (Please refer to **Appendix A-10 Beaufort County Emergency Attendance & Pay Policy** for explanation of compensation).

Employees designated as EOT Tier 2 (remote) and work remote during an Emergency Event are not eligible for Disaster Pay. These employees will be compensated at their regular rate of pay for all hours worked remotely during an Emergency Event activation. For any portion of their regularly scheduled hours that are not worked, they will be made whole through the use of Emergency Administrative Leave, up to their standard weekly schedule.

Similarly, Tier 1 employees who are designated for on-site response but are only activated to work remotely during a specific Emergency Event are also not eligible for Disaster Pay. In such cases, these employees will be compensated at their regular rate of pay for all hours worked remotely and may receive Emergency Administrative Leave for any scheduled hours not worked, consistent with Tier 2 provisions.

Relief from Duty

Employees identified to work during emergencies (identified on the Emergency Operation Team) are expected to report to work when called. An employee may be excused from work only in extreme situations, and only by the appropriate reporting authority (County Administrator).

Return to Regular Duties

Once the emergency incident is declared resolved, employees who worked during emergency conditions shall be allowed a reasonable amount of time for rest and recuperation prior to returning to their regular assignments.

Payroll Processing

The Finance Department, in the event of possible or likely office closures due to an emergency, may issue a standard payroll prior to the normal payroll processing date to ensure that all employees will have access to wages if offices are closed.



If this occurs, employees will be paid for their "standard" scheduled hours for the emergency pay run via direct deposit. Corrections, whether in the form of additional pay or recoupment of overpayments, will be handled as soon as possible after normal operations are reinstated.

Re-Entry / Recovery

The recovery process after a storm or other disaster may take days, weeks, or months. Payment of Emergency Administrative Pay during the recovery process will be subject to weekly review and Administrator approval. Under no circumstance will Emergency Administrative Pay be continued after County offices have reopened.

Employees activated during the emergency will begin recovery operations as directed after the event. All other County employees are expected to report to work when County offices reopen (unless otherwise instructed to do so earlier) and will be paid their normal wages, to include overtime as required by law. Employees may be required to perform work outside of their normal duties to assist with recovery efforts. This work will enable Beaufort County government to return to normal operations and assist citizens in returning to their normal daily routines as quickly as possible.

Other Provisions

Employees who are required to remain at their emergency duty stations will be allowed to sleep and/or rest when conditions allow at no loss of supplemental compensation outlined above.

The Chief Financial Officer, or designee, is responsible for developing and maintaining a payroll system to properly administer the pay practices described above. No supplemental pay will be authorized for employees who do not stay behind to work during an event or who have not received prior authorization by the County Administrator, or designee, to work.

Elected Officials, Appointed Officials, and the County Administrator are only eligible to receive their regular rate of pay for hours worked during an Emergency Event, or Emergency Administrative Pay for any scheduled hours not worked.

STATE OF EMERGENCY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is the intent of the State of Emergency Conditions? The intent of the policy is to provide an orderly compensation plan for Beaufort County employees during a period of emergency or disaster response and recovery. Emergency operations and disaster response and recovery can occur during a period of declared local emergency or under a period of Mutual Aid. The latter is an instance where Beaufort County mobilizes to assist another county or state during an emergency or disaster.

Who should respond to an activation? The County Administrator, or designee, shall provide final approval of county personnel to be assigned to the Emergency Operations Team (EOT). The County Administrator will make the final determination as to who will report to duty during any individual activation. Individuals that are assigned to the EOT are not guaranteed automatic approval to report to duty for each individual event. Only individuals that are identified and approved by the County Administrator for an individual event are to report to duty at their designated workstation.

How will I be paid if I work an Emergency or Disaster response and recovery assignment and I am an exempt employee? Exempt employees who perform work in support of a declared Emergency Event will be paid



their regular salary. In addition, exempt employees who work in excess of 40 hours during the declared Emergency Event, if directly related to the declared emergency, will be paid overtime for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours during the work week.

What if I don't work during a period of an Emergency Event? Do I receive compensation? This depends on your status during a declared emergency. There are multiple compensation types that will determine your compensation status during a period of declared emergencies (see the **Beaufort County Emergency Attendance & Pay policy**).

If I am asked to report for work after I have evacuated, how will I be paid? If you have traveled out of town as part of an evacuation order and are asked to return to work during the evacuation period, your commute time back to Beaufort County will be counted as work time, and you will be paid for the travel time necessary to return, plus actual work time once you report for work.

If I am out of town on personal leave and asked to report for work, how will I be paid? If you are out of town and travel is not related to an evacuation order, you will not be paid for travel time to Beaufort County, and your paid work time will begin once you report for work.

If I am working out of town and asked to report back for work, how will I be paid? If you were instructed to report to an out-of-town location to perform work and then asked to return to Beaufort County, your travel time to the out-of-town location and your travel time back to Beaufort County will be counted as work time.

If I am working during the Emergency Event and cannot leave due to safety reasons, how will I be paid? There may be times when it is not safe or legal to travel around the County. During periods such as this, it is expected that employees will remain at their work location, even if their shift has ended. This time will be treated as work time.

If I only work part of the day and it's during a period when Emergency Administrative Leave is authorized, how will I be paid? Tier 1 Non-exempt employees who work part of the day that has been authorized for Emergency Administrative Leave will be paid for the hours worked plus receive the full number of hours of authorized Emergency Administrative Leave. Tier 2 Non-Exempt employees who work part of the day that has been authorized for Emergency Administrative Leave will be paid for the hours worked, and any portion of their regularly scheduled hours that are not worked will be made whole through the use of Emergency Administrative Leave, up to their standard weekly schedule. Exempt employees will receive the full number of hours of their regular scheduled shift. The County Administrator, or designee, will determine whether additional pay will be granted to exempt employees during the period of Emergency Administrative Leave.

I am a new employee, but my start date was moved because of an emergency or disaster event. Will I still be paid based on my originally scheduled start date? No. Pay will begin on your first actual day of work.

I need extra time to prepare to evacuate but Emergency Administrative Leave is only allowed for a portion of the day. How will I be paid? If you are scheduled to work, but did not report to work because you needed time to prepare to evacuate, you will be granted the authorized hours of Emergency Administrative Leave, but must use personal leave time for the additional hours in the workday not covered by the Emergency Administrative Leave.

I am required to work during the Emergency Event and also required to sleep at my assigned location. Am I paid for this time? All time that you are required to be at a facility or on-site will be treated as work time, regardless of whether you have sleep time. This includes, but is not limited to, employees who work in the EOC,



shelter in an assigned office/housing facility, and emergency service employees who are required to remain at given work sites.

How will I be compensated for Emergency Administrative Leave if my regular work schedule is greater than eight hours per day or if I normally work on the weekend? Emergency Administrative Leave will be calculated on the regular workday of the employee, for any days County offices that will be closed to the public.

What if I am already scheduled to be on approved personal leave during a declared emergency? Employees on approved personal leave during a declared emergency will be paid according to their leave approval, and not under this policy.

What if I am on approved personal leave, but must report due to my Employee Category? Employees already on approved personal leave who report to work due to their emergency work assignment will be paid according to this policy. Employees already on approved leave that are required to report, but don't report will be paid according to their leave approval.

What if I am scheduled to go on approved personal leave and a local emergency is declared? Employees approved to take personal leave who are advised to report may have their personal leave canceled so that they can participate in the emergency or disaster response and recovery effort. If this happens, employees will be paid according to this policy.

What if the facility is closed before my scheduled workday begins? Exempt and non-exempt regular employees will be paid for the regularly scheduled shift.

What if the facility remains open and I don't come to work? Non-exempt employees failing to report to work when there is an Emergency Event and the facility remains open, will not be paid for the day, nor will they be permitted to charge this lost time to Paid Leave Time, unless such time off has been previously granted. Employees arriving late on such days will be paid for the actual time worked.

What if the facility closes after a regular workday has begun?

- a. Non-exempt employees who report to work but leave prior to the time the facility is officially closed will be paid up to the time they leave the facility. The employee must use Paid Leave Time to cover the remaining hours until the Emergency Administrative Leave is activated.
- b. Non-exempt employees who report to work and remain at work until the facility is officially closed will be paid for the entire workday.

A-10 Beaufort County Emergency Attendance & Pay Policy

Beaufort County must continue to provide services during periods of bad weather, emergencies or other situations in which the demand for public services is expected to be great. The need for employees to be on the job is especially critical during these emergencies. Employees are expected to make every effort to report to work, unless specifically directed, in writing by the County Administrator, or designee. This policy describes special attendance and pay provisions applicable to non-exempt (hourly) and exempt (salaried) employees whether performing their regular responsibilities or reassigned as a result of an emergency.



The County Administrator reserves the right to amend the EOT list at its discretion due to the specific Emergency Event.

A. Definitions.

As it applies to this Policy the following terms are defined as:

1. *Emergency Conditions.* The County is open and operating. County is monitoring, planning and otherwise preparing for prompt, effective use of available resources of the County or municipality necessary to respond to the potential Emergency Event.
2. *Emergency Event.* The County may be operating under an abbreviated schedule, closed, or under a Declaration of Emergency. An Emergency Event is in effect when one of the following conditions are met:
 - a. The County has suspended normal County operations or is operating under emergency conditions, as determined by the County Administrator; *or*
 - b. The Policy Group has declared that a state of emergency exists in the County, or a state of emergency for an area encompassing the County has been declared by the Governor or other competent authority.
3. *Essential Personnel.* Employees who are exempt and non-exempt, as well as, both part-time and full-time employees, and identified as employees necessary to provide continued services during Emergency Conditions or an Emergency Event.
4. *Non-Essential Personnel.* Employees who are exempt and non-exempt, as well as, both part-time and full-time employees, and not identified as essential to provide continued services during Emergency Conditions or an Emergency Event.
5. *Emergency Administrative Pay.* Pay equal to the Employee's regular rate pay per hour. As it applies to this policy, Emergency Administrative Pay will be shown as "Emergency Administrative Pay" in the county's timekeeping system and should be used when submitting an Employee's hours. Emergency Administrative Pay hours are intended to make an employee "whole", shall not be included in the calculation of overtime, and should not exceed the maximum of regularly scheduled weekly hours, equivalent to a standard work week.
6. *Disaster Pay.* Pay equal to the Employee's regular rate pay per hour. As it applies to this policy, Disaster Pay will be shown as "Disaster Pay" in the county's timekeeping system and should be used when submitting an Employee's hours.
7. *Emergency Stand-By Employee.* Employee should be 1) in work ready status and able to physically report to work with a one hour notice; *or* 2) available to physically report to work within 12 hours if requested; *or* 3) immediately available to work remotely. As it applies to this policy, Stand-by Pay will be shown as "Emergency Stand-By Pay" in the county's timekeeping system and should be used when submitting an Employee's hours.

B. Emergency Condition Preparation.

While under Emergency Conditions, non-exempt and exempt employees may be required to work during the preparation phase leading up to an Emergency Event and will be compensated at their regular pay in accordance with FLSA rules. Any overtime must be approved in writing by the County Administrator, or designee.

C. Emergency Event Pay.

1. *Non-Essential Personnel Pay.* Employees whose offices are closed or employees who are instructed not to report to work by the County Administrator, or designee, will receive Emergency Administrative



Pay for the number of hours they were scheduled to work, within limitations set forth in section A.5 of this Policy. Any overtime must be approved in writing by the County Administrator, or designee.

2. *Essential Personnel Pay (Non-exempt)*. Non-exempt employees designated as EOT Tier 1 and are required to work on-site during an Emergency Event will receive Emergency Administrative Pay for the number of hours they were scheduled to work and Disaster Pay for the number of hours that work was performed. This rate of pay is applicable even if they have taken vacation, sick leave, or holiday during the pay cycle. Employees designated as EOT Tier 2 and required to work remotely will be compensated at their regular rate of pay for all hours worked. Any remaining hours needed to fulfill their regularly scheduled shift will be supplemented with Emergency Administrative Leave to ensure they are made whole.
3. *Essential Personnel Pay (Exempt)*. Exempt employees who perform work in support of a declared Emergency Event (on-site or remotely) will be paid their regular salary. In addition, exempt employees who work in excess of 40 hours in a work week, if directly related to the declared emergency, will be paid overtime for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week.
4. *Emergency Stand-By Pay*. Employees designated as Emergency Stand-By are paid \$3.00 hourly during an Emergency Event. The pay defined in this Section shall start upon written notification from the County Administrator, or designee; and shall end upon written notification from the County Administrator.

Once the Employee has reported to their assigned workstation, the Stand-By pay no longer applies and the Employee shall receive Essential Personnel Pay as described in Section C.2 and C.3 of this Policy.

D. Eligibility for Pay.

1. Those employees named on the EOT list are eligible for Disaster Pay or Stand-By Pay only when they have received written communication from the County Administrator confirming they are needed for the Emergency Event. The written communication will be provided by the County Administrator, or designee, through electronic mail or text. The EOT list will be reviewed annually.
2. During the applicability of this Policy, scheduled leave may be cancelled and employees on leave may be recalled. Eligibility for pay in such situation is described in Section C.
3. Employees on paid or unpaid leave who are not recalled to duty during or following an Emergency Event are not subject to special pay provisions until such time as their leave ends and they return to duty.
4. During an Emergency Event, should an employee not report for work when scheduled or not check in at the designated time and/or location, the employee is not eligible to receive compensation and may be subject to disciplinary action.
5. Elected Officials, Appointed Officials, and the County Administrator are only eligible to receive their regular rate of pay for hours worked during an Emergency Event or Emergency Administrative Pay for any scheduled hours not worked.

E. Recovery/Re-entry.

1. When normal operations resume, should an employee not report for work when required or not request and receive approval for time off, the employee will be considered to have resigned from employment with the County.



Following the Emergency Event, the County Administrator will determine which department/functions are still working overtime, which exempt employees will be compensated for hours worked beyond a normal pay period, and provide an estimated timeframe for each department to return to normal operations. Once a department returns to normal work schedule, all pay returns to normal wages as defined by FLSA.

A-11 Beaufort County Fleet Policy

PURPOSE: To establish policy directives and procedures that ensure Beaufort County citizens that vehicles and motorized equipment are selected, acquired, and maintained in a manner that provides the best possible support to county operations while being cost-effective, safe, and environmentally responsible.

RESPONSIBILITIES: The Fleet Manager is responsible for planning, directing, managing, coordinating, and supervising programs for acquisition, assignment, utilization, maintenance, repair, replacement, disposal, and providing fleet fuels for vehicles and motorized equipment throughout Beaufort County. Conduct and create annual fleet utilization reports through each department. The fleet Manager can recommend reassignment, rotation, and removal of services under the Public Works Director's guidance. Dispose of fleet vehicles or equipment when the asset becomes uneconomical to maintain. As vehicles reach their targeted miles in the life cycle or time for a replacement. That asset will go under a mechanical and cost evaluation to include a repair or replace analysis to determine whether to dispose of or reassigned the vehicle to the motor pool.

County Fleet Management — These policy directives establish the requirements for the acquisition, assignment, identification, replacement, disposal, maintenance, and operation of county vehicles. County vehicles, as defined below, are those vehicles operated, maintained, purchased, or acquired by the departments.

Fleet Maintenance Program — These policy directives set forth the requirements for establishing a cost-effective county vehicle maintenance program that shall apply to all county vehicles and county vehicle maintenance facilities. The maintenance of county vehicles is the responsibility of the department to which the vehicle is assigned.

Fleet Safety Program — This policy directive was issued by the Beaufort County Fleet Manager with the conjunction of Risk Management. This policy promotes and enforces safe operations while operating a vehicle or equipment. Properly implemented vehicles and equipment will be operated and maintained to minimize injuries, property damage, and additional costs associated with accidents.

GUIDELINES:

I. Beaufort County Fleet Management

A. Exemptions

- 1) The Sheriff's office, Airports and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are exempt from certain provisions of these policy directives.

B. Organizational Authority

- 1) Beaufort County Fleet Manager is directed to develop and administer a comprehensive fleet management program for the county's vehicle fleet.
- 2) County Fleet Manager shall manage the county's vehicle fleet and insured equipment.
- 3) Fleet manager will monitor compliance of these policies from departments Fleet Manager will periodically, prepare and submit a Fleet Audit Review Report. The Fleet Manager will report on each



department's performance in complying with policy directives. All departments will supply sufficient and accurate information as requested by Fleet Manager to evaluate compliance and prepare the Fleet Audit Review Report. The Fleet Manager can recommend denying the purchase of new equipment or vehicle to the department for failing to comply with these policy directives or any other fleet management directive issued by the County Fleet Manager.

C. Fleet Operations Program

- 1) Assignment of County vehicles will be for department use, excluding Beaufort County Sheriff's Office, and the following criteria:
 - a. Travel requirements of an appropriate number of annual official miles as determined by the County Fleet Manager.
 - b. County vehicles may be assigned individually to full-time, law enforcement officers, as determined by department heads.
 - c. County vehicles are essential to the performance of official duties by individuals.
 - d. Circumstances, as determined by the Department head, warrant individual assignment in the county's best interest.
 - e. When county vehicles are requested to be permanently assigned to individuals, the department shall complete and submit the required justification to the Fleet Manager.
 - f. Departments operating motor pools shall manage the motor pools by procedures approved by Fleet Manager.
 - g. County vehicles are authorized for use of all travel or tasks necessary to accomplish official county business that is within the rated design capacity of the vehicle. Use is not authorized for unofficial travel, the transport of unauthorized persons or items, or the performance of tasks outside the rated capacity of the vehicle.

D. Authorized Use

- 1) Only County employees are authorized to operate a County vehicle and only to conduct County business. Authorized uses of county vehicles include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Travel between the place of vehicle dispatch and location of official business.
 - b. When on official out-of-county travel status, travel between place of temporary lodging and location of official business.
 - c. When on official out-of-county travel status:
 - I. Places to obtain suitable meals.
 - II. Places to obtain medical assistance, including pharmacies.
 - III. Places of worship.
 - IV. Garment or vehicle cleaning establishments; or
 - V. Similar places are required to sustain health and welfare or continued efficient performance of the authorized operator, exclusive of places of entertainment.
 - d. Transport county employees, or official county guests, all of whom must be on official business of the county.
 - e. Transport of professional or commercial representatives when in the direct interest of the county.
 - f. Transport of materials, supplies, parcels, luggage, kits, or other items belonging to or serving the interests of the county.
 - g. Transport of any person or item in an emergency, provided such movement does not endanger life or property.
 - h. Children transported in a county vehicle will be properly secured in a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards and as prescribed by the law of the state.

E. Unauthorized Use

- 1) Unauthorized uses of county vehicles include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Travel or task of a personal nature that has no connection with the accomplishment of official business.
 - b. Transport of other people not serving the interests of the county.
 - c. Transport of hitchhikers.



- d. Transport of pets.
- e. Tobacco use, smoking, and vaping are prohibited in all county vehicles.
- f. Transport of items or cargo having no relation to the conduct of official county business.
- g. Transport of acids, explosives, weapons, ammunition, non-prescribed medicines, alcoholic beverages, and highly flammable materials except by specific department authorization or by a duly commissioned law enforcement officer acting within his or her assigned duty.
- h. Transport of any kind of equipment or cargo projecting from the side, front, or rear of the county vehicle in such a manner as to constitute a hazard to safe driving, pedestrians, or other vehicles.
- i. Use of the county vehicles to provide transportation between home and place of official county business unless authorized by the County Administrator.
- j. Travel to or from social events unless acting as an official representative of the county.
- k. Use of a county vehicle while on leave.

F. Acquisition of County Vehicles

- 1) All Departments seeking to purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire vehicles, regardless of the source of funding, shall do so by the Purchasing and Finance Policy and Procedures Manual. All vehicle and equipment requests must be routed through the Fleet Department. The Fleet Manager will annually establish classes of vehicles, and with the appropriate equipment. The fleet Manager will develop vehicle type and size procurement criteria which shall be based solely on the functional task(s) to be performed by the vehicle. All vehicle and equipment purchases must be approved by the Fleet Manager. In the event a special purpose vehicle is required and not shown on the approved listing, the requesting department will inform the County Fleet Manager who will, in conjunction with that department, will determine the proper vehicle and equipment to be purchased. The approved annual listing shall be provided to each department from the Fleet Department.
- a. If vehicle purchase orders are submitted that are off-cycle, a complete justification for off-cycle purchasing must be forwarded with a purchase requisition containing the desired specifications. Purchase of a vehicle to prevent loss of funds will not be considered a valid justification.

G. Purchasing Requirements

The following requirements shall apply when purchasing new vehicles and or equipment:

- 1) Purchase orders for vehicles shall be forwarded to the Fleet Manager on the New Vehicle and Equipment request form. Departments shall supply any additional information necessary for Fleet Manager to order vehicles on the Departments behalf. Agencies shall indicate if the requested vehicle is a replacement for an existing vehicle or an additional vehicle. Justification must be provided for any "increase in class" change for existing vehicles, or any additional vehicles above the current allowance. Existing vehicles to be replaced with a newly purchased vehicle must be decommissioned or repurposed on the delivery of the new vehicle.
- 2) Fleet Manager shall notify the requesting department of the status of each request and forward approved purchase orders to the appropriate vehicle vendor. Only the Fleet Department shall submit vehicle and equipment purchase orders excluding Beaufort County Sheriff's office, Emergency Medical Services, and Airport.
- 3) All new vehicles and equipment will be delivered to Public Works 120 Shanklin Road Beaufort S.C. 29906.
- 4) When a vehicle is delivered to the receiving department, modifications shall not be made to the vehicle or optional equipment added that will alter the vehicle without the prior written approval of the Fleet Manager. The addition of lights, sirens, radios, window tint, and similar equipment used on law enforcement or emergency response vehicles shall not require prior approval, nor shall installation of utility bodies and features on cab and chassis type vehicle.
- 5) For vehicle purchase, the following requirements shall apply:



- a. Fill out a New Vehicle and Equipment Form
- b. Justification must be provided for additional vehicles.
- c. Existing vehicles to be replaced or repurposed must be approved by the Fleet Manager.
- d. Departments will indicate if the requested vehicle is a replacement for an existing vehicle.

H. Vehicle Inventory System

- 1) Fleet Manager shall maintain a current inventory of the County's vehicle fleet. Departments shall assist the Fleet Manager with keeping the inventory current. The inventory shall indicate make and model, original acquisition cost, and the manufacturer's identifying serial number (VIN) for each vehicle.
- 2) Vehicles shall be added to the inventory upon receipt of title and documentation as specified by Fleet Manager. Vehicles shall be deleted from the inventory upon receipt of a bill of sale for each vehicle.

I. Registration, Licensing, and Identifying Decals

- 1) Every county vehicle shall be registered and licensed by county law regardless of how the vehicle is acquired. All county vehicles shall be titled to the County. All such titles shall be received by and remain in the possession of the Fleet Manager and the Finance Department.
- 2) The following requirements shall apply to the registration and licensing of county vehicles:
 - a. Requests for license plates, titles, and license plate renewals shall be submitted to Fleet Manager. The Fleet Manager will obtain and forward license plates to the requesting department.
 - b. At the time of purchase or acquisition, all county vehicles shall be registered with the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles showing the county as the owner.
 - c. All county vehicles are to be registered through the Fleet Department regardless of how vehicles are acquired.
- 3) Identification decals on government license plates and only county identifying decals may be displayed on county vehicles, which include Beaufort County Seal and asset number. **This directive excludes BCSO, EMS, Airports and Fire Departments.**

J. Disposal of County Vehicles

- 1) Fleet Management shall develop disposal criteria for all county vehicles. The sale of all county vehicles that qualify for disposal, or assets declared to be excess to the county's needs, shall be conducted by the Purchasing and Finance policies under the authority of the Beaufort County Code of Ordinances. Fleet Management will determine whether a vehicle is past its cost-effective useful life or excess to the needs of the county before allowing its sale or disposal.
- 2) The following requirements shall apply to the disposal of county vehicles:
 - a. Departments may request to dispose of a county vehicle once the county vehicle has reached or exceeded the recommended minimum disposal.
 - b. The Fleet Manager shall determine whether the vehicle meets the minimum disposal criteria by Purchasing and Finance policies that are under the authority of the Beaufort County Code of Ordinances.
 - c. Seals, decals, and other identification strips will be removed from vehicles before delivery for disposal.

K. Complaints

The County Fleet Manager is responsible for receiving complaints concerning the possible misuse of County Vehicles. The fleet Manager will obtain information concerning the circumstances of each incident and forward complaints to the controlling department for investigation. Departments receiving complaints



not referred to from the Fleet Manager shall investigate each incident and forward a copy of the complaint summary and correspondence to the Fleet Manager.

L. State Fuel Cards

- 1) South Carolina state Fleet Manager administers the State Fuel Card System. Vendors are contracted by the procurement code with established pricing structures and supply requirements for county-owned fuelsites.
- 2) State Fuel Card purchases shall be made under the following restrictions:
 - a. Official state fuel cards issued by the Fleet Manager are valid for the purchase of fuel only.
 - b. State fuel card purchases shall be made by County employees and other authorized operators and cardholders. Use of the state fuel card to procure goods or services by unauthorized persons, to procure unauthorized goods or services by any person, or for the purchase of goods or services for privately owned vehicles is prohibited.
 - c. State fuel cards can be used at commercial outlets that accept the contracted fuel vendor's card and all state-owned fueling sites.
- 3) Authorized operators shall protect state fuel cards against loss or theft. Missing state fuel cards shall be reported immediately.
- 4) State Fuel Cards are issued to the asset.

M. Insurance

Departments will be responsible for the cost of county vehicle repairs resulting from accidents or shall absorb the cost of such repairs within the department's budget. Authorized operators who are not county employees will have insurance coverage.

N. Commuting and Personal Use

- 1) Commuting between home and a permanently assigned work location shall be the only authorized personal use of a county vehicle. The exception is if a stop is made on the route to and from home and work.
- 2) Only county employees may commute in a county vehicle unless specifically authorized by the department head.

O. Identification - This directive excludes BCSO, EMS, Airports and Fire Departments.

- 1) Unless specifically exempted by Fleet Management, all county vehicles shall carry the county government license plates and display the county logo. Beaufort County Fleet Management will install and remove all decals. Decals that become unrecognizable or unsightly shall be replaced by the owning department through Beaufort County Fleet Management.
- 2) Identification requirements shall not apply to County vehicles operated by law enforcement officers involved in undercover law enforcement if the investigation or the investigator would be jeopardized if identified. The fleet manager will consult with the BCSO to determine which vehicles shall be exempt. No vehicle is exempt unless Fleet Management has made an exemption determination in writing.
- 3) Identification exemptions involving vehicles not used in undercover law enforcement work shall not be granted unless it can be shown that an identified vehicle would substantially hinder the department's ability to fulfill its mission or impair the privacy of the client being served.

P. Vehicle Telematics and Tracking Devices

- 1) County vehicles may be equipped with vehicle telematics or automatic tracking devices. Information



from these devices will assist the county to ensure efficient vehicle operation. Items such as mechanical codes, speed, mileage, idle times, utilization, and routing will be monitored.

- 2) Tampering with or removing vehicle telematics, GPS tracking device, or component thereof from a county vehicle is strictly prohibited.
- 3) **BCSO is exempt. (Fleet Management recommends having GPS installed on vehicles that are not undercover.)**
- 4) Department Heads will be issued GPS and Fleet Management software credentials.

Q. Vehicle Minimum Utilization

- 1) Fleet Management will establish minimum mileage utilization requirements for county vehicles by APWA/and or GSA requirements and ensure that county vehicles are used in the most cost-effective manner possible. Vehicles not meeting minimum mileage utilization requirements are subject to be returned to Fleet Management or disposed of as directed by Fleet Manager.
- 2) Fleet Management will analyze department utilization data to determine if the department possesses vehicles that do not meet established utilization criteria. If such vehicles are discovered Fleet Management will advise the department to take management action (reassignment, pooling, sale, etc.).
- 3) Fleet Management may grant exemptions to retain a county vehicle that does not meet the minimum mileage utilization requirements. A department can provide Fleet Management with justification for the need for a vehicle that does not meet minimum utilization requirements based on the unique use of the county vehicle.

II. Fleet Maintenance Program

Maintenance will include an inspection, lubrication, alignment, cleaning, and testing of components. Maintenance will be performed in two ways:

- (1) Scheduled, which is called preventative maintenance (PM); or
- (2) Unscheduled, which is a breakdown or unscheduled maintenance.

A. Fleet Maintenance

- 1) Departments will conduct basic operator weekly preventive maintenance inspections that include the following:
 - Walk around the vehicle looking for deficiencies.
 - Tire
 - Lights
 - Fluids
 - Mirrors
 - Instruments
 - Insurance Card
 - Registration Card
- 2) Departments will make an appointment with Central Garage for Preventive Maintenance.
- 3) Fleet Management will develop criteria to be used by departments in implementing various maintenance programs and preventative maintenance schedules.
- 4) Fleet Management will indicate all maintenance costs incurred by each vehicle for each department. This information will be available upon request, from Fleet management. Fleet management will process and code vehicle repairs, maintenance, and fuel according to criteria published by Finance excluding the BCSO.



- 5) Departments with assigned vehicles are responsible for the cleanliness of the interior and exterior of their vehicles.

B. Priority

Beaufort County Fleet Management will prioritize maintenance cycles in the following:

- 1) Public Safety (BCSO, EMS)
- 2) Essential Services (Stormwater, Maintenance, etc.)
- 3) Preventive Maintenance (Scheduled)
- 4) Breakdown (Unscheduled)
- 5) Pass Due/ Missed Preventive Maintenance
- 6) Modifications

C. After Hours

The Fleet Manager can be reached on the Beaufort County Cell Phone. In the event of a breakdown or emergency, Beaufort County Fleet Management shall make provisions to handle the 24-hour, 365 days a year, emergency road service calls from its facility for Units identified During normal working hours, both emergency calls and towing shall receive service within two (2) hours of notification. Fleet Management will provide vehicles to all county departments as a rental service. The motor pool is designed to reduce fleet size and in return reduce any overhead cost on underutilized vehicles.

III. Fleet Safety Programs

A. Driver Qualifications and Screening

- 1) All authorized operators of county vehicles shall have a valid driver's license appropriate to the type of vehicle being operated as more particularly outlined in the Fleet Safety Program.
- 2) Criteria of the fleet safety program shall include procedures to screen the motor vehicle record (MVR) of all applicants for county employment, existing employees, and individuals who, because of their work, operate or are likely to operate a county vehicle. Restrictions shall be placed on the privilege of operating a county vehicle for those applicants, employees, and individuals whose MVR indicates a history of involvement in motor vehicle accidents, who have a considerable number of current violation points, or whose driver's licenses have been suspended by the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles or any other like governmental organization or agency, including those in other states that issue, suspend, or terminate the operator's driver's license.

B. Driver Education

- 1) Criteria of the fleet safety program shall include driver education requirements for authorized operators who must operate county vehicles by Risk Management. Such criteria shall, at a minimum, take into consideration driving requirements associated with an employee or individual's job duties, an employee or individual's history of traffic violations or accidents involving the operation of county vehicles, and accident review board findings and recommendations.
- 2) Advance training shall apply to law enforcement officers. All law enforcement operators of county vehicles shall abide by statutes, regulations, and policy directives about the operation of authorized emergency and pursuit vehicles.

C. Compliance

- 1) County vehicles will have GPS and telematics tracking that measure:
 - a) Location



- b) Speed
- c) Harsh driving and Behaviors
- d) Idling

D. Driving Practices and Maintenance

- 1) Wearing of Seat Belts
- 2) Authorized operators of county vehicles shall abide by all applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and policies while operating such county vehicles. All traffic signs, signals, and speed limits will be obeyed.
- 3) County vehicles shall be maintained by county vehicle maintenance policies and procedures to minimize the possibility of mechanical failure causing or contributing to vehicle accidents and preventable expenses.
- 4) County Vehicles will be locked when they are unoccupied and preferred in a well-lit area.
- 5) Refrain from engine idling unless job responsibilities require the vehicle to idle.

E. Handheld Electronic Devices

- 1) Drivers of county vehicles shall not operate cell phones, multi-media enabled smartphones, MP3 players, GPS devices, laptop computers, tablet computers, or other handheld electronic devices (an “electronic device”) unless the electronic device is being operated via a hands-free mode or while the vehicle is in the park position and is being used solely for the conduct of official county business. Any use of an electronic device that is not hands-free, including but not limited to talking, reading, sending, or receiving text messages, or reading, sending, or receiving email messages, is prohibited while the vehicle is in drive or motion. Drivers are prohibited from watching the screen of an electronic device while operating a county vehicle unless the vehicle is in the park position. Radar detectors are prohibited.
- 2) Personnel who, as a part of their official duties, must use an electronic device other than as outlined in this directive and while operating a county vehicle, are required to have authorization from his or her department head or their designee, submitted to the Fleet Manager for review before the department approving. Nothing in this directive excuses the obligation to comply with applicable traffic laws.
- 3) An exception to this requirement is an emergency call placed to 911 for situations such as a fire, traffic accident, road hazard, or medical emergency. In such cases, the communication should be as short as reasonably necessary to communicate the nature of the emergency, location, etc.
- 4) Departments have the option to adopt supplemental electronic device use policies as they need or desire if such supplement is not less restrictive than this directive.

F. Eating and Drinking

- 1) Eating and Drinking are discouraged while driving a county vehicle.
- 2) Zero Tolerance for driving under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, or prescribed medication that indicates that the driver is not to operate a vehicle or heavy machinery.

G. Safety Maintenance

- 1) County vehicles will be properly maintained to eliminate any preventable mechanical failures.
- 2) County Vehicles should be inspected before daily operations.
- 3) Vehicles that are hauling or pulling should check their load before moving vehicles.

H. Motor Vehicle Record (MVR)

- 1) Fleet Manager will recommend Human Resources request an MVR annually.



- 2) Operators are required to report any vehicle accidents and moving violations to their supervisors, including their vehicles.

I. Accident Reporting and Review

- 1) Authorized operators of county vehicles involved in an accident resulting in property damage, injury, or death shall give immediate notice of such accident to the appropriate local or state law enforcement authorities. The authorized operator shall, as soon as practical, report the accident to the Beaufort County Risk Manager by Accident Reporting Review Procedures. Any authorized operator involved in a collision with an unattended vehicle shall immediately stop, and to the best of his or her ability, locate and notify the operator of the unattended vehicle.
- 2) A Vehicle Accident Report form, including instructions, can be found at the back of this guide. Please keep a copy of the forms in the glove compartment of this vehicle. If you are involved in an accident, complete this form, and send it within 12 hours to the Beaufort County Risk Manager.

CONTACT OFFICE/TELEPHONE: Public Works —Beaufort County Fleet Management 843-225-6415

A-12 Beaufort County Fuel Card Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the appropriate use of the South Carolina Fuel Card assigned to Beaufort County vehicles. This policy aims to ensure the efficient and responsible use of fuel cards while promoting compliance with contractual rates and authorized purchases.

Scope

This policy applies to all Beaufort County employees who have been authorized and issued a valid personal identification number (PIN) for the South Carolina Fuel Card WEX and COMDATA.

Guidelines

1. Fuel Card Usage:

- a. The South Carolina Fuel Card is assigned to each Beaufort County vehicle and is valid until 7/2024.
- b. The fuel card must be used for self-service fuel purchases at commercial retail sites displaying the Wright Express (WEX) logo, state-owned facilities, and Beaufort County back yard fuel sites.
- c. A list of WEX card accepting retail locations can be found at
- d. Fuel prices are based on contractual rates updated daily at <https://www.procurement.sc.gov/contracts/fuel> and Beaufort County is considered Zone 4.

2. Cardholders:

- a. Only Beaufort County employees with a valid PIN are authorized to use the South Carolina Fuel Card.
- b. The PIN is mandatory for card usage and should not be shared with anyone.
- c. If a PIN is required or forgotten, employees should contact Beaufort County Fleet Management.
- d. PIN request forms can be found on the Beaufort County SharePoint under County Forms.

3. Card Usage Procedure:

- a. Select a fuel facility that accepts WEX fuel cards. www.wexinc.com/accepting-locations, SCDOT sites and Beaufort County fuel sites
- b. Swipe the fuel card into the card reader on the pump.



- c. Enter the vehicle's current odometer reading when prompted.
- d. Enter the six-digit PIN when prompted.
- e. Fuel vehicles with unleaded fuel (unless high grade fuel is required) and collect the receipt after fueling is complete.
- f. If the fuel facility lacks a card reader, pump the fuel first, then present the fuel card for payment to the cashier inside the facility.
- g. Never agree to pre-pay for fuel; if pre-payment is required, locate a different fueling facility.

4. Authorized Card Purchases:

- a. Unleaded gasoline (87 octane).
- b. Diesel fuel for vehicles with diesel engines.
- c. Alternative fuels (E-85, E-10, or CNG) for vehicles and equipment required to operate on alternative fuels.

5. Unauthorized Card Purchases:

- a. High grade gasoline, unless required for the vehicle.
- b. Food/drink.
- c. Storage, tolls, parking, or repairs.
- d. Vehicle accessories not required for vehicle operation, such as floor mats or air fresheners.
- e. Any item, service, product, or purchase other than authorized fuel products, motor oil, or car wash services.
- f. Exterior and/or interior vehicle cleaning.

Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Beaufort County Employee Manual, including the revocation of fuel card privileges.

A-13 Merit Pay Policy

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent, fair, and transparent process for awarding merit-based pay adjustments to county employees. Merit pay is designed to:

- Recognize and reward employees who demonstrate exemplary job performance and contribute to the mission of Beaufort County.
- Encourage accountability, productivity, and innovation throughout county government.
- Align employee compensation with organizational goals, budgetary capacity, and the County's long-term workforce strategy.
- Reinforce a culture of fairness, motivation, and continuous improvement.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time regular employees of Beaufort County Government. Exceptions include:

- Elected officials.
- Appointed officials whose compensation is established by statute, ordinance, or contract.
- Temporary, seasonal, and contractual workers.

III. Guiding Principles

The following principles guide the application of merit pay in Beaufort County:



1. Equity & Fairness – Merit pay decisions must be made without bias and free from favoritism, nepotism, or political influence.
2. Transparency – Employees will be informed of how performance is assessed, what criteria determine merit eligibility, and how pay decisions are made.
3. Fiscal Responsibility – Merit pay will be awarded only when budgeted funds are available and will not compromise essential county services.
4. Consistency – Evaluation criteria and merit pay standards will be applied consistently across all departments.
5. Performance-Driven – Increases will be tied to measurable results, demonstrated competencies, and behaviors that reflect county values.

IV. Funding & Budgeting

1. Each fiscal year, the County Council may appropriate funds specifically designated for merit pay.
2. The pool of available funds may be expressed as a percentage of payroll, a fixed allocation per department, or another method approved by Council.
3. If resources are limited, priority will be given to rewarding employees with the highest performance ratings.
4. Any unused merit funds will revert to the general fund and will not carry over to subsequent years.

V. Eligibility

1. Employees must:
 - Have successfully completed their probationary period.
 - Not have received a performance improvement plan within the preceding 12 months.
 - Have a current performance evaluation on file.
2. Employees at the top of their salary range may be eligible for a one-time lump sum merit payment instead of a base pay increase.
3. Employees with “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” ratings are ineligible for merit adjustments, will be placed in a probationary status, and issued a performance improvement plan.

VI. Performance Evaluation System

1. Annual Evaluation – All eligible employees will undergo an annual performance review. Interim reviews may be conducted at the discretion of supervisors.
2. Standardized Rating Scale – A countywide rating system will be used to ensure consistency (e.g., Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards, Needs Improvement).
3. Performance Criteria – Evaluations will be based on the following, at minimum:
 - Job knowledge and quality of work.
 - Productivity and efficiency.
 - Communication and teamwork.
 - Compliance with county policies and ethical standards.
4. Supervisor Training – Supervisors must complete HR-led training on performance evaluation, merit pay criteria, and avoiding bias in assessments.
5. Documentation – Supervisors must provide written justification and supporting evidence for all merit pay recommendations that Exceed Standards.

VII. Merit Pay Structure

1. Base Salary Adjustment
 - Exceeds Standards – 2-step increase, based on budget and department allocation. Written justification and supporting evidence must be submitted to Human Resources.
 - Meets Standards – 1-step increase, based on budget and department allocation.



- Needs Improvement or Below – No merit adjustment. Employee will be placed in probation and issued a performance improvement plan.

2. Lump-Sum Payment – Employees at the maximum pay range may receive a one-time lump sum payment equivalent to the merit percentage.
3. Equity Check – Human Resources will review merit awards for patterns of inequity (e.g., by gender, race, or department) and report findings to the County Administrator.

VIII. Administrative Process

1. Supervisor Recommendation – Supervisors evaluate performance, document results, and recommend merit increases.
2. Manager Review – Second-level managers will review recommendations for consistency, accuracy, and fairness within the department.
3. Human Resources Review – HR validates eligibility, ensures compliance with county policy, and conducts an equity audit.
4. Administrator Approval – The Administrator or designee approves final awards.
5. Council Notification – An annual report will be submitted to the County Council summarizing merit pay allocations.

IX. Communication & Employee Notification

1. Employees will receive written notice of their merit pay outcome within 30 days of approval.
2. Supervisors are expected to provide direct feedback explaining the performance evaluation and how it influenced the merit pay decision.

X. Appeals Process

1. Employees who believe their merit pay determination was unfair or inconsistent with policy may file a written appeal to Human Resources within 15 business days of notification.
2. Human Resources will review the case, consult with the relevant department, and issue a determination within 30 days.
3. Human Resources' determination will be final.

XI. Accountability

1. Supervisors who fail to complete performance evaluations on time or who demonstrate consistent bias in merit recommendations may face corrective action.
2. Human Resources will track merit pay distribution by department, demographic category, and job classification to ensure equitable application.
3. Results will be included in the annual workforce report presented to County leadership.

XII. Policy Review & Evaluation

1. This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years by Human Resources, in consultation with the County Administrator and County Council.
2. Recommended revisions will be presented for approval as needed.
3. Human Resources will monitor the impact of merit pay on employee retention, satisfaction, and performance outcomes.

XIII. Effective Date

This Merit Pay Policy shall take effect on July 1, 2026, and remain in force until amended or repealed by the County Council.

Appendix A – Merit Pay Matrix

The following matrix provides guidance on how merit pay will be administered, based on employee performance ratings and current placement within the salary range



Merit Increase & Performance Rating Chart

Overall Rating	Performance Rating	Potential Rating Increase	Definition of Performance
4 - 5	Exceeds Standards	2-step increase	Exceeds expectations in applying the competency. Anticipates needs, mentors others, and adapts skillfully to complex situations. Frequently delivers above-average results and adds value beyond core responsibilities.
3 – 3.99	Meets Standards	1-step increase	Demonstrates solid and consistent application of the competency. Fully meets expectations. Applies knowledge and skills effectively in routine situations with minimal supervision.
2 – 2.99	Needs Improvement	No Merit Increase	Job requirements and standards are inconsistently met, resulting in errors, missed deadlines, or incomplete work. Immediate corrective action, including constructive feedback, targeted training, and closer supervision, is necessary to support improvement and achieve acceptable performance levels promptly.
0 – 1.99	Unsatisfactory	No Merit Increase	Does not demonstrate the competency. Lacks the required knowledge, skills, or behaviors. Performance negatively impacts the team or organization. Requires immediate improvement and ongoing support.



RESOLUTION 2023/68

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE BEAUFORT COUNTY PERSONNEL HANDBOOK

WHEREAS, the Beaufort County Council ("Council") finds that it is in the best interest of Beaufort County ("County") employees to implement uniform employment practices; and

WHEREAS, the current Beaufort County Personnel Handbook was adopted on June 27, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that from time to time, the policies and procedures within the Personnel Handbook must be revised in order to stay current and address the needs and desires of the County and its employees; and

WHEREAS, the County administration and staff have drafted the new Beaufort County Personnel Handbook provided in "Exhibit A," attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, in order to address the needs and desires of the County and its employees.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Beaufort County Council hereby revokes and repeals all previously issued handbooks made or issued by Beaufort County Council and hereby adopts the Beaufort County Personnel Handbook provided in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

This Resolution shall be effective January 1, 2024.

Dated this 11th day of December 2023.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY


Joseph Passiment, Chairman

ATTEST:


Sarah W. Brock, Clerk to Council

RESOLUTION 2024/69

A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE BEAUFORT COUNTY PERSONNEL HANDBOOK POLICY SECTION 4.2 - HOLIDAYS & HOLIDAY PAY AS AMENDED TO ADD JUNETEENTH NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY AS A COUNTY OBSERVED HOLIDAY

WHEREAS, the Beaufort County Council ("Council") finds that it is in the best interest of Beaufort County ("County") employees to implement uniform employment practices; and

WHEREAS, the current Beaufort County Personnel Handbook was adopted on January 1, 2024 and amended on February 15, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that from time to time, the policies and procedures within the Personnel Handbook must be revised in order to stay current and address the needs and desires of the County and its employees; and

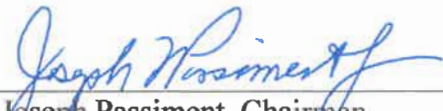
WHEREAS, the County administration and staff have drafted an amendment to the new Beaufort County Personnel Handbook policy Section 4.2 – Holidays & Holiday Pay provided in "Exhibit A," attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, in order to address the needs and desires of the County and its employees.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Beaufort County Council hereby amends the Beaufort County Personnel Handbook policy Section 4.2 – Holidays & Holiday Pay as provided in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

This Resolution shall be effective December 9, 2024.

Dated this 9th day of December 2024.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY


Joseph Passiment, Chairman

ATTEST:


Sarah Brock
Clerk to Council

RESOLUTION 2025/55

**A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE BEAUFORT COUNTY PERSONNEL HANDBOOK
POLICY SECTION A-9 COUNTY EMERGENCY DISASTER POLICY AND A-10
BEAUFORT COUNTY EMERGENCY ATTENDANCE & PAY POLICY.**

WHEREAS, the Beaufort County Council ("Council") finds that it is in the best interest of Beaufort County ("County") employees to implement uniform employment practices; and

WHEREAS, the current Beaufort County Personnel Handbook was adopted on January 1, 2024 and last amended on December 9, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that from time to time, the policies and procedures within the Personnel Handbook must be revised in order to stay current and address the needs and desires of the County and its employees; and

WHEREAS, the County administration and staff have drafted an amendment to the new Beaufort County Personnel Handbook Policy Section A-9 County Emergency Disaster Policy and A-10 Beaufort County Emergency Attendance & Pay policy provided in "Exhibit B", attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, in order to address the needs and desires of the County and its employees.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Beaufort County Council hereby amends the Beaufort County Personnel Handbook Policy A-9 County Emergency Disaster Policy and A-10 Beaufort County Emergency Attendance & Pay policy as provided in Exhibit B, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Adopted this 22nd day of September 2025.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY



Alice Howard , Chairwoman

ATTEST:



Sarah W. Brock, Clerk to Council

RESOLUTION 2026/01

A RESOLUTION OF BEAUFORT COUNTY COUNCIL ADOPTING A STEP PAY SCALE, AMENDING SECTION 4.1 OF THE BEAUFORT COUNTY PERSONNEL HANDBOOK (COMPENSATION PLAN), AND AUTHORIZING IMPLEMENTATION WITH A RETROACTIVE EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Beaufort County Council ("Council") is committed to attracting, retaining, and rewarding a qualified and diverse workforce in support of its mission to provide effective and efficient public services; and

WHEREAS, the County has historically utilized an open-range salary structure and has determined that transitioning to a structured step pay scale, along with the amendment of the Compensation Plan policy, will promote consistency, transparency, and internal equity in compensation practices; and

WHEREAS, County staff has reviewed the proposed step pay scale provided by Management Advisory Group, International Inc. and evaluated the placement of current employees on the compensation and classification plan within the new structure based on their current salaries; and

WHEREAS, As part of this transition, current employees will be placed at the appropriate step within their assigned pay grade under the step pay scale, with an effective date of January 3, 2026.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Beaufort County Council hereby approves and adopts the step pay scale as presented by Management Advisory Group, International Inc., as provided in Exhibit A, and amends the Beaufort County Personnel Handbook policy 4.1 Compensation Plan policy as provided in Exhibit B, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Adopted this 26th day of January 2026.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY



Alice Howard, Chairman

ATTEST:



Sarah W. Brock, Clerk to Council

RESOLUTION 2025/63

**A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE BEAUFORT COUNTY PERSONNEL HANDBOOK
POLICY SECTION 3.3 REMOTE WORK/TELECOMMUTING.**

WHEREAS, the Beaufort County Council ("Council") finds that it is in the best interest of Beaufort County ("County") employees to implement uniform employment practices; and

WHEREAS, the current Beaufort County Personnel Handbook was adopted on January 1, 2024 and last amended on September 22, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that from time to time, the policies and procedures within the Personnel Handbook must be revised in order to stay current and address the needs and desires of the County and its employees; and

WHEREAS, the County administration and staff have drafted an amendment to the new Beaufort County Personnel Handbook policy Section 3.3 Remote Work/Telecommuting policy provided in "Exhibit A" attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, in order to address the needs and desires of the County and its employees.

WHEREAS, the Council further finds that certain existing work arrangements within the Treasurer's Office were approved by the Elected Official prior to the adoption of this amended policy, and that, in order to support continuity of operations and employee retention, those arrangements should be grandfathered as a limited, employee-specific exemption to the policy for Employees 9168, 9893, and 10512 during their continuous, uninterrupted employment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Beaufort County Council hereby amends the Beaufort County Personnel Handbook policy Section 3.3 Remote Work/Telecommuting policy as provided in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Dated this 9th day of February 2026.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY



Alice G. Howard, Chairman

ATTEST:



Sarah W. Brock, Clerk to Council

RESOLUTION 2026/15

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY ADOPTING A
MERIT PAY POLICY AND ASSOCIATED APPENDIX TO THE PERSONNEL
HANDBOOK**

WHEREAS, the Beaufort County Council ("Council") is committed to maintaining a compensation program that supports the recruitment, retention, and motivation of a high-performing workforce; and

WHEREAS, the County has implemented a step-based compensation structure by way of resolution 2026/01, effective January 26, 2026, designed to provide a consistent and equitable framework for employee pay; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to formally establish a merit-based pay program that links compensation adjustments to individual employee performance; and

WHEREAS, the Merit Pay Policy establishes a fair, transparent, and performance-driven process for awarding merit increases, consistent with organizational goals and fiscal responsibility; and

WHEREAS, merit increases under this program will be administered in accordance with annual performance evaluations conducted on each employee's anniversary date in their current position and are not automatic but contingent upon performance, available funding, and administrative approval; and

WHEREAS, the Merit Pay Policy applies to eligible County employees and provides guidance on evaluation standards, eligibility criteria, administrative review, and accountability measures; and

WHEREAS, the County Council finds it to be in the best interest of the County to adopt a formal Merit Pay Policy to ensure consistency, equity, and responsible stewardship of public funds.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Beaufort County Council hereby approves and adopts the Merit Pay Policy as set forth in Section 4.31 of the Beaufort County Personnel Handbook, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, with an effective date of July 1, 2026. The Beaufort County Council further adopts Appendix A-13: Merit Pay Policy, which provides detailed guidance regarding eligibility, evaluation procedures, merit pay structure, administrative processes, and program oversight, with an effective date of July 1, 2026.

Adopted this 27th day of April 2026.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

By: Alice G. Howard
Alice G. Howard, Chairman

ATTEST:

Sarah W. Brock
Sarah W. Brock, Clerk to Council



County Administration reserves the right to change all policies, benefits, procedures, and other information in this personnel handbook at any time.

-END OF PERSONNEL HANBOOK-