

# COOS COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



The purpose of these policies is to provide for the requirements of the employer/employee relationship. The employee handbook contains general employment rules and information.

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# INTRODUCTION

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This handbook is a collective representation of Coos County policies and current practices as they relate to employees. These policies provide rules and regulations for all employees of Coos County relative to matters of personnel administration. These rules and regulations are intended to:

- Promote efficiency in County employment operations
- Provide uniform procedures governing matters pertaining to wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment
- Ensure actions affecting the status of employees including appointments, promotions, demotions, terminations, layoffs, transfers, classifications, reclassifications, and compensation are performed in a manner based on merit and fitness, and to attract and retain qualified employees for County service
- Provide a method of ensuring County management and employees are informed of their respective rights and employment obligations

Personnel policies can be modified, revoked, or added to at any time at the sole discretion of the Board of Commissioners with notice to employees. No other personnel have the authority to alter these policies. Any revisions will substitute and replace prior policy or procedure statements. Unless otherwise stated, all employees will become subject to the new addition, deletion or changes regardless of date of hire. Neither the text of these policies, nor that of any policy or procedure statement of Coos County, is intended to be, nor should be construed as a contract of employment or as a contract guaranteeing continued employment or benefits.

In the event portions of this handbook are/or become inconsistent with the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement or the law, the terms of the collective bargaining agreement or law will prevail.

Unless otherwise stated in a collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract, County employees are engaged in "at will" employment relationships. This means that either the employee or the County may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without reason or notice.

Employees are encouraged to read this handbook carefully and keep it for future reference. Employees should become familiar with its contents and to review it with a supervisor or the Human Resources Director if questions arise.

# **GENERAL**

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## **ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL POLICIES**

This handbook is a compilation of the County's Administrative Personnel Policies and summaries of each policy are provided. Complete Administrative Personnel Policies are available on the County website and in Human Resources.

## **COUNTY VEHICLES**

Employees who need a County vehicle to assist in the performance of their official duties may be provided a County vehicle as available on a short- or long-term basis.

## **EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

Educational assistance may be available to County employees on a reimbursement basis. The County may reimburse an employee for all or part of tuition for courses directly related to the employee's work. Courses must be taken at an accredited institution of higher education or other recognized training facility and be conducted outside the employee's regular working hours. Reimbursement may be made providing that:

1. Funds are available in the current department budget and approved by the department head, or in the County training budget and pre-approved by the Human Resources Director and referred to the Board of Commissioners.
2. The employee had made application for approval of the course and tuition reimbursement at least 10 business days prior to course registration.
3. The employee is not receiving reimbursement for tuition from any other source, and
4. The employee submits evidence of satisfactory completion of the course with a grade "C" or better.

## **TRAINING**

The County will allow time off with pay and reimburse employees for the expenses of attending classes, lectures, conferences, or conventions when attendance is required by the County. The County may allow time off with pay for voluntary

training during working hours with department head approval. For voluntary programs conducted during off-duty time, employees will not receive any compensation.

## **TRAVEL and EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**

The County will reimburse reasonable expenses incurred by employees when traveling on official County business. The County provides cash advances. Departments may request a voucher for travel expenses in advance for employees.

Employees will be reimbursed at the current GSA rate for meals while conducting official County business. Purchases of alcohol will not be reimbursed. Current rates can be located at [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem).

Employees will be reimbursed for other expenses not covered by an advance voucher by submitting the appropriate receipts.

Mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS rate when an employee uses a privately owned vehicle in the course of conducting County business. Current rates can be located at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

It is the policy of the Board of Commissioners to provide an orderly process for employees to have their complaints considered as fairly and rapidly as possible without fear of reprisal. These procedures are available to all employees; however, bargaining unit employees shall use the grievance process outlined in the collective bargaining agreement if the action pertains to an interpretation of the agreement provisions.

An administrative grievance exists when any unresolved problem, complaint, misunderstanding, or disagreement exists. An employee may proceed individually or select a representative of the employee's choice. Employees with a problem or complaint are expected to proceed generally as follows:

1. Discuss the matter frankly and openly with the immediate supervisor.
2. If the immediate supervisor is unable to satisfactorily resolve the matter within 10 business days, the individual should state the problem clearly and completely in writing to the department head with a copy to the immediate supervisor.
3. If the matter remains unresolved or cannot be resolved within the department, within 15 business days of the original submission, the employee may submit the grievance in writing to the Board of

Commissioners for consideration. The Board may confer with the parties as necessary. The decision of the Board of Commissioners shall be the final administrative decision.

4. If a bona fide reason exists that there is a complete breakdown of communication in the chain of command, the employee may take his or her complaint directly to the Board of Commissioners.
5. Employees may also consult at any stage with the Human Resources Director.

## **MANDATORY MEETINGS**

From time to time the County will require employees to attend work related meetings either on or off premises. These meetings will be used to disseminate information, train, or instruct personnel on work related matters. Per ORS 659.785, employees cannot be required to attend employer-sponsored meetings or communications with the employer or the agent, representative, or designee of the employer if the primary purpose of the meeting or communication is to communicate the opinion of the employer about religious or political matters (political party affiliation, campaigns for measures or candidates). An employee may not be disciplined, discharged, or otherwise penalized for refusing to attend or participate in such meetings.

## **NEWS MEDIA POLICY**

Fostering good relations with the news media and providing for a free flow of public information is vital to the County. We work with the news media to make relevant information available to the public. We respond quickly and politely to requests for information from the news media, and we request assistance from others if we do not know the answer to a reporter's question. It is required that Department Heads be notified of all work related announcements, interviews, and interactions with the news media. Department Heads must strive to keep Commissioners informed about media contacts as soon as is practicable.

Misinformation shared with the media can have negative effects on the public, as well as on our credibility. Speak to reporters only about topics that you know and understand. Never speculate. When reporters' questions go beyond your expertise or when in doubt, refer them to County Counsel's Office.

# **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

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## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT**

Coos County is an equal opportunity entity; employment decisions are based on skills, qualifications, and abilities. Coos County does not discriminate or harass others in its employment decisions on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, color, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, veteran or military status, organization or political affiliations, association with members of a protected class, or any other class protected by state and federal discrimination laws.

## **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

Coos County is committed to complying fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities who are still able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. Essential functions are defined as the fundamental non-marginal duties of the position being held or sought by a disabled individual. A job function is essential if the position exists for the performance of the function, there are only a limited number of employees available to perform it, or the function is so highly specialized that an expert must be specially hired to perform it.

Reasonable accommodation may be available to employees and applicants, as long as the accommodation does not cause undue hardship for the County. Individuals protected by the ADA/ADAAA should engage in the interactive process with their supervisor or the Human Resources Director to discuss possible accommodation.

## **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR VICTIMS OF CERTAIN CRIMES**

The County offers reasonable safety accommodation to employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or criminal harassment. When an employee requests a reasonable safety accommodation, the County will engage in discussions with the employee about the nature and scope of a reasonable safety accommodation that will best address the particular safety concern affecting the individual employee.

A reasonable safety accommodation may include, but is not limited to, a transfer, reassignment, modified schedule, paid or unpaid leave, changed work station or telephone number, workplace facility or work requirement in response to actual or threatened domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or criminal harassment.



## **RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION**

The County respects the religious beliefs and practices of all employees and will make, upon request, an accommodation for such observances when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship on the County's business.

An employee whose religious beliefs or practices conflict with his/her job, work schedule, with the County's policy or practice on dress and appearance, or with other aspects of employment and who seeks a religious accommodation should submit a request for the accommodation to his/her immediate supervisor. The request should be in writing and include the type of religious conflict that exists and the employee's suggested accommodation.

The supervisor and employee will meet to discuss the request and the decision on an accommodation. If the employee accepts the proposed religious accommodation, the immediate supervisor will implement the decision. If the employee rejects the proposed accommodation, the parties may discuss alternative accommodations or the employee may appeal the decision using the policy set forth in these personnel rules.

## **GENETIC INFORMATION NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT (GINA)**

The County respects all employees' privacy in their genetic information and enforces a strict policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of genetic information. The County will not discriminate, harass, or retaliate on the basis of genetic information regarding any aspect of employment. Additionally, the County prohibits the use of genetic information to make an employment decision.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, genetic information includes information about an individual's genetic tests and the genetic tests of an individual's family members, as well as information about any disease, disorder, or condition of an individual's family members (i.e., an individual's family medical history).

Family medical history is included in the definition of genetic information as it is often used to determine whether someone has an increased risk of getting a disease, disorder, or condition in the future. Employees are encouraged not to disclose any genetic or family medical history in the workplace. Any such information that is inadvertently disclosed to the County will be kept in a file separate from the employee's personnel file.

## **WHISTLEBLOWER**

It is the responsibility of all County employees to report violations or suspected violations of applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Employees should share their concerns, suggestions, or complaints with someone who can properly address them. Typically, concerns should be shared with a supervisor, department head, or Human Resources. This policy in no way limits an employee's right to engage in rights protected by the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Act.

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Discrimination or retaliation against employees who report in good faith alleged violations of applicable laws, rules, or regulations shall not be tolerated. Any employee, who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination or retaliation for whistleblowing, or that a violation of this policy has occurred, should immediately contact the Human Resources Director. The County shall conduct an investigation regarding the complaint maintaining anonymity and confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. Appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

## **HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION**

Coos County prohibits harassment based on disability, race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, veterans status, military status, retaliation for opposing unlawful employment practices, association with members of a protected class, marital status, union participation, injured workers status, non-supervisory family relationships, or any other protected class, regardless of whether that harassment is targeted specifically at the employee.

Behavior including (but not limited to) telling ethnic jokes, making religious slurs, using offensive "slang" or other derogatory terms denoting a person's speech, accent or disability create a hostile work environment and will not be tolerated at the County.

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or non-verbal communication or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment.

- Submission or rejection of such conduct by an individual influences any employment-related decisions affecting the individual; or,
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

The conduct prohibited may be verbal, visual or physical in nature. Sexual harassment may occur between an employee and supervisor or employee to employee. It includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, physical touching, or the granting or withholding of benefits (e.g. pay, promotions, time off) in response to the sexual conduct. More subtle forms of prohibited behavior, such as offensive posters, cartoons, caricatures, comments and jokes, language or innuendoes, hugging, or kissing may also constitute sexual harassment when they create or contribute to a hostile or offensive work environment.

#### Complaint Process

Employees who believe discrimination or harassment has taken place, or who witness or suspect any violation of County policies, should report the matter immediately to any member of management or the Human Resources Director.

Coos County will not retaliate against employees who file a complaint in good faith or cooperate in an investigation, and will not tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees or co-workers even if accusations are not substantiated.

The County will conduct a prompt and impartial investigation of the reported conduct.

Where investigations confirm the allegations, appropriate corrective action will be taken as provided in these policies, up to and including discharge.

The affected employee will be informed of the results of the investigation.

Failure to cooperate with an investigation may lead to disciplinary action up to and including the possible termination of employment.

Information provided by individual employees during the course of an investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible and made available only on a need-to-know basis.

# **HIRING AND RECORDS**

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## **HIRING PRACTICE**

All employment decisions are based on merit, qualifications, and abilities, without regard to age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, veteran or military status, marital status, injured worker status, union participation, non-supervisory family relationships, association with members of a protected class, or any other protected class.

## **VETERANS PREFERENCE**

Coos County provides qualifying veterans and disabled veterans preference in employment in accordance with ORS 408.225-408.238. For the preference to be applied, veterans must have received an honorable discharge from military service, successfully complete the initial application screening, and meet the minimum qualifications of the applied for position. To qualify for disabled veteran preference, applicants must submit proof of veteran status and proof of their veterans' disability rating from the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Applicants must submit proof of veteran status (DD214/DD215) at the time the application is submitted.

## **PERSONNEL FILES**

Official personnel files are maintained in Human Resources. These files contain materials relevant to the employee's employment with the County, including but not limited to application materials, job description, payroll changes and authorizations, evaluations, transcripts, contracts, commendations, written discipline or other materials deemed appropriate by the County.

Employees may inspect the content of their own personnel files upon request to Human Resources. Employees may prepare written explanations or opinions regarding materials in their personnel files they believe to be incorrect or derogatory. Written rebuttals may be attached to related document and included in the personnel file.

Payroll information (deductions, benefits costs and memberships), medical records, and employment eligibility (I-9) records are also maintained in Human Resources but separate from the employee's personnel file.

Employees have the responsibility to immediately notify Human Resources of changes in name, mailing address, telephone number, number of dependents, marital status, etc.

# **WORKPLACE SAFETY**

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## **SAFETY**

Coos County provides safe working conditions for employees attained through the use of safety equipment, proper job instruction, frequent review of safe work practices, and adequate supervision

Coos County has safety committees designated to review safety complaints and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners regarding safe working conditions. Safety committees will be comprised of both management and employee representatives.

All Coos County employees including elected officials, department heads, supervisors, and employees are responsible for complying with safety procedures and reporting unsafe conditions. Supervisors will enforce safety policies, instruct employees, eliminate or report unsafe conditions, and report accidents.

## **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

Coos County recognizes the importance of a safe workplace for employees, members, customers, vendors, contractors, and the general public. A work environment that is safe and comfortable enhances employee satisfaction as well as productivity. Therefore, threats and acts of violence made by an employee or member of the public against another person's life, health, well-being, family, or property will be dealt with in a zero tolerance manner by Coos County.

Should situations occur which present a risk of harm to employees and others, all employees have an obligation to report any incidents that pose a risk of harm to employees or others associated with Coos County or which threaten the safety, security or financial interests of our organization. Employees should make such reports directly to their supervisor, department head, or Human Resources Director.

All information related to the reports, including the name of the reporting employees, will be kept as confidential as possible under the circumstances. Human Resources will notify the reporting employee of any action it takes in response to the report.

Coos County may conduct an investigation of a current employee where the employee's behavior raises concerns about work performance, reliability, honesty, or potentially threatens the safety of co-workers or others. An employee investigation may include investigation of criminal records; it may also include a

search of desks, work areas, file cabinets, voice mail systems and computer systems.

## **FIREARMS**

Except for employees required to carry a firearm as part of their job duties, Coos County prohibits employees from bringing firearms into the workplace including but not limited to all County buildings and vehicles.

## **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

The County has a responsibility to its employees to ensure a safe and productive work environment unimpaired by chemical substance use or abuse. The County will make a good faith effort to maintain a drug and alcohol free work environment by conducting reasonable suspicion drug testing. This policy will be enforced and administered with the advice and consent of human resources. This policy applies to all County employees while at the workplace. Certain safety sensitive or special needs positions (i.e. Public Works jobs with a CDL requirement) may be subject to random drug and alcohol testing, including but not limited to those required by federal Department of Transportation rules and regulations.

The County prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace. Violations of this policy may lead to required participation in a substance abuse program and disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

## **REASONABLE SUSPICION TESTING**

If a supervisor makes specific expressed observations concerning the work performance, appearance (including noticeable odor of alcohol or drug), behavior, or speech of the employee, the supervisor will confer with another trained management employee or the Human Resources Director. If both supervisory or management employees agree on the observations of possible use of alcohol or drugs, the employee may be sent for a drug or alcohol test via Breathalyzer, urinalysis, blood test, or otherwise.

Any accident or incident involving physical injury to any person or property damage may be considered as constituting reasonable suspicion for testing for drugs and alcohol where human factors contribute to the incident and a question of sobriety exists.

Reasonable suspicion testing may be based upon, among other things:

- Observable phenomena, such as direct observation of drug use or possession and/or the physical symptoms of being under the influence of a drug;
- A pattern of abnormal conduct or erratic behavior;
- Arrest or conviction for a drug-related offense, or the identification of an employee as the focus of a criminal investigation into illegal drug possession, use, or trafficking;
- Information provided either by reliable and credible sources or independently corroborated;
- Employee's voluntary admission of use; or
- Newly discovered evidence that the employee has tampered with a previous drug test.

## **PERMITTED USE**

It is the employee's responsibility to determine whether or not a prescribed or over-the-counter drug can impair their job performance, and to take appropriate action by using paid leave and/or notifying their supervisor of not being able to work in order to avoid endangering themselves or others. An employee who reports to work under the influence of medication and endangers themselves or others may be disciplined, up to and including termination. Any failure to report the use of prescribed medication following an event, or failure to provide evidence of medical authorization, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **ACTION**

Employees who violate this policy may be asked to participate in a drug and/or alcohol abuse assistance or rehabilitation program at his/her own expense as approved by the Human Resources Director, and/or may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Paid leave will not be available. If the employee fails to satisfactorily participate in and/or complete the program, the employee may be subject to discipline, suspension, and/or termination.

Employees who voluntarily request assistance (counseling and/or rehabilitation) in dealing with a drug and/or alcohol problem may do so through a private treatment program. If an employee seeks treatment voluntarily and not under adverse employment circumstances, accrued sick or vacation leave may be used while attending the program. After such accommodation, the discontinuation of any involvement with drugs and/or alcohol may be an essential requisite for employment and is consistent with the County's policy of maintaining a drug free workplace.

## **REPORTS OF DRUG CONVICTION**

Each employee must report facts and circumstances to his or her supervisor no more than five days after conviction for violating any criminal drug statute.



# **EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

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## **GENERAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Coos County expects all employees to conduct themselves in a professional, courteous, and respectful manner in contact with other employees, citizens, and business partners.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Any action by an employee which reflects discredit upon the County or a direct hindrance to the effective performance of County functions may be considered cause for disciplinary action. Such actions may include, but are not limited to:

1. Reporting for duty under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
2. Insubordination.
3. Displaying offensive conduct or language toward the public or fellow County employees.
4. Performing one's job with inefficiency or incompetence.
5. Displaying inattention to duty, indolence, carelessness, or negligence in the care and handling of County property or business.
6. Habitual tardiness.
7. Improper or unauthorized use of County vehicles, equipment, or property.
8. Using sick leave under false pretenses or other misuse of sick leave.
9. Unauthorized leave from duty.
10. Conduct contrary to public policy.
11. Willfully violating any of the provisions of these rules, or any rules and regulations prescribed by the department head.
12. Accepting gratuities or bribes.
13. Theft of County materials, funds, or property.

Disciplinary action may only take place after consultation with Human Resources. Disciplinary action may take the form of a reprimand, suspension, demotion, disciplinary probation, or dismissal, depending on the totality of the circumstances.

When employees are covered by a collective bargaining agreement or department policy (in the Sheriff's Office), that collective bargaining agreement or department policy will determine the procedure for disciplinary action.

## **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Coos County does not restrict outside employment of County employees providing that such employment does not impact the employee's County responsibilities and

does not present a conflict or appearance of a conflict of interest. Employees engaging in outside employment must notify their department head or supervisor.

## **ETHICS POLICY**

It is the policy of Coos County that all County employees shall adhere to the rules and regulations as set forth in this Coos County Employee Handbook, and the Government Ethics provisions for Public Officers and Employees as stated in Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 244.

Each Department Head shall be responsible for notifying employees of the requirements of these rules and for taking appropriate action for any violations.

The Board of Commissioners shall enforce these rules with respect to the activities of the Department Heads.

### **1. Reporting**

Any employee who has knowledge of, or a reasonable suspicion, that a fraudulent or other dishonest or unethical act has occurred, should follow the "Complaint Procedure" as set forth in this Employee Handbook.

### **2. Investigation**

- a. The Human Resources Director shall investigate, or cause to be investigated, all suspicions, allegations, and complaints of unethical or fraudulent conduct by County employees.
- b. Should the Human Resources Director determine that assistance is needed, the Human Resources Director shall promptly notify the Board of Commissioners to request the necessary additional assistance.
- c. The County shall make every effort to protect employees from retaliatory action due to reports of suspected fraudulent or unethical conduct.

### **3. Discipline**

- a. Disciplinary action may only take place following the completion of an investigation that includes the recommendation that disciplinary action be taken.
- b. Disciplinary action may take the form of a reprimand, suspension, demotion, disciplinary probation, or dismissal, depending on the totality of the circumstances.
- c. When employees are covered by a collective bargaining agreement or department policy (in the Sheriff's Office), that collective bargaining

agreement or department policy will determine the procedure for disciplinary action.

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Attendance and punctuality are requirements of the job. Poor attendance and/or excessive tardiness is disruptive and may be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on County operations. If an employee cannot avoid being late or is unable to work as scheduled, he/she should immediately notify his/her supervisor.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Coos County employees shall avoid situations that create, potentially create, or give the appearance of creating a conflict with the mission or objectives of the County; or could cast doubt upon objectivity between personal interests and the interests of the County.

County employees shall not participate in any decision or use their positions or access to influence a decision by the County to employ or enter into a contract for procurement of goods or services with a relative of the employee, a member of the employee's household, a business with which the employee is associated, or someone who shares financial interest with the employee.

## **DISCLOSURE**

Coos County employees are required to report any actual or potential conflict of interest to their supervisor or Human Resources Director.

## **ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Acceptance of certain types or forms of gifts is a violation of Oregon Government Ethics Law.

Gifts, gratuities, loans, fees, or any other items of significant value, may not be solicited by County personnel, or accepted either directly or indirectly, if the acceptance could be considered to influence directly or indirectly the actions of said personnel, or any other person, in any matter of County business.

Significant value is any gift with a market value of \$50 or more. Under no circumstances are gifts to exceed \$50 per calendar year from any one source.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

The information contained in this employee handbook is just a summary of the relevant government ethics laws. Detailed information on these laws is available at the Oregon Government Ethics Commission website, <http://www.oregon.gov/OGEC/>.

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

The restrictions imposed by the law of the State of Oregon (ORS 260.432(2)) on employee's political activities are that "No public employee shall solicit any money, influence, service or other thing of value or otherwise promote or oppose any political committee or promote or oppose the nomination or election of a candidate, the gathering of signatures on an initiative, referendum or recall petition, the adoption of a measure or the recall of a public office holder while on the job during working hours. However, this section does not restrict the right of a public employee to express personal political views."

It is therefore the policy of Coos County that employees may engage in political activity outside of working hours in a manner that does not suggest that the County endorses the political view.

## **FAMILY EMPLOYMENT**

One member of an immediate family may not exercise supervisory, appointment, or grievance adjustment authority over another member of the same family. Any exception must be approved by the Board of Commissioners.

# **COMPENSATION**

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## **ENTRANCE RATE**

New employees will be placed at the entrance rate within the salary schedule upon hire. Authorization for a starting salary above the entrance rate must be obtained from the Board of Commissioners unless otherwise permitted by County Rules.

## **MERIT INCREASES**

Employees will be advanced to the next step of the salary schedule on their anniversary date, provided they receive a satisfactory (mid range or higher) performance evaluation. Once an employee reaches the top step of the County's salary schedule, additional merit increases will not be available.

Based on the County's fiscal ability, cost of living adjustments for non-represented employees may be recommended by the Board of Commissioners on an annual basis. Cost of living adjustments for represented employees are negotiated through the collective bargaining process.

## **PAY ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO CLASSIFICATION CHANGE**

When an employee is reclassified and promoted to a position in a higher classification range, he or she will be placed on the step within the new salary range closest to his or her current pay rate which results in a pay increase. Upon promotion, a new anniversary date is established for the employee for the purposes of future merit increases.

When an employee is demoted (voluntarily or involuntarily) or reclassified to a position in a lower classification for reasons that do not reflect discredit upon the employee's employment record, he or she will be placed on the step within the new salary range closest to his or her current pay rate which does not result in a pay increase. Demotions for disciplinary reasons will ordinarily result in a pay reduction.

When an employee is transferred to a job classification within the same salary range, his or her pay rate and anniversary date will remain unchanged.

Promoted or transferred employees will serve a six-month probationary period in the new job classification or department.

## WORKING OUT OF CLASSIFICATION

When an employee is required to work in a classification above his or her normal job classification for at least one consecutive work week, the employee will be paid for such work at the rate he or she would be entitled to as if a promotion to that job classification had occurred.

## HOURS OF WORK

The normal hours of business for all County departments are generally 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Board of Commissioners may establish or modify the business hours for certain departments in accordance with the department's particular operating requirements.

The regular work schedule shall be fixed by the department supervisor and may vary by department. Exceptions to the established workday may be made at the discretion of the supervisor.

### Rest Periods

Hourly employees must take one 15-minute uninterrupted rest period for every four-hour portion of their shift, scheduled at or near as feasible to the middle of each half shift. All employees are paid during rest periods and therefore, are required to follow County policies during such rest periods. If an employee must breastfeed or express milk while at work, she should contact the department head or Human Resources for the appropriate private location.

Rest periods may not be accumulated and used for extra time off at lunch break or at the end of the day.

### Meal Break

Employees must take an unpaid meal break of at least one half-hour during each work shift of 6 hours or more. Consistent with operating requirements, meal breaks shall be scheduled at or about the middle of the work shift.

## TIMESHEETS

Federal and state laws require the County to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate hourly employees' pay and benefits. Time worked is the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties. Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every employee. Non-exempt employees should accurately record the time worked each day, not including the meal break and any departure from work for personal reasons. All hours worked should be recorded to the nearest quarter-hour. The supervisor must always approve overtime work **before** it is performed.

It is the employee's responsibility to sign their timesheets to certify the accuracy of the time recorded. The supervisor will review and sign the timesheet before submitting it for payroll processing. In addition, the employee must initial any corrections or modifications to the timesheet.

Altering, falsifying, or tampering with timesheets, or recording time on another employee's timesheet may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **PAYDAY**

All employees are paid based on hours worked during each pay period. Payday is normally the on the 30th day of each month. If payday lands on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, or in months with less than 30 days, payday will be the preceding workday.

## **PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

The law requires the County to make certain deductions from every employee's wages. Examples are federal and state withholding taxes, social security taxes, medical insurance contributions, court ordered garnishments, and retirement contributions (PERS).

Eligible employees may voluntarily authorize deductions from their wages to cover costs of programs and benefits offered beyond those required by law including voluntary life/disability insurance, and other voluntary deductions.

Questions regarding payroll deductions should be directed to Human Resources.

## **OVERTIME**

All overtime must be approved by a department head or supervisor. Employees will be paid 1.5 times their regular rate for hours worked over 40 in a workweek when budgeted funds are available. When budgeted funds are not available for overtime payment, compensatory time at the time-and-one-half rate will accrue. Employees are encouraged to use compensatory time within the pay period in which it is accrued. If an employee is not able to use his or her compensatory time within the same pay period, it will be accrued in a compensatory time bank, not to exceed forty (40) hours.

Employees exempted from overtime requirements according to the Fair Labor and Standards Act are not eligible for overtime or compensatory time

# LEAVES OF ABSENCE

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## **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Employees may take up to five days of paid bereavement leave in the event of a death in their immediate family. For bereavement leave purposes, “immediate family” includes parent, child, spouse or registered same-sex domestic partner; mother-in-law or father-in-law, sister, brother, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, or legal dependents that live in the employee’s household.

Employees requiring more time off in the event of a death in the family should notify their supervisor. Bereavement leave may be extended to ten days per death in the immediate family, as needed and provided by OFLA. Employees taking extended bereavement leave under OFLA must use accrued sick, vacation, or compensatory leave. If no paid leave is available, the employee may take the leave without pay.

## **FAMILY LEAVE**

Coos County recognizes that employees need support in balancing their work with personal and family responsibilities. Accordingly, eligible employees are entitled to up to twelve weeks of family leave in a rolling twelve month period for their own serious health conditions, or to attend to a family member’s serious health condition in accordance with the Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA) and the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

### Eligibility

Coos County employees are eligible to take OFLA-protected leave once they have been employed for at least six months and work an average of 25 hours per week or more.

Coos County employees are eligible to take FMLA-protected leave once they have been employed for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months immediately preceding the family medical leave.

### Qualifying Events

An employee is qualified for protected leave when he or she is unable to perform the essential functions of the job because of the following:

- His or her own serious health condition, including pregnancy-related conditions.



- In the event of the birth or adoption of a child;
- To care for a spouse, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, parent-in-law, registered same-sex domestic partner, or child or parent of a registered same-sex domestic partner who has a serious health condition, or a mentally/physically impaired child aged 18 or over;
- To provide home care for a child under the age of 18 with a non-serious health condition, provided another family member is not willing or able to care for the child (OFLA only); and/or
- In the event of a death in the immediate family (OFLA only).

In some situations, additional leave may be available for pregnancy-related disability.

#### Request For Leave

In situations where the need for family leave is known or anticipated, employees must give thirty (30) days notice to take family leave. If the leave is anticipated less than thirty (30) days in advance, employees must give notice as soon as is practical.

In unanticipated or emergency situations where there is no opportunity to give notice, employees must notify their supervisor verbally within two business days of the emergency situation.

Upon notice, the supervisor will provide the employee with the required forms. All employees will be required to complete a Family Leave Request Form and to have the applicable certification form completed and returned prior to the commencement of family leave.

#### Medical Certification

Certification of the need for family leave is required. In the event of a personal health condition or that of a family member, the certification must be provided by a medical professional within fifteen (15) days of the request for family leave.

If medically necessary, family leave may be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule. Details of the proposed schedule should be verified by the certifying medical professional. Employees should discuss the need for intermittent leave with their supervisor. The County may require updated medical certifications during intermittent leave periods.

### General Provisions

Employees are entitled to take up to 12 weeks family medical leave during a rolling 12-month period.

Employees requesting unpaid family leave must first use any available sick, vacation, or compensatory time.

Employees returning from family leave taken for their own health condition may be required to provide a medical release to return to work prior to or upon return indicating they are able to return to work and whether there are any restrictions.

### Reinstatement

Employees returning from family medical leave will be reinstated to the same or an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment, unless their former positions have been eliminated for bona fide business reasons.

### Benefits During Leave

FMLA – While the employee is on an absence covered by FMLA, Coos County will continue to pay its share of benefit premiums whether or not the employee is receiving wages while on leave. The employee is required to pay the employee's regular contribution toward premiums, if any.

OFLA – If the absence is only covered under OFLA, the employee will be responsible for the full premium payments in order to continue benefit coverage if the employee is on an unpaid status.

## **JURY DUTY**

Leave with pay will be granted for the time required for jury duty. Employees should immediately inform their supervisor, complete a Leave Request form, and attach a copy of the juror summons. Compensation received for jury duty, excluding mileage, is to be surrendered to the County Treasurer. Employees are expected to return to work when not selected for jury duty.

## **COURT APPEARANCES**

Employees required to appear in court, or before a legislative committee or judicial or quasi-judicial body in connection with their official job duties, including travel, will be allowed to do so on paid time.

Employees required to appear in court, or before a legislative committee or judicial or quasi-judicial body for a non-work related reason may do so by using accrued vacation leave.

## **MILITARY LEAVE**

The County will grant military leave to employees on duty with a uniformed service in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Employees requesting military leave are required to provide written notice to their supervisor as soon as practicable following notification of military call or reservist duty, unless precluded by military necessity.

Upon honorable discharge, such employees will be reinstated in their job, or if unavailable, be placed in the first available comparable job with equal or better pay than when the employee left. Employees on military leave will not lose seniority or employment rights.

Employees on annual active duty for training as a member of the National Guard, National Guard Reserve, or any component of the Armed Forces of the United States or the United States Public Health Services, are entitled to leave, upon application, not to exceed 15 days in one calendar year without loss of time, pay, or regular leave, and without impairment of merit rating or other rights or benefits to which the employee is entitled.

Coos County will grant leave for participation in Peace Corps and VISTA in accordance with Oregon Revised Statutes.

## **NATURAL DISASTERS**

When a natural disaster causes an emergency as approved by the Board of Commissioners, the County will pay regular salary to employees who, because of a natural disaster, are unable to report to work, are needed to provide safety for their families or prevent property damage, or to help with the rescue effort.

## **UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Department heads may approve unpaid leaves of absence of up to 90 calendar days upon written request from an employee provided that the temporary absence of the employee does not seriously hinder the department's work.

The Board of Commissioners may approve a leave of absence greater than 90 days at its discretion.

Unpaid leaves of absence will not be approved for employees accepting other employment.

# TECHNOLOGY

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## CELL PHONES

### County Issued Electronic Devices

Cell phones and other electronic devices issued or assigned to Coos County employees, volunteers and officials are intended to provide for the efficient conduct of business related to the County. Personal calls (outgoing and incoming) and usage will be allowed infrequently, for limited duration, and only in instances of family emergencies when a landline telephone is not reasonably available. These devices remain County property and, in the case of cell phones, will be on the service plan provided by the County.

Employees issued County cell phones and other electronic devices shall have no expectation of privacy while using County-issued devices. The County may audit and monitor phone calls, messages, internet, and other usage.

### Personal Cell Phones

Coos County discourages personal cell phone use or text messaging except on breaks or lunch time. Except in cases of emergencies, prior approval should be obtained by the supervisor.

Employees shall not store confidential or work-related information on personal cell phones.

When using a cell phone, employees should be courteous and speak quietly in an area away from co-workers and other persons interacting within the workplace. Unattended cell phones must have the volume set to silent to limit disruptions within the workplace.

### Cell Phone Safety

Coos County prohibits the use of cell phones, including text messaging, during the following work-related activities:

- While operating a moving vehicle unless a hands free device is used (please note, the use of a speaker phone is not considered a "hands-free" device);
- While operating or being in close proximity of heavy, dangerous, moving machinery; or
- Where use of a cell phone may place employees at risk of injury.

Oregon law requires motorists to employ a hands-free accessory when using cell phones, tablets, and similar electronics while driving. The law stipulates that motorists must be able to maintain both hands on the steering wheel when using their hands-free electronics. The only exception is for calls placed to 9-1-1, and for law enforcement personnel, fire department personnel, and EMT Emergency Services.

#### Reporting Lost or Stolen Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

If County-issued cell phone or other electronic device, or a personal cell phone or electronic device which stores email addresses, phone numbers or other work or private information about other employees, customers, or clients, or sensitive or confidential workplace information, is lost or stolen, report the loss to your supervisor immediately.

### **SOCIAL NETWORKING AND BLOGGING**

Coos County takes no position on any employee's decision to start or maintain a social media blog or participate in other social networking activities. However, it is the right and duty of the County to protect itself from unauthorized disclosure of information. The County's social networking policy covers County-authorized social networking and personal social networking and applies to all employees.

Unless specifically instructed, employees are not authorized and are therefore restricted from speaking on behalf of Coos County. Employees are expected to protect the privacy of other employees and citizens and are prohibited from disclosing personal employee and customer information and any other information to which employees have access through work. This policy does not prohibit employees from exercising their rights under applicable employment relations laws.

### **OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION; NO RIGHT OF PRIVACY**

County employees have no right of privacy for any information contained on any County computer, phone, tablet, or other electronic device.

1. There is no right of privacy for the contents of any e-mail message, phone message, texting device or internet use on such devices at any time. Employees or users of electronic equipment should not consider their use of the network or the internet private or confidential.
2. The use of a password does not give rise to any right of privacy, and the use of the deletion keystroke or any other attempt to delete does not necessarily mean that a record, communication, or document

has been eliminated from the network.

3. All use of County owned devices by employees is subject to County oversight. Appropriate County personnel have the right to view the contents of an employee's e-mail, phone records, texts, or similar communications, files, other data storage, and records of internet site access at any time for devices provided by the County.

# **BENEFITS**

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## **ELIGIBILITY**

To qualify for employment fringe benefits with Coos County, employees must work an average of 20 hours or more per week. Health benefits go into effect on the first day of the month following the employee's completion of 80 or more working hours.

## **GROUP INSURANCE**

All regular full-time and part-time employees working 20 hours or more per week are eligible for County-sponsored health, vision, dental, and life insurance plans. The County also offers health, vision, dental, and life insurance coverage for employees' dependents and registered same-sex domestic partners.

Employees on unpaid leaves of absence not protected by FMLA or OFLA for more than two weeks may retain health and life insurance coverage by making required payments. Employees will be advised of payment information by Human Resources.

Detailed information regarding current health and dental plan offerings, rates, and cost share is available from Human Resources.

## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Coos County has made available to all employees an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist employees with identifying problems at an early stage and motivate employees to seek help as needed related to circumstances inside and outside of their employment.

For additional information about the EAP, employees should contact the Human Resources Director.

## **RETIREMENT**

Eligible County employees participate in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) or the Oregon Public Service Retirement Plan (OPSRP). Public employees hired on or after August 29, 2003 become part of OPSRP, unless membership was previously established in PERS.. There is a six-month mandatory waiting period for new employees not actively enrolled in PERS.



## **HOLIDAYS**

The County recognizes the following paid holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans' Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

If the recognized holiday falls on Saturday, the holiday is observed the preceding Friday. If the recognized holiday falls on Sunday, the holiday is observed the following Monday.

After one year of employment, each County employee is entitled to two floating holidays per fiscal year unless otherwise specified by a collective bargaining agreement. Floating holidays are credited to each employee's leave bank on July 1 and must be used by June 30 of the following year. Unused floating holidays are forfeited and may not be traded for pay.

After 15 years of County service, employees are entitled to one additional floating holiday for a total of three floating holidays per fiscal year, unless otherwise specified by a collective bargaining agreement.

Part-time employees are entitled to paid holidays on a pro-rated basis.

Employees on unpaid leaves of absence shall not receive holiday pay. Employees who are off work due to sickness or vacation shall be paid for the holiday in lieu of using paid leave. Holidays will not be counted as hours worked for the purposes of determining overtime.

### Holiday Pay

A regular employee required to work on a holiday will receive compensatory time off or pay at 1.5 times his or her regular rate of pay.

Extra help or seasonal employees will be paid straight time for hours actually worked on a holiday. If hours worked on a holiday cause the employee to work over 40 hours in the work week, hours over 40 will be paid at the overtime rate.

### **VACATION**

All benefits-eligible employees are eligible for vacation based on the schedule below. All accruals begin at the date of hire, and after completion of 6 months' employment, monthly accruals are credited as vacation leave and may be taken with supervisor approval. Vacation time is not available during the first six months of employment.

Vacation time is intended to provide time away from work for rest and recreation and may not be taken as a cash payment. The vacation accrual cannot exceed a maximum of twice each employee's annual accrual rate. Vacation benefits will stop accruing once the maximum has been reached. When this total is reduced below the maximum allowable, the benefit will begin accruing again. No vacation is accrued for employees on a leave of absence without pay.

Full-time employees will earn vacation leave benefits according to the following schedule:

<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Monthly Accrual</u>	<u>Annual Accrual</u>
0-60 months	8 hours	96 hours
61-120 months	10 hours	120 hours
121-180 months	12 hours	144 hours
181-240 months	14 hours	168 hours
241+ months	16 hours	192 hours

Part-time employees accrue vacation on a prorated basis. Temporary and extra help employees do not accrue vacation.

New employees hired on or before the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month will receive vacation credit for that month. New employees hired on or after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month will start accruing vacation the following month.

Vacation leave must be used in quarter-hour increments.

### Required Vacation

County employees are required to take at least ten vacation days per year. Employees with accounting controls (having authority to prepare and submit vouchers for payment and/or taking and receipting money) within their department must take at least five consecutive vacation days per year or work out of their area of control for the equivalent amount of time.

### Termination

Employees who have served at least one year in County service are entitled to cash compensation for accrued vacation leave up to their maximum accrual or as specified in a collective bargaining agreement.

In case of death, compensation for accrued vacation leave shall be paid in the same manner as salary due to the decedent is paid.

## **SICK LEAVE**

Sick leave will accrue at the rate of eight hours for each calendar month of active employment for eligible full-time employees and on a prorated basis for part-time employees. Unused sick leave may be accumulated without limit.

For employees having completed one year of County service, 25% of the first 960 hours of sick leave will be paid to the employee upon termination. The remaining balance will be reported to PERS.

Sick leave must be used in quarter-hour increments and will not accrue during an unpaid leave of absence.

### Sick Leave Use

Sick leave is available for use for absences due to personal or immediate family injury, illness, doctor and dental appointments, quarantine, or death in the immediate family. Any employee who is absent due to illness for more than three work days may be required to furnish a physician's statement verifying the employee's illness. Immediate family is defined as: mother, father, spouse or registered same-sex domestic partner, children, or legal dependents that live in the employee's household.

Sick pay is intended solely to provide income protection in the event of illness or injury. An employee is prohibited from working elsewhere while on paid sick leave.

Sick leave will not be counted as hours worked for the purposes of determining overtime.

## **LEAVE DONATION**

Employees who have a serious health condition, have exhausted their sick and vacation leave balances, and require extended time off may request vacation leave donations from other County employees up to a maximum of 240 hours per year. Requests for leave donation must be made to Human Resources. The Human Resources Director will determine if the employee qualifies for leave donations and if donations may be requested.

Only employees who have accrued more than 240 vacation hours may donate vacation hours and no single employee may donate more than 40 hours per calendar year to any other employee.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE**

Coos County provides workers' compensation insurance for its employees. This insurance covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical treatment and/or causes the employee to lose time from work.

If an accident involves personal injury to an employee while on duty, regardless of how serious, the supervisor and Human Resources Office must be notified as soon as possible. Injury notification is necessary to comply with laws and assist in workers' compensation requirements. It is equally important that the employee's supervisor inform Human Resources when an injury has occurred. Injured workers who seek medical treatment or lose time from work must fill out a Worker's Compensation Report Form 801 and submit it within 5 working days to Human Resources. Employees who are injured or ill but do not seek medical treatment should complete the Incident/Accident Report and submit it to Human Resources. Human Resources staff may provide assistance to any person completing these forms.

On-the-job fatalities and catastrophes must be reported to OR-OSHA within eight hours. Report any accident that results in overnight hospitalization within 24 hours to OR-OSHA. Call (800) 922-2689, (503) 378-3272, or Oregon Emergency Response (800) 452-0311 on nights and weekends. Human Resources will notify the County's insurance carrier by phone and process a workers' compensation claim form.

### Workers' Compensation Payments

If an employee receives compensation from the insurance carrier or any other form of public insurance benefits as a result of a work related injury or illness, the employee has the option of allowing the County to pay the difference between the insurance benefit and full pay by using the employee's sick leave accruals. If sick leave is exhausted, accrued vacation and/or comp time may be

used. The employee must report to Human Resources the amount of the payment and the period that the payment represents.

#### Return-to-Work Policy

The workers' compensation carrier has a return-to-work policy that allows modified work to be done by the injured employee during their healing process. The County works with the carrier to follow the proper procedures of reinstatement. The employee is responsible for immediately notifying Human Resources of his or her release to light or modified work, work restrictions, and doctor appointments. If an employee is offered a suitable position and refuses to accept it, the employee will be considered to have voluntarily terminated their employment and abandoned their right to reinstatement or reemployment.

#### Light Duty Work Assignments

The County will decide if light duty or modified work is available on a case by case basis. Disabled or restricted duty employees who are temporarily assigned light duty work as a reasonable accommodation but are unable to perform the essential duties of their job may be required to provide a medical evaluation after 30 days from their treating physician. Human Resources will use the evaluation to determine whether the employee is capable at that time of performing the essential functions of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation. Coos County's workers' compensation carrier offers light duty accommodations only for those employees who are anticipated to recover the ability to perform all the essential functions of the job within a reasonable time. If recovery becomes doubtful, the County may discontinue the light duty assignment. Light duty assignments are not intended to become permanent.

# **LEAVING EMPLOYMENT**

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## **CONTINUED MEDICAL COVERAGE**

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) permits continuous coverage to employees and qualified dependents who lose health, dental, or vision coverage due to termination of employment or reduction in employee work hours. The employee or dependent pays the full cost of coverage. Human Resources will provide each eligible employee with a written notice describing the employee's rights granted and obligations under COBRA.

## **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

Termination of employment is initiated by the County. This can occur at any time during the course of employment including as an action to discipline the employee.

Resignation is voluntary termination of employment initiated by the employee, and includes abandonment of a position.

Layoff is the involuntary termination of employment by the County because of budgetary restrictions, consolidation of departments and/or programs, and/or positions being eliminated.

Retirement is voluntary termination of employment initiated by the employee for meeting age, length of service, or other criteria.

Group insurance benefits will be terminated at the end of the month in which termination is effective unless continuous coverage is requested under COBRA.

## **FINAL PAY**

Human Resources must be immediately notified when an employee gives notice of resignation or is being terminated.

An employee's final paycheck will include hours worked but not paid and accrued vacation and compensatory time, if applicable. The date the paycheck is available will follow state wage and hour laws and depends on when the employee gives notice. All final paychecks will be paid by manual check.

# EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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As an employee of Coos County, I acknowledge the following:

I have received a copy of the Employee Handbook. I understand that the Handbook contains important information about the County's policies, work rules, and my benefits. I also understand that the Handbook outlines my responsibilities as an employee. I understand that I have the responsibility to read and understand the information in the Handbook, and to ask my supervisor for clarification of any information I do not understand.

I understand that this Handbook is not a contract of employment or a guarantee of specific treatment in specific situations. Except for any supplemental safety policies and rules that apply to employees in certain jobs or work areas, or otherwise stated in an express, individual, written employment contract, I understand that this Handbook supersedes all prior Handbooks, policies, and understandings on the subjects contained in it.

I understand that the County has the right to change, modify, add to, substitute, eliminate, interpret, and apply in its sole judgment, the policies, rules, and benefits described in this Handbook. I understand that should the content be changed in any way, the County may require an additional signed acknowledgement from me to indicate that I am aware of the changes.

Unless otherwise stated in a written employment contract, I understand that my employment relationship with the County is at-will and either the County or I can terminate the relationship at any time, with or without reason or notice.

I understand that the Board of Commissioners is the only entity who is authorized to make changes in the policies, rules, and benefits described in this Handbook and that all such changes must be in writing to be valid. I also understand that the Board of Commissioners is the only entity who will ever have the authority to enter into an employment contract, and that all such contracts must be express, individual, in writing and signed by both parties to be valid.

I also acknowledge that, before signing this form, I have asked for and received clarification on any of the items listed on it that I did not understand.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Employee's Name