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PERSONNEL MANUAL

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PREFACE

Peach County and the Peach County Board of Commissioners (collectively, the “County” or “Peach County”) welcome you to our team! We believe that each employee contributes directly to the County’s growth and success, and we hope you will take pride in being a member of our team. It is our goal to maintain our excellent reputation and provide top-tier services to the residents of Peach County.

The County is an Equal Opportunity employer. We conduct all employment-related activities without regard to race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, creed, disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, genetic information, or any other classification protected by applicable state or federal employment discrimination laws.

Policies within this Employee Handbook have been officially adopted by the Peach County Board of Commissioners. Each employee of the County will be given a copy of the Employee Handbook and be required to have knowledge of the policies. Whenever a new employee is hired, he or she will likewise receive copies and have knowledge of the said policies. All employees will keep their individual copies of the Employee Handbook up-to-date and current by inserting any copies of changes or amendments which may be subsequently adopted by the Board of Commissioners. Employees will be expected to participate in a training session in order to know the policies and abide by them. Lack of knowledge of these policies by the employees will not be considered as justification for noncompliance.

This Employee Handbook, and its policies, is for information purposes only and is not intended as an employment contract or guarantee of benefits. All employees considered at-will employees. The Peach County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to alter, amend, modify, change, or delete any of the policies, practices, or benefits described in this handbook at any time, with or without notice. When portions of this Employee Handbook are revised or deleted department heads and supervisors will receive notification of the changes. Once changes have been communicated, all employees are expected to comply with the changes.

Introductory Statement

This Employment Handbook has been prepared to provide a general description of County programs, policies, and procedures in effect as of the date of publication. It is advisory in nature and will act as a guide to the County's general practices and procedures in matters of employment. These policies may be changed or amended at time by the County. Each employee should read, understand, and comply with all provisions of the Handbook.

1. **Administration** – The County Administrator is responsible for administering these policies.
2. **Covered Employees** – The policies and procedures contained in this Employee Handbook apply to all employees of the Peach County Commission and County elected officers, unless specifically excluded by these policies and procedures or by other County ordinance. Such exclusions are as follows:
 3. **Exclusions to Covered Employees** – Certain policies and procedures contained within this Employee Handbook may not apply to applicants or employees in positions under the jurisdiction of County-elected officials (i.e., Sheriff, Tax Commissioner, Probate Judge, Magistrate Judge, Coroner, and Clerk of Superior Court).
 - However, this exclusion does not exempt elected officials from fair employment practices that may be mandated by State or Federal laws. Nothing in these personnel policies and procedures should be construed as allowing employees of County-elected officials to attain a property interest in their position.
 - Elected officials may opt to include their employees under the coverage of the above sections of these policies and procedures in a manner consistent with O.C.G.A. 36-1-21(b).

Each employee must sign the **Employee Acknowledgement Form** contained within to acknowledge receipt of this Employee Handbook and must read the Employment Handbook upon hire and/or upon revision/updating of the Handbook. Employees should retain a copy of the Handbook and refer back to it as needed during employment.

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

(To Be Maintained In Personnel File)

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Peach County Employee Handbook and have been asked to read its contents. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this Employee Handbook and any revisions made to it. I understand that I should contact my immediate supervisory or other appropriate County management personnel if there is anything I do not understand in this Handbook, or if I need additional information.

In all cases of interpretation of this Employee Handbook, management decisions are final. The County may modify any part of this Employee Handbook at its sole discretion, without prior notice. This Handbook supersedes and replaces all previously existing County Employee Handbooks and personnel policy manuals.

EMPLOYMENT AT THE COUNTY IS AT-WILL. THE COUNTY MAY DISCHARGE AN EMPLOYEE AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER, WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE, AND WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE. NOTHING WITHIN THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK OR WITHIN THE COUNTY’S POLICIES, PRACTICES OR PROCEDURES IS INTENDED TO CREATE A CONTRACT FOR EMPLOYMENT, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, OR A GUARANTEE OF CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT FOR A SPECIFIC DURATION.

SIGNED BY: _____ DATE: _____
(Employee Signature) Date Signed

EMPLOYEE
NAME: _____
(Print Employee’s Name)

POSITION: _____
(Employee’s Position)

DEPARTMENT: _____
(Employee’s Department)

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of policies contained within this Employee Handbook, the following terms shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them below, unless another meaning is specifically indicated.

Appeal – The right of an applicant or employee to appear before the Grievance Committee to be heard on matters of discrimination, unfair practices, or other grievances of such person in the manner prescribed in this Employee Handbook.

Classification and Pay Plan – The system of assigning jobs to classes and to the appropriate pay grades based on the similarities of positions.

Classified Service – The Classified Service consists of all positions included in the Classification and Pay Plan with the exception of those positions specifically excluded by the County Commission.

Constitutional Officer – an individual identified under the Georgia Constitution of 1983 or the most recent version.

Continuous Service – Continuous service is employment that is uninterrupted except for authorized leaves of absence, suspension, or separation due to a reduction in the work force.

Demotion – Demotion means a change in the rank of an employee from a position in one class to a position in another class having a lower minimum starting salary and less discretion and/or responsibility.

Department Head – The position, whether appointed or elected official, with overall administrative responsibility for a department.

Elected Official – The persons filling the offices of Sheriff, Tax Commissioner, District Attorney, Probate Judge, Magistrate Judge, Coroner, and Clerk of Superior Court are considered to be elected officials. Persons employed by these officials do not have a property interest in their positions unless provided for as stated in the Introductory Section of this Employee Handbook.

Eligible – A person who has made a passing score on any examination required under these regulations and who has qualified to be employed by the County.

Employee – A person appointed to a position in the County government for which he or she is compensated on a full-time, part-time, or temporary basis.

Full-Time Employee – Any employee who works not less than 30 hours per week on a continuing (indefinite) basis and receives full benefits.

Grievances – Any dispute concerning the interpretation or application of these policies and procedures or any decision relative to any disciplinary action, dismissal, demotion, or charge of discrimination.

Lay-Off – The separation of an employee from the Classified Service due to lack of work, lack of funds, abolishment of the position, or other material changes in duties or organization.

Longevity Bonus – An increase in an employee’s pay step based on the employee’s years of service.

Merit Bonus – A single payment made to an employee based on the employee’s job performance.

Overtime – Time worked in excess of forty (40) hour per work week in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Part-Time Employee – An employee who works on a continuing (indefinite) basis on an established schedule at less than thirty (30) hours per week.

Pay Grade (Level) – One of 48 pay classifications assigned to each position according to the position’s individual responsibilities.

Pay Step – The progressive rates of pay for each Pay Grade or Level.

Performance Evaluation – A method of evaluating each employee on a periodic basis as to his or her performance on the job.

Probationary Employee – An employee serving the first six months of his or her appointment, promotion, re-employment, or reinstatement to any position in the Classified Service. A probationary employee is not a regular employee until completion of a six (6) months probationary period. Employees of elected officials or other constitutional officers do not serve a probationary period under this policy. Elected officials, however, may establish probationary periods for their employees.

Promotion – A change in rank of an employee from a position in one class to a position in another class having a higher minimum salary and carrying a greater scope of discretion and responsibility.

Promotion List – A list of individuals who have been found qualified for appointment to a higher position. They may be qualified either by written examination or other evaluation techniques.

Provisional Employee – An employee appointed to a position without competition pending the establishment of an eligibility list. Such employee may serve for a limited time only and must compete with other applicants to qualify for a probational appointment (if applicable).

Public Hearing – A meeting of the County Commission, open to the public, at which any interested party may appear and be heard relevant to the specific topic being considered by the County Commission.

Regular Employee – An employee who has completed the probationary period. Unless an elected official has established a probationary period for his/her employees, employees of elected officials do not serve a probationary period and cannot attain regular employee status as defined by these policies and procedures.

Reprimand – A reprimand is a formal means of communicating to an employee that a problem exists and that it must be corrected.

Resignation – The separation of an employee at the employee's request.

Salary Increase – An increase in salary within the salary range prescribed for the class by the Classification and Pay Plan.

Suspension – An enforced leave of absence for either disciplinary purpose or a pending investigation of charges against an employee.

Temporary Employee – A person appointed to serve in a position for a definite duration, not to exceed the end of the current budget year. These are non-benefited positions.

Termination – The separation of a regular employee for cause.

SECTION A – EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

A-1. Nature of Employment

All employees of the County Government are “at-will” employees. Employment with the County is entered into on a voluntary basis, and all regular employees are employed for an indefinite time period. Either the employer or the employee is free to terminate the employment relationship at any time without notice, for any reason or for no reason at all.

Policies and guidelines set forth in this Employment Handbook are not intended to create a contract, nor are they to be construed to constitute contractual obligations of any kind or a contract of employment between the County and any of its employees. In no case should any provisions of this Employee Handbook be interpreted as an act of conveying the expectation of continued employment to an employee or any other relaxation of the employment “at will” doctrine of the County. Employees of any Constitutional Officer or independent Elected Official within the County work at the pleasure of that elected official and office.

A-2. Policy Changes

The provisions of the Handbook have been developed at the discretion of the County Commission and, except for its policy of employment at will, may be amended or cancelled at any time, at the County’s sole discretion. These provisions supersede all existing policies and practices and may not be amended or added to without the express written approval of the Peach County Board of Commissioners.

These policies shall reflect, and be superseded by, any changes mandated by State or Federal legislation.

A-3. Policy Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each employee to cooperate with the policies and practices described in this Handbook. All supervisory and management employees are responsible for administration and compliance with this policy as it relates to employees under their supervision or jurisdiction. Any employee or applicant who believes that he/she has not been accorded treatment conforming to these policies is urged to discuss the matter with his/her supervisor or department head, or with the County’s Human Resources Director.

A-4. Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

It is the policy of the County to provide equal employment opportunities to all applicants and employees of the County. The County does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy (and related medical conditions), childbirth (and related medical conditions), gender identity, genetic information (including family medical history), marital status, veteran status, disability, political affiliation, or any other characteristic protected by law. All employment decisions by the County will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities, and will be made in a fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory manner. This policy relates to all phases of employment, including recruitment, placement, transfer, promotion, demotion, separation, compensation, benefits, County-sponsored training, layoff, recall from layoff, participation in County-sponsored employee activities, and all other aspects of personnel administration. The Human Resources Director will ensure that information about job opportunities and the County's Equal Employment Policy is readily available to all citizens of the County, and especially to all potential job applicants.

The County does not and will not permit its employees to engage in unlawful discriminatory practices. Any County employee found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including separation of employment. This Policy extends to all terms, conditions and privileges of employment, as well as the use of all County facilities. Further, the County will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who raise issues of equal employment opportunity.

Any applicant or employee with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace is encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor, department head, or to the County's Human Resources Director.

The Grievance Procedure described in this Employee Handbook is available for any applicant or employee who believes that he/she may have been discriminated against. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. A thorough investigation of each complaint will be conducted. If any employee is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, the employee should follow the grievance procedures described in this Employee Handbook.

While employees of County-elected officials, and applicants to positions under the jurisdiction of County-elected officials, are not specifically covered under this policy, they are covered by any applicable State or Federal laws governing equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

A-5. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

The County is committed to complying fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA") and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 ("ADAAA") by ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. The ADA and ADAAA require that individuals with disabilities be given the same employment opportunities and services available to people without disabilities. Qualified individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal pay and other forms of compensation (or changes in compensation) as well as in job assignments, classifications, job descriptions, promotional opportunities, and seniority. All employment actions

are conducted on a non-discriminatory basis. All employment decisions are based on the merits of the situation in accordance with defined criteria, not the disability of the individual. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, separation from employment, and access to benefits and training.

The ADA and ADAAA describe an individual with a disability as one who has either a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a person's ability to perform "major life activities" such as eating, sleeping, walking, talking, hearing, breathing, learning, working, or taking care of oneself. A qualified individual is anyone who has the skills, experience, and education required for the job and can perform the job's essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodation.

If a person with a disability is unable to perform the essential functions of the job because of the disability, the County will then consider whether there is reasonable accommodation that would enable the person to perform the job (such as restructuring the job, changing the work schedule, or acquiring/modifying equipment). A Reasonable accommodation is available to all disabled employees, in cases where the disability affects the performance of job functions, unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. Requests for reasonable accommodations must be made to Human Resources.

A-6. Pregnant Workers Policy

As required by the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act ("PWFA"), the County will provide reasonable accommodations to employees and applicants with limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless the accommodation will cause undue hardship to the County's operations.

An employee or applicant may request accommodations due to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition by submitting the request in writing to Human Resources. The accommodation request should include an explanation of the pregnancy-related limitation, the accommodation needed, and any alternative accommodation(s) that might be reasonable. Depending on the nature of the accommodation, the individual may be requested to submit a statement from a health care provider substantiating the need for the accommodation.

Upon receipt of a request for accommodation, Human Resources will contact the employee or applicant to discuss the request and determine if an accommodation is reasonable and can be provided without an undue hardship.

While the reasonableness of each accommodation request will be individually assessed, possible accommodations include allowing the individual to:

- Sit or stand while working.
- Drinking water during the day.
- Receive closer-in parking.
- Have flexible hours.
- Receive appropriately sized uniforms and safety apparel.

- Receive additional break time to use the bathroom, eat and rest.
- Leave to recover from childbirth.
- Excused from strenuous activities and/or activities that involve exposure to compounds deemed unsafe during pregnancy.

An employee may request paid or unpaid leave as a reasonable accommodation under this policy; however, the County will not require an employee to take time off if another reasonable accommodation can be provided that will allow the employee to continue to work.

A-7. Prohibition of Discrimination and Harassment

A-7.1. General Harassment

The County is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment, including general harassment, sexual harassment, or harassment on the basis of an individual's protected characteristic including race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age disability, sexual orientation, sexual identity, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, or any other protected characteristic. In keeping with this commitment, the County will not tolerate harassment of its employees in any form by anyone, including any manager, supervisor, employee, co-worker, vendor, client, or customer of the County.

Harassment may take many forms. General harassment may include any conduct that creates a hostile work environment for an employee, whether verbal, physical, or visual. The County condemns and prohibits any form of harassment by managers, supervisors, fellow employees, and outside contractors, clients, customers, or vendors. Comments, jokes, practical jokes, pictorial representations, or gestures that are negative or derisive of the categories mentioned above may constitute harassment.

Any such conduct which interferes with an employee's ability to perform his/her job or which creates a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment will not be tolerated and will subject the employee displaying such conduct to disciplinary action up to and including Termination.

A-7.2. Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is prohibited under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") has issued guidelines stating in part that unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature amounts to sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is implicitly or explicitly made a condition of an individual's employment,
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis of employment decisions affecting the individual; or
- Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment.

Specifically, the County prohibits the following:

- Unwelcome sexual advances.
- Requests for sexual favors, whether or not accompanied by promises of threats with regard to the employment relationship.
- Other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature made to any employee that may threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that any employee's submission to or rejection of sexual advances will in any way influence any personnel decision regarding that person's employment, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts, or any other condition of employment or career development.
- Any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the employee's ability to do his or her job.
- Any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Such conduct will result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including Termination.

Sexually harassing conduct in the workplace, whether physical or verbal, committed by supervisors or non-supervisory personnel is prohibited. This behavior includes but is not limited to, commentary about an individual's body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual, offensive comments, off-color language or jokes, innuendoes, and sexually suggestive objects, books, magazines, photographs, cartoons, or pictures.

A-7.3. Complaint Procedures

Any employee who believes that he/she has been the victim of discrimination or harassment (including sexual harassment), or who has knowledge of that kind of behavior, is urged to report such conduct immediately to his/her supervisor, any other member of management, directly to the County Administrator or the County's Human Resources Director. The County, by and through its designated Compliance Officer or their designee, will initiate a prompt, thorough, and confidential investigation. All complaints or reports of harassment will be treated confidentially as possible, and no employee will be penalized in any way for making a complaint of harassment or for reporting knowledge of harassment. If an investigation confirms that harassment has occurred, the offender will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including Termination of employment.

A-7.4. Retaliation

The County prohibits retaliation for (1) reporting a possible violation of this or the Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy, or (2) participating in an investigation under this or the Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy.

A-8. Immigration Law Compliance

The County complies with E-Verify in accordance with state and federal immigration laws. The County will hire only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States. These laws require that all individuals pass an employment verification procedure before they are permitted to work. In compliance with the Immigration Reform & Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility.

Former employees who are rehired must also complete the I-9- form. Failure to provide such identification as outlined on the Form I-9 will result in immediate Termination of employment.

Employees who have questions or are seeking more information on immigration law issues are encouraged to contact the County Administrator. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

A-9. Safety in the Workplace

A-9.1. Introduction

The County strives to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. To do this, all employees have a responsibility to learn and practice safe methods of performing their jobs, and to report any potentially hazardous condition observed in the workplace.

It is the County's policy to provide safe working conditions for all employees. Comprehensive instructions covering safe work practices and special equipment to protect employees against particular hazards will be addressed by department heads according to the type of hazards in their areas. Most accidents are preventable. All County employees are responsible for promoting accident prevention by actively supporting the safety policy and observing the regulations. Employees are expected to cooperate fully by observing the rules of safety and taking an active part in protecting themselves, their fellow workers, and County facilities.

A-9.2. Safety Policy Statement

It is the objective of the County to conduct all operations as safely and efficiently as possible. To accomplish this, the County is assigning the responsibility, authority, and accountability for safety to all department heads and supervisory personnel within their individual areas of operations. Each department may want to appoint an individual as their safety coordinator/officer. This individual would be responsible for the administration and coordination of the department's safety program to ensure that safety standards are met throughout the department. All employees will have the responsibility of performing their own work in a safe and efficient manner and to report unsafe conditions to their department head or supervisor or prompt corrections. In addition to this General Policy, it is the responsibility of each department to develop and maintain any specific policies and procedures to ensure a safe work environment.

A-9.3. General Rules

Safety means efficient performance. Safety must, therefore, be a part of the planning for every job, equal in the importance to all operational considerations. Observing safety procedures will make all County operations safer. All employees must be on the alert to the possibility of improvement. Employee suggestions for improvement of work conditions and work procedures are welcomed, and, in fact, invited.

Unsafe conditions and unsafe procedures must be identified before they can be corrected. Consequently, it is the responsibility of all employees to report these conditions immediately. All accidents should be reported, whether personal injury or property damage is involved or not. Remember, the "near misses" are danger signals. The accident you prevent could be the incident that injured you!

The following general safety procedures apply:

- Report all personal injuries, no matter how minor, to your immediate supervisor as soon as possible. This must be done whether or not the injury resulted in lost time from work or required medical attention. Prompt reporting of accidents is a requirement under the Workers' Compensation Law.
- The County does not expect you to take any unnecessary chances. Learn the right way to do your job. That will be the safe way. If you are not sure you thoroughly understand the job, ask your supervisor for further instructions.
- Avoid horseplay and practical jokes on the job. Any employee participation in such activities will be subject to disciplinary action.
- Work at a speed consistent with Safety. "Foolish Hurry" such as running in passageways or on stairs is dangerous.
- Use the handrails on stairs or on elevated places.
- Jumping from an elevation such as a table, bench, or platform can result in injury. "DON'T DO IT."
- Always inspect tools and equipment before use. Report defects to supervisors and other potential users. Do not use tools and equipment that are defective to an unsafe degree.
- Remove splinters from work benches, tables, bins, shelves, or chairs before someone is injured.
- Remove, cut off, or hammer down protruding nails, staples, or steel straps.
- Work clear of suspended loads; if a load is moved above where you are working, stand aside until it has passed by.
- Obey warning tags and signs. They are posted to point out hazards.
- Operate only the machinery or equipment you have been authorized and trained to operate safely.
- Remove loose items, such as jewelry, rings, identification bracelets, etc., when work involves climbing, materials handling, or operating mechanical equipment.
- Never reach over moving parts of machinery or equipment.
- Never operate machinery or equipment with guards removed.

- Report to work in appropriate clothing suitable for the type of work you perform. This includes footwear. Avoid wearing loose clothing or personal equipment near machinery or equipment with moving parts.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment as required.
- Common sense, along with health and sanitation rules, must be observed for the welfare and consideration of other employees.
- Repeat violators of safety rules and procedures may be subject to disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

A-9.4. Rules and Responsibilities

A. County Administrator:

The County Administrator is responsible for the general oversight of the Safety Program by setting policy and making strategic planning decisions.

Under the direction of the County Administrator, there is:

- An active Safety Committee, consisting of department heads and their designees, meeting on a regularly scheduled basis.
- A thorough and effective Accident Investigation to include reporting and recording procedures, and a written report on actions taken to prevent recurrence of accidents, including actions taken against individual violators of safety rules and practices.
- A training program for employees and supervisory personnel directly related to avoiding a possible injury or illness in the area of designated operations.
- A periodic audit of all premises, equipment, and materials so that recommendations can be developed to obtain compliance with established standards.
- A communication system established and maintained to ensure that all personnel responsible for safety matters are kept abreast of new standards or procedures published by the State Board of Workers' Compensation.
- Specific goals established for the safety program, with progress toward those goals measured on a quarterly basis.

B. Department Heads:

Department Heads are responsible to the County Administrator for complying with the County's Safety Program and for maintaining safe and healthful working conditions and practices for the benefit of all personnel under their supervision.

Department Heads will demonstrate support for the Safety Program through every visible means, including:

- Providing a safe and healthy workplace.
- Providing personal protective equipment as well as machine guards and safety devices commensurate with the state of the art.
- Demonstrated support of the program through personal participation and through approval of necessary expenditures for such items as personal protective equipment, mechanical guards, good lighting, good ventilation, and other physical improvements to the working environment, as well as expenditures for safety training materials.
- Reviewing accident records and accomplishments of the Safety Program with the Safety Committee.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the safety program.
- Participating directly and/or indirectly in safety activities as may be required to maintain the enthusiasm and interest of all concerned.
- Abiding by safety rules and regulations when exposed to conditions governed by the rules.
- Directing that any flagrant disregard of safety rules and regulations by employees be grounds for discipline or dismissal as outlined in the Personnel Policy.

C. Supervisor:

Supervisors are charged with the responsibilities of quality and quantity of production with the department and therefore are responsible for the work conduct of the same. Supervisors should be afforded the necessary knowledge to carry out their duties with efficiency and safety.

Because of the close relationship with the employees and intimate knowledge of operating procedures, supervisors are key persons in the scheme of loss control.

Supervisors should:

- Have a thorough knowledge of the Safety Policy.
- Provide instruction and training to workers so that they may fulfill their job in a safe manner.
- Make daily inspections of the department to ensure that no unsafe conditions or unsafe practices exist.
- Initiate immediate corrective action where unsafe conditions or practices are found.

- Properly complete incident reports and investigate all accidents to determine what must be done to prevent recurrence of a similar accident. This should be completed and submitted to the Safety Committee Chair/Safety Officer in time that he/she can submit within three working days to the Georgia Board of Workers' Compensation.
- Be familiar with all procedures that must be followed in the event of any emergency.
- Enforce safety rules and regulations of the County and each respective department.
- Provide good examples by safe work habits.

D. Employees:

To assist the employees in developing a keen "safety awareness," the following responsibilities are assigned:

- To abide by the safety rules and regulations of the County and their respective departmental policies and procedures.
- To regard the safety of fellow workers at all times.
- To report any unsafe conditions to the supervisor.
- Use proper safety clothing, equipment, and personal protective equipment wherever provided or required, as designated for the work performed.
- Use appropriate, safe methods to lift heavy objects, and use back braces, handcarts, or other devices to assist with lifting or moving activities.
- Be prepared for fire or other emergency situations – know what to do and what actions to take; know where to go; and know the location of exits, firefighting equipment, and alarm pulls within the work environment.
- Observe good maintenance practices to keep work area, vehicles, tools, or other equipment in clean, safe, and operable condition.
- To contribute ideas and suggestions for improving the safety of conditions or procedures to the supervisor.
- To use individual knowledge and influence to prevent accidents.
- To attend safety training sessions.
- To report accidents and injuries immediately.

E. Safety Committee Members

The Committee team will help improve decision making in vital areas of employee safety and well-being, public safety, and property protection. This Committee will develop and implement County safety policies, determine goals/objectives, promote employee safety communications, increase employee safety awareness, ensure safety activities are completed, and keep up with governmental regulations. The Safety Committee will report to the County Administrator.

The Committee shall meet on a quarterly basis. Its primary purpose is to assist the Safety Committee Chair/Safety Officer in the formulation and implementation of the Safety Program. To accomplish this, the Committee shall:

- Draft safety rules and regulations and recommend approval for adoption by management.
- Devise methods of promoting safety among employees.
- Review accident records to discover trends and to gauge effectiveness of the safety program.
- Discuss difficult accident problems and make suggestions for preventive measures.

The following activities are the Committee's responsibility and require periodic attention:

- Departmental self-inspection.
- Maintenance of fire prevention and suppression equipment.
- Seasonal promotional activities.
- Safety regulations.
- Employee training programs.
- Written reports of all Committee meetings.

F. Safety Committee Chair/Safety Officer:

The Safety Committee Chair/Safety Officer sets meeting dates, distributes meeting materials, conducts meetings, establishes sub-committees when necessary, and determines Committee action on items discussed.

Further responsibilities of the Safety Committee Chair/Safety Officer shall include:

- Make periodic inspections of all County buildings/operations to ensure compliance with safety regulations.
- Promote "safety awareness" in all employees through educational and training programs.
- Maintain contact with available sources of topical safety information, such as Local Government Risk Management and the Georgia Board of Workers' Compensation.
- Maintain minutes of all safety meetings.

- Safety Program status reports.

A-9.5. Reporting Requirements

The purpose of recordkeeping is to discover patterns and trends of recurring accidents to direct risk control efforts in the right direction. The following recordkeeping procedures will be used:

1. All injuries and accidents shall be reported immediately to the Safety Coordinator and to Human Resources no matter how minor the injury may appear to be. This ensures prompt and appropriate medical treatment, allows for timely completion of required reports in accordance with law, and enables eligible employees to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible.
2. If medical attention by a physician is needed, the employee must use one of the physicians specifically listed on the Workers' Compensation Notice posted by the County on the official bulletin board or other designated location. Failure to report an injury or to receive medical treatment will jeopardize payment of medical bills or other benefits under workers' compensation insurance.
3. A Peach County Government Risk Management Form shall be filled out completely and sent to the Safety Coordinator and to Human Resources immediately.
4. The accident will be investigated to determine what corrective action should be taken to prevent future similar accidents. This accident investigation will be done by Human Resources or by the Safety Coordinator, and an investigation may also be undertaken by the relevant department head.
5. It shall be the responsibility of the County Safety Committee Chair/Safety Officer to maintain records as necessary to comply with laws and objectives of the Safety Program. These records should include:
 - Peach County Accident Investigation Report
 - Infection Exposure Form
 - First Report of Injury Form (digitally)

A-10. Security in the Workplace

The County cannot be responsible for any loss or damage to the personal property or valuables of employees or others using the premises. However, it is the County's intent to do what is necessary to safeguard all employees while on the job, as well as to protect County property. Packages, handbags, briefcases, or other personal items brought onto or taken off of County property are subject to inspection by supervisors or other authorized personnel. All County property, including but not limited to desks, file cabinets, and vehicles, is subject to being searched and the contents held by County management at any time. All employees are encouraged to report to their supervisor any suspicious individuals or happenings on or near County property.

Background Review – In certain employment areas, such as accounting or finance, applicants for employment, promotion, or transfer may be required to provide additional personal information that would not be needed in other areas of employment. Such applicants/employees may also be subject to additional background screening, which may include driver’s history reports, criminal history reports, credit reports, or other review.

A-11. Weapon-Free Workplace Policy

A-11.1. Purpose

County employees are its most valuable resources, and, for that reason, their health and safety are of paramount concern. The purpose and intent of this policy are to promote safe and secure working environments for all County employees.

A-11.2. Covered Individuals

All County workers are subject to this policy, including contract workers and temporary employees, as well as visitors and customers on County property and County vehicles. A license to carry a weapon does not supersede this policy. Any employee in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including Termination.

A-11.3. Weapon Defined

“Dangerous weapons” include firearms, explosives, knives, and other weapons that might be considered dangerous or that could cause harm. Employees are responsible for making sure that any item possessed is not prohibited by this policy.

The term “weapon” does not include any tool provided or approved for an employee’s use by the County; provided, however, that the use or threatened use of any such tool as a weapon shall be considered to be a violation of this policy.

A-11.4. Prohibited Conduct

No employee (except for Law Enforcement) shall carry, possess, or transport a weapon inside any County building, in the performance of County duties, on the grounds of any County property, or in a County vehicle, while on-duty/off-duty or otherwise acting in the course of his or her employment.

A-11.5. Searches of Weapons

The County reserves the right at any time and at its discretion to search all county-owned vehicles and other areas for the purpose of determining whether any weapon is being, or has been, brought onto the property or premises in violation of this policy. Employees who fail or refuse to promptly permit a search under this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including Termination.

A-12. Background Checks

The County requires a criminal background check for all full-time, part-time, and temporary employees, including interns upon hire once a conditional offer of employment has been extended.

Although a disqualification is possible, in accordance with federal and state laws, a previous conviction does not automatically disqualify an application from consideration for employment with the County. Depending on a variety of factors (for example, the nature of the position, the nature of the conviction, age of the candidate when the illegal activity occurred), the candidate may still be eligible for employment with the County.

However, if an applicant attempts to withhold information or falsify information pertaining to previous convictions, the employee will be disqualified from further employment consideration in a position with the County due to falsification of an application.

An offer of employment may be extended to an applicant prior to the completion of the criminal conviction check. However, the applicant's first day of work in the position must not be prior to the satisfactory completion of the criminal background check.

NOTE: Peach County Sheriff's Office applicants are required to complete a background check at the time of completion of the application, and an internal affairs background investigation will be completed before employment consideration is offered.

A-13. Georgia Whistleblower Act

In compliance with the Georgia Whistleblower Act and specifically O.C.G.A. § 45-1-4, the County encourages employees to report information concerning the possible existence of any activity constituting fraud, waste, and abuse in or relating to any state programs and operations under the jurisdiction of the County. In furtherance of this policy, the County has designated the County Administrator as the individual to receive such reports. Employees may also make such reports to their Department Head or immediate supervisor.

The County does not and will not adopt or enforce any policy or practice to prevent employees from disclosing violations of or noncompliance with a law, rule, or regulation to the County Administrator, Human Resources, their Department Head, or immediate supervisor.

Employees shall not be retaliated against for disclosing a violation of or noncompliance with a law, rule, or regulation to the County Administrator, Human Resources, their Department Head, or immediate supervisor unless the disclosure was made with knowledge that the disclosure was false or made with reckless disregard for the disclosure's truth or falsity. Employees shall not be retaliated against for cooperating with any investigation into any report made under the Georgia Whistleblower Act, or for supporting any report made by any other person concerning any activity within the jurisdiction of the County under the Georgia Whistleblower Act.

Employees shall not be retaliated against for objecting to, or refusing to participate in, any activity, policy, or practice that the employee has reasonable cause to believe is in violation of or noncompliance with a law, rule, or regulation. This anti-retaliation provision does not apply to any policies or practices which implement, or to actions by the County employees who violate, privilege or confidentiality obligations recognized by constitutional, statutory, or common law.

Disclosure of the identity of an employee making such a report covered by this policy is prohibited without the employee's written consent unless the County determines such disclosure is necessary and unavoidable during the course of the County's investigation.

If an employee believes that he or she has been subject to retaliation prohibited under this Policy, the employee is encouraged to immediately report such retaliation to either his/her Department Head, supervisor, or Human Resources.

Individuals found to be in violation of this anti-retaliation provision shall be subject to discipline up to and including Termination of employment.

A-14. Workplace Violence

The County is committed to providing a safe environment for working and conducting business. The County will not tolerate acts of violence committed by employees or members of the public on County property, in County vehicles, or between County employees whether or not on County property. Any unlawful violent actions committed by employees or members of the public while on County property or while using County facilities will be prosecuted as appropriate. The County intends to use reasonable legal, administrative, and disciplinary procedures to secure the workplace from violence and to reasonably protect employees and members of the public.

The County operates under a policy of zero tolerance for violence or any conduct which threatens the safety of well-being of its employees and visitors to its facilities. Accordingly, acts of violence will result in Termination of employment.

Threats or Acts of Violence

Threats or acts of violence include, but are not limited to, behavior or actions that a reasonable person would perceive as a threat against oneself, another person, or property. Persons who engage in actions or behavior that are sufficiently severe, offensive, or intimidating and/or which alters employment conditions will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including Termination of employment.

Procedures for Dealing With Threats or Acts of Violence in the Workplace

If a threat or violent act occurs:

- If the situation constitutes an emergency, CALL 911. If the situation constitutes an emergency and occurs in a County building, contact the Human Resources Department.
- If the situation does not constitute an emergency, contact your immediate supervisor, the appropriate Department Head, and the Human Resources Department.

All reports of threats or violence will be evaluated immediately, and appropriate action will be taken in order to protect employees and the public from further violence. Where County employees exhibit violent behavior, the County reserves the right, under the direction of Human Resources,

to determine fitness for duty. Employees may be suspended with or without pay pending this fitness for duty evaluation.

Where issues of employee safety are of concern, Department Heads and supervisors should evaluate the workplace and make appropriate recommendations regarding a reasonable response. Additionally, supervisors are encouraged to consult with the Director of Human Resources concerning appropriate resolution of instances of workplace violence. Each employee of the County and every person on County property are encouraged to report threats or acts of physical violence of which he/she is aware.

Workplace violence shall constitute a violation of County policies and procedures. Violation by an employee of any provision of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including Termination of employment.

SECTION B – BUSINESS ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

B-1. Policy Overview

The proper operation of government requires that public officials and employees be independent, impartial, and responsible to the people; that government decisions and policy be made through proper channels of the government structure; that public office not be used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government.

Employees have an obligation to conduct County business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide general direction so employees can seek clarification on issues related to the subject of acceptable standards of operation. Contact the Human Resources Director for more information or questions about conflicts of interest.

B-2. Conflicts of Interest

No employee or immediate family member (spouse, child, parent, parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, stepparent, step child, ward, or member of one's household) shall have ownership of greater than one percent (1%) in a company holding a contract with the County or its affiliated agencies. No employee shall acquire an interest in any contract at a time when he/she has reason to believe that such interest will be affected either by his/her own official actions or by the official actions of the County. No employee shall hold investments in real property or business in the immediate vicinity of a County project that might appear to be speculative.

If any employee has a financial interest in a business or activity that he/she has reason to believe may be affected by his/her official actions or by the actions of the County, the employee must disclose the exact nature and value of the interest in writing to the County Administrator. Any employee who has a financial interest as described above must disqualify himself/herself from participating in any official action directly affecting this interest.

B-3. Political Activities

No employee in **Classified Service** shall engage in political activities at the workplace or during business hours. No employee shall make use of any County time, equipment, or other County assets to aid a political candidate, political party, or political cause; nor shall any employee use their County position to persuade, coerce, or intimidate any person in the interest of a political candidate, party, or cause. All employees of the County have a right to be free of any and all political persuasion or coercion in relationship to their employment, and should report any such job-related activity to the County Administrator.

B-4. Use of Influence

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for an immediate family member (defined in B-2) as a result of the County's business dealings. No employee may use his/her position and influence in the County to promote personal gain, or to benefit friends, immediate family members, relatives (relationship by blood or marriage), or associates.

Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which the County does business, but also when an employee or relative receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving the County.

No "presumption of guilt" is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, if an employee has any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases, it is imperative that he/she discloses to the County Administrator (or other appropriate County Director) the existence of any actual or potential conflict of interest as soon as possible, so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties.

B-5. Gifts, Gratuities, and Favors

No employee or immediate relative (defined in B-2) may request or receive a gift, gratuity, favor, or loan for himself/herself or another person if it tends to, or appears to, influence his/her opinion or judgments in the performance of official duties. No employee may accept any gift, gratuity, or loan from any organization, business concern, or individual with whom the employee has official relationships on business the County.

Transactions with outside firms must be conducted within a framework established and controlled by the executive level of the County. Business dealings with outside firms may not result in unusual gains for those firms. Unusual gain refers to bribes, product bonuses, special fringe benefits, unusual price breaks, or other windfalls designed to ultimately benefit either the employer, the employee, or both. Any promotional plans that could be interpreted to involve unusual gain require specific executive-level approval.

B-6. Confidential Information/Trade Secrets

During the course of employment, employees often learn confidential and restricted information regarding County operations, activities, or personnel; about business associates and their operations; about County citizens and their personal business; or other information acquired through their job. It is County policy that such information should not be discussed with any unauthorized person, either inside or outside the workplace.

Information regarding employee compensation and benefits is considered strictly confidential, and employees should not discuss such issues with other employees or individuals other than the immediate supervisor, manager, or County Administrator.

Employee medical information is also required to be treated confidentially and maintained in separate files. All employees are responsible for respecting and maintaining the confidentiality of employee medical information, and to take reasonable precautions to protect such information from inappropriate disclosure.

Further, no employee shall make use of or reveal any confidential information acquired through employment with the County for private gain or for the private gain of any other persons or groups. Revealing confidential information may be considered grounds for dismissal.

B-7. Outside Employment

Outside employment is any compensated activity performed by an employee of the County for any person or organization other than the County, and any such outside employment must conform to the following conditions:

1. Outside employment must not interfere with the efficient performance of the employee's duties for the county.
2. It must not in any way present a conflict of interest with the duties of employees for the County.
3. It cannot involve the performance of duties which the employee should perform as part of his/her employment for the County.
4. Employees are not permitted to perform outside employment while on FMLA or any other form of leave.

B-8. Nepotism/Employment of Relatives

It is the policy of the County to avoid hiring individuals who are relatives of (or who have personal relationships with) any County employee or official for positions that may involve or lead to conflicts of interest, complaints of favoritism, lack of objectivity, or morale/dissension problems in the workplace.

For purposes of this policy:

- A "direct line of supervision" is defined as a situation in which the employee or official would be in a position to affect the terms and conditions of another's employment, to

include making decisions about work assignments, compensation, grievances, advancement, or performance evaluation.

- For this policy, a “relative” is defined as a spouse, parent, son, daughter, brother/sister, grandparent, parent-in-law, stepparent, brother-/sister-in-law, step-brother-/sister, stepchild, step-grandchild, or any person whose relationship to the employee is that of a dependent, or any two persons who cohabitate and share the same household. This policy is not limited to relatives, and applies to other relationships between employees in which actual or potential conflicts of interest in the workplace may exist.

No relative of a County employee, or of an elected or appointed County official, may serve in or be appointed to a regular classified position which involves a direct line of supervision. This policy applies to new employees, promotions, demotions, transfers, and reinstatements. As such, two relatives will not be employed under the same supervisor; neither will two relatives be employed at the same time, regardless of the assigned department(s), if such employment will result in one employee directly or indirectly supervising a relative.

The employment of relatives is not prohibited by the County as long as none of the related persons are employed in a supervisory role in which they might have an effect on a relative’s progress, performance, or welfare as an employee.

If, by reason of marriage or cohabitation, County employees come to be in violation of this policy, one or the other must accept a job reassignment of equal or lesser pay, if available, or must elect to resign within thirty (30) days of said marriage or cohabitation. If that decision is not made within thirty (30) days by the individuals involved, County management will initiate appropriate action.

Exclusion – This section does not apply to any situations which constitute a violation of this policy at the time of this policy’s adoption.

B-9. Standards of Conduct

As a representative of the County, each employee is expected to observe the highest standards of professional conduct and to act responsibly, both on duty and off duty. The County expects that each employee will respect, support, and comply with ethical standards and rules of conduct established by the County or its employees and officials.

All employees should comply with County policies, and with all rules and regulations of Federal, State, and local governments and of applicable regulatory agencies. Employees should show respect, courtesy, honesty, and integrity in all personal and professional interactions, and should act responsibly, in good faith, and with due care, without knowingly misrepresenting material facts.

Certain actions or forms of behavior are considered unacceptable in the workplace, and will not be tolerated. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including Termination.

B-10. Indictment or Conviction

B-10.1. General

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, and temporary employees of the County, and is provided to establish rules and guidelines concerning action taken when an employee of the County is indicted and/or convicted of a misdemeanor or felony criminal offense.

B-10.2. Obligation to Report

Any County employee shall notify his/her immediate supervisor as soon as possible, but in no event less than 48 hours after any conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of the employee for felony or misdemeanor criminal offense.

The requirement to report a conviction or deferred adjudication shall not apply to minor traffic offenses. However, an offense of operating a motor vehicle under the influence, revocation or suspension of driver license, or driving after a revocation or suspension of driver license must be reported in accordance with this policy if the employee drives or operates a vehicle owned by the County or piece of mobile equipment owned by the County.

Failure to report under this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including Termination of employment. Such report shall be made as soon as possible, but in no circumstance less than 48 hours after the event giving rise to the duty to report. This reporting requirement applies to both on and off duty conduct.

B-10.3. Disciplinary Action

An indictment or conviction of a crime shall not be an automatic basis for Termination of employment. The County shall consider the following factors in determining what action, if any, should be taken against an employee who is convicted of a crime during his/her employment with the County:

A. Nature and Gravity of the Offense/Conduct

The County will carefully consider the nature and gravity of the offense or conduct to determine whether a specific offense may be relevant to risks in a particular position of employment. The nature of the offense may be assessed with reference to the harm caused by the crime, (e.g., theft causes property loss), and to the legal elements of a crime (e.g. whether the elements of the offense are substantially related to job duties, whether intent is a legal element of the offense). With respect to the gravity of an offense, offenses classified as misdemeanors may be less severe than those classified as felonies.

B. Date of the Offense and the Individual

The County will consider the length of time that has passed since the offense, conduct, and/or completion of sentence as probative of the risk the employee poses in his/her particular position of employment. Where possible, this assessment will include consideration of recidivism data and studies. The County will also consider the number

and type of pending charges and convictions, the employee's participation in or completion of programs of a rehabilitative nature, the employee's probation or parole status, and the employee's ability to perform or continue to perform the job consistent with the safe, efficient, and effective operation of the County.

C. Nature of the Job Held

The County will conduct an individualized assessment to determine whether the employee's continued employment poses an unacceptable level of risk to the County. This factual inquiry will begin with identifying the job title of the employee, but will also consider the nature of the job's duties, essential functions of the job, (e.g., extent to which successful job performance requires public trust), the circumstances under which the job is performed (e.g., level of supervision, level of oversight, interaction with co-workers and/or the public, opportunity for access to private property).

Termination of employment based on a conviction may be imposed where a demonstrable relationship between the offense or underlying conduct and prejudice to the County's interest(s), the public trust, or to successful performance of the position of employment held by the affected employee exists.

Nothing herein shall prohibit the County from placing an employee on administrative leave based upon an indictment, information, or conviction.

SECTION C – DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE

C-1. Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy

The County is dedicated to providing safe, dependable, and economical services to citizens of Peach County. County employees are our most valuable resource, and it is our goal to provide a healthy, satisfying work environment which promotes personal opportunities for growth.

The intention of this policy is to eliminate substance abuse and its effects in the workplace. This commitment is jeopardized when any County employee illegally uses drugs on or off the job; comes to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol; possesses, distributes, or sells drugs in the workplace; or abuses alcohol on the job.

This policy applies to all employees. All employees and managers are required to join the County in implementation of this policy. Employees who abuse drugs and alcohol are not only a danger to themselves, but to their fellow employees and the community we serve.

All job applicants being considered for employment and applicants requesting to be transferred into a safety-sensitive position shall be required to pass a drug/alcohol test prior to employment. Failure of a pre-employment drug test will disqualify an applicant for employment for a period of 120 days. Evidence of the absence of drug dependency from a Substance Abuse Professional that

meets with the approval of the County and a negative pre-employment drug test will be required to further consideration for employment. The cost for the assessment and any subsequent treatment will be the sole responsibility of the individual. All job applicants shall be informed in advance that said testing shall be required.

C-2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assure worker fitness for duty and to protect our employees and the public from the risks posed by the misuse of alcohol and illegal use of prohibited drugs. This policy is also intended to comply with all applicable Federal and State regulations governing workplace anti-drug and alcohol programs. In no event will any standards set by this policy be less restrictive than those set by Federal and State law, in the event of which any standards set by Federal and State law shall be controlling.

C-3. Applicability

This policy applies to all County employees, paid part-time employees, contract employees, volunteers, and contractors when they are on Peach County property or when performing any County-related safety-sensitive or non-safety-sensitive business. This policy applies to off-site lunch periods or breaks when an employee is scheduled to return to work. Visitors, vendors, and contract employees are governed by this policy while on Peach County premises and will not be permitted to conduct business if found to be in violation of this policy.

As stated in Section C-6 (*Testing Procedures*), all employees shall be subject to drug and alcohol testing prior to employment, for reasonable suspicion, follow up testing, and following an accident as defined herein. Follow up testing will continue for a period of one to five years, with at least six tests performed during the first year. Those employees who perform safety-sensitive functions shall be subject to testing on a random, unannounced basis. A listing of safety-sensitive positions is found in Section C-3.1.

C-3.1. County Safety-Sensitive Positions

A safety-sensitive function is any duty related to the safe operation of County services, including, but not limited to, the operation of any County vehicle; operation of any heavy equipment or machinery; dispatch services; maintenance of County vehicles or equipment; security functions requiring personnel to carry firearms; and positions requiring the employee to possess a Commercial Driver's License. This includes:

1. Persons authorized to drive any County vehicles.
2. Persons required to possess a Commercial Driver's License.
3. Persons who carry a weapon in the course of performing their job.
4. Dispatchers, Communications Officers and Firefighters.
5. Employees in the Parks & Recreation Department who work closely with families and children of the County.
6. Persons who operate heavy equipment, including but not limited to:
 - Motor grader
 - Bulldozer
 - Backhoe

- Road Mowing Equipment
 - Tractors
 - Bush Hogs
 - Any heavy equipment designed for the maintenance of roads.
- G. Persons who operate motorized equipment and machinery, including but not limited to:
- Stripping and Floor Waxing Machines
 - Lawn Mowers
 - Power Tools
 - Any Motorized Equipment and Machinery designed for the maintenance of buildings and grounds.

C-4. Prohibited Substances

1. “Alcohol” includes any beverage or substance containing alcohol manufactured for the primary purpose of personal consumption or as defined in 49 C.F.R. Par 382. The concentration of alcohol is expressed in terms of alcohol per 210 liters of breath as indicated by an evidential breath test.
2. “Illegal Drugs” refers to marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamines, opiates (including heroin and codeine), phencyclidine, and all other “controlled substances” as defined in Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and/or 49 C.F.R. Part 382. Use of any illegal drug or any substance identified in Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and/or 49 C.F.R. Par 382 is prohibited at all times unless a legal prescription has been written for the substance.
3. “Over-the Counter Medications” includes any substance which does not require a prescription, but which has the capacity to affect a person physically, mentally, or emotionally, or which could otherwise affect a person’s ability to safely perform any essential job function.
4. “Prescription Drugs” means any substance which is attainable only by lawful prescription from a physician or other authorized medical provider. A lawful prescription must include the patient’s name, name of the substance, quantity/amount to be taken, and the period of authorization.
5. “Authorized Prescribed Medicine” means the use of physician-prescribed over-the-counter medications and drugs will not be, per se, a violation of this policy. However, any employee who is taking any medication or drugs which could interfere with the safe and effective performance of duties or operation of vehicles or equipment shall notify his or her supervisor before beginning work who must immediately notify the County Administrator. This includes the use of any substance which carries a warning label that indicates that mental functioning, dizziness, motor skills, or judgment may be adversely affected. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including Termination. If there is a question regarding such employee’s ability to safely and effectively perform assigned duties, pre-clearance from a physician will be required.

C-4.1. Prohibitions

The following conduct is expressly prohibited, and violations shall result in disciplinary action, which may include Termination. Where criminal activity is suspected, Peach County law enforcement shall be notified.

1. Unauthorized use, consumption, possession, manufacture, growth, distribution, dispensation, or sale of controlled substances or illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia on county premises, in county supplied vehicles, in any county work area, or while wearing a county uniform or insignia.
2. Unauthorized use, consumption, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation, or sale of alcohol, while on duty, on county premises, in county supplied vehicles, in any county work area, or while wearing a county uniform or insignia.
3. Being under the influence of an unauthorized or controlled substance or illegal drug or alcohol, while on duty, on county premises, in county supplied vehicles, or in county work area.
4. The use or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs off county premises and while not on duty may be cause for discipline where such conduct can be shown to have a direct and material adverse impact on county's interests, including public image.
5. Reporting to work or engaging in any work activity whatsoever on behalf of the County in a condition which could pose a threat of harm to the employee or other person, or reporting to or engaging in any work on behalf of the county in a condition which could impair the ability to satisfactorily perform any essential function of the job due to the use of drugs or misuse of alcohol.
6. A conviction of an employee for the sale of or possession with intent to sell illegal drugs at any time or place is cause for immediate Termination.
7. Storage in a locker, desk, automobile, or other repository on county property of any illegally-used drug, controlled substance, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol whose storage is unauthorized.
8. Switching or adulterating any sample.
9. Refusing to consent to submit to a breath, urine, hair, or blood sample for testing, or refusing to undergo a drug or alcohol test(s), which may include an inability to provide a sufficient urine specimen, saliva sample, or breath sample without a valid medical explanation; a verbal declaration of refusal to undergo a drug or alcohol test(s); obstructive behavior; or, physical absence resulting in the inability to conduct the test.
10. Failure to notify, in writing, the county of any arrest or conviction under any drug or alcohol statute for a violation occurring in the workplace, within five (5) days of the arrest or conviction.

11. Abusing or misusing prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, or authorized prescription medication which includes but is not limited to the use, possession, sale, or solicitation for the purpose of the purchase or sale of any prescription medication for which the employee lacks a valid prescription.
12. Failure to notify a supervisor of the use of a prescription drug which may alter the employee's behavior or physical or mental ability. If an employee obtains a performance-altering prescription, the employee must also obtain a written release from the attending physician which states that the employee can perform his/her job duties while using the medication as prescribed.
13. Refusing to sign a statement agreeing to abide by the County's required testing process.
14. Hindering, obstructing, or refusing to cooperate or participate in any investigation involving suspected violation of this policy, including but not limited to providing false, misleading or incomplete information in response to any inquiry from a supervisor related to a suspected violation of this policy.
15. Hindering, delaying, or obstructing a drug or alcohol test(s), including but not limited to tampering with a sample or interfering in any way with the chain of custody; providing false information in connection with a test; or, falsifying test results through tampering, contamination, adulteration, or substitution. Any employee who is suspected of false information in connection with a test, or who is suspected of falsifying test results through tampering, contamination, adulteration, or substitution will be required to undergo an observed specimen collection.

Any employee reasonably suspected of violating any of these provisions shall be suspended from his/or her job duties pending an investigation and verification of condition. The employee will be subject to alcohol and/or drug testing and, if the employee is under the influence of a prohibited substance or fails to pass a drug or alcohol test, he/she shall be terminated.

C-4.2. Alcohol

The use of alcoholic beverages containing alcoholic beverages or substances including any medication, mouthwash, food, edibles, or any other such substance where alcohol could be present while performing County work is prohibited. Any concentration of alcohol after a verified test is strictly prohibited and is subject to disciplinary action up to and including Termination.

C-4.3. Drug and Alcohol Treatment

1. An employee who voluntarily identifies himself/herself as a user of drugs or abuse of alcohol prior to being asked or required to take a drug/alcohol test will not be subject to disciplinary action if the employee seeks immediate assistance and treatment through the County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or a similarly available treatment program.
2. Failure to comply with all requirements of a treatment program or continued use of drugs or alcohol during or after completion of such a program, will result in an appropriate disciplinary action if such use resulted in a violation of this policy.

3. Nothing in this policy is intended to discriminate against any person on the basis of an individual's medical history or addition to drugs or alcohol pursuant to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, the county reserves the right to take into account, for purposes of employment or disciplinary action, any history of criminal activity related to such use to the extent that such may lead to disqualified from employment

C-5. Searches

1. The County reserves the right to search for evidence of prohibited conduct at any time and without notice or employee consent of all areas and property, real or personal, which are owned or controlled by the County or where the County has the right to control, including joint control with an employee. Such areas and property include, but are not limited to, the County-owned or leased or controlled buildings, parks, land, motor vehicles, desks, lockers, files or storage containers.
2. With respect to personal property not owned or controlled by the County, but which is in the possession or control of the employee on the County's premises or located in the County's supplied vehicle or in the County's work area, and where any supervisor has a reasonable suspicion that an employee is intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and where alcohol or drugs are suspected to be inside such personal property, the employee may be ordered to submit said personal property to a search. Such may include orders to unlock and open vehicles, toolboxes, lunch boxes, locker, etc., and to turn inside out clothing pockets and billfolds, purses, envelopes, sacks, etc. The refusal of the employee to comply with such order may be cause for discipline, including Termination.

C-6. Testing Procedures

A drug or alcohol test is considered positive if the individual is found to have a quantifiable presence of a prohibited substance in the body above the minimum thresholds defined in 49 C.F.R. Part 40, as amended.

C-6.1.Pre-Employment Testing:

Applicants for all positions of employment with the County must undergo pre-employment drug testing after a conditional offer of employment has been extended but before the employee is placed on payroll. This requirement also applies to seasonal employees, interns, and any other persons who will be working in any County facility. A negative drug test is a prerequisite for employment with the County. Failure of a pre-employment drug test disqualifies an applicant for employment with the County.

C-6.2.Promotion, or Transfer to Safety-Sensitive Positions Testing:

- A. The County shall require appointments or promotions or demotions or transfers to, any "safety-sensitive" positions (as defined in the policy), must submit to a pre-employment drug and alcohol screening/testing in order to determine the individual's suitability for employment or appointment. The results of such screening/testing will be revealed to the applicant and the applicant will be allowed to request a conformity test. Such retest shall be coordinated by the Human Resources Department and shall be performed on the original specimen provided

by the applicant and shall be at the applicant's expense. Additionally, the applicant shall be given an opportunity to explain or to provide a bona fide verification of a valid current prescription for any drug identified in the drug screening/testing. The applicant will be informed if the reasons for rejection for employment or appointment include the results of the screening/testing.

- B. An employee who screens/tests positive for alcohol or drugs will be in violation of this policy and may be subject to disciplinary action, including Termination. An applicant who tests positive shall not be hired. Refusal of an employee-applicant to submit to the screen/test will be cause for rejection of the appointment or employment of such applicant.

C-6.3.Regular Physical Examinations:

Whenever the County's standard policy requires an employee in a "safety-sensitive" position (as defined in this policy) to undergo a physical examination, that examination may include a breath, saliva, urine, and/or blood tests for alcohol and drugs. Opportunity for confirmatory testing shall be provided as set in this policy. An employee who tests positive for alcohol or drugs during such a physical exam will be in violation of this policy. Refusal of the employee to submit to the test will be cause for discipline, including Termination.

C-6.4.Post -Accident Testing:

- A. Any employee who is involved in a work related accident including but not limited to motor vehicle accident while operating a County vehicle or equipment or any job-related accident, no matter how minor will be required to submit to drug and/or alcohol testing. The employee will be taken to a collection site to provide the required urine and/or blood and/or breath and/or saliva specimen as soon as possible after the accident.
- B. An alcohol test should be completed within two (2) hours of the accident or report of injury but no more than eight (8) hours after accident or report of injury. A drug test should be completed within eight (8) hours of the accident or report of injury but not more than thirty-two (32) hours after the accident or report of injury.
- C. All cases involved post-accident testing must be immediately reported in writing to Human Resources.
- D. An employee who is required to submit to a test after an on-the job injury will be escorted to a test on site as soon as practical.
- E. The record of the test results shall be included with the report to Human Resources. The facts underlying the determination to require testing shall be disclosed to the employee at the time the order is given.

- F. An employee who tests positive for drugs or alcohol as a result of such testing will be in violation of this policy. Opportunity for confirmation drug testing shall be provided as set in this policy.

C-6.5.Reasonable Suspicion Testing:

- A. Whenever a supervisor, Department Head, member of Human Resources, or member of the Safety Committee has a reasonable suspicion that any employee on duty or scheduled for duty is intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the employee may be ordered by the County to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. Refusal of an employee to submit to the test will be cause for discipline, including Termination.
- B. The Department Head or his/her designee shall be notified of the circumstance necessitating the test as soon as possible. The supervisor or Department Head shall fully document all appropriate witnesses as soon as possible.
- C. “Reasonable suspicion” is that quantity of proof or evidence that is more than intuition or strong feeling, but less than probable cause, and must be based on specific, objective facts or reasonable inferences drawn from facts that would cause a reasonable person to suspect that the employee is or has been using drugs or alcohol.
- D. Such “reasonable suspicion” facts include, but are not limited to any one or more of the following:
 - i. Direct observation of prohibited drug or alcohol use.
 - ii. Slurred speech.
 - iii. Alcohol beverage odor on breath.
 - iv. Unsteady walking and movement or other such physical appearance.
 - v. Lapse in cognitive abilities.
 - vi. Aggressive, hostile, threatening, disruptive, or unusual behavior.
 - vii. A report of prohibited drug or alcohol use as provided by a reliable and credible source.
 - viii. Drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, or containers indicating the presence of drugs or alcohol observed or discovered in a location in which the employee had primary control or access, including but not limited to desks, lockers, equipment, machines, or vehicles.
 - ix. Habitual tardiness or absence indictive of off-duty use of alcohol or prohibited drugs which renders the employee unable or unwilling to perform duties.

Any employee ordered to be tested based upon reasonable suspicion shall be immediately removed from duty, escorted to the testing facility, and taken home (unless other suitable arrangement have been made to transport the employee, including calling a cab). Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to drive himself/herself home. The employee shall

turn in keys to the county vehicle, building, or office, as well as his/her identification badge or any other property belonging to the County.

C-6.6. Random Drug Testing:

- A. Safety-Sensitive
- B. Individuals employed as operators of vehicles or equipment requiring the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) shall be subjected to additional alcohol and drug testing on a random basis as required by 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 382, as amended.
 - i. Tests will be ordered on a random, unannounced basis from the pool of CDL and safety-sensitive employees throughout the year.
 - ii. A random number table or computer-based random number generator will be used to select employees for random drug and alcohol testing, thereby allowing each employee an equal chance of being tested each month.
 - iii. The percentage of employees in the CDL random testing pool to be selected for breath alcohol testing and the percentage of employees in the CDL random testing pool to be selected for substance abuse testing shall be determined by the United States Department of Transportation and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association's Random Testing Rates, published annually.
 - iv. At least 2-10% of safety-sensitive employees per department will be selected and tested for alcohol and drugs each year.
 - v. An employee's name will remain in the pool after being selected so that every employee will have an equal chance of being tested each time selections are made. Therefore, it is possible that any employee who is randomly selected may be randomly selected again during the same year.
- c. Any employee with a confirmed positive drug or alcohol test will be removed from his/her position to a substance abuse professional for assessment at the employee's expense. A confirmed positive drug or alcohol test will result in Termination of employment.

C-6.7. Follow-Up Testing:

- A. Employees in safety sensitive positions returning to work from an approved, EAP, self-referred treatment program for drug or alcohol abuse will be subject to frequent, unannounced urine and/or breath testing following return to duty. Follow up testing will be performed for a period of one (1) to five (5) years with a minimum of six (6) tests to be performed during the first year following return to duty.
- B. Employees who re-enter the County's work force following self-referral to a drug or alcohol treatment program or facility must agree to a re-entry agreement with the County. The agreement may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. A release to work statement from the substance abuse professional;

- ii. A negative test for alcohol and/or drug use;
- iii. An agreement to submit to unannounced and frequent follow-up testing for a period of one (1) to five (5) years with a minimum of six (6) tests to be administered during the first year following return to duty.
- iv. An agreement to follow specified after-care requirements with the understanding that violations of the re-entry agreement shall be grounds for Termination of employment.

C-6.8. Return to Duty Testing:

Employees who are absent from work on any leave for thirty (30) days or longer shall be tested for drugs immediately prior to returning to work and before performing any job duties. Any employee who screens/tests positive for alcohol or drugs will be in violation of this policy and may be subject to further disciplinary action, including Termination. Refusal of an employee to submit to the screen/test will also be cause for disciplinary action, including Termination.

C-7. Testing Procedures

1. Testing for the presence of alcohol and/or drugs may be conducted by analysis of breath, urine, hair, saliva, and/or blood.
2. In any situation in which the employee has been ordered to be tested or tests positive and the employee refuses assistance in leaving the building or property or insists on leaving in his/her own vehicle, supervisors and/or department heads must document the situation and, depending on the circumstances, contact the Peach County Sheriff's Office non-emergency line and provide the sheriff's department with the employee's name, vehicle description and license plate number. However, if the employee is extremely agitated, violent or is making threats of violence, leaves the premises in a County vehicle, or if it is believed that the employee has violated the law, 9-1-1 must be called.
3. The drug and/or alcohol analysis may test for alcohol or a controlled substance which could impair an employee's ability to safely or effectively perform the function of his/her job. Controlled substance means any drug listed in 21 U.S.C. 812 and other federal regulation and any "illegal drugs" as defined in the Definitions section of this policy. Generally, these are drugs which have a high potential for abuse. Such drugs include, but are not limited to prescription medications, heroin, cocaine, morphine and its derivatives, P.C.P., methadone, barbiturate, amphetamines, marijuana and other cannabinoids.
4. Lab reports and/or test results will not be placed in the employee's personnel record. This information will remain in a separate medical record that will be securely kept under the control of Human Resources.

5. Drug/Alcohol Screen Analysis

A. Alcohol:

- i. For purposes of this prohibition, an employee shall be deemed to be “under the influence” of alcohol where a blood alcohol content by weight of alcohol exists in the person’s blood exceeding .04 percent.
- ii. An employee may be found to be “under the influence” where blood alcohol content by weight of alcohol exists in the person’s blood is less than the foregoing amounts and other competent evidence shows job performance or employee safety to be affected.
- iii. Pursuant to Georgia’s Workers’ Compensation laws, if the amount of alcohol in the employee’s blood within three (3) hours of the time of an alleged accident, as shown by chemical analysis of the employee’s blood, urine, breath, or other bodily substance, is 0.08 grams or greater, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the accident and injury or death were caused by the consumption of alcohol. The amount of alcohol found in the employee’s blood at any time after the accident, however, may disqualify the employee from workers’ compensation benefits.
- iv. If any amount of marijuana or a controlled substance as defined in this policy paragraph (4) of Code Section 16-13-21, Code Sections 16-13-25 through 16-13-29, Schedule I-V, or 21 C.F.R. Part 1308 is in the employee’s blood within eight (8) hours of the time of the alleged accident, as shown by chemical analysis of the employee’s blood, urine, breath, or other bodily substance, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the accident and injury or death were caused by the ingestion of marijuana or the controlled substance. The amount of any marijuana or controlled substance in the employee’s blood discovered during any time frame, however, may disqualify the employee from workers’ compensation benefits.
- v. No CDL employee shall perform his/her safety-sensitive job functions within eight (8) hours after using alcohol.
- vi. Alcohol screening will be conducted using a federally approved testing device operated by a trained technician. An initial screening will be conducted first. If the initial test indicates an alcohol concentration of 0.02 or greater, a second test will be performed to confirm the results of the initial test. The confirmatory test will be performed using a federally

approved evidential breath testing device operated by a trained breath alcohol technician.

- vii. Any tested employee with a confirmed alcohol concentration of 0.02 or greater but less than 0.04 will be removed from duty for 24 hours without pay. This removal from duty will be treated as an unexcused absence subject to Termination of employment for a second offense. A confirmed alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater shall constitute a positive alcohol test in violation of this policy and a violation of federal requirements for safety sensitive employees set forth in 49 C.F.R. Part 654, and the employee may be subject to Termination of employment.

B. Drugs:

- viii. The drug screen analysis will include those agents that most frequently are the drugs of abuse. The list will be subject to review and modification. Each drug screening may include a test for the following illicit narcotics or drugs:
 - 1. Amphetamines (Benzedrine, Dexedrine, Methamphetamine).
 - 2. Barbiturates (Seconal, Phenobarbital, Pentobarbital).
 - 3. Benzodiazepines.
 - 4. Cannabinoid metabolites (Marijuana, Hashish, THC).
 - 5. Opiate derivatives (Heroin, Morphine, Codeine).
 - 6. Cocaine metabolites (Benzoyllecgonine, Ecgonine, Crack).
 - 7. Phencyclidine (P.C.P).
 - 8. In any instance in which there is a reason to believe an employee is abusing a substance other than what is listed above, the County reserves the right to test for additional drugs under its own authority using standard laboratory testing protocols.
- ix. To ensure accuracy and fairness of the testing program, all testing will be conducted by medical personnel.
- x. Two types of drug tests may be employed: initial screening tests, often referred to as color tests; and confirmatory tests. Initial screening (color) tests are designed to distinguish negative from presumptive positive samples. Confirmatory tests positively identify a drug or metabolite when preliminary or field tests indicate their presence. Drug screening technologies will include gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) analysis and may include other tests as follows:
 - 1. Enzyme immunoassay (EIA).
 - 2. Radioimmunoassay (RIA).

3. Fluorescence Polarization Immunoassay (FPIA).
 4. Intoxilyzer Model 5000 (for alcohol).
 5. Field tests such as Abuscreen Assays.
- xi. Thresholds have been established which set the limit at which a drug test may be called positive. Specimens containing the drug or metabolite below the threshold are identified as “negative.” All specimens identified as positive on the initial test shall be confirmed.
1. The initial and confirmatory drug test cutoff values promulgated by the Department of Health and Human Services (Federal Register, Vol. 53, No. 69, published April 11, 1988), and as amended, are hereby adopted as the cutoff values for this policy. These tests levels are subject to change by the Department of Health and Human Services as advances in technology or other considerations warrant identification of these substances at other concentrations.
 2. Threshold levels specified by the reagent manufacturers will be used for drugs or compounds not listed in the Federal Register or specified by law.

C. Acceptable Laboratories:

- xii. Only laboratories currently certified to meet Subpart C of Mandatory Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs (53 F.R. 11986) may conduct confirmatory drugs tests.
 - xiii. Chain of custody procedures will be followed and documented.
 - xiv. Specimens found to be positive will be maintained (frozen) for one year, unless the laboratory is otherwise directed.
 - xv. An inadvertent failure to comply with a requirement of this protocol which does not render the test result unreliable shall not prevent the County from imposing disciplinary action, including Termination, against the employee.
- D. All positive drug tests will be interpreted by a physician approved by the County as a Medical Review Officer (MRO) before the results are reported to the County. The MRO will make reasonable efforts to ascertain whether there may be a legitimate medical explanation for any positive test result by requesting information from the employee prior to administering the test.

- E. Upon notification of a verified positive result of drugs, the employee may request that the remaining portion of his/her (original) split specimen undergo a second confirmation test at his/her expense at a difference DHHS laboratory. If the test conducted at the employee's request is negative for the presence of drugs, a third test may be made at the County's sole expense at a separate DDHS facility of its choosing. The results of the third facility will be determinative. If the results from the third facility are negative, all prior positive tests will be disregarded and shall not be the basis for any disciplinary or adverse action.
- F. The method of collecting, sorting, and testing the split sample will be consistent with the procedures set forth in 49 C.F.R. Part 40, as amended. The employee's request for a split sample test must be made to the MRO within 72 hours of notice of the original sample verified result. Requests after 72 hours will only be accepted if the delay in the request was due to documented facts beyond the control of the employee.
- G. The County will make reasonable efforts to notify the employee of a positive test within five (5) days from the date it receives the test results. Because the results of a breath alcohol test are immediately available, this provision will not apply to alcohol tests conducted in such a manner.
- H. In the event that it is not reasonable under the circumstances to conduct an alcohol test based on a breath test, the County reserves the right to test for the presence of alcohol by a blood, or other, test analysis. If this procedure is used, the County will make reasonable efforts to notify the employee of a positive test within five (5) days from the date it receives the test results. An MRO will not be used when a blood test for alcohol is administered.

C-8. Confidentiality:

- 1. All reports of test results for drugs and alcohol, searches, or any employee referral to or participation in an EAP program or treatment program for addictive disorders will be maintained in strict confidence. Any person authorized to have access to such confidential information who, without authorization, discloses it to another person shall have engaged in gross misconduct and shall be subject to severe disciplinary action up to and including Termination of employment.
- 2. The confidentiality of such information shall not apply to any use by or communication to the office of the County Attorney, or where the information is relevant to the County's defense in an administrative or civil action. Such information may also be disclosed to the extent required by any federal, state, or local law, statute ordinance or regulation. All personal health information shall be maintained in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability

Act (HIPPA); access to such information shall be limited to individuals who need the information to process claims under the County program, or to individuals who need the information to process claims under a County program, or to individuals for whom the employee has signed a release form and presented the form to administrator of such program.

C-9. Last Chance Agreement

In limited situations and as approved by the County Administrator, employees who are permitted to re-enter the workforce must agree to a last chance agreement. That agreement may include (but is not limited to):

- A release-to-work statement from a Substance Abuse Professional.
- A negative test for drugs and/or alcohol.
- An agreement to unannounced, frequent follow-up testing for a period of one to five years with a least six tests performed the first year.
- A statement of work-related behaviors.
- An agreement to follow specified after-care requirements, with the understanding that violation of the agreement is grounds for immediate Termination.

C-10. Information Disclosure

The following guidelines apply to disclosure of information relating to drug and alcohol testing:

1. The County shall release information regarding a covered employee's record as directed by specific, written consent from the employee authorizing release of the information to an identified person.
2. An employee is entitled, upon written request, to obtain copies of any records pertaining to his/her use of prohibited substances, including any records pertaining to test results.
3. The County may disclose information that is required to be maintained to the decision-maker in a lawsuit, grievance, or other proceeding initiated by or on behalf of the employee tested.
4. When requested by the National Transportation Safety Board as part of an accident investigation, County shall disclose information related to its administration of drug and alcohol tests following the accident investigation.
5. Records shall be made available to subsequent employees upon receipt of written request from the covered employee.
6. The County shall disclose data for its drug and alcohol testing program, and any other information pertaining to its anti-drug program, when requested by the Secretary of Transportation or any Department of Transportation agency with regulatory authority over the County.

C-11. County Contacts

Questions regarding this policy or any other aspect of the drug free and alcohol free program should be directed to the following County representatives:

Program Manager:

Name: April Hodges
Title: Peach County Administrator
Address: 213 Persons Street, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030
Telephone: 478-827-3155
Fax Number: 478-825-2678

Program Representative:

Name: Matthew Ingram
Title: Human Resources Director
Address: 213 Persons Street, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030
Telephone: 478-827-3157
Fax Number: 478-827-3167

Medical Review Officer:

Name: Macon Occupational Medicine
Address: 124 Third Street, Macon, Georgia 31201
Telephone: 478-751-2900
Fax Number: 478-751-2979

SECTION D – HIRING AND CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

D-1. Position Classification and Pay Plan

D-1.1. Establishment

The County Administrator is responsible for maintaining and administering a Position Classification and Pay Plan covering all employees in Classified Service. The Classification Plan provides class titles and description of duties and responsibilities for all positions in County government. The Plan shall be amended as recommended by the County Administrator and approved by the County Commission and shall constitute the official approved system of grouping positions into appropriate classes and pay scales.

D-1.2. Definitions

For purposes of this section, the following words shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them below.

1. **“Allocate”** – Assigning a position to an appropriate class on the basis of the similarity of work performed and level of responsibility inherent in the position.
2. **“Class”** – A group of positions (or one position) that:
 - Has similar duties and responsibilities;
 - Requires like qualifications; and
 - Can be equitably compensated by the same salary range.
3. **“Class Title”** – The official designation or name of the class as stated in the job description. It is used on all personnel records and actions. Different working or office titles may be used for purposes of internal administration.
4. **“Position”** – A group of currently assigned responsibilities requiring the full-time or part-time employment of one person. A position may be occupied or vacant.
5. **“Reclassification”** – The assignment of an existing position from one class to a different class due to significant change in duties or responsibilities.

D-1.3. Allocation of Positions

1. **Initial Allocation** – The County Administrator is responsible for initial allocation of the position of every employee of the County to one of the classes in the Plan.
2. **New Positions** – When a position is established and approved by the County Commission, the department head involved must submit in writing a comprehensive job description that explains in detail the duties and responsibilities of the new position. The County Administrative will investigate the described duties and allocate the position to one of the classes in the Classification Plan; however, if a suitable class does not exist, the County Administrator will recommend that the County Commission establish a new class. Upon recommendation and approval of such new class by the County Commission, the County Administrator will allocate the new position to the new class.
3. **Allocation Appeals** – If an employee has reason to believe that his or her position has been improperly allocated, the employee may, with the knowledge of the department head, request the County Administrator to review the allocation of the position. Any such request must be submitted in writing and contain a statement of justification. If not resolved to the employee’s satisfaction, the employee may appeal to the Grievance

Committee as described in the Grievance and Appeal section of this Handbook.

D-1.4. Maintenance of Plan

1. **Vacancies** – All department vacancies (other than those occurring in the Sheriff's Department, Probate Court, Magistrate Court, Clerk of Superior Court, and the Tax Commissioner's Office) must be pre-approved by the Board of Commissioners prior to replacement, to insure that the position is still necessary for efficient operation of the department.

Each time a vacancy occurs, the department head must submit a description of the vacant position to the County Administrator for review of the allocation of the position. The County Administrator may waive this requirement for cases in which he/she has determined that no material changes have occurred.

2. **Departmental Reorganization** – Each time a department or division under the jurisdiction of a department head is significantly reorganized, the department head must submit to the County Administrator new position descriptions for all affected positions.
3. **Changes in Duties of Position** – The County Administrator may require departments or employees to submit position descriptions on a periodic basis or at any time the County Administrator has reason to believe that there has been a change in the duties and responsibilities of one or more positions.
4. **New and Abolished Positions** – Each time a new position is established, a position description will be written and approved by the County Administrator and incorporated into the existing Plan. Likewise, an abolished position will be deleted from the Classification Plan.

D-1.5. Reclassification

Reclassification is the assignment of an existing position from one pay level to a different pay level, due to a significant change in duties or responsibilities of that position. Reclassification will result in the following:

1. Raising a position from one classification level to a higher classification level involves the following:
 - An employee who is reclassified to a higher classification level will receive a minimum ten percent (10%) pay increase, or move to the job rate of the new classification level, whichever is greater.
 - No evaluation period will apply.
 - The reclassification does not affect pay other than as noted above.

2. Lowering a position from one classification level to a lower classification level involves the following:
 - An employee who is reclassified to a position with a lower pay level will not receive a salary reduction unless the salary exceeds the maximum rate of the lower level.
 - No evaluation period will apply.
 - The reclassification does not affect pay other than as noted above.
3. Remaining within the same classification level, but with different job responsibilities, involving the following:
 - No evaluation period will apply.
 - The reclassification does not affect pay other than as noted above.

D-1.6. Procedures for Reclassification

The procedure for reclassification is as follows:

1. The request for reclassification and a draft of the job description must be submitted to the County Administrator or a designee.
2. The County Administrator or a designee will evaluate and complete the reclassification request and the job description, and recommended a pay level to the Board of Commissioners. Upon approval, the County Administrator will notify the Department Director.
3. All reclassifications will become effective on the next October 1 (the beginning of the new budget year) unless otherwise stated.
4. The reclassification of a position will occur without the posting of job vacancy unless the position is vacant.

D-1.7. Interpretation of Job Descriptions

The County's job descriptions are descriptive, and not restrictive. The use of a particular description as to duties, qualifications, or other factors shall not be held to exclude others of similar kind or quality.

D-1.8. Official Copy of Plan

The County Administrator is responsible for maintaining an official copy of the Position Classification and Pay Plan. The official copy will include a list of class titles and job descriptions, plus all amendments. A copy of the official Plan shall be available for inspection by the public under reasonable conditions during business hours.

D-1.9. Amendments to Plan

When there is need for establishment of a new position or abolition of a current position, the County Administrator will submit findings and recommendations to the County Commission, which will take such action as deemed appropriate. All

changes in the Position Classification and Pay Plan will be in the form of amendments to the Plan approved by the County Commission.

D-2. Rate of Pay

D-2.1. New Appointees

New employees will be paid the minimum rate (job rate) of pay for the class to which they are assigned, subject to the following exceptions, which require the approval of the County Administrator and the County Commission. These exceptions include:

1. If an appointee to a particular position does not meet the minimum qualifications stated in the job description, or if certain classes of work require a formalized training period which is of unusual duration, and the needs of the County can best be met by placing an individual in a training (probationary) capacity, the County Administrator may designate such position as a “trainee” (probationary) position. Appointment to a “trainee” position shall be at a salary range below the minimum rate established for the classification, at a rate not more than 5 percent below the minimum rate.
2. If an appointee exceeds the minimum qualifications for a particular position, the employee may be paid a rate above the starting salary for the classification, upon recommendation to the County Administrator and upon approval from the Board of Commissioners. To determine if an appointee exceeds the minimum qualifications, the County may look at education, direct or indirect experience, or related training. Such list is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive.

D-2.2. Promotion

1. A promotion occurs when:
 - An employee is transferred to a position classified in a higher pay range.
 - An employee’s position is reclassified to a classification having a higher pay range.
2. Promotions may occur within a department or between departments.
3. Procedure for promotion – All job vacancies will be posted internally for at least five business days. All eligible employees are welcome to apply to current opening and should provide complete job-related information indicating why they are the best qualified for the position. Department supervisors who recommend an employee promotion due to the job duty changes should review and revise the employees job description with Human Resources. All major changes in responsibilities should be noted for the recommendation.

4. Pay Upon Promotion – Pay changes will be consistent with the County’s current pay scale. Employees who are promoted will be assigned the appropriate pay grade for the position. The employee will receive a minimum 10% pay increase for the promotion. All promotions will be justified by experience, longevity, certifications/education and will be noted by the department supervisor recommending the promotion. The department supervisor will submit the appropriate forms to Human Resources for review and the County Administrator will make the decision on the promotion request.
5. Eligibility – Defined as any employee who is not on disciplinary probation or suspension and those who are current and valid with all certifications/licenses required for the position to be filled.

D-2.3. Demotion

1. A demotion occurs when:
 - An employee is placed in a different classification having a lower pay range.
 - An employee’s position is reclassified to a classification having a lower pay range.
2. When an employee receives a demotion of the type described above, the employee’s pay remain unchanged or may be reduced at the discretion of the County Commission.
3. When an employee’s position is reallocated to a lower pay level due to a reclassification, the employee’s pay will not be reduced. The employee will be permitted to continue at the present rate of pay, but will not be entitled to a salary increase when the current salary exceeds the maximum for the new assigned range.
4. When an employee voluntarily requests a demotion to a position in a lower classification, and has successfully competed for and received the new position, the employee’s pay will be lowered to the pay level of the new position at the same pay step as previously paid.

D-2.4. Reinstated Employees

A reinstated employee will be paid at a salary rate within the approved salary range for the position to which the employee is reinstated. The rate of salary at appointment will be determined as described in Section D-2.1 (*New Appointees*).

D-2.5. Part-Time Employment

Pay for part-time employment in a position will be equivalent to the hourly rate of the pay for full-time employment in similar positions.

D-2.6. Overtime

Overtime is time worked beyond forty (40) hours in a workweek. The workweek is from Monday to Friday. Overtime must be authorized by the Department Head, subject to the approval of the County Administrator. Compensation for overtime will be in accordance with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Funds must be available in overtime budgetary accounts before overtime work is performed.

D-2.7. Increases in Pay

Increases in pay for County employees will be governed by the following principles:

1. All employees will be initially employed for a probational period of six (6) months. (Unless established by the individual elected officials, employees of elected officials do not serve a probationary period.)
2. The Pay Plan consists of forty-eight pay grades. The County Commission may add or delete pay grades as deemed necessary.
3. Each pay grade includes a pay range with a probationary rate, an entry rate, and steps placed at 3.1 percent (3.1%) intervals.
4. After an employee reaches the maximum rate within a pay grade, the employee will be entitled only to across-the-board salary adjustments and merit payments in bonus form.
5. Each department head (excluding specific exempted departments, as described in the *Introductory Statement* of this Handbook), must file an annual performance evaluation report on each employee within the department. This report will become a permanent part of the employee's personnel file.
6. When feasible, the County Commission may, at its discretion, appropriate funding for the purpose of rewarding an employee's meritorious service in the form of a merit bonus. In order for an employee to receive a merit bonus, the following are required:
 - Performance evaluation for current fiscal year;
 - Recommendation by the Department Head; and
 - Recommendation by the County Administrator.
7. In order to move to a higher pay grade, an employee must apply for a new position within a higher pay grade or be an incumbent in a position which has been reclassified to a higher pay grade.

8. Annually, the County Commission will consider increasing salaries within all pay grades on an equal percentage basis. During budget hearings, the County Commission will determine what percentage increase, if any, will be allotted for increases to employee salaries. The percentage for cost-of-living pay increases will change the entry rate, steps, and maximum rate for each pay grade the salary schedule.
9. Merit increases may be granted upon recommendation of the department head, administrative approval of the County Administrator, and budgetary approval of the County Commission. Contingent upon funding by the County Commission, department heads may initiate a merit increase application annually for each regular full-time and regular party-time employee until the maximum pay rate for the employee's classification has been reached.

D-3. Applications and Examinations

D-3.1. Announcement of Vacant Positions

Except as otherwise provided below, all vacancies in the Classified Service will be publicized. The announcements will specify the titles and salary ranges of vacant positions, qualification requirements, manner of making application, and other pertinent information, and will specify the deadline for submitting applications. A deadline for application submissions will be set for a minimum of 14 days following the announcement. Deadlines for applicant submissions set for less than 14 days from the announcement must be approved by the County Administrator (or designee). Applications received after the stated deadline will not be considered.

D-3.2. Application Forms

All applicants for positions in the Classified Service of the County must submit an application with the County Administrator (or designee). All applicants must provide proof of citizenship as required by law. Application forms must include information concerning training, experience, and other pertinent information, and must be signed by the applicant. No person will be employed by the County unless and until that person has submitted an employment application.

D-3.3. Employment Requirements

All positions in the Classified Service will be open only to persons who meet the requirements listed on the public announcement of the position. Such requirements may include, but are not limited to, experience, education, and training.

D-3.4. Receipt and Duration of Applications

Application from all persons desiring employment with the County will be accepted during regular business hours and placed on file. Applications will be kept on file for one year. Applicants wishing to reapply during this year may update their previous application or complete a new application for each announced position vacancy.

D-3.5. Rejection of Applications

The County Administrator (or designee) may reject any application which indicates the applicant is deficient in any or all of the requirements as specified in the public announcement of the vacancy. An applicant may also be rejected for fraud or deception in the completion of the application or fraudulent or deceptive conduct while meeting pre-employment testing requirements, or if his or her past record of employment is determined to be unsatisfactory by the County Administrator.

D-3.6. Open Competitive Appointments

Positions to be filled by recruitment from outside the Classified Service will be filled through a competitive process open to the public. This process may include, but will not be limited to, ratings of training and experience, job-related tests, or any combination of these as determined by the County Administrator (or designee). Factors such as education, job-related qualifications, and experience may be taken into account in making employment decisions. The applicant will be required to submit proof of education and military service, or any other such documentation as is deemed necessary.

D-3.7. Summary – Hiring Procedure

Except where approved by the County Administrator, the procedure to be followed when filling a regular full-time or regular part-time position vacancy will be as follows:

1. Positions will be advertised in the legal organ and posted on official bulletin board for a minimum of fourteen (14) days. Applications received after posted deadline will not be considered.
2. Applications received will be forwarded to department.
3. Applications will be reviewed by department to determine applicants meeting minimum qualifications for position. A scoring grid or spreadsheet may be developed to rank applicants by specified criteria.
4. Tests, where applicable, to determine proficiency level of required skills, will be completed prior to interviews.
5. Applicants will be interviewed using a standard set of interview questions approved by the County Administrator (or designee). Employment interviews will be conducted by a minimum of two interviewers of equal or higher rank to the vacancy sought to be filled. The Human Resource Director, or his/her designee, is allowed to attend any interview, is practical.
6. If the vacancy to be filled is that of a department head for the County, such hiring process will be dictated by any directive, policy, or procedure as established by the Board of Commissioners.
7. If necessary, a short list will be developed for conducting second interviews prior to making final recommendation.
8. Employee references will be checked on applicants, to include at least one (1) personal reference, and one (1) prior employer reference. References will not be accepted if made by a family member of the applicant.

9. Best applicant will be selected by determining which applicant has the best overall training, prior work experience, required skills, and successful work history, and meets all other requirements for employment with the County.
10. If position sought requires driving a vehicle, top applicant will be required to permit the County to obtain a three (3) year driver history to verify that applicant is in compliance with the County Driving Policy.
11. The top applicant will be advised to submit a Criminal History Consent Form to authorize the Peach County Board of Commissioners to perform a criminal history background check on the applicant.
12. The department head will complete an Interview Summary Form stating reasons why applicant selected and why other applicants were not selected.
13. The department head will submit all applications, interview questions, reference information, Interview Summary Form, Personnel Action Form, and letter recommending applicant selected to the County Administrator for review.
14. County Administrator or Designee will check for compliance with all procedural requirements and verify that sufficient justification for selection has been documented.
15. All applicants will undergo a pre-employment drug screening.
16. If drug screening is negative and background is sufficient, Human Resources department will send a job offer letter to candidate.

D-3.8. Promotional Appointments

Promotional appointments will be open to all employees who meet the training and experience requirements included in the position description or who have an equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

D-4. APPOINTMENTS

D-4.1. Initial Appointments

All employees of the County, except appointees to department director positions, shall be appointed upon recommendation of the appropriate department head and approval of the County Administrator. Appointments to fill department director vacancies shall be appointed upon recommendation of the County Administrator and approval of the Board of Commissioners. Department heads whose positions are elected officials have approval authority for their respective departments.

D-4.2. Types of Appointments

When initially hired, each person employed by the County Commission will be assigned to one of the following types of appointments by the County Administrator.

1. **Probationary** – A probationary appointment is an appointment to a position in the Classified Service. An employee serving a probationary period (6 months) may be discharged or returned to his or her previous position at the

discretion of the department head and will not have the right to utilize the grievance and appeal procedure set forth in this Handbook.

2. **Provisional** – A provisional appointment may be made only after applications for the position have been taken, no qualified applicant has been found, and there is need to fill the vacancy. No provisional appointment will be continued for more than three (3) months from the date of appointment, unless, due to extenuating circumstances, an extension is approved by the County Commission. An employee may not attain “regular employee” status while serving on provisional appointment.
3. **Temporary** – Temporary appointments may be made to fill positions which are authorized and established only for a specified period of time, or when the work of a department requires the services of one or more employees on a seasonal or intermittent basis, or in cases of emergency. Temporary appointments will not extend beyond the conclusion of a budget cycle or beyond expenditure of approved budget appropriations. Funds for temporary positions must be requested through the budget cycle each year by the department head, and these funds are subject to approval by the County Commission.
4. **Regular Appointments** – A classified employee given an initial probationary appointment will be given a regular appointment upon completion of the probationary period.

D-5. Probationary Period

D-5.1. Duration

The probationary period will be six (6) months in duration. During an employee’s probationary period, the employee may be released or returned to his or her previous position without notice, by recommendation of the Department Head to the County Administrator, and with the approval of the County Administrator. The Department Head may recommend to the County Administrator that the probationary period of a newly hired, transferred, or promoted employee be extended for a period not to exceed three (3) months.

D-5.2. Promotional Appointments

The probationary period will be used in connection with the promotional appointments in the same manner as it is used for initial appointments.

D-5.3. Transfer Appointments

The probationary period will be used in connection with employees placed in different positions due to transfer.

D-5.4. Interruption of Probationary Period

If an employee is laid off (i.e., terminated not by fault of the employee) during a probationary period, and that individual is subsequently reappointed in the same department, he or she may be given credit for the portion of the probationary period completed before the lay-off.

D-5.5. Demotion During Probationary Period

A Department Head may demote an employee during the probationary period with approval of the County Administrator. A written report of the demotion must be filed with the County Administrator before the effective date of demotion.

D-5.6. Probationary Period Reports

Prior to the expiration of the employee's probationary period, the department head must notify the County Administrator in writing of whether or not the employee has completed the probationary period. Failure to send such a notice within twenty (20) working days of the expiration date of the probationary period will be construed as completion of the probationary period. The Department Head is to maintain documentation on the employee's performance during the probationary period to assure that performance needing correction is communicated clearly to the employee.

D-5.7. Paid Time Off (PTO)

If a new employee leaves the service of the County prior to completing his/her first year of employment, the employee will not be entitled to any payment of accrued PTO. Employees placed on probation due to promotion or transfer will not lose their accrued PTO.

SECTION E – EMPLOYMENT CHANGES AND TERMINATIONS

E-1. Promotions

A promotion is the movement of an employee from one position to another position which has a higher job classification and a higher level of responsibility.

It is the County's policy to fill vacancies in the Classified Service, as far as practicable, by promotion. As a standard practice, every attempt will be made to fill a promotional vacancy from within the County's work force, if there is a qualified applicant already working with the County and such action would not be in conflict with the County's anti-discrimination or fair employment practices. To this end, closed examinations may be held at the call and under the direction of the County Administrator. However, promotional vacancies may be filled with applicants external to the County's work force at the discretion of County management. Employees with a disciplinary action in the previous six (6) months or under a performance improvement plan will not be considered for promotion.

Political or Partisan Endorsement Prohibited – Promotions to positions in the Classified Service will be based upon merit and fitness for promotion only. No consideration shall be given to political or partisan endorsement.

Promotional Examinations – The County Administrator will conduct competitive promotional examinations in accordance with these regulations. In competitive promotional examinations, the County Administrator will admit to the examination all employees who meet the published qualification requirements.

E-2. Transfers

A transfer is the movement of an employee from one position to another position which has the same job classification and a similar level of responsibility. The County may initiate a transfer, or an employee may request a transfer. If a position is open at an equivalent pay grade, an employee may request transfer to that position. If the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for that job are not the same as for the present job, the employee will be tested and interviewed for the new position. The County may transfer an employee to any position, at any pay grade, if the employee is qualified to do the work and if the salary is not changed.

Intra-Departmental Transfers – The appropriate Department Head may, at any time, transfer an employee in the Classified Service under his or her jurisdiction from one position to another in the same department if the positions are classified at the same pay grade. An intra-departmental transfer of an employee to a position in another class and pay grade may be made only with the approval of the County Administrator. The County Administrator must be notified of such changes in assignment.

Inter-Departmental Transfers – A transfer of an employee from one department to another requires the approval of both department heads concerned and the County Administrator. Requests for such transfer must indicate how the employee concerned meets the qualification requirements of the class to which the transfer is proposed. The effective date of transfer should be negotiated between the department heads to determine the date most beneficial to both departments.

Pay Grade After Transfer – An employee who is transferred will continue at the same rate of pay unless otherwise provided.

E-3. Demotions

A demotion is the movement of an employee from one position to another position which has a lower job classification and a lesser degree of responsibility. The County may initiate a demotion or an employee may request a demotion for a variety of reasons, such as elimination of a position or poor performance in a position. When a demotion occurs, the employee's pay rate will be reduced to an appropriate step within the pay grade of the new job.

E-4. Separation/Termination of Employment

Separation and Termination of employment are an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization. Since employment with the County is based on mutual consent, both the employee and the County have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause, at any time.

Employees are expected to return all County property immediately upon Termination of employment.

E-4.1. Types of Separation From the Classified Service

Separations from positions in the Classified Service will be designated as one of the following:

1. Resignation
2. Abandonment of Job
3. Lay-off or Reduction in Force
4. Inability to perform the essential functions of the position with or without a reasonable accommodation.
5. Loss of job requirement necessary to perform the essential functions of the position.
6. Termination
7. Retirement
8. Death

E-4.2. Resignation

A resignation is a voluntary separation of employment initiated by the employee. An employee wishing to resign in good standing should submit to the Department Head written notice of resignation at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the date of resignation and thirty (30) days in advance for management personnel. Failure to comply with this guideline will be entered as such in the personnel records, and may negatively impact the employee's eligibility for re-employment.

Immediately upon receipt of such notice, the department head will forward the resignation notice to the County Administrator of the Human Resource Director. The County Administrator may exempt an employee who has given less than required notice if, in their judgment, exceptional circumstances warrant such exemption. Also, under certain circumstances, County management may choose not to accept an employee's resignation, and may instead choose to discharge the employee.

Only employees who provide two weeks' notice of resignation and work the full two-week period will receive payment for unused but accrued PTO.

E-4.3. Abandonment of Job

An employee not on authorized leave of absence who fails to report for work for three (3) consecutive days may be terminated from the service of the County for job abandonment in accordance with Section F-2 (Disciplinary Actions). Any employee terminated for job abandonment has the right of appeal to the Grievance Committee in the manner set forth in Section F-3 (Grievances and Appeals) of this Handbook.

E-4.4. Lay-Off or Reduction in Force

Any involuntary separation not related to an employee's conduct shall constitute a lay-off or reduction in force.

1. **Reasons For Layoff** – Any employee may be laid off because of shortage of funds or work, abolishment of the position, material changes in the duties or organization, or related reasons beyond the employee's control which do not reflect dissatisfaction with the service of the employee. The duties previously performed by any laid-off employee may be reassigned to other employees holding positions in appropriate classes.
2. **Notice to Department Head** – Whenever the lay-off of any employee becomes necessary, the County Commission will notify the department head, at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the intended action or any notice as is otherwise required by state or federal law, of the necessity for such lay-off and the reasons therefore. The department head will then furnish to the County Administrator the names and job titles of the employees to be laid off, and the order in which such lay-off will be affected.
3. **Order of Lay-Off** – Should it become necessary to reduce the number of employees within a given class in any department, such employees will be laid off on the basis of the following two factors to be weighted equally:
 - Length of service in class, and
 - Length of service with the County.

If an employee believes an error has been made in determining lay-off order, he or she may request an administrative review by the County Administrator.

4. **Special Cases** – If a department head determines that retention of a certain employee is essential to the effective operating of the department because the employee possesses special skills or ability, and if the department head wishes to retain that employee in preference to another with another position, then the department head will submit a written request to the County Administrator. Such notification shall set forth in detail the specific

skills and abilities possessed by the employee and the reasons why that employee is essential to the effective operating of the department. With approval of the County Commission, the individual may be retained.

5. **Notice to Employees** – Regular employees to be laid off will be notified in writing by the County Administrator at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the effective date of the lay-off or in accordance with State and Federal laws.
6. **Demotions** – Any regular employee scheduled to be laid off will have the right to be demoted to a lower classification, provided that a vacancy exists and the employee is qualified to fill the position in the lower classification.
7. **Reemployment List** – Former employees who were separated from County service by lay-off and who desire to be considered for reemployment with the County will be placed on the reemployment list. Such persons may remain on the reemployment list for a period not to exceed one (1) year.
 - A. Former employees will be listed by seniority in terms of service as defined in Section E-4.4.C (Order of Lay-off) above, and will be offered reemployment for the first vacancy that becomes available in the same classification in which they were employed at time of separation. All employees appointed to a position in this in this manner will serve the stated probationary period for that position; if the employee does not complete the probationary period, he or she will be separated from County service without right of appeal.
 - B. A person on the reemployment list may voluntarily accept a position at a lower classification level than his or her former position.
 - C. If a person placed on the reemployment list does not accept the first offer for reemployment in a position having the same classification as the position held at separation, he or she will be removed from the reemployment list. Such persons will no longer have guarantee of reemployment rights when a vacancy occurs, but may be considered for reemployment on the same basis as other applicants.

E-4.5. Essential functions of the Position

Any employee who is unable to adequately perform the essential functions of his or her job because of loss of a necessary license or other necessary equipment will be separated by lay-off from employment in that position, until such license or requirement is re-obtained. The license or requirement should be reacquired within a reasonable length of time, not to exceed six (6) months, or the employee will be dismissed.

E-4.6. Termination for Cause

Termination constitutes discharge from employment for cause and will be governed by the provisions of Section F-2 (Disciplinary Actions) of this Handbook or otherwise identified herein.

E-4.7. Retirement

The retirement of an employee will consist of the voluntary separation of an employee who has met the requirements of age and length of service under the laws governing any applicable pension fund of which the employee may be a member.

E-4.8. Death/Disability

In the event of an employee's death, separation will be effective as of the date of the death. All compensation, including annual leave pay, due to the employee as of the effective date of separation will be paid to the beneficiary of the employee, to the surviving spouse of the employee, or to the estate of the employee, as may be determined by state law or by the applicable executed documents in the employee's personnel file.

Grievance Hearing – The grievance hearing procedures outlined in Section F-2 (Disciplinary Actions) of this Handbook apply to abandonment of job, inability to perform the essential functions of the position, loss of a job requirement necessary to perform the essential functions of the position, and Termination as defined in this Employment Handbook.

E-4.9. Status of Benefits at Separation/Termination

The status of the employee's benefits will be explained at separation. Different criteria exists for payment, continuation, or termination of benefits, in accordance with the terms of each benefit plan. Any accrued, vested benefits that are considered due and payable at termination will be paid. The employee will be notified in writing of any benefits that may be continued, and the terms, conditions, and limitations of such continuance. In the event of a Termination for cause accrued but unused PTO will not be paid.

E-4.10. Severance

Any type of severance payment to separated employees will be determined by the Peach County Board of Commissioners on a case-by-case basis.

SECTION F – PERFORMANCE ISSUE AND GRIEVANCES

F-1. Performance Evaluations

F-1.1. Evaluation of Employee Performance

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time County employees.

The County has established a uniform method of evaluating an employee's job performance for the purpose of employee development. Official performance appraisals for both full-time and part-time employees will be completed as scheduled by the Department Head and Human Resources. The type of system utilized will be at the discretion of the County, and is subject to change without prior notice. The performance evaluation may also be used in determining merit bonuses; as a basis for training, promotion, demotion, transfer, or dismissal; and for other purposes described in these policies. In no case should employees view the evaluations as a right of the employee, or as an obligation of the County; rather, they are a management tool to be used at the County's discretion.

Wage increases are not automatic. Employees are hired at a rate that is competitive with what other employers would pay for similar skills. An employee may receive a wage increase based upon the tasks performed and the manner in which they perform these tasks. Budgetary considerations or marginal performance by an employee may result in little or no salary increase.

Managers or supervisors may choose to delay an employee's official performance appraisal if the employee has been absent or on leave for a significant period of time during the relevant review period. Any such decision to delay a performance appraisal should be communicated to the Human Resources Department.

Employers are evaluated on work-related performance including quantity and quality of work, general work habits, and other factors directly relating to individual task performance. The performance appraisal must be signed by the employee, the supervisor preparing the appraisal, and must continue through the chain of management to the department head, elected official, or designee.

The employee performance appraisal is intended to be and must be an honest and complete assessment of an employee's job performance. The supervisor must use the performance appraisal to make note of both the positives and the negatives related to an employee's performance, and should make specific note of any challenges and deficiencies in performance. The performance appraisal should also set forth a plan for improvement of employee performance where appropriate. Failure by the supervisor and/or department head to honestly assess and record an employee's job performance during a performance appraisal can give rise to difficulties where an objective review of the employee's performance history may be needed for other purposes later in the employee's career.

F-1.2. Definitions:

1. **Employee:** All full-time and part-time employees on the payroll of the County who have been employed with the County for more than six (6) months.
2. **Performance Review Form:** The performance evaluation form to be completed on each full-time and part-time employee.
3. **Satisfactory Performance Standard:** When an employee is performing the duties and responsibilities for his or her job at the level of efficiency for which he or she is being paid to perform.
4. **Unsatisfactory Performance:** When the employee is not meeting the performance standards required for the compensation being paid.
5. **Above Satisfactory Performance:** When an employee is exceeding the performance standards of a satisfactory performer. The type of performance should be noted in the comments section of the County Performance Review form.

F-1.3. Performance Evaluation Procedures

Each party involved in the process of evaluating an employee's job performance has specific responsibilities, which are outlined below:

1. **Evaluating supervisor:** The immediate supervisor is responsible for determining and apprising the employee of the performance requirements established for the position, assigning work to the employee, developing the employee's capabilities on the job and evaluating the employee's overall performance. The supervisor establishes and/or monitors the performance requirements and (a) compares the employee's actual performance with the performance requirements of the job and pay received for performing the duties spelled out in the position description, (b) discusses the results of the employee performance evaluation with the employee, (c) plans with the employee for needed improvements or job development of activities that will help the employee grow in the position, (d) completes the Performance Evaluation form before the employee step date and (e) forwards the completed evaluation form to the next level supervisor or to the department head.
2. **Department Head:** (a) Directs the implementation of the employee performance evaluation plan within their department, (b) reviews the performance evaluation submitted for consistency and adherence to this employee performance guideline, (c) follows up to see that each employee is evaluated and that the evaluation has been discussed with the employee and (d) maintains the discipline necessary to ensure the employee's performance evaluation is meaningful and that employees who are in disagreement with their evaluation are given an opportunity to discuss it with not only the supervisor but their department head. Employee evaluations cannot be changed without the concurrence of the evaluating supervisor. "Department head" includes elected officials, appointed officials, and other County officials.

3. **Employee:** The employee is responsible for (a) working cooperatively and diligently to perform his or her job to the best of his or her ability, (b) requesting clarification of his or her evaluating supervisor if any work requirements or standards are not understood by the employee, (c) informing the evaluating supervisor of any special factors or circumstances that should be considered in evaluating his or her performance, and (d) accepting constructive suggestions given by the evaluating supervisor or department head for the improvement of the employee's overall performance.
4. **Human Resources Department:** Reviews all evaluations for conformity to guidelines.

F-1.4. Evaluation Period

Evaluations are continuous and normally performed at one-year periods, with the exception of the performance evaluation conducted after completion of the first six (6) months of service with the County, or first six (6) months of working in a new position.

Because of such events as shift assignment, new supervisor, etc., the employee may have been under the direction of more than one (1) supervisor during the evaluation period. In this instance, the involved supervisors should jointly evaluate (if possible) and sign the evaluation form.

SPECIAL NOTE: *It is the responsibility of all supervisors to constantly work with, correct and advise their employees of their performance status. The rating received and the comments made on the employee evaluation form should not come as a surprise to the employee. It is a responsibility of the supervisor and/or department head to assist his or her employees in developing to their fullest potential.*

F.1.5 Discussing Performance Issues During Evaluations

Except in the case of very recent events, supervisors should not wait until performance evaluations are given to offer employees with performance deficiencies corrective counseling or assistance. During performance reviews, supervisors should review past issues that have been discussed with the employee over the evaluation period, and should give the employee feedback with respect to their progress towards demonstrating the improvements required.

Supervisors must maintain records on all employee discussions, agreements, time schedules, disciplinary action, etc., with copies to be sent to the Human Resources Department for the employee's personnel file. These supervisor practices reflect good management, constructive oversight of employee performance, and good labor relations.

The type of system utilized will be at the discretion of the County, and is subject to change without prior notice. The performance evaluation may also be used in determining merit bonuses; as a basis for training, promotion, demotion, transfer, or dismissal; and for other purposes described in these policies. In no case should employees view the evaluations as a right of the employee, or as an obligation of the County; rather, they are a management tool to be used at the County's discretion.

Wage increases are not automatic. Employees are hired at a rate that is competitive with what other employers would pay for similar skills. An employee may receive a wage increase based

upon the tasks performed and the manner in which they perform these tasks. Budgetary considerations or marginal performance by an employee may result in little or no salary increase.

Completed evaluation forms are maintained in the employee's personnel file.

If the employee disagrees with any statement in an evaluation, the employee may submit, within five (5) days following the conference with his or her supervisor, a written statement which will be attached to the evaluation form and forwarded to the department head and the County Administrator. The written statement will become part of the employee's permanent file. This action does not constitute a grievance or appeal but is merely an administrative procedure requiring no action or response by County management or any of its designees.

F-2. Disciplinary Actions

The County seeks to resolve performance and conduct problems in the most positive and constructive manner possible. In order for the County to function effectively toward accomplishment of its objectives, it is essential that all employees conduct themselves in a manner that promotes attainment of these objectives. Accordingly, the County has established this policy to identify unacceptable behaviors, and appropriate measures to correct such behaviors, in order to provide involved employees with the opportunity to continue productive employment with the County. When situations arise which warrant disciplinary action, the guidelines described in this Section will assist in ensuring fair and consistent treatment of all employees.

F-2.1. Intent

Effective supervision and good employee relations should reduce to a minimum those instances necessitating disciplinary action. The establishment of rules and regulations and the imposition of disciplinary action for a violation thereof and are not intended to restrict the rights of any employee but are for the purpose of insuring the rights of all and for securing cooperation and orderliness for all employees. The severity of the disciplinary action imposed should be related to the gravity of the offense, the employee's record of disciplinary action, and the disciplinary action imposed in similar cases. The County will not allow discrimination against any employee because of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, creed, disability, pregnancy (and related medical conditions), childbirth (and related medical conditions) sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, genetic information including family history), or any other classification protected by applicable state or federal employment discrimination laws.

As an "at-will" employer, the County is not required to reasons for disciplinary action either in these policies or at the time of the disciplinary action. The County may discipline for any combination of reasons, for reasons not listed below, or for uncommunicated reasons, at any time.

The County reserves the right to proceed with any discipline that is appropriate up to and including termination. The County will exercise appropriate actions on a case-by-case basis.

F-2.2. Conduct Subject to Disciplinary Action

The following actions shall constitute cause for disciplinary action up to and including Termination, but the imposition of disciplinary action will not be limited to the offenses listed below:

1. The conviction of a felony, or of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude.
2. Excessive absenteeism.
3. Absence without approved leave, or failure to report after the expiration of a leave of absence.
4. Excessive tardiness.
5. Insubordination (refusal or failure to follow instructions or perform duties) or serious breach of proper discipline.
6. Inefficiency or incompetence.
7. Abuse or theft of County property.
8. The loss of a job requirement, such as the loss of a necessary license that prevents the adequate performance of the essential functions of the position.
9. The willful making of false statements to supervisors, officials, the public, boards, commissions, or agencies.
10. The violation of County ordinances, administrative regulations, departmental rules, or the rules and regulations contained in this Employee Handbook.
11. Violation of the Drug and Alcohol Free policy.
12. The discovery of a false statement in an application.
13. Acceptance of gratuities in conflict with State law or County ordinance.
14. Use of obscene, profane, hostile, threatening, abusive, derogatory, offensive, or disruptive language on County property towards the public, co-workers, or towards County management.
15. Sleeping on the job.
16. Theft, destruction, unauthorized use, or inappropriate removal or possession of property, including property of the County, other employees, customers, or others during business with the County.
17. Disorderly conduct or violence in the workplace, including fighting, threatening, bullying, cat calling, gambling in the workplace, abusing, or intimidating other individuals; using physical force against another individual except in self-defense; provoking a fight; causing a disturbance; engaging in horseplay; engaging in lewd, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate conduct.
18. Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace.
19. Sexual or other unlawful harassment or discrimination.
20. Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of County-owned/-leased or customer-owned/-leased property.
21. Unauthorized use of County communication systems (such as computers, e-mail, cyber security, internet, telephone, voice mail, pagers, regular mail, etc.); County vehicles; or other County-owned or County-leased equipment.
22. Failure in performance of job duties including failure to work assigned hours, unapproved overtime, excessive breaks.

23. Failure to meet quality or productivity standards.
24. Violation of safety policy including improper use of equipment, tools, machinery or vehicles, contributing to unsafe or unsanitary conditions.
25. Failure to report an accident or injury on the job.
26. Discourteous treatment of visitors/patrons.
27. Leaving a scheduled work shift without authorization.
28. Dishonesty; falsification of County documents or records, including timekeeping records, clocking in or out for another employee, personnel records, employment applications, or expense reports.
29. Unsatisfactory performance or conduct; conduct or behavior that negatively reflects on the County.
30. Mishandling of County funds; failure to follow County procedures governing reporting or use of funds.
31. Any other action which the County reasonably believes presents a negative impact to or negative reflection on the County.

F-2.3. Types of Disciplinary Action

Department Heads and the County Administrator, subject to the employee's right of appeal as provided in Section F-3 (Grievances and Appeals), shall have the following alternatives when disciplining an employee:

1. Reprimands

A. Oral Reprimand – An oral reprimand is a disciplinary measure which may be issued for an incident, action, or behavior which does not warrant more severe disciplinary action. In the oral reprimand, the Department Head or County Administrator will verbally and privately explain to the employee that he or she is being reprimanded, describe the problem, and indicate what must be done to correct the problem. There will be written documentation of all oral reprimands. A copy of same will be forwarded to Human Resources and filed in the employee's personnel file.

B. Written Reprimand – A written reprimand is a disciplinary action may be issued for more severe violations and for the first or second offenses. Written reprimands may be in the form of a letter, memorandum, or counseling statement. Written reprimands will be issued by the Department Head or the County Administrator to the affected employee; the employee will sign a statement declaring that he/she has received a copy of the written reprimand; and a copy of same will be forwarded to Human Resources and filed in the employee's personnel file.

2. **Suspension**

A Department Head or the County Administrator may suspend without pay any employee under his or her supervision for a period of not less than one (1) nor more than ten (10) working days. A written statement specifically setting forth the reasons for the suspension, and the length of time of suspension, will be furnished by the Department Head or the County Administrator to the affected employee. A copy of the statement will be sent to Human Resources and filed in the employee's personnel file within one (1) working day of the effective date of the action.

An employee may be suspended for a period longer than ten (10) working days upon the express approval of the County Administrator. A written statement advising the employee the length of the suspension will be furnished by the County Administrator and to the affected employee within one (1) working day of his or her decision.

When an employee has been accused of serious misconduct or criminal behavior, the employee may be suspended during which the County Administrator will conduct an investigation to determine whether the pending charges will affect the employee's job performance or whether the conduct which resulted in the criminal conduct is the basis for disciplinary action. If the County Administrator determines that an employee's return to work would not be in the best interest of the County, the employee will be given notice of his or her proposed indefinite suspension without pay, including the reasons for the suspension; and the employee will be given an opportunity to respond to the County Administrator concerning those reasons. After the employee has had an opportunity to respond, the County Administrator will issue a decision on the indefinite suspension.

3. **Demotion**

A Department Head or the County Administrator may reduce the salary of a regular employee within the range provided in the Pay Plan or demote the employee to a lower graded position.

A written statement specifically setting forth the reasons for any such action will be furnished by the Department Head to the affected employee, and a copy of the statement will be forwarded to the County Administrator within one (1) day of the effective date of the action and filed in the employee's personnel file.

4. **Termination**

When an employee is charged with misconduct that serves as cause for Termination or the conduct is repeated without correction, the Department

Head or the County Administrator will immediately notify the affected employee. The employee will be advised of his/her right to appeal the decision under the grievance procedure. Terminated employees will not receive accrued but unused PTO.

5. **Notification and Right of Appeal**

Any written notification submitted to an employee who is being subjected to disciplinary action shall set forth the right of the employee to appeal such action to the Grievance Committee in the manner as described in Section F-3 (Grievances and Appeals). Note: oral and written reprimands are not grievable actions.

6. **Compliance Coordinator**

In certain instances, the County Administrator may appoint the Compliance Coordinator to investigate employee misconduct. The Compliance Coordinator is selected and serves at the pleasure of the Peach County Board of Commissioners.

F-3. Grievances and Appeals

F-3.1. Intent

Employee grievances should receive prompt consideration and equitable resolution. Wherever possible, grievances should be resolved or adjusted informally, and both supervisors and employees will be expected to make every effort to do so. For grievances which cannot be so resolved, employees are entitled to process the grievances as provided in this policy.

These procedures governing the processing of grievances and providing the right of appeal are established for the purpose of eliminating or correcting justifiable complaints or dissatisfaction of regular employees, or certain complaints of probationary employees and applicants; insuring that all employees will be afforded fair, equitable, and expeditious review of their grievances without fear, coercion, or discrimination; and providing a systematic and orderly method for resolving complaints and differences between employees and supervisory or management personnel.

F-3.2. Procedure for Grievance Resolution

Any employee who has been demoted, suspended, or Terminated, or who is aggrieved as a result of the interpretation and application of these rules and regulations, and any applicant or employee (regular or probationary) who has been subjected to any alleged discriminatory action that is prohibited by Federal law, shall have the right to utilize the grievance and appeal procedure set forth in this Handbook.

1. A formal grievance may be initiated by filing it in writing with the Human Resources Director within three (3) working days of when the employee knew or should have known of the grievable action. The Human Resources Director will make appropriate inquiries, consider all facts surrounding the action, review all documents and make every effort to resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the employee or the applicant. Human Resources will respond to the employee in writing within seven (7) working days.
2. Should the employee (not including Department Heads) not be satisfied with the decision of the Human Resource Director, the employee may, within five (5) working days, file an appeal of the Human Resource Director's decision in writing which clearly states the reason and purpose of the appeal and any supporting documentation to the County Administrator. The appeal must clearly outline the issues and include all evidence to support the employee's position. Within five (5) working days of an employee's appeal, the Human Resources Director will forward the entire grievance file including all written and recorded documentation and the Human Resource Director's reasons for its decision to the County Administrator. The County Administrator will render a decision within fifteen (15) working days of the employee's appeal.

*Department Heads will appeal directly to the Grievance Committee as described in step 3 below.

4. Should the employee still not be satisfied with the decision of the County Administrator or be a Department Head who suffered a grievable action, the employee may submit a written appeal which must include all supporting written and recorded documentation to the Grievance Committee to the County Clerk and/or his or her designee within five (5) working days of the County Administrator's decision or the Department Head's grievable action.
5. The Grievance Committee is comprised of the Peach County Board of Commissioners. Within seven (7) working days of an employee's appeal, the Human Resource Director or the County Administrator will forward the entire grievance file including all written and recorded documentation and a written response to the Grievance Committee outlining the reasons for the decision. The Grievance Committee will review all submitted documentation. The Grievance Committee has complete discretion to either: (1) schedule an in-person grievance hearing or (2) decide to not schedule an in-person grievance hearing, thus rendering the previous decision final. If the Grievance Committee decides to schedule an in-person grievance hearing, it will be scheduled within thirty (30) working days of the appeal and will hear evidence from both sides. The Human Resources Director or the County Administrator will provide evidence on behalf of the County. The Grievance Committee will render a full and final decision within thirty (30) working days of either the written appeal or the in-person grievance hearing, whichever is later.

6. The decision by the Grievance Committee will be final.
7. No punitive, discriminatory, or adverse action shall be taken against any employee or applicant on account of the filing of a grievance or an appeal.

SECTION G – ATTENDANCE AND PAYROLL ISSUES

G-1. Personnel and Payroll Records.

Personnel Transaction Forms – All personnel appointments, separations, and other actions will be recorded on forms provided by Human Resources to be signed by the County Administrator.

Personnel Files – the County maintains a personnel file on each employee. A separate file folder is prepared and maintained for each employee and contains the original or a copy of all pertinent documents, including the employee’s job application, resume, training records, performance evaluations, documentation of personnel actions (such as salary changes, transfers, promotions, or separation), benefits enrollment forms, and other employment related records. Records of employees’ personnel actions will be maintained in accordance with all legal requirements and guidelines.

Public Inspection – Personnel files are the property of the County, and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only management and supervisory personnel who have a legitimate reason to review information in a file are allowed to do so. However, information relating to employees and former employees may be available for public inspection at reasonable times and in accordance with Title 50, Chapter 18, Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Employees who wish to review their personnel file should contact the County Administrator; with reasonable advance notice, employees may review their own personnel file in County offices and in the presence of an individual appointed by the County to maintain the files.

Changes in Personal Information – It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the immediate supervisor or manager of any changes in their personal data, including changes in name, address, telephone number, marital status, number/names of dependents, person to contact in case of an emergency, educational accomplishments, or other information pertinent to their employment, benefits, or payroll actions.

Destruction of Records – After separation of employment, employee service records will be maintained in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Such records may be kept in their original form or in any other duplicate form the County Administrator deems appropriate. All other records, including correspondence, applications, and examinations, may be destroyed after seven (7) years.

G-2. Requests for References

Any County employee receiving a request for reemployment verification or references on another employee should forward such request to Human Resources. The Human Resources office is responsible for responding appropriately to any inquiries regarding personnel records or credit references on present or previous employees. Any response to such inquiries must be limited to factual information that can be substantiated by County records.

No “letter of recommendation” (such as those addressed “To Whom It May Concern”) may be given to any employee or former employee from a County representative or on County letterhead, without the express approval of the County Administrator.

G-3. Payroll Procedures

G-3.1. Initial Appointment – Upon the appointment of any employee. The employees will have to be verified by Human Resources before the submission and approval of payroll claims; and provide documentation to the identity of the new employee.

G-3.2. Attendance Records – Regular attendance reports shall be prepared and submitted by each department. Non-exempt employees are required to maintain accurate time records using equipment and/or forms provided by the County, and in accordance with requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Each employee is responsible for accurately recording and reporting time worked, including the time they begin an end work each day, as well as any time they begin or end any split shift or department from work for personal reasons. Overtime work must be approved before it is performed. Failure to have overtime work approved will result in disciplinary action up to and including Termination.

Any activities involving alteration, falsification, or tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee’s time record, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including Termination of employment.

Supervisory personnel are expected to ensure that time records are properly maintained and are accurate upon submission for payment. All wage and hour records are subject to audit by the U.S. Department of Labor.

G-3.3. Payroll Deductions – The law requires that the County make certain deductions from every employee’s compensation (such as withholding taxes or social security taxes). Only those deductions required by law, plus any employee-authorized contributions (such as premiums for insurance benefits or retirement contributions) will be deducted from employee earnings. Court-ordered deductions such as wage garnishments or child support payments will be deducted in accordance with the appropriate court order. Other voluntary deductions are prohibited.

- G-3.4. Paydays** – Paydays are determined according to a specific schedule, and management will inform employees of the current schedule and any changes in schedule.
- G-3.5. Paychecks** – Paychecks are issued each pay period on a regularly scheduled basis. There will be no advances in pay. The County takes all responsible steps to ensure that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday, and that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck. In the unlikely event that an error in amount of pay should occur, the employee should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of his/her supervisor, manager, or the County Administrator, for the error to be researched and corrected.
- G-3.6. Payroll Adjustments** – Each department head is responsible for immediately notifying the Finance Department of any occurrences or actions taken which require an adjustment in the salary or wage of any employee under that department head’s supervision. Upon receipt of such notice, or upon the taking of any action by the Grievance Committee or the County Commission which requires an adjustment in the salary or wage of any employee, the Human Resources office will make such payroll adjustments for the employee(s) as may be required. Officers and employees may be held liable for the return of salaries improperly, accidentally, or illegally paid to employees.

G-4. Work Schedules and Overtime

- G-4.1. Work Schedules** – The established work week and the hours of work shall, insofar as practicable, be uniform within occupational groups, and will be in accordance with the needs of the County and the reasonable needs of the public who may be required to do business with various County departments. The work schedule for each department will be established by the Department Head, with the advice and approval of the County Commission. Employees will be required to work the hours assigned. Staffing needs and operational demands many necessitate variations in starting and ending times of an employee’s assigned schedule, as well as variations in the total number of hours scheduled each day or each week.
- G-4.2. Overtime** – When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours, employees may be scheduled to work overtime hours. When possible, advance notification of these mandatory assignments will be provided. Overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as practical to all employees qualified to perform the required work. All overtime must be authorized in advance by the supervisor or department head, and funds must be available in overtime budgetary accounts before overtime work is performed. Overtime compensation is paid to nonexempt employees in accordance with Federal wage and hour laws at a rate of one-and-one-half times the employee’s regular rate of pay. Overtime pay is based on actual hours worked; time off for holidays, sick leave, vacation, or other

non-worked time will not be considered hours worked for purposes of calculating overtime payments.

Exempt (salaried) employees are not eligible for overtime, and will receive their normal salary, regardless of hours worked.

- G-4.3. Comp Time** – As an alternative to compensating employees for overtime in the form of additional payments at the increased rate provided in the preceding section, the County may compensate non-exempt employees, as defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”), for overtime in the form of Compensatory Time or “Comp Time.” Each hour of overtime worked shall be equal to one-and-one-half hours of Comp Time. An employee may only accumulate up to 240 hours of Comp Time, or 480 hours of Comp Time if the employee is engaged in public safety, emergency response, or seasonal activities, as those terms are defined in the FLSA and its associated regulations.

Employees must expend all accrued Comp Time before other forms of vacation time, including Paid Time Off (PTO) may be used. The County reserves the right to unilaterally schedule an employee’s Comp Time for them in order to reduce the employee’s accrued balance of Comp Time. All accrued Comp Time must be fully expended by the one-year anniversary from the date such Comp Time was accrued. Any time not used by the one-year anniversary will be paid out at the employees’ overtime rate. Employees may request to use Comp Time within a reasonable time of the anticipated leave, not less than ten (10) days before such anticipated leave, and unless the requested leave is unduly disruptive, the leave will be allowed. Supervisors have the discretion to approve Comp Time that is reasonably requested less than ten days before such Comp Time is requested to be used.

Upon an employee’s separation or retirement from the County, the County will pay out any accrued but unused Comp Time pursuant to the FLSA standards and requirements.

This policy shall constitute the agreement and understanding required by 29 U.S.C. § 207(o) regarding the use of Comp Time.

G-5. Attendance and Tardiness

- G-5.1. Attendance** – To maintain a productive and safe work environment, the County expects all employees to be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on the County since workload falls behind schedule and other employees must assume heavier workloads.

The County recognizes, however, that there are instances when absences are unavoidable. An absence is considered acceptable if it is reported promptly and if the reason for the absence is appropriate. If an employee is unable to report to work as assigned, the employee must personally notify his/her supervisor immediately. This notice must be given as far in advance of the time assigned for reporting to work as possible. In circumstances where it is impossible for the employee to personally talk to the supervisor, the employee should (a) have someone else make the notification as soon as possible, and (b) personally call and discuss the situation with the supervisor just as soon as circumstances permit. An employee absent due to illness should advise his/her supervisor on a daily basis of the employee's status and estimated date-of-return. An absence will be considered unacceptable whenever property notification of the absence is not given, or where the reason for the absence is, itself, unacceptable.

G-5.2. Tardiness – It is important to arrive on time, to promptly return from breaks, and to leave work on schedule. Tardiness is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with appropriate disciplinary action up to and including Termination.

G-5.3. Attendance Records – Each department head is responsible for the attendance of all persons in his or her department. The County Administrator will maintain complete attendance and other records on each employee, including annual leave, sick leave, overtime, and other activities.

Frequent or excessive absences or tardiness for any reason are disruptive, and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including Termination of employment.

G-5.4. Notification to County Administrator – When an employee is absent without leave, or had taken leave of any kind, his or her department will notify the County Administrator or his/her designee in writing within the same pay period in which the absence occurs, or the leave is taken. Such notification may be by notation on a timecard of attendance sheet or by memo, giving specific information covering type of leave, date, hours, and other pertinent data.

G-6. Breaks

The schedule or most full-time employees provides a meal break that is on the employee's time and is not compensated by the County. Meal breaks should be taken on a staggered schedule to accommodate operating requirements. A meal break schedule will be developed within each department, subject to changes based on the department's workload and coverage.

Occasional breaks may be provided during the work shift as a brief rest period of the employee, independent of the longer meal breaks. Breaks are contingent upon workload and coverage and may not be provided in times of heavy workload or insufficient coverage at the discretion of the supervisor. Breaks may not be "saved" or lumped together. If an employee misses a scheduled break, the break will be considered lost.

SECTION H – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

H-1. General Benefits Information

Eligible employees of the County are provided a wide range of benefits. Eligibility for benefits is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. Employees can refer to the Hiring & Classification issues section of this Handbook for a description of each category and the benefits eligibility associated with each category. Some benefit programs require contributions from employees, and some are fully or partially paid by the County. A number of programs (such as Social Security, worker's compensation, and unemployment insurance) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law.

The benefits available to employees represent a significant portion of the employee's overall compensation package. All employees are encouraged to become familiar with the benefit programs for which they are eligible and take advantage of these valuable benefits.

H-2. Holiday Benefits

For the purpose of establishing uniformity in administration of paid holidays, all County offices (except those which must remain open on a holiday because of work requirements) will be closed on the designated holidays listed below.

H-2.1. Designated Holidays – The following days are designated as official paid holidays for eligible County employees:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

H-2.2. Holiday Schedule – The County will publish the approved holiday schedule at the beginning of each calendar year. Any changes to the designated list of holidays may be made at the County's discretion. When a holiday falls on a Saturday, it will generally be observed on the preceding Friday. When a holiday falls on a Sunday, it will generally be observed on the preceding Monday.

H-2.3. Eligibility – All regular employees of the County will be eligible for holiday leave for the days listed above, and other days as designated by specific action of the County Commission. Regular employees will be paid for holidays based on the

number of hours they normally work each day, exclusive of overtime. Holiday pay will be calculated based on the employee’s regular hourly rate as of the date of the holiday. Temporary status employees will not be paid for holidays not worked.

H-2.4. Compensation for Holidays:

- A. Overtime** – Holiday hours do not count as actual hours worked for the purposes of determining overtime.
- B. Working on Holidays** – Some employees may be required to work on a designated holiday. An employee who is required to work will receive pay for the hours worked in addition to the holiday pay.
- C. Holidays While On Authorized/Unauthorized Leave** – An employee who is not on approved leave and fails to report on his or her scheduled work day before and after a holiday will not be paid for the holiday. Holidays which occur during approved annual or sick leave shall not be charged against the employee’s annual or sick leave accruals.

H-3. Paid Time Off (PTO)

- H-3.1. General** – Paid Time Off (hereinafter “PTO”) is for rejuvenating both physical and mental faculties and all employees are urged to avail themselves of PTO. When PTO is taken, payment for such leave will be made at the end of the pay cycle in which the PTO leave was taken.
- H-3.2. Eligibility** – All full-time employees will be eligible to earn and accrue PTO benefits. Part-time and temporary employees are not eligible for PTO benefits.
- H-3.3. Rate of Leave Accrual** – PTO benefits will be provided to all employees on January 1 of each calendar year. Employees under temporary, part-time, provisional, or emergency appointments, and employees not deemed to be in the Classified Service, will not be granted PTO under these policies.

PTO will be accrued according to the following schedule:

Years of Service	Total Annual Amount
0 yr to 5 yrs	120 hrs
5 to 10 yrs	160 hrs
10-15 yrs	200 hrs
15 or more yrs	240 hrs.

Employees who are hired during the year shall be entitled to a prorated amount of PTO hours based on the month of their hire according to the following schedule:

Month of Hire	Prorated PTO Hours
January	120 hrs
February	110 hrs
March	100 hrs
April	90 hrs.
May	80 hrs.
June	70 hrs.
July	60 hrs.
August	50 hrs.
September	40 hrs.
October	30 hrs.
November	20 hrs.
December	10 hrs.

H-3.4. Notice of Leave – Each request for PTO should be submitted to the employee’s immediate supervisor. PTO may be taken only after approval by the appropriate department head so that, insofar as practicable, the department can function without the hiring of additional temporary help. PTO will be authorized in units of days or hours only.

H-3.5. Maximum Allowable Accumulation – Unused PTO up to 240 hours per year will be carried into the next calendar year. It is the intent of these rules for employees to take their PTO yearly. Accordingly, the maximum PTO an employee can have at any time is the total amount allotted to that employee based on their years’ of service, plus the amount of PTO, up to 240 hours, that is carried from the previous calendar year. Therefore, no payment will be made for non-use of PTO except as described below, unless approved by the Board of Commissioners. If an employee has accrued sick leave under previous versions of the County’s policies, that sick leave may be used by the employee during the course of the employee’s employment as long as the employee provides appropriate documentation from a medical provider to substantiate the need for the use of sick leave.

H-3.6. PTO Buyback

The County will buy back up to 80 hours of unused but accrued PTO per year.

H-4. Bereavement Leave

Up to five (5) days of Bereavement Leave per year within the two (2) week period following the date of death of each immediate family member may be available to eligible employees for absences from work.

- H-4.1. **Immediate Family Member** – “Immediate family” includes the employee’s spouse, parent, child, stepchild, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or similar member of spouse’s immediate family, or other relative who lives in the employee’s household. Special consideration will be given to a relative who is domiciled in the employee’s household or any other person whose association with the employee was similar to any of the above relationships.
- H-4.2. **Eligibility** – Full-time employees in the Classified Service are eligible to receive up to three (3) working days of Funeral Leave benefits, on an annual basis.
- H-4.3. **Procedure to Request Funeral Leave** – If an eligible employee wishes to request time off due to the death of an immediate family member, the employee should notify his/her supervisor immediately. Approval of Funeral Leave will normally be granted, unless there are unusual business needs or staffing requirements. Employees may, with supervisory approval, use available PTO for additional time off as necessary.
- H-4.4. **Payment of Funeral Benefits** – Funeral Leave benefits are paid at the employee’s base hourly rate of pay at the time of the absence. The Funeral pay rate does not include overtime or any special form of compensation such as incentives, bonuses, or shift differentials. Funeral Leave compensation will not be advanced to any employee. Funeral Leave benefits are available only at the time of a death in the family, and only once during a calendar year, and may never accrue or carry over to another year.

H-5. Group Insurance Plans

The County offers a variety of options for medical, life, or other insurance coverage for eligible employees. The types of insurance plans available and the various options within each plan may vary from year to year. The County frequently pays for all (or the majority of) the employee’s insurance premiums in a given plan, and employees may have the option of purchasing additional coverages or family coverages at group rates.

Insurance Programs available to eligible employees may include: ***Health Insurance, Dental Insurance, Life Insurance, Vision Insurance, Short-Term Disability Insurance, and/or Long-Term Disability Insurance. Information regarding insurance options and enrollment procedures is provided to new employees during the initial hire period. New employees must complete appropriate enrollment forms within the designated timeframe.

Annual enrollment sessions are typically conducted at a designated time each year, and employees may elect to change coverages only at that time (unless the employee experiences a “qualifying life status event” as defined by plan documents; in which case the employee may only change

enrollment within thirty (30) days of the qualifying event). Any employee who wishes to enter a plan after their new-hire enrollment period, or who wishes to upgrade any coverages, may be required to show evidence of insurability, which must be approved by the insurance carrier.

Insurance Benefits During Unpaid Leave of Absence – A participating employee who is placed on unpaid leave of absence status will be required to pay for both the employee’s share and the County’s share of his/her insurance premiums, or coverage will be terminated. The employee should make advance arrangements to pay premiums directly to the County, to avoid loss of important benefits.

COBRA – Continue of Insurance Benefits – Group insurance benefits will terminate at the end of the employee’s separation date month. However, the Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified dependents the opportunity to continue medical insurance coverage under the County’s health plan when a “qualifying event” would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Typical qualifying events include resignation, termination of employment, death of employee, change in eligibility status, leave of absence, divorce or legal separation, or a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements. Under COBRA, the employee or dependent pays the full cost of coverage at the County’s group rates, plus an administration fee. The insurance provider will provide a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when the employee becomes eligible for coverage under the County’s health plan. The notice contains important information about the employees’ rights and obligations.

H-6. Worker’s Compensation Insurance

The County operates under and in accordance with Georgia Workers’ Compensation Laws. An employee who is temporarily disabled because of an injury or illness sustained directly in the course and scope of employment may be covered by the provisions of the State of Georgia’s Workers’ Compensation Act. The rules and regulations of the Act will govern all workers’ compensation issues. Workers must report all accidents immediately to the employer by personally advising the employer.

Employee safety at work is important. Because of this, safety standards and procedures should be followed at all times. Worker’s Compensation is provided to ensure the safety of employees and, if a compensable injury does occur, worker’s compensation provides payment of medical and rehabilitation expenses within the limits of the law.

H-6.1. Leave on the Day of a Workers’ Compensation Injury or Illness -

Employees will receive leave without pay of the injury or illness for any treatment resulting in lost work time. Employees may supplement their leave with any balance of accrued PTO.

H-6.2. Follow-up Medical Visits for Workers’ Compensation Injury or Illness -

Employees requiring medical or therapy visits during regularly scheduled working hours to reach maximum medical improvement will receive leave without pay for the required treatment resulting in lost time. Employees may supplement their leave with any balance of PTO.

H-6.3. Insurance Benefits during Workers' Compensation Leave - While on workers' compensation leave, an employee will continue to be covered under the County's insurance programs. The employee's share of premiums is to be paid directly by the employee unless the employee is using PTO, in which case premiums will continue to be paid through payroll deduction. If the workplace injury or illness in additional (continuous) time away from work, the employee will be placed on Family and Medical Leave Act for their own serious health condition and will be subject to the County's FMLA policy.

Employee elects to supplement their workers' compensation payments with PTO. As outlined under the Workers' Compensation Act, employees are entitled to receive weekly Temporary Total Disability Benefits if an employee misses more than seven (7) days from work. The first seven (7) day period is considered a "waiting period," during which time the employee is not eligible to draw Workers' Compensation Income Benefits. If elected, you will be paid Workers' Compensation Income Benefits for any days that you miss in excess of seven (7) days. If an employee is out longer than twenty-one (21) consecutive days, the employee will be paid Workers' Compensation Income Benefits for the seven (7) day waiting period unless regular wages are received from Peach County.

H-6.4. Reporting an Accident or Injury – Any employee who is injured on the job must immediately report such injury to the Safety Coordinator and to Human Resources, regardless of how minor the injury may appear to be. This ensures prompt and appropriate medical treatment, allows for timely completion of required reports in accordance with law, and enables an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible. Work injuries and occupational diseases should be reported in writing whenever possible. The worker may lose the right to receive compensation if an accident is not reported within thirty (30) days. The County will supply free of charge, upon request, a form for reporting accidents; and will also furnish, free of charge, information about workers' compensation.

H-6.5. Use of Designated Physicians – A worker injured on the job must select a doctor from the Panel of Physicians which is posted in each department. If a physician is chosen who is not on the Panel of Physicians, the employee will be liable for any medical expenses incurred. The physician selected from the Panel may arrange for appropriate consultations, referrals, and other specialized services as the nature of the injury requires. If the employee is dissatisfied with the physician selected, he or she may make one change without permission of the employer/insurer, self-insurer claims office, or the State Board of Workers' Compensation.

H-6.6. Post-Accident Drug Testing for Accidents or Injuries – All employees involved in work-related accidents or injuries are subject to post-accident drug screening testing.

H-6.7. Return to Work – The County will work to return injured employees to work as soon as possible.

Because the County recognizes that their employees are a valued and limited resource, this program is designed to:

Assist the medical recovery process by providing a focus on a goal for return of the injured employee.

Benefit employees by allowing them to return to full wages as soon as possible.

Benefit employers by reducing workers' compensation costs.

All employees who have lost time due to a work-related injury or illness must obtain a doctor's statement for the time missed and a "release statement" to return to work. Doctor's notes that specify "Light Duty" restrictions must be adhered to by both the employee and the supervisor. Employees who are out of work due to a workers' compensation injury will not accrue PTO and are not eligible for holiday pay.

H-6.8. Off-Duty Activities – Neither the County nor its worker's compensation insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of worker's compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by the County. Employees may not moonlight while out on workers' compensation.

H-7. Training Development

The County promotes in-service training of its employees for the purpose of improving the quality of services provided to the community and to assist employees in preparing themselves for advancement. To that end, the County may:

1. Establish standards for training programs.
2. Ensure that training programs are carried out as approved.
3. Prepare certificates or other forms of recognition for persons who satisfactorily complete approved courses and programs.
4. Develop supervisory and management training and other types of training programs common to all departments.

The County will advise employees of any training programs or opportunities pertinent to their functions as such programs become available. All employees attending training programs must provide proof of attendance.

H-8. Retirement Program

All eligible full-time employees and some elected officials are eligible for the county pension offered by the county. Employees are enrolled into the county pension after two years of continuous employment and vested at five (5) years of service. All personnel with ten (10) years

of County service may retire on the day in which the employee reaches age fifty-five (55) or age sixty-five (65) with compensation commensurate with that set forth in the Retirement Policy of the County. In addition to eligible retirement ages, employees will have the opportunity to enroll into an early election option provided by the country. The option allows an employee to retire at age fifty-five (55) with twenty (20) years of service. In doing so, this plan stipulates the employee must contribute 4% (gross) of his or her bi-weekly pay. The county also provides a deferred compensation plan. Employees may enroll at any time and contribute post or pre-tax contributions. The county does not match employee contributions.

H-9. Section 125 – Flexible Spending Accounts

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) are available to all eligible full-time employees. Flexible Spending Accounts give the employee an opportunity to set aside a specific amount of funds for medical purposes. The FSA is only available during the open enrollment.

H-10. Credit Union

The county is in partnership with a local credit union. The employee may request details from the human resources department.

H-11. Direct Deposit of Paychecks

Employees will receive all pay from the county through direct deposit. Direct deposit forms are provided the human resources office or may be obtained on the County website listed under HR documents. All completed forms must be submitted to human resources for processing.

H-12. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The EAP program is provided for all employees. The program provides professional, confidential support services and information for a wide variety of life areas such as family issues, workplace and managing stress. All employees may contact human resources for additional information.

SECTION I – LEAVES OF ABSENCE

I-1. Types of Leave

The County Government recognizes several types of leave that are available to employees. The nature of the leave determines whether a type of leave will be paid or unpaid. They are:

- Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Funeral Leave (see Employee Benefits section for discussion of Funeral Leave benefits)
- Family and Medical Leave - Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Civil Leave
- Military Leave

- Personal Leave
- Administrative Leave
- Absence without Approved Leave

I-2. General Guidelines Governing Leave

Any employee applying for leave under a specific leave provision is responsible for the following:

1. Must follow appropriate procedure to request a leave or return from a leave.
2. Must communicate regularly with the supervisor or manager regarding the status of their leave.
3. Must submit any required documentation related to the return to work.
4. Must maintain any required payments for benefits to be continued during the leave.

Subject to approval of the department head and the County Administrator, a regular employee in the Classified Service may be granted a leave of absence in accordance with the terms of respective type of leave, and with the following conditions:

1. The employee must submit a written leave request to the immediate department head.
2. The leave must be for a justifiable reason.
3. Approval of such leave must not cause an undue hardship on the County.
4. The Department Head will forward all requests for leave without pay with his/her recommendations to the Human Resources office. Leave without pay (except Military Leave) will be at the discretion of the County Administrator based on the business needs of the County.
5. Failure to report for duty promptly at the end of the leave may be cause for Termination of employment.
6. If an employee on a leave of absence accepts employment with another employer, the employee must notify his/her department head within three (3) days of acceptance. If the outside employment is deemed in conflict with the stated purpose of the leave, or with the County's policy governing outside employment, the leave is cancelled, and employment will be terminated (except for employees working for a governing agency during Military Leave).
7. If necessary for effective operation of the County, an employee granted leave without pay may be required to return to work before expiration of their leave. An employee who does not return at the required time is considered to have resigned and may be terminated.

Benefits During Leave – A leave of absence prevents a break in service, but no benefits (such as PTO or holidays) will accrue during a leave of absence (except for Military Leave). Benefits such as medical or life insurance will be suspended after thirty (30) days unless the employee chooses to pay the required contribution. Eligibility for these benefits will be reinstated if the employee returns to work during or at the end of the approved leave period.

I-3. Family & Medical Leave – Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

In accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), codified at 29 U.S.C. Sections 2611 *et seq.*, all employees of the County are covered, and may be eligible, under the Act. The law requires the County to provide up to twelve (12) weeks of leave to employees for qualifying FMLA reasons. The 12-month period for calculating leave is based on a “rolling” period that moves forward from the employee's first day of leave.

I-3.1. Eligibility – To be eligible for Family & Medical Leave under FLMA, an employee must be employed by the County for at least twelve (12) months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) month period immediately preceding commencement of the leave. After satisfying these criteria, an employee may take up to twelve (12) weeks of Family & Medical Leave per year as long as he/she works at least 1,250 hours in a (rolling twelve (12) month period as defined as a twelve (12) month period measured forward from the date an employee uses any Family & Medical Leave.

I-3.2. Intermittent Leave or Reduced Work Schedule – Leave may be taken intermittently in increments of one (1) hours, or by working a reduced schedule. However, in no event will the employee's right to FMLA leave exceed twelve (12) weeks in a single calendar year.

I-3.3. Allowable Use of Family & Medical Leave – Leave is allowable under FMLA for the following events:

- A. For birth of the employee's child.
- B. For placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care.
- C. To care for the employee's child, spouse, parent, or spouse's parent who has a serious health condition¹.
- D. For the serious health condition of the employee which renders the employee unable to perform the essential function of his/her position.
- E. Qualifying Exigency - Any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on “covered active duty” or twenty-six (26) weeks of leave during a single twelve (12)

¹ The FMLA defines a serious health condition as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider. Both physical and mental health conditions qualify for FMLA leave. For more information, please consult with Human Resources.

month period (measured from the date leave begins) to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the service member's spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave).twenty-six.

- F. Covered Service Member - An eligible employee may take up to twenty-six (26) weeks of unpaid, job protected leave in a single twelve (12) month period (measured beginning on the date the lave begins) to care for a covered service member who has incurred an injury or illness in the line of duty while on active duty in the Armed Forces. FMLA leave to care for a seriously ill or injured service member runs concurrently with other leave entitlements provided under federal, state, and local law. Leave that qualified as both leave to care for a covered service member and leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition during a single twelve (12) month period may not be designated and counted as both types of leave. Such leave will be designated first as leave to care for a covered service member. Unless otherwise required by law, no employee will be entitled to more than a combined total of twenty-six (26) weeks of leave in a single twelve (12) month period for any FMLA qualifying reason.

*The employee's entitlement to leave for the birth of a child, or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, expires at the end of twelve (12) month period which began on the date of the birth or of placement of child.

I-3.4. Procedures to Request Family & Medical Leave:

- A. **Request for Leave** – The employee must submit a written request for Family & Medical Leave.
- i. The employee must request Family & Medical Leave at least thirty (30) days before leave is to begin when the leave is foreseeable (such as an expected birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, or planned medical treatment of the employee or family member).
 - ii. If thirty (30) day's notice to request leave is not feasible due to medical emergency or change in circumstances, leave must be requested as soon as possible.
 - iii. In emergency situations where written notification is not possible, verbal notice will be accepted, to be followed by written request.
 - iv. All requests for FMLA Leave must be made through the Human Resources Department. Human Resources will provide all necessary FMLA forms.
 - v. Within five (5) business days of requesting Family & Medical Leave, the County will inform you whether you are eligible for Family & Medical Leave.

- B. Medical Certification** – If the requested leave is to care for a family member due to the employee’s own serious health condition, the employee must obtain a medical certification from a physician and return the completed medical within fifteen (15) calendar days.
- i. The County requires employees to submit a complete and sufficient certification for qualifying exigency or to care of a covered Service Member with a serious injury or illness. Failure to provide a complete certification may result in delay or denial of Family & Medical Leave.
 - ii. Human Resources may contact the physician to clarify any information given in the medical certification but may not request information beyond that described above.
 - iii. If there is any doubt as to the validity of the original certification, the County may require the employee to submit to another certification by another physician (at the County’s expense). The County may designate the physician, but it cannot designate a physician regularly employed by the County for any purpose. In the event the opinion given by the employee’s physician and the County’s physician differ, the County may require medical certification from a third physician (again at County expense). The third physician must be jointly approved by both the employee and the County, and this third opinion will be final and binding.
 - iv. The County may request re-certification every thirty (30) days for serious illness, or when the employee is under supervision of a health care provider.
- C. Designation of Leave** – The County will notify employee within five (5) business days regarding approval of leave or requirement for additional information.
- D. Status Reports During Leave** - The County may require periodic status reports from employee, including a statement regarding the employee’s intention to return to work.
- I-3.5. Status of Benefits During Family & Medical Leave** – Portions of Family & Medical Leave may be **paid** or **unpaid**, based on the accrued benefits available to the employee.
- A. Paid Leave** – if an employee has paid leave available such as accrued PTO, the employee’s paid leave will run concurrently with FMLA. During paid leave, the employee may be eligible for holiday benefits. Once an employee exhausts available paid leave, any additional leave taken for Family & Medical purposes will be without pay.
 - B. Unpaid Leave** – During periods of unpaid leave, no annual vacation leave, sick leave, or other benefits will accrue nor will holiday pay provisions apply.

I-3.6. Each employee is required to pay his/her contribution of insurance premiums while on paid and unpaid Family & Medical Leave. The employee is responsible for making arrangements to pay the required premiums on a timely basis. Employees who do not return to work following Family & Medical Leave will be liable for the amount of any health insurance premiums paid by the County unless the failure to return to work was due to the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition beyond the employee's control.

I-3.7. **Reinstatement Rights** – At the end of the twelve (12) weeks of Family & Medical Leave, the employee will have the right to reinstatement to his or her former position, or an equivalent, with all of the rights, privileges, and benefits that had accrued to the employee, as if the leave had not been taken.

I-3.8. **Procedures for Return to Work from Family & Medical Leave:**

- A. **Return from Medical Leave** – Prior to permitting reinstatement to work (and if the employee is otherwise eligible), the County will require a fitness for duty certification from his/her medical provider. Fitness for duty certifications are not required following Family & Medical Leave taken to bond after the birth of a child. The County may delay returning an employee to work until this certification is received. Failure to provide the certification may subject the employee to Termination.
- B. **Return to Former or Equivalent Position** – Every effort will be made to return the employee to the former position, or to a position of equal status, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. Except when legally required, the County cannot guarantee reinstatement in all cases. Employees must contact the County one-week (five (5) business days before Family & Medical Leave terminated).
- C. **Exceptions to Restoration** – Exceptions to restoration to an equivalent position when an employee returns include:
 - i. The employee is no longer able to perform essential functions of the job with or without a reasonable accommodation.
 - ii. The employee is considered a “key employee” where denial of job restoration is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the operation of the County.
 - iii. Employee unequivocally indicates his or her intent not to return to work.

I-3.9. **Failure to Return from Family & Medical Leave** – The failure of an employee to return to work on the agreed-upon date may result in separation of employment with the County.

I-3.10. Intermittent Leave - The FMLA permits eligible employees to take leave intermittently or on a reduced-schedule leave when medically necessary for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member or to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness. In the case of planned medical treatment, the employee must attempt to schedule the intermittent or reduced-schedule leave so as not to unduly disrupt the County's operations. Intermittent leave is not available for the birth, adoption or placement of a child unless agreed by the County. The County may transfer the employee temporarily to an alternative position with equal pay and benefits that better accommodates any recurring periods of intermittent leave.

I-3.11. Scheduled Medical Treatment – When scheduling elective medical treatment, the employee must consult with his/her supervisor in advance to ensure that their department's operations are not unduly disrupted by the employee's absence(s).

I-4. Civil Leave

The County encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities, such as jury duty, witness duty, or voting leave. Regular employees in the Classified Service may be eligible for leave time with pay or without pay to perform required civic duties.

I-4.1. Types of Civil Leave – Guidelines for each type of Civil Leave are as follows:

- A. Jury Duty** – Upon receiving a summons to serve on Jury Duty, the employee should immediately present a copy of the Jury Summons to his/her supervisor to allow for schedule adjustment. Either the County or the employee may request an excuse for Jury Duty if, in the County's judgment, the employee's absence would create serious operations difficulties.
 - i. When the jury is not meeting, the employee must report to work. The employee also will be required to report for work before and/or after the daily tour of Jury Duty, as time and circumstances warrant.
 - ii. In all cases, the employee must keep his/her supervisor informed of the employee's status.
 - iii. **Compensation During Jury Duty Absence** – Non-exempt (hourly) employees will be paid their base hourly rate for absence due to required Jury Duty.. Exempt (salaried) employees will receive their regular salaries during weeks in which they are absent for required Jury Duty. Proof of service of jury duty is required.. Jury Duty pay will be calculated at the employee's base rate (excluding any special compensation such as incentives, commissions, or shift differentials), and is calculated based on the number of hours the employee would otherwise have worked on the day of absence. If the employee works a partial day, he/she will be paid for their worked hours, plus enough Jury Duty hours to total the number of hours that would otherwise have been worked that day. Jury Duty will not be paid for time that the court did not require juror attendance and the employee did not

report to work (taking into consideration scheduled hours, travel time, or other circumstances).

- B. Witness Duty** – When ordered to appear as a witness in legal proceedings, the employee should present a copy of the subpoena to his/her supervisor as soon as possible so arrangements can be made to accommodate the absence. The employee is expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits. Depending on the nature of the case, the following guidelines will apply:
 - i. Litigation Related to County Business** – County employees who are subpoenaed or ordered to appear in court as a witness at the request for a party other than the County, the employee may be granted a maximum of two (2) days of paid time off to appear in court (normally 16 hours for regular full-time employees, or a prorated number of hours based on scheduled hours for regular part-time employees). If the employee is required to appear in court beyond the period of paid witness duty leave, the employee may use available annual vacation leave or may request an unpaid Civil Leave of Absence for Witness Duty purposes. Any exception to this policy may only be made upon approval of the County Administrator and based on the circumstances surrounding the particular case.
- C. Voting** – The County encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by participating in elections. Most employees should be able to vote either before or after their regular work schedule. Employees who are unable to vote in an election during their non-working hours will be allowed up to two (2) hours of time off without pay. Time off for voting should be taken at the beginning or end of the regular workday, or as an extension of the employee’s lunch/meal break.
- D. Benefits During Unpaid Leave** – During unpaid Civil Leave, benefit accruals such as PTO or holiday benefits will be suspended and will resume upon return to active employment.

I-5. Military Leave

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) protects the job rights of individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily leave employment positions to undertake military service or certain types of service in the National disaster Medical System. USERRA also prohibits employers from discriminating against past and present member of the uniformed services, and applicants to the uniformed services.

USERRA is administered by the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (BETS), and applies to persons who perform duty, voluntarily or involuntarily, in the “uniformed service,” which include the army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service commissioned corps, and reserve components of each of these services. Federal training or service in the army National Guard and Air National Guard also gives rise to rights under USERRA. In additionally, under the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Response Act of 2002, certain disaster response work (and authorized training for such work) is considered “service in the uniformed services” as well as any other category of persons designated by the President in time of war or emergency.

Uniformed services include active duty, active duty training, inactive duty training (such as drills), initial active duty training, and funeral honors duty performed by National Guard and reserve members, as well as the period for which a person is absent from a position of employment for the purpose of an examination to determine fitness to perform any such duty.

USERRA covers nearly all employees, including part-time employees, and applies to virtually all U.S. employers, regardless of size.

I-5.1. Employment Rights – Time during which you are on military leave shall not constitute an interruption of continuous employment, and you will not be subject to any loss or diminution of time, service, increment (merit increase), vacation, holiday privileges, or any other right or privilege by reason of such absence.

You will be paid your full salary or other compensation for any period of absence while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from duty, not exceeding a total of eight (18) days (144 hours total) in any one federal fiscal year.

NOTE: The military leave requirement does not apply to employees who are employed on a temporary basis.

I-5.2. Reemployment rights – You have the right to be reemployed in your civilian job if you leave that job to perform service in the uniformed service and:

- A. You ensure that your employer receives advance written or verbal notice of your service, unless such notice was precluded by military necessity or otherwise impossible or unreasonable;
- B. You have five (5) years or less of cumulative service in the uniformed services while with that particular employer;
- C. Your return to work or apply for reemployment in a timely manner after conclusion of the service or have submitted a timely application for reemployment, unless timely return or application was impossible or unreasonable; and
- D. You have not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge or under other than honorable conditions.

If you are eligible to be reemployed in the job that you would have attained, had you not been absent for military service (the “escalator” principle), with the same seniority, status and pay, as well as other rights and benefits determined by seniority. Reasonable efforts *such as training or retraining) must be made to enable you to qualify for reemployment. If you cannot qualify for the “escalator” position, you must be reemployed, if qualified, in any other position that is the nearest approximation to the escalator position and then to the pre-service position.

While you are performing military service, you are deemed to be on leave of absence and are entitled to the non-seniority rights accorded other similarly-situated individuals on non-military leaves of absence. The time limits for returning to work are as follows:

- A. **Less than 31 days of service:** By the beginning of the first regularly scheduled work period after the end of the calendar day of duty, plus time required to return home safely and an eight (8) hour rest period. If this is impossible unreasonable through no fault of your own, then as soon as possible.
- B. **31 to 180 days:** You must apply for reemployment no later than fourteen (14) days after completion of military service. If this is impossible or unreasonable through no fault of your own, then as soon as possible.
- C. **181 days or more:** You must apply for reemployment no later than ninety (90) days after completion of military service.

If you fail to report or apply for employee or reemployment within the appropriate period, you do not automatically forfeit your entitlement to your rights and benefits, but will be subject to the BOC's conduct rules, established policy, and general practices, pertaining to explanations and discipline with respect to absence from scheduled work

USERRA establishes a five (5) year cumulative total for military leave with a single employer, with certain exceptions allowed for situations such as call-ups during emergencies reserve drills, and annually scheduled active duty for training. However, an employee may complete an initial period of active duty that exceeds five (5) years.

An employer is not required to reemploy a person if:

- A. The employer's circumstances have so changed as to make such reemployment impossible or unreasonable;
- B. In the case of a person entitled to reemployment under 38 U.S.C. § 4313(a)(3),(a)(4), or (b)(2)(B), such employment would impose an undue hardship on the employer;
- C. The employment from which the person leaves to serve in the uniformed service is for a brief, non-recurrent period and there is no reasonable expectation at that such employment will continue indefinitely or for a significant period.

I-5.3. Right to be free from discrimination – If you (1) are a past or present member of the uniformed service; (2) have applied for membership in the uniformed service; or (3) are obligated to serve in the uniformed service – then an employer may not deny you initial employment, reemployment, retention in employment, promotion, or any benefit of employment, because of this status.

- I-5.4. Right to be free from retaliation** – An employer may not retaliate against anyone assisting in the enforcement of USERRA rights, including testifying or making a statement in connection with a proceeding under USERRA, even if that person has not service connection.
- I-5.5. Health insurance protection** – If you leave your job to perform military service of more than thirty (30) days, you may elect to continue your existing employer-based health plan coverage for you and your dependents for up to twenty-four (24) months while in the military. However, you may be required to pay up to 102% of the full premium. If you leave your job to perform military service of less than thirty-one (31) days, health care coverage is provided as if you had remained employed.

Even if you do not elect to continue coverage during your military service, you have the right to be reinstated under your employer’s health plan when you are reemployed, generally without any waiting periods or exclusions (e.g., pre-existing condition exclusions) except for service-connected illnesses or injuries.

I-6. Personal Leave

A Personal Leave of Absence without pay may be granted to **regular full-time** or **regular part-time** employees who have at least sixty (60) months of continuous service for situations that, in Management’s view, require such a leave. Personal Leave may be granted only when it will not adversely affect the interests of the County.

- I-6.1. Duration of Personal Leave** – A Personal Leave for up to three (3) months may be granted by a department head only with approval of the County Administrator. Any request for Personal Leave for a period exceeding three (3) months must be submitted to the County Commission, and if approved, may be granted for no more than one (1) year.
- I-6.2. Procedure to Request Personal Leave** – A written request for Personal Leave should be submitted by the employee to the immediate supervisor or department head as early as possible before commencement of the proposed leave. Approval may be granted based on the circumstances surrounding the request, including the reasons for leave, the requested duration, anticipated workload during the requested leave time, and staffing considerations. Approved Personal Leaves may not exceed three (3) months.
- I-6.3. Status of Benefits During Personal Leave** – Personal Leave is an **unpaid** leave of absence. Employees may wish to request and use any available PTO prior to commencing Personal Leave. As described, in the earlier section of General Guidelines Governing Leaves, benefit accruals such as PTO or holidays will be suspended during Personal Leave. Employees are responsible for paying the full costs of applicable insurance premiums while on Personal Leave and should make such arrangements prior to commencement of leave.

I-6.4. Other Employment During Personal Leave – An employee who obtains either part-time or full-time employment elsewhere while on an authorized Personal Leave is required to notify his/her department head in writing within three (3) days of accepting such employment. Such outside employment may not conflict with the stated purpose of the approved Personal Leave. In addition, such outside employment must conform to the County’s policy governing Outside Employment, as described in Section B-7 of this Handbook. If an employee on Personal Leave should accept employment with another employer but does not notify the County within three (3) days in accordance with this policy, the Personal Leave will be cancelled, and the employment will be terminated.

I-6.5. Return from Personal Leave – An employee returning from a Personal Leave will be entitled to employment in the same department, in the same equivalent class of employment, and at the same salary grade as at the time of commencement of Leave.

Any employee who wishes to return from Personal Leave before expiration of the approved leave period will be required to give his/her department head at least one (1) week notice. Upon receipt of such written notice, the employee will be permitted to return to work.

In all cases, any employee on Personal Leave who fails to return to work at the required time is considered to have resigned from employment.

I-7. Administrative Leave

An employee may be placed on Administrative Leave, with pay or without pay, at the discretion of the department head and with approval of the County Administrator when such action is deemed to be in the best interest of the County.

I-8. Absence Without Approved Leave

Any absence of an employee from duty, including any absence for a single day or part of a day, that is not authorized by a specific grant of Leave of Absence under the provisions of these regulations shall be deemed to be an unapproved absence without pay, and will result in disciplinary action up to and including Termination.

SECTION J – OTHER EMPLOYEMENT POLICIES

J-1. Dress Code

The County considers it very important that employees be well-groomed, neat, and dressed appropriately for the respective job functions. While the County Commission trust each employee’s common sense and good judgment, a dress code must be followed which appropriate to the work environment the County generally adopted a business casual dress code but emphasizes that some position of employment may call for more professional level attire. Appropriate dress and hygiene are important in creating a positive image to our customers, both internal and external.

1. The County expects employees to be well groomed, clean, neat and professionally dressed at all times. Work attire should complement an environment that reflects an efficient, orderly and professionally operated organization.

Under no circumstances may employees wear halter tops, strapless tops, spaghetti straps, tank tops, cropped tops, clothing with offensive wording, clothing that shows undergarments (sheet), torn clothing, clothing with holes, or tight fitting, revealing, or oversized clothing, flip flops, midriff tops, or sandals. All clothing must be clean, neat and proper fitting. Moreover, the County expects its employees to dress professionally every day.

2. Employees required to wear uniforms due to the nature of their work will have uniforms furnished by the County. If uniforms are provided, employees are expected to keep them cleaned, pressed and in good repair.
3. Proper personal hygiene is essential to and for all employees.

This policy applies to all County employees, appointed officials, contract employees and agents, and to state or federal employees doing business or working on County premises.

J-2. Use, Misuse, and Monitoring of County Property & Work Areas

The County provides work areas, desks, computers, vehicles, equipment, tools, supplies, and/or other County property for use by employees in association with their employment. These items are property of the County, and the employees are entrusted with the use of County equipment and supplies in order to perform their jobs. Under no circumstances should County property be utilized for the personal use of any employee. The misuse, abuse, or tampering, altering, or destruction of, misappropriation of County equipment, supplies, or funds can lead to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

The County can make no assurances about the privacy or security of any office, desk, file cabinet, lockbox, computer, or other County facility, and discourages the storage of valuables, perishables, or other personal items. Employees should keep any personal records or personal business at home.

- J-2.1. **Care of Property** – All employees are expected to follow operating instructions and safety guidelines, perform required maintenance, and exercise care in using equipment. Supervisory staff can provide guidance about each employee's responsibility for care and maintenance of equipment used on the job. Employees should notify supervisors if any equipment or tools appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair.

- J-2.2. **Property Inspections** – Since work areas, desks, computers, telephones, vehicles, equipment, tools, supplies or other property provided for use by employees in their jobs are County property, they are subject to monitoring and inspection by County management at any time. The County reserves the right to open and inspect any vehicle or items of any kind of County property, and the contents of same, at any time, with or without reason, notice, or consent. Employees on County property, and

the contents of any item carried by employees County property, may be subject to search.

- J-2.3. Workplace Monitoring** – Workplace monitoring may be conducted by the County to ensure quality control, employee safety, security, and customer satisfaction. Employees who regularly communicate with customers may have their telephone conversations monitored or recorded. The County may conduct video surveillance of non-private workplace areas, in an effort to maintain quality control, identify safety concerns, detect theft and misconduct, and discourage or prevent acts of harassment or violence. However, the County is sensitive to the legitimate privacy rights of employees, and every effort will be made to ensure that any workplace monitoring is done in an ethical and respectful manner.
- J-2.4. Monitoring Telephone Use** – Computers and communications systems furnished for the use of employees are County property and, as such, system usage and files may be monitored or accessed. The County reserves the right to access and search all directories, indices, diskettes, files, databases, faxes, e-mail message, voice mail messages, or other electronic transmissions contained in or used in conjunction with County systems, including the County’s computer, voice mail, e-mail, telephone, or other communications systems, with no prior notice. This right applies both during an employee’s employment with the County and after cessation of employment for any reason, including whether the cessation is voluntary or involuntary, for any reason or no reason, or by death or disability.
- J-2.5. Business Telephone Use** – Employees are expected to maintain a professional, courteous demeanor in telephone communications, and to incorporate proper telephone etiquette and customer service skills into all telephone conversations. To maintain consistency and effectiveness in County operations, employees should always use County-approved greetings when answering telephone calls.
- J-2.6. Personal Telephone Use** – Personal telephone calls during work time must be kept to a minimum. It is understood that certain personal calls are necessary; however, personal calls should be local and should be brief, as they disrupt the normal work process. In the event it becomes necessary for an employee to make a personal long-distance call during the workday, the employee should take an uncompensated break, and the call may not be charged to the County.
- J-2.7. Mail Systems** – The use of County-paid postage for personal correspondence is not permitted. This includes stamps, machine-applied postage, downloaded postage, shipping/ mailing services, delivery services, or any other type of mail system funded by the County.
- J-2.8. Return of County Equipment** – Each employee is responsible for County property/items issued to him/her, in their possession, or in their control. Such items may include vehicles, radios, equipment, tools, keys, pagers, cell phones, manuals,

written materials, County funds or checks, County credit cards, or other items. Employees are expected to return all County property immediately upon request or upon separation of employment. In the event of theft, destruction, or damage of County issued equipment from the employee's home or vehicle, the County will issue an invoice to the employee for the cost of the replacement equipment. The invoice will be for insurance claim purposes only, and the employee will not be liable for the cost since the theft was out of the employee's control. The employee must file a claim with their insurance and remit any proceeds relevant to the stolen county property of Peach County Board of Commissioners.

In the event of the loss of County issued equipment, where no third party is involved or liable, the employee will be charged the lesser of the current value of the equipment and the cost of the replacement equipment. The current value of the equipment will be determined using the following formula:

$$\text{Purchase price} + \text{Equipment Life (stated in months)} \times \text{Remaining Life (stated in months)} = \text{Current Value of Equipment}$$

The cost of the replacement equipment shall be determined by the actual cost of comparable equipment as determined by competitive quotations.

The County may take appropriate action to recover or protect property not returned upon request.

J-3. Internet Policy

The County provides internet service as a tool to assist authorized employees in performing their work efficiently. This tool, and the work product it contains, is the property of the County and should be used for business purposes only. Employees who do not require access to the Internet as part of their official duties may not access the Internet using County equipment under any circumstances.

J-3.1. De Minimis Use – The County will allow “*de minimis*” personal use of the internet, meaning that a limited amount of personal communications, while not sanctioned, is not entirely prohibited by this policy so long as all County policies are followed. Generally, *de minimis* personal use includes such uses as adding a personal comment to an official email, sending a short personal note to a colleague, or other personal interactions that are a routine part of day-to-day business interaction. Reasonable judgment should be applied to individual circumstances. The County retains sole discretion to determine what use is considered *de minimis*, and to discipline for all other use.

J-3.2. Personal Internet Accounts – No personal Internet accounts (paid for by the employee) may be accessed using County equipment during regular work hours at any time.

J-3.3. Inappropriate Use – Use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

- A. “Inappropriate Use” is defined as a violation of the intended use or purpose of the internet authorization, such as use of recreational games or chain letters, attempts to gain unauthorized access, harassment, threats, racial slurs, jokes or epithets directed to any protected group, advocacy of the supremacy of any racial group, or any other actions that are disruptive of the internet or internet users.
- B. Inappropriate use includes obscene activities, or violations of generally accepted social standards for the use of a publicly owned and operated communication system. Obscene activities include, but are not limited to, the receipt, storage, or distribution of profanity or other offensive language and sexually explicit materials, including nudity and other graphic or textual depictions of sexually explicit activities.
- C. Inappropriate use also includes illegal activities, or any violations of Federal, State or local law.
- D. Inappropriate use also applies to copyright violations. Most information on the Internet is copyrighted or protected under the law. It is illegal to reproduce or distribute copyrighted information regardless of the source. Violation of copyright laws can also involve heavy fines.

J-3.4. No Right to Privacy – An employee’s rights while accessing the Internet by use of County property do not include the right to privacy. The County reserves the right to monitor in any way the activities of employees while accessing the Internet. All Internet activity is subject to login and monitoring to provide a chronological history of events and to maintain audit trails of usage. The County may automatically monitor Internet activity via software.

J-3.5. Authorization – County management will determine which employees will require authorization for Internet access in association with their job. Each Internet account will be issued to one authorized user only. Each user is responsible for all activity in the assigned account, and for maintaining confidentiality of the password.

J-3.5. Precautionary Measures – Individual users must be aware of, and at all times attempt to prevent, potential County liability in their use of the Internet. All outgoing messages which do not reflect the official position of the County must include the following disclaimer: “the opinions expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent those of Peach County Government.” Internet users are advised not to use the Internet for any purpose that would reflect negatively on the County or its employees.

Employees may find some information on the Internet offensive or otherwise objectionable. Individuals should be aware that the County has no control over and, therefore, cannot be responsible for the content of information available on the Internet.

Files are not to be downloaded from the Internet without express consent by the department head. All files expressly approved for downloading must first be scanned by virus detection software. Resources of any kind which require a fee must not be accessed or downloaded without prior approval of the department head. Resources which are not used for a clear County purpose may not be accessed or downloaded. Websites or other electronic communication databases may not be created or implemented without prior approval of the department head and review by the County Administrator.

Violations of County policy regarding Internet use may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

J-4. Social Media Policy

Employees of the County Board of Commissioners shall not use any form of social media in any way to tarnish the image or reputation of the County or its employees. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the internet. Employees must refrain from engaging in any social media activity which disqualified them from performing, or in any way reasonably calls into question their ability to objectively perform, any essential function of their jobs. Examples of such functions include, but are not limited to, making hiring or promotion decisions or recommendations and conducting performance evaluations. Employees who choose to maintain or participate in social media or social networking platforms while off duty shall conduct themselves with professionalism and in such a manner that will not reflect negatively upon the County. Employees should be mindful of all postings on social media as they work for the County that strives to serve its citizens. Postings that include discriminatory remarks, sexually harassing statements, threats or retaliation or violence will not be tolerated. These types of postings will lead to disciplinary action up to and including Termination.

No employee, whether through social media activity or otherwise, may disclose or reveal any privileged or confidential information of Peach County, any other current or former employee of Peach County, or any applicant for employment with Peach County.

Peach County shares notices about county government and its activities via social media to reach a broader audience and so that interested citizens can also share our information. Peach County encourages the public to submit comments, questions or concerns. Peach County reserves the right to delete any vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind and any offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial or religious group. Please note that all comments are subject to open records laws and are subject to be monitored only during business hours.

J-5. E-mail Policy

The County uses electronic communications as a tool to facilitate communications, promote increased efficiency, and reduce costs. Any form of e-mail system installed on County equipment is for County business purposes only. Employees are accountable for their use of electronic communications just as they are for other conduct and communications in the workplace. The County reserves the right to monitor e-mail messages in any way. The County may enter the e-mail system to review, copy, or delete any message, to disclose such messages to others, and to use the message to support disciplinary or other action.

Employees should not assume that messages are confidential, even if a password is used. For private communications, employees should not use the e-mail system. E-mail should not be used as a communication tool if one is concerned about public disclosure or internal disclosure. The County will view the appropriateness of any communication on the basis of how it would have been perceived and dealt with had it been conducted by telephone, in person, or in writing.

Employees should know the source of e-mail before attempting to open the message. Computer viruses are commonly spread by embedding the virus within e-mail attachments. Virus scanning software is installed on personal computers with email capabilities. Each employee is responsible for ensuring that virus-scanning software has been installed on his/her computer and is operative.

The following represent prohibited actions:

1. Use of e-mail should be reserved for official County business and not for personal use.
2. Racism, sexism, and other inappropriate behavior are not tolerated by the County, including in the e-mail environment.
3. Confidential and sensitive issues should not be communicated via e-mail.
4. E-mail is not to be used to create, send, or copy any offensive, harassing, or disruptive message.
5. E-mail is not to be used to send, receive, or download copyrighted materials, financial information, or similar materials without prior authorization.
6. Communications which would be inappropriate under other County policies are equally unacceptable if delivered via electronic communication, including harassing or discriminatory comments, breaches of confidentiality, and insubordinate statements.
7. E-mail is not to be used to solicit for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-job-related solicitations.
8. Employees are not authorized to retrieve or read any e-mail messages that are not sent to them.

Email Encryption - All County employees must manually encrypt all emails containing sensitive information (including but not limited to, Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Personal Health Information (PHI) sent to external parties. The sending of sensitive information is to be limited to authorized employees with County approved email encryption capabilities.

J-6. County Driving Policy

All employees who are required to drive a Peach County vehicle in the performance of their jobs, or who drive a personal vehicle while conducting County business, must adhere to the County driving policy as described in this Handbook. Any employee who violates any of the requirements described herein will lose his/her right to operate a county vehicle and will be subject to possible Termination for failure to meet the minimum requirements of his/her job.

J-6.1. Requirements for All Drivers - Any employee who operates a vehicle while acting within the scope of his/her duties as a county employee must meet the following requirements:

- A. Must meet all current State of Georgia driver's licensing requirements including, but not limited to, have a valid and current Driver's License and/or Commercial Driver's License, if applicable.
- B. Must immediately report any change in the status of the Driver's License to their supervisor.
- C. Must immediately report any accident or incident (a) involving a County vehicle, or (b) occurring when the employee is operating a personal vehicle while conducting County business.
- D. Must immediately report all traffic citations received from any source for any driving offense.
- E. Must maintain a driving record as described below:
 - i. No major violation in the last three (3) years, which includes but is not limited to eluding a police officer, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, reckless driving, license suspension and/or revocation, vehicular homicide, or leaving the scene of an accident.
 - ii. No more than two speeding violations in the last three (3) years.
 - iii. No more than one at-fault accident in the last three (3) years.
 - iv. No more than two accidents in the last three (3) years.
 - v. No convictions of a drug-related offense of any kind.
 - iv. No felony convictions involving a vehicle.
- F. Must submit to a drug and alcohol screening immediately following any accident while operating a county vehicle.

J-6.2. Process to Approve Drivers – An individual may be designated to drive a county vehicle, or to drive a personal vehicle while acting within the scope of his/her duties, through employment, transfer, promotion, or volunteer work. The appropriate department head must verify that the employee possesses a valid, current State of Georgia driver's license with endorsements appropriate for vehicle(s) to be driven. The department head may also request a driver's history report. After evaluating the driving background of the proposed driver, the department head will submit a recommendation regarding approval to the County Administrator. If both the department head and the County Administrator approve the submission, the

employee will be eligible to drive county vehicles or to drive personal vehicle while acting in the scope of his/her duties. If the proposed driver has not met the criteria, the department head must take action to ensure the rejected applicant does not drive any vehicles while acting within the scope of his/her duties.

Peach County will periodically check the driving record of each employee required to drive a vehicle to verify that the employee is in compliance with County policy. In addition, any supervisory personnel who become aware of an employee who has violated any of the requirements listed above must immediately report the violation to the County Administrator. Supervisors who intentionally withhold information of violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including possible Termination.

J-6.3. Driver Responsibilities – All individuals who operate a vehicle while acting within the scope of their duties as a County employee are responsible for the following:

- A. Knowing and obeying all traffic laws of the State of Georgia and/or the jurisdiction in which the vehicle is being operated.
- B. Obtaining and/or maintaining a current and valid State of Georgia Driver's License.
- C. Operating County vehicles in a safe manner at all times.
- D. Wearing safety belts when the vehicle is being driven and ensuring that all passengers are wearing safety belts when the vehicle is being driven.
- E. Using County vehicle only for the purpose of conducting Peach County business, except for commuting if approved by the appropriate County officials, and as otherwise allowed by IRS regulation regarding *de minimis* use (such as a stop for a personal errand on the way between a business deliver and the employee's home).
- F. Immediately reporting any change in the status of their driver's license.
- G. Immediately reporting traffic citations received from any source for any violation.
- H. Immediately reporting any accident involving a county vehicle, or occurring during the course of County business, to appropriate personnel.
- I. All vehicles are to be maintained free of all trash and debris.
- J. No smoking in vehicles.
- K. Holding or supporting, with any part of the body, a wireless telecommunications device (cell phone, GPSs receiver, personal digital assistant, portable telephones, text messaging devices, any similar portable wireless device used to send/received communication or data) or stand-alone electronic device is prohibited.

- L. Reaching for a device if it means you're no longer in a seated, driving position or properly restrained by a seatbelt is prohibited.
- M. Watching a video or movie other than watching data related to the navigation of your vehicle is prohibited.
- N. While driving a county vehicle you may only use an electronic device to report an accident, medical emergency, fire, a crime or delinquent act or a hazardous road condition.
- O. You may use your device if you are lawfully parked off or beside the road in an area open to parking.
- P. Only speaking or texting will be allowed by the usage of hands-free technology.
- Q. Only first responders are exempt from the hands-free law if they are performing official duties.
- R. The operation by or transportation of non-county personnel in a county vehicle is strictly prohibited except as required for legitimate county business purposes.
- S. All employees authorized to drive a county vehicle will be required to have a clean drug screening on file and be subject to future random drug testing per county policy. A signed acknowledgment of having read and received a copy of the Peach County Substance Abuse Policy must be on record in the employee's personnel file.
- T. Destruction or tampering with County vehicles is strictly prohibited.
- U. No use of County vehicles for illegal or unlawful purposes.

Every employee in charge of any vehicle owned by the County shall exercise care in the operation of that vehicle and avoid accidents. Disregard of this obligation shall be grounds for discharge. Each head of a department shall inform in writing each person within their department entrusted with the operation of a motor vehicle of this section.

Peach County employees will not be allowed to take their Peach County vehicles home during non-work hours. However, vehicles can be taken home due to an impending emergency, if pre-approved permission is received from the Peach County Administrator. Exceptions to this policy can only be made by vote of the Peach County Board of Commissioners.

J-7. Smoking/Vaping Policy

Smoking or vaping is not permitted in any office, buildings or vehicle owned or operated by Peach County. This includes, but is not limited to, smoking cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, vapes and pipes.

J-8. Solicitation Policy

To avoid disruption of County operations, the following rules apply to solicitation or distribution of literature on County property:

1. Non-Employees – Persons not employed by the County may not solicit or distribute literature on County property at any time, for any purpose.
2. Employees – County employees may not solicit or distribute literature for any purpose during working time or in working areas. Working time includes the working time of both the employee doing the soliciting/distribution and the employee to whom the soliciting/distributing is being directed. Working time includes all time an employee's duties require that he/she be engaged in work tasks but does not include meal breaks or scheduled breaks. Working areas include all areas of County property.

J-9. Inclement Weather

As a government employer, Peach County provides essential services to its citizens and visitors. During periods of inclement weather, such as icy conditions and snowstorms, severe weather, tornadoes, etc., it becomes even more critical that the County deliver those services.

Under inclement weather circumstances and after receiving a recommendation from the EMA Direct, the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners will make a decision regarding closure of county offices (to include partial days, such as delayed openings or early closings). The Chairman shall designate the beginning date and time of the closure event, and after conferring with the EMA Director, establish the ending date and time of the closure event once inclement weather conditions have improved sufficiently to allow safe travel to and from the workplace.

If questionable weather exists, but the county is open for business, employees should make their own independent safety determinations concerning travel to work. If the employee elects not to attend work due to safety concerns when the county is open for business, the employee's absence will be charged against any accrued PTO. If no such PTO exists, the employee will not be compensated. If hazardous weather exists and the county is closed during normal business hours, Inclement Weather Pay will be available. No Inclement Weather Pay will be available for hazardous weather situations that begin and/or end outside of normal, weekday business hours of 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (e.g., an event that begins at 2:00 a.m. on a Saturday and ends 42 hours later at 8:00 p.m. on Sunday would require the closure of county offices during normal weekday business hours and would not qualify for Inclement Weather Pay). During a period of closure within normal business hours, non-essential personnel will receive an equal number of hours pay to correspond with the office closure exclusive of lunch breaks (e.g., a full day's closure = 8 hours pay, closure at 1 p. = 4 hours pay, etc.). Non-essential employees who voluntarily choose to report to work or stay at work during this time will not be paid as an essential employee. Any employees who are scheduled off work for any reason during the period of closure will not be eligible for Inclement Weather Pay.

Departments with essential personnel (any personnel deemed by the EMA Director as necessary to sustain and conduct emergency operations) will be expected to schedule and staff employees as needed. Employees of those departments must check with their supervisor for such purposes. When Inclement Weather Pay is invoked, essential personnel will be paid for all time physically worked in compliance with Fair Labor Standards Act. In addition, essential personnel shall receive Inclement Weather Compensation, which will be paid hour-for-hour to coincide with the number of hours physically worked during the closure event for a maximum of eight hours within a 24-hour operation cycle.

For both essential and non-essential employees, only hours physically worked will be applied when determining overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Inclement Weather Pay is a special leave accrual and does not represent additional hours physically worked. Therefore, Inclement Weather Pay will not count toward overtime calculation. Additionally, Inclement Weather Pay will not be applied during scheduled holidays since employees will be compensated according to the Holiday Pay Policy.

J.-10. County Bulletin Board

Peach County Government maintains a bulletin board for the purpose of posting/conveying official County information from management to employees, such as notices from State/Federal agencies, legal notices, safety information, benefit information, job announcements, or information of special interest. Employees are responsible for reading all information posted on bulletin boards. No personal announcements may be posted on this board.

J-11. Business Travel Expenses

Peach County will bear the cost of all reasonable and authorized expenses incurred by employees or County officials while traveling on official County business. All travel at the expense of the County must be approved by the department head and/or County Administrator prior to the time such expenses are incurred. Employees are expected to show good judgment and proper regard for economy in the matter of travel expenses. Typical expenses that may be reimbursed by the County include expenses for transportation, lodging, meals, telephone, parking, and registration fees. Other expenses will require specific consideration and approval.

Employees should complete appropriate forms and follow established procedures to request and receive approval for travel prior to incurring any expenses. After incurred, expenses must be submitted on the designated expense report form and approved by the department head and/or County Administrator. Original receipts of all expenses will be required. Travel and related expenses shall be authorized when an officer or employee is engaged in the conduct of official government business and shall include the following:

1. Travel to and from the location of a conference, seminar, school or training program held outside of Peach County for education or training purposes directly related to the operations of the government and its official functions. Advance payment of reimbursement of expenses for travel under this category shall require the prior written approval of the Department Head.

2. Travel to any location outside of Peach County to conduct operations of the Government. Advance payment or reimbursement of expenses for travel under this category shall require the written approval of the Department Head.
3. Travel to any location outside of Peach County for any purpose, which is directly related to the functions and responsibility of Peach County Government. Such purposes may include economic development, legislative/governmental relations, and other activities directly related to Peach County Government. Advance payments or reimbursement of expenses for travel under this category shall require the prior written approval of the County Administrator.

A travel advance for travel-related expenses may be made upon a written request on such form as may be prescribed by the Finance Department. Such request should be made sufficiently (a minimum of 14 days) in advance to accommodate the government's accounts payable payment schedule. Travel advances are allowable only for meals and mileage. Travel advance payments will be made in the form of a check payable to the employee and will be available before two (2) working days prior to the scheduled departure. No advance will be made for less than \$25.00.

Registration fees and fares for common carrier transportation will be paid either by purchase order or request for payment. If any combination of registration fees, room accommodations, and/or meals is to be paid to the same vendor, only one request for payment or purchase order shall be required for such combination. Advance payment to guarantee lodging accommodations shall be paid for by county check or credit card at the time of registration. The lodging accommodations cost shall be paid directly to the hotel/motel, not to the employee. The check can be taken by the employee at the time of travel if the reservation was made with a credit card to secure registration. Local and state government employees are exempt from hotel/motel taxes under Georgia Code 48-13-51 while on official business in the state. Most hotels require an exemption form to be provided before allowing exemption. Employees and officials should use the attached form to gain this exemption.

Each individual department will be responsible for making their own travel arrangements for lodging and transportation.

A request for reimbursement of expenses shall be submitted to the Finance Department within ten (10) calendar days following the date of return to work. Such request shall be made in such form as prescribed by the Finance Department. The request for reimbursement shall contain an itemized listing of all expenses incurred for such travel and must be approved and signed by the employee's department or division head; however, if an employee travels on a regular basis, a mileage form should be kept for a period of one month and a reimbursement will be made monthly instead of paying mileage reimbursement after each trip. If an employee fails to reconcile the account within the specified time period and an extension of time is not granted by the Finance Director, the Finance Director may void such reimbursement claim. With the approval of the County Administrator, the Finance Director shall be authorized to withhold any such cash advance or direct payment from the employee's paycheck.

Receipts or other communication shall be required for all expenses except for meals. Receipts for taxi or limousine services are not required when cash receipts are not available.

Payment by the government shall be limited to the actual, necessary, and reasonable expenses incurred for authorized activities provided for in this policy. The standard for “reasonable” may be determined by the geographic location and other circumstances, and the interpretation of this standard shall be made by the County Administrator.

Documentation for meal expenses is not required. The meal allowance for each full day is \$30 for all Peach County employees. Travel days both to and from a conference will be paid at ½ the per diem amount (\$15). Travelers must always avail themselves for any free or prepaid meals which are included in conference registration in order to save the taxpayers’ money. Alcoholic beverages shall not be considered for reimbursement. The request for reimbursement has to follow the guidelines as posted in Section 5, which includes making the request within ten (10) working days of the employees return to work.

Employees traveling outside of the State of Georgia must have the Board of Commissioners approval. Any employee who is approved for out of state travel will be responsible for travel accommodation to and from the destination. The county will pay the cost of the hotel and fees charged to attend training/educational classes or conferences. Meal expenses will be paid to the employee according to Section 8 of this travel policy.

Meals covered in registration fees will be deducted as in the above schedule of meal allowances. Tips and gratuities for meals allowed in this policy are included within the allowance(s) established above.

Reasonable expenses associated with room accommodations will be paid to a hotel or motel upon presentation of an itemized bill. Whenever special rates are included as part of the planned program, payment will be made only for the special rate as long as such accommodation is available. Payment shall be limited to the single room rate. If employees elect to share a room with another employee, then double room rates will be paid.

Mileage expenses for transportation in a personal-owned vehicle shall be based on the rate per mile as prescribed by the IRS Standard Mileage Rate. If a county vehicle is available and the employee chooses to use the personally owned vehicle, the reimbursement rate will also be based on the IRS Standard Mileage Rate. If a county vehicle is available and the employee chooses to use the personally owned vehicle, the reimbursement rate will also be based on the IRS Standard Mileage Rate for “if government furnished vehicle is available.” Mileage shall be computed and reported based on actual odometer readings. Employees who receive an automobile allowance for using their personal automobiles for government business will be limited to reimbursement for out-of-county destination only. Any employee traveling in a county vehicle will not be paid mileage.

If two or more persons travel to the same location in the same vehicle, only one such payment shall be made. A personally owned vehicle may be used for travel inside the State of Georgia, provided that the allowable expense is the vehicle mileage expense.

A common carrier shall be any scheduled airplane, train or bus, and the rate shall be limited to the minimum fare available (economy or tourist). Roundtrip fare should be obtained whenever it will result in cost savings and reservations should be made sufficiently in advance to take advantage of any special savings plan offered by the carrier.

Ground transportation by taxi, Uber, bus, or limousine is an allowable expense when incurred in conjunction with common carrier transportation to and from terminals, hotels, restaurants, and meeting locations, if necessary. Receipts for such transportation shall not be required; however, a complete point-to-point itemization of such charges shall be required. The most economical means of ground transportation should be used. The costs associated with any changes or deviations from the approved method of travel will be the responsibility of the traveler. Mileage to a destination shall be determined by MapQuest or other recognized map site and shall be used as a base mileage for the trip, including return. No more than five (5) percent deviation from that mileage shall be paid unless explanation is provided and approved by the County Administrator. Reimbursements will be per mile at the current rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. The rates are set in accordance with the rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service.

The points of departure and return for travel status shall be either the office at which the employee carries out their duties or their residence, whichever is more practical under the circumstances. All travel should be by the most direct route. However, an expressway route which involves more total mileage may result in savings in personnel time and therefore would be considered the more direct route. Reason and good judgment should be exercised in this determination.

Telephone, Internet connection, and "FAX" messages directly pertaining to official government business shall be an allowable expense. Claims for payment of such charges shall be itemized and shall include the locations, the person contacted, and the justification for the communication. A personal telephone call to confirm the safe arrival of the individual shall be an allowable expense; however, any other personal communication shall not be allowable.

An employee who requires Internet access to conduct official government business while traveling should first verify with the hotel/motel to determine if Internet access is available and the costs involved. The County maintains two (2) credit cards which are available to be signed out for the duration of the trip should Internet access not be available at the hotel/motel or if such service only available with an additional cost. The credit cards are to be used for official government business purposes only and should be returned promptly upon the employees return.

Whenever allowable expenses are purchased or paid by the employee with a credit card, the receipt shall include an itemization of expenditures or separate receipts must be obtained for each expenditure. A credit card receipt showing only an aggregate of charges, unless itemized, shall not constitute sufficient documentation and shall not be allowable.

County credit cards will be issued to members of the Board of Commissioners and Department Heads for out-of-town travel. Non-County business charges are not allowed. The county credit card **MUST** be signed back in promptly upon return to work of the employee.

Registration fees for an authorized program as described herein shall be an allowable expense and payment shall be arranged no less than fourteen (14) days in advance of the program date either by purchase order or a request for payment. The employee shall be responsible for submitting the request for purchase order or request for payment in sufficient time for the payment to be processed and mailed prior to any registration deadline. Optional assessment such as special events or personal memberships, i.e., golf tournaments, fees for tours, or spousal trips, which are not included in the registration fees are not allowable expenses. Any part of a registration fee covering meals and/or lodging shall be identified separately and shall not otherwise be paid in addition to the registration fee. The registration fee of an official's or employee's spouse will not be an allowable expense.

Expenses for parking shall be allowable if documents by paid receipt, except however no payment shall be made for charges in connection with any illegal parking violation.

The Finance Director shall be authorized to pay other expenses which may be incurred in conjunction with an authorized travel or activity if they are determined to be reasonable and proper. A claim for payment of such other expenses shall include adequate documentation and justification to meet the purpose of this policy.

The following expenses are specifically unallowable for payment:

1. Expenses incurred by any person other than the employee unless otherwise provided for in this policy or prior written approval has been granted by the County Administrator.
2. Expenses for entertainment.
3. Laundry or valet service.
4. Personal articles, toiletries, souvenirs, etc.
5. Payments to friends or other individuals for costs of meals, lodging, or transportation not a part of the authorized activity or program.
6. Direct expenses of operating a personal vehicle, such as gasoline, oil, parts, or repairs.
7. Travel and related expenses incurred from an employee's residence to his designated work site.
8. Any expenses for meals or per diem allowances for meals that are not required to ensure the employee's performance of official government business. Scheduling or extending travel periods in order to increase meal reimbursement or per diem allowances is specifically not allowable.
9. Any expenses incurred that are unrelated to official government business or activities as determined by the Finance Department.

10. Alcoholic beverages are not considered for reimbursement.

An employee taking PTO while away on official travel status shall not be entitled to any payment of expense incurred during the period of such leave.

All expenses paid or reimbursed from a petty cash fund shall be in accordance with all requirements and provisions of this policy.

Economic conservatism and sound judgment must be exercised by all officials and employees in every expense incurred. In the event of a dispute of the allowability of an expense, the Finance Director shall be authorized to make such determination based on this policy, reasonableness, and sound fiscal judgment. In each such circumstance, the Finance Director shall make every attempt to resolve such dispute in the best interest of the employee and Peach County.

J-12. Housekeeping

Each employee is responsible for assisting to uphold a level of professionalism in the workplace and is requested to assist in maintaining the work areas. Employees' desks, offices, and immediate work areas should be kept neat and free from clutter. Employees are asked to assist in keeping public areas of the office (such as lobbies, conference rooms, break rooms, supply rooms, etc.) clean and orderly. Any food or beverage containers should be removed from desks at the end of each workday, and accidental spills should be cleaned immediately.

Kitchen/breakroom facilities are provided as a benefit and convenience to all employees. Each employee is responsible for cleaning any dishware, silverware, or other items used. All employees who use the kitchen are expected to help with cleaning of coffee machines, countertops, refrigerator, or other facilities. Any food stored in kitchen cabinets or refrigerator must be in an appropriate covered container, and food must be removed or discarded within a reasonable period of time. Employees should be aware that food or personal items left in the kitchen for any length of time may be thrown away (including containers).

J-13. Cell Phone Policy

This policy on cell phone usage applies to all County employees. For purposes of this policy, the term "cell phone" is defined as any handheld electronic device with the ability to receive and/or transmit voice, text, or data messages, without a cable connection [including, but not limited to, cellular telephones, digital wireless phones, radio-phone/walkie-talkies, telephone pagers, PDA's (personal digital assistants with wireless capabilities, or RIM ("Research in Motion") wireless devices]. The County reserved the right to modify or update these policies at any time.

The Sheriff's Department employees, phone, and contracts will be administered by the Sheriff and/or his delegate.

J.13.1. Use of Cell Phones or Similar Devices

- A. **General Use at Work.** While at work employees are expected to exercise the same discretion in using personal cell phones as they use with County phones. Excessive personal calls during the workday, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to others. Employees should restrict

personal calls during work time and should use personal cell phones only during scheduled breaks or lunch periods in non-working areas. Other personal calls should be made during non-work time whenever possible, and employees should ensure that their friends and family members are instructed of this policy. The County is not liable for the loss of personal cell phones brought into the workplace.

To ensure the effectiveness of meetings, employees are asked to leave all cell phones at their desk. On the unusual occasion of an emergency or anticipated emergency that requires immediate attention, the cell phone may be carried to the meeting in a silent mode.

- B. **Use of Cell Phones in Unsafe Work Conditions.** Employees shall limit the use of all cell phones while operating heavy equipment or while working in dangerous environments, such as construction sites.
- C. **Use of Cell Phones While Operating A Vehicle.** Cell phone use while driving is, of course, a necessity for most County employees, but extreme care should be used while operating a vehicle. In non-emergency situations, employees should limit phone calls and only use the cell phone when the vehicle is in park. Employers are expected to follow and be aware of all state hands free laws.

J-13.2. Department Head/Supervisor Responsibilities

- A. It is the responsibility of the department head and supervisors to ensure that cellular devices are being used to efficiently manage the County's business in conformance with this policy. The managers will determine which employees have a demonstrated need for a county-owned device and will submit a sufficient budget request to fund the device. The Board of Commissioners will consider said request and shall either approve or deny said request as part of the annual budget preparation process.
- B. Department heads have the authority to set other department specific rules and procedures to ensure cellular devices are used in compliance with the goals of this policy.
- C. Any cellular devices/plans that could impact the County network infrastructure must meet the approval of the Board of Commissioners and the County Administrator.

J-13.4. Employee Responsibilities

- A. Employees issued cell phones will take every precaution to safeguard the cell phone. Should the cell phone be lost, the Department Head and the County Administrator should be notified immediately.
- B. Liability of the employee for lost or damaged phones: If an employee loses or damages more than one cell phone or mobile device during the contract period, the employee may be required to pay replacement costs for the mobile device after the first occurrence. Management will carefully review each instance of loss or damage of mobile devices.

- C. Employees shall notify the County Administrator before taking the phone to the service provider store. The store will not work on any phone owned by the County without the consent of the IT Director.
- D. Upon leaving County employment, the cell phone and related accessories must be turned into the County Administrator before the final paycheck will be released. The former employee must provide the County with any and all passcodes or passwords to allow the County to access the cell phone.

J-13.5. IT Department Responsibilities.

- A. The County Administrator, at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners, will be responsible for enforcing this Cell Phone Policy.
- B. The County Administrator will order and issue properly budgeted phones to employees who have been designated by their department heads and approved by the Board of Commissioners to be assigned a wireless device to conduct official County business.
- C. The County Administrator will monitor cell phone usage and adjust the pooled plan minutes and features to accommodate normal business use of County owned phones. Employees that, in the opinion of management, abuse the pooled minutes plan or have overages of text or data may be required to reimburse the County for the coverage.
- D. The County Administrator with input from the Board of Commissioners and department heads, will evaluate overall usage, quality of service, cell/data coverage, and plan cost comparisons on an annual basis and will work with the department heads to property budget for the service.

J-13.6. Board of Commissioners Responsibilities.

- A. The Board of Commissioners will set the Cell Phone Usage Policy and enforce its goals and guidelines. The Board of Commissioners can at any time review and adjust this policy.
- B. The Board of Commissioners will annually review, during the budget preparation process, a proposed listing of employees to be authorized to use County owned wireless devices for official County business for the following budget year and shall approve or disapprove said listing as part of the budget approval process.

J-14. Leave Donation Policy

Peach County Board of Commissioners recognizes that employees may have a family medical emergency that may result in the need for additional time off in excess of their available PTO. To address this need, all eligible employees will be allowed to donate accrued PTO hours to a co-

worker in need of additional paid time off, in accordance with the policy outlined below. The use of this policy is strictly voluntary.

J-14.1. Eligibility

Employees must be employed with Peach County for a minimum of one year to be eligible to donate and/or receive donated PTO. An employee may donate accrued PTO to another employee who has exhausted all available leave balances (PTO) and who would otherwise need to take leave due to personal health condition/injuries or similar health conditions/injuries affecting qualified family members.

J-14.2. Guidelines

Employees who would like to submit a donated PTO request from their co-workers must follow the following criteria:

Medical emergency, defined as a medical condition of the employee or immediate family member that will require the prolonged/extended absence of the employee from duty and will result in a loss of income to the employee due to the exhaustion of all paid leave available. An immediate family member is defined as a spouse, child, or parent. Before applying for a leave donation, the employee must have been approved by Human Resources to be on Family Medical Leave.

J.14.3. Donation of PTO

- A. Employees cannot borrow against future PTO to donate.
- B. Employees who are currently on approved leave of absence cannot donate PTO.
- C. Employees wishing to donate PTO hours must retain a minimum of 80 hours for their own personal use.
- D. An employee who wishes to donate PTO must be on an equal or greater pay grade than the recipient.
- E. Any employee who is in the process of retiring or who has put in a notice to resign is not eligible to donate PTO.
- F. No solicitation to co-workers to donate time; all requests must go through Human Resources.

J-14.4. Requesting Donated PTO

Employees wishing to donate PTO must submit a leave authorization form to Human Resources for review. The recipient of donated leave must be on approved medical leave in order to receive leave hours.

Employees who received donated PTO may receive no more than 80 hours within a twelve (12) month period.

Donated PTO may only be used for time off related to the approved request. All employees who have requested leave will be notified by Human Resources the status of the request within three (3) business days.

J-15. On Call Policy

J-15.1. Purpose/Objective

Certain employees of Peach County may be required to serve in an on-call capacity to respond to an unforeseen circumstance or emergency and, if such circumstances arises, to report to work in a timely manner.

J-15.2. Procedures

In order to ensure that a certain department of Peach County is responsive after normal working hours to address emergencies or other adverse situations, it will be necessary to establish a weekly rotating duty roster for all employees on an on-call status. It will also require that the employee is made aware of such roster.

The employee must remain available by telephone or text and report in person in response to the on-call notification within forty-five (45) minutes or less. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure all forms of contact are working properly. Employees who fail to respond when called are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with this Employee Handbook.

Any employee (non-exempt) who is called in to work will be paid a minimum of one hour of work at their regular rate of pay, which shall not be included in that employee's weekly hours worked for overtime purposes, in addition to actual hours worked by the employee. Any employee (non-exempt) who is called in to work on Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday will be paid a minimum of two hours of work at their regular rate of pay, which shall not be included in that employee's weekly hours worked for overtime purposes, in addition to actual hours worked by the employee. Employees should remain free of the influence of alcohol and will be expected to be in conformity with the drug free policy. However, employees are not required to restrict their activities while on-call in any other manner.

The rate of pay for actual work while on-call shall be paid in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards act and the County's policy regarding overtime pay. Employees who have not met the threshold for required overtime shall be paid his/her regular rate until she/she meets the required threshold.

This on-call policy specifically excludes employees of constitution officers and elected officials.

Employees with questions regarding this policy should contact Human Resources.

J-16. Workplace Wellness Policy

Peach County recognizes the benefits to both employees and programs that promote and support workplace promotion and wellness. It is the goal of Peach County to provide every employee with the tools they need to make positive healthier lifestyle changes that result in better physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

Peach County intends to partake of the following actions: hold annual health fair/wellness screenings, provide approved health education programs/activities, and continually create awareness.

As part of Peach County's commitment to wellness, a Health Promotion leader has been appointed to provide educational information on wellness. The leader will continually work to achieve the goals of this policy through coordinating and implementing activities and programs.

J-17. Credit Card Policy

J-17.1. Policy Statement

This is to ensure effective controls, policies and procedures are in place with respect to the use of county credit cards.

J-17.2. Principles

Ensure transparency in the Commissioners operating concerning the use of county credit cards.
Ensure the Commissioners resources are managed with integrity and diligence.

J-17.3. Objective

To adopt best practices in developing a clear and comprehensive policy on the use of county credit cards. To provide an economical business procedure to policy on the use of credit cards for travel, education, and emergency purchases.

J-17.4. Use of Credit Cards

Purchases with credit card should be restricted to purchases that cannot be made with a purchase order or a request for check. due to inconvenience.

Purchases made with the county credit card should be infrequent and used primarily for education and training related expenses, such as reserving hotel rooms, renting vehicles, fuel purchases when traveling, for certain internet purchases that cannot be made with a purchase order.

All purchases made with the county credit card must be in compliance with the County's purchasing ordinance.

Before an office/department can obtain a credit card for an authorized expenditure, approval must be obtained in writing from the Commissioners, County Administrator, and/or the department head, whichever authorization level is required. (See authorization level and authorized usage).

Each elected official/department head is responsible for the liability incurred by using the credit card.

Each elected official/department head is responsible for the use of the card by their department.

Each use of the credit card requires a request for check or a purchase order to be used for the amount charged to the card. The request for check can be obtained at the Purchasing Agent's

office. The requisition for the purchased order must be entered into the system via the requisition process.

J-17.5. Restrictions

- County credit cards are not to be used for personal expenses under any circumstances.
- Cash advances on county credit cards is prohibited.
- Use of the county credit card for purchases over the internet (if approved) should be restricted to trusted secure site.
- The cardholder will be personally liable for expenditures that cannot be shown to be related to the business of Peach County Board of Commissioners.
- If an official or employee, who is authorized on behalf of their office or department, has charges that are disallowed and are not repaid prior to the credit card billing date, the county shall place a lien on the employee's wages, including final pay.
- Failure to repay disallowed charges shall result in a penalty of ten (10) percent per annum from the date of default until repaid. The interest will be computed as simple interest on the outstanding balance. This penalty is payable to the county and is in addition to interest and penalty charges.
- Unauthorized charges will result in disciplinary actions, including revocation of the right to use the credit and/or other disciplinary action, which may include Termination of employment.

A credit card voucher/approval form must be completed before each individual purchase. This form must be signed by the elected official and/or the department head before the credit card is issued to an individual employee.

Split purchases are not allowed unless specifically approved by the County Administrator. It is the responsibility of elected official/department head to ensure that funding in an appropriate account is available to cover the credit card purchase.

J-17.6. Issuing of Cards

The County Administrator will be responsible for the issue of a credit card, and this will be recorded on a "Cardholder Approval and Acknowledgement Form." Each individual signing out the card will be required to sign this form on the receipt of the credit card and acknowledge these policies and procedures.

The County Administrator will be responsible for maintaining a register of the individual credit cards, including name of person that signed the credit card out, date, time, purpose, vendor name, amount and general ledger account number.

The County Administrator is also responsible for verifying the signature on the “Cardholder Approval and Acknowledgement Form.”

J-17.7. Payment of Monthly Account Balance

The balance of the monthly credit card statement shall be paid in full.

J-17.8. Disputed Purchases

The Commissioner’s Office is responsible for paying all accounts on the monthly credit card statement.

An employee will be personally liable for expenditures that cannot be shown to be related to the business of the Peach County Board of Commissioners.

The Commissioner’s Office shall be notified of all disputed transactions. The employee must complete the “Disputed Transaction” form and include it with their request for check or purchase order.

When a dispute occurs, the employee should attempt to correct the situation with the merchant. In many cases, a simple phone call can clear up a problem without any delay. If unable to correct the situation, contact the Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner’s Office will attempt to resolve the matter and may have to contact the bank for assistance.

The bank can assist with resolving some disputes with merchants, particularly those involved duplicate charges, non-receipt of goods ordered, or credits not processed after refund vouchers have been issued.

J-17.9. Reporting of Lost or Stolen Credit Card

If a card is stolen or lost, it is the employee’s responsibility to immediately contact the Commissioner’s Office to report the loss.

The employee then must complete a “Lost or Stolen Cards” form and forward it to the Commissioner’s Office.

J-18. Rehire Policy

J-18.1. Purpose

It is the policy of the County to consider rehire of former employees who voluntarily left employment. This policy outlines the rules regarding eligibility for re-employment.

J-18.2. Eligibility of Rehire

Employees who resign in good standing will be eligible for reemployment for a period of up to six (6) months from the last date of employment with no probationary period. All leave accruals will start over at the date of rehire along with other benefits provided by the County. Any employee rehired after six (6) months will be treated as a new employee.

J-18.3. Procedures

When an employee applies for a position, the following procedures should be followed:

- A. The department supervisor will contact Human Resources to request an employee records review to decide whether the employee is eligible for rehire.
- B. If the employee is eligible, hiring managers decide whether the employee is qualified for a particular position. If they are eligible, Human Resources will inform employee.
- C. If the former employee is qualified, the hiring manager shall submit a personnel action form to Human Resources along with interview questions and/or tests. All paperwork will be submitted to the county administrator for approval. Once approved Human Resources will request a drug and background screen. If screens are satisfactory, Human Resources will send the employee the employee a job offer letter.

J-19. Promotion and Pay Policy

J-19.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines on promotion opportunities to positions of higher responsibility for existing staff members based on qualifications of experience, education and capabilities. Any employee in good standing is eligible for promotion consideration assuming he or she meets the minimum qualifications of the position.

J-19.2. Eligibility

Define as any employee who is not on disciplinary probation or suspension and those who are current and valid with all certifications/licenses required for the position to be filled.

J-19.3. Procedures for promotion within the department or promotion to another department

All job vacancies will be posted internally for at least five (5) business days.

All eligible employees are welcome to apply to current opening and should provide complete job-related information indicating why they are the best qualified for the position.

Department supervisors who recommend an employee promotion due to job duty changes should review and revise the employees job description with Human Resources. All major changes in responsibilities should be noted for the recommendation.

J-19.4. Pay Changes

Pay changes will be consistent with Peach County's current pay scale. Employees who are promoted will be assigned the appropriate pay grade for the position. The employee will receive a minimum of ten (10%) percent pay increase for the promotion. All promotions will be justified by experience, longevity, certifications/education and will be notated by the department supervisor recommending the promotion. The department supervisor will submit the appropriate forms to

human resources for review and the county administrator will make the decision on the promotion request.

J-20. Telecommute Policy

J-20.1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish requirements and guidelines for employees engaging in authorized teleworking or telecommuting. “Teleworking” or “Telecommuting” is a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs their work duties and responsibilities from an approved worksite.

J-20.2. Scope

This Policy applies to all employees specifically authorized by Peach County to perform teleworking or telecommuting. All requests to telework or telecommute shall be made by the employee and be authorized by the Department Head and the County Administrator. In addition, all requests are to have a beginning and ending date. This Policy is effective immediately until rescinded by the County. This Policy may be revoked, changed, or updated at any time.

J-20.3. Requirements

A. Location of Work

- i. The workplace must be safe and free from hazards.
- ii. The workplace must be reasonably free from interruptions and distractions that would affect work performance.
- iii. The workspace must allow the employee to preserve the confidentiality of sensitive or non-public information. Any County provided material or equipment shall not be removed from the workspace while the employee is teleworking.
- iv. For employees who must verbally communicate with others as part of their duties, the workspace must be quiet and allow for professional communications during those times.
- v. Teleworking employees shall not conduct in-person, face-to-face meetings with the public or clients in their home office in any official capacity or connected with the County’s business. The County is not responsible for any injurie to family members, visitors, and others in the employee’s home.
- vi. The County is not responsible for any loss to the employee’s property, whether caused by physical damages or by computer virus attacks or other instructions via the internet that is or is not related to the County or its equipment, systems, etc.
- vii. Employees utilizing County equipment while teleworking must protect the equipment from damage and follow the Computer and Internet Policy.

- viii. Reliable internet service is a requirement for teleworking. Consistent internet failures will result in loss of teleworking privileges.

B. Communication and Work Schedules: Employees are authorized to engage in teleworking during the scheduled workdays and hours pre-approved by their supervisor; employees must be reachable by the County during these days and times. If the employee becomes aware or anticipates any failure of technological communication or equipment that could prevent the employee from being reached by their supervisor and/or performing any of the employee's duties during their normal working hours, they are to immediately notify their supervisor. Employees may not work outside of their approved days and hours without prior supervisor approval.

Supervisors reserve the right phone or email employees at any time during working hours and may require employees to report productivity daily. Supervisors may also ask employees to perform duties outside their job descriptions in an effort to pull together as a team to ensure essential office duties are carried out in the absence of others. The primary mode for meetings for remote employees will take place virtually or telephonically; however, in-person meetings may be scheduled as needed, and the remote employee must attend if directed. At any time, employees may be required to physically report to work. Employees who require sick leave and/or wish to request vacation or comp time leave must follow the current Policy in place to request such leave and have it approved.

C. Security and Confidentiality: While working remotely, employees must take steps to preserve the security and confidentiality of County information. Employees must keep confidential documents and materials in secure locations. Employees must maintain password protection to the same extent as required at the workplace and keep confidential documents and records securely stored. Any suspended loss or theft of County documents, materials, or information, as well as any suspected malware, hacks, or breaches of security, must be reported to the County immediately.

D. Policies: This teleworking arrangement does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment, including the rate of pay and benefits. Employees are expected to comply with all County policies, procedures, and performance standards.

E. The County retains the right to investigate alleged abuse of this teleworking Policy and may cease or modify an employee's approval for telework at any time.

J-21. Pool Vehicle Use Policy

The following policies and procedures have been established in an effort to provide consistency in the management and usage of the Board Commissioners Pool Vehicle. The purpose of these policies and procedures is to establish a fair process for allocating vehicle usage time to meet the travel needs of the office staff of the Peach County Board of Commissioners and to monitor the use of the vehicle assigned to the Board of Commissioners. All reference to "County" in this policy means Peach County. All reference to "BOC" in this policy means Board of Commissioners.

1. Use of any County-owned vehicle for personal use is prohibited.

2. Drivers must have and maintain a valid Georgia driver's license and maintain a driving history that is in compliance with Peach County Driving Policy. A signed acknowledgement of having read and received a copy of the Peach County Driving Policy must be on record in the employee's personnel file. A signed and notarized consent form allowing periodic driver history checks during the term of the approved driver's Peach County employment must be on file in the employee's personnel file.
3. All employees authorized to drive a county vehicle will be required to have a clean drug screening on file and be subject to future random drug testing per County policy. A signed acknowledgement of having read and received a copy of the Peach County Substance Abuse Policy must be on record in the employee's personnel file.
4. Drivers must drive responsibly at all times and follow all traffic regulations, including the speed limit.
5. Requests to use the BOC Pool Vehicle will generally be honored on a first-come, first served basis. However, the County Administrator will assign while usage based on severity of need when requests for usage conflict.
6. The BOC Pool Vehicle is to be parked in the parking lot adjacent to the Office of Peach County Board of Commissioners at 213 Person Stret, Fort Valley, at the close of each working day. The vehicle will not be taken home with any employee except by express ***advanced*** approval from the County Administrator and only for a specified County business purpose. Usage of BOC Pool Vehicle for approved out-of-town training or travel involving overnight stay should be reserved at least two (2) weeks prior to the intended usage or as early as possible to prevent scheduling conflicts for other employees.
7. Vehicle key and fuel key are to be returned and placed in the drop box on the wall outside the rear door to the Purchasing Office (lobby are at R911 entrance) at the close of the business day.
8. Peach County Public Works will be responsible for providing periodic maintenance and upkeep of the vehicle. The vehicle is to be made available upon request by Public Works personnel to provide this service. The Public Works Office has provided a daily checklist to be completed at the beginning of each workday before the vehicle is driven. There is a also a mileage log in the vehicle that must be completed to show the business locations and changes in the odometer reading over the course of the business day.
9. The fuel key is to remain in the vehicle at all times. The vehicle is to be refueled only at the Five Point Services in Fort Valley unless an emergency occurs or when the driver is on approved out-of-town training or travel. Each approved driver will be issued a personal access code for refueling the vehicle. Approved drivers are to use no other access code but their own. Each approved driver is to take responsibility for ensuring that there is at least a half tank of fuel remaining in the vehicle at the time that the vehicle is parked for the day and the keys are returned. All mileage records and other required vehicle information

requested at fueling statement must be provided at the time the vehicle is refused. In the event that fuel must be purchased from another location due to emergency or out-of-town travel, the purchase is to be made with an approved Peach County credit card or be reimbursed off of a receipt documents the purchase at an alternate location.

10. Any suspected problems with the vehicle should be reported immediately to the County Administrator and to the Public Works Office to schedule an evaluation of the suspected problem. The vehicle is not to be driven until the potential problem is resolved.
11. Upon returning the vehicle, all trash and debris is to be removed for the vehicle.
12. Any approved driver included in an accident or situation which has caused any amount of damage or injury while operating the BOC Pool Vehicle must immediately notify Peach County E911 at 478-822-9111 to report the occurrence and to begin the process and procedures outlined in the Peach County Safety Policy for reporting accidents. A signed acknowledgment of having read and received a copy of the Peach County Safety Policy must be on record in the employee's personnel file.
13. A GPS system has been installed on the BOC Pool Vehicle to monitor the location of the vehicle to encourage proper usage of the vehicle and to provide added safety to all approved drivers and protection of the vehicle in case of theft. Tampering with the GPS System is prohibited.
14. All drivers and passengers will use seat belts in a manner consistent with the manufacturer's specific at all times that the vehicle is in operation.
15. Smoking in the BOC Pool Vehicle is prohibited.
16. Texting while operating any county vehicle is strictly prohibited.
17. Damaging, altering or tampering with County vehicles is strictly prohibited.

J-22. Service Animal Policy

Peach County is responsible for assuring the health and safety of all employees. As defined under Title III of the ADA (28 CFR 36.104), a service animal, is "any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained, or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability."

An employee who needs the assistance of a service animal must submit documentation to Human Resources. The employee will be completely and solely liable for any injuries or any damage to personal property caused by the animal. Any repair of cleaning/maintenance costs incurred by the animal will be charged in full to the owner. All dogs must be on a leash and in physical presence of the owner.

Peach County shall not be liable for loss of, or injury to, any animal brought into county buildings.

J-23. Break Time for Nursing Mothers

The County complies with the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“PPACA”) which amended Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) which allows nursing employees a reasonable break time to express breast milk. In accordance with the PPACA and O.C.G.A. § 45-1-7(c), a dedicated space for use by nursing mothers will be provided. The County recognizes the importance of this act of nurture for maternal and infant health and provides paid breaks to all nursing mothers.

Employees will not be subject to discrimination or retaliation. Where feasible, employees desiring to express breast milk at their usual worksite shall also be afforded access, upon advanced written request, to suitable, limited access cold storage for the purpose of storing expressed milk.

Questions regarding the application for this policy should be directed to the Human Resources Department.