

**HOKE COUNTY  
PERSONNEL POLICY  
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## **SECTION I. IN GENERAL**

### **Paragraph 1. Employment Philosophy**

Employment with the County of Hoke is an opportunity for public service. It confers no special rights or privileges, but it does impose certain responsibilities and duties. The County of Hoke expects from all of its employee's honesty, fairness, reliability, diligence, discipline and appropriate skills for the tasks assigned. Nothing in this Employment Policy is designed to take away or diminish any Constitutional, Statutory, Regulatory or Common Law Rights of our employees or to add or supplement any. Employment with the County should be undertaken only in good faith, with a spirit of cooperation and a desire to serve our citizens in an appropriate manner.

### **Paragraph 2. Employment Policy**

- a) The employment relationship between the county and the employee is terminable at the will of either any time and with or without cause and with or without notice. No employee, officer, agent or representative of the county has any authority to enter into any agreement or representation, verbally or in writing, which alters, amends, or contradicts this provision or the provisions in these policies. Any exceptions to this policy of at-will employment must be expressly authorized in writing, approved by the board of commissioners and executed by the officers designated by the board of commissioners.
- b) None of the benefits or policies set forth in these policies are intended because of their publication to confer any rights or privileges upon employees or to entitle them to be or remain employed by the county. The contents of this document are presented as a matter of information only. Although the county believes wholeheartedly in the plans, policies, and procedures described herein, they are not conditions of employment.
- c) These personnel policies are not a binding contract, but merely a set of guidelines for the implementation of personnel policies. The county explicitly reserves the right to modify any of the provisions of these policies at any time and without any notice to employees. Notwithstanding any of the provisions within these policies, employment may be terminated at any time, either by the employee or by the county, with or without cause and with or without advance notice. Likewise, these personnel policies are not an offer that can be developed into a contract by any action or failure to act on the part of the employee.
- d) These provisions for personnel administration remain subject to review and change whenever improvements can be made.

- e) These personnel policies establish a system of personnel administration for the county to recruit, select, employ, develop, and maintain an effective and responsible work force.

### **Paragraph 3. General Purpose**

The purpose of these policies is to establish a personnel system which will recruit, select, employ, develop and maintain an effective and responsible work force. All appointments and promotions of county employees subject to the authority of the board of commissioners and exercised by the county manager shall be made on the basis of merit, fitness, and demonstrated ability. It is also the policy of the county to foster, maintain, and promote equal employment opportunity (EEO). The county shall select employees on the basis of the applicant's qualifications and without regard to age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, political affiliation or national origin. Applicants with disabilities shall be given equal consideration with other applicants for positions in which their disabilities do not represent an unreasonable barrier to satisfactory performance of duties.

### **Paragraph 4. Coverage**

- a) A "County Employee" in North Carolina is sometimes difficult to categorize due to the variety of special statutes and rules which apply to various agencies that are related to the County. For example, the Health Department, Social Services Department, the Board of Elections, the Sheriff's Department, and the Register of Deeds have specific statutes that relate to hiring, termination, and other conditions of employment which supersede the Board of Commissioners' and the County Manager's abilities to regulate or control personnel practices in those Departments. Additionally, certain County officials such as the County Manager, the County Attorney, the Tax Collector, the Tax Assessor, Finance Director and Clerk to the Board have special statutes that control their relationship with the County. And finally, there are certain county related agencies such as the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service or the Sandhills Mental Health Center that are partially county funded but whose employees may not receive direct payment from, or control by, the County. (This list of departments, agencies and officials does not constitute the exclusive array of differences, but are for illustrative purposes only.) To the extent certain laws override the County's authority to regulate personnel practices for certain departments or positions, these policies do not apply. If you have any questions as to the application of these personnel policies to you or your agencies, you should contact the Personnel Director, County Manager or the County Attorney in writing requesting clarification.
- b) These personnel policies do not apply to elected officials or appointed members of the various county boards or agencies.

**Paragraph 5. Definitions.**

Temporary Employee. A person appointed and/or hired to serve in a position for a definite duration not to exceed one year.

Permanent Employee. A person appointed and/or hired to serve in a position for an indefinite duration and who has served a probationary period of more than nine (9) calendar months.

Part-time Employee. An employee, either permanent or temporary, who is regularly scheduled less than nineteen (19) hours per work week.

Full-time Employee. An employee, either permanent or temporary, who is regularly scheduled to work forty (40) hours per week.

Probationary Employee. A person appointed to a permanent, full-time position but who has not yet completed his probationary period.

Completed Year. A period of twelve (12) consecutive calendar months in which the employee is in active pay status or is receiving workmen's compensation payments while on leave without pay.

Completed Month. A pay period in which an employee works at least one half the workdays for the purpose of earning benefits.

**Paragraph 6. Nature of Policy.**

This policy has been promulgated by the County Manager as generally authorized by the County Board of Commissioners. It is a guide for all affected employees in dealing with employment issues related to the County; however, it is not an ordinance, binding resolution or contract of employment.

**Paragraph 7. Responsibility of Board of County Commissioners.**

The Board of County Commissioners (hereafter referred to as the Commissioners) shall establish the classification and pay plan and shall make such appointments, terminations, determine residency requirements or take other actions as is specified by law.

**Paragraph 8. Responsibility of County Manager.**

The County Manager has been delegated the authority by the Board of County Commissioners to enforce personnel policy and other related rules and regulations. The County Manager will be responsible to the Commissioners for the administration and technical direction of the personnel program. The Manager may appoint, suspend, and remove all County employees, except for those who are Department Heads, elected by the people or whose appointment is otherwise provided for by law. The Manager will make appointments, dismissals, and suspensions in accordance with the policies and procedures of this personnel administration policy. When practical the employee will be given a letter of dismissal and the Board of Commissioners will be apprised of situation with full documentation of issues prior to the dismissal.

## **SECTION II. RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT**

### **Paragraph 1. Statement of Equal Employment Opportunity**

It is the policy of the County to maintain a systematic, consistent recruitment program, to promote equal employment opportunities, and to identify and attract the most qualified applicants for employment with the County. This policy is to be achieved by announcing all position vacancies, by evaluating all applicants using the same criteria, and by applying testing methods through the Local Job Service Office (Employment Security Commission). Selection decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, non-disqualifying handicap, or age.

### **Paragraph 2. Recruitment – Responsibility of the Personnel Director**

The Personnel Director is responsible for an active recruitment program to meet current and projected staffing needs, using procedures that will ensure equal employment opportunities based on job-related requirements. Recruitment efforts of the Personnel Department and all County departments will be coordinated in a timely manner.

### **Paragraph 3. Position Vacancy Announcements.**

All position vacancy announcements shall be posted for a minimum of seven (7) working days at (1) the County Personnel Office, (2) the local office of the Employment Security Commission, and (3) the county web-site (4) position that salaries are above \$50,000 annually will go to the newsjournal. Optional recruiting publicity shall be carried out through the media, as appropriate. Position vacancy announcements shall contain, at a minimum, the title, the grade, and the location of the position; the closing date of the announcement; a summary of the duties of the position; a summary of the basic qualifications; the procedures for making application; and a statement of equal employment opportunity.

### **Paragraph 4. Application for Employment.**

The Hoke County Application shall be the standard application accepted for any and all position listings unless otherwise specified. An agency or a department may accept no applications; all referrals must be made through the County Personnel Department or the local office of the Employment Security Commission.

### **Paragraph 5. Applicant Tracking.**

- a) The Personnel Department shall be responsible for maintenance of permanent records of all vacancy announcements, including posting and closing dates, all

optional referral sources used in the recruitment process, and the pool of applicants considered for each vacancy.

- b) The applicant pool data for each position shall include an alphabetized listing of all applicants, Social Security numbers, and test scores, when applicable, for each position vacancy announcement. In addition, EEO-4 forms, providing data on race and sex of applicants, shall be maintained by the Personnel Department.

**Paragraph 6. Qualification Standards.**

- a) All applicants considered for employment or promotion shall meet the qualification standards established by the class specifications relating to the position to which the appointment is being made.
- b) All appointments shall be made on merit.
- c) Consideration may be given to “trainee” appointments when there is an absence of qualified applicants from which to make a selection. In this instance the deficiencies may be eliminated through orientation and on-the-job training, and the employee is a designated trainee by the County Manager (for employees in County General Positions) and by the **Office of State Personnel (for employees in all positions subject to the State Personnel Act).**
- d) **When qualified applicants** are unavailable and there is no trainee provision for the vacant classification, an appointment may be made below the level of the regular classification in a work-against appointment, allowing the appointee an opportunity to gain the qualifications needed for the full class through on-the-job experience. The work-against appointment is available for **competitive service employees only. The appointee must meet the minimum education and experience standard of the class to which the appointee was initially appointed. A work-against appointment may not be made when applicants are available who meet the education and experience requirements for the full class of the position in question.**

**Paragraph 7. Selection.**

Department heads shall develop, use, and document, on a consistent, routine basis, a selection process that best suits the County’s needs in filling positions within each agency or department. All selection methods developed and utilized by the department heads shall be valid measures of job performance.

**Paragraph 8. Appointments**

- a) Before any applicant begins work, the department head shall meet with the Personnel Director to discuss the appointment. The Personnel Action Form, the original application for employment, test score sheets (when applicable), and any

additional supporting documents, including the State PD-100 (positions subject to the State Personnel Act), shall be reviewed by the Personnel Director.

- b) If the duties of the position include operation of county-owned or county-insured vehicles, the department head will, before issuing an offer of employment, conduct a review of the driving record of the person to be hired, which record will become a part of the personnel file.
- c) The Sheriff and the Register of Deeds shall have authority over appointments in their respective departments, with the County Manager determining the class and the salary of new employees.
- d) The Board of Commissioners must approve the appointment by the Sheriff or the Register of Deeds of a relative by blood or marriage of nearer kinship than first cousin or of a person who has been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude.
- e) The Board of County Commissioners must approve residency requirements.

**Paragraph 9. Probationary Period of Employment.**

An employee appointed to a permanent position shall serve a probationary period of nine (9) months, up to one (1) year. Any employee serving a probationary period following initial appointment may be dismissed at any time during the probationary period.

At the end of the probationary period, the department head shall submit a change notice that (1) places the employee in a permanent position, (2) extends the probationary period, or (3) terminates the employee. No employee may remain in a permanent position after the probationary period of 1 year has been exhausted.

**Paragraph 10. Promotion**

Candidates for promotion shall be chosen based on their qualifications. First consideration for filling positions shall be given to employees already in service with the County. If a current employee is chosen for promotion, the department head shall forward the request to the County Manager with recommendations for classification and salary along with reasons for selecting the employee over other applicants. After considering the department head's recommendation, the County Manager shall confirm or reject the appointment. If the County Manager confirms the appointment, he or she shall determine the starting salary for the employee.

**Paragraph 11. Demotion.**

- a) An employee whose work is unsatisfactory may be demoted provided that the employee shows promise of becoming a satisfactory employee in another position. Such a demotion shall be made in general compliance with the procedures in Section VI. The employee should be provided with written notice citing the recommended effective date of the demotion, the reasons for the

demotion, and the review rights available to the employee as stated in Section VI of this policy.

- b) An employee who wishes to accept a position with less complex duties and reduced responsibilities may request a voluntary demotion. A voluntary demotion is not a disciplinary action and is made without using the procedures in Section VI of this policy.

**Paragraph 12. Transfer.**

- a) If a vacancy occurs and an employee eligible for transfer from another department wishes to be considered for the appointment, a written request and application must be forwarded to the Personnel Director during the recruitment period for the position. The request for transfer shall be subject to approval of the County Manager. Any employee transferred without his or her having requested it may appeal the action for review in accordance with the review procedure in Section VI.
- b. The County Manager may transfer employees to another department if he determines that it is in the best interest of the county.
- c Any employee who has successfully completed a probationary period may be transferred to any other position without serving another probationary period, providing that the transfer and the waiver of the probationary period has been approved by the department head and county manager.

**SECTION III. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

**Paragraph 1. Workweek**

The standard workweek for all employees of the various departments of the county, with the exception of law enforcement, emergency service personnel, communications, library, public buildings/maintenance, and solid waste shall be from 8:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. Department heads shall work the hours necessary to ensure the satisfactory performance of their departments, but not less than forty (40) hours per week. When the activities of a particular department require some other schedule to meet work needs, the County Manager may authorize a deviation from the normal schedule.

**Paragraph 2. Gifts and Favors**

- a) No employee shall accept any gift, favor, or thing of value (over \$25.00) that would influence that employee in the discharge of duties.

- b) No employee shall grant any improper favor, service, or thing of value in the discharge of duties.

### **Paragraph 3. Political Activity Restricted**

Every employee of Hoke County has a civic responsibility to support good government by every available means and in every appropriate manner. Any employee may join or affiliate with civic organizations of a partisan or political nature, may attend political meetings, and may advocate and support the principles of policies of civic or political organizations in accordance with the constitution and the laws of the state of North Carolina and the constitution and the laws of the United States of America. However, **while on duty**, no employee of Hoke County shall:

- A. Engage in any political or partisan activity during work hours;
- B. Use official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or a nomination for office;
- C. Be required as a duty or a condition of employment, promotion, or tenure of office to contribute funds for political or partisan purposes;
- D. Coerce or compel contributions for political or partisan purposes by another employee of the county;
- E. Use funds, supplies, or equipment of the county for political or partisan purposes.
- F. Lobby for other employees or contact citizens or officials on behalf of other employees.
- G. Use County equipment, emails, or supplies on behalf of candidates.

### **Paragraph 4. Unlawful Harassment in the Workplace**

- a) Hoke County opposes unlawful harassment by supervisors and co-workers in any form. Unlawful harassment is defined as unwelcome advances, requests for unlawful favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of an unlawful nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or a condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or the effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
- b) Any employee who believes he or she may have a complaint of unlawful harassment may file a written complaint directly with the Personnel Director, the County Manager or the County Attorney. If the County has direct authority to act, the Personnel Director, County Manager or County Attorney will conduct, or cause to be conducted an investigation into any allegation of unlawful harassment, advise the employee, and appropriate management officials of the outcome of the investigation.

- c) If the County does not have direct authority to act due to state statutes, case law or other rulings, the Personnel Director, County Manager or County Attorney may assist the employee in redirecting their complaint to the appropriate official or agency.

#### **Paragraph 5. Outside Employment**

The work of the County takes priority over other employment interests of employees. All outside employment for salaries, wages, or commission and all self-employment must be reported to the employee's department head before such work is to begin. The department head and the county manager will determine whether the outside work would create a conflict of interest or otherwise be incompatible with county service. The assumption of outside employment without prior approval by the County may be deemed improper conduct and subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Employee must have a signed approval letter on file in Personnel Department.

#### **Paragraph 6. Limitation on Employment of Relatives**

- a) No two members of an immediate family shall be employed within the same department if such employment will result in one member supervising the other or in one member occupying a position that has influence over the other's employment, promotion, salary administration, or related management or personnel considerations.
- b) The term immediate family means an employee's wife, husband, mother, father, guardian, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild, and grandparent, as well as the various combinations of half, step, in-law, and adopted relationships that can be derived from the family members named herein.
- c) The provisions of the Paragraph shall not be retroactive, and no action will be taken concerning members of the same family employed in conflict with Sub-Paragraph A before the adoption of this policy.
- d) By statute, the Board of County Commissioners considers approving the appointment by the Sheriff or the Register of Deeds of a relative by blood, marriage, or nearer kinship than first cousin.

#### **Paragraph 7. Travel Expense and Reimbursement**

- a) Vehicles owned by the county will be provided for certain personnel for county business. County vehicles are not to be used for personal purposes.
- b) The department head must authorize travel on official county business outside Hoke County. A written request for travel, reimbursement or advancement must describe the purpose of the proposed trip, and the period of time away from the county.
- c) County employees and officials traveling away from the county on official business will be reimbursed for mileage, lodging, meals, and other expenses as established by the Board of County Commissioners.

- d) Employees and officials traveling for the county will keep an accurate record of their expenses. No reimbursement will be paid without a written claim signed by the employee and approved by the department head. Receipts for the cost of hotels, and related travel expenses must be attached to the written claim. Meals exceeding the per diem rate must have documentation supporting the increase in order to claim reimbursement.

### **Paragraph 8. Delinquent Tax Policy**

It shall be the policy of the county to require employees to make timely payments of all city and county property taxes. It shall further be the policy that offers of employment shall not be extended to individuals with delinquent taxes. Failure to comply with this policy shall be considered a violation of personnel conduct, punishable within the guidelines set forth within Section VI, Paragraph 5.

### **Paragraph 9. Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy Statement**

#### **Authority**

Hoke County adopts this substance abuse policy as required by The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, 102 Stat. 4305-4308, Pub. L. No. 100-690 (Nov. 18, 1988), pursuant to the authority granted it by N.C.G. S. Chapter 153 A.

#### **Purpose and Scope**

Hoke County is committed to fostering the health and well-being of our employees and is also committed to providing a healthy, safe, and satisfying work environment. Because we recognize that the illegal use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol pose a significant threat to these goals, we adopt this substance abuse policy to balance our respect for individuals with the need to maintain a healthy, safe, and satisfying work environment.

The purpose of this policy is to create a workplace environment free from the adverse effects of substance abuse and to provide procedures for conducting screenings of job applicants and employees for the use of illegal drugs and the abuse of alcohol in the workplace. Additionally, it is important that such a policy exist and is enforced to be in compliance with State and Federal Contract, Grant and other regulatory requirements.

#### **Prohibited Conduct**

- A. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, purchase, or use of drugs by employees is prohibited. A violation of this

provision is punishable by disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.

- B. The manufacture or use of alcoholic beverages while on duty or on call is prohibited. A violation of this provision is punishable by disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.
- C. No employee shall report for duty or remain on duty when his or her ability to perform assigned functions is adversely affected by any substance, including but not limited to alcohol, or when his or her breath alcohol concentration is 0.04 or greater. A violation of this provision is prohibited and is punishable by disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.
- D. No employee shall refuse to submit to, or fail to follow through with, a drug or alcohol test when testing is required by this Policy. A violation of this provision is prohibited and is punishable by disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.
- E. No employee shall thwart or attempt to thwart drug testing by tampering with, altering, destroying, or exchanging a specimen or sample required for drug testing. A violation of this provision is prohibited and is punishable by disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.

## **Employee Responsibilities**

### **All employees**

Every employee shall

- A. Abide by this substance abuse policy as a condition of employment;
- B. Comply with all applicable laws regulating the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, use or possession of drugs and alcohol;
- C. Assure that his or her ability to perform job duties is not adversely affected by the use of any substance, including but not limited to, prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, alcohol, or any other substance when on duty or on call;
- D. Submit immediately to a drug or alcohol test when requested by the supervisor/department head or Human Resources Director;
- E. Notify the County Manager if convicted of a violation of a criminal drug statute and such violation occurred while the employee was on duty, within five (5) days after such conviction, as required by the Drug-Free Workplace Act. Failure to comply with this provision shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### **Safety-sensitive employees**

Employees performing safety-sensitive functions as defined in Article VIII below shall inform his or her supervisor if he or she has used or intends to use any prescription drug, over-the-counter medication, alcohol, or any other substance that might adversely affect his or her ability to perform job duties safely and satisfactorily, when reporting for duty, while on duty, or while on call. Failure to notify the supervisor under these circumstances may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **The County**

The County will take the following steps to provide a drug-free workplace:

- A. Provide employees with a copy of this Substance Abuse Policy;
- B. Establish a drug-free awareness program which may include informing employees about
  - 1. the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace
  - 2. the County's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace
  - 3. any available drug counseling , rehabilitation, and employee
  - 4. assistance programs, and
  - 5. the penalties that may be imposed on employees for drug abuse violations.
- C. Encourage employees with substance abuse problems to seek help voluntarily from any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs. Employees who fail drug or alcohol tests, however, may be disciplined, up to and including termination.
- D. Apply this policy consistently and impartially for all employees.

### **Drug Testing for Employees in Safety Sensitive Positions**

This section covers the following: 1) all employees who must hold a commercial driver's license as a job requirement; 2) all employees who perform other safety-sensitive functions as defined by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) regulations; and 3) all employees in safety-sensitive positions as designated by this Substance Abuse Policy.

#### **A. Pre-placement**

Before an employee initially performs safety sensitive functions for Hoke County, he or she must undergo testing for drugs. Covered applicants for employment or current

covered employees transferring into a position that requires testing must pass a pre-placement drug test.

### **Random testing**

Employees designated as safety-sensitive, as defined by the USDOT regulations and this Substance Abuse Policy, will be tested on an unannounced basis throughout the year. The selection of employees for random drug and alcohol testing will be made using a scientifically valid method that results in each covered employee having an equal chance of being selected each time selections are made.

The random tests will be unannounced and spread throughout the year. Tests can be conducted at any time the employee is on duty, and employees are required to proceed immediately to the collection site when notified of their random selection.

Drug Testing for all Employees, including Safety-Sensitive

### **Post Accident**

Any employee involved in an accident while on duty may be subject to post accident testing. Any employee whose conduct or performance could have contributed to the accident (e.g., maintenance personnel) will be subject to post accident testing.

Employees will be tested as soon as possible following an accident, but not to exceed eight (8) hours for alcohol testing and thirty two (32) hours for drug testing. Any employee involved in an accident must refrain from alcohol use for eight (8) hours following the accident or until he or she undergoes a post-accident alcohol test.

### **Reasonable Suspicion**

Testing will be conducted when there is a reasonable suspicion that an employee has used a prohibited drug or misused alcohol as defined in this Policy.

### **Definitions**

Drug means a controlled substance as listed in Schedules I through V of Section 202 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 USC 812) or Chapter 90, Section 87(5) of the North Carolina General Statutes or a metabolite thereof.

Criminal Drug Statute means a criminal statute relating to the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, use or possession of any drug.

On call means subject to a call to report immediately for work for Hoke County.

On duty means that an employee is at the workplace performing job duties or during any other period of time for which he or she is entitled to receive pay from Hoke County.

Reasonable suspicion means an articulable suspicion based on specific facts and reasonable inferences drawn from those facts that an employee is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. By way of example and not limitation, any one or a combination of the following may constitute reasonable suspicion:

- A. direct observation of drug or alcohol use;
- B. the odor of marijuana or alcohol about the person;
- C. an accident resulting in damage to property or personal injury;
- D. physical altercation;
- E. possession of drugs;
- F. presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol use (e.g., glassy or bloodshot eyes not related to an eye examination, slurred speech, inexplicable lack of coordination or poor reflexes) as witnessed by at least two people.

Safety-sensitive position means a position of employment with Hoke County, whether full or part-time, that requires the following: 1) employees to hold a commercial driver's license as a job requirement; and/or 2) employees to perform other safety-sensitive functions as defined by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) regulations; and/or 3) designation by this Substance Abuse Policy. The list of positions designated as safety-sensitive by this policy is attached as Appendix A, and the County Manager has final authority to add to or delete positions from Appendix A.

Workplace means the location or facility where an employee may be expected to perform any task related to the requirements of his or her job. This includes break rooms, restrooms, outdoor worksites, Hoke County or personal vehicles while personal vehicles are being used for County business, computer work stations, conference rooms, hallways, private offices, open/partitioned work areas, public contact/customer service/medical services areas, and parking lots.

### **Safety-Sensitive Positions**

For purposes of this Substance Abuse Policy, safety-sensitive positions include the following employees or classes of employees:

Sworn law enforcement officers having power to arrest

Detention center officers (jailers), detainee/inmate transport personnel, cooks, pre-trial release officer and other personnel having direct contact with detainees or inmates

Employees who are assigned or who operate a county-owned motor vehicle on a regular or recurring basis

Employees who operate motorized equipment on a regular or recurring basis

Employees engaged in building construction, reconstruction, repair or maintenance functions

Employees who regularly operate or use power tools and/or hand tools in performance of their job duties

Utility distribution crew members (including supervisors and meter readers)

### **Paragraph 10. Criminal History and Driver's License Records Check**

Hoke County is dedicated to providing services to our consumers in the safest environment and manner possible. With this belief the following is established:

All applicants and employees are required to submit to a criminal history records check and a driver's license records check at the following times:

- (1) prior to initial employment; and,
- (2) at any other time that just cause exists.

Applicants who refuse to consent to any records check will not be considered for employment.

Employees who refuse to consent to any records check will be dismissed. The nature and relevance of any convictions or violations will be taken into consideration when evaluating an applicant for employment or evaluating an employee for continuation of employment.

Criminal History Checks will be obtained through the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation and County Clerks of Court and other appropriate Law Enforcement Agencies. Prior to the initial offer of employment a Certified Criminal History Check will be secured and paid for by the applicant.

Driver's License Checks will be obtained through the appropriate State Division of Motor Vehicles and/or Hoke County Sheriff's Department.

## **SECTION IV.**

### **Paragraph 1. Adverse Weather Conditions**

Adverse weather and other conditions of a serious nature:  
Adverse weather or other conditions that may prohibit some employees from reporting to work but do not necessitate the closing of facilities or curtailing of operations.

### **Inclement Weather Conditions or Disaster Situations**

#### **PURPOSE :**

To establish a standard procedure for the consistent handling of employee attendance during periods of inclement weather conditions or disaster situations.

**ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:**

All departments/divisions unless otherwise covered under published and approved departmental work rules.

**POLICY:**

- 1) Employees in all departments are expected to report for work at scheduled times unless officially notified not to do so.
- 2) If an announcement is made by the County Manager that County Offices are to be closed (except for emergency and essential personnel as established by each department head), non-essential employees will be charged with vacation leave, sick leave, other accumulated leave, or excused leave without pay. Employee's Option with supervisor's approval)
- 3) In the event the County Manager closes County offices, this information will be provided to the Communication's Department for announcement: Employees will be contacted by our reverse Emergency Telephone Notification System at the last phone number entered into the Personnel System for instruction on reporting.
- 4) Employees who do not report for scheduled work or who leave before the end of a regular shift due to adverse weather conditions or disasters will be charged with vacation leave, sick leave, other accumulated leave, or excused leave without pay. (Employee's Option with Supervisor's Approval)
- 5) With the approval of the supervisor, an employee may elect to "make up" time lost due to inclement weather conditions or disaster situations. Opportunities to make up such lost time exist only during the specific pay period (payroll week beginning on a Sunday and ending on a Saturday) in which the lost time occurs due to restrictions under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Make-up time must be appropriately supervised.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Department Head

Maintain accurate attendance records for each employee in cases of inclement weather conditions or disasters. Make employees aware of the policy as well as any special approved department rules that may impact on it. Establish and communicate a departmental emergency/Essential personnel list to all affected personnel.

### **Personnel Department**

Make recommendations as requested by County Manager concerning advisability of having employees not report to work or having employees leave early.

### **County Manager**

Review existing conditions to determine whether it is advisable for some or all County employees not to report to work or for some or all County employees to leave the work site before the end of their normal shift.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

Inclement Weather Conditions - natural weather conditions which make normal travel to or from work extremely difficult or impossible for a majority of the employees or which would make performance of their duties impossible or extremely hazardous. These conditions would include but are not restricted to the following:

Snow, Ice Storms, Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Floods

Disasters - any conditions which would make normal travel to or from work extremely difficult or impossible for a majority of employees or which would make performance of their duties impossible or extremely hazardous. These conditions would include but are not restricted to the following:

Emergency/Essential Personnel - Personnel required to be on duty to provide for public safety. Job classes which are considered emergency personnel include, but are not restricted to the following: Sheriff Deputies, Sheriff Sergeants, Sheriff Lieutenants, Sheriff Captains, and Sheriff Majors, Jailers. Other employees may be called in to provide emergency services as specific conditions dictate. Essential Personnel are persons identified by the Department Head as essential to the operation of the department and who have been notified of such.

### **PROCEDURES:**

Employees who are unable to report for work as scheduled are responsible for notifying their supervisors as soon as possible whether they will be late or whether they will be able to report at all. Any employee failing to notify his/her supervisor that he/she will not be reporting for work will be subject to normal disciplinary procedures.

Employees reporting to work late or not at all may use either vacation leave, sick leave, other accumulated leave, or excused leave without pay.

In the event the County Manager determines that all or some County employees should be requested not to report to work due to inclement weather conditions or disasters, that information will be made available to Communication's for announcement on our Emergency Telephone Notification System. Employees are responsible for having a valid telephone number to be contacted at concerning work cancellations. Should inclement weather conditions or disasters develop during normal work hours (8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.), the County Manager will make the determination of whether Employees will be released early. If an employee, due to location of home, family considerations, etc., feels that he/she must leave the work site before a decision is made will be required to use time. If a Department Head with employees working hours other than the normal work day will be responsible for contacting the County Manager for approval of sending employees home before the end of their shift. If the County Manager cannot be reached, his/her designated alternate should be contacted in the following order:

1. Assistant County Manager
2. Finance Director
3. Utilities Director

## **Paragraph 2. Overtime**

- A. The County abides by all applicable sections of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended. The County will properly record all applicable overtime accrued for each covered employee. This overtime policy is applicable only to employees of Hoke County who are "Non-Exempt" under the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- B. Employees are expected to work during all assigned periods exclusive of breaks and mealtimes. Employees are not to perform work during breaks or at any time that they are not scheduled to work unless they receive approval from their immediate supervisor, department head or County Manager, except in cases of emergency. An emergency exists if a condition arises that could reasonably result in damage to property or persons or that requires the immediate attention of the employee. Employees who work excess hours because of an emergency shall advise their immediate supervisor of the overtime worked as soon as practical following completion of the work. Based upon the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, non-exempt employee work which has not been requested by management but is endured or permitted, is considered work time. Therefore, when an employee voluntarily works prior to or after his regularly scheduled work day, and it is endured or permitted, it is considered overtime hours when in excess of forty (40) hours in the work-week, although the work had not been specifically authorized. Department heads are responsible for ensuring that overtime hours are authorized, recorded and properly documented for compensatory time off or overtime pay in accordance with the established record keeping forms and instructions.

- C. Computation for overtime will include actual hours worked over and above the standard work hours for a seven (7) day work period for non-law enforcement and non-emergency service employees.
- D. Computation for overtime will include actual work hours over and above 171 hours for a 28 day work period for law enforcement employees (Deputies and Jailers).
- E. Sick leave, vacation leave, petty leave or holiday time off in a work period will not count toward computing overtime hours.
- F. It is the policy of the County, in agreement with its employees, that non-exempt employees receive compensatory time off at a rate of one-and-one half (1-1/2) hours for each hour of overtime worked. Exception: Mandatory/Essential Personnel - Law Enforcement, Jailers, Public Buildings, Emergency Management, and Fire Marshal. Essential Personnel shall be paid for overtime worked on a weekly or bi-weekly basis as overtime is budgeted and earned.
- G. Exempt employees may receive compensatory time off at an equal amount for each hour of overtime worked only on an exceptional basis, as approved by the County Manager (i.e., in response to emergency hours worked, etc.) and may accrue not more than 80 hours. **No compensatory time balance will be paid to exempt employees at termination of employment or otherwise.**
- H. All other nonexempt employees may accrue not more than 80 hours of compensatory time for overtime hours during active employment, all excess must be taken off. Upon ending employment employee will be paid balance of compensatory leave accrual time.
- I. Employees wishing to use accrued compensatory time must make a written request to their immediate supervisor. Use of such time will be allowed within a reasonable period following the request as long as the use does not unduly disrupt the operations of the county. Department heads will be responsible for administering their compensatory policies by allowing employees to take accrued compensatory time in a timely manner so that compensatory time will not accrue to excessive levels.

## **SECTION V, SEPARATION, DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND REINSTATEMENT**

### **Paragraph 1. Types of Separation**

All separations of employees from positions in the service of the county shall be designated as one of the following: resignation, reduction in force, disability, retirement, dismissal, or death.

### **Paragraph 2. Resignation**

An employee may resign by notifying his department head (or in the case of no department head, the county manager) of the effective date as far in advance as possible. A minimum of two weeks' notice is expected of all personnel.

### **Paragraph 3. Reduction in Force**

In the event that a reduction in force becomes necessary, consideration shall be given to the quality of each employee's performance as documented by current performance appraisals, organizational needs, and seniority, in determining the employees to be retained. Employees who are laid off because of a reduction in force shall be given at least two (2) weeks notice and 30 day severance pay. No permanent employee shall be separated while there are temporary employees serving in the same class in the department unless the permanent employee is not willing to transfer to the position held by the temporary employee.

### **Paragraph 4. Disability**

An employee may be separated for disability when the employee cannot perform the required duties because of physical or mental impairment. The employee or the county may initiate action for disability separation, but in all cases, consideration for disability separation shall be supported by medical evidence as certified by a competent physician. The county may require a physical and/or mental examination at its expense and by a physician of its choice. Before an employee is separated for disability, a reasonable effort shall be made to locate alternative positions within the county's service for which the employee may be suited. In disability situations, the employee and the Personnel Director should review any relevant Americans with Disabilities Act requirements prior to final separation.

### **Paragraph 5. Discipline and Dismissal**

An employee may be reprimanded, suspended, demoted, or dismissed by the employee's department head.

- a) An employee whose work is unsatisfactory over a period should, under normal circumstances, be notified by the department head in what way the employee's work is deficient and what must be done if the work is to be satisfactory.
- b) An employee who is reprimanded, suspended, demoted, or dismissed for unsatisfactory performance of duties should receive at least three (3) warnings before disciplinary action is taken. First, the employee's immediate supervisor must issue one
  1. Initial written warning.
  2. If the initial written warning does not result in improved performance, the supervisor, specifying the employee's performance deficiencies must issue a second written warning and the steps required achieving satisfactory performance.

3. If performance still does not improve, department head must issue a final written warning.
4. A final written warning serves notice to the employee that corrective action must be taken immediately to avoid disciplinary action. The supervisor and the department head will record the dates of their discussions with the employee, the performance deficiencies discussed, and the corrective actions recommended and file the information in the employee's personnel file. Copies of the disciplinary action(s) taken are to be given to the County Manager for routing and adding to employees personnel file.

c) An employee may be reprimanded, suspended, demoted, or dismissed for reasons of misconduct without warning or disciplinary action having been given to the employee.

d) An employee may be suspended without notice by the department head for causes related to personal conduct in order to avoid undue disruption of work, to protect the safety of persons or property, or for other serious reasons. When a Department manager suspends an employee without notice, the employee shall be required to leave county property at once and remain away until further notice. The department head shall notify the county manager immediately. A written summary giving the circumstances and the facts leading to the immediate suspension shall be prepared; one (1) copy to be delivered to the employee by certified mail, one (1) copy shall be filed in the employee's personnel file, and one (1) copy shall be filed with the county manager.

e) Before any disciplinary action is taken, whether for misconduct or unacceptable performance, the department head may, in his or her discretion, provide the employee with a written notice of proposed disciplinary action, which will include the nature of the proposed action, its recommended effective date, the reason(s) for the action, and a date and time for pre-disciplinary conference. At this conference, the employee may present any response to the proposed disciplinary action to the department manager. The County Manager will be provided with a written notice of any action taken.

### **Paragraph 6. Investigatory Suspension**

Investigatory suspension without pay may be used to provide time to investigate, establish facts, and reach a decision concerning an employee's status. Investigatory suspensions without pay may be appropriately used to provide time to schedule and hold a pre-dismissal conference. In addition, the county may elect to use investigatory suspension to avoid undue disruption of work or to protect the safety of persons or property. An investigatory suspension without pay shall not exceed forty-five (45) calendar days. If no action has been taken by management by the end of forty-five (45) calendar days, one of the following must occur: reinstatement of the employee with full back pay; appropriate disciplinary action based on the results of the investigation; or reinstatement of the employee with up to three (3) days' pay deducted from back pay.

### **Paragraph 7. Reinstatement**

- a) An employee who resigns while in good standing or who is separated because of a reduction in force may be reinstated within three (3) years of the date of separation, with the approval of the department head, the County Manager, and in the case of competitive service employees, in accordance with Personnel Policies for Local Government Employees Subject to the State Personnel Act.
- b) An employee who enters extended active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States, the Public Health Service, or with a reserve component of the Armed Forces will be granted reinstatement rights as provided under federal law.

### **Paragraph 8. Death**

Separation will be effective as of the date of death. All compensation due employee will be paid to the estate of the employee.

### **Paragraph 9. Maintenance of Records**

All documentation, records, and reports will be retained by State Law and shall be held by the Personnel Director.

## **SECTION VII. PERSONNEL RECORDS**

### **Paragraph 1. Personnel Records Maintenance**

Such personnel records as are necessary for the proper administration of the personnel system will be maintained by the Personnel Director. The county shall maintain in personnel records only information that is necessary and relevant to accomplishing legitimate personnel administration needs. Access to personnel records is controlled by North Carolina General Statute Section 153A-98.

### **Paragraph 2. Remedies of Employees Objecting to Material in File**

An employee who objects to material in his or her file may place in the file a statement relating to the material the employee considers being inaccurate or misleading. The employee may seek the removal of such material in accordance with the Employment Practice Review procedure.

## **SECTION VIII, CLASSIFICATION PLAN**

### **Paragraph 1. Adoption.**

The position classification plan, upon adoption, shall be set forth in Appendix A as the classification plan for the county.

### **Paragraph 2. Coverage.**

The classification plan will include all full-time permanent classes of positions in the county service, except for the position of County Manager.

**Paragraph 3. Administration of the Classification Plan.**

The County Manager is charged with maintenance of the classification plan so that it will accurately reflect the duties performed by employees in the classes to which their positions are allocated. It is his duty to examine the nature of the positions as they are created, to allocate them to existing classes, and to recommend to the Commissioners the creation of new classes as deemed appropriate, to make such changes in the classification plan as are made necessary by changes in the duties and responsibilities of existing positions, and periodically to review the entire classification plan and recommend to the Commissioners appropriate changes in individual position allocations or the classification plan itself.

**Paragraph 4. Allocation of Positions.**

When a new position is established or the duties of an existing position change, the department head will submit in writing a comprehensive job description describing in

detail the duties of such a position. The Manger will then investigate the actual or suggested duties and make the appropriate class allocation or will recommend to the Commissioners the establishment of a new class. The Commissioners will then act on such recommendations.

**Paragraph 5. Pay Rates in Promotion, Demotion, Transfer, and Reclassification.**

When an employee is promoted, demoted, transferred, or reclassified, his rate-of-pay in the new position will be established in accordance with the following rules:

- (a) When an employee is promoted, his salary will be advanced to the step rate in the new pay range which would provide at least the equivalent of the next merit increase in the range from which he was promoted;
- (b) When an employee is demoted to a position for which he is qualified his salary will be set at the step rate in the lower pay range which provides the smallest decrease in pay if the action is not for reasons of unsatisfactory performance or failure in personal conduct, or in the appropriate step rate in the lower range if the action is a result of unsatisfactory performance or failure in personal conduct;
- (c) When the employee is transferred from a position in one class to a position in another class at the same pay grade, he should continue to be paid at the same step rate;
- (d) When an employee whose position is reclassified to a class having a higher salary range, his salary will be advanced by the County Manager to a step rate in the new pay range which would provide at least the equivalent of the next merit increase in the range from which he was reclassified. If his position is reclassified

to a class having a lowery salary range, his salary will remain unchanged. When an employee's position is reclassified to a class at the same pay range, his salary will remain unchanged.

**Paragraph 6. Pay Rates in Salary Range Revisions.**

When the Commissioners approve a change in salary grade for an entire class, an employee whose position is in that class may have his salary raised, lowered, or left the same by the County Manager. When an employee whose position is in a class revised to a higher salary range, his salary will be advanced to a step rate in the new pay range which would provide at least the equivalent of the next merit increase in the range from which his class was revised. If his position is in a class revised to a lowery salary range, his salary will remain unchanged.

**Paragraph 7. Part-Time or Temporary Work.**

The pay plan established by this policy is for full-time service. An employee appointed from less than full-time service will be paid at a rate determined by converting the established monthly salary or at any other rate designated by the County Manager.

**Paragraph 8. Hiring above the entry level**

All New Hires applications will be sent to Human Resources Director in advance of making an offer of employment to assess if Premium Points apply. The following condition must be meet 1) be within the previously approved pay grade established for the position and 2) be at a step no higher than indicated by applying a premium point system using the following objective factors.

- A. Directly related experience in the same field or position held immediately prior to application for employment
  - 1 point - Not less than three (3) full year's experience
  - 2 points - Not less than five (5) full year's experience
  - 3 points – Not less than ten (10) full year's experience
  
- B. Education and/or training qualifications higher than minimum requirement for the position (apply only highest level)
  - 1 point – Associate degree or technical degree of less than four years
  - 2 points – Four year degree from college or university
  - 3 points – Advanced degree
  
- C. Professional credentials or certification(s)

1 point – License or certification(s) greater than minimum required for position

D. Salary requirement (based on salary earned in last position held)

1 point – \$3,000-\$4,999 above entry level

2 points – More than \$5,000 above entry level

Maximum step assignment may be granted based on the following premium points.

1 point from Category A      Step 2

2 points from Category A      Step 3

3 points from Category A      Step 4

1, 2 or 3 points from Category A plus any combination of points from Categories B, C and D

4-6 points – Step 5

7-9 points – Step 6

Appointment at a level higher than Step 6 requires approval of Board of County Commissioners acting upon recommendation of County Manager.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **CHANGE OF PERSONAL DATA**

Any change in an employee's name, address, telephone number, marital status, dependents, or insurance beneficiaries, or a change in the number of tax withholding exemptions, needs to be reported in writing without delay to the Human Resources Department.

### **SAFETY**

The safety and health of employees is a priority. HOKE COUNTY makes every effort to comply with all federal and state workplace safety requirements. Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution and common sense in all work activities.

### **Employee Requiring Medical Attention Due To Work Related Incident**

Employees should report all work-related injuries and accidents immediately to their supervisor, if supervisor is unavailable notify Human Resources Department for instruction.

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

## PROFESSIONAL IMAGE CODE

Hoke County recognizes that the manner in which staff presents themselves reflects how the community perceives us and sets the tone for inter-departmental relations. To this end, all staff must appear neat, clean, and appropriately dressed at all times.

The Department Director, Supervisors, and all staff are expected to project a professional image. They are to be dressed and groomed appropriately in accordance with these guidelines.

Men must wear collared shirts, non-collared shirts with buttons, turtleneck shirts, or sweaters with slacks. Women must wear skirts, dresses, jumpers, or slacks. Clothing for all must be non-distracting in length and fit. The Department Director or Supervisors may approve variations for special situations such as casual Friday or other designated days or events and field staff visits.

Departments with uniforms are excluded, as are Departments such as the Department of Social Services, Health, or any other department with specific dress codes due to special departmental needs.

The following dress is not appropriate for employees:

- Dresses, shirts, and blouses that have inappropriate cutouts or see-through elements; do not cover back, waist, midriff; or have excessive armpit cutouts.
- Clothing which reveals undergarments, is see-through, ripped, torn, or has holes exposing excessive skin.
- Shorts – this includes Skorts, Overalls, etc.
- Clothing that promotes alcoholic beverages, tobacco, the use of controlled substances, depicts violence, is of a sexual nature, of a disruptive nature or of a political nature.
- Clothing that is too tight fitting.
- Pants or skirts worn below the waist with skin exposed
- Clothing that is provocative, revealing, low-cut, indecent, vulgar, obscene, or profane.
- Tank tops, tube tops, or spaghetti strap tops without shirt or jacket covering.
- Baggy white colored or printed tee shirts.
- Articles of clothing more than three inches above the top of the knee. This includes, but is not limited to dresses, skirts, Bermuda shorts, and jumpers.
- Jeans – except on casual Friday.
- Sweat pants, sweat suits, wind suits or jogging outfits.
- Flip Flops - at any time.
- Tennis shoes – except on casual Friday.
- Head Gear – ball caps, any type of hats in the office (\*exceptions may be made for employees who have medical condition. This will be on a case by case basis.

Holiday sweatshirts, shirts and sweaters are acceptable in season.

Tee-Shirts promoting a county event (such as Turkey Festival, departmental event, etc.) may be worn as authorized by County Manager or Department Head for specified period.

Appropriate jeans and sweatshirts are only allowed on casual Friday. Overalls are not to be worn.

Determination of the appropriateness of dress shall be left up to the discretion of the Department Director and immediate supervisor. They will counsel the individual employee regarding professional dress.

Reasonable accommodations shall be made by the appropriate supervisor for those employees who because of a sincerely held religious belief of a recognized religious organization, cultural heritage, or medical reason, request a waiver of a particular part of this policy for dress or appearance. The waiver request must be in writing and signed by the employee and approved by the Department Director.

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

**BY VIRTUE OF THIS POLICY, ALL COUNTY EMPLOYEES ACKNOWLEDGE THE PUBLIC NATURE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND UNDERSTAND THAT HOKE COUNTY HAS THE RIGHT TO INSPECT AND REVIEW SUCH COMMUNICATIONS.**

**PURPOSE:** This policy covers the use of all technology resources belonging to the Hoke County. It includes, but is not limited to pagers, radios, all computer systems of any size and function and their attached peripherals, phones, cellular phones, faxes, voice mail systems, e-mail systems, network resources and Internet resources. Hoke County provides these technology resources to enable county employees to provide timely and efficient services. Providing timely, efficient and accurate information is the primary function of these automated resources and any activity or action that interferes with this purpose is prohibited. Failure to adhere to this policy places the individual at risk for legal liabilities, potential embarrassment and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**ADMINISTRATION:** Each Department Head shall become thoroughly familiar with the requirements set forth in this policy and to administer this policy consistently within the department and with other departments. The Department Head shall explain this policy within their department and see that it is fully implemented. It is the Department Head's responsibility to ensure their department's users abide by the requirements and guidelines set forth in this and any related documents. Department Heads and IT personnel have the authority to inspect the contents of any equipment, files, or mail in the normal course of their supervisory responsibilities. Reasons for review include, but are not limited to investigation of network slowdown; system hardware or software problems including software license compliance, general system failure, litigation or potential litigation; reasonable suspicion of a crime or violation of policy; or a need to perform work or provide a service when an employee is not available. All communication system

users acknowledge their consent that the County may, at its discretion, inspect, use or disclose any electronic communications and/or data without further notice for any legitimate business, legal or discretionary purpose. The County may utilize monitoring software to administer this policy.

**PUBLIC NATURE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:** Electronic communication is a public record like any other public document. Users must understand that any communications created, received or backed up on the County system may be construed to be public documents and thus may be subject to legal requests for public disclosure. This includes communications that users might think of, incorrectly, as personal and private. Electronic communications may be searched for evidence in any legal proceeding.

**E-MAIL/INTERNET:** Use of the Communications Systems by employees for personal use must be restricted to occasional use that does not interfere with the conduct of County business. Personal use should be limited to personal time (breaks) and personal use of the Internet and e-mail should be minimal. Supervisors, at best, should monitor the extent of personal use of these assets during regular working hours.

Any business or personal use of the Internet or e-mail by a County employee shall clearly and accurately identify the employee. Anonymous or pseudonymous use is prohibited. E-mail is considered an official form of communication between departments and between employees.

The following uses of the County's Communications Systems are strictly prohibited:

- Use of the Communications Systems to send chain letters.
- Use of the Communications Systems to compromise the integrity of Hoke County and its business in any way.
- Use of the Communications Systems to send messages containing offensive, abusive, discriminatory, threatening, harassing, or other language inappropriate for the operation of Hoke County.
- Use of the Communications Systems to send messages that violate any policy of the County including the County's Policy Against Harassment. Such messages include, but are not limited to, messages that contain sexual implications, racial slurs, or other comment that offensively addresses someone's age, gender, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin or disability.
- Use of the Communications Systems for the advertisement of personal business.
- Intentionally viewing, downloading and/or transmitting materials (other than that required for police business) that involve the use of obscene language, images, jokes, sexually explicit materials or messages that abuse or belittle any person, group or classification of individuals is strictly prohibited.

- Use of the Communication System to distribute personnel information unless it is an authorized Human Resource function that includes but is not limited to salary, performance reviews, complaints, grievances, misconduct, disciplinary information, medical records or related information.
- Installation or downloading of software from outside vendors or the Internet without prior authorization from IT personnel.
- Employees shall not permit unauthorized persons to use the County electronic Network/Communication System.
- Installation of Software through any method unless authorized by IT personnel. This includes software by third-party vendors, as well as shareware, freeware, personal software and Internet distributed programs.
- Use of the computer to play any games.

**SECURITY:** Each employee is responsible for all actions taken while using his/her user profile or password. Passwords should be kept confidential and not shared. Only the director of the IT department can authorize exceptions to this policy.

Any file, program, or document received on any media, through the Internet or through file transfer must be checked for viruses immediately. You should be cautious when you receive an email message you were not expecting containing an attachment. It should not be opened if you have any doubt about the type of file, content or sender. This is to prevent viruses from infecting the County's entire network. Each individual employee is responsible for the prevention of the spread of viruses.

All electronic communications are the property of Hoke County, are subject to monitoring and therefore not considered private. Hoke County will disclose any electronic mail message as required by appropriate law or regulation. The County shall promptly access electronic communication data:

- When a user leaves the employ of Hoke County for any reason. User's mail will be accessed for the purpose of saving those messages that pertain to County business. These files may be subject to transfer to another user if necessary to conduct County business. The employee's county e-mail service will be discontinued.
- When necessary to investigate a possible violation of County policy or a breach of the security of the Communications Systems.
- In the event there is reasonable suspicion a user has committed or is committing any crime.

**MEDIA PROTECTION:** Due to the importance of source data and stored data, all media must be protected. The following is a list of minimal steps to protect County media.

- All media should be kept in a locked location when not in use.
- Media should be kept away from all heat sources, direct sunlight and any sources of extreme cold.
- Media should be stored in their protective cases.
- Never touch the magnetic surface of storage media or the protective sliding shields.
- Optical disks, CD & DVD, should be kept clean of smudges, and the both sides must be protected from scratches.
- Never place any clip on any storage media. If media must be attached to a document, place the media in an envelope and attach the envelope.
- Keep all media away from magnets or equipment that may produce magnetic fields. These include magnetic paper clip holders, speakers, electric pencil sharpeners, etc.
- All storage media should be kept away from liquids

**TELEPHONES:** The telephone system is intended primarily to accomplish the work of Hoke County. Providing services to internal and external customers is always the first priority. Personal use should be limited in accordance with the provisions of Internet and e-mail use.

The County will deem personal use excessive if it prevents the employee from managing customer inquiries, complaints and requests for service in a timely manner or if it interferes with the employee's accomplishing her/his job responsibilities. Personal use of the County's log distance service is prohibited. Violations will be subject to disciplinary actions as provided in the Personnel Policy.

**CELLULAR PHONES:** Cellular phones are to be used to conduct County business only. If it becomes necessary to use a County issued cellular phone for incidental personal calls, employee will reimburse the County at a rate of (.04 cents per minute for a call, and .15 cents per text messages). Payment must be made to the County within 10 business days of presentment of the bill to the employee.

Personal use is only allowable in cases where there is no alternative form of communication and the need for personal use is immediate and compelling. Any personal calls must be reported to your supervisor.

Using a cellular phone while driving is discouraged. Only necessary calls should be made while driving and the calls should be kept brief. No calls should be made or received while driving conditions are hazardous, or while traffic is heavy. If you must place or answer a call while driving, it is advised that you pull off of the road and park.

In all cases, adherence to current laws regarding cell phone use and distracted driving will prevail.

Department managers are responsible for reviewing cell phone bills for their staff on a monthly basis.

Employees who abuse this policy will be subject to disciplinary action. Employees who do not make or fail to meet the arrangements to reimburse the County for personal use will be subject to garnishment of their payroll.

**PRINTERS, COPIERS AND FAXES:** Photocopy machines, printers and fax machines shall be used for the transaction of County business. Any personal use must be pre-approved by the Department Head and reimbursement for personal use should be arranged with the Department Head prior to use. Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material is strictly prohibited.

**VIOLATIONS:** It is the user's responsibility to read and abide by topics set forth in this document. If any employee violates any of the provisions of this policy, or a supervisor or department head who knowingly permits a violation of this policy, the employee, supervisor or Department Head will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as provided in the Personnel Policy.

### **Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy**

(Policy amended March 16, 2009 by Board of Commissioners)

This document constitutes the policy for all County of Hoke employees regarding the access, use, security and monitoring of the County's computer systems, network, e-mail and internet access.

The primary purpose for the Hoke County Network and all County information technology resources is to support and facilitate the business of the County as defined by the County Commissioners and the County Manager. Use of these resources for other purposes must be approved by the County Commissioners, County Manager and I.T. Department prior to that use.

The information technology resources of the County shall not be used for any activity that violates Federal, State or local laws or any other applicable policy or statute. Specifically, but not meant as a comprehensive list, the Hoke County network will not be used to transmit offensive materials, hate mail, discriminatory remarks, obtain or transmit pornographic materials, communicate racial or ethnic slurs or anything that may be construed as harassment of others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or religious or political beliefs. Further, the Hoke County Network shall not be used for commercial or profit enterprises, lobbying, advertising, religious material, political causes, outside organizations, or other non-government related solicitations.

All users will be given a user account for access to the Hoke County network. User accounts will be protected by passwords to prevent unauthorized use. User accounts are to be used only by the authorized owner of the account and only for authorized purposes. Users will not permit the use of their account by anyone else. Any attempt to gain another individual's password, use another person's account or to circumvent password or other security measures is a violation of this policy.

No user shall perform any action that disrupts or denies another user's access to the Hoke County Network or other information technology resources. Heavy usage or high-demand activities that disrupt or significantly reduce the overall performance of the network should be avoided and may be restricted or rescheduled in order to maintain acceptable internet/network response times throughout the system.

All data, information and files accessible via the Hoke County network are considered to be the private property of Hoke County and shall not be disclosed except for legitimate County purposes consistent with this and any other applicable policy. Except in the course of genuine County business, users shall not damage, destroy, modify or copy information, files, data or passwords available on or via the Hoke County Network.

Illegal use of copyrighted software is prohibited on any and all systems in the Hoke County Network.

Network services, Internet access and email services may be provided to County employees. The primary purpose of these accounts and services is to support and facilitate the business of the County as defined by the County Commissioners and the County Manager. Incidental personal use of these systems may occur, but such usage must not interfere with efficient and timely completion of County business activities or negatively impact the performance of the network. No user should attempt to gain access to another user's personal files or emails without prior, expressed consent from that user. The County may terminate the availability of the internet or email services at any time in its sole discretion.

In no event shall the County be liable to any user for any damages, whether direct, indirect, special or consequential arising out of the use of the Internet, accuracy or correctness of data bases or information contained therein or related, directly or indirectly, to any failure or delay of the County in providing access to the internet or email.

All computers, communication, activity and all information stored, received or transmitted using the Hoke County Network shall be assumed to be the property of the County of Hoke and are to be used primarily for job-related purposes. Any email messages sent or received using the Hoke County network are considered property of the County.

To ensure proper use of the network and computer resources, the County may monitor the use of these systems, information and equipment at any time. All users understand that there is no right of privacy associated with the County's computer equipment. In this regard, the county has the right to monitor all activities and communications, retain records of all activities and communications and use this information in any manner permitted by law.

No employee will, at any time, use a privately or personally owned computer at work or connect such devices to the network without prior consent from the IT Director, County Manager, and/or the Board of Commissioners. This includes, but is not limited to: laptop computers, PDA devices, USB storage devices (flash/thumb drives), external hard drives, or any other device or media that could potentially introduce a virus to the network.

Violators of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment. As condition for employment and access to information technology resources, employees will be required to sign this form acknowledging their understanding of this policy.

## **Complaint Procedure**

### **Establish an internal and external complaint process to report concerns related to county staff or management**

Any employee may use this process to inform management, and ultimately the Board of violations of county policy wrong doing by any county employee. The employee who makes a good faith report will be protected. An employee who makes a false claim will be terminated. If the complaint involves the County Manager or the Human Resources Director, a replacement investigator shall be appointed. This process will also be available to any citizen who witnesses a county employee violating county policy.

### **Process for the Board of Commissioners to have personnel concerns investigated**

The specific procedure for investigating, managing, and reporting allegations reported to the Board of Commissioners.

1. All personnel questions, issues, or concerns by the Board will be directed to the Human Resources Director.
2. Human Resources Director will apprise County Manager of the specific concern.
3. Human Resources Director and County Manager will thoroughly investigate the issue through an interview process.
4. Following the investigation, Human Resources Director will determine the validity of the concern and the appropriate action, if any.
5. Human Resources will report, by letter, our investigative findings, to include an explanation for the action taken.
6. The process of receiving the complaint, investigating the complaint, and the final Board report shall be completed within 5 working days.

### **Process for a general complaint by the General Public**

The specific procedure for investigating, managing, and reporting allegations by the general public is as follows.

1. All personnel questions, issues, or concerns by the general public will be directed to the Human Resources Director.
2. Human Resources Director will apprise the County Manager of the specific concern.
3. Human Resources Director and County Manager will thoroughly investigate the issues through an interview process.
4. Following the investigation, Human Resources Director will determine the validity of the concern and the appropriate action, if any.

5. Human Resources will report, by letter, our investigative findings, to include an explanation for the action taken.
6. The process of receiving the complaint, investigating the complaint, and file the final Board report shall be completed within 5 working days.

**HOKE COUNTY TIMEKEEPING POLICY & PROCEDURE**  
**Duly adopted by Hoke County Board of Commissioners**  
**8/23/2011**

Hoke County timekeeping system is called Timeclock Plus. Employees who are paid biweekly and hold exempt, non-exempt, temporary positions, whether full or part-time, are required to use Timeclock Plus or such other timekeeping methods or systems duly adopted by the Hoke County Board of Commissioners (exceptions elected Sheriff and Register of Deeds determine which employees in their departments actually use Timeclock Plus or send in a Hoke County Timesheets signed by Department head in order to receive payment from the Hoke County Finance Department).

**Timeclock Plus Electronic Timecard Reporting Method – Exempt, Non-Exempt**

The time and leave reporting method that you will use is determined by the Board of Commissioners (exception elected Sheriff and Register of Deeds will determine their employees method of reporting, if elected official decides that their employees will utilize Hoke County Timesheet instead of the TimeClock electronic timecard then they are solely responsible for hours submitted). Missed hours worked for training and all other absences for non-exempt and exempt employees can be entered by submitting to Human Resources by email, IM, or written authorization by 9:30 a.m. on payroll Monday.

“Non-Exempt” refers to those employees who are required by Federal and State law to be paid time and one-half, where applicable, for overtime worked. Overtime work hours are normally calculated for any hours in excess of forty (40) worked hours in a work week (excluding vacation, sick, petty, and holiday pay). Hoke County’s standard work week shall be Sunday through Saturday.

As a non-Exempt employee, you are required to clock in on a daily basis all time worked and all absences using appropriate leave codes in increments of hours and tenth of hours (15 minute time increments).

Your time worked is recorded when you use your Hoke County Employee ID to clock in when you arrive for work, takes a lunch break, return from lunch break, and when you leave work at the end of the workday. All leave time must be put in Request Manager in advance and approved by your Supervisor/Dept. Head. If an employee calls in and reports out of work the Supervisor/Dept. Head is required to send by email, IM, or written authorization the time to be added to an employees electronic timecard.

**Electronic Timecard Approval**

At the end of each pay period, you and your supervisor/Dept Head are required to verify your time worked and any leave hours recorded for the pay period by sending HR Accounting Technician any discrepancies prior to closing of payroll every other Monday by 9:30 am. Employees in departments that have no access to TimeClock Plus computer access must have timesheets to Human Resources by 9:30 a.m. every other Monday. By failing to notify supervisor/dept. head of any discrepancy on your electronic timecard, you are attesting to the best of your knowledge that your information submitted is complete and accurate. You are responsible for any inaccuracy or omission of which you are aware at the time the electronic timecard was approved and submitted. You may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination for submitting and inaccurate information on your report.

#### Payroll Activity

Once your electronic time card in Timeclock Plus is approved, it will be reviewed by an employee in the Human Resources Department for inaccuracies or omissions, as well as by a person whom you report, at the completion of the current pay period. If inaccuracies or omissions are not reported to Human Resources by 10:00 am on the Counties official Payday then the employee will not have pay corrected until the following official pay period.

Correcting Hours Reported If you have Not Previously Reported hours from a prior pay period, you must inform your immediate supervisor. The supervisor must inform the Human Resources Department and provide written documentation to support hours being edited. If an employee requests in the Request Manager to use vacation, petty, or compensation leave and supervisor/dept. head approves that leave as requested then it will not be changed to sick leave without doctor's documentation supporting change being turned into Human Resources.

#### Maximum Hours Paid

Employees will be paid a maximum of 40 hours per week for regular employees, 84 hours biweekly jailers, and 86 hours biweekly Law Enforcement Officer unless employee actually works overtime. Employees will not be able to use leave accruals and make up time in same pay period (i.e. employee calls in sick uses 8 hours sick leave and then in same week employee with supervisor/dept. head authorization makes up time missed then employee will not be charged 8 sick leave). This would ensure that employees are not paid more than the number of hours budgeted in their departments.

#### Information for Exempt Employees

'Exempt' refers to employees who are exempt from Federal and State laws regarding payment of overtime. Exempt employees are required to clock in on a daily basis to record attendance and must report all leave time to Human Resources bi-weekly. Elected officials are not required to clock in but must submit information for any leave time taken.

## Leave Accruals & Compensatory Time

Employees shall exhaust compensatory time before taking sick leave, vacation leave, petty leave or leave without pay.

All non-exempt employees may accrue not more than 80 hours of compensatory time for overtime hours worked after August 27, 2011 and will be paid out for no more than 80 hours upon leaving the County all excess compensatory time will be transferred into employees sick leave balance.

All other non-exempt employees who have accrued over 80 hours prior to August 27, 2011 will be required to reduce their balances to 80 hours by June 30, 2012. If excess balances are not reduced to eighty (80) hours by June 30, 2012 all excess will be transferred into employees sick leave balance.

Department heads will be responsible for administering their compensatory policies by allowing employees to take accrued compensatory time in a timely manner so that compensatory time will not accrue to excessive levels.

## **Department Cash Handling Procedures**

All cash collections should be accounted for through the receipting process. All collections should be receipted either through entries in a computerized receipting module or through manually recording the cash receipt in a multi-copy receipt book. Each receipt should be sequentially numbered.

All cash collections should be recorded on a daily collection report indicating the appropriate general ledger account numbers and account names to accurately describe the type of revenue received. The daily collection report should also include a section summarizing the checks received by issuer and amount and the total cash received. Each department should have a daily collection report tailored to accommodate the department's operations and accounts. Every effort must be made to accurately record the cash receipt to the correct revenue account number. Contact the Finance for guidance if needed.

All cash collections must be deposited DAILY per G.S. 159-32. The total on the bank deposit slip MUST equal the total on the daily collection report. The individual totals for cash/currency and checks must also equal the totals for cash/currency and checks reported on the daily collection report.

Reasonable internal controls should be established for the handling of collections received by mail by separation of duties regarding cash receipts, if at all possible. One person should be responsible for opening the mail and removing any checks. The recording of cash receipts and the making of deposits should be performed by a separate person.

Evidence of daily collections and deposits, including a copy of the department's deposit slip attached to the completed daily collection report, must be submitted to the Finance Department by the end of the next business day.

Hoke County utilizes a central depository system in that all departmental deposits are placed into the one account. Each department's deposit slip should bear a separate and distinct "location" code pre-printed at the top of the deposit slip. This will aid in tracking a deposit if a banking error should occur.

Each department supervisor is responsible and accountable for ensuring proper cash handling procedures within their respective departments. All departments are subject to audit by the Finance Officer or designee to ensure proper cash handling and internal control measures are in place.

Each department is responsible for maintaining proper records of cash receipts and those records are subject to review by the Finance Officer upon request.

### **Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment**

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, HOKE COUNTY is committed to providing the basic employment and reemployment services and support as set forth in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA).

### **County Owned Vehicle Use Policy**

1. A Department Head (for his Department), the County Manager or the County Board of Commissioner's may assign a County owned vehicle to a County employee (Custodian) for his official use.
2. The Custodian (employee assigned a vehicle) of a County vehicle shall at all times be properly licensed to drive any vehicle which he operates, and shall maintain a driving record acceptable to the County.
3. The Custodian shall not allow any person to drive the county vehicle in his on her custody. This does not prevent another county employee from using the assigned vehicle if he or she otherwise authorized to do so. That employee is then considered the Custodian if the regular Custodian of that vehicle is not in the vehicle.
4. The Custodian shall keep accurate records and reports as may be required by the County Manager covering mileage, expense, accidents, violations, car maintenance, etc.
5. The Custodian of a county vehicle shall of all times follow state motor vehicle laws and regulations.

6. The county will pay all operating expenses such as registration, insurance, excise tax, state inspections fees, gasoline, oil, washing and repairs. Parking and toll charges will be reimbursed when such charges are incurred while driving on business for the county.
7. Personal use of a County owned vehicle is not allowed.
8. The Custodian will be responsible for safe, over-night parking of the car in a home garage, private driveway, or other safe and legal areas of public ways. The County will pay for overnight parking of cars for out-of-town county business use, but will not for garaging or parking of vehicles while at or near the custodian's home.
9. A Department Head may recommend to the County Board Commissioners that certain employees, based on their duties, are allowed to drive their vehicles home. The County Board of Commissioners shall make a determination as to which their vehicles home and under what conditions.
10. The Custodian assumes full responsibility for any traffic and parking violations arising out of the use of the county car. If the county should be required to pay any fine after the custodian terminates employment with the county, the custodian agrees to reimburse the county within 30 days written notice.
11. It is the county's policy that employees who drive, or others (employees or non-employees) who ride as passengers, in county vehicles will use available passenger restraints at all times when the vehicle is in motion, and the Custodian, in addition to other employees involved, shall be held responsible for compliance in the county owned vehicle assigned to him or her.
12. The Custodian shall be responsible for making sure that the car is properly serviced and maintained. This responsibility shall include, but not to be limited to, maintenance of proper fluid levels, maintenance of proper air pressure, delivery of the vehicle for regularly scheduled maintenance or service.
13. The Custodian may not transport passengers in county vehicles unless the transport is related to the Custodian normal work activities.
14. The Department Head, County Manager or the Board of Commissioners may revoke the assignment of a vehicle at any time.
15. Each Department shall develop departmental regulations for implementing this County Owned Vehicle Use Policy and those regulations must be approved by the County of Commissioners.

## **EMPLOYEE-OWNED VEHICLE USED IN CONDUCT OF OFFICIAL COUNTY BUSINESS**

From time to time, an employee of Hoke County may be required to use his/her privately-owned vehicle in carrying out duties for a department of Hoke County government. Such instances may include travel to meetings, conferences, or training sessions; use on a regular basis to conduct home visits or investigations; or for use on temporary projects. Generally, when such use occurs, the employee will be in a mileage-reimbursement status authorized by the department head.

**Collisions or Damage Caused by At-fault Employee:** All vehicle collisions involving an employee-owned vehicle being used in the conduct of official county business and all vehicle incidents involving damage to other persons or property must be promptly reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation and possible determination of fault. Additionally, the employee's immediate supervisor or department head must be notified as soon as practical.

Employees should be aware that the general rule is that "insurance follows the car"; therefore, their own auto insurance is primary in cases in which the employee's vehicle, being used on official county business, is involved in a collision with other vehicle(s) or causes injury or damage to other persons or property when the employee or his/her alternate driver (when another employee or driver is operating the vehicle) is found to be at fault or responsible for the damage or injury caused. This means that employee should report the collision/incident to their auto insurance carrier as soon as possible. Vehicle coverage provided by NCACC Risk Management Pools is secondary in such instances and a claim may be paid (subject to deductible) under that coverage only to the extent of damages not fully covered by employee's auto insurance policy. This secondary coverage does not extend to damage to the employee's own vehicle, however.

### **Damage to employee's own vehicle:**

Employees should be aware that liability and property insurance coverage provided through NCACC Risk Management Pools **does not cover damage to an employee's privately-owned vehicle being used in the conduct of official county business.**

Employees who sustain damage to privately-owned vehicle while on county business must be aware that their auto insurance carrier (under comprehensive coverage) is the primary payor subject to deductible provisions of their auto insurance policy. The claim may be subrogated to another vehicle insurer, homeowner's insurance carrier or other insurance carrier if cause of damage is clearly established and attributed to someone other than the employee.

Therefore, when an employee's privately-owned vehicle is damaged while being used in the conduct of official county business, the damage should be investigated by appropriate law enforcement, be reported to employee's auto insurance carrier, and be promptly reported to employee's supervisor or department head.

No employee, supervisor, department head, nor County Manager may commit Hoke County or its vehicle liability carrier to responsibility for or payment for any damage or loss (including deductibles) involving an employee's privately-owned vehicle including, but not limited to, any of the following: road service, towing, repairs, replacement parts; or loss of use of vehicle requiring replacement vehicle lease or rental; or alternate transportation cost(s); or damage to vehicle caused by road hazards; or damage caused by running over, colliding with, striking or being struck by animals, gravel, debris, objects falling from vehicles; or by storm damage or flooding; or by vandalism to vehicle including glass breakage, body or surface damage; or by theft of vehicle, vehicle parts, accessories, personal property from within vehicle; or by any other accident, willful act or incident resulting in damage to employee's vehicle.

Only in extraordinary cases will Hoke County pay deductibles, or pay for repairs or other costs resulting from damage to or loss of use of an employee's privately-owned vehicle. Such payments may be made only upon approval of Board of County Commissioners.

Employees should contact the Hoke County Human Resources Director for guidance when damage occurs to privately-owned vehicle while being used in the conduct of official county business.

Damage which occurs to an employee's vehicle while being operated on or being parked on county premises is not covered by the county's vehicle liability insurance unless the county is at fault or causes the damage. Such incidents should be thoroughly investigated by appropriate law enforcement and should be promptly reported to Human Resources Department for filing of claim.

### **Closing Statement**

Successful working conditions and relationships depend upon successful communication. It is important that employees stay aware of changes in procedures, policies, and general information. It is also important to communicate ideas, suggestions, personal goals, or problems as they affect work at HOKE COUNTY.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the HOKE COUNTY Employment Policies, and I do commit to read and follow these policies.

I am aware that if, at any time, I have questions regarding HOKE COUNTY policies I should direct them to my manager or the Human Resources Department.

I know that HOKE COUNTY policies and other related documents do not form a contract of employment and are not a guarantee by HOKE COUNTY of the conditions and benefits that are described within them. Nevertheless, the provisions of such HOKE COUNTY policies are incorporated into the acknowledgment, and I agree that I shall abide by its provisions.

I also am aware that HOKE COUNTY, at any time, may with or without prior notice, change, add to, or delete from the provisions of the company policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date