

JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



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SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

About this Handbook . . .

This Handbook is for employees of the Jefferson County Commission and designed to acquaint you with employment at Jefferson County Commission and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies/rules affecting your employment. You are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with all provisions of the Handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities and outlines the programs developed by the County to benefit employees. **This Handbook and the rules and regulations, policies and procedures contained herein do not in any way constitute, and should not be construed under any circumstances as, a contract of employment between the Jefferson County Commission and the employee, or a promise of employment.**

This Employee Handbook is intended only for use as a **general guide** regarding the policies and procedures of the Jefferson County Commission, as well as the rules and regulations of the Jefferson County Personnel Board. It is not intended to provide all the information you will need regarding your employment. For further information, you should look to [the Personnel Board Rules and Regulations](#) and [the Enabling Act](#) which established our Merit System [and Jefferson County Commission's Administrative Orders and Resolutions](#) and [Rules & Regulations](#). Those documents control in case of any omissions, misstatements, or conflicts with this handbook. Employees should also refer to and become familiar with any departmental manuals or documents which contain rules, regulations, and procedures that are specific to their departments. Additional information may be accessed through the County Manager directives, Human Resources guidelines and the employee portal.

This Employee Handbook is available on the County's intranet site at <http://courthouse.jcc.jccal.org> under the **Employee Information** tab.

Note: Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations are under constant review and may be revised from time to time. The language in this handbook supersedes all previous Jefferson County Commission Employee Handbooks. The County reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, supplement, or rescind any policies or portion of this handbook and/or the benefits described herein.

About Jefferson County Commission

The Jefferson County Commission is the governing body of Jefferson County, which is comprised of five County Commissioners elected from specific districts of the County. The major responsibilities of the County Commission are administering the County's finances, serving as custodians of all the County's property, collecting taxes as set by state law, allocating resources for the construction of buildings, roads and other public facilities, providing the delivery of services that by law are the County's responsibility (such as sewer service and law enforcement) and making appointments to various governmental boards and agencies.

By a majority vote of the County Commissioners, the Commission President is named. The President's duties include presiding over the County Commission meetings and executing contracts and other documents. As a whole functioning body, the County Commission makes decisions to establish policy, pass resolutions, approve the budget and approve land use plans. These actions are all taken in open meetings, which residents and visitors may attend. All decisions are held in public as required by Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-2 5A-1, known as

the “Alabama Open Meetings Act”, except for executive sessions as permitted in Section 36-25A-7.

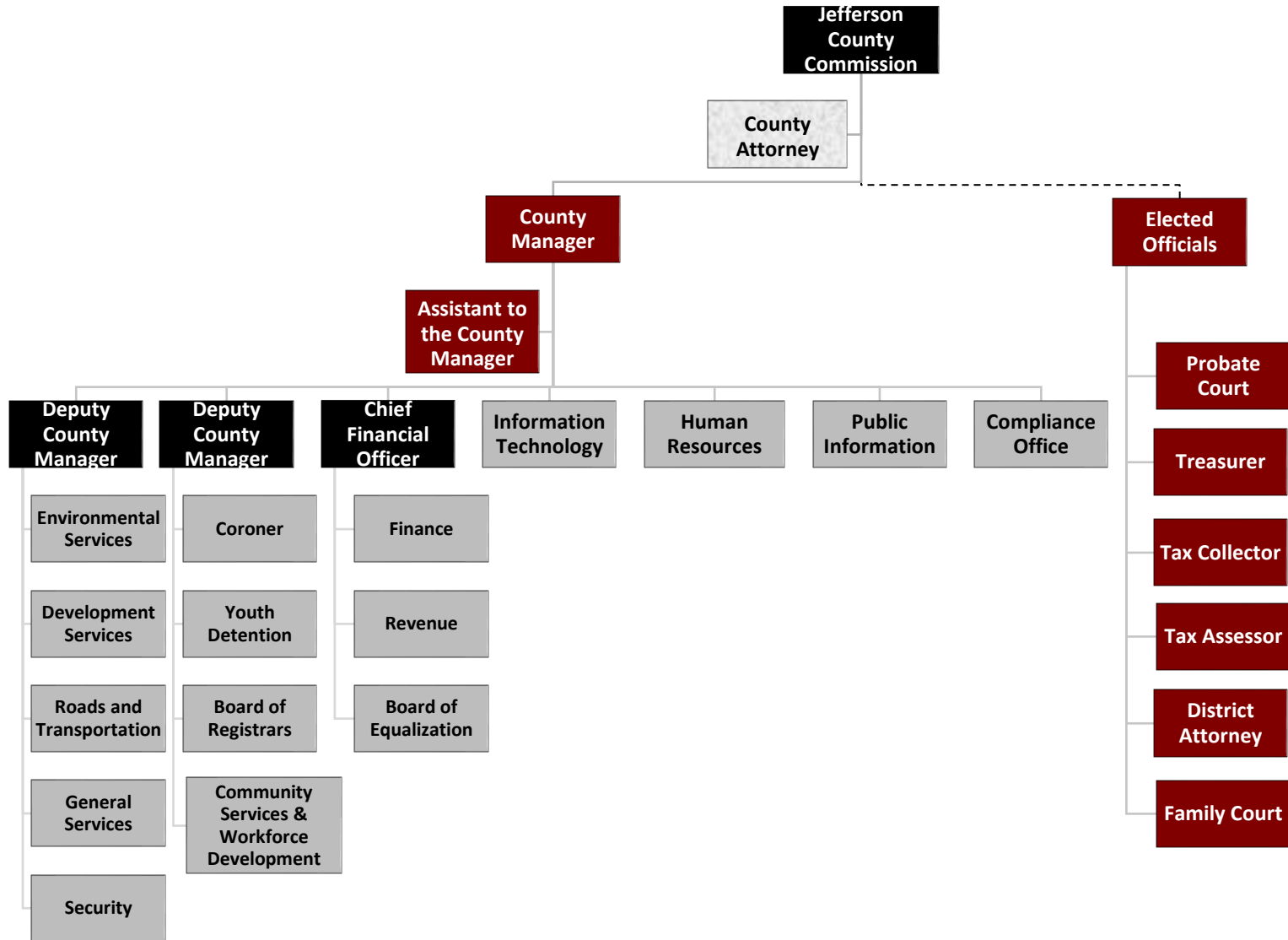
County Manager /Appointing Authority

Jefferson County Commission’s daily operations and business affairs are managed by a County Manager. The County Manager is a full-time employee who recommends and implements policy approved by the County Commission. The County Manager also ensures departmental compliance of these policies.

Additionally, the County Manager oversees a diverse workforce of approximately 2,500 employees located at numerous sites throughout the County. The County Manager is also referred to as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Appointing Authority because of the ultimate authority to hire, discipline and terminate County employees. Simultaneously, the County Manager conducts hearings and makes decisions regarding disciplinary actions and serves as the Appointing Authority for department heads, including elected officials functioning as department heads (see Organizational Chart below).

The Sheriff is the Appointing Authority for matters regarding employees of the Sheriff’s Department.

Jefferson County Commission Organizational Chart



About the Merit System

Since 1945, classified employees of Jefferson County have been employed under a merit service system established by legislative acts. The Merit System promotes continuity and stability in the public service. A three-member Personnel Board oversees administration of the Merit System. Members of the Personnel Board are appointed for six-year terms by an oversight group, the Citizens Supervisory Commission.

The Personnel Board administers the Merit System through its [Rules and Regulations](#) published at pbjcal.org. Among the Personnel Board's responsibilities is administration of the classification and pay plan, recruitment and testing to fill jobs, and hearing grievances and appeals. The Board appoints the Personnel Director who manages the system.

SECTION II. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

As described in Jefferson County Commission's [Equity & Inclusion Rule 5.1.17](#), Jefferson County Commission follows all applicable local, state, and federal laws concerning equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex (including sexual identity, sexual preference, and pregnancy), national origin or ancestry, genetic make-up, disability status, protected veteran status, equal pay or any other characteristic protected by law. Jefferson County Commission is committed to equal employment opportunity for all employees and to providing employees with a work environment free of discrimination and harassment.

CODE OF CONDUCT/APPROPRIATE WORK-RELATED BEHAVIOR

Every employee of Jefferson County Commission is a "public employee". The taxpayers of Jefferson County entrust every employee with the responsibility of conducting themselves accordingly while performing their assigned duties and responsibilities. As such, all employees are expected to demonstrate positive work-related behavior and the County values, to include:

- Treating the public, co-workers, supervisors, and subordinates with courtesy and respect;
- Maintaining a record of good work attendance and punctuality;
- Avoiding inappropriate workplace behavior;
- Following all rules regarding safety and security and maintaining a good safety record;
- Demonstrating a commitment to quality, productivity, and accuracy;
- Following rules and regulations that are specific to the department and/or worksite as well as the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of the Jefferson County Commission and the Personnel Board of Jefferson County;
- Demonstrating honesty and integrity;
- Obeying local, state, and federal laws;
- Avoiding any interest or activity, including outside employment which conflicts with the conduct of their duties and responsibilities to the County;
- Avoiding disclosure of confidential or privileged information without proper authority;
- Carrying out the duties of the job to the best of one's ability.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

All County employees work for the public who pay the taxes to fund County government. The public expects courtesy, respect, and efficiency from County employees. Every contact between a County employee and a member of the public plays a part in establishing and maintaining the image and reputation of the County workforce. One thoughtless act can damage the reputation and image of all County employees. A good rule to follow is to treat every member of the public and each other as you would want to be treated in the same situation.

Miscommunication is at the heart of many complaints, problems, and misunderstandings. Whether dealing with co-workers, supervisors, subordinates, or the public, actions and words communicate an impression. Be sure you communicate the right message by following these guidelines:

1. BE PLEASANT – Call people by name, make eye contact, smile, indicate your interest or concern.
2. BE HELPFUL – Offer to be of assistance whether it is helping a “lost” visitor find his/her way or lending a hand to a co-worker.
3. KEEP PEOPLE INFORMED – Explain what you are doing, who you are transferring a call to, etc. People are less likely to become anxious or angry when they know what to expect.
4. TAKE THE INITIATIVE – Just because something is “not your job” doesn’t mean you can’t help or find someone who can.
5. LISTEN AND ACT – When people complain, don’t blame others or make excuses. Hear them out and do all you can to respond to the problem and make things right.
6. APPLY GOOD TELEPHONE SKILLS – When you are on the telephone, the County’s reputation is on the line. Identify yourself. Sound pleasant. Be helpful. Listen with understanding.
7. LOOK THE PART – Dress appropriately for where you work. Professional dress and demeanor enhance the public confidence in all County employees.

JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION CONSENT DECREE

Jefferson County Commission is under a Consent Decree. This decree states under paragraph 1 that “all hiring, promotion, upgrading, training, job assignments, discharge or other disciplinary measures, compensation, or other terms and conditions or privileges of employment shall be maintained and conducted in a manner which does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color or sex”. A requirement of the County’s Consent Decree is to ensure that employees are aware of the decree and to comply. The Consent Decree specifically states that Blacks and females shall be advised of the terms of the Consent Decree and the County must “receive and investigate oral or written complaints of race and sex discrimination and conciliate such complaints when appropriate.” You may review the Consent Decree via the attached link on the County’s Intranet site: <http://courthouse.jcc.jccal.org/sites/Intranet/Consent.pdf> and on the Equity & Inclusion Division webpage.

EQUITY & INCLUSION DIVISION (EID)

The former Affirmative Action Office, historically associated with investigating complaints of race and sex discrimination, was renamed the Equity & Inclusion Division (EID). As part of the Jefferson County Human Resources Department’s progression under the Consent Decree and beyond, the EID’s vision is to support the County in creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture for all employees where respect and communication are embedded in every aspect of Jefferson County Commission’s operations. The EID’s mission is to support the Jefferson County Commission in continuing to build and maintain an inclusive culture where ALL employees are respected and provided equitable opportunities.

The EID is a neutral party and fact finder whose major functions are to receive, investigate and remedy complaints of employment discrimination and harassment. Employees are encouraged to access the Equity & Inclusion Hotline at **(844-759-0034)** or visit the website at

www.iccal.ethicspoint.com to report a complaint. Employees have the option to self-identify or report anonymously. If you have any questions about the Equity & Inclusion Hotline, please do not hesitate to contact the EID at 205-325-5249 or via email at equityandinclusion@iccal.org.

Employees may also schedule a private and confidential consultation with an EID Business Partner in order to obtain assistance with their concerns. **NOTE:** Refer to the full [Equity and Inclusion Rule 5.1.17](#) for the entire and specific requirements of the Rule.

ADA REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS RULE 5.1.11

Per [Rule 5.1.11](#), the County is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunity and equal access to services, programs, and activities for persons with disabilities as required by the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (as amended). Reasonable accommodation(s) will be provided to a qualified person with a disability to enable such person to perform the essential functions of the position for which he or she is employed unless providing such accommodations would result in undue hardship to the County. The County is committed to not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training, or other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. **NOTE:** Refer to the full Rule/Regulation for the entire and specific requirements of the ADA Reasonable Accommodations Rule.

HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION (ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 20-01)

At Jefferson County Commission, we believe it is essential to provide all employees with a respectful and safe working environment. As a result, we do not tolerate harassment or any mistreatment of employees in the workplace or work-related situations, including unlawful harassment on the basis of the following protected categories:

- race, color, ethnic or national origin;
- age;
- religion or religious creed;
- sex, including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions;
- sexual orientation;
- gender, gender identity, gender expression, transgender status, or sexual stereotypes;
- nationality, immigration status, citizenship, or ancestry;
- marital status;
- protected military or veteran status;
- physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information or characteristics (or those of a family member);
- political views or activity;
- status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking; or

- any other basis prohibited under federal, state, or local law.

Conduct prohibited as Harassment under Administrative Order (AO) 20-01 may include conduct that creates a disrespectful, intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for an employee.

If the County determines that an employee's conduct has violated this AO, we will take steps to ensure the conduct is effectively addressed, and any employee found to have engaged in harassing conduct may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Because the intent of this AO is to deter conduct that is unwanted, unreasonable, and demeaning, the County may consider an employee's conduct to be in violation of this AO even if it falls short of unlawful harassment under applicable law. When determining whether conduct violates this AO, consideration is given as to whether a reasonable person could conclude that the conduct created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or demeaning environment.

This AO applies to everyone who works for Jefferson County Commission. Everyone—including employees, supervisors, and independent contractors—is responsible for following and upholding this AO. Additionally, the County does not tolerate harassment of employees by non-employees (e.g., contingent workers, guests, applicants, vendors, or clients), nor does the County tolerate harassment of non-employees by employees.

Harassment – Harassment can range from extreme forms such as violence, threats, or physical touching to less obvious actions like ridiculing, teasing, or repeatedly bothering colleagues or subordinates or refusing to talk to them. For example, harassment may include the following types of conduct:

- derogatory or insensitive jokes, pranks, or comments;
- slurs or epithets;
- unwelcome sexual advances or invitations;
- non-verbal behavior such as staring, leering, or gestures;
- ridiculing or demeaning comments;
- innuendos or veiled threats;
- intentionally excluding someone from normal workplace conversations and making them feel unwelcome;
- displaying or sharing offensive images such as posters, videos, photos, cartoons, screensavers, emails, or drawings that are derogatory or sexual;
- offensive comments about appearance, or other personal or physical characteristics, such as sexually charged comments or comments on someone's physical disability;
- unnecessary or unwanted bodily contact such as groping or massaging, blocking normal movement, or physically interfering with the work of another individual; or

- threats or demands that a person submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment or to avoid some other loss and offers of employment-related benefits in return for sexual favors.

This list of examples is not exhaustive, and there may be other behaviors that constitute unacceptable harassment under the AO. “I was joking” or “I didn’t mean it that way” are not defenses to allegations of harassment, nor is being under the influence of alcohol or other substances. This AO applies to conduct at work and at work-related social events, office parties, and off-site meetings. Employees are expected to be particularly careful about what they say and do in these circumstances.

Sexual Harassment – Harassment specifically based on sex, can take two forms:

- *Hostile Work Environment*: Conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; and
- *Quid Pro Quo Harassment*: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an employee’s employment, or when submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting that employee.

Sexual harassment can happen regardless of the individuals’ gender, gender identity, or gender expression and can, for example, occur between same-sex individuals as well as between opposite-sex individuals, and does not require that the harassing conduct be motivated by sexual desire.

Bullying – Jefferson County Commission does not tolerate abusive conduct, bullying or other intimidating or aggressive behavior among employees or others covered by this AO, whether or not it is based on a protected category. If an employee is found to be mistreating his or her colleagues, appropriate action to stop the behavior will be taken.

Any employee who wishes to complain of harassment or retaliation at work should report the problem immediately. Employees are encouraged to access the Equity & Inclusion Hotline at **(844-759-0034)** or visit the website at www.jccal.ethicspoint.com to report a complaint. **NOTE:** Refer to the full AO 20.01 for the entire and specific requirements of the Harassment and Retaliation Administrative Order.

ANTI-NEPOTISM ([ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 08-3](#))

Jefferson County Commission policy prevents nepotism in the workplace. This policy ensures that employees and qualified applicants have an equal opportunity to obtain and serve in the merit system and non-merit system positions. County employees and applicants are evaluated on the basis of individual merit, without consideration of race, color, age, disability, sex, religion, national origin, or any other factors unrelated to qualifications and performance. After the adoption of this policy, the County put in place the following restrictions to avoid the possibility of favoritism based on personal or family relationships and shall be adhered to by all County personnel:

- Related persons shall not serve concurrently within the same department in any case where one related person holds a position having responsibility for the direct supervision of the other related person.

- With regard to proposed employment decisions which would result in concurrent employment of related persons within the same department (or other comparable capacity), a person related to an incumbent employee may not be selected if qualifications of other prospective employees for the available position demonstrably exceeds those of the related person.
- With respect to the concurrent employment of related persons within the same department (or other comparable capacity), neither related person shall be allowed to participate in the evaluation of the other related person.
- With respect to department heads of the Jefferson County Commission, a person may not serve as a department head of any department if there exists within that department any person with any (Alabama) legally recognized degree of kinship to any department head.
- No person may be considered for employment in any department within Jefferson County wherein such person is related in any (Alabama) legally recognized degree of kinship to the department head in which he or she is seeking employment.
- With respect to deputy county managers, a person may not serve as a deputy county manager of any department if there exists within any department which he or she oversees any person where any (Alabama) legally recognized degree of kinship exists between the deputy county manager and any employee within the department which he or she oversees.

An employee who wishes to complain of nepotism should report the problem immediately to the Equity & Inclusion Division via the Equity & Inclusion Hotline at **(844-759-0034)** or visit the website at www.jccal.ethicspoint.com.

This policy is not intended to preclude relatives from obtaining employment at Jefferson County Commission, but rather to avoid favoritism by influencing actions such as, but not limited to, hiring, supervision, promotion and/or evaluation of prospective and existing relatives employed by the County.

The following relationships are the definition of "related persons" and shall not serve concurrently within the same department:

1. Parent and child
2. Brothers and sisters
3. Grandparent and grandchild
4. Aunt/Uncle and niece/nephew
5. First cousins
6. Stepparent and stepchild
7. Stepbrother and stepsisters
8. Husband and wife
9. Parents-in-law and children-in-law
10. Brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law
11. Guardian and ward

12. Any of the above relationships created by adoption
13. Persons involved in amatory relationships, meaning relationships without the benefit of marriage; two persons engaged in a sexual union or romantic courtship.

Anti-Nepotism training is mandatory for all employees.

HIRING FOR COUNTY JOBS

The Personnel Board of Jefferson County (PBJC) is an organization responsible for administering the civil service system (Merit System) for Jefferson County, Alabama. As such, the PBJC facilitates the initial application process, whereby applicants, if deemed eligible, are placed on a certification list that is forwarded to Jefferson County Commission to conduct its secondary hiring process.

The culture of the Jefferson County Commission has shifted to one that is merit based. As such, fair, valid, and legally defensible selection processes have been implemented in the Human Resources Department as of 2016. In short, all internal and external job candidates are provided with the opportunity to participate in a competitive secondary hiring process for all job vacancies that appear on the County Manager's Priority List. The competitive processes (i.e., tests) include, but are not limited to structured interviews, job simulations, and computer assessments.

CLASSIFIED (MERIT SYSTEM) SERVICE

County positions are either "classified" in the Merit System or "unclassified" and outside of the Merit System. Applicants seeking classified job opportunities with the County must apply through the Personnel Board of Jefferson County (PBJC). The PBJC administers the countywide Merit System through its rules and regulations. Among the PBJC's responsibilities are recruitment and testing of job applicants, administration of the classification and pay plan, and hearing grievances and appeals. The PBJC maintains lists of applicants eligible for hiring. Classified vacancies are filled using these lists. For information on PBJC procedures, job applications and current Merit System job openings, call 279-3500 or visit www.jobsquest.org or www.pbical.org.

UNCLASSIFIED SERVICE

"Unclassified" positions are outside the Merit System and do not have the same protections as merit employees. The "Appointing Authority" presides over the disciplinary process of unclassified employees. However, unclassified employees still have the right to file complaints. Candidates seeking to apply for unclassified positions should contact the Human Resources Strategic Relationship Management Division for unclassified job opportunities.

NEW HIRE/DEPARTMENTAL ONBOARDING

To welcome new employees and effectively acclimate existing employees, new hire and departmental onboarding are offered. The main goals of onboarding at Jefferson County Commission are to help employees begin producing and contributing to the mission of the County.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

All classified employees must complete a probationary period – a twelve (12)-month period of full-time paid service within a discrete Class. During this period, the employee is monitored to

determine his/her ability to perform the job and to follow rules and regulations. During this probationary period, an employee may be disciplined or terminated by an Appointing Authority for any lawful reason. The employee will be notified of the reason for discipline.

Employment in a position in the classified service shall be subject to the satisfactory completion of a Probationary Period:

1. Following Standard Appointment;
2. Following Lateral Appointment from an Eligibility List;
3. Following Promotion; and
4. Following Demotion to a Class for which the employee did not previously complete a Probationary Period pursuant to PBJC Rule 11.7.

During the Probationary Period following Promotion, Lateral Appointment, or Demotion, a Regular Employee may be returned to his or her last held class if the position is still vacant and agreed upon by the Appointing Authority over the formerly held Class. A Regular Employee who is provided the opportunity to return to the formerly held Class does not have the right to appeal under PBJC Rule 12.2.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

Employees are encouraged to pursue career and advancement opportunities for classified (Merit System) and unclassified positions. Human Resources sends weekly emails and posts information on current job openings and classification data for classified positions and unclassified positions as positions become available. Employees may access the Personnel Board of Jefferson County's website at www.pbjcal.org or www.jobsquest.org to review and/or apply for various classified job openings in the Merit System.

REASSIGNMENTS ([PBJC Rule 11.9](#))

The Appointing Authority may at any time assign a Classified Employee under his or her Jurisdiction from one position to another in the same class regardless of the shift, location, or hours of work. Such reassignments shall be made with retention of all rights of seniority, vacation, sick leave, and overtime as the employee may have accrued. Please refer to the employee portal for more information.

TRANSFERS

A Merit System employee who has attained regular status in class may request a transfer into the Jefferson County Commission. Prospective employees must complete a PBJC Request for Transfer Form and obtain signatures from their current jurisdiction's department head, current jurisdiction's Appointing Authority, and the new department head at Jefferson County Commission. Before forwarding the form to the PBJC, the prospective employee must contact Jefferson County's Human Resources Department to complete the pre-employment screening process, obtain clearance, and have the Jefferson County Commission Appointing Authority approve the transfer form. Transfer forms are available on the Personnel Board of Jefferson County's website, www.pbjcal.org. For additional information, go to the employee portal.

EXIT INTERVIEWS PROCESS RULE 5.1.15

Jefferson County Commission recognizes the value of feedback received from employees leaving the organization. The main purpose of the exit interviews is to gain insight into employees' experiences, both good and bad, to help improve working conditions of current and future employees at the County. Exit interviews are optional and facilitated by the Equity & Inclusion Division.

In addition, this is an opportunity to discuss with Human Resources or the department such issues as employee benefits, conversion privileges, retirement withdrawal and/or options, repayment of monies due to the County or return of County-owned property.

REHIRE ELIGIBILITY

Jefferson County Commission is an equal opportunity employer committed to ensuring equal access to employment for all individuals. In addition, it is the goal of Jefferson County Commission to consider former employees for rehire who were dismissed For Cause, voluntarily resigned or were laid off due to a business need.

Employees who were part of an involuntary Reduction In Force (RIF), as well as those employees who voluntarily resigned and provided not less than a fourteen (14) calendar day notice, as set forth by the County Manager, will be eligible for rehire if they had a satisfactory work record while employed by Jefferson County Commission.

The following reasons may determine a former employee's **ineligible rehire status**:

- Gross misconduct
- Any act that warrants immediate termination
- Accident, injury to another party due to negligence
- Violence or offensive behavior (threats to self and others)
- Fighting, bullying and/or harassment
- Failure to provide a fourteen (14) calendar day notice or refusal to work the 14-calendar day notice period
- Unsatisfactory completion of Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
- Resigning in lieu of termination
- Weapons possession
- Breach of confidentiality
- Falsification of credentials, application, internal documents, etc.
- Felony conviction
- Conviction of any criminal offense involving moral turpitude
- Disorderly or immoral conduct on the job
- Abuse of leave policies
- Insubordination
- Reporting to or engaging in work while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance
- Neglect of duty/job abandonment
- Theft, negligence or willful damage to public property or waste of public supplies or equipment

- Refusal to cooperate fully and truthfully in any internal investigation conducted by the PBJC or Jefferson County
- Any other legitimate and nondiscriminatory reason that constitutes good cause for disciplinary action

REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF) [PBJC Rule 11.12](#)

When Jefferson County Commission must abolish positions, the Personnel Board of Jefferson County Rule 11.12 Reduction in Force will be adhered to in the process. As such, Jefferson County Commission must follow procedures as governed by the Personnel Board of Jefferson County.

EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL FILES

Employee files are maintained by the Human Resource Department and are considered confidential. Personnel file access by current employees and former employees upon request will generally be permitted within three (3) days of the request unless otherwise required under state law. Personnel files are to be reviewed in the Human Resources Department. Personnel files may not be taken outside the department.

Representatives of government or law enforcement agencies, in the course of their duties, may be allowed access to file information. [Note: Please be advised that the County may be subject to state requirements, including potential requirements to provide copies of personnel files.]

ANNIVERSARY DATES

Employees' anniversary dates are maintained by the Human Resources Department. It is normally the date an employee is eligible for a merit step increase. Anniversary date is calculated as the hire date (most recent date of hire) less any unpaid leaves of absence (except where otherwise dictated by federal or state law) or periods of suspensions. Certain personnel actions change this date. Anniversary dates are extended by the length of any unpaid leave of absence (except where otherwise dictated by federal or state law), any suspension, and by any delay in granting an annual merit step increase. This date is also used for generation of performance appraisals as related to merit step increases.

SECTION III. COMPENSATION AND PAY POLICIES

CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN

Every classified position in the Merit System has a title (classification) assigned by the Personnel Board of Jefferson County. Each classification has a specific pay grade with a minimum and maximum pay step. The minimum pay rate is step 1.

WORK HOURS

Regular full-time employees normally work 40 hours per week. Work hours are fixed by Jefferson County Commission departments. Employees are expected to work hours/shift provided by their department. However, work hours may be reduced at the discretion of the Jefferson County Commission.

FLEXTIME

Per [Rule & Regulation 5.1.29](#), the County supports flextime as a viable option for employees in some situations based upon the needs of the job, work group or department. Please refer to Rule 5.1.29 which establishes the guidelines for flextime. The County allows flextime on a voluntary basis to employees who fill job classifications/positions that have been designated as eligible for flextime. The Flextime Program is an employer option, not an employee right and is appropriate only when it results in the best interest of the County. Flextime may not be suitable for all employees and/or positions. The County may implement flextime as a work option for certain eligible employees based on specific criteria and procedures consistently applied throughout the department. **NOTE:** Refer to the full Rule/Regulation for the entire and specific requirements of the Flextime Rule.

TELEWORK RULE [5.1.21](#)

Departments may implement teleworking as a work option for certain eligible employees based on specific criteria and procedures consistently applied throughout the department. Offering the opportunity to work at home or another alternate workplace is a management option and is not an employee right. An employee's participation in the teleworking program is generally voluntary. The employee, supervisor or department head may terminate teleworking without cause. Teleworking is a work arrangement between an individual employee and his or her supervisor and department head. Telework may not be suitable for all employees and/or positions.

ABSENTEEISM AND TARDINESS ([ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 02-5](#))

Prompt and regular attendance is required. Employees who are absent from work without eligibility for any form of paid leave or without approved leave without pay will be marked for payroll purposes as absent without leave (AWOL) and will not be paid for the unauthorized absence. It is the policy of the Jefferson County Commission that employees so marked as AWOL receive formal discipline which may include up to termination of employment. Unauthorized or excessive absences or tardiness will not be tolerated and shall result in disciplinary action.

Employee Attendance Responsibilities

1. Employees are responsible to be at their workstation on time as scheduled and prepared to work. (For example, if your shift starts at 8:00 a.m., employees are expected to be at their assigned station ready to begin work at 8:00 a.m.) An employee is tardy when he/she arrives at the assigned workstation after the scheduled start time.
2. Maintain a consistent and reliable level of attendance.
3. In case of an illness or situation that would prevent an employee from reporting to work at the scheduled time, employees are required to notify their immediate supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable, employees are required to speak with the next-level manager or director, or to the person designated by their supervisor. Failure to notify the supervisor in a timely manner of any absence or delay may be grounds for termination.
4. Request time off as far in advance as possible.

RECORDING WORK HOURS

The County uses the Kronos Workforce Timekeeper system for recording work time. [Fair Labor Standard Act](#) (FLSA) non-exempt employees use their identification badges when clocking in and out. A work hour is any hour of the day that is worked and should be recorded to the nearest tenth of an hour. The workday is defined as the 24-hour period starting at 12:00 a.m. and ending at 11:59 p.m. The workweek covers seven consecutive days beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday. The usual workweek period is 40 hours.

Exempt – The exempt classification applies to certain executive, administrative, and professional employees. They are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act and are not eligible for overtime compensation.

Non-Exempt – The non-exempt classification applies to employees who are covered by FLSA. They are compensated at the time and one-half rate for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week.

Employees should familiarize themselves with and follow procedures and rules in their departments regarding the recording of time.

PAYCHECKS

County employees receive checks every two weeks for a total of 26 paychecks per year. Employee paychecks are distributed electronically through direct deposit, whereby the County deposits employees' checks to their individual bank accounts.

OVERTIME COMPENSATION

Eligibility for overtime compensation is determined by the Human Resources Department using the following exempt and non-exempt criteria:

COMPENSATORY TIMEOFF

Nonexempt employees may receive either overtime pay or an equivalent amount of compensatory leave (hour for hour) for overtime worked. However, employees cannot choose between these two options. Since Department Heads are most knowledgeable about staffing needs at their departments, it is up to Department Heads to decide if their employees should receive overtime pay or compensatory leave. If an employee is non-exempt, the employee shall be compensated in compliance with FLSA. Most employees can only accumulate up to 240 hours of compensatory leave at any point during the year (the maximum for public safety employees, that is members of the Sheriff's Office, is 480 hours).

NOTE: Overtime work is **PROHIBITED** unless specifically authorized. All employees are responsible for confirming overtime authorization **before** working. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

MERIT PAY RAISES

Classified employees may receive a merit pay raise after each 12 months of employment, until the maximum step is reached. An employee must have a satisfactory work performance review to receive a merit raise. See also the PERFORMANCE REVIEW section of this handbook.

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS (COLA)

The Jefferson County Commission may provide a cost-of-living raise for employees. A cost-of-living raise is a percentage of compensation equally applied to all employees, regardless of their time in service or pay grade. Depending on the financial health of the County, a cost-of-living raise is usually provided, if any, at the beginning of a budget year (October).

PAY FOR TRAINEES AND RECRUITS WITHIN PUBLIC SAFETY (Sheriff's Department)

Some positions are "trainee" positions because they require a training period which is of an unusual nature or duration. An employee appointed to a position as a "trainee" is paid at the minimum pay step for that classification. After satisfactory service and/or completion of APOST certification, the new employee may receive an increase to the next pay step.

PREMIUM PAY

The Director of the Personnel Board of Jefferson County may authorize premium pay for various work assignments (hazardous, medical support personnel who work rotating, evening, or night shifts in a medical facility).

The Personnel Board of Jefferson County has determined that eligible employees may be paid up to a three (3) step increase above the regular rate of pay as premium pay. Premium pay process is on the employee portal.

EDUCATION AND INCENTIVE PAY

The pay plan allows for a one, two, or more step pay increase in certain job classifications for employees who exceed minimum education requirements or have achieved special certifications. Contact the Personnel Board of Jefferson County at pbjcal.org

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The performance appraisal process provides a means for discussing, planning and reviewing performance of each employee. The employee's immediate supervisor will evaluate and rate employee's performance annually. The immediate supervisor should discuss ratings periodically with the employee and initiate performance improvement plans when needed.

The purpose of the performance evaluation is to provide the employee with an honest appraisal of work performance as well as provide guidance for improvement. Performance appraisals influence salaries, promotions and transfers, and it is critical that supervisors are objective in conducting performance reviews and in assigning overall performance ratings.

An employee must receive a satisfactory evaluation in order to receive a merit pay increase. The Performance Evaluation is also reviewed and signed by a higher-level supervisor.

TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS ([PBJC Rule 11.3](#))

Temporary appointments may be granted in certain circumstances. Candidates for temporary appointments must meet the requirements recommended by the PBJC Director and receive approval by the Board. For more information concerning temporary appointments, contact the PBJC at pbjcal.org.

SECTION IV. TIME-OFF BENEFITS

VACATION

Employees earn vacation at the following rates:

- 0 to 12 years..... 1 day per month of service
- 12 to 25 years.....1 ½ days per month of service
- Over 25 years.....2 days per month of service

Classified and Unclassified employees can take vacation leave after completion of the first 90 days of employment. The Department must approve time-off for vacations. Employees forfeit all vacation more than 40 days (320 hours) not used by December 31st of each year. An employee who terminates employment in good standing may receive up to 40 days of unused vacation as pay upon termination.

HOLIDAYS

Jefferson County Commission has adopted a holiday standard to assist employees and departments in planning for holidays. Holidays are approved by the Jefferson County Commission each fiscal year. The following holidays are observed as indicated below:

HOLIDAY	DAY OF BUSINESS WEEK OBSERVANCE
New Year’s Day (1 day)	The actual day is observed if January 1 st occurs Monday thru Friday. If January 1 st occurs on Saturday, Friday is the Holiday or if it occurs on Sunday, Monday is the Holiday.
Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday (1 day)	Monday is observed
President’s Day (1 day)	Monday is observed
Good Friday (1 day)	Friday immediately preceding Easter
Memorial Day (1 day)	Monday is observed
Independence Day (1 day)	The actual day is observed, if July 4 th occurs Monday thru Friday. If July 4 th occurs on Saturday,

	Friday is the holiday or if it occurs on Sunday, Monday is the Holiday.
Labor Day (1 day)	Monday is observed
Veterans Day (1 day)	Day of observance
Thanksgiving and day after Thanksgiving (2 days)	Fourth Thursday of November and following day.
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (2 days)	Actual day except if Christmas is on Monday or a weekend day, the holidays are on Friday and Monday.
Variable Holiday (1 day)	Employee's discretion with supervisor's approval

The one-day Variable Holiday cannot be carried over into the next fiscal year. If not taken prior to October 1st of each year, it is forfeited.

SICK LEAVE ([PBJC Rule 13.10](#)) and BEREAVEMENT

Employees earn paid sick leave at the rate of eight (8) hours per month of employment. During the probationary period, employees accrue paid sick leave, but it cannot be used until after completion of 90 days of employment. If an employee has no sick leave available, time off for illness is without pay and shall be recorded as AWOL (Employee Absent Without Leave Administrative Order 02-5) unless authorized by the Appointing Authority. In addition to personal illness, sick leave may be used for doctor, dental, and vision appointments. Supervisors may require a doctor's proof of illness for sick leave requested.

An employee who requests sick leave for five (5) or more consecutive days may be required to furnish a doctor's Proof of Illness. This usually consists of a note from the doctor, which confirms the employee has been under medical care and states the employee has been unable to work and provides the date the employee is released to return to work. However, Proof of Illness for absences less than five (5) consecutive days may be required by the Department Head or the Appointing Authority.

Use of Sick Leave for Family Illnesses

An employee may use up to twelve (12) days per calendar year of accrued sick leave with pay for an illness or death in the employee's immediate family that necessitates the employee's absence from work. Immediate family includes the employee's spouse, children, parents, grandparents, siblings, and legal guardians, as well as the employee's spouse's "immediate family."

If an employee uses sick leave for an illness in the employee's immediate family, the Appointing Authority may require appropriate documentation to substantiate necessity for the use of leave.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT ([ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 07-2](#))

In 1993, the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) came into effect. FMLA entitles eligible employees to take paid or unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. To be eligible, the employee must have been employed with the County for at least twelve (12) months and worked at least 1250 hours during that period.

Eligible employees are entitled to:

- Twelve workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for:
 - birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
 - placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
 - care of the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
 - a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job;
 - qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty;" **or**
- Twenty-six workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin to the employee (military caregiver leave).

For more information on FMLA, please visit www.wagehour.dol.gov or [Administrative Order 07-2](#). Please contact the Human Resources Department if you want to apply for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act.

PAYMENT FOR ACCRUED SICK LEAVE ([ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 84-2](#) & [94-2](#))

Employees with at least five (5) years' continuous full-time employment with Jefferson County may receive a lump sum payment of 50% of their unused sick leave up to a maximum of 30 days upon termination of employment with the County. This is payable if an employee leaves in "good standing" and is not transferring to another jurisdiction. The term "good standing" includes leaving voluntarily with fourteen (14) days' notice to the County.

Employees may carry over an unlimited number of sick leave days into following years. Employees may also receive payment for accrued sick leave upon termination or retirement. ([PERSONNEL BOARD Rules 13.20 and 13.23](#))

RETIREMENT CONVERSION OF ACCRUED SICK LEAVE ([ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 92-8](#))

To encourage employees to conserve their paid sick leave benefit, the County has established a retirement conversion benefit. Retiring employees with at least 15 years of County employment may elect to receive a retirement service credit. Employees electing retirement credit remain on the County's payroll but are "off duty" and not required to report to work. Employees remain "off duty" with pay until their official retirement day. Employees have several options and plans available, which are based on the amount of accumulated unused sick leave. Because of the number of plans and options, employees nearing retirement must carefully review the entire policy and seek assistance from the Human Resources Department and the Pension Office in deciding.

INJURY WITH PAY LEAVE (IWP)

An employee who receives a disabling injury on the job may receive injury with pay (IWP) leave. Employees must immediately report injury occurring on the job to a supervisor and the Risk Management Division. Employees claiming on-the-job injuries are required to immediately provide a blood, urine or saliva sample for alcohol and drug testing. Refusal to do so will result in forfeiture of workers' compensation benefits as well as injury with paid leave. IWP will also be denied if the injury is not timely reported or the injury results from fault or gross negligence of the employee. In an event of an accident call Risk Management immediately. For additional information, please see the SAFETY/SECURITY section in this handbook.

JURY/WITNESS LEAVE

An employee summoned for jury duty or as a witness in court may receive leave with pay under limited circumstances ([See Personnel Board Rule 13.15](#)).

MILITARY LEAVE

A full-time employee may receive pay for up to 21 days per year for National Guard or Armed Forces Reserve Training. The employee must provide official orders for the absence and notify the department at least 10 working days in advance of the leave (See [PERSONNEL BOARD Rule 13.14](#) and [ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 07-2](#)).

LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

Employees may receive leave of absence without pay for no more than one (1) year for the following purposes:

1. Extended Medical Leave of Absence
2. Career Development Leave (to pursue a course of study)
3. Personal Leave
4. To Assist a Government Agency
5. Disability Leave (may exceed one year)
6. Military Service
7. Administrative Leave

An employee must request leave in writing; the Department Head must recommend, and the Human Resources Director must approve the leave. An employee must no longer be in a probationary status to be eligible for unpaid leave for career development, to assist a governmental agency, or for personal reasons. **CONTACT THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT REGARDING YOUR FRINGE BENEFITS BEFORE BEGINNING UNPAID LEAVE** (See [Administrative Order 07-2](#)).

GRANTED LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

Probationary employees who are absent from work without eligibility for vacation or sick leave shall be eligible for up to 48 hours of granted leave without pay (GLWOP). The Employee must submit a properly executed Request for Authorized Leave (excluding FMLA) Form through the chain of command to the Human Resources Department before commencement of the absence.

Requests for GLWOP must be submitted by the end of the pay period in which the absence occurred.

VOTING TIME

All employees should be able to vote either before or after regularly assigned work hours. However, when this is not possible due to work schedules, employees will receive up to three (3) hours during the workday to vote. Time off for voting should be reported and coded appropriately on timekeeping records.

ELECTION LEAVE – CANDIDACY FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

If a classified employee resigns his or her position in order to run for public office, he or she shall submit a written resignation to the Appointing Authority, with a copy to the Human Resources Department and the Director of the Personnel Board of Jefferson County stating the purpose of such resignation. Provided the Classified Employee returns to work within six (6) months from the date of his or her resignation and his or her position has not been filled, the Classified Employee will be treated as if he or she had been on an authorized unpaid leave. See [Personnel Board Rule 17.2](#).

Any Classified Employee who qualifies to seek a political office with the Appointing Authority with which he or she is employed, shall be required to take an unpaid leave of absence pursuant to the provisions of [Administrative Order 07-2](#), or use accrued overtime or vacation time with said Appointing Authority and/or governmental entity from the date he or she qualifies to run for office until the date on which the election results are certified, or the Classified Employee is no longer a candidate, or there are no other candidates on the ballot. Any Classified Employee who violates this Rule shall forfeit employment with said Appointing Authority and/or governmental entity.

VACATION LEAVE BANK RULE ([ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 99-1, as amended](#))

After completing one year of uninterrupted full-time employment with Jefferson County, Sheriff's Department, or the Personnel Board of Jefferson County (PBJC) employees are eligible to apply for membership in the Vacation Leave Bank (VLB). The VLB allows employees to take up to a maximum of 720 hours (90 days) of Leave Bank benefits within a 12-month period for non-work-related serious illness or accident when it is anticipated that all accrued leave will be exhausted. The Vacation Leave Bank Committee will determine whether to grant or deny benefits after reviewing Vacation Leave Bank withdrawal requests. Enrollment forms are available on the County's Intranet site. Enrollment forms may also be picked up directly from the Human Resources Department. Complete the Vacation Leave Bank enrollment form and submit it to the Human Resources Department. The Plan requires all members to contribute eight (8) hours of accrued vacation leave when entering the Plan. Employees returning from layoff need not contribute an additional eight (8) hours upon return if they were previously enrolled in the Plan. If you have any questions, please call the Human Resources Department at 325-5249. Employees may apply for membership during Open Enrollment.

SECTION V. OTHER BENEFITS

RETIREMENT PLAN

Regular, full-time County employees may participate in the Jefferson County Retirement System (Pension). Participation is mandatory for full-time classified employees and is optional for full-time non-classified employees. Each member of the pension contributes 6% of base salary to the Pension by payroll deduction. The County “contributes an amount equal to the total of all member contributions”. Each member must designate a beneficiary for his/her pension benefits, in case of death of the member. It is the member’s responsibility to complete a change of beneficiary form when a ‘life event’ change occurs (marriage, divorce, death, etc.) to ensure that the designated beneficiary is correctly recorded in the Human Resources Department. These forms are available from departmental payroll coordinators.

A Pension Handbook is available from the Pension Office, which has details regarding the pension. Questions may be answered by referring to the handbook or contacting the Pension Office at 325-5354. (website: www.grsal.net)

DEFERRED COMPENSATION

Employees may defer a portion of their pay which also defers payment of income tax. Providers are available who offer several options for investment of the deferrals. For further information, contact the Human Resources Department, Employee Services Division at 325-5249.

PARKING

Available parking varies at different worksites. The General Services Department assigns parking at the Courthouses and maintains a waiting list of employees seeking parking spaces. There is a parking charge for spaces at the Courthouses. Employees should familiarize themselves with the parking locations and rules at their individual worksites and consult with their supervisors if there are questions.

TRAINING

Employees are encouraged to keep abreast of developments in their job fields and strive for continuous improvement of their knowledge and abilities. Formal job-related training is available to employees for professional or technical seminars and for training provided by outside sources. The County Commission must approve this training in advance. The County’s Human Resources Department Learning and Organizational Development Division provides training and organizational development activities for County employees. Employees must participate in required training, as identified by Human Resources or their department.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH/WORKER’S COMPENSATION

Risk Management is concerned with the health and wellbeing of employees and the County’s work environment. Risk Management is also responsible for management of all aspects of on-the-job injuries and illnesses, and administration of workers' compensation benefits, under the Code of Alabama. As such, there are procedures that should be followed so that in all on-the-job injuries properly handled and reported as required to Risk Management.

Additionally, Risk Management is responsible for Safety and Accident Prevention, as well as investigating property damage and auto liability/collision claims. Risk Management can be contacted at 205-325-5110.

Accident/Incident Reporting

Any employee involved in an accident or incident, which involves injury, damage to County property, or could result in a claim for injury or damages against the County must IMMEDIATELY report it to his/her Department Head **and** Risk Management (See section regarding EMPLOYEE LIABILITY). Employees who are involved in a work accident or injury may be subject to a drug and alcohol testing.

Fitness for Duty Evaluations

Employees may be requested to undergo an evaluation relating to their “fitness for duty” to perform the functions of his/her job description or any other formal standard relating to the job. The Risk Manager of the County will evaluate all requests from department heads, make the final decision, and coordinate the evaluation with the appropriate providers. These examinations are paid for by the County.

Any person who does not comply with the reasonable request from the Risk Manager or any medical provider can be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

Jefferson County Commission understands that when an employee is experiencing stress on the job, struggling with substance abuse or simply looking for advice to balance life’s difficult duties, they may need assistance. Contact information to a confidential source for behavioral health services can be found on the employee portal.

EMPLOYEE LIABILITY

The County does not provide general liability insurance for employees. The County does provide legal representation for eligible employees for claims or suits which involve accidents or incidents occurring within the scope of employment. Under limited circumstances, the County may be responsible for resolving legal actions against employees. Eligibility for such legal representation and County assistance requires:

- That the accident or incident must have arisen while the employee was acting within scope of his/her employment with the County;
- That employee immediately reports the accident or incident to the Department Head **and** Risk Management Division;
- That employee’s action or conduct was not willful, malicious, wanton or intentional;
- That employee cooperates with the County in its investigation and legal actions;
- That employee does not make an admission of liability and does not collude with the person or persons asserting the legal action; and
- That employee has not acted in bad faith nor in violation of County policies and procedures.

Employees operating County vehicles or operating their personal vehicles while performing County business are **STRONGLY URGED** to extend their personal automobile-vehicle insurance coverage to guard against personal liability while operating County vehicles. Employees should consult with their personal insurance agents for this insurance coverage.

SECTION VI. EMPLOYEE CONDUCT/RESPONSIBILITIES

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

The continued employment of every employee is conditioned upon satisfactory conduct of the employee and continued efficient performance of assigned duties and responsibilities. Employees may be dismissed, demoted, or suspended for specific cause or for any reason deemed to be in the best interest of public service. Probationary and unclassified employees may be disciplined or dismissed by an Appointing Authority, without right of appeal to the Personnel Board of Jefferson County (PBJC). The reasons for such action are furnished in writing to the employee. Classified employees beyond their probationary period have right of appeal to the PBJC.

Personnel Board Rules & Regulations list the following as some of the causes which are sufficient for dismissal, demotion, or suspension:

- a) Absent without leave;
- b) Commitment of any criminal act;
- c) Conduct unbecoming an employee in public service;
- d) Conviction of a criminal offense or of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude;
- e) Disorderly or immoral conduct;
- f) Failure to pay or make proper provision for liquidation of just debts;
- g) Incapacity due to mental or physical disability of a permanent nature;
- h) Incompetence or inefficiency;
- i) Insubordination;
- j) Intoxication while on duty or public intoxication while off duty;
- k) Neglect of duty;
- l) Negligence or willful damage to public property or waste of public supplies or equipment;
- m) Violation of any lawful or reasonable regulations or order made and given by a superior officer;
- n) Willful violation of any provisions of the Civil Service Law or of the Personnel Board Rules & Regulations;
- o) Refusal of an employee to testify or answer any questions before any board or anybody authorized to conduct any hearing concerning the affairs of government or the conduct of any officer or employee, on the grounds his/her testimony would tend to incriminate him/her or refusal to waive immunity from prosecution;
- p) For any other reason deemed to be in the best interest of the public service and not inconsistent with Personnel Board Rules & Regulations.

The foregoing list is not all-inclusive. Employees are expected to follow the code of conduct outlined in this handbook as well to use good judgment.

Discipline can take the form of verbal counseling and reprimand, written reprimand, suspension, demotion, and termination. While Jefferson County Commission encourages use of progressive discipline, the seriousness of the offense may warrant the most severe form of discipline for a first offense (See Employee Conduct and Progressive Discipline [Rule 5.1.14](#)).

VIOLATION OF THE DRUG/ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE POLICY USUALLY RESULTS IN TERMINATION FOR A FIRST OFFENSE

DRUG/ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE RULE 5.4.2

Jefferson County Commission [Rule 5.4.2](#) calls for a drug/alcohol free workplace with **zero tolerance**.

Employees are prohibited from operating any County vehicle, being present on County premises or conducting organizational work offsite, while using, possessing, buying, selling, manufacturing or dispensing an illegal drug (to include possession of drug paraphernalia) or being under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug. Prohibited activities will result in disciplinary action which is subject to termination and not being eligible for future employment with the County. **NOTE:** Refer to the full Rule/Regulation for the entire and specific requirements of the Drug/Alcohol Free Workplace [Rule 5.4.2](#).

Drug/alcohol testing will be required for any employee operating a County vehicle, which is involved in an accident and for any employee involved in any job-related accident. Testing may also be required of any employee if reasonable suspicion exists that the employee is intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This reasonable suspicion includes a record of tardiness or absence which indicates an employee may be using alcohol or prohibited drugs off-duty which renders him/her unable to perform duties. Random drug testing may also be ordered for employees in safety sensitive positions. Safety-sensitive employees returning to duty from disciplinary suspensions without pay are subject to testing. A "safety-sensitive" position is one in which job performance can affect safety of the employee and others. Examples of these positions may include, but are not limited to medical employees, truck drivers, positions working with children under the age of 13 and positions working with toxic or hazardous chemicals or equipment. Consult your supervisor, Human Resources Department, the County Attorney, or the Rule/Regulation if you have a question about whether you occupy a safety sensitive position. Employees claiming on-the-job injuries are required to immediately provide a blood, urine or saliva sample for testing, at the County's discretion. Refusal to do so will result in forfeiture of worker's compensation benefits as well as injury with pay leave.

The County reserves the right to search any property owned or controlled by the County. This includes desks, lockers, files, buildings, motor vehicles, computers, telephones and other electronic devices. The County also reserves the right to search any employee's personal property which is located on County premises or work areas when reasonable suspicion exists that the employee may be intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. This includes pockets, billfolds, purses, lunch boxes, etc.

Jefferson County Commission will assist and support employees who voluntarily seek help for such problems before becoming subject to discipline or termination under this or other County policies. Such employees will be allowed to use accrued paid time off, placed on leaves of absence, referred to treatment providers and otherwise accommodated as required by law. Such employees may be required to provide evidence they are successfully following prescribed treatment and to take and pass follow-up tests. Failure to follow prescribed treatment will result in termination.

Once a drug test has been scheduled, the employee will have forfeited the opportunity to be granted a leave of absence for treatment and termination will be enforced.

USE OF PHONE, EMAIL, COMPUTER AND INFORMATION ([Rule 5.1.25](#))

County computers, phones and email systems are for the exclusive use of Jefferson County employees. Data housed on County computers may only be accessed by County employees for the purpose of conducting County business. All technology provided by the County, including computer systems, communications networks, County-related work records and other information stored electronically, are property of the County and not the employee. Occasional use of County email for personal communication is not inherently a violation of this Rule. However, such use may be restricted or terminated by a supervisor for abuse. All County employees must sign and have on file a Computer and Email Usage Rule Acknowledgment Form before being granted access to any County computer.

It is the responsibility of County employees to:

- Adequately secure computer(s) they use by locking and password protecting it when not in use.
- Adequately secure any personal device or computer used to remotely access County data or systems.
- Immediately report a lost, stolen, or damaged computer or other electronic device to his or her supervisor.
- Immediately report actual or suspected data breach.

All County employees must sign and have on file a Computer and Email Usage Rule Acknowledgment Form before being granted access to any County computer.

It is the responsibility of supervisors to contact the County's IT Department as soon as an employee resigns, is terminated, receives a disciplinary suspension, or otherwise leaves employ of the County. All security rights to any County computer will be terminated immediately as of the date of separation. **For more details, refer to [Rule 5.1.25](#).**

Right to Monitor

All County-supplied technology and County-related work records belong to the County and not to the employee. Jefferson County Commission routinely monitors use of County-supplied technology. Inappropriate or illegal use of communication may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Social Media – Acceptable Use

Below are guidelines for social media use:

- Employees may not post financial, confidential, sensitive or proprietary information about the County, clients, employees or applicants.
- Employees may not post obscenities, slurs or personal attacks that can damage the reputation of the County, clients, employees or applicants.
- When posting on social media sites, employees must use the following disclaimer when discussing job-related matters, *“The opinions expressed on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent views of Jefferson County Commission.”*
- Jefferson County Commission may monitor content on the Internet. Policy violations may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

DRESS CODE

It is important for all employees to project a professional image while at work by being appropriately attired. Jefferson County Commission employees are expected to be neat, clean and well-groomed while on the job. Clothing must be consistent with standards for a work environment and must be appropriate to the type of work being performed.

Jefferson County Commission services provided are broad and dress, uniform and appearance requirements will vary from department to department. For this reason, employees are expected to refer to their specific departmental dress code rule/policy to ensure adherence. Any employee who is improperly dressed will be counseled or in severe cases, be sent home to change clothes. Continued disregard of this rule may be cause for disciplinary action, which may result in termination.

Jefferson County Commission recognizes the diversity of cultures and religions of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress, uniform and appearance requirements. As such, if employees are unable to conform to required personal appearance standards, then they are advised to seek assistance through the Equity & Inclusion Division (EID).

ALABAMA ETHICS COMMISSION REPORTING (AL Act 2012-509)

As of June 5, 2019, County officials and designated County employees earning \$81,000 or more annually must submit annual Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) reports to the Alabama Ethics Commission. Also, every full-time public employee serving as a supervisor must file a SEI form.

Covered employees and officials may personally complete forms online at <http://ethics.alabama.gov/>

EMERGENCY CLOSING/ INCLEMENT WEATHER

Many employees work in departments which provide essential public services and must continue to function in all kinds of weather. Each employee is responsible for knowing inclement weather procedures in effect for their department (see Emergency Closing/Inclement Weather Rule 5.1.13).

SMOKING POLICY ([ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 93-3](#) and Adopted City of Birmingham Ordinance 12-52)

Smoking is prohibited inside all County buildings and vehicles. In addition, smoking shall be prohibited within seven (7) ft. outside entrances, windows and ventilation systems of enclosed areas where smoking is prohibited, so as to prevent tobacco smoke from entering those areas. Members of the public and employees may smoke at designated locations outside County buildings. The duration and frequency of employee smoking breaks should be limited to regularly scheduled breaks.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT/CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND COMMITMENT/INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES ([ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 02-4](#) & [03-2](#))

Employees are permitted to engage in outside work or to hold other jobs, subject to certain restrictions as outlined below.

Activities and conduct away from the job must not compete with, conflict with or compromise County interests or adversely affect job performance and ability to fulfill all job responsibilities. Employees are prohibited from performing any services for customers on nonworking time that are normally performed by Jefferson County Commission. This prohibition also extends to unauthorized use of any County tools or equipment and unauthorized use or application of any confidential information. In addition, employees are not to solicit or conduct outside business during paid working time.

Employees are cautioned to carefully consider demands that additional work activity will create before accepting outside employment. Outside employment will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel or refusal to work overtime or different hours. If Jefferson County Commission determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance, the employee may be asked to terminate outside employment.

Employees who have accepted outside employment may not use paid sick leave to work the outside job. Fraudulent use of sick leave will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

To avoid a conflict of interest, employees should submit a written request detailing the nature of their contemplated outside employment to their Department Head. Department Heads engaging in outside work or activities should submit a written request for approval to their Appointing Authority.

PROHIBITED USE OF COUNTY NAME OR CREDIT OR THING OF VALUE

Employees are prohibited from using their employment with the County for personal gain. Employees must not use any form of credit of the County or the name of the County to obtain any personal discount, entitlement, gratuity, gift, or any other thing of value (except authorized employee groups). Employees must not use County vehicles or equipment or telephones or any other County equipment for private purposes unless expressly authorized by Administrative Order. Employees must not solicit in any manner whatsoever meals, food, drinks, gifts, money,

or otherwise, using in any manner whatsoever their employment with the County as any form of inducement (See [ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 94-1](#)).

FIREARMS

Firearms are prohibited in the workplace. As an exception, supervisors may authorize employees who are licensed and required to carry firearms in performance of their County work duties to bring firearms into the County work environment.

IDENTIFICATION BADGES ([ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 92-4](#))

Classified and Unclassified employees are required to wear an official County identification badge and must do so in a clearly visible manner while in a County building. Employees may replace badges due to a name change or because of normal wear and tear without cost to the employee. There is a charge to replace badges lost or rendered unusable. Badges are also used to clock in and clock out on time clocks. General Services Security issues identification badges.

SAFETY/SECURITY

It is the responsibility of every employee to help maintain a safe and secure work environment, which requires following departmental and worksite safety rules. Employees must comply with all security and safety related laws. For example, State law requires wearing of seat belts, as well as use of headlights when a vehicle's windshield wipers are in operation. Any employee taking medication, which may affect his/her ability to perform job duties in a safe manner, must immediately notify the supervisor. Employees should immediately report suspicious or unusual incidents and behavior to the supervisor or appropriate security personnel.

DRIVER'S LICENSE/COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE

Some positions with the County require an employee to have a current and valid driver's license. Some positions also require a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Those employees must obtain and maintain their own licenses. Any employee whose job requires a driver's license or CDL must notify his/her supervisor IMMEDIATELY if required license is suspended or revoked. Failure to immediately report the suspension or revocation is a disciplinary offense, which may include termination. The County reserves the right to periodically verify that an employee's required driver's license is current and valid. An employee who operates a County vehicle without the valid license is subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Employees required to have CDL's are subject to random drug and alcohol testing.

SOLICITATION POLICY ([ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 92-5](#))

Unauthorized solicitation of County employees or the public within any County building or on County property is prohibited. "Solicitation" is defined as selling an item or service or requesting a donation or contribution.

Requests for access to County employees and County buildings for the purpose of solicitation must be submitted in writing to the County Manager.

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION/GRIEVANCES

Employees with complaints should utilize services of the Equity & Inclusion Division (EID). The HOTLINE number is **844-759-0034** or HOTLINE web www.jccal.ethicspoint.com. Business Partners in the Equity & Inclusion Division will offer mediation of the complaint, as appropriate. If resolution is not possible, there is a formal complaint process. The EID is committed to taking each complaint seriously through each step of the process.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT/REINSTATEMENT TO REGISTER

An employee who resigns is required to give not less than fourteen (14) calendar days' notice to leave in good standing. An exit interview will be performed when possible. Classified employees, who resign in good standing, may within two (2) years apply for reinstatement to the eligible register for the same classification.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Employees may join or affiliate with civic organizations of a partisan or a political nature, may attend political meetings, and may advocate and support principles or policies of civic or political organizations in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the State of Alabama and in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.

However, employees may not:

1. *Engage in political activity while on duty:* **Note: An employee may resign employment to run for public office and may be eligible for a six month leave of absence without pay to campaign.**
2. *Use official authority or influence* for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or a nomination for office;
3. *Be required* as a duty of employment or as a condition of employment, promotion, or tenure of office to contribute funds for political or partisan purposes;
4. *Coerce or compel contributions* for political or partisan purposes from another employee of the County; or
5. *Use any supplies or equipment of the County* for political or partisan purposes.

SECTION VII. OTHER MATTERS

CREDIT UNION

The Jefferson County Employees' Credit Union provides many services including free checking accounts, savings accounts, low interest loans, and credit cards. Net payroll check deposit is available. The website for the Jefferson County Employees' Credit Union is www.jcccu.org.

To better serve employees, the Credit Union offers full-service banking through its branches at the Birmingham Courthouse, the Bessemer Courthouse, Hoover, Fultondale and Hueytown. Also, with online banking employees can view their checking and savings account, credit card, mortgage, or auto loan. Please visit <http://jeffersoncreditunion.org/locations> for the address and hours of operation for each branch.

EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

All employees of Jefferson County Commission may join the Employees' Association. The objective of the Association is to sponsor and support civic and social measures conducive to the welfare of the Jefferson County Commission and its employees. The Association was further established to allow employees an opportunity to connect with other employees and to discuss and plan resolutions to issues concerning the majority of employees. The Association holds several social gatherings each year, sponsors charitable functions that all employees may participate in, and contributes both money and volunteers to many charities and groups. The Association also represents employees with the County Commission and State Legislature in matters concerning or of potential impact on employees. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month and the location of meetings are determined by availability of meeting space. Notice of meetings are distributed by County-wide e-mail or posted in common areas for employees without e-mail access. The Employees' Association website is:

http://jeffco.iccal.org/portal/page?_pageid=434,79147,434_79149&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL located at [JCEA](#).

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND INSURANCE BENEFITS

Health, dental, vision, life and other terms of insurance are available for employees. The County shares in costs of some of these insurance benefits. For a summary of current health and insurance benefits, contact the Human Resources Department Employee Services Division at 325-5249.

SECTION IX. CONFLICTS - DISCLAIMER

This handbook is available for all employees of Jefferson County Commission. It is intended for your use only as a **general guide** regarding policies and procedures of the Jefferson County Commission as well as the rules and regulations of the Jefferson County Personnel Board. **THIS HANDBOOK IS NOT, NOR SHOULD IT EVER BE CONSTRUED TO BE, AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT.** It is not intended to provide all information you will need regarding your employment. For further information, you should look to the [County Commission's Administrative Orders and Resolutions](#) and [Rules & Regulations](#), and the [Personnel Board Rules and Regulations](#) and [the Enabling Act](#) which established our Merit System. Those documents control in case of any omissions, misstatements, or conflicts with this handbook. Employees should also refer to and become familiar with departmental manuals or documents, which contain rules, regulations, and procedures, which are specific to their departments. It is the responsibility of employees to familiarize themselves with rules and regulations; lack of knowledge is not an acceptable excuse. Additional information may be accessed through County Manager directives, Human Resources guidelines and the employee portal.

For more information regarding services provided by the Human Resources Department, please go to the employee portal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECEIPT

I have received my copy of the Employee Handbook.

The Employee Handbook describes important information about employment with Jefferson County Commission, and I understand that I should consult my management, HR or the Compliance Office regarding questions not answered in the handbook or for clarifications. I have entered my employment relationship with Jefferson County Commission voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment.

I understand and agree that, other than the Jefferson County Commission Appointing Authority or designated representative of Personnel Board of Jefferson County, no supervisor, department head, or representative of the Jefferson County Commission has authority to enter into an employment agreement or adopt revisions to the policies referenced in this handbook.

I understand that language in this handbook supersedes all previous Jefferson County Commission Employee Handbooks and all policies and practices may be changed at any time by Jefferson County Commission and/or the Personnel Board of Jefferson County. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies.

I understand and agree nothing in the Employee Handbook creates, or is intended to create, a promise or representation of continued employment.

I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with policies contained in this handbook and revisions made to it.

Employee's Name (Print)

Employee's Signature

Social Security Number (last four digits)

Date