

**CATOOSA COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**



# Catoosa County Board of Commissioners

## *Employee Handbook*

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### **100 General Provisions**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

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### **101 Introduction**

Catoosa County welcomes you as an employee. Catoosa County is committed to ensuring that you have a positive work environment in which to pursue your career. To assist in creating such an environment, Catoosa County expects its employees to meet the following minimum employment standards:

- (a) **Honesty and Integrity.** All County employees should be honest and ethical. Always.
- (b) **Have Regular and Prompt Attendance.** You cannot be productive and fulfill our purpose and our commitment to the public if you are not here. Those people that are here are the only ones that are contributing and adding value to our community.
- (c) **Positive Attitude.** Your attitude and demeanor are infectious. When it is positive, both you and the County can accomplish great things. That is our standard and our expectation. If you have a problem, let's get it addressed through the proper channels quickly. Negativism is nonproductive and harmful. It is inconsistent with our mission.
- (d) **Be Courteous and Helpful to the Public.** Not one of us should ever forget that our customers and citizens provide us our jobs. They deserve excellent service and to be treated with respect.
- (e) **Be Productive.** Use all your abilities, everyday, to accomplish our mission. Our work is too important, and our standards too high, to spend our time doing anything other than our best. Expect excellence from yourself.
- (f) **Respect Yourself and Each Other.** The County will not allow racial, gender, religious, or cultural bias. Jokes and other behaviors that demean or insult others are not appropriate and will not be tolerated.
- (g) **Be Safe.** Most of us work with equipment and vehicles and under conditions that expose us, and the public, to safety hazards. Accidents hurt everyone. Be careful and use safety equipment.
- (h) **Work Smart.** Be responsible for your own performance and set high standards for yourself. Be creative. Always try to do the right thing.

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- (i) **Be Accountable.** Make yourself responsible for your own performance. Do not make excuses or blame others when problems arise. Take it upon yourself to solve problems. Supervisors should always give credit where it is due.
- (j) **Be Committed.** We all spend a significant part of our lives at work. Let's make it count for something. Let's make a difference!

## **102 Code of Ethics for Public Service**

It is the policy of the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners to uphold, promote, and demand the highest standards of ethics from all of its employees. County employees shall conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Government Service (O.C.G.A. § 45-10-1):

There is established for and within the state and for and in all governments therein a code of ethics for government service which shall read as follows:

### --CODE OF ETHICS FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE--

Any person in government service should:

- I. Put loyalty to the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to persons, party, or government department.
- II. Uphold the Constitution, laws, and legal regulations of the United States and the State of Georgia and of all governments therein and never be a party to their evasion.
- III. Give a full day's labor for a full day's pay and give to the performance of his duties his earnest effort and best thought.
- IV. Seek to find and employ more efficient and economical ways of getting tasks accomplished.
- V. Never discriminate unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not, and never accept, for himself or his family, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of his governmental duties.
- VI. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of office, since a government employee has no private word which can be binding on public duty.

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VII. Engage in no business with the government, either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of his/her governmental duties.

VIII. Never use any information coming to him/her confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means for making private profit.

IX. Expose corruption wherever discovered.

X. Uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

### **103 Purpose of Employee Handbook**

Your Employee Handbook provides general information about Catoosa County policies, procedures, expectations, and benefits. The information in this Handbook, however, cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question regarding your employment. Therefore, the policies set forth in this Handbook will not apply in every situation. The County Manager shall make interpretive decisions for those situations that are not specifically covered by the provisions of this Handbook.

Catoosa County reserves the right to change or revise the policies contained herein when such action is deemed necessary. Proposed changes may be recommended at any time by the County Manager, Department Directors, Elected Officials, the Human Resources Director, Commissioners, or any employee. Such recommendations for changes should be submitted to the Human Resources Director.

*This Handbook is not intended to and does not create an employment contract between Catoosa County and its employees. Your employment is for no specific period of time, and this Handbook does not limit your right or Catoosa County's right to terminate your employment at any time for any reason or no reason. The employment at will relationship exists for all employees, unless otherwise specified by state law.*

### **104 Applicability**

This Employee Handbook is intended to apply to all employees of Catoosa County. The broad application of this Handbook will ensure that all employees of Catoosa County are treated equally. Moreover, the provisions contained in this Handbook establish uniform procedures for handling employment situations that facilitate efficiency and productivity.

### **105 Administration**

This Employee Handbook shall be administered by and under the direction of the County Manager. However, powers and duties designated to the County Manager in this Handbook may be delegated by the County Manager to Department Directors, who may

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further delegate such authority to subordinates.

If, at any time during the operation of this Employee Handbook, the position of County Manager is vacant, the Human Resources Director or any interim official designated by the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners will be responsible for administration of the Employee Handbook until the County Manager position is filled by the Board of Commissioners.

### **106 Departmental Operating Rules and Regulations**

Departmental Operating Rules and Regulations (sometimes referred to as “Standard Operating Procedures” or “SOPs”), not in conflict with this Handbook, may be established and used by any Department Directors as applicable. All such Departmental Operating Rules and Regulations and subsequent amendments thereto adopted pursuant to this Section shall be submitted to the County Manager for maintenance in the County Manager’s office. The Board of Commissioners has no involvement with the creation, administration, or enforcement of any Departmental Operating Rules and Regulations established by any Elected Official. In the event that a conflict arises between an employee’s conduct or performance required by Departmental Operating Rules and Regulations and the conduct or performance required by this Policy Manual, then the rule or regulation requiring the higher standard of conduct or performance shall control.

### **107 Revisions to Employee Handbook**

This Employee Handbook may be amended in whole or in part from time to time in the sole discretion of Catoosa County in order to maintain legal compliance, operative effectiveness, and desired workplace conditions. Amendments will be provided to all employees upon adoption and incorporated into the handbook.

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### **200 Catoosa County Government Structure**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

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### **201 Role of Board of Commissioners**

The Board of Commissioners establishes levels of service and appropriates funds to meet the needs of the County. By adopting ordinances and resolutions, pay and benefit programs, and other actions, the Board of Commissioners provides the basic tools for management to guide, motivate, attract, and retain a productive work force.

### **202 Role of County Manager**

The County Manager is the chief administrative official of Catoosa County and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the County. In addition to numerous other duties, the County Manager issues rules, regulations, policies and procedures and provides direction and guidance regarding allocation of the County's resources to achieve the desired objectives of the County Government.

### **203 Constitutional Officers & Other Independent Offices Enumerated**

The constitutional officers of the County are:

- (1) Judge of the Probate Court
- (2) Clerk of the Superior Court
- (3) Tax Commissioner
- (4) Sheriff
- (5) Superior Court Judges
- (6) State Court Judges

The elected officials whose offices are created by Local Act or Statute and who serve within the County are:

- (1) District Attorney
- (2) Public Defender
- (3) State Court Solicitor

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(4) Chief Magistrate Judge

(5) Coroner

Unless the aforementioned Constitutional Officers and other independent offices created by Local Act or Statute elect to be covered by the County's personnel policies, each Constitutional Officer and/or independent office shall promulgate personnel policies and procedures applicable to their respective employees.

### **204 Role of Department Director**

Except as provided in Section 203, the Department Director is responsible for ensuring the optimum performance of his/her Department by providing leadership, guidance, and direction to achieve organizational goals and assuring the overall integrity of the Department.

### **205 Role of Supervisors**

The Supervisor ensures satisfactory performance, enforces rules, and ensures compliance with applicable rules and regulations. A Supervisor, or other designated manager, is responsible for giving positive guidance and correcting or responding to improper action or misconduct witnessed even when the subject is not a direct subordinate.

### **206 Role of County Employees**

The Employee's role is to perform assigned duties efficiently, effectively, and professionally and to be flexible in adjusting with the changing nature of the County Government's functions based on the expectations of both management and the public. The employee must be courteous and respectful of the public with whom the employee interacts.



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### **300 Statement of Catoosa County Policy**

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### **301 Equal Employment Opportunity**

Catoosa County is an equal opportunity employer. It is the policy of Catoosa County to provide an equal employment opportunity to qualified persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, uniformed service status, sexual orientation, gender identity, transgendered status, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions or any other legally protected category. This policy relates to all phases of employment, including, but not limited to, recruitment, placement, Promotion, transfer, reduction in force, separation, training, compensation, and benefits. All decisions regarding hiring, placement, Promotion, transfer, Demotion, termination, or any other term or condition of employment will be based upon the qualification and performance of the employee or prospective employee.

In addition, Catoosa County will not discriminate against any qualified employee or Applicant on the basis of a physical or mental disability. Catoosa County will strive to provide reasonable accommodations to assist disabled individuals to perform essential job functions, as long as the accommodation does not cause the County undue hardship.

If you have any concerns regarding Catoosa County's equal employment opportunity policies, report those concerns to the Human Resources Director. Please refer to Chapter 1200, Section 1203 for procedures for reporting harassment.

### **302 Workplace Environment**

Catoosa County is committed to ensuring that all employees enjoy a work environment free from intimidation, harassment, and violence. These issues are discussed in more detail below. If you have any concerns regarding your workplace environment, report those concerns to the Human Resources Director.

### **303 Workplace Safety**

The County is concerned about the well-being and personal safety of its employees and all individuals conducting business or otherwise interacting with the County. Consequently, County employees shall be prohibited from transporting, carrying, or possessing Weapons in the course and scope of their employment with the County. A person with a valid weapons-carry license, as the terms "Weapon" and "Weapons-Carry License" are defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-11-125.1(5) and (6), may carry a Weapon into a County building or portion of a building when the building or portion thereof is open for

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business except if ingress to the building or portion of the building is restricted or screened by security personnel.

The paragraph above shall have no application to County elected or appointed officials, constitutional officers and their respective employees, and any other County officer or agent for whom an exemption is authorized by law.

### **304 Smokefree Environment**

Consistent with the public health concerns addressed by the adoption of the Georgia Smokefree Air Act of 2005, all Catoosa County property, enclosed buildings, and vehicles are hereby declared to be smoke-free areas. Smoke free tobacco and vapor cigarettes are to be included under this policy.

Outdoor areas where cigarette smoking is permitted will be formally designated as such by the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners.

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### **400 Classification Plan**

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### **401 The Classification Plan**

The Classification Plan is based upon a categorical designation of Job Descriptions. In turn, each Job Description is grouped into a corresponding Grade within the Classification Plan, which governs the pay scale for that Job Description.

### **402 Administering the Classification Plan**

The County Manager or his/her designee shall be responsible for administering the Classification Plan, with the opportunity for assistance of any Third-Party Administrator retained by the County. Reorganization of Departments in the Classification Plan may be requested by the County Manager, with final approval of such reorganization by the Board of Commissioners.

### **403 Official Copy of the Classification Plan**

The County Manager shall maintain a master copy of the Classification Plan.

### **404 Job Descriptions**

Job Descriptions endeavor to describe the duties and responsibilities for each position; however, Job Descriptions do not necessarily include all of the duties of the position. The language of a Job Description does not limit the authority that the County Manager and Department Directors have to add, withdraw, or eliminate duties, functions, and responsibilities applicable to particular jobs or positions.

### **405 Minimum Qualifications**

The Minimum Qualifications contained in each Job Description are considered comprehensive statements of the minimum required education, experience, and other qualifications for all positions as evidence of an employee's ability to perform the work properly and shall be strictly followed. Other qualifications cannot be considered in lieu of, or in substitution of, the Minimum Qualifications established. The Human Resources Director, or his/her designee, will review and determine whether Applicants meet Minimum Qualifications as detailed further in Chapter 600 – Recruitment.

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### **406 Procedures for Adopting New Job Descriptions**

(a) Responsibilities of the County Manager

The County Manager or his/her designee shall be responsible for overseeing the creation of new Job Descriptions consistent with the procedures contained in this Section.

(b) Request for New Job Description

Whenever a Department Director requests a new position that would require the adoption of a new Job Description, a request must be submitted to the County Manager. In addition, the County Manager and the Board of Commissioners each have the authority to request the creation of a new Job Description with the input from the affected Department Director. The request must describe in detail the intended duties of the requested position. An interview of the requesting party and/or all other affected Department Directors may be required by the County Manager in order to verify the information submitted.

(c) Review of Request by County Manager

Upon receipt and verification of the request, the County Manager shall conduct or caused to be conducted an analysis of the request for the purposes of creating a new Job Description, placing the Job Description into the appropriate Grade within the Classification Plan, and determining whether the creation of a new Job Description is warranted.

(d) Approval Process

The decision of the County Manager or his/her designee regarding the approval or denial of a request to approve a new Job Description is final.

(e) Budgetary Limitations

Requests for creation of a new Job Description should be presented for consideration in conjunction with the annual budget process, absent exceptional circumstances. Such requests are contingent on available funds.

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### **407 Procedures for Modification of Existing Job Descriptions**

(a) Responsibilities of the County Manager

The County Manager or his/her designee shall be responsible for the modification of existing Job Descriptions consistent with the procedures contained in this Section.

(b) Request for Modification of Existing Job Description

Whenever a Department Director requests the modification of an existing Job Description, a request must be submitted to the County Manager. In addition, the County Manager has the authority to request the modification of an existing Job Description with input from the affected Department Director. The request must describe in detail the changes in duties or other reasons for the requested modification. An interview of the requesting party and/or all other affected Department Directors may be required by the County Manager in order to verify the information submitted. A modification to a Job Description may produce a corresponding change in Grade for the position contained in the Job Description.

(c) Review of Request by County Manager

Upon receipt and verification of the request, the County Manager shall conduct or cause to be conducted an analysis of the request for the purposes of determining whether the requested modification is warranted. Modifications of existing Job Descriptions are disfavored and must be supported by compelling circumstances to obtain approval.

(d) Approval Process

The decision of the County Manager or his/her designee regarding the approval or denial of a request to approve a new Job Description is final.

(e) Budgetary Limitations

Requests for modification of a new Job Description should be presented for consideration in conjunction with the annual budget process, absent exceptional circumstances. Such requests are contingent on available funds.

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### **408 Procedures for the Abolishment of Existing Job Descriptions and/or Positions**

(a) Responsibilities of the County Manager

The County Manager or his/her designee shall be responsible for the abolishment of Job Descriptions and/or positions consistent with the procedures contained in this Section.

(b) Request for Abolishment of Existing Job Description and/or Position

Whenever a Department Director requests the abolishment of an existing Job Description or a particular position within their Department, a request must be submitted to the County Manager. In addition, the County Manager and the Board of Commissioners each have the authority to request the abolishment of a Job Description or position with the input from the affected Department Director. Any request for abolishment must describe in detail the reasons for the requested abolishment. Such reasons may include, but are not limited to, lack of work, reorganization, or lack of funds. An interview of the requesting party and/or all other affected Department Directors may be required by the County Manager in order to verify the information submitted. In no case will a Job Description or position be abolished as a means of terminating the employment of an employee, but it may result in the termination of an employee.

(c) Review of Request by County Manager

Upon receipt and verification of the request, the County Manager shall conduct or cause to be conducted an analysis of the request for the purposes of determining whether the requested abolishment is warranted.

(d) Approval Process

The decision of the County Manager regarding all requests for abolishment shall be final, except that this provision does not limit the authority of the Board of Commissioners to abolish a position in conjunction with the annual budget process or otherwise.

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### **409 Procedures for the Reclassification of Positions**

(a) Statement of Intent

Each position of employment in Catoosa County is categorically assigned to a particular Job Description. This Section allows for changing the assignment of a particular position to a different and more suitable Job Description when it is determined that the position is incorrectly assigned. This change may produce a corresponding change in the Grade for the position. This procedure shall be known as Reclassification of the position.

(b) Request for Reclassification

A Department Director may request Reclassification. In addition, the County Manager may direct a Reclassification with the input from the affected Department Director. A request for Reclassification shall be submitted to the County Manager and shall contain a detailed statement of justification for the request. Reclassifications are justified as a result of the following:

- (i) The position was incorrectly assigned to an inappropriate Job Description; or
- (ii) There has been a change in the duties and responsibilities associated with a position since it was assigned to a particular Job Description.

(c) Review of Request by County Manager

Upon receipt and verification of the request, the County Manager shall conduct or cause to be conducted an analysis of the request for the purposes of determining whether the requested Reclassification is warranted.

(d) Approval Process

The decision of the County Manager regarding Reclassifications shall be final.

(e) Budgetary Limitations

To the extent that a Reclassification will require a change in Grade that produces a corresponding increase in needed funds for the position, the

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request for Reclassification should be presented for consideration in conjunction with the annual budget process, absent any exceptional circumstances. Such a request is contingent on available funds.

(f) Treatment of Affected Employee Upon Reclassification of Position

- (i) If the position is occupied at the time of Reclassification, the employee shall be entitled to serve therein with the corresponding status after the Reclassification and shall not be subject to a working test period in the Reclassification position.
- (ii) If the position is assigned to a higher Grade as a result of the Reclassification, such action is considered an upgrade of the position. If the position is occupied at the time of an upgrade and the salary of the employee who is occupying the position is below the minimum rate for the higher Grade, the employee's salary shall be increased to the minimum salary of the higher Grade. Reclassifications of positions are not Promotions and do not impact an employee's pay, unless his/her salary is below the minimum rate of pay for the new Grade.
- (iii) If the position is assigned to a lower Grade as a result of the Reclassification, such action is considered a downgrade of the position. If the position is occupied at the time of a downgrade, the employee will continue at the same pay as prior to the Reclassification and may receive future salary increases up to the maximum rate of pay of the new lower Grade. If the employee's current salary is above the maximum rate of pay for the new lower Grade, the employee shall revert to the maximum of the lower Grade.
- (iv) In all cases of Reclassification of a vacant position, the position shall be filled according to the Recruitment Policies contained in this Employee Handbook.



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### **500 Compensation Plan**

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### **501 Statement of Policy**

The Compensation Plan is intended to be a fair and equitable method for payment of Catoosa County employees. The Compensation Plan establishes a basic salary schedule for Full-time Employees as approved by the Board of Commissioners and is subject to availability of funds. Each Grade shall contain a minimum salary, a mid-point salary, and a maximum salary. The Board of Commissioners may establish, as part of the County's annual budget, the minimum, midpoint, and maximum salaries for each Grade as recommended by the County Manager. No Full-time Employee in any Grade shall be paid a salary lower than the minimum or higher than the maximum of the salary range approved for the position, except that employees whose salaries are higher than the maximum salary approved for their position at the time this Handbook is adopted, may be eligible for annual salary increases as established by the Board of Commissioners. In contrast, part-time, temporary, seasonal, and part-time grant-funded positions are not subject to the Compensation Plan or the provisions of this Chapter, unless expressly noted otherwise.

### **502 Administration**

The Compensation Plan is maintained and administered by the County Manager or his/her designee, with the opportunity for assistance of a Third-Party Administrator. The Compensation Plan shall be available for review upon reasonable request during business hours.

### **503 Starting Rates for General Employees**

A new Full-time Employee shall be paid the minimum rate of pay for the applicable Grade. The minimum rate of pay is based upon the assumption that a new employee meets the Minimum Qualifications stated in the Job Description. If a new employee exceeds the Minimum Qualifications for a position based on extensive knowledge, skills, and abilities, he/she may be appointed at a higher salary within the Grade assigned to his/her position based on a request to the County Manager by the Department Director, and based on consideration of the following:

- (a) Whether the candidate possesses objectively outstanding or unusual abilities, experience, and/or training above the minimum requirements for the position;
- (b) Whether the County is unable to find a desirable and qualified candidate to

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accept the position at the minimum rate of pay; and

- (c) Whether the Departmental funds are available for such Appointment.

Consideration should be given to a review of the salaries of current employees in the same or similar positions whose present salaries are below the requested higher salary for the new employee. Upon consideration of the above, the County Manager shall make a determination of the appropriateness of the Appointment above the minimum rate of pay not to exceed mid-point. The decision of the County Manager shall be final.

### **504 Starting Rates for Executive Employees**

For purposes of this Handbook, Executive Employees are defined to include the County Manager and all employees who report directly to the County Manager (hereinafter collectively referred to as “Executive Employees”). The term “Executive Employee” does not include the Chief Financial Officer or the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners who report directly to the Board of Commissioners.

It is expected that incoming Executive Employees shall be paid the minimum rate of pay for the position. Every effort should be made to recruit a qualified candidate who will accept Appointment at the minimum rate of pay for the position. However, in recognition of the important role and increasing demands placed upon Executive Employees, an Executive Employee may be appointed at a higher rate of pay, within or above the salary range, in the discretion of the County Manager when considering salaries for Executive Employees, and in the discretion of the Board of Commissioners when considering the salary of the County Manager, in the event that desirable and qualified Applicants cannot be located for a given position at the minimum rate of pay.

To seek Appointment at a higher rate of pay, the County Manager or the Board of Commissioners, as applicable, must consider the following:

- (a) Whether the candidate possesses objectively outstanding or unusual abilities, experience, and/or training above the minimum requirements for the position;
- (b) Whether the County is unable to find a desirable and qualified candidate to accept the position at the minimum rate of pay; and
- (c) Whether the Departmental funds are available for such Appointment.

Upon consideration of the above, the County Manager or the Board of Commissioners, as applicable, shall make a determination of the appropriateness of the Appointment above the minimum rate of pay. The decision of the County Manager or the Board of Commissioners, as applicable, shall be final.

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### **505 Components for Salary Adjustment**

A Full-time Employee's salary may be adjusted based upon two independent components as detailed in this Section: (a) Market Adjustment to the Compensation Plan; and/or (b) Merit Increase. In any given year, Full-time Employees may receive an increase in salary as a result of either the Market Adjustment or the Merit Increase or both. Salary increases are discretionary and dependent on available funds as determined by the Board of Commissioners. Any increases for Part-time Employees will be determined on an as-needed basis. Any increase in a part-time salary may be considered; however, there must be existing budgeted funds available. Seasonal, temporary, and part-time grant-funded employees are not normally entitled to salary adjustments.

#### (a) Market Adjustment

The market adjustment is the salary adjustment component that is used to ensure that the salary structure is adjusted equally across the County to reflect changes in the wage index. Two considerations dictate whether or not a market adjustment will be administered: (1) changes in the wage index based upon references such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics or the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and (2) the budgetary constraints of the County. The Board of Commissioners shall consider the applicability and the ability of the County to apply a market adjustment to the Compensation Plan as recommended by the County Manager. When applicable, if the Compensation Plan falls below the market for example, a percentage increase may be applied to the Compensation Plan such that the pay scales are adjusted upward.

#### (b) Merit Increase

##### (i) Policy

For purposes of determining an employee's eligibility for a merit increase and to monitor employee performance, a comprehensive Performance Evaluation may be conducted annually. An employee may be evaluated by his/her immediate Supervisor, and the evaluation may be endorsed by any appropriate intermediate Supervisors, with final approval by the County Manager or Department Director, as applicable. Interim Appraisals are strongly encouraged to assist in performance development or otherwise, but such Appraisals are solely for the purposes of ensuring performance standards and not related to the merit increase process. The County strongly recommends interim evaluations so that an employee can be advised of performance issues and is given the opportunity to improve his/her performance.

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### (ii) Appraisal Forms

Appraisal forms prepared or approved by the Human Resources Department must be utilized for each employee. Appraisal forms will be maintained in each employee's personnel file and will serve as the necessary documentation to authorize any salary adjustment.

### (iii) Salary Increases

Employees may receive a merit increase as determined by the County Manager or Department Director, as applicable. The Board of Commissioners may, as part of the County's annual budget, establish the range of potential salary increases for that budgetary year, unless there is a salary freeze in place.

### (iv) Annual Appraisal for Employees on Extended Military Leave

Employees who are on approved Military Leave in excess of six months of the Appraisal period shall receive a compensation adjustment for merit increase, if applicable, based upon calculating the average of the employee's past two annual Appraisal ratings. This average shall be the percentage of the employee's compensation adjustment. In the event that a two year history of annual Appraisal ratings is unavailable, the employee shall receive a compensation adjustment based on the average rating within the employee's Department. If the rate of pay for the position to which the employee is returning is an attribute of position, the returning servicemember is entitled to the current rate of the entitled position, including all the changes that occurred in his or her absence.

### (v) Re-Evaluation of Unsatisfactory Performance

Any employee who receives an unsatisfactory Appraisal may be re-evaluated within three months for purposes of monitoring employee performance. If the employee receives a second unsatisfactory Appraisal, the employee may be subject to termination. Any such re-evaluation must be submitted to the Human Resources Department for retention in the employee's personnel file. This re-evaluation process shall not in any event result in an upward salary adjustment.

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### (vi) Appraisal Disputes

The Appraisal rating is final upon approval of the rating by the County Manager or the respective Department Director, as applicable. The grievance procedures outlined in the Employee Handbook are not available to address a dispute over an Appraisal rating. As such, there is no mechanism for disputing an Appraisal rating; however, an employee may submit a written statement setting forth the reasons for disagreement with the Appraisal for retention in the employee's personnel file.

### **506 Limitations to the Compensation Plan**

The Compensation Plan and all provisions in this Handbook related to salaries are contingent upon funds being available as determined solely in the discretion of the Board of Commissioners. Any deviation from paying employees in accordance with the Compensation Plan or the provisions of this Handbook must be approved by the Board of Commissioners.

### **507 Payroll Changes in Paydays**

A payroll change shall not take effect until the personnel action notification has been approved by the County Manager in writing on the appropriate personnel action form. Most employees will be paid bi-weekly, with some being paid monthly, depending on the position held. No employee will be paid prior to regular payday. All employees are strongly encouraged to provide information to the County sufficient for the County to direct deposit paychecks into the employee's desired account on or before sixty days following the initial adoption of this Employee Handbook.

### **508 Recovery of Salaries Improperly Paid**

Elected Officials and employees may be held liable for the return of salary improperly, accidentally, or illegally paid to employees.

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### **600 Recruitment**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date: 01/15/2019

### **601 Statement of Policy**

Recruitment of candidates for all positions with Catoosa County, including but not limited to, positions created and/or funded by state or federal grants, will be based upon meeting or exceeding the Minimum Qualifications established in the applicable Job Description in accordance with the non-discrimination policies enunciated in this Handbook and otherwise in accordance with state and federal law.

### **602 Filling Vacancies**

All vacancies will be filled according to the policies set forth in this Chapter, regardless of whether the vacant position exists as a result of a newly created position or whether an existing position has been vacated. Newly created positions must have approval by the Board of Commissioners prior to commencement of recruitment efforts when funding of said position was not approved in any previous or existing budget. All such offers must be extended to the candidate from the County Manager or his/her designee.

### **603 Advertisement of Vacancies**

- (a) The County Manager or the Department Director, as applicable, shall request that the Human Resources Director publish an advertisement and initiate the recruitment process. The County Manager or the Department Director, as applicable, shall simultaneously submit to the Human Resources Department an acknowledgement confirmed by the Chief Financial Officer that there are available funds in his/her respective budget for the requested advertising. The County Manager or the Human Resources Director, as applicable, shall have sole discretion to determine whether the recruitment shall be limited to Internal Advertisements within the County workforce or whether the recruitment shall proceed with simultaneous internal and external advertisements. The means and methods of external publications shall be selected in the discretion of the County Manager or the Human Resources Director, as applicable, and indicated in the request. The job vacancy advertisement shall specify the title, qualification requirements, manner of making application, and other pertinent information. The job vacancy advertisement may include a specific salary or compensation amount, a salary or compensation range, or may provide that salary and compensation will be determined based on candidate qualifications and other pertinent factors.

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- (b) The internal publications, and if applicable, the external publications may continue indefinitely as the County Manager or the Human Resources Director deems appropriate or until the vacancy is filled. There may be a stated closing date for the submission of applications. Interviews of the Applicants may begin at any time as determined by the Human Resources Director.

### **604 Minimum Qualifications**

All positions shall be open only to persons who meet such minimum requirements as are listed on the Job Description and job vacancy notice. Such requirements may include, but are not limited to, the following: experience, education, training, skills, and other qualifications that are desired or normally required to perform the duties and any responsibilities. The County Manager or his/her designee will review all applications to ensure that the Applicants meet minimum qualifications. Applicants who fail to meet Minimum Qualifications may be denied the opportunity to proceed further in the hiring process and will otherwise be ineligible for consideration.

### **605 Filing of Applications**

- (a) All applications for employment shall be made by completing a standard application form as prescribed by the Human Resources Director pertaining to the particular position sought. Applications must include detailed information regarding educational background, training, skills, employment experience, and other pertinent information sought on the application form as needed to assess the Applicant's ability to meet the minimum requirements for the position.
- (b) Applicants must apply for positions through the Human Resources Department.
- (c) All written applications shall be signed by the Applicant attesting to the truth of all statements contained in the application form. Any application submitted electronically must contain an electronic mark or signature by the Applicant likewise attesting to the truth of all statements contained in the application form. Untruths, misrepresentations, or material omissions made by an Applicant on his/her application shall be grounds for rejection of the application, or if the Applicant has been hired prior to the County learning of the discrepancy, it shall be grounds for termination. Any Applicant found to have submitted an application containing untruths, misrepresentations, or material omissions shall be unqualified from consideration for employment with Catoosa County.
- (d) Incomplete applications may be returned to the Applicant with a Notice to

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amend same. The County shall have no obligation, however, to detect an incomplete application and notify an Applicant prior to the Vacancy being filled. Incomplete applications may be completed or revised and re-submitted, however, there is no guarantee that the Vacancy will remain open during such process.

### **606 Conditions for Rejection of Applicants**

The Human Resources Director or his/her designee may reject any application from consideration when the following determinations are made:

- (a) The application was not received on or before the published closing date/time noted on the recruitment announcement.
- (b) The Applicant does not possess one or more of the minimum requirements as specified in the Job Description for the position sought.
- (c) The Applicant falsified statements, practiced deception, or materially omitted information on the application.
- (d) The Applicant does not reply to, or return, a telephone inquiry within two days.
- (e) The Applicant was previously employed by Catoosa County and was dismissed for cause, resigned not in good standing, resigned in lieu of termination, or is otherwise not currently eligible for re-employment.
- (f) The application is incomplete in that the Applicant has not completed the entire application by filling in all applicable spaces and providing all requested information.
- (g) The Applicant has been convicted of a criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, or sale of a controlled substance, dangerous drug, or marijuana. Such Applicant shall be given the opportunity to demonstrate that the conviction should not exclude him/her from consideration for the position he/she seeks with the County. Thereafter, the County will make a determination on whether exclusion of the application is job-related and consistent with business necessity.
- (h) The Applicant has been convicted of a crime involving a violent crime such as assault with a deadly Weapon, aggravated assault, or murder. Such Applicants shall be automatically rejected. Such Applicant shall be given the opportunity to demonstrate that the conviction should not exclude him/her from consideration for the position he/she seeks with the



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County. Thereafter the County will make a determination on whether exclusion of the application is job related and consistent with business necessity.

- (i) Applicants convicted of any other crime will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- (j) The Applicant has received information regarding a qualification Examination that other Applicants did not receive and to which the Applicant was not entitled such that the Applicant had an unfair advantage over other Applicants taking the Examination.
- (k) The Applicant has used or attempted to use political influence or bribery to gain an advantage in securing employment.
- (l) The Applicant has tested positive to a drug or alcohol test administered by Catoosa County and/or been found to have submitted an application containing untruths, misrepresentations, or material omissions.

### **607 Interviews**

Upon initial review and removal of Applicants from consideration that are rejected in accordance with the standards set forth above, the Human Resources Director shall make available the remaining applications to the applicable Department Director for further consideration, which may include conducting personal interviews with those remaining Applicants. The Human Resources Director or his/her designee will assist the applicable Department Director to the extent requested in the interview and selection process.

### **608 Verification of References**

The Human Resources Director or the Department Director shall verify the references and past employment of at least the top candidate prior to making any job offer unless a legitimate reason can be provided to the County Manager regarding why such reference verification is unnecessary.

### **609 Qualification Examinations**

- (a) Statement of Policy

The Human Resources Director, upon approval by the County Manager, may initiate and install a suitable Examination program for any position, along with the procedures to implement such an Examination program. In addition, any Department Director may also initiate and install a suitable

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Examination program for any position, provided that the Examination program is reviewed and approved by the Human Resources Director and the County Manager prior to implementation. Any written or performance tests will be designed to test for job performance, and will not be discriminatory as to race, creed, color, sex, disability, religion, age, national origin, or political affiliation, or any other category protected by federal and/or state law. Any Examination program shall be administered in a fair and neutral manner and shall be applied consistently to all interviewees successful in obtaining the required standard for performance and who are seeking the particular position for which the Examination program was implemented.

(b) Conduct of Examination

The Human Resources Director or his/her designee may, as appropriate, designate monitors to take charge of the Examination process under prescribed instructions.

(c) Method of Rating Examinations

For all Examinations, the Human Resources Director, in coordination with the applicable Department Director, shall establish minimum standards for performance or requirements in order to achieve an eligibility standard. If there is more than one part to an Examination, such as a written test and a rating of experience and training, the Human Resources Director, in coordination with the applicable Department Director, shall assign the minimum acceptable scores and/or weighted score to the various parts of the Examination prior to conducting the Examination. If the Examination is comprised of successive components, candidates must obtain acceptable scores on each component for continued consideration for employment. The formula for assigning weights will be administered in a uniform and equal manner for all Applicants for the same class of positions.

(d) Inspection and Confidentiality of Examination Material

The confidentiality of all applications, Examination results, and test materials is essential to the integrity of an Examination process. Accordingly, general access to, or disclosure of, Examination results and/or materials is prohibited. Limited access to Promotional Examination results and/or test materials will be allowed in a manner carefully constructed to protect both confidentiality and the integrity of the Examination process. Specifically, participants in an Examination process will be able to review their own Examination materials. No participant will be able to review the Examination materials of other participants.

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In all cases, testing materials will be reviewed in the presence of a representative of the Department of Human Resources or an individual authorized by the Human Resources Director. Unless otherwise specified by the Human Resources Director, the opportunity to review Examination materials will be limited to a period of thirty days following the release of results for the Examination. Individuals may make general notes regarding their review of their own testing materials, but may not directly transcribe, or make copies of, any Examination materials.

Nothing contained in this sub-section shall be construed to limit the availability of Examination materials for use in judicial proceedings, related appeals, or as required by applicable law.

The Human Resources Director shall be responsible for the maintenance of all records, including the completed tests, related to the Examination process.

(e) Notification of Examination Results

Upon completion of the Examination process, each participant may request notification of his or her rating on all phases of the Examination within a reasonable time period. Failure to request examination results within a reasonable time period shall not be grounds for challenging the Examination process or any employment decisions related thereto.

(f) Adjustment of Errors on Examinations

If an objectively demonstrated error in the rating of an Examination is called to the attention of the Human Resources Director within thirty days after the announcement of the results, the Human Resources Director shall correct such error.

(g) Eligibility Registers

To the extent that the Examination process adopted by the Human Resources Director, or in coordination with the applicable Department Director, for a particular position provides for the creation of a listing of participants who met certain minimum standards for performance so as to be eligible for employment, this listing shall be known as an Eligibility Register. Any Examination process that results in the creation of an Eligibility Register shall specifically state in writing the method by which offers for employment will be extended to individuals appearing on the Eligibility Register and shall so notify all participants in the Examination

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process. In any event, and under any Examination process resulting in the creation of an Eligibility Register, an individual's existence on an Eligibility Register does not constitute an offer for employment or any guarantee of future employment. Therefore, an individual shall have no expectation of employment based upon appearance on an Eligibility Register. To the extent that the Examination process adopted by the Human Resources Director, or in coordination with the applicable Department Director, for a particular position utilizes an Eligibility Register and specifically provides for future hiring based upon the Eligibility Register, any individual who is extended an offer of employment based upon appearance on that Eligibility Register more than sixty days after the completion of the Examination, shall be subject to submitting updated information, including re-submitting to the applicable background checks, drug tests, and medical exams. The subsequent submittal of updated information may result in an Applicant being denied employment if the results are unacceptable.

### **610 Promotional Examinations**

Any Department Director may institute a suitable Promotional Examination program for purposes of testing and promoting employees within the particular Department to positions designated in higher Grades within the particular Department, provided that the Promotional Examination program is approved by County Manager and otherwise complies with the policies set forth in this Chapter. Such an approved Promotional Examination program would be in lieu of the recruiting requirements set forth in this Chapter for those positions for which the Promotional Examination program is established.

### **611 Selection**

The hiring Department Director will notify the Human Resources Department of the selected Applicant(s). The Human Resources Director or his/her designee will notify successful Applicants by mail or by telephone and provide the Applicant with instructions regarding the completion of additional required forms and pre-employment screening. The failure of an individual to accept employment, to timely report for any additional drug or medical screenings, to cooperate with a background check or Motor Vehicle report investigation, or to report to duty within the time prescribed in the employment offer may result in the employment offer being rescinded and the individual shall no longer be considered for the position.

All employment offers that will result in the Applicant being a Safety Sensitive Employee or a CDL Employee (as those terms are defined in Section 1307 below) are contingent upon successfully passing a drug test and background check, as well as successful completion of a physical Examination if required. No such candidate shall be

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authorized to begin employment with Catoosa County until the Human Resources Director receives notification of candidate's successful completion of the drug test, background check, and physical Examination, if applicable. In the event that an employment offer is rescinded or not accepted, the Human Resources Director, at the request of the applicable Department Director, may make additional job offers to others in the pool of Applicants until the position is filled without the need for any further advertisement or Notice, or in the alternative, the Department Director may at any time request that the recruitment process be commenced anew.

All other employment offers are contingent upon the completion of a background check, as well as passage of a physical Examination if required. No candidate shall be authorized to begin employment with Catoosa County until the Human Resources Director receives notification of candidate's successful completion of the background check and physical Examination, if applicable. In the event that an employment offer is rescinded or not accepted, the Human Resources Director, at the request of the applicable Department Director, may make additional job offers to others in the pool of Applicants until the position is filled without the need for any further advertisement or Notice, or in the alternative, the Department Director may at any time request that the recruitment process be commenced anew.

### **613 Eligibility Verification Requirements**

Catoosa County is committed to full compliance with federal and state immigration laws, and will hire only individuals with the legal right to work in the United States.

Pursuant to Section 2 of the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act, all employees must complete Form I-9 and provide legal documentation of citizenship and/or work status as set forth on the form. Within 3 business days of hire, the Human Resource Office electronically verifies accuracy of the employee's Social Security number and other documentation through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security verification system. In the event of tentative non-confirmation of an employee's social security number, Catoosa County will follow the procedures designated under the E-Verify Program concerning employee notification, case referral to the Social Security Administration, continued employment during the confirmation process, monitoring of case status, and final confirmation after case resolution. This policy and its procedures are intended to comply with the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act and with O.C.G.A. §13-10-90, *et seq.* Should any portion of these laws be amended, modified, revised, or repealed, or if other or additional controlling federal or state immigration laws or regulations become adopted in the future, the processes and requirements set forth in such Act, laws, or regulations shall govern. Information about current procedures under the E-Verify program can be found at [www.uscis.gov/e-verify](http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify).

### **614 Nepotism**

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There should be nothing in this Employee Handbook to prohibit the concurrent employment of relatives by Catoosa County as long as neither of the related parties is employed in a Supervisory role in which they may have a direct effect on the other individual's progress, performance, Promotion, training, testing, or welfare as a Catoosa County employee. An employee may not be promoted into a position in which the employee would have a Supervisory responsibility over a relative as defined in this Handbook unless the relative can be transferred to another position to eliminate the necessity of the promoted employee supervising a relative. For purposes of this nepotism policy, relatives are defined as husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers, sisters, fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, grandparents, step-parents, and step-children, or any other person living in the household.

### **615 Working Test Period**

The working test period, shall be considered an integral part of the selection process. All employees appointed, transferred, or promoted to a position in the County's service shall be required to satisfactorily complete the working test period.

- (1) *Duration.* The first twelve months of service in a position to which an employee has been appointed, transferred, or promoted shall constitute the working test period. If the working test employee's performance has not been adequately proficient, and the Department Director believes that the performance could be improved during an extension of the working test period, the Department Director may request an extended working test period of not more than six months.
- (2) *Extensions.* Working test period extensions may be considered only when extenuating circumstances exist, or it is believed that an employee will show significant improvement during the extended working test period.
- (3) *Active work status.* Only time in active work status shall be counted toward completion of the working test period.
- (4) *Transfer/Promotion.* A transferred or promoted employee shall be subject to a working test period for the first year in the new position. If it is determined that the employee is unsuitable for the position, the Department Director may return the employee to the position previously occupied if it is vacant. If not vacant, the Department Director may attempt to place the employee in a comparable position for which the employee meets the requirements. If such placement is not feasible, the employee may be placed in Layoff status and may be considered for placement when a suitable position becomes available. This action can be

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taken without the employee's right of appeal to the Board of Commissioners.

- (5) *Frequency of Performance Appraisals.* A Performance Appraisal shall be performed for working test period employees at the end of twelve months and not less than thirty calendar days prior to the end of the working test period. Performance Evaluations may be completed more frequently at the discretion of the Department Director or County Manager. If the working test period is extended, a Performance Appraisal may be performed at the end of each month up to fifteen days prior to the end of the extended working test period. A Performance Appraisal report must be completed before allowing an employee to successfully complete the working test period.
- (6) *Performance reports.* Each Performance Appraisal will be completed, accepted, and returned to the County Manager within five days after the conclusion of the working test period. At least ten work days prior to the expiration of the employee's final working test period, the Department Director shall notify the County Manager in writing concerning whether the employee has satisfactorily completed the working test period. The report shall also include a completed Performance Appraisal on the working test employee which indicates his/her work related strengths and weaknesses.

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### **700 Position Placement**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date: 11/6/2018

### **701 Statement of Policy**

The different mechanisms for placement of employees in positions are set forth in this Chapter. Placements shall be made only to positions that have been allocated under the Classification Plan and approved by the Board of Commissioners. The different types of placements include the following: original hire, Promotion, Demotion, reinstatement, lateral transfer, reassignment, grant-funded placement, and Emergency Assignment.

### **702 Original Hire**

An Original Hire occurs upon hiring an individual as a result of recruitment efforts, except as specifically indicated herein. Original hires may consist of employment in a full-time position, a part-time position, a seasonal position, a temporary position, or a grant-funded position.

(a) Full-Time Position

An employee who works in a position that is budgeted as a full-time position for twelve months of the year, and who works thirty hours or more per week. A Full-time Employee is entitled to all PTO and benefits as described in this Handbook.

(b) Part-Time Position

A Part-time Employee is an employee who works in a position that is budgeted as a part-time position for twelve months of the year, but who works less than thirty hours per week. Part-time Employees are not eligible to accrue PTO and are not eligible for benefits. All Part-time Employees must have approval from the County Manager to work any time in excess of the budgeted amount of hours for the position.

(c) Seasonal Position

A Seasonal Employee is an employee who works in a position that is temporary in nature in that it coincides with a particular season or seasons of the year or with heavy workload periods for a particular Department. The seasonal position period may recur regularly from year to year, but it is not budgeted for twelve months of the year. A Seasonal Employee is not entitled to any PTO or benefits with Catoosa County. Seasonal



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positions may not last longer than six months. A seasonal position may be created or abolished at the recommendation of the County Manager provided the Departmental funds are available.

(d) Temporary Position

A Temporary Employee is an employee who works in a position that is temporary for purposes of a special project or other work of a temporary nature. The temporary position period is established according to the special project or special circumstances requiring work of a temporary nature. The temporary position is not budgeted for twelve months of the year and does not recur regularly from year to year. A Department Director requiring the use of a Temporary Employee is not required to utilize the recruitment procedures in recognition of the fact that a temporary position will be needed based on time-sensitive and/or exigent circumstances. In any event, a temporary position shall not exceed six months without the approval of the County Manager. A Temporary Employee is not entitled to any PTO or benefits with Catoosa County. A temporary position may be created or abolished at the recommendation of the County Manager, provided that Departmental funds are available.

(e) Shift Worker Position

A Shift Worker employee is an employee who occasionally works one twelve hour or one twenty-four hour shift on a seasonal or part-time basis. A Shift Worker is not eligible for PTO or benefits.

(f) Grant-Funded Position

A grant-funded position is a full-time or part-time position established for a specific period of time not to exceed the scheduled termination date of the grant. This position will terminate by operation of law on the date of the grant termination unless the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners provides appropriate funding to continue the program or positions on or prior to the date of the grant termination. All grant-funded placements will occur as a result of the recruitment procedures outlined in this Handbook.

## **703 Promotion**

A Promotion occurs when an employee is promoted from a position in one Grade to another position having a higher Grade and pay range. Unless a Promotional Examination program or a period of time in a classification is a specified promotional prerequisite instituted within a Department and approved by the County Manager, all

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Promotions will occur as a result of the recruitment procedures outlined in this Handbook.

When an employee is promoted to a position in a higher Grade, the employee's salary should increase to the minimum salary of the new Grade or to a salary approved by the County Manager, but which cannot exceed maximum rate of pay for the new position in any event.

An employee must have successfully completed a twelve month working test period prior to being eligible for a Promotion unless the County Manager approves a Promotion prior to the completion of the working test period.

### **704 Demotion**

A Demotion occurs when an employee is moved from a position in one Grade to a position having a lower Grade and pay range. When an employee is demoted to a lower Grade, the employee's salary will decrease that percentage difference between the minimum salary for his/her former position and the minimum salary applicable to his/her position. For example, if an employee is demoted from position "A" which has a minimum annual salary of \$30,000.00 to position "B" with a minimum annual salary of \$27,000.00, then the demoted employee would receive a 10% reduction in salary.

A Demotion Appointment will be one of the following types:

- (a) Disciplinary Demotion;
- (b) Administrative Demotion – which results from Layoff, reduction in force, reorganization, or disability accommodation;
- (c) Voluntary Demotion, which results from the request of the employee or agreed to by an employee, provided the following requirements are met:
  - (i) The request or agreement is in writing;
  - (ii) Approval is obtained from the Department Director and the County Manager; and
  - (iii) If the Demotion includes the transfer of the employee from one Department to another, the receiving Department must be willing to accept the employee.
- (d) Working test period Demotion occurs when an employee fails to satisfactorily complete a working test period.

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An employee is eligible for Demotion within his/her Department at any time. Should an employee seek a Demotion outside his/her Department, said employee must have shown satisfactory performance during the working test period prior to being eligible for a Demotion in any other County positions.

### **705 Reinstatement**

A Reinstatement shall be made when employees who were laid off, subject to an Administrative Demotion, on an approved Leave of Absence, or on an approved Military Leave are eligible for return to the position the employee previously held with Catoosa County as set forth herein. Reinstatements are not intended to include an employee's return to work subsequent to a Suspension or Administrative Leave. In addition, reinstatements are not intended to include an employee's request to return to work after leaving employment with Catoosa County voluntarily or involuntarily as such request to return to work would be subject to the recruitment procedures contained herein and would constitute an Original Hire if the individual is selected for a position. No credit for past employment shall be given to employees.

#### (a) Employees Reinstated After Non-Military Leave

A reinstated employee shall be paid at the employee's salary rate prior to the separation, provided the employee assumes his/her prior position, or the minimum salary provided for by the Job Description for that position, whichever is greater. In the event an employee is reinstated to a position that is not comparable to the one previously held their pay should be placed at the minimum salary provided for by the Job Description for that position.

#### (b) Employees Reinstated After Military Leave

An employee reinstated after military service lasting ninety-one days or more will be promptly reemployed in the following order of priority:

- (i) In the job the employee would have held had he or she remained continuously employed, or a position of equivalent seniority, status, and pay so long as the person is qualified for the job, or can become qualified after reasonable efforts by the County to qualify the person; or
- (ii) If the employee cannot become qualified for the position in (i), in the employee's pre-service position so long as he or she is qualified for the job or could become qualified after reasonable efforts by the County; or

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- (iii) If the employee cannot become qualified for the position in either (i) or (ii), in any other position, which is the nearest approximation of (i) for which the employee is qualified.

### **706 Lateral Transfer**

A Lateral Transfer is defined as an employee's move from one position with a certain Job Title to a different position with a different Job Title, but at the same Grade, either within or outside the employee's Department. The employee's rate of pay will remain the same. A Lateral Transfer for any employee must be approved by the applicable Elected Officials/Department Directors and Notice must be provided to the Human Resources Director.

- (a) An involuntary Lateral Transfer may be made without following the recruitment procedures as a Lateral Transfer is designed as an administrative mechanism for movement of an employee as needed.
- (b) In the event that an employee requests a Lateral Transfer, the employee must submit an application and proceed through the recruitment procedures outlined in this Handbook and will be subject to a new working test period. An employee is eligible to apply for a vacant position that would constitute a Lateral Transfer at any time if the Lateral Transfer sought is within the employee's Department. To the extent that the employee desires to apply for a vacant position that would constitute a Lateral Transfer outside the employee's Department, the employee must have successfully completed the full working test period in the current position before the employee is eligible to apply for a Lateral Transfer to an external Department.

### **707 Reassignment**

A Reassignment shall be made at the request of the Human Resources Director or by a Department Director, without prior approval by the County Manager. A Reassignment consists of the movement of an employee from one position with a certain Job Title to another position within the same Department with the same Job Title. Any Department Director making a Reassignment shall provide notification to the Human Resources Director and Finance Department for purposes of allocating cost centers and budgeting. The employee's rate of salary upon Reassignment will remain the same. Any Department Director wishing to make a Reassignment does not have to follow the recruitment procedures set forth in this Handbook as a Reassignment is designed as an administrative method for the movement of employees by the Department Director to accommodate workload within the Department.

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### **708 Temporary Work at a Higher Grade/Emergency Assignment**

With the prior approval of the County Manager, an employee may be required to work at a higher Grade on a temporary, emergency basis and may do so for a period of thirty days or less with no increase in pay. If the employee is required to perform the duties for a period exceeding thirty days, the employee will be given an Emergency Assignment for a specified term to the higher Grade and be paid the appropriate rate for the higher Grade, which may be the minimum rate of pay for that Grade upon the thirty-first day in the tour of duty or a maximum increase of three percent to the employee's current salary, whichever is greater. At the conclusion of the assignment, however, the employee's pay shall revert to the authorized rate established for the employee's regular position. Any such temporary increase shall not affect the employee's eligibility for other advancements. Temporary assignments pursuant to this Emergency Assignment position may not in any event exceed six months without written approval for an extension by the County Manager. Recruitment procedures need not be followed in the event of an employee being required to perform work at a higher Grade on a temporary, emergency basis.

### **709 Rehire**

In the event that the Department Director specifies on the personnel action form, or an attachment thereto, that a former employee should not be considered for re-employment, said employee shall not be eligible for reemployment with Catoosa County in any capacity for at least two years from the date of separation. All Rehires will occur as a result of the recruitment procedures outlined in this Handbook.

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### **800 Separation**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date: 11/6/2018

### **801 Statement of Policy**

Employees shall be separated in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter and in accordance with the non-discrimination policies and non-harassment policies contained in this Handbook. A separated employee shall be paid accumulated salary and shall be paid for any accrued Leave as follows:

#### (a) Payment for PTO

At the time of termination, Resignation, retirement, or death while employed with Catoosa County any accrued PTO (up to the accrual limit based on employee's length of service) will be paid to the employee or his/her estate; provided, all uniforms and equipment issued by the County has been returned and no outstanding liabilities or debts remain.

Under no circumstances will an employee be allowed to request payment for unearned or advance PTO except as otherwise provided for in this Handbook.

### **802 Types of Separation**

#### (a) Resignation

An employee may be separated from employment with Catoosa County upon the submission of the employee's Resignation. Resignation may be submitted in writing or orally to the employee's Department Director, his/her Supervisor, the Human Resources Director, or the County Manager. If the Resignation is provided to someone other than the Human Resources Director, the Human Resources Director must be notified immediately. Once a Resignation is tendered, oral or written, the Resignation should be considered final. Any employee who wishes to rescind his/her Resignation is not guaranteed the right to withdraw or rescind the Resignation.

In order to resign in good standing, an employee must, at a minimum, give written Notice at least fourteen calendar days prior to the effective date of the Resignation and otherwise have demonstrated satisfactory performance. Failure to comply with this provision shall be entered on the service record of the employee and will result in a denial of re-

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employment rights for at least two years from the date of Resignation, unless the applicable Department Director determines that there was a hardship basis for not providing the two-week Notice.

After submitting a Resignation, the employee is not eligible to utilize Personal Leave time. Instead, the employee will be monetarily compensated for any accrued Personal Leave time consistent with this Chapter at the conclusion of the employment relationship.

At the discretion of the Department Director or County Manager, any employee providing Notice as described above may be immediately dismissed from service rather than the employee working during a Notice period.

### (b) Abandonment of Position

An employee shall be considered to have abandoned his/her position when any of the following occur: (1) an employee is absent without Notice to the Department Director or his/her designee for three or more consecutive Working Days; (2) an employee is absent for three or more consecutive Working Days after providing Notice, but without having any available Leave time; or (3) an employee is absent for three or more consecutive Working Days without receiving approval for the absences. An employee may not be deemed to have abandoned his/her position if the employee has provided Notice to the Department Director and the employee demonstrates a serious medical condition supported by medical documentation to the satisfaction of the County. Such status of non-abandonment, however, could change at any time in the discretion of the County depending on the length of the absence from the position and other circumstances.

For purposes of this paragraph, a “Working Day” is defined as eight hours worked for County employees; twelve hours worked for E911 Center dispatchers who work a 12-hour shift; and twenty-four hours for Fire Department employees who work a 24-hour shift. In any of the three situations set forth herein, the employee shall be deemed to have abandoned his/her position and to have resigned as of the end of the third Working Day. The Human Resources Director should be notified immediately of any employee who has resigned as a result of abandonment of the position.

### (c) Failure to Return from Leave of Absence

Any employee who fails to return to duty at the expiration of a duly

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approved Leave of Absence for three consecutive calendar days following the expiration of the Leave of Absence shall be deemed to have abandoned his/her position and to have resigned as of the end of the third day.

(d) Lay-off

(i) Reasons Justifying Lay-Off

Lay-off is defined as a reduction in force that may result in the separation of employee(s) due to abolishment of a position, a shortage of funds or work, a need to increase efficiency, or a material change in the duties or organizational unit of the Department. No lay-offs shall be made for the purpose of dismissing an employee for incompetence, misconduct, or for other reasons, except as included in this Chapter. The lay-off does not reflect discredit upon the service of the employee. A lay-off can be recommended by the Board of Commissioners, the County Manager, and/or the Human Resources Director. Any lay-off must be approved by the County Manager prior to becoming effective.

(ii) Order of Lay-Off

Prior to the lay-off, the affected Department Director shall make recommendations to the Human Resources Director who shall consider job performance, work records, employee evaluation ratings, and length of service in determining which employees shall be laid-off. If it is found that two or more persons in the Department in which the lay-off is to be made have equal job performance, records, and/or ratings as determined by review of employee records and evaluation ratings, the order of lay-off shall be based upon seniority. No Full-time Employee shall be laid-off while another person is employed on a temporary or part-time basis in a position within the same Job Description if the employee is willing to accept the temporary or part-time work. In evaluating employees for purposes of a lay-off, care should be taken to accurately evaluate all employees. An employee shall not be laid-off based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, political affiliation, disability, or any other category protected by federal and/or state law.

Prior to lay-off and in an effort to avoid separation of employment, the Human Resources Director may direct Lateral Transfers or Demotions as necessary to place employees into positions for which they are qualified rather than lay them off. Lateral Transfers



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or Demotions in accordance with this Chapter will be effective unless the employee elects in writing to be laid off. Written Notice of said election from the employee must be received by the Human Resources Director within three calendar days after the employee has received Notice of a Lateral Transfer or Demotion.

### (iii) Special Cases

Should a Department Director determine that the retention of a certain employee is essential to the effective operation of the Department because of the fact that such employee possesses special skills or abilities, and should the Department Director wish to retain such employee in preference to another with a higher rating or seniority, then the Department Director shall submit a written request to the County Manager. Such notification shall set forth in detail the specific skills and abilities possessed by the employee and the reasons why such employee is essential to the effective operation of the Department. With the approval of the County Manager, the individual may be retained to the detriment of the higher ranking employee.

### (iv) Re-Employment Register

The Human Resources Director shall prepare a register of employees who have been laid-off to be utilized as provided in this Chapter. The order of names appearing on this register will be based upon the order of the lay-off and when there is a tie, then seniority will be the determining factor. The names of the employees shall remain on the lay-off register for a period of one year. During the life of the lay-off register, an employee may submit a written request to have his/her name removed from the list. Employees whose names appear on the lay-off register shall be given primary consideration when conditions warrant rehiring. "Primary consideration" shall mean that the employee does not have to go through the recruiting process, but that Catoosa County will notify the employees who appear on the lay-off register when there is an opportunity to fill a position that the laid-off employee previously held or a comparable position, either full-time or part-time; provided the employee meets the Minimum Qualifications for the position. All employees appointed to a position in this manner will serve the stated working test period for that position. In any event, employees whose names appear on the lay-off register are welcome to apply for other positions with Catoosa County at any time. If an employee is hired for another position in

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Catoosa County during the life of the lay-off register, the employee's name shall be removed from the lay-off register and no other special consideration shall be given to the employee. If a person placed on the lay-off register does not accept the first offer for re-employment having the same classification as the one held at the time of separation, the employee's name shall be removed from the lay-off register and no other special consideration shall be given.

(e) Death

An employee who dies while in Catoosa County's employment shall be separated effective as of the date of death.

(f) Retirement

An employee may be separated from employment with Catoosa County upon his/her retirement consistent with retirement eligibility contained in federal and state law, as well as in the Catoosa County Retirement Plan. Any employee who wishes to retire shall provide written Notice a minimum of fourteen calendar days prior to the intended retirement date to the affected Department Director. After providing Notice of retirement, the employee is not eligible to utilize Personal Leave time without prior approval of County Manager and only under special circumstances. All compensation will be paid to the employee in a lump sum during the next pay period.

Any employee eligible for the Catoosa County Retirement Plan who retires from employment with Catoosa County must terminate employment prior to receiving any benefit under the Retirement Plan. After such termination of employment, the employee may return to perform services for Catoosa County on a part-time, temporary, seasonal, or independent contractor basis. Any employee returning to the Catoosa County workforce in such a manner will not receive any increases in benefits received under the Retirement Plan on account of future years of service and compensation.

(g) Inability to Perform

If an employee suffers from a condition or physical or mental disability that prevents him/her from performing the essential functions of the position or is otherwise unfit for duty such that the employee cannot perform the essential functions of the position, even with reasonable accommodation or in the absence of an available reasonable

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accommodation, the employee is subject to Dismissal for inability to perform the job.

(h) Loss of License or Certification

Any employee who is unable to perform the essential functions of his/her job adequately because of loss of a necessary license or certification shall be subject to Dismissal. All employees are independently and solely responsible for ensuring that any license or certification required to perform the job are maintained in good standing.

(i) Dismissals

A Dismissal is the involuntary separation of an employee from employment with Catoosa County. A Dismissal for disciplinary reasons may be instituted without prior Notice to the employee when deemed necessary to protect the County or the employee concerned. In the event of such a Dismissal, the applicable Department Director shall notify the Human Resources Director no later than the end of the following Business Day. However, in all other cases, the applicable Department Director should notify the Human Resources Director of his/her intent to dismiss an employee and the reasons therefore prior to Dismissal. Upon such notification, the applicable Department Director or his/her designee and/or applicable Supervisor, shall arrange to meet with the employee in a Dismissal conference. The employee is to be told the purpose of the conference. Specifically, the employee should be advised that the County intends to dismiss him/her. If the employee refuses to attend the Dismissal conference, the Dismissal will become automatic and enforced, and all rights to a Dismissal conference shall be waived by the employee. The Dismissal conference shall consist of the applicable Department Director or his/her designee and/or applicable Supervisor, the Human Resources Director or his/her designee and the employee. The employee should be advised of the specific reasons for the Dismissal and be further advised that he/she has an opportunity to respond to the reasons for Dismissal prior to being discharged. The employee's verbal response at the conference should be considered. If deemed appropriate, the County shall proceed with Dismissal. If deemed inappropriate, the County shall proceed with another disciplinary action.

The Dismissal of the County Manager, Chief Financial Officer and/or the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, must be pursuant to a majority vote of the Board of Commissioners in accordance with Chapter 900, Section 901.

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### **803 Recommendation of Re-Employment**

In every instance other than death or retirement, upon the separation of an employee from a position, the applicable Department Director shall specify on the personnel action form, or an attachment thereto, whether the employee can be considered for re-employment. An answer of “no” disqualifies the employee for further Appointments with Catoosa County for at least two years from the date of separation.

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### **900 Disciplinary Actions**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date: 08/03/2021

### **901 Statement of Policy**

Catoosa County employees are terminable at will and at the sole discretion of the appointing official and/or Catoosa County. Nonetheless, Catoosa County seeks to resolve performance and conduct problems in the most positive and constructive manner possible. When situations occur that warrant disciplinary action, Catoosa County will treat all employees fairly and consistently.

The County Manager will be responsible for all disciplinary actions against the other Executive Employees who report to him/her, including reprimands, Demotions, Suspensions and Dismissals.

The Board of Commissioners will be responsible for all disciplinary actions against the County Manager, and the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, including reprimands, Demotions, Suspensions, and termination.

### **902 Prohibited Conduct Generally**

In general, conduct that interferes with the operations of Catoosa County, brings discredit to Catoosa County, or is deemed inappropriate by Supervisors, co-workers, or the public is not tolerated. Examples of conduct that is not permitted, and will subject the individual involved to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination, include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Insubordination or uncooperative attitude, including, but not limited to, disrespect to a Supervisor, a higher ranking employee or official, co-worker, or the public, and failure to follow the lawful orders of a Supervisor;
- (b) Failure to do work at an acceptable level of competence;
- (c) Excessive tardiness, excessive absenteeism, unexcused absences, and absences when the employee does not have accrued Personal Leave or Sick Leave to accommodate the absence;
- (d) Conviction of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude, if the conduct leading to such conviction is job related and the disciplinary action is consistent with business necessity;

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- (e) Theft, abuse or misuse of County property or vehicles, violation of traffic laws while driving a County vehicle, failure to report damage or destruction of County property to a Supervisor, loaning property or equipment of the County without permission or proper authority;
- (f) Willfully giving false statements to Supervisors, officials, or the public;
- (g) Violation of County ordinances, administrative regulations, provisions of this Handbook, or Departmental rules;
- (h) Consumption or distribution of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs or abuse of prescription drugs or over-the-counter medication in a manner that violates the Catoosa County Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace policies;
- (i) Acts during duty hours which are incompatible with public service;
- (j) Use of profane or abusive language or discourteous treatment of the public or other employees;
- (k) Consumption of alcoholic beverages or use of illegal, prescription, or over-the-counter drugs outside work hours in such a manner as to adversely affect attendance or job performance;
- (l) Falsification or destruction of official records or documents, or use of official position for personal benefit, profit, or advantage;
- (m) When duly and properly called as a witness before any County board, appeals board, state or federal judicial or administrative tribunal, and when before such tribunal, failing to answer truthfully any question concerning performance of official duties with the County;
- (n) Failure to report an occupational injury or accident during the shift on which it occurred;
- (o) Absence due to incarceration;
- (p) Use of any form of physical abuse of the public, Supervisors, or other employees, or making threats to the public, Supervisors, or other employees;
- (q) Violating any lawful official regulation or order or failing to obey any proper directive made and given by a superior officer;

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- (r) Dishonest and unlawful conduct;
- (s) Careless or negligent with the monies or other property of the County;
- (t) Failure to pay or make reasonable provisions for future payment of debt to such an extent that such failure is detrimental to the work relationship;
- (u) Use or threatening of use, or attempt at use of personal or political influence to secure employment benefits, including but not limited to, Promotion, Leave of Absence, transfer, change of pay rate, or character of work;
- (v) Taking for personal use from any person any fee, gift, or other valuable thing in the course of work or in connection with it, when such gift or other such valuable thing is given in the hope or expectation of receiving a favor or better treatment than that afforded other persons based upon the Code of Ethics for Government Service. See O.C.G.A. § 45-10-1;
- (w) Violating established security procedures during the Examination process or obtaining information, through unauthorized or illegal means, which provides an unfair advantage on the Examination;
- (x) Failure to acquire a valid license, registration, or certification when such license, registration, or certification is required and specified in the specifications for the class to which the position occupied by the employee is classified;
- (y) Wasted time, inefficiency, and/or loitering during working hours;
- (z) Violation of any provisions of the Code of Ethics for Government Service (as fully set forth in Chapter 100, Section 102), this Handbook, or the applicable Departmental SOP;
- (aa) Release of confidential information learned as a result of employee's position without specific approval of the applicable Department Director, Constitutional Officer or the County Manager;
- (bb) Lending money or borrowing money from another County employee who makes a practice of loaning money and charging interest to employees; and/or
- (cc) Babysitting or keeping children in the employee's assigned work area.

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### **903 Conduct Prohibited by Departmental SOP and Rules**

Notwithstanding the conduct prohibited generally in Section 902 above, or any other conduct prohibited by Code of Ethics for Government Service (as fully set forth in Chapter 100, Section 102) or this Handbook, an employee will be subject to disciplinary action for violation of Departmental SOPs or rules. Additionally, the Departmental SOPs or rules may contain schedules of penalties for violations. In the event that the applicable Department imposes a higher standard of conduct and/or the schedule of penalties results in a harsher penalty than the conduct guidelines and penalties contained in this Handbook, the Departmental SOP or rules shall control.

### **904 Progressive Discipline**

Whenever possible, Department Directors should provide employees with an opportunity to correct problematic behavior or poor performance. All Supervisors are encouraged to follow specific steps of progressive discipline. However, depending upon the nature of the employee's misconduct, poor performance, and/or length of employment, the use of progressive discipline shall be discretionary. Thus, while this Chapter sets forth available mechanisms for discipline, certain steps may be skipped in a disciplinary process depending upon the nature of the employee's misconduct, poor performance, working test period status and/or length of employment. To the extent that progressive discipline is being utilized, when an employee engages in different types of misconduct or poor performance, each incident can provoke increased discipline, even if the incidents of misconduct or poor performance are in different areas or unrelated to other previous incidents. The mechanisms for progressive discipline may include, but are not limited to, verbal reprimand, written reprimand, Suspension without pay, Demotion, and Dismissal. While there are five steps identified in this Chapter, this Chapter should not be construed to require five incidents of misconduct or poor performance prior to Dismissal being an appropriate disciplinary sanction. Moreover, other forms of discipline not detailed in this Chapter may be utilized in the discretion of the applicable Supervisor. All disciplinary actions shall be reduced to writing and forwarded to the Human Resources Director for maintenance in the employee's personnel file. All such disciplinary actions shall remain in the employee's personnel file.

### **905 Verbal Reprimand**

A verbal reprimand is an oral Notice of a policy violation, mistake, inefficiency, misconduct, poor performance, or other factors that may adversely influence an employee's ability to carry out his/her duties and responsibilities. Any Supervisor may verbally reprimand a subordinate employee at any time. Verbal reprimands may affect the employee's employment status, particularly if corrective action is not taken by the employee. All verbal reprimands should be documented in the employee's personnel file and shall be signed by the Human Resources Director to acknowledge receipt.



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### **906 Written Reprimand**

A written reprimand is a written Notice of a policy violation, mistake, inefficiency, misconduct, poor performance, or other factors that may adversely influence an employee's ability to carry out duties and responsibilities. Any Supervisor may reprimand in writing a subordinate employee at any time. Written reprimands are required to be shown and explained to the employee who will acknowledge receipt of same by his/her signature. If the employee refuses to sign, the same shall be noted. If the employee feels the written reprimand to be unjust, he/she must so state in writing giving the reasons, which must be done within five calendar days. An original copy of the reprimand, with the employee's response, if any, must be forwarded to the Human Resources Director to be placed in the employee's personnel file. The Human Resources Director will sign the written reprimand to acknowledge receipt. A written reprimand may be presented on a form adopted by the applicable Department or available from the Human Resources Department, or the written reprimand may be in letter or memo form.

### **907 Suspension Without Pay**

The County Manager, a Department Director, or his/her respective designee, as applicable, may, by written Notice to the employee, suspend an employee without pay. Any such Notice of Suspension must be forwarded to the Human Resources Director to be placed in the employee's personnel file. The Human Resources Director will sign the Suspension Notice to acknowledge receipt. An employee who is suspended for any reason may not utilize Personal Leave so as to be compensated during the Suspension without pay period.

An employee may be suspended in the following manner:

#### **(a) Disciplinary Suspension**

In an attempt to correct unacceptable behavior and/or work performance issues, an employee may be suspended for a specified period of time without pay. All such disciplinary Suspensions for a specified period of time shall be stated in hours, rather than days or shifts. The total period of any Suspension without pay for disciplinary purposes shall not exceed five days or the equivalent for shift employees.

An employee in the position of exempt status may be suspended without pay in increments of the equivalent of one or more full days imposed in good faith for violation of workplace rules. Non-Exempt employees may be suspended without pay in consecutive full or partial day increments.

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### (b) Suspension Pending a Court Decision

An employee shall be suspended indefinitely without pay at the discretion of the County Manager or the applicable Department Director, or his/her respective designee, when awaiting trial on criminal charges, the nature of which would impede or undermine the employee's ability to satisfactorily perform his/her job. The employee will be given the opportunity to demonstrate that the criminal charges should not subject him/her to Suspension from employment with the County. Thereafter, the County will make a determination on whether said Suspension is job related and consistent with business necessity.

In the alternative, if the employee's actions and/or the criminal charges are such that it is not in the best interest of the County for the employee to remain in the County workforce, the County Manager or the applicable Department Director, or his/her respective designee, as applicable, may elect to terminate the employee upon Notice of the criminal charges or at any time thereafter. The employee will be given the opportunity to demonstrate that the criminal charges should not subject him/her to Dismissal from employment with the County. Thereafter, the County will make a determination on whether said Dismissal is job related and consistent with business necessity.

If the County does not elect to terminate the employee during the pendency of criminal charges, upon receipt of Notice from the employee that the criminal matter has been resolved by Dismissal, plea, or trial, the County Manager or the applicable Department Director, or his/her respective designee, shall make a determination as to whether the employee shall be reinstated and whether any such reinstatement shall be with or without loss of pay. If an employee is fully exonerated of all criminal charges, the employee shall be reinstated without loss of pay, privileges, benefits, or status retroactive to the date of Suspension.

### (c) Suspension Pending Drug/Alcohol Testing

An employee shall be suspended without pay immediately upon being required to submit to a reasonable suspicion drug or alcohol test. The total period of any Suspension without pay shall be for an indefinite period of time, which shall conclude upon completion and receipt of the drug or alcohol test and any applicable confirmation tests.

An employee who initially tests positive for drugs or alcohol pursuant to any other type of drug or alcohol testing (such as workers' compensation testing, return to duty testing, post-accident testing, and/or random testing)

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shall be immediately suspended without pay pending any applicable confirmation of the positive test results. The period of Suspension shall be for an indefinite period of time, which period shall end upon completion and receipt of any applicable confirmation tests.

### **907.1 Suspension During Investigation/Paid Administrative Leave**

A Suspension during an investigation is referred to as Administrative Leave. Designation of such an absence from the workplace as “Administrative Leave” is to prevent any possible stigma against an employee during a period of Administrative Leave. Please refer to Chapter 1100, Section 1115 for details on Administrative Leave.

### **908 Demotion**

The County Manager or the applicable Department Director or his/her respective designee may by written Notice to the employee, demote an employee for disciplinary purposes. When an employee is demoted to a lower Grade, the employee’s salary will decrease by that percentage difference between the minimum salary for his/her former position and the minimum salary applicable to his/her new position. Employees will be subject to a working test period upon Demotion. All Demotions must be approved in writing by the County Manager.

### **909 Dismissals**

An employee may be dismissed from employment with Catoosa County for disciplinary purposes. Please see Chapter 800 concerning Separations for details.

Immediate Dismissal, in the absence of progressive discipline, may be necessary in certain circumstances. The following list includes some, but not all, offenses that may be grounds for immediate Dismissal:

- (a) Theft;
- (b) Falsification of documentation and/or other acts of dishonesty;
- (c) Fighting or other physical violence or threats of violence;
- (d) Wrongful or negligent destruction of Catoosa County property;
- (e) Conviction of a felony or other offense that, in the opinion of the County, conflicts with and/or undermines the employee’s performance of his/her job duties. The employee will be given the opportunity to demonstrate that the conviction should not exclude him/her from employment with the

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County. Thereafter, the County will make a determination on whether said termination is job related and consistent with business necessity;

- (f) Possession of firearms, Weapons, or explosives on Catoosa County property without the express consent of the County Manager, or as otherwise allowable pursuant to applicable law(s);
- (g) Use, possession, sale, or testing positive for alcohol or illegal drugs on Catoosa County property or while on duty, and/or failure to submit to testing for same;
- (h) Use, possession, sale, or testing positive for prescription or over-the-counter drugs that lead an employee to be unfit for duty;
- (i) Falsification of an employment application or other information for the purposes of obtaining employment or any benefits from Catoosa County;
- (j) Violation of safety rules that endanger lives or safety and/or any conduct that endangers lives or safety;
- (k) Violation of the Catoosa County's anti-harassment, non-discrimination, and/or internet use policies;
- (l) Unreported or unauthorized absences of three consecutive Working Days;
- (m) Unauthorized and repeated tardiness; and
- (n) Gross insubordination.

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### **1000 Grievances**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

### **1001 Purpose**

The purpose of this article is to provide an orderly process for hearing an employee's grievable claim. The objective of this process is to reach a firm and equitable decision in a timely manner. The employee, Department Director, and County Manager should make an effort to resolve any grievance informally before initiating the formal grievance procedure.

The chain of command must have the opportunity to resolve any grievance. If the employee is not satisfied with the results following appeal through the chain of command, the employee may file an appeal to the Board of Commissioners as discussed in Section 1006. At any point when following the chain of command, the employee, Supervisor, or Department Director may call upon the County Manager to assist in the mediation of the dispute.

### **1002 Overview of Grievable Areas**

An employee may file a written grievance with the applicable Department Director, Human Resources Director or County Manager, in accordance with the process/policies contained herein.

Grievance shall be defined as a claim by an employee declaring:

- a. Unsafe or unhealthy working conditions;
- b. Unlawful discrimination;
- c. Application of County policies in violation of this Policy Manual; or
- d. As a result of a disciplinary Demotion, a disciplinary reduction in pay, or termination.

### **1003 Areas That Are Not Grievable**

The following areas are NOT grievable:

- a. Issues which are pending or which have been concluded by other administrative or judicial procedures;

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- b. Management's rights to assign work and/or establish work processes;
- c. Disciplinary actions that do not result in a Dismissal, Demotion or salary reduction;
- d. Budget allocations and expenditures and organizational structure, including the persons or number of persons assigned to particular jobs or units;
- e. The content or rating of a Performance Evaluation;
- f. The selection of an individual by the Department Director, or County Manager to fill a position through Appointment, Promotion, or transfer, except when the employee can show adverse effect because of unlawful discrimination;
- g. Any matter which is not within the jurisdiction or control of the County;
- h. Internal security practices established by the County Manager and/or Board of Commissioners; and
- i. Decisions, practices, resolutions, or policies made or passed by the Board of Commissioners or County Manager.

### **1004 Processing of Grievances**

All Executive Employees are responsible for ensuring that the grievance is fully processed. No employee shall be retaliated against for using the County grievance procedures.

Any complaint shall follow the procedure outlined below and shall refer to the provision or provisions of County policy, shall identify the manner in which County policy is alleged to have been applied in violation of this Policy Manual, shall identify the practice, procedure, rules, or regulation alleged to have been violated, and shall adequately set forth the facts pertaining to the alleged violation.

Any grievance submitted shall be dated and signed by the employee. Any decision shall be written to the employee and shall be dated and signed by the County representative at that step.

### **1005 Formal Grievance Procedure**

*Step 1.* The employee shall present a grievance or complaint in writing to the applicable Department Director within five Working Days from the date that the grievable action or violation occurs. Discussions shall be informal for the purpose of settling the issue in the

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simplest and most direct manner. The Department Director shall reach a decision and communicate in writing to the employee within five Working Days from the date that the grievance was presented. If there is no applicable Department Director, the employee shall proceed directly to Step 2 within five Working Days from the date that the grievable action or violation occurs.

*Step 2.* If the employee is not satisfied with the decision in Step 1, the employee may appeal the decision, within three Working Days of the Step 1 decision, in writing to the County Manager or the Human Resources Director.

- a. Included in the employee's appeal shall be:
  1. A written statement clearly explaining the issue at hand, including any known violation of County policy, procedures or laws;
  2. The steps already taken by the grievant to address the issue;
  3. A copy of the response of the Department Director; and
  4. The requested remedy of the employee.
- b. The County Manager shall review the facts of the grievance and, if appropriate, shall schedule a meeting with the employee and Department Director. The employee will be represented by him/herself during the grievance process. However, at the employee's discretion, he/she may upon advance Notice to the County Manager, bring another County employee(s) to testify on his/her behalf.
- c. After reviewing the facts of the grievance or after meeting with the affected employee(s), as appropriate, the County Manager shall notify the employee of the decision on the grievance within fifteen Business Days from the time it was submitted to the County Manager.

*Step 3.* If the employee is not satisfied with the decision in Step 2, and the action taken results in termination of employment or the grievance contends a violation of state or federal law, the employee may appeal the decision in writing within five Working Days of the Step 2 decision to the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners.

- a. Included in the appeal shall be:
  1. The specific violation contended within the original grievance;
  2. A complete copy of all of the grievance materials generated through Step 2; and

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3. Specific information that establishes that a termination is not warranted or supporting the employee's position that the aggrieved matter constitutes a violation of state or federal law.
- b. The Catoosa County Board of Commissioners shall review the appeal on its merits and, if appropriate, meet with the employee within fifteen Working Days after receipt of the appeal. The Catoosa County Board of Commissioners shall thereafter investigate the contentions and communicate the Board's decision to the grievant within forty-five Working Days from the date the grievance was received. The decision of the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners shall be final, without further right to appeal.

### **1006 Time Limits**

The time limit at any step set forth in this Chapter may be extended by the Human Resources Manager for good cause. A grievance not advanced to the higher step within the time limit provided shall be deemed permanently withdrawn, and as having been settled on the basis of the decision most recently given. Failure on the part of the County's representative to answer within the time limit set forth in any step may entitle the employee to proceed to the next step.



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### **1100 Attendance and Leave**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date: 02/16/2022; 06/18/2024

### **1101 Hours of Work**

(a) Attendance

The employee is responsible for his/her attendance and is required to work the schedule assigned by the applicable Department Director.

(b) Annual Period

The “Annual Period” for purposes of determining rights under this Handbook shall commence on October 1<sup>st</sup> and conclude on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

(c) Maximum Work Hours

The following table sets forth the maximum work hours for purposes of computing overtime. In accordance with the table, employees are not entitled to overtime compensation until the maximum work hours in the applicable work period have been exceeded.

<u>Classification of Employees</u>	<u>Work Period</u>	<u>Maximum Hours</u>
Fire Department	28 days	212 per period
911 Employees	14 days	84 per period
Other County Employees	7 days	40 per period

(d) Emergency On-Call Policy

Exempt and non-exempt employees may be required to be “on-call” for the purpose of responding to emergency situations. Any such emergency response generating potential on-call time shall be approved by the County Manager.

According to the Fair Labor Standards Act, for a non-exempt employee, the waiting time while on-call is not compensable as hours worked as long as the conditions on the non-exempt employee’s activities are not so restrictive that they cannot use the time effectively for personal pursuits. It is the intent of the County that all employees shall be able to effectively use on call time for personal pursuits such that on call time is not compensable. Nonetheless, with the exception of the Hutcheson

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Maintenance Department, the County shall pay a non-exempt employee who is on the emergency on-call list one hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of pay for each day that the non-exempt employee appears on the emergency on-call list. Non-exempt Hutcheson Maintenance employees will be paid at the rate of \$2.50 per hour for each hour on-call. The applicable Department Director shall submit the emergency on-call list to the County Manager on a monthly basis. The on-call list must be approved by the County Manager.

Compensable time for non-exempt employees shall begin to run immediately when the employee commences travel to the emergency on-call location. With the exception of the Hutcheson Maintenance Department, non-exempt employees will be paid a minimum of two hours at their regular rate of pay in the event that the time worked is less than one hour. Hutcheson Maintenance employees will be paid their normal hourly rate for actual time worked as the result of an emergency call. They will not be paid a two-hour minimum. Additional emergency calls that occur while a non-exempt employee is responding to a prior emergency call will not be reimbursed as a separate emergency call but is considered as a continuous event.

Exempt employees shall receive no pay in addition to their regular salary for on-call time.

(e) Time-Swapping Record Keeping

The County does not allow time-swapping or shift-swapping between employees, unless it is previously authorized by all shift Supervisors involved. Shift-swapping is the practice of trading work shifts. Time-swaps or shift-swaps without proper authorization are grounds for disciplinary action. Falsifying payroll records to show an individual is present when he is actually not present is grounds for termination.

(f) Rounding of Hours Worked

Catoosa County will track employee hours worked in fifteen (15) minute increments. The FLSA allows rounding of time to the nearest quarter hour. Employee time from 1 to 7 minutes, will be rounded down and thus not counted as hours worked, however time from 8 to 14 minutes will be rounded up and be counted as a quarter hour of work time.

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### **1102 Compensation for Overtime Hours Worked**

(a) Classification as Exempt or Non-Exempt

All employees will be classified as either “exempt” or “non-exempt” according to the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) and its governing regulations. These classifications are established by the County based upon the prevailing law and the actual duties and compensation earned by each employee. The County is not required to compensate employees who are exempt under the FLSA for overtime work. In contrast, the County is obligated to compensate employees who are deemed non-exempt under the FLSA for overtime work and does so according to the FLSA and the policies set forth herein. It is the expressed intent of Catoosa County to strictly comply with the FLSA with regard to overtime payment.

(b) Approval and Recording of Overtime Hours Worked

All overtime work performed must have prior approval of the Department Director. In addition, all overtime hours worked must be recorded by the employee during the pay period in which the employee performed the work. No employee should be subjected to being requested by a Supervisor to work overtime without allowing the employee to record and receive compensation for overtime hours worked. If any employee has concerns about the overtime compensation practices occurring in his/her Department, the employee should immediately advise the Human Resources Director.

(c) Rate of Overtime Compensation

Non-exempt employees who perform overtime work shall be paid in wages at the rate of one and one-half times their regular rate of pay.

(d) Computation of Hours Worked for Overtime Compensation Purposes

The computation of hours worked for purposes of reaching the maximum hour threshold (as specified in Chapter 1100, Section 1101, Paragraph c above) to trigger the entitlement to overtime compensation shall include all hours actually worked. Paid Personal Leave, other paid Leave, holiday Leave and other types of Leave shall not be included.

(e) Overtime for Part-Time, Non-Exempt Employees

Part-time, non-exempt employees who work more than their normal work schedule, but less than the FLSA maximum hours for the appropriate work

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cycle, will be paid at straight time. When hours worked exceed FLSA maximums for the appropriate work cycle, Part-time Employees will be paid overtime at time and one-half of the regular hourly rate. Part-time Employees are not authorized to perform any work in excess of their normal work scheduled in the absence of written approval by the County Manager.

### **1103 Holiday Leave**

#### (a) Holidays Observed

It is the policy of Catoosa County that all Full-time Employees shall be eligible for the following eleven holidays each year: New Year's Day, observed Martin Luther King's Birthday, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day (and the day after Thanksgiving), Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Any other holidays shall be upon specific authorization of the Board of Commissioners. When a holiday falls on Saturday, it shall be observed by the County on Friday, and if it falls on Sunday, it shall be observed by the County on Monday.

#### (b) Holiday Pay

All Full-time Employees shall be paid a total of eight hours for each holiday, regardless of the hours in the employee's shift, provided they are scheduled to work on the holiday. Part-time, temporary, and Seasonal Employees or employees on approved Leave Without Pay, Suspension Without Pay, Military Leave, and/or FMLA Leave are not entitled to holiday pay. Holiday pay cannot be added in the computation of overtime pay.

In order to qualify for holiday pay, employees are required to work their scheduled work days before and after a holiday unless the employee is off on scheduled and pre-approved PTO. If unscheduled PTO is taken on the day before or the day after a holiday the employee will not qualify for holiday pay. Holidays which occur during pre-approved PTO shall not be charged against PTO.

If you are an employee of the Sheriff's office who is scheduled to work on an observed holiday and you did not schedule and receive pre-approval for PTO for the holiday, you may receive holiday pay only if the following conditions are met: you must work the day before, the day of, and the day after the observed holiday, if scheduled to work. If unscheduled PTO is used for any of these days, the employee will not qualify for holiday pay.

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In this situation, holidays which occur during pre-approved PTO shall be charged against PTO.

(c) Scheduled Work on Holidays

In the event that a non-exempt employee is required to work on or during one of the actual holidays identified by the County, the employee shall be compensated at their regular rate of pay for the hours worked on the actual holiday. The employee will also receive eight additional hours of pay at his/her regular rate of pay for hours worked on the day the County observes the holiday. If due to working the holiday the employee reaches overtime hours, the hours will be paid in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act requirements.

### **1104 Paid Time Off**

(a) Purpose

The purpose of Paid Time Off (PTO) is to provide paid time away from work for vacation, doctor or dental appointments, family sickness and hazardous weather conditions.

(b) Eligibility

- i. All Full-time Employees and Part-time Employees who are scheduled to work thirty or more hours per week shall be entitled to accrue PTO.
- ii. Part-time Employees scheduled less than thirty hours per week or 1,000 hours per year and other specified employees who are exempt shall not be eligible for PTO under these policies.

(c) Accrual of Paid Time Off

Full-time Employees shall accrue Paid Time Off upon completion of each bi-weekly pay period. The system accrual rate is calculated by multiplying the accrual rate per hour by the annual hours worked per employee divided by twenty-six, which is the number of bi-weekly pay periods in a year (for example:  $.046153 \times 2080/26 = 3.6922$  hours per pay period). PTO is accrued as follows: by twenty-six which is the number of bi-weekly pay periods in a year. Leave is accrued as follows:

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<u>Length of Employment</u>	<u>Accrual Rate Per Hour</u>	<u>Annual Accrual for 2080 hr employee</u>	<u>Annual Accrual for 2184 hr employee</u>	<u>Annual Accrual for 2912 hr employee</u>	<u>Accrual Limit</u>
Less than one year of employment	.04615 hours	96 hours	101 hours	134 hours	96 hours
One year, but less than six years	.06154 hours	128 hours	134 hours	179 hours	400 hours
Six years, but less than ten years	.07115 hours	148 hours	155 hours	207 hours	400 hours
Ten years, but less than fifteen years	.08077 hours	168 hours	176 hours	235 hours	400 hours
Fifteen years or more	.10 hours	208 hours	218 hours	291 hours	480 hours

Employees with less than one year of employment, PTO accrual begins on the date of employment and is available for use during the year it is accrued, but may not be taken in advance. Employees with less than one year of employment as of January 1 will be allowed to carry over any unused PTO accrued to the next calendar year.

Employees with more than one year of employment, PTO accrual begins on January 1, of each calendar year. PTO may be taken in advance upon approval of the employee's Supervisor. This means that the accrual balance reported can be negative during a calendar year. Any un-accrued or unearned PTO taken by the employee in advance, indicating a negative balance in the accrual on December 31 each year will be deducted from the employee's pay.

However, unused accrual of PTO up to eighty-eight (88 hours) per year may be carried-over to the next calendar year, and each year thereafter until the accrual limit is reached based on the length of employment. If the maximum amount of accrual limit has been reached, an employee may request payment for up to no more than 40 hours of accrued PTO. Such requests may be made at the end of each calendar year.

Department Directors will accrue PTO at the rate of 40 hours per year in addition to the accruals listed in the table above.

### (d) Approval of Paid Time Off

All requests for PTO must be pre-approved by the Department Director or the appropriate Supervisors as designated by the Department Director. In the case of Department Directors, Personal Leave must be pre-approved by the County Manager. The employee shall report needed time off, for any reason, prior to his/her scheduled work time. If not possible, he/she must report the tardiness or absence, or tardiness/absence will be

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unexcused and unpaid. Absences from duty without previous approval that recur frequently or are habitual will be addressed per the disciplinary process.

(e) Compensation for Paid Time Off Upon Separation

At the time of termination, Resignation, retirement, or death while employed with Catoosa County the unused accrued PTO (up to the accrual limit based on employee's length of employment) will be paid to the employee or his/her estate, provided all uniforms and equipment issued by the County has been returned and no outstanding liabilities or debts remain.

Under no circumstances will an employee be allowed to request payment for unearned or advance Leave.

(f) Emergencies

Employees on PTO are subject to recall in cases of emergencies.

(g) Maximum Allowance

PTO accrual begins January 1 of each year. PTO may be carried over past December 31 of each calendar year into the next calendar year and accumulated in accordance with Section 1104(c) Rate of Accrual.

(h) Donation of PTO

An employee may receive PTO donated by fellow employees in cases where extended illness or injury exceeds the maximum allowable accumulation. The employee donating time can only donate up to forty (40) hours of their accrued PTO once a year. An employee can receive a maximum of four (4) weeks of donated PTO time per year. The donation form can be picked up and turned back in at the Human Resources Office.

(i) Major Medical

Paid medical leave will be provided for eligible employees experiencing major medical conditions based on the specific requirements and limitations of this Section. The County will provide payment for time away from work due to an employee's major medical condition up to a maximum aggregate combined total of 120 hours of full pay. The paid medical leave will be based on the actual time missed from work by the employee for major

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medical conditions and is subject to the maximum annual aggregate limitations set forth in this Section.

Eligibility Criteria – must be an active full-time employee with at least one year of continuous service; must provide documentation of the employee’s hospital admission of at least 24 hours; must first use all PTO time before eligibility for major medical benefit begins. Major Medical may be used only one time for each incident of major surgery, major illness, or major injury. Unused major medical benefit time shall not accrue or roll over from one calendar year to the next.

### **1106 Workers’ Compensation Leave for On-the-Job Injury**

#### (a) Reporting Injury, Drug Test, and Exam

An employee who sustains an injury on-the-job must, at the time of the injury, notify his/her Supervisor on the forms prepared and maintained by the Human Resources Department. The employee may be required to submit to a drug test within eight hours of the injury. The employee must, upon request, submit a physician’s statement, from a physician who is listed on the workers’ compensation approved Panel of Physicians (the “Authorized Treating Physician”), to the effect that the injury will prevent the employee from performing his or her regular duties. The County shall reserve the right to refuse payment of medical services for any employee examined by a physician not listed on the workers’ compensation approved Panel of Physicians.

#### (b) Compensation

If the injury necessitates an employee’s absence from work as certified by the Authorized Treating Physician, he or she shall receive the regular rate of pay for a maximum of seven Working Days. The County’s Workers’ Compensation Insurance Carrier shall determine if the employee is eligible for further compensation. However, employees may at no time receive workers’ compensation income benefits and PTO benefits in excess of their average weekly wage as determined by O.C.G.A. § 34-9-260.

An employee qualifying for Workers’ Compensation Leave must run any FMLA Leave concurrently with that of all concurrent and/or intermittent Workers’ Compensation Leave.

#### (c) Supplemental Pay



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An employee receiving workers' compensation payments may use PTO to supplement the workers' compensation pay.

(d) Pay for Doctor Visits

An employee that is injured on-the job and returns to light-duty work shall be paid time-off for physician visits. A medical note from the employee's Authorized Treating Physician must be presented to the Department Director and forwarded to Human Resources.

(e) PTO Accrual and Policies

An employee on Workers' Compensation Leave shall continue to accrue PTO until such time the Authorized Treating Physician returns the employee to work. Workers' Compensation Leave must run concurrently with Family Medical Leave.

(f) Return to Work Program

It is the policy of Catoosa County to provide and establish a return to work policy and procedure for employees with work-related injuries and illnesses who are unable, temporarily and permanently, to return to their permanent job duties.

Because Catoosa County recognizes that employees are a valued and limited resource, this program is designated to:

- (i) Assist the medical recovery process by providing a focus and a goal for return of the injured employee;
- (ii) Benefit employees by allowing them to return to full wages as soon as possible; and
- (iii) Benefit employer by reducing workers' compensation costs.

Catoosa County will seek return to work opportunities through the use of transitional employment for all employees who are temporarily disabled due to an on-the-job injury as quickly as medically possible. Transitional employment opportunities will be considered in all Departments, not just the Department in which the injured employee was working before the injury or illness occurred.

Transitional employment assignments are intended to assist workers who

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are transitioning back to work after a temporary disability that resulted from a work-related injury. All transitional employment duties must be productive. Duties must never be demeaning or appear worthless in any way.

Catoosa County, through their reasonable accommodation program, will make efforts to retain employees who are disabled as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

### **1107 Reporting of Unscheduled Personal Leave or an Illness**

An employee who is absent from work without prior approval is responsible for contacting the appropriate Department Director or Supervisor within thirty minutes before the designated reporting time on the day of absence, and reporting thereafter on any subsequent days unless approved ahead of time. Leave for an illness will be charged against PTO. Where an employee is employed in a Department that must provide twenty-four hours sustained service, the employee must report the absence two hours before the designated reporting time unless otherwise required by the Departmental SOP or rules. In the event of failure of compliance with this Section, the employee may be charged on the payroll with Leave without pay and it will be a disciplinary matter. The method of notification of absences pursuant to this Section may be varied at the discretion of the applicable Department Director, which method or notification should be clearly communicated to the employees of the Department.

Personal Leave for an illness that exceeds three consecutive Working Days, without prior approval, shall be allowed at the discretion of the Department Director only after presentation of a satisfactory written statement by a licensed physician or dentist certifying that the employee's condition prevented him/her from performing the duties of his/her position. With the exception of a Leave without pay approved pursuant to the applicable Leave Policies set forth herein, there is no "leave without pay" available to employees. This Section should be read in conjunction with the abandonment provisions contained in Chapter 800 and the absenteeism provisions contained in Chapter 2000.

### **1108 Military Leave**

An employee who is a member of the National Guard and Reserves, an organized military reserve of the United States, or any employee who is otherwise engaged in the performance of military duty, will be allowed Leaves of Absence with pay not to exceed twenty Working Days during any calendar year to attend training camps upon presentation of orders pursuant to such training. Such Leaves shall not be charged to PTO and may be intermittent in nature.

In addition, any employee who is called up to active duty in any branch of the military

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service of the United States will be allowed Leaves of Absence and maintenance of rights and benefits consistent with state and federal law upon presentation of orders pursuant to such active duty.

All Military Leave time shall be counted towards all seniority rights and towards eligibility of FMLA Leave.

Catoosa County shall comply with the applicable State of Georgia law and federal law for public employees concerning Military Leave. Employees must comply with the same laws when he or she seeks to return to work following military service.

An employee who has engaged in military service must, in order to be entitled to the reemployment rights set forth in federal and state law, submit an application for reemployment according to the following schedule:

1. *If service is less than 30 days (or for the purpose of taking an Examination to determine fitness for service) – the employee must report for reemployment at the beginning of the first full regularly scheduled working period on the first calendar day following completion of service and the expiration of eight hours after a time for safe transportation back to the employee's residence.*
2. *If service is for 31 days or more but less than 181 days – the employee must submit an application for reemployment with Human Resources no later than fourteen days following the completion of service.*
3. *If service is over 180 days – the employee must submit an application for reemployment with Human Resources no later than ninety days following the completion of service.*
4. *If the employee is hospitalized or convalescing from a service-connected injury – the employee must submit an application for reemployment with Human Resources no later than two years following completion of service.*

### **1109 Civil/Jury Leave**

An employee shall be given necessary time off without loss of pay when performing jury duty or when required by subpoena to be a witness in a legal proceeding, provided such call to duty is reported in advance to the individual's Department Director. Civil Leave pursuant to this Section shall not be charged to PTO.

An employee who is required to perform jury duty or who is required to be a witness in a legal proceeding pursuant to subpoena is obligated to specifically utilize his/her best efforts to minimize the time spent away from work and to request an on-call arrangement for appearance in response to a subpoena. Employees dismissed early from jury duty or released from a subpoena with reasonable hours remaining in the Workday are required

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to return to work for the completion of the Workday. Failure to do so could result in the employee not being paid by the County for those remaining hours.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, an employee shall not be granted Civil Leave for any case or proceeding in which the employee is a litigant, defendant, or other principle party, or if the employee has any other personal or familiar interest in the proceeding, outside the scope of employment. In addition, an employee shall not be granted Civil Leave for any case in which the employee is charged with a crime.

The employee seeking Civil Leave must submit to the applicable Department Director a copy of the subpoena, summons for jury duty, or other court order or process as a prerequisite for approval of Civil Leave. Appropriate certification and service is also required.

An employee shall not be discharged, disciplined, threatened, or otherwise penalized because the employee's absence is for the purpose of a judicial proceeding in response to a subpoena, summons for jury duty, or other court order or process that requires the employee's attendance at the judicial proceeding.

### **1110 Maternity Leave**

Maternity Leave is afforded to employees pursuant to, and governed by, the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") and those provisions set forth in the following Section. Maternity Leave shall be granted to employees upon written request filed by the employee at least ten regularly scheduled Working Days prior to the effective date (unless emergency conditions prohibit the filing of such prior Notice, in which case, it shall be filed as soon as possible). Time for beginning Maternity Leave shall be when the employee, with the approval of her doctor, deems she is no longer able to carry out the duties and responsibilities of her position. Time for termination of Maternity Leave shall be governed by the FMLA when applicable time provided thereunder has elapsed.

An employee on Maternity Leave must utilize any available PTO during any period of Maternity Leave to run concurrent with the FMLA Leave. Upon expiration of any PTO, the remainder of FMLA Leave, if any, shall be unpaid.

Catoosa County will seek to provide modified duty work assignments for all pregnant employees who are temporarily unable to perform their job duties due to pregnancy. Modified duty employment opportunities will be considered in all Departments, not just the Department in which the pregnant employee was working before she requests a light duty assignment.

Modified duty employment opportunities are intended to assist pregnant workers who are temporarily not able to perform their normal job duties. All modified duty assignments will be productive. Duties must never be demeaning or appear worthless in any way.

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Catoosa County, through their reasonable accommodation program, will make efforts to retain pregnant employees who need temporary modified duty in accordance with the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1987.

In addition, as required by the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA), Catoosa County will provide reasonable accommodation for an employee's pregnancy, or any condition related to the employee's pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions including but not limited to, lactation or the need to express breast milk for a nursing child.

An employee may request accommodation by submitting the request in writing to the Human Resources Department (HR). The accommodation request should include an explanation of the pregnancy-related limitations, the accommodation needed, and any alternative accommodation that may be reasonable. HR will engage in an interactive process with the employee to determine a proper accommodation which may include, but is not limited to, job restructuring, reassignment, schedule changes, additional breaks, and the use of a private area shielded from coworkers and the public, other than a bathroom or toilet stall, to accommodate an employee desiring to express breast milk for the employee's infant child.

Catoosa County prohibits retaliation, harassment, discrimination, or any adverse action due to an individual's request for accommodation under the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

### **1111 Family and Medical Leave**

#### (a) Statement of Policy

Pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"), 29 U.S.C. § 2601, *et seq.*, employees may be eligible to take up to twelve weeks (or up to twenty-six weeks of Military Caregiver Leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness) of unpaid Leave during any twelve month period for one or more of the following:

- (i) The birth, adoption or placement of a child;
- (ii) The serious medical condition of a parent, spouse, or child;
- (iii) A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job to include qualified injuries or illnesses that existed prior to military active duty and were aggravated by service while on active duty in the Armed Forces;

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- (iv) Qualifying Exigency Leave is available to eligible employees who are family members of a covered military member to take FMLA Leave to address the most common issues that arise when a covered military member is on covered active duty or called to covered active duty; or
- (v) Military Caregiver Leave is available to eligible employees (defined as the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of an injured or ill servicemember or veteran) to care for the covered servicemember. Eligible employees are entitled to twenty-six work weeks of Leave during a single twelve month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

(b) Rolling Twelve Month Period

For purposes of this Section, a “twelve-month period” means a rolling twelve months measured backward from the date the employee uses any FMLA Leave. If the policies set forth in this Handbook conflict or come into conflict with the FMLA as it presently exists or is amended from time to time, the provisions contained in the FMLA shall control.

(c) Eligibility

Eligible employees as defined by the FMLA shall be entitled to Leave, provided such Leave is within the conditions and limitations provided in the FMLA.

(d) Request for Leave

It shall be the responsibility of the employee to ensure that the appropriate forms required by the Human Resources Director are timely submitted to the Human Resources Director or his/her designee in order to request Leave pursuant to the FMLA. Failure to submit an application and required supporting documentation for Leave pursuant to the FMLA within a reasonable period of time prior to the requested effective date of the Leave, when the reason for the Leave is foreseeable, may constitute grounds for denial of the request. Upon receipt of a request for Leave and a completed medical certificate pursuant to the FMLA, the Human Resources Director shall respond in writing with approval or denial of the Leave within three Working Days. An approval should specify the terms and conditions of the Leave. If a request is denied in whole or in part, the response of the Human Resources Director will specify the reasons for the denial and shall include a Notice of the right to appeal consistent with this Section.

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### (e) Concurrent Utilization of PTO

An employee requesting Leave pursuant to the FMLA is required to utilize all accrued PTO available as part of the twelve week (or twenty-six workweeks to care for an injured or ill servicemember over a twelve month period) Leave period. If the available PTO for the employee is less than twelve working weeks, the additional weeks of Leave necessary to obtain the twelve work weeks of Leave available under the FMLA shall be provided without compensation. In any event, any combination of PTO, and/or unpaid Family and Medical Leave shall not exceed twelve weeks. However, Family and Medical Leave to care for an injured or ill servicemember shall not exceed twenty-six weeks over a twelve month period. PTO must be used concurrently with FMLA Leave. FMLA requests will be retroactively dated to the beginning of the current PTO in the event that the PTO is commenced prior to the request for FMLA Leave.

### (f) Concurrent Workers' Compensation and FMLA Leave

An employee qualifying for Workers' Compensation Leave must run any requested FMLA Leave concurrently with that of all concurrent and/or intermittent Workers' Compensation Leave.

### (g) Intermittent Leave or Reduced Schedule Leave

Leave for childbirth, adoption, or foster care may not be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Leave for a serious health condition of a qualifying family member (parent, spouse, child) or of the employee may not be taken on an intermittent basis or on a reduced Leave schedule unless medically necessary. The taking of any Leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule basis shall reduce the total amount of FMLA Leave that has been approved for the eligible employee according to the actual hours of Leave taken. For example, if an eligible employee takes ten hours of Leave intermittently over twenty Business Days, the employee's bank of available FMLA Leave will be reduced only by ten hours and not by twenty days.

If an eligible employee requests intermittent or reduced schedule Leave that is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, the Human Resources Director may require the employee to transfer temporarily to an available equivalent position for which the employee is qualified that better accommodates recurring periods of absence.

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### (h) Spouses Employed by Same Employer

In any occasion in which spouses in a legally recognized marriage are eligible for Leave under the FMLA and are both employed by Catoosa County, the aggregate number of work weeks of Leave to which both may be entitled may be limited to twelve work weeks during any twelve month rolling period, in the case where Leave is taken for childbirth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a sick parent (as “parent” is defined at 29 C.F.R. § 825.122(c)).

In any occasion in which spouses in a legally recognized marriage are eligible for Leave under the FMLA and are both employed by Catoosa County, the aggregate number of work weeks of Leave to which both may be entitled will be limited to twenty-six work weeks during any twelve month rolling period, in the case where Leave is taken to care for a covered injured or ill service member.

### (i) Foreseeable Leave

In any case in which the necessity for Leave under the FMLA is foreseeable, the employee shall provide the Human Resources Director with written application for the requested Leave and certification no less than thirty days before the date the Leave is to begin, with the exception of Maternity Leave which will be granted to employees upon written request filed by the employee at least ten regularly scheduled Working Days prior to the effective date (unless emergency conditions prohibit the filing of such prior Notice, in which case, it shall be filed as soon as possible).

In a case where the necessity for Leave is based on planned medical treatment, the employee shall make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the employer, subject to the approval of the health care provider and shall provide the Human Resources Director with at least thirty days Notice before the date the Leave is to begin, except that if the date of the treatment requires Leave to begin in less than thirty days, the employee shall provide such Notice as is practicable.

### (j) Certification of Serious Health Conditions

An eligible employee who requests Leave for a serious health condition of the employee or a qualifying family member shall submit certification from an appropriate health care provider to the Human Resources Director



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when requesting Leave.

Certification shall be sufficient if it states:

- (i) the date on which the serious health condition commenced;
- (ii) the probable duration of the treatment or condition;
- (iii) the appropriate medical facts within the health care provider's knowledge; and
- (iv) the estimated amount of time the employee needs to care for the qualifying family member or a statement of the extent to which the employee is unable to perform the essential functions of the employee's position.

(k) Certification of Serious Health Conditions-intermittent Leave

An eligible employee who requests intermittent Leave for a serious health condition of the employee or a qualifying family member shall submit certification from an appropriate health care provider to the Human Resources Director when requesting Leave.

Certification shall be sufficient if it states:

- (i) If an employee requests Leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis for planned medical treatment of the employee's or a covered family member's serious health condition, information sufficient to establish the medical necessity for such intermittent or reduced schedule Leave and an estimate of the dates and duration of such treatments and any periods of recovery;
- (ii) If an employee requests Leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis for the employee's serious health condition, including pregnancy, that may result in unforeseeable episodes of incapacity, information sufficient to establish the medical necessity for such intermittent or reduced schedule Leave and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the episodes of incapacity; and
- (iii) If an employee requests Leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis to care for a covered family member with a serious

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health condition, a statement that such Leave is medically necessary to care for the family member, as described in 29 C.F.R. §§ 825.124 and 825.203(b), which can include assisting in the family member's recovery, and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the required Leave.

(l) Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave

Catoosa County requires certification of the qualifying exigency for Military Family Leave. The employee must respond to such a request within fifteen days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of Leave. This certification will be provided using the United States Department of Labor Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave.

(m) Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Servicemember for Military Family Leave

Catoosa County requires certification for the serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember. The employee must respond to such a request within fifteen days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of Leave. This certification will be provided using the United States Department of Labor Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Servicemember.

(n) Accruals and Benefits during FMLA Leave

An employee on unpaid FMLA Leave shall not be entitled to the accrual of any seniority or employment benefits during the period of unpaid FMLA Leave, including but not limited to, the accrual of PTO. The employee, while on paid FMLA Leave, is entitled to accrue PTO during the periods of paid FMLA Leave. For the purposes of pension or retirement plans, any period of FMLA Leave will be treated as Continuous Service for the purposes of vesting and eligibility to participate.

FMLA time will not be counted as part of an employee's working test period, but will be added to the remaining working test period, extending the ending date of the working test period.

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During any period of Leave, Catoosa County will maintain any health insurance provided by Catoosa County to the employee for the duration of the Leave at the level and under the conditions coverage would have been provided if the employee had continued in employment continuously for the duration of such Leave. If, however, the employee fails to return from Leave after the period of Leave to which the employee is entitled has expired and the employee fails to return for a reason other than the continuation, recurrence, or on-set of a serious health condition or other conditions beyond the control of the employee, Catoosa County may recover the premium(s) that the County may have paid for maintaining coverage for the employee during the period of Leave. If the employee is unable to return to work because of the continuation, recurrence, or on-set of a serious health condition, the Human Resources Director may require that the employee provide a certification of such circumstance.

During any period of Leave, Catoosa County will continue to make available to the employee coverage for health insurance for dependents and other supplemental insurance, provided however, that the employee pays all premiums owed on a monthly basis. Failure to pay such premiums on a timely basis each month will result in coverage for health insurance for dependents and supplemental insurance being terminated. Employees will be required to execute a form with the Human Resources Department identifying the premiums for which the employee is responsible prior to the commencement of the Leave.

None of the above and foregoing limits the accrual of seniority or PTO time for those on Workers' Compensation Leave that runs concurrently with FMLA Leave.

### (o) Appeals of Denials

In the event that the Human Resources Director denies in whole or in part a request for Leave pursuant to the FMLA, an employee has the right to appeal that decision consistent with the following procedures.

Any such appeal from an employee must be filed within three Working Days following receipt of the denial decision from the Human Resources Director. The written Notice of appeal shall include the request for the Leave and all supporting documentation provided to the Human Resources Director. The appeal shall be filed with the County Manager who has the authority to amend or reverse the decision of the Human Resources Director. Failure of the employee to appeal within three Working Days shall result in forfeiture of any further right of appeal of a denial.

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The County Manager shall review the record of the appeal and shall, within five Working Days, issue a final determination. The decision of the County Manager, as applicable, shall be final.

(p) Return to Duty from FMLA Leave

As a condition for return to duty, the employee may be required to provide certification from the employee's health care provider that the employee is able to resume work. Upon expiration of the period of Leave pursuant to the FMLA, the employee shall be returned to his/her former position or a position of equal Grade and pay, provided that the employee has complied with the terms of the Leave and reported for return of duty at the appropriate time. While the employee shall be restored to a position of employment without loss of employment benefits accrued prior to the date on which the Leave commenced, the employee shall have no greater rights than those in effect prior to the commencement of the Leave.

### **1112 Leave Without Pay**

An employee who has been employed by the County for a minimum of one year may, upon written application to his/her Department Director and the Human Resources Director, obtain a continuous Leave of Absence without pay for a period of time not to exceed six months. An application for a Leave of Absence shall be submitted in writing by the employee to the applicable Department Director and to the Human Resources Director, showing the employee's reason for requesting such Leave, a statement that the employee intends to return to Catoosa County employment upon expiration of such Leave, a statement that the employee will not otherwise become employed during the period of the Leave, and a statement that the employee otherwise agrees to the terms and conditions as outlined in this Handbook. Approval of a request for a Leave of Absence is within the sole discretion of the applicable Department Director, pending final approval by the County Manager. A Notice of approval/denial of the request for a Leave of Absence shall be provided to the employee by the Human Resources Director and shall contain the terms and conditions of the approval or reasons for denial.

During the employee's approved Leave of Absence, the position may be filled on a temporary basis. At the expiration of the Leave, the employee shall be reinstated to the former position or to a position of equal Grade and pay without loss of any rights, provided the employee returns within the terms of the Leave granted and provided that such a position is available. Once a Leave of Absence is approved, the employee may request reinstatement earlier than the time for which the Leave of Absence was approved. Such request for early reinstatement may or may not be granted. In any event, an employee will not be entitled to accrue any employment benefits during the period of the

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Leave. Specifically, an employee shall not be entitled to accrue PTO during the period of any Leave of Absence. In addition, an employee is not entitled to continued contributions to Catoosa County's Retirement plan. If an employee is on an approved Leave of Absence, the employee may retain his/her personal health insurance benefits as long as the employee continues to pay his/her portion of the premium costs at the time and in the manner required by the County. If an employee on approved Leave wishes to continue health insurance coverage for any dependents, the employee is responsible for making the requisite premium payments at the time and in the manner required by the County.

Upon approval of an employee's Leave of Absence, the employee will be required to turn in all County equipment, including, but not limited to, all County identification badges, keys, telephones, punch cards, and any other County documentation or property.

During a Leave of Absence, an employee may not become employed in any capacity. Should an employee become employed during a Leave of Absence, the employee will be immediately terminated from Catoosa County.

### **1113 Voting Leave**

The County encourages employees to vote in all local, state, and national primary and general elections for which the employee is qualified and registered to vote. Federal regulations now provide for advance voting during the week prior to each election, and employees are encouraged to take advantage of advance voting so that the County is not overburdened with absences on Election Day. Employees may contact the Elections Department regarding the location of polls for purposes of advance voting.

Each employee may, upon at least twenty-four hours prior Notice to his/her Supervisor, take necessary time off from employment without loss of pay to vote in any municipal, county, state, or federal primary or election for which the employee is qualified and registered to vote. Such time off to vote shall not exceed two hours. However, if the hours of work of the employee commences at least two hours after the opening of the polls or ends at least two hours prior to the closing of the polls, an employee is not entitled to any time off pursuant to this Section. For example, if voting polls are open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., and an employee works from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., the employee should require no time off to vote. Any time off taken to vote pursuant to this Section must be approved by the applicable Supervisor and will not be charged against the employee's PTO.

### **1114 Request for Leave to Observe Religious Holidays**

An employee, upon request to the applicable Department Director at least seven days in advance shall be given priority consideration for time off for observance of religious holidays not already provided for as a holiday. Any paid Leave for such religious holiday

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observance shall be charged to accrued PTO as available to the employee at the time of the holiday observance. A request by an employee for time away from work to observe religious holidays shall not be denied, unless the duties performed by the employee are urgently required and the employee, in the judgment of the applicable Department Director, is the only person available who can perform the duties. However, a request by an employee for time away from work to observe a religious holiday may be denied if the employee does not have enough accrued PTO to accommodate the Leave request or an undue hardship would in fact result from granting such request.

### **1115 Paid Administrative Leave**

A Department Director, the County Manager, the Human Resources Director, or their respective designee, with notification to the Human Resources Department, may place an employee on Paid Administrative Leave when an employee is being investigated by Catoosa County for possible misconduct or by a law enforcement agency for possible violation of a criminal law or in any instance where it is considered to be in the interest of Catoosa County and/or the employee.

Administrative Leave shall be with pay. Every effort shall be made to complete the investigation within an initial ten-day Administrative Leave period. At the expiration of the initial ten-day period, if the investigation has not been completed, the Administrative Leave may be extended for an additional twenty Working Days upon written notification to the Human Resources Department by the official who placed the employee on Administrative Leave. At the conclusion of the twenty-day Administrative Leave period, if the investigation has not been concluded, an extension may be considered or the employee may be terminated or reinstated.

The purposes of Administrative Leave are to provide an investigatory opportunity and/or to relieve the employee of his/her duties when it is deemed in the best interest of the County and the employee. Designation of the Leave as "Paid Administrative Leave" is to prevent any possible stigma against an employee during a period of Administrative Leave. Notice of the conclusion of the Administrative Leave period shall be provided in writing to the employee by the applicable Supervisory official with copies of the written Notice provided to the Human Resources Director. Upon conclusion of the Administrative Leave period, and provided that no disciplinary action is taken as a result of the Administrative Leave period, the employee's personnel file shall be documented to reflect that the investigation concluded favorably for the employee.

### **1116 Leave Due to County Office Closure**

In the event of hazardous weather, or other occurrence resulting in the closure of the County offices as approved by the County Manager, all employees who are scheduled to work during the period for which the County is officially closed will be paid. Full-time Employees shall be paid closure pay according to hours worked in their regularly

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scheduled shifts. Part-time, temporary, and Seasonal Employees shall not be paid.

If questionable weather exists, but the County is open for business, employees should make their own independent safety determinations concerning travel to work. If the employee elects not to attend work due to safety concerns when the County is open for business, the employee's absence will be charged against any accrued PTO. If no such accrued PTO exists, the employee will not be compensated. Public safety and Fire Suppression employees are expected to monitor weather conditions and report to work as scheduled.

Certain positions require mandatory coverage because they provide a critical County service such as Fire, Building Maintenance and Public Works Departments. The Department Director may wish to provide transportation to assure proper staffing of services.

All other Departments may be called in to assist in the case of emergency and will be compensated in accordance with FLSA laws.

### **1117 Funeral Leave**

Leave with pay may be granted to an employee in the event of any death which occurs in the employee's immediate family. Funeral Leave may be granted at the maximum of up to three (3) working days but not to exceed twenty-four (24) working hours. Immediate family for purposes of this section shall include the employee's spouse, child, step-child, parent, step-parent, parent-in-law, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, spouse's grandparent, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, aunt, uncle or any other relative who resides in the employee's household. Such Funeral Leave shall not be charged to PTO, even if the employee has been absent from work to care for the deceased family member pursuant to the Family Medical Leave Act.

The employee is charged with the responsibility of verbally requesting Funeral Leave directly from his/her Department Director. The Department Director may also request supporting documentation to justify the amount of time that has been requested and approved, such as a funeral announcement.

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### **1200 Workplace Harassment**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

### **1201 Prohibited Harassment**

#### (a) Discriminatory Harassment

It is Catoosa County's policy to maintain a working environment free of any and all harassment, including harassment based on a person's race, color, national origin, religion, sex/gender, disability, age, veteran status, citizenship, sexual orientation, genetic information, uniformed service status, gender identity, transgendered status, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions or other protected group status. To assist in preventing or eliminating any such unwelcome harassment, Catoosa County will not tolerate any form of harassment or unlawful discrimination by or against its employees, Supervisors, and Department Directors.

All employees, Supervisors, and Department Directors are expected to avoid any behavior or conduct that could reasonably be interpreted as harassment. Any form of harassment related to an individual's race, color, national origin, religion, sex/gender, disability, age, veteran status, citizenship, sexual orientation, genetic information, uniformed service status, gender identity, transgendered status, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions or other protected group status, is a violation of this Chapter and will be treated as a disciplinary matter. For purposes of this Chapter, the term "discriminatory harassment" shall be construed consistent with applicable law and may include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- (i) Offensive remarks, comments, jokes or slurs pertaining to an individual's race, color, national origin, religion, sex/gender, disability, age, veteran status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or genetic information, uniformed service status, gender identity, transgendered status, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions other protected group status;
- (ii) Offensive pictures, drawings, posters, photographs, reading materials, computer monitors, or other tangible items, or communications including e-mail, that are reasonably offensive or that reasonably exploit an individual's race, color, national origin, religion, sex/gender, disability, age, veteran status, citizenship, genetic information, uniformed service status, pregnancy,



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- childbirth, or related medical conditions or other protected group status;
- (iii) Threatening reprisals based on an employee's race, color, national origin, religion, sex/gender, disability, age, veteran status, citizenship, sexual orientation, genetic information, uniformed service status, gender identity, transgendered status, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions or other protected group status; or
- (iv) Conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance and/or conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

### (b) Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of harassment and will be treated in accordance with the express terms of this Chapter. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (i) Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment;
- (ii) Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used, either in part or in full, as the basis for employment decisions; or
- (iii) The conduct has the purpose or the effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's job performance or when such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

For purposes of this Chapter, the term "sexual harassment" shall be construed consistent with applicable law and may include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- (i) Sexual assaults, including rape and molestation, or attempts or threats to commit such acts;
- (ii) Unwanted intentional physical contact of a sexual or suggestive nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, kissing, brushing, or poking of another person's body regardless of the gender of the individuals involved;
- (iii) Offensive sexual remarks, sexual advances or requests for sexual favors regardless of the gender of the individuals involved;

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- (iv) Threatening reprisals for an employee's refusal to respond to requests for sexual favors;
- (v) Disciplining or retaliating against any individual in any way because he or she has resisted, reported or complained about sexual harassment;
- (vi) Preferential treatment, or the promise of preferential treatment, for engaging in sexual conduct;
- (vii) Offensive pictures, drawings, posters, reading materials, calendars, photographs or other physical objects, or communications, including e-mail, that are sexually suggestive, sexually demeaning or pornographic;
- (viii) Any conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance and/or conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment; or
- (ix) Suggesting or inferring to any employee, Supervisor, Elected Official/Department Director (or Applicant for any such position) that his or her employment, advancement, or treatment will be affected in any way by entering into (or refusing to enter into) any form of personal or sexual relationship.

### **1202 Application to all Employees, Supervisors, Elected Officials/ Department Directors**

All employees, Supervisors, and Department Directors are subject to the terms and provisions of this Chapter, and are to avoid any behavior or conduct that could be interpreted as discriminatory or sexual harassment as set forth above. All employees, Supervisors, and Department Directors have a responsibility to inform an individual whenever the individual's behavior is unwelcome, offensive, in poor taste, or inappropriate and to report harassment as set forth herein.

### **1203 Reporting Harassment**

#### **(a) Officials to Whom Complaints Shall Be Made**

Incidents interpreted by any individual to be in violation of this Chapter should be brought to the attention of the individual's Supervisor or to the

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attention of the applicable Department Director or to the Human Resources Director, depending on to whomever the employee feels most comfortable reporting. Any individual who has not personally experienced conduct prohibited by this Chapter, but who believes that such conduct has occurred, shall report that information to the applicable Department Director or to the Human Resources Director.

### (b) Investigation of Harassment Complaints

#### (i) Investigation will be as timely and as confidential as possible.

Incidents reported by anyone pursuant to this Chapter will be handled in a timely manner, and as confidentially as possible. Due to the nature of the investigation process, however, Catoosa County cannot guarantee confidentiality. Information reported by any individual pursuant to this Chapter will not be unnecessarily released to third parties or to any person not involved in the investigation or involved in the conduct forming the basis of the complaint. Upon conclusion of the investigation, any such information will only be released to the extent required by law. No person involved in the investigation shall discuss the complaint or investigation with any person outside of the investigation process. This provision is intended to protect the confidentiality of anyone who files a complaint, to encourage the reporting of all incidents of harassment, and to ensure the fair treatment of all parties involved.

#### (ii) Investigation by duly appointed agent.

Upon receiving a complaint of harassment pursuant to this policy, Catoosa County will conduct an investigation into the allegations. The investigation will be conducted by the Human Resources Director unless an alternate arrangement has been made with the applicable Department Director. If the complaint involves an individual in the Human Resources Department, the investigation shall be conducted by the County Manager or his/her designee.

#### (iii) Intent and purpose of the investigation.

The intent of the investigation is to obtain further information about the events or conduct complained of, to enable the person(s) named in the complaint to tell his or her side of the story, to determine whether harassment has in fact occurred, and to develop an appropriate resolution. Anyone making a complaint pursuant to this Chapter may be asked to put his or her complaint in writing.

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The person to whom the complaint is made, or the person or persons investigating the complaint, may take notes and may request the complainant to sign those notes. All employees, Supervisors, and Department Directors are expected to fully cooperate with any investigation of a complaint of harassment. Failure to cooperate will be justification for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

(iv) No reprisal against Complainant.

No individual will be retaliated against for reporting a violation of this Chapter or for cooperating with an investigation of a complaint of harassment. However, intentional, or malicious false accusations of misconduct could have a serious effect on an individual who has been falsely accused. Individuals falsely accusing another of misconduct will be disciplined based on the extent of the false accusation, up to and including termination.

(v) Notification of belief that investigation is not being handled properly.

If, at any time, anyone feels that his or her complaint is not being handled properly, he or she should immediately contact the Human Resources Director, the County Manager, or the applicable Department Director.

### **1204 Disciplinary Action**

Violation of any provision of this Chapter will subject the offender to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. If anyone has any questions about what constitutes harassing behavior or what conduct is prohibited by this Chapter, he or she should contact the Human Resources Director.

### **1205 Importance of Policy**

Catoosa County is serious about enforcing its policy against harassment. However, Catoosa County cannot respond to complaints of harassment unless it is aware of those complaints. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each employee, Supervisor, Department Director to report any incident of harassment so that Catoosa County can take corrective action as needed. Anyone who experiences or observes any violation of this Chapter is required to report the same under the terms of this Chapter prior to the end of the Workday or the following Workday on which the violation was believed to occur.

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### **1300 Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

#### **1301 Statement of Policy**

Catoosa County is committed to maintaining a work environment free from the adverse impact of employee drug and alcohol abuse. Employee drug and alcohol abuse constitutes a direct threat to the lives and property of the employees and citizens of the County and to the public health, safety, and welfare of all persons in the County.

Catoosa County does not and will not tolerate any employee's possession, sale, distribution, consumption, or presence in the body of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs while on County property and/or on County business at any time.

This Chapter is intended to comply with federal regulations and state laws that mandate pre-employment, reasonable suspicion, random, and post-accident testing of certain positions of employment, and to further the objective of protecting the persons and property of the County's employees, citizens, and the general public. This Chapter will be strictly enforced against all employees. To the extent that this Chapter and any results from a fitness for duty test conflict, the most strenuous provision favoring a drug and alcohol free workplace shall govern.

#### **1302 Drug and Alcohol Use Prohibited for all Employees**

This Chapter applies to all employees. This Chapter applies to off-site lunch periods or breaks when an employee is scheduled to return to work, as well as to County Premises as discussed in Section 1303 below. Visitors, vendors, and contractors are governed by this Chapter to the extent they are on County Premises or in County vehicles and will not be permitted to conduct business if found to be in violation of this Chapter.

#### **1303 Drug and Alcohol Use Prohibited on County Premises**

Substance and alcohol use by Catoosa County employees during assigned working hours on County Premises, or otherwise while on County business is prohibited. This shall include the use of illegal substances, the abuse of prescription medications and over-the-counter medications, and the use of or abuse of alcohol.

As used herein, "County Premises" includes all property, facilities, land, platforms, buildings, structures, fixtures, installations, parking lots, and vehicles, whether leased or used by Catoosa County government or its officials, managers, Supervisors, employees, or other agents. This definition also includes locations other than County headquarters and offices, including all other locations of County-sponsored recreational, social, or

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educational events, and any place where a Catoosa County employee is located while traveling to or from such location in the course and scope of his duties on behalf of the County, including an employee's own vehicle when the employee is using it on County business, or when the vehicle is parked on County property. This definition shall not be interpreted to imply that the County assumes or accepts responsibility for any wrongful, tortious, negligent, or criminal acts of any person whom it employs when such person is not acting pursuant to a County Supervisor's instruction in furtherance of the County's business, nor shall it constitute a waiver of any immunity which Catoosa County or its officials or employees might have under federal, state, or local laws or ordinances.

### **1304 Impairment**

Drug and alcohol abuse on or off County Premises is entirely inconsistent with fitness for duty and as such shall constitute an impairment. Catoosa County prohibits employees from being at work, on County Premises, operating County equipment, or operating any other equipment or vehicles on County business while impaired due to any illegal drug(s), legally obtained drug(s), or alcohol.

### **1305 Prohibited Substances**

- (a) Illegal Drugs or controlled substances
  - (i) "Illegal drug(s) or controlled substance(s)" means any drug or substances the law prohibits individuals from manufacturing, dispensing, using, consuming, possessing, distributing, purchasing, selling, or otherwise transferring, including, without limitation, all drugs listed as controlled substances under Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia. This definition encompasses any measurable amount of any drugs or controlled substances such as amphetamines, cannabinoids, cocaine, phencyclidine (PCP), methadone, methaqualone, opiates, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, propoxyphene or other drugs made unlawful under federal or state laws, or a metabolite of any such substances, "look-alikes," "designer drugs" having the same or similar psychotropic effects, unauthorized alcoholic beverages, marijuana, hallucinogens (whether natural or synthetic), inhalants, unauthorized prescription drugs, or authorized drugs which are not prescribed for a verifiable medical condition and/or are not used in strict accordance with this Chapter and with the prescribing physician's instructions, or any other substances that are mood-altering, mind or consciousness-affecting, or which are likely to have an effect upon a person's perceptions, sensations, thought processes, self-awareness, emotions, or other mental or physiological or psychological reactions or behavior. It also includes urinaid or other substances,

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natural or synthetic, of a similar nature or purpose designated or used to alter a urine specimen or to conceal illicit chemical substances or their metabolites in an initial screening test.

- (ii) Catoosa County prohibits employees from manufacturing, dispensing, using, consuming, possessing, distributing, purchasing, selling, or otherwise transferring any illegal drug(s) or controlled substance(s) while on the job, on call, on County Premises, while operating County equipment or vehicles, or while operating any other equipment or vehicle while on County business.
- (iii) An employee is impaired due to the influence of illegal drug(s) or controlled substance(s) if such employee's drug test results indicate the presence of an illegal drug or controlled substance in an amount that constitutes a positive test under accepted scientific standards.

### (b) Legally Obtained Drugs

- (i) A "legally obtained drug" includes prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs. A "prescription drug" means any substance that is attainable only by lawful prescription from a physician. "Over-the-counter" medication includes any substance that does not require a prescription, but which has the capacity to affect a person physically, mentally, or emotionally or which could otherwise affect a person's ability to perform.
- (ii) Employees must not be on the job, on call, on County Premises, operating County equipment or vehicles, or operating any other equipment or vehicle while on County business while impaired due to any drug, legal or illegal, that renders the employee unfit for duty. An employee is "unfit for duty" if, in the County's opinion, the employee's use of legally obtained drugs jeopardizes his or her ability to work safely and efficiently. An employee who is using legally obtained drugs must notify his or her immediate Supervisor of any and all symptoms and probable adverse side effects that may render him or her unfit for duty. An employee's failure to so notify the County constitutes grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including, termination. If any employee's medically required use of legally obtained drugs renders the employee unfit for duty and, in the opinion of the County, a temporary alternative job assignment is not available, the employee will be considered unfit for duty.

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- (iii) Employees using legally obtained drugs while on the job shall do so in strict accordance with physician and/or manufacturer's directions. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the prescribing physician of the duties required by the employee's position and to ensure that the physician approves the use of the prescription medication while the employee is performing his or her duties.
  - (iv) The abuse and/or inappropriate use of legally obtained drugs while on the job, on call, on County Premises, while operating County equipment or vehicles, or while operating any other equipment or vehicle while on County business shall be prohibited and is a disciplinary matter. Job performance or attendance deficiencies resulting from abuse and/or inappropriate use shall be cause for disciplinary action.
- (c) Alcohol
  - (i) "Alcohol" includes any beverage or substance containing alcohol manufactured for the primary purpose of personal consumption. Catoosa County prohibits employees from using, consuming, possessing, distributing, purchasing, selling, or otherwise transferring alcoholic beverages on the job, on call, on County premises, while operating County equipment or vehicles, or while operating any other equipment or vehicles while on County business.
  - (ii) No employee shall use alcohol while on the job, on call, on County Premises, while operating County equipment or vehicle, or while operating any other equipment or vehicle while on County business. In addition, no employee shall use alcohol within four hours of reporting for duty. Violation of these provisions is prohibited and subjects the employee to discipline, up to and including termination.
  - (iii) Catoosa County also prohibits employees from being on the job, on call, on County Premises or operating County equipment or vehicles, or operating any other equipment or vehicles on County business while under the influence of alcohol. An employee is "under the influence of alcohol" if, based upon the employees' speech statements, behavior, conduct, appearance, or odor, the County reasonably believes the employee is under the influence of alcohol in a manner that is adversely affecting the employee's behavior. An employee is also under the influence if an evidential



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breath test indicates a result of 0.02 percent or higher. An employee is further considered under the influence of alcohol if he has been arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol any County equipment or vehicles, or any other equipment or vehicles while on County business.

### **1306 When Testing is Required**

#### (a) Pre-Employment/Post-Offer Testing

All Applicants for positions of employment with Catoosa County will be tested for drugs after a conditional offer of employment has been extended. Drug tests must also be performed on all seasonal and shift employees returning to employment with the County after six months of absence from employment. No such Applicant/new hire or such seasonal or shift employee as described above shall report to duty or be allowed to report to duty until the results of the drug test are obtained. Any such Applicant/new hire or seasonal or shift employee described above who refuses a pre-employment/post-offer drug test(s) or who tests positive, shall not be extended a final offer of employment and will not be considered for any subsequent employment for a period of at least two years. The Applicant will, however, be afforded the opportunity to contest the test results as set forth in this Chapter.

#### (b) Random Testing

All employees who are required to hold a commercial driver's license (hereinafter referred to as "CDL" or "CDL positions" or positions governed under FMCSA Title 49 Transportation Part 382) and employees in Safety Sensitive Positions shall be subject to random testing as follows:

- (i) Tests will be ordered on a random, unannounced basis from the pool of identified CDL and Safety Sensitive employees.
- (ii) A random selection method and test rates as adopted by the Human Resources Director will be used to select employees, thereby allowing each employee an equal chance of being tested each month. Random selection test rates are subject to change as determined by the Human Resource Director or if applicable, as required by law under the FMCSA or FTA.
- (iii) An employee's name will remain in the pool after being selected so that every employee will have an equal chance of being tested each time selections are made. Therefore, it is possible that any

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CDL or Safety Sensitive employee, who is randomly selected for testing, may be randomly selected again during the same year.

(c) After-Care Testing

Persons in CDL and Safety Sensitive Positions returning to work from an approved treatment program for drug or alcohol abuse may be subject to unannounced testing at the discretion of the Department Director for a period of six months following the employee's return to work.

(d) Return to Duty Testing

All employees who are absent from work for more than thirty days, for any reason, shall be tested for drugs immediately upon returning to work and before performing any job duties.

(e) Position Testing

Employees who are transferred, reclassified, promoted, or demoted from a non-CDL/non-Safety Sensitive Position into a CDL or Safety Sensitive Position will be tested for drugs before performing any job duties in the new position.

(f) Reasonable Suspicion

All employees will be subject to testing when there is reasonable suspicion that the employee has used drugs or misused alcohol in violation of this Chapter. Any employee who is required to take a reasonable suspicion test will be immediately suspended without pay pending the results of the test and confirmation of the results, if applicable.

(i) Any Supervisor who has received training in the signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol use and impairment may require an employee to undergo a reasonable suspicion test(s) for drugs or alcohol. A reasonable suspicion test may be required based upon, but not limited to the following:

(1) the personal observation of the employee's job performance, appearance, behavior, speech, or odor by the trained individual creating a reasonable suspicion that the employee has used drugs or alcohol in violation of this Chapter;

(2) personal observation of the employee by another individual

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who has fully disclosed the observation to the trained Supervisor;

- (3) observation of the employee by a nurse or physician engaged in the treatment or evaluation of a work related injury who has disclosed such observations to the County; or
- (4) information from a law enforcement agency received by the County.

Additionally, any untrained Supervisor may require a reasonable suspicion test(s) for drugs or alcohol when a trained Supervisor or the Human Resources Director has reviewed the underlying facts and agrees that reasonable suspicion exists to require a test.

- (ii) Specific and objective facts indicating that an employee's drug or alcohol use may have caused or have been a contributing factor to an on-duty Motor Vehicle accident will give rise to a reasonable suspicion test(s) for drugs or alcohol. The following facts, if present, may independently or collectively, depending upon the circumstances, give rise to reasonable suspicion:
  - (1) The appearance, behavior, speech or odor of the employee immediately prior to or after the accident;
  - (2) The employee left the scene or attempted to leave the accident scene without legal authority or permission to do so, or failed to report the accident to the appropriate individual or otherwise attempted to keep appropriate persons from learning about the accident or the extent of the accident;
  - (3) The employee acted contrary to a safety rule, established safety practice or otherwise engaged in demonstrably unsafe behavior for which there is no reasonable explanation;
  - (4) The employee was arrested or received a traffic citation;
  - (5) The employee or any other person received medical attention as a result of the accident; and
  - (6) The employee has been involved, as a contributing factor,

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in a pattern of repetitive on-duty accidents whether or not they involved actual or potential injury.

Notwithstanding the foregoing factors indicating reasonable suspicion of drug or alcohol use due to involvement in an on-duty Motor Vehicle accident, it is the policy of the County to administer drug and alcohol tests to any and all employees involved in any of the accidents described in paragraph (g) below.

- (iii) Specific and objective facts indicating that an employee's drug or alcohol use may have caused or been a contributing factor to an on-duty accident involving the use of heavy machinery will give rise to a reasonable suspicion test(s) for drugs or alcohol. The following facts, if present, may independently or collectively, depending on the circumstances, give rise to reasonable suspicion:
  - (1) the appearance, behavior, speech or odor of the employee immediately prior to, or after, the accident;
  - (2) the employee left the accident scene or attempted to leave the accident scene without legal authority or authorization to do so, or failed to report the accident to the appropriate individual or otherwise attempted to keep appropriate persons from learning about the accident or the extent of the accident;
  - (3) the employee acted contrary to a safety rule, established safety practices or otherwise engaged in demonstrably unsafe behavior without a reasonable explanation;
  - (4) the employee or any other person received medical attention as a result of the accident; and
  - (5) the employee has been involved as a contributing factor in a pattern of on-duty accidents whether or not they involved actual or potential injury.

Notwithstanding the foregoing factors indicating reasonable suspicion of drug or alcohol use due to involvement in an on-duty accident involving the use of heavy machinery, it is the policy of the County to administer drug and alcohol tests to any and all employees involved in any of the accidents described in paragraph (g) below.

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### (g) Post-Accident Testing

Alcohol and drug test(s) should be completed within eight hours of an accident resulting in any of the events described below. This testing is to be performed in addition to any drug or alcohol test(s) ordered by law enforcement authorities. It is the responsibility of the immediate Supervisor to ensure the involved employee or individual reports immediately for testing. Failure to do so can result in disciplinary action taken against the Supervisor and/or employee up to and including immediate termination.

Drug and alcohol testing must be performed within policy guidelines when any employee, while operating a County vehicle, transit vehicle or heavy machinery is involved in an accident that results in: (1) a fatality; or (2) a citation issued to the employee; or (3) an injured person requiring immediate medical treatment away from the scene; or (4) damage to County or personal property; or (5) damage to a vehicle to the extent that it is towed away.

### (h) Post-Workplace Injury Testing

Alcohol and drug tests should be completed within eight hours of any workplace injury. The involved employee must report immediately for testing, or be subject to immediate termination.

## **1307 Persons Subject to Testing**

### (a) CDL Employees

Employees who are required to possess a CDL license as a job requirement are subject to all testing provisions of this Chapter, including, but not limited to, pre-employment, post-accident, reasonable suspicion, random testing, position testing, return to duty and follow-up testing. CDL employees will be tested based on procedures in compliance with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Transportation Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Programs regulations set forth in 49 CFR Part 40 ("DOT Guidelines").

### (b) Safety Sensitive Employees

Safety Sensitive employees occupy positions where a lapse of judgment or impaired physical/mental ability in performing any essential job function

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could reasonably result in a significant threat of harm to the employee, fellow employees, citizens, inmates, or others. Safety Sensitive Positions include, but are not limited to, those which, as a part of the essential job functions, require: the performance of law enforcement duties as a POST-certified law enforcement officer; possession of a firearm; providing emergency medical, rescue, or fire suppression services; interacting with incarcerated persons or persons on probation for drug charges; direct involvement in the enforcement of drug laws; direct involvement, access to, handling of or testing of illegal drugs that have been seized, confiscated by or taken into custody by law enforcement; the performance of duties essential to drug interdiction; primarily operating motorized equipment, heavy machinery or heavy equipment or the maintenance of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, heavy machinery or heavy equipment and are not otherwise designated as a CDL position subject to DOT Guidelines; or the performance of duties which directly affect public health or safety, such as 911 Communications Dispatchers, 911 Supervisors and Emergency Management.

Safety Sensitive employees are subject to all testing provisions of this Chapter, including, but not limited to, pre-employment, post-accident, reasonable suspicion, random, position testing, return to duty and follow-up testing. Safety Sensitive employees will be tested based upon procedures in compliance with DOT Guidelines.

(c) All Employees

Employees are subject to all testing provisions of this Chapter including, but not limited to, pre-employment, post-accident, reasonable suspicion, return to duty, follow up testing and position testing. Employees not holding a CDL or Safety Sensitive Position shall be drug tested via non-DOT drug testing guidelines.

(d) Job Applicants

All Applicants are subject to pre-employment testing after a conditional offer of employment has been extended.

(e) Employees in Offices of Elected Officials

Employees in the offices of Elected Officials are subject to the testing provisions contained in this Chapter, unless the Elected Official has adopted a more stringent drug and alcohol workplace policy specific to his or her Department.

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### **1308 Procedures for Testing**

- (a) Whenever a drug or alcohol test(s) is to be performed under this Chapter, the Department Director or his/her designee shall be notified of the circumstances necessitating the test(s) as soon as possible.
- (b) Alcohol screening will be conducted using a federally approved evidential breath-testing device or the use of a swab/saliva test performed by an approved independent medical facility.
- (c) All drug tests, regardless of the purpose for the test, shall be performed as a Panel test for the following drugs or classes of drugs: (1) Marijuana metabolites; (2) Cocaine metabolites; (3) Amphetamines; (4) Opiate metabolites; and (5) Phencyclidine (PCP). Additional testing to the Opioid category will include Hydrocodone, Hydromorphone, Oxycodone, Oxymorphone.
- (d) All drug tests shall be administered and accounted for by an approved laboratory and/or medical facility that is operating in compliance with the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Testing will involve an initial screening test(s) and confirmation of positive tests by gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) analysis. Tests will be certified, to the fullest extent possible under the circumstances, by a laboratory approved by the DHHS.
- (e) All positive test results for drugs will be interpreted by a physician approved by the County as a medical review officer ("MRO") before the results are reported to the County. Prior to notifying the County, the MRO will make reasonable efforts to contact the employee for the purpose of allowing the employee to offer an alternative medical explanation for the positive test result. If the MRO is able to contact the Applicant or employee and determines there is a legitimate medical explanation for the positive test, the result will be communicated as negative to the County. The MRO's inability to contact the Applicant or employee before providing test results to the County will not void the test results or make the test results unusable in any subsequent disciplinary action. An Applicant or employee who fails to respond to an inquiry by the MRO within forty-eight hours of such inquiry shall have waived his/her opportunity to offer an alternative medical explanation for the positive test result or to request confirmation testing. Because the employee is present for interpretation of an alcohol test, the procedure concerning prior notification by the MRO is not applicable.

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- (f) Upon notification by the MRO of a confirmed positive result for drugs, the employee may request, within five calendar days of such notification, that the remaining portion of his/her specimen undergo a second confirmation test at his/her expense at a DHHS laboratory of his/her choice. If the test conducted by the laboratory selected by the employee is negative for the presence of drugs, a third test may be made at the County's sole expense at a separate DHHS facility of its own choosing. The results of the third facility will be determinative. If the results from the third facility are negative, all prior positive tests will be disregarded and shall not be the basis for any disciplinary or adverse action. This option of a confirmation test is contingent upon there being enough of the specimen remaining to allow for a confirmation test.
- (g) The County will make reasonable efforts to notify the employee in writing of a positive drug test within five days from the date it receives the test results. Because the results of a breath alcohol test are immediately available, this provision will not apply to alcohol tests conducted in such a manner.
- (h) Any employee ordered to be tested based upon reasonable suspicion, shall be immediately removed from duty, escorted to the testing facility, and taken home (unless other suitable arrangements have been made to transport the employee). Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to drive himself or herself home. The employee shall be suspended without pay pending the results of the test and any confirmation tests, if applicable. If the positive test is explained or negated by the MRO and/or subsequent confirmation testing, the employee shall be reinstated with back pay and the Suspension without pay will be expunged from the employee's personnel file.
- (i) In the event that it is not reasonable under the circumstances to conduct an alcohol test based on a breath test, the County reserves the right to test for the presence of drugs or alcohol by a blood test analysis. If this procedure is used, the County will make reasonable efforts to notify the employee of the results within ten days after the results are received. A MRO will not be used when a blood test for alcohol is conducted.

### **1309 Consent for Testing**

Prior to date of hire, all employees and job Applicants will be provided a consent form consenting to any and all frequency of drug and/or alcohol test(s) set forth in this Chapter and permitting the release of test results to the employer and/or the medical review officials. Signed consent forms are kept on file by the Human Resources Department and



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are enforceable for the duration of employment.

Any employee subject to drug and alcohol testing under this Chapter who refuses to submit to a drug and alcohol test as required herein shall be subject to termination. Employees who refuse to be escorted or fail to appear at the designated collection site to take the test when so directed or as required by this Chapter shall also be subject to termination.

Refusal can include an inability to provide a sufficient urine specimen, breath, or saliva sample without a valid medical explanation, as well as a verbal declaration, obstructive behavior, or physical absence resulting in the inability to conduct the test.

### **1310 Arrests/Indictments/Convictions for Drug or Alcohol Related Offenses**

An employee must report his/her arrest, indictment and/or conviction for violation of a criminal drug statute (including any drug or alcohol offenses under local, state, or federal law, including but not limited to any drug or alcohol offenses enumerated in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated) whether the violation occurs in or outside the workplace or on or off duty, to his/her immediate Supervisor or Department Director. An employee must report such an arrest, indictment or conviction as soon as possible, but in no event later than 72 hours after such arrest, indictment and/or conviction. The term “conviction” as used in this Policy means a plea of guilty or a finding of guilt (including a plea of nolo contendere and regardless of treatment as a first offender under Georgia law), imposition of a sentence, or both, by any judicial body charged with a responsibility to determine violations of the federal or state criminal drug statutes. The County will make a determination at that time whether the arrest, indictment and/or conviction causes a temporary or permanent disqualification from holding that position, or constitutes grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

An employee who violates this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

### **1311 Searches**

All County-issued equipment, property, and facilities, including but not limited to, desks, lockers, and vehicles (collectively “Materials”) are subject to inspection at any time and for any reason. No employee shall have any privacy interest whatsoever in any County-issued Materials. No personal property may be searched unless the owner of the property has consented or a search is otherwise legally permissible. If an individual is asked to submit to a search, and refuses, that individual will be considered insubordinate and will be subject to discipline, up to and including, termination.

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If a search uncovers evidence of employee wrong doing, illegal activity, or employee violations of County rules or policies, the evidence may be used to support disciplinary actions up to, and including, termination. In cases involving suspected illegal activities, the evidence may be turned over to the proper legal authorities.

### **1312 Confidentiality**

All reports of test results for drug and alcohol, searches, or any employee referral to, or participation in an assistance program or treatment program for addictive disorders, will be maintained in strict confidence. Any person authorized to have access to such confidential information, who, without authorization, discloses it to another person shall have engaged in gross misconduct and be subject to severe disciplinary action, up to and including, termination. The confidentiality of such information shall not apply to any use by or communication to the Catoosa County attorneys, or where the information is relevant to the County's defense in an administrative or civil action. Such information may also be disclosed to the extent required by any federal, state, or local law, statute, ordinance, or regulation.

### **1313 Discipline**

#### (a) Immediate Suspension

An employee who tests positive for drugs or alcohol shall immediately be relieved from duty, placed on Suspension without pay, and sent home pending disciplinary action. If the positive test is explained or negated by the MRO and/or subsequent confirmation testing, the employee shall be reinstated with back pay and the Suspension without pay will be expunged from the employee's personnel file.

#### (b) Disciplinary Action

An employee who violates any provision of this Chapter is subject to discipline, up to and including termination. If terminated, the employee will not be eligible for rehire.

#### (c) Immediate Termination

The following reasons shall be presumed to result in immediate termination of an employee:

- (i) Manufacturing, dispensing, using, consuming, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling, or otherwise transferring an illegal drug(s) or controlled substance(s) while on the job, on call, on County Premises, while operating County equipment or

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vehicles, or while operating any other equipment or vehicles on County business.

- (ii) Operating County motorized equipment while unfit for duty due to the use of drugs and/or alcohol.
- (iii) Conviction for violation of any drug law.
- (iv) Refusing to consent to or to take a drug or alcohol test pursuant to this Chapter.
- (v) Failure to appear at the designated collection site to take a drug or alcohol test when so directed or as required by this Chapter.
- (vi) A confirmed positive test for drugs or alcohol.

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### **1400 Workplace Violence**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

### **1401 Statement of Policy**

The County is concerned about the well-being and personal safety of its employees and anyone doing business with the County. The County consequently strictly prohibits workplace violence. Acts of violence and/or threats of violence, whether expressed or implied, toward individuals in the County workplace, are prohibited and will not be tolerated. All reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be addressed appropriately. This policy defines prohibited conduct, as well as general procedures and potential responsive steps in the unfortunate event that workplace violence occurs despite these preventive measures. In addition, unless otherwise permitted by law, firearms, Weapons, ammunition, or explosives on County property is strictly prohibited.

### **1402 Scope**

This prohibition against threats and acts of violence (including domestic violence) applies to all persons involved in the operation of the County, including but not limited to, County personnel, contract and temporary workers, and anyone else on County property.

### **1403 Definition of Workplace Violence**

Workplace violence is any conduct that is severe, offensive, or intimidating enough to make an individual reasonably fear for his/her personal safety or the safety of family, friends, or property. Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to, threats, or acts of violence or behavior that causes a reasonable fear or intimidation response that occurs:

- (a) On County premises, no matter what the relationship is between the County and the perpetrator or victim of the behavior.
- (b) Off County premises, where the perpetrator is someone who is acting as an employee or representative of the County at the time, where the victim is an employee who is exposed to the conduct because of work for the County, or where there is a reasonable basis for believing that violence may occur against the targeted employee or others in the workplace.
- (c) Examples of conduct that may be considered threats or acts of violence under this policy include, but are not limited to the following:
  - (i) Threatening physical or aggressive contact directed toward another

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individual or engaging in behavior that causes a reasonable fear of such contact.

- (ii) Threatening an individual or his/her family, friends, associates or property with physical harm or behavior that causes a reasonable fear of such harm.
- (iii) Intentional destruction or threat of destruction of the County's or another's property.
- (iv) Harassing or threatening physical, verbal, written or electronic communications, including verbal statements, phone calls, emails, letter, faxes, website materials, diagrams or drawings, gestures and any other form of communication that causes a reasonable fear or intimidation response in others.
- (v) Stalking. Stalking is defined as a pattern of conduct over a period of time, however short, which evidences a continuity of purpose and includes physical presence, telephone calls, emails and any other type of correspondence sent by any means.
- (vi) Veiled threats of physical harm or like intimidation or statements, in any form, that lead to a reasonable fear of harm or an intimidation response.
- (vii) Communicating an endorsement of the inappropriate use of firearms or Weapons of any kind.
- (viii) Unauthorized possession of Weapons of any type. Weapons, include, but are not limited to:
  - (1) Any Weapon which, per applicable law, is illegal to possess or unauthorized to possess at a particular location;
  - (2) Any firearm, loaded or unloaded, assembled or disassembled, including pellet, “BB”, and stun guns;
  - (3) Knives (and other similar instruments) other than those present in the workplace for approved work purposes or for the specific purpose of food preparation and service;
  - (4) Any switchblade knife;
  - (5) Brass knuckles, metal knuckles, and similar Weapons

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- (6) Bows, cross-bows and arrows;
  - (7) Explosives and explosive devices, including fireworks, ammunition and/or incendiary devices;
  - (8) Throwing stars, nun chucks, clubs, saps, and any other item commonly used as, or primarily intended for use as a Weapon;
  - (9) Self-defense chemical sprays (mace, pepper spray) in canisters or containers larger than two ounces, unless otherwise approved by the County Manager;
  - (10) Tasers, stun guns or any other electroshock Weapon, unless otherwise approved by the County Manager; and
  - (11) Any object that has been modified to serve as, or has been employed as, a dangerous Weapon, unless otherwise approved by the County Manager.
- (ix) Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of coercive tactics carried out by an abuser against an intimate partner (the victim) with the goal of establishing and maintaining power and control over the victim. Where the abuser's tactics include any of the above-described conduct on County premises, this policy applies. Where such tactics include any of the above-described behaviors off County premises, this policy applies where the abuser is someone who is acting as an employee or representative of the County at the time, where the victim is an employee who is exposed to the conduct because of work for the County, or where there is a reasonable basis for believing that violence may occur against the victim or others in the workplace. The term "intimate partner" includes people who are legally married to each other, people who were once married to each other, people who have had a child together, people who live together or who have lived together, and people who have or have had a dating or sexual relationship, including same sex couples.

### **1404 Reporting Complaints**

If you observe the unauthorized possession of Weapons on County premises, or if you are subjected to or threatened with Weapons by a co-worker or member of the public, or if you become aware of another individual who has been subjected to or threatened with violence, you must report this information to your Supervisor or the Human Resources

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Director immediately. Supervisors must report all potential violations so the Human Resources Department can handle them appropriately. Do not assume that any violation or threat is not serious. All complaints will be thoroughly investigated, and all complaints that are reported to management will be treated with as much confidentiality as possible. Employees who become angry, upset, or concerned with the actions of a co-worker, Supervisor, member of the public or the County in general, are encouraged to seek assistance from the Human Resources Director.

*A 9-1-1 call may be appropriate first, in the good judgment of the employees or managers involved.* Under this policy, decisions may have to be made quickly to prevent a threat from being carried out, a violent act from occurring, or a life-threatening situation from developing. Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent quick action to stop or reduce the risk of harm to anyone, including requesting immediate assistance from law enforcement or emergency response resources.

Failure to report any threats or acts of violence in violation of this policy appropriately is itself a violation of this policy, and may subject any employees involved to discipline up to and including termination.

Retaliation against anyone for reporting an actual or suspected violation of this policy in good faith will not be tolerated and will subject the individual engaging in the retaliation to discipline up to and including termination. Any complaints about retaliation should be reported in the same manner as violations of this policy are to be reported.

## **1405 County Expectations of Employees**

### Stay Away Orders/Orders of Protection

The County reserves the right to seek orders of protection (also known as restraining orders or stay away orders) against any person who violates the Workplace Violence Policy. Additionally, employees themselves may seek and obtain orders of protection against individuals outside of the workplace. Employees so protected are obligated to immediately notify the Human Resources Director and their Supervisor if: (a) an order of protection extends to the workplace; or (b) they reasonably believe that their safety (or the safety of others) in the workplace is affected by the order of protection. Employees should provide written notification of:

- (1) the existence of any such order and provide a copy of the order;
- (2) any violations or attempted violations of the order;
- (3) any changes to the order that affect the workplace; and
- (4) the order being lifted.

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Employees who are subject to orders of protection requiring them to stay away from or refrain from contacting other individuals who are or may be in the workplace (including employees, customers, vendors, and others) must immediately notify the Human Resources Director and provide a copy of the order.

Upon being notified of an order of protection, Human Resources will contact the reporting party to gather information about the individual and assess the situation. The County will make every effort to maintain confidentiality of such orders with the understanding that it will use the information as necessary to maintain safety in the workplace.

### **1406 Search Policy**

If the County reasonably suspects that an employee either has or may have violated this policy, or that the employee possesses evidence that others pose a threat of workplace violence as defined by this policy, the County may request the individual to submit to a search of his or her person, personal effects, vehicles, and locker. If an individual is asked to submit to a search, and refuses, that individual will be considered insubordinate and will be subject to discipline, up to and including, termination.

In addition, the County may conduct searches of any County property including, but not limited to, work stations and areas, desks, lockers, credenzas, file cabinets, computers and computer-stored information, voicemail, email, business records, County vehicles and any other property or equipment owned by the County, at any time, without Notice to or permission from affected employees, for purposes of enforcing the no violence policy.

Searches will be conducted by a Supervisor with a second witness and may or may not be conducted in the presence of the person whose property is searched. Any Weapons or evidence of violations of this policy will be confiscated, and may be turned over to law enforcement, as appropriate. Any illegal activity discovered during an inspection is subject to referral to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.



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### **1500 Dual Employment**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date: 12/15/2020

### **1501 Outside Employment**

No employee shall engage in any other employment, or in any private business, or in the conduct of a profession, during the hours for which the employee is employed to work for the County, or outside such hours in a manner or to an extent that affects or is deemed likely to affect the usefulness of the employee to the County. All outside employment must be approved by the employee's applicable Department Director, with final approval or disapproval by the County Manager. Any approved outside employment must be reported in writing to the Human Resources Director prior to commencing any outside employment.

### **1502 Holding Multiple Positions with the County**

An employee is not allowed to hold more than one full-time position with Catoosa County. Full-time employees may, however, work part-time jobs with the express written approval of the employee's applicable Department Director and the express written approval of the County Manager or his/her designee, provided that the part-time job is during different hours than that required for the full-time job and in a different Department. Any employee electing to hold multiple positions will be paid at the rate of each respective position for the time spent working in that position. Employees must be exclusively committed to each job during the scheduled hours for the job respectively.

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### **1600 Standards of Conduct**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

### **1601 General Conduct**

All employees of Catoosa County are covered by, and subject to the Code of Ethics for Government Service. See O.C.G.A. § 45-10-1. The Code of Ethics for Government Service is incorporated into this Handbook and is fully set forth in Chapter 100, Section 102.

### **1602 Political Activity**

Employees of the County are encouraged to exercise their right to vote, but no employee shall make use of government time or equipment to aid a political candidate, party, or cause, or use their government position to influence, coerce, or intimidate any person in the interest of a political candidate, party, or cause. No employee shall be hired, promoted, favored, or discriminated against with respect to employment because of his/her political opinions or affiliations.

#### **(a) Seeking Elective Office**

A County employee seeking elective office within the County may, upon declaring candidacy, resign or submit a request in writing to the Board for a Leave of Absence without pay from the date of his/her announcement through the duration of the campaign or announcement of the election results. Such Leave of Absence shall be requested, considered, and applied according to the Leave of Absence policies set forth in this Handbook. If elected to office, the employee shall immediately, upon the swearing in date, be separated from County employment upon written request and approval of the County Manager.

Nothing in this section shall prevent an employee from fully exercising those rights to participate in political activities granted by the laws of the State of Georgia or the laws of the United States of America.

#### **(b) Political Campaign Involvement**

A County employee may be involved in any political activity which would not constitute a conflict of interest. However, an employee is strictly forbidden from engaging in election or political activities during his/her County working hours or with use of County equipment.

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### **1700 Use of Vehicles For County Business**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date: 07/18/2018

### **1701 Statement of Policy**

Vehicles owned by, titled to, or otherwise under the control of Catoosa County are authorized for use in the performance of essential travel and transportation duties consistent with the assignment of any such vehicle to an employee by his/her applicable Department Director and County Manager. Unless otherwise specifically provided by the applicable Department Director and County Manager, use of a County vehicle is not authorized for unofficial travel duties or tasks or the transportation of unauthorized persons or items.

The Human Resources Director will periodically review reported accidents and injuries. Upon review of an accident, the Human Resources Director shall make a recommendation for disciplinary action if necessary. The recommended disciplinary action must be followed by the Department Director, at a minimum. More strenuous discipline may also be imposed by the Department Director and County Manager based on the employee's overall personnel file and previous disciplinary actions.

### **1702 Driver Responsibilities**

All drivers who operate a vehicle owned by, titled to, or otherwise controlled by the County are responsible for the proper care, use, and safety of the County vehicle. Moreover, all such drivers are required to meet the standards set forth in the Motor Vehicle Record ("MVR") requirements as detailed below in subparagraph (a). To the extent that there is a conflict between this Chapter and the MVR requirements, the most strenuous provision shall govern.

#### **(a) Motor Vehicle Record.**

It is the policy of Catoosa County and a requirement of employment that every employee in a position that requires a valid driver's license have an MVR meeting the grading requirements as stated below. The MVR policy applies both to drivers of County vehicles and employees using personal vehicles in the course of their employment.

Employee MVRs will be examined prior to the date of employment and at least every two years thereafter, upon availability of funds. Employees must submit their driver's license every two years and authorize Catoosa County government to obtain MVR information pertinent to verification of their driving history. Any job offer made requiring a valid driver's

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license will be contingent upon the MVR meeting the required standards. Continued employment with the County in a position requiring a valid driver's license will require an MVR meeting each of the standards outlined below:

- (1) All operators must have a valid driver's license issued by the state in which they reside. Employees relocating from another state must adhere to O.C.G.A § 40-5-20 in obtaining a timely transfer to a Georgia license. A copy of the new license must be submitted to Human Resources.
- (2) For jobs requiring a valid driver's license, no Applicant with more than eight points will be hired.
- (3) All operators must at all times meet the insurability standards of Catoosa County's current insurance carrier.

(b) Additional Requirements.

Drivers must also adhere to the following minimum responsibilities:

- (1) Possess and maintain a valid driver's license approved by the class appropriate for the vehicle;
- (2) Obey all traffic laws and practice safe and courteous driving;
- (3) Ensure that vehicles are used for authorized purposes only;
- (4) Report all accidents, no matter how trivial, to the applicable Department Director immediately and submit a written report of the accident within twenty-four hours to the Human Resources Director;
- (5) Accept legal responsibility for violations and fines resulting from actions of the driver. This includes personal responsibility for speeding and illegal parking tickets;
- (6) Follow drug and alcohol arrests and conviction reporting procedures;
- (7) Usage of any form of tobacco and e-cigarettes is prohibited inside County vehicles by driver or passengers;
- (8) No vehicle owned by, titled to, or otherwise controlled by the

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County shall be driven home if the employee lives outside of Catoosa County unless otherwise approved by the County Manager.

- (9) No employee may alter the exterior or interior of a County vehicle in any manner, without the written approval of the applicable Department Director and the County Manager.

Anyone misusing or abusing County vehicles, using the County vehicle for other than approved purposes, transporting non-County employees except as expressly permitted by the applicable Department Director and County Manager, or taking a vehicle home when not approved by the applicable Department Director and the County Manager shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including Dismissal, as deemed appropriate.

The County Manager has the express permission of the Board of Commissioners to take home his/her County-issued vehicle and to use the vehicle for any and all County business and for all uses enumerated in Section 1704 below.

### **1703 Personal Vehicle**

Each employee is to make every effort to use a County vehicle whenever possible. An employee's use of his/her personal vehicle in the performance of County business may be necessary. To that extent, the following rules are in effect:

- (a) Approved officials or employees who use their personal vehicles for County business may be reimbursed on a per mile driven basis at the rate determined by the Internal Revenue Service for that current period. Mileage for transit between home and work does not qualify for reimbursement.
- (b) Reimbursement travel should only be done with the advance knowledge and consent of the applicable Department Director. Accurate and substantiated mileage records must be maintained and submitted by the employee to the Finance Department for reimbursement. Such reporting to the Finance Department must include written authorization from the employee's Department Director for travel reimbursement prior to the Finance Department remitting any funds for reimbursement to the employee.
- (c) The rate of reimbursement shall be raised or lowered in accordance with the rate used by the Internal Revenue Service.

### **1704 Authorized Use of County Vehicle**

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Unless otherwise provided by the applicable Department Director and the County Manager, the following constitutes authorized use of County vehicles:

- (a) Transport of officials, employees, clients, or guests of the County;
- (b) The performance of law enforcement duties;
- (c) When on official travel status, between places of official business and temporary place of lodging;
- (d) When on official travel status, between places of official business, or temporary place of lodging and places to obtain meals or medical assistance;
- (e) Transport of consultants, contractors, or commercial representatives when in direct interest of the County;
- (f) Transport of representatives from federal, state, or local government when in the direct interest of the County;
- (g) Commute between place of dispatch or place of performance of official business to a personal residence when specifically authorized by the employee's Department Director to do so;
- (h) Transport of County recreation program participants only when authorized by the applicable Department Director and County Manager;
- (i) While on active service call, or on active County business, use for lunch or while on break from County business; or
- (j) Transport of family members only when approved by the County Manager.

### **1705 Unauthorized Use of County Vehicle**

Unless specifically provided otherwise by the applicable Department Director and the County Manager, the following are unauthorized uses of County vehicles:

- (a) Travel or performance of a task of a personal nature, not connected with the accomplishment of official business;
- (b) Transport of family members other than as specified above;
- (c) Transport of friends, associates, or other persons who are not employees

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of the County serving the interest of the County;

- (d) Transport of items of cargo having no relationship to the conduct of official business;
- (e) Loan of vehicle for use in non-County authorized functions, to persons that are not employed by the County, or to persons not authorized by the County to operate the County vehicle;
- (f) Transport of acids, explosives, Weapons, ammunition, or highly flammable material, except in the performance of an authorized task in the normal performance of duties; or
- (g) Transport of an item, equipment, or cargo projecting from the side, front, or rear of the vehicle in such a manner as to constitute an unsafe delivery.

### **1706 Seatbelt Use**

Available safety belts shall be used while traveling on County business. Occupants must use safety belts in County owned, leased, or rented vehicles whenever such vehicles are in use and also in personal vehicles when utilizing the same for County business. All employees operating equipment that contains seatbelts must wear the seatbelts.

If an employee is provided a County owned vehicle that is used in the course of his/her employment and is also available for that employee's personal use, that employee, together with all passengers who occupy the vehicle at any time and for any purpose, are required to use safety belts at all times the vehicle is in motion.

Emergency Services Personnel are not required to wear seat belts in the back of an ambulance while engaged in patient care.

Safety belt use shall be enforced in the same manner and with the same enforcement standards as any other work rules. The driver of the vehicle is responsible for enforcing seatbelt use by all occupants.

Failure to follow this policy will result in disciplinary action up to termination.

### **1707 Cell Phone Use While Driving**

Employees should limit usage of cell phones while driving a County vehicle. Drivers should utilize hands-free equipment when making or receiving calls to avoid distraction. No emailing, texting, instant messaging, or internet usage should be attempted while driving or stopped at a traffic light/stop sign. It should be done while the vehicle is parked in a safe area dependent upon traffic and weather conditions.

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House Bill 673 Hand-Free Georgia Act refers to distracted driving and prohibits drivers from:

Holding or supporting (in lap or otherwise) a cellphone unless legally parked.

Writing, reading, or sending text message (not even if someone else is holding the cellphone). Text messages must be fully voice based communication.

Watching or recording a video and leaving one's seat or driving position to retrieve a device.

Hands-free technology is the only acceptable use in a County vehicle.

Refer to HB673 for full details regarding Hands Free Georgia Act. Also, refer to department operating procedures regarding Public Service employees especially as it relates Public Safety employees and Transit Department employees.



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### **1800 Workplace Safety & Risk Management**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

#### **1801 Statement of Policy**

It is the policy of Catoosa County that every employee is entitled to work under the safest possible conditions. Every reasonable effort will be made to provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace, safe equipment, proper materials, and to establish and insist upon safe methods and practices at all times. Department Directors are authorized to adopt and enforce safety rules and regulations that are applicable to the operations of their respective Departments. A copy of any such Department promulgated safety rules and regulations shall be provided to the County Manager and will be maintained in the Human Resources Department. These rules and regulations are to be complied with and are applicable to all employees located within the respective Department. It is the basic responsibility of every employee to make safety a part of their daily concern. Employees are obligated to observe the rules of conduct and safety and to properly use the safety equipment provided.

It shall be the policy of the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners to:

1. Provide the highest degree of safety and health possible for Employees and the general public.
2. Preserve and protect County property and afford the same consideration towards the property of the general public.
3. Hold Department Heads responsible for implementing all phases of the County Risk Management Program.
4. Identify hazardous working conditions and take prompt corrective action to eliminate such conditions.
5. Provide and maintain ongoing safety training and education in order to train and educate all County Employees to the extent necessary to ensure they can perform their duties economically, efficiently, and safely.
6. Comply with applicable Federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations, and policies.
7. Improve communications by requiring regular safety meetings.

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8. Maintain current County safety and health policies, making changes when necessary.
9. Require periodic and follow-up Safety Inspections of all work locations.
10. Require equitable disciplinary measures for violation of prescribed safety and health requirements and ensure that such requirements are applied in a consistent and even-handed way.
11. Assure that all aspects of the Risk Management Program function in the prescribed manner.
12. Minimize Accident, Incident and Personal Injury rates by requiring investigations to ensure that any safety or health concerns are addressed promptly.

## **1802 Responsibilities**

The most effective Accident/Incident/Injury prevention measures are those which have been formulated at each level or organization, thoroughly discussed, and coordinated by all concerned, and unreservedly supported by top management. A Safety Coordinator identified within each County Department shall help facilitate the maximum exchange of ideas between Risk Management, Supervisory personnel, and Employees and ensure general understanding by County staff of policies and procedures governing Accident/Incident/Injury prevention. Safety shall be a function of management at all levels.

1. County Board of Commissioners: The County Board of Commissioners support County-wide safety and loss control programs and the County's Risk Management Policy, including but not limited to the Return to Work Policy as outlined in this policy.
2. County Manager: The County Manager ensures County compliance and adherence to established safety policy and procedures adopted by the Board of Commissioners.
3. County Administration: The Catoosa County Senior Leadership Team (also referred to herein as "County Administration"), consisting of the County Manager and the Chief Financial Officer and all Department Heads, are tasked with ensuring that Departments within their reporting structure comply and adhere to established policy and procedures. The term "County Administration" does not refer to a created committee and, instead, refers only to each of the above-

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referenced senior managers and their respective responsibilities within the Catoosa County reporting structure.

4. Risk & Safety Manager: The Risk & Safety Manager will serve to support the County's policy and oversee all activities relative to the Risk Management Program, obtaining required approval from the pertinent member of County Administration when necessary.
5. Safety Coordinator: Each Safety Coordinator will -
  - A. Organize and hold meetings within his/her Department to discuss a topic of safety, record the topic of the meeting and Employees in attendance, and send the record to Risk Management.
  - B. Keep an open dialogue between Risk Management and Department Head regarding safety concerns and safety initiatives.
6. Department Head: Each Department Head will -
  - A. Maintain safe and healthy working conditions within his/her Department functions whether out in the field, in the shop or in the office.
  - B. Ensure minimal injuries, accidents, liabilities, and waste of materials within his/her Department.
  - C. Provide the leadership and positive direction essential in maintaining effective accident prevention by setting proper examples.
  - D. Ensure that all personnel under his/her direction are in compliance with all safety and health requirements through regular surprise safety audits.
  - E. Ensure Department Heads and Supervisors are conducting new Employee safety orientation, to include but not be limited to newly reclassified Employees, prior to allowing Employee to work.
  - F. Support and participate in safety training related to supporting the County's and Department's goals in loss prevention.
  - G. Work with Supervisors in developing, maintaining, and updating work safety policies and requirements essential to that Department, and require those policies and requirements to be posted in the office. Every Department

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Director will also have an Infectious Control Plan specific to their Department and that is developed in the format described in Appendix A.

- H. Ensure that regular Departmental safety meetings are held and attended by all levels of personnel under his/her direction to review Departmental Accidents, Incidents, and Personal Injuries and to discuss plans to bring about a more positive Accident, Incident, and Personal Injury prevention program.
- I. Halt any operation or activity which is determined by the Department Head to be hazardous to Employees or the general public when such operation or activity is brought to the attention of the Department Head.
- J. Ensure that Departmental safety and health inspections are conducted.
- K. Ensure a review of all Accidents, Incidents and Personal Injuries with the involved Employee are conducted; evaluate the potential cause and, as appropriate, solution. Report the results of the review to Risk Management within forty-eight (48) hours of the date of the Accident, Incident, or Personal Injury or as otherwise approved by Risk Management.

7. Supervisor: Each Supervisor will -

- A. Assume responsibility for safe and healthy working areas for Employees under his/her direction through regular inspections and safety audit of personnel.
- B. Ensure that all Employees under his/her supervision are fully trained to perform their assigned jobs. In the case of new Employees, this may require demonstration, observation, and practice.
- C. Have Employees under his/her supervision read all published safety rules, and have the Employees certify in writing that they understand that compliance is necessary.
- D. Ensure all safety policies are implemented for maximum efficiency of each job and the well-being of each Employee working under such Supervisor.
- E. Take the initiative to recommend correction of deficiencies noted in facilities, work procedure, Employee job knowledge and attitudes that adversely affect County safety and loss control efforts.

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- F. Make one-on-one contacts with each Employee directly under his/her supervision to review safe practices, procedures, and safety rules on a regular basis.
  - G. Be firm and impartial in the enforcement of safety policies.
  - H. Be accountable for losses, injuries, and other work interruptions under his/her supervision and reporting requirements related to same.
  - I. Fully cooperate with Department Heads, Risk Management and other responsible Supervisory personnel in discontinuing hazardous activities or operations which pose an immediate danger to Employees, County property and/or the general public until such times as the operation can be completed safely.
  - J. Obtain a written list of relevant medications when notified by an Employee whose position affects public safety that a medication taken by or prescribed to such Employee may impair his/her ability to perform essential functions and notify the Human Resources Department regarding such information provided by the Employee.
8. Employee: Each Employee shall -
- A. Follow written and oral safety requirements to prevent injuries to himself/herself, his/her fellow workers, and/or the general public, and to prevent damage to County and/or private property.
  - B. Maintain an alert and businesslike attitude at all times.
  - C. Report all Incidents or Accidents resulting in Personal Injury or Property Loss, regardless of how trivial, to the immediate Supervisor as soon as the Incident or Accident occurs.
  - D. Avoid participation in any horseplay or practical jokes.
  - E. Keep work areas clean and orderly.
  - F. Immediately report any condition the Employee reasonably knows or should know to be unsafe to the Supervisor.
  - G. Obey all Federal, state, and local safety requirements. If any doubt exists about the safety of doing a job, the Employee shall stop and get instructions or assistance from the Supervisor before continuing work.

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- H. Wear any prescribed protective equipment.
- I. Operate only machinery or equipment which the Employee is trained and authorized to operate.
- J. Use proper tools and equipment for the job to be performed.
- K. Learn to lift and handle materials properly.
- L. Dress safely and sensibly for the job to be performed before starting to work.
- M. Take an active part in the County's safety program.
- N. Inform his/her Supervisor when taking medication which may impair the Employee's physical or mental alertness and/or affect ability to perform the Employee's job safely.

### **1803 Safety Inspections**

#### A. Authority to Inspect:

Risk Management is authorized to enter, inspect, and investigate, at any time, any County work site or County owned or maintained establishment to ensure compliance with all safety requirements. This authority may be delegated to a Safety Coordinator within the Department or his/her designee.

#### B. Procedures:

Safety Inspections may vary in type and frequency. They may be conducted on an area basis, or an entire shop basis, or on a specific operation basis. The following depicts some, but not all, of the types of inspections that may be conducted.

1. Functional Safety Inspections: Sometimes called an activity inspection, these are conducted regularly and frequently by a Supervisor or may be delegated to an Employee. This type of inspection is completed at the site of the activity and will result in an initialed written report or checklist and corrective action as necessary. Each Department will develop checklists specific to their facility and equipment.
2. Formal or Periodic Self Inspection (Audit): This type of inspection goes beyond the identification of unsafe conditions and unsafe acts and reviews management involvement in the unsafe condition or act as well. This type

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of inspection would include review of Departmental support, policies and requirements, training, purchasing, accident investigation and corrective actions, and internal inspections. This type of inspection is normally conducted by a special team headed by Risk Management as needed and at the request of County Administration. It typically results in a written report and recommendations. A follow-up inspection may be conducted to ensure recommendations have been implemented.

3. Spot Inspections: This type of inspection is normally completed on an as needed basis when one or more of the following situational prompts occurs:
  - a. Imminent danger
  - b. As part of an accident investigation
  - c. Adverse accident trend
  - d. A new operation or one of special interest
  - e. Special equipment
  - f. High hazard operation (trenching, confined space entry, etc.)
  - g. Request from Supervisor or Department Head

Usually, this kind of inspection is completed during an unannounced visit, and as a result the inspector can see working conditions as they are on an average work day. This kind of inspection does not normally require a written report unless conditions indicate the need. However, all spot inspections should be logged with date, location, person contacted, type of operations, and unfavorable conditions noted.

### C. Safety Deficiency Notice:

A safety deficiency should be documented when any unsafe condition or act is noted, and the documentation describing the condition or act should be submitted to the Risk Manager.

## **1804 Accident/Incident Reporting Procedures**

- A. Timely reporting of any Incident, Accident, or Personal Injury is mandatory. Ensuring full Employee benefits and reasonable liability adjustments at the lowest cost to the County is dependent upon proper reporting.
- B. Procedures for Reporting Personal Injuries (in immediate emergency situations call 911):
  1. An Employee having an on-the-job Personal Injury must:
    - A. Report it immediately to his/her Supervisor.

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- B. If necessary, report to the appropriate medical treatment facility (using the panel of physicians for Workers' Compensation), and ensure that all follow-up medical treatments are completed.
    - C. Complete First Report of Injury Form, Employee Statement of Accident, and Employee Treatment Refusal (if no immediate treatment is sought) (all part of the Employee Injury Packet).
  - 2. The Supervisor receiving a report of an on-the-job Personal Injury must:
    - A. Seek medical attention, if needed, for the Employee. If medical attention is sought, ensure proper drug testing procedures occur as required in the Drug Testing Policy.
    - B. Complete Employee Injury Packet and promptly submit the packet to the Department Head for review and submission to Risk Management.
    - C. Investigate the circumstances which caused the injury, and recommend the appropriate corrective measures to eliminate the hazard and prevent future occurrences, ensuring such findings and recommendations are documented on the Supervisor Report.
  - 3. The Department Head will:
    - A. Review all reports completed for that Department related to the Personal Injury for accuracy and completion.
    - B. Have the original copy of such reports delivered to Risk Management within forty-eight (48) hours of the date of the Personal Injury or as otherwise approved by Risk Management.
    - C. Review the reports related to the Personal Injury and then forward such report to Risk Management for further review and investigation.
  - C. Procedures for Reporting Accidents/Incidents Involving Motor Vehicle or Special Mobile Equipment
    - 1. Any Employee having an Accident or Incident while in a County Motor Vehicle or using County Special Mobile Equipment or on-the-job in a personal vehicle must:



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- A. Notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency
  - B. Notify his/her Supervisor (if injured, see Section III(B) above)
  - C. Complete the Employee Statement of Accident/Incident
  - D. If applicable, employee shall report immediately to Drug Testing Facility for Post Accident Drug Screening (see Drug Testing Policy).
- 2. The Supervisor, upon learning that an Employee under his/her direct supervision has been involved in an Motor Vehicle Accident/Incident while on-the-job or in a county vehicle or involved in an Accident/Incident involving Special Mobile Equipment, must:
  - A. Ensure employee reports immediately to Drug Testing Facility for Post Accident Drug Screening if required (see Drug Testing Policy).
  - B. Complete the Accident/Incident Packet.
  - C. Investigate the circumstances which caused the Motor Vehicle Accident/Incident or Accident/Incident Involving Special Mobile Equipment, and recommend the appropriate corrective measures to eliminate the hazard and prevent future occurrences, ensuring such findings and recommendations are documented on the Supervisors Report form.
  - D. Ensure any county-owned vehicle Mobile Vehicle or Special Mobile Equipment involved is taken to Fleet Maintenance or approved repair shop for assessment, photos, and repair evaluation.
- 3. The Department Head, upon learning that an Employee in his/her Department has been involved in a Motor Vehicle Accident while on-the-job or in a county vehicle or in an Accident involving Special Mobile Equipment, will:
  - A. Review all reports related to the Motor Vehicle Accident or Accident involving Special Mobile Equipment for accuracy and completion.
  - B. Ensure that an original copy of the Traffic Accident/Incident Packet is delivered to the Risk Management within forty-eight

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(48) hours of the date of the Accident or as otherwise approved by Risk Management.

### D. Procedures for Reporting (Non-Motor Vehicle) Incidents/Accidents

1. Any Employee involved in an Incident/Accident while on-the-job must notify his/her immediate Supervisor and complete the Employee Statement of Accident/Incident
2. The Supervisor, upon learning of the Incident/Accident, will complete the Incident Packet describing the Incident/Accident and damage. The Supervisor shall also investigate the circumstances which caused the Incident/Accident and recommend the appropriate corrective measures to eliminate the hazard and prevent future occurrences, ensuring such findings and recommendations are documented on the Supervisor Report Form.
3. The Department Head, upon learning of the Accident, will ensure the Accident/Incident Packet is reviewed and forwarded to Risk Management within forty-eight (48) hours of the date of the Incident/Accident or as otherwise approved by Risk Management.

## **1805 Evaluation of Accidents, Incidents and Personal Injuries**

### A. Evaluation and Record Maintenance

1. Risk Management shall evaluate and categorize events as Accidents, Incidents and/or Personal Injuries.
2. Further, Risk Management shall maintain records related to all Accidents, Incidents and Personal Injuries.

### B. Discipline

1. Accidents – Accidents are reviewed by Department Director, Risk Management and Administration to determine whether the event was an “Unavoidable” Accident or Injury or an “Avoidable” (and Chargeable) Accident Injury and recommend discipline.
2. Incidents – Discipline is handled at the Department level.

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### **1806 Return to Work**

#### CATOOSA COUNTY RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM

It is the policy of Catoosa County to provide and establish a return to work policy and procedure for Employees with work-related injuries and illnesses who are unable, temporarily or permanently, to return to their usual job duties.

Because Catoosa County recognizes that its Employees are a valued and limited resource, this program is designed to:

- Assist the medical recovery process by providing a focus and a goal of return of the injured Employee to his/her usual job duties.
- Benefit Employees by allowing them to return to full wages as soon as possible.
- Benefit employer by reducing workers' compensation costs.

#### Process:

Catoosa County will seek to make available return-to-work opportunities as soon as medically reasonable through the use of transitional employment for all Employees who are temporarily disabled due to an on-the-job injury. Transitional employment opportunities will be considered in all Departments, not just the Department in which the injured Employee was working before the injury or illness occurred.

Transitional employment assignments are intended to assist workers who are transitioning back to work after a temporary disability that resulted from a work-related injury. All transitional employment duties must be productive. Duties must never be demeaning or appear worthless in any way.

Catoosa County, through its reasonable accommodation program, will make efforts to retain Employees who are permanently disabled.

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### **1900 Dress Code**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

### **1901 Statement of Policy**

All employees are required to have a neat and professional appearance that reflects well upon Catoosa County government. No body piercing is allowed to the extent it presents a safety issue in the discretion of the Department Director and/or the County Manager. The dress code shall apply to all on-site and off-site functions at which the individual is acting as a representative, or is present on behalf, of the County. To the extent that a particular Department Director adopts a more strenuous dress code than that set forth in this Chapter, the more strenuous Departmental dress code shall apply and serve as the basis for disciplinary action.

### **1902 Employees With Uniforms**

The County may provide uniforms to those employees required to wear them or employees who work outside the office at least three days of the week and who are likely to come into elements that could damage, stain, or otherwise harm their personal clothing, or when uniforms are needed for the employee's protection and/or identification. Employees shall not modify the uniforms provided. Uniforms must be worn at all times when an employee is on duty and must be kept clean and neat. Required identification on the shirt will be the Catoosa County logo and the Department name. If the uniform shirt does not have the required identification imprinted, then the employee will wear the laminated identification tags provided by the County. Jeans may be allowed for field personnel in lieu of uniform pants upon approval by the appropriate Department Director. If allowed, the jeans must be kept clean and in good condition.

No employee shall wear a County uniform or any garment denoting the County, Department or entity of any sort at an off-site, non-job related establishment or function, or any other establishment that is deemed unbecoming to the image of the County.

Upon separation of employment with the County, an employee must return all uniforms to the County and/or reimburse the County for any uniforms lost or not returned to the County. In the event that an employee fails to return all uniforms as required by this Section, the employee shall be assessed the cost of the uniform(s) not returned, and that cost shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

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### **1903 Employees Without Uniforms**

- A. ***Appropriate attire:*** Business attire is to be worn by employees who are not required to wear uniforms. Acceptable attire includes:

Men:

- Slacks
- Chinos or khakis
- Collared shirts
- Sweaters
- Suits, blazers, or sport coats
- Footwear should be selected according to the type of work performed, keeping safety, comfort, and professional appearance in mind.
- On specific projects, as assigned, and also in conjunction with Section 1905 blue jeans without frays, holes, tears, patches, etc. may be worn.

Women:

- Slacks
- Chinos or khakis
- Collared shirts
- Blouses
- Sweaters
- Suits or blazers
- Dresses and skirts no more than 3” above the knee
- Footwear should be selected according to the type of work performed, keeping safety, comfort, and professional appearance in mind.
- On specific projects, as assigned, and also in conjunction with Section 1905 blue jeans without frays, holes, tears, patches, etc. may be worn.

- B. ***Inappropriate Attire:***

- Clothing that is see-through is unacceptable;
- Clothing should cover the chest, back, and midriff (including when standing, sitting, stooping, while arms are extended over the head or while bending over), and should not reveal undergarments;
- Clothing that allows excessive exposure of skin is not permitted;
- Athletic clothes including sweats, warm-ups, or workout clothing;
- Spandex or Lycra clothing, when not worn in layers (i.e. biker shorts/pants/body suits);
- “Flip Flops” are not allowed;

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- Hats or caps (unless they are issued as part of a County uniform or approved by the County Department Head);
- Shorts or cut-offs;
- Mid-drifts and crop tops;
- Tank tops, tube tops, halter tops, tops with spaghetti straps;
- Clothing that is excessively tight or loose fitting;
- Clothing and jewelry that pose a safety hazard within specific working environments;
- Bedroom shoes/slippers;
- Frayed clothing;
- Dirty or wrinkled clothing; or
- Clothing with vulgar or obscene words; or which features logos for alcoholic beverages, logos that are sexually offensive, contain profanity or other logos that are indecent.

### **1904 Personal Grooming, Accessories, and Use of Fragrances**

Good personal hygiene is expected at all times. A County employee's clothing should be clean, neat, and well kept (no holes, tears, patches, fading, or frayed areas). Additionally, it is expected that facial hair should be clean and neatly trimmed.

Due to allergies and chemical sensitivities, fragrances, if used, must be mild. Citizens and others visiting County buildings and other employees may be allergic or sensitive to perfumes, colognes, or other fragrant products.

### **1905 Casual Day**

Catoosa County has designated each Friday to be "casual day". However, other days may be designated as "casual day" by the County Manager. Each Department Director is to use his/her good judgment in determining appropriate attire for dressing casual.

### **1906 Compliance**

Dressing appropriately is a condition of employment with the County. Failure to adhere to the dress code will be addressed as a policy violation. Repeated or obvious violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. For failure to comply with this policy, the County reserves the right to require an employee to leave work to change into appropriate clothing. Any time spent away from work shall be without pay.

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Employees are expected to comply with the above standards, and should not put their Supervisors in the position of having to police attire. If there is any doubt as to whether an aspect of attire is appropriate, the employee should assume it is not. Employees with questions about what is appropriate for their positions should contact their Supervisor or the Department Head.

No dress code can address all contingencies. The County reserves the right to interpret what is acceptable in the matter of overall appearance, and to interpret and apply this policy to other aspects of appearance not specifically covered in this policy.

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### **2000 Tardiness and Absenteeism**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

### **2001 Applicability**

County employees are subject to the tardiness and absenteeism provisions contained in this Chapter, unless the Department Director has adopted a more stringent tardiness and absenteeism policy specific to his or her Department.

### **2002 Tardiness**

All employees are expected to report to work at their scheduled start time. For recording of hours worked purposes and payment of wages, an employee's pay will be docked 15 minutes if he is 8 to 22 minutes late and docked 30 minutes if he is 23 to 38 minutes late. However, for attendance purposes, a punch made after the scheduled start time or before the scheduled finish time will be noted as a late arrival or early departure, respectively, and the employee may be subject to discipline according to the Employee Handbook.

Occasional excused late arrivals for non-exempt employees may be permitted with pre-approval by the appropriate Supervisor as designated by the Department Director. An employee who is tardy or requests excused late arrivals on a recurrent basis will be subject to discipline. All employees are required to speak directly with their Supervisor regarding unforeseen tardiness. Such notification does not release the employee from disciplinary action.

### **2003 Absenteeism**

All employees are expected to attend and be available to provide services to the County during established Workdays. An employee shall not be entitled to be absent from work and seek approval for that absence as Leave without pay. Such an absence will be unexcused and a matter for discipline, unless under extenuating circumstances and upon presentation of a written statement by a licensed physician or dentist, it is certified to the satisfaction of the Department Director that the employee's condition prevented him/her from performing the duties of his/her position.

This Section applies to intermittent absences from work and shall not affect an employee's right to seek a continuous Leave of Absence without pay pursuant to this Handbook. This Section should be read in conjunction with the abandonment provisions in Chapter 800 and the Leave provisions in Chapter 1100.



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### **2100 Internet and Use of County Property**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

### **2101 County Property**

All supplies, equipment, computers, desks, information, and any other material obtained and used during the course of employment is property exclusively owned by Catoosa County (hereinafter collectively referred to as “County Property”). As a result, an employee should have no expectation of privacy with respect to County Property.

### **2102 Phone Use**

When making personal local phone calls from the workplace, and/or using a County cellular phone/Smartphone device, employees must use judgment and discretion to limit any calls. County employees may be responsible for any additional cellular/mobile service charges (e.g., texting, data usage, and excessive minutes of use beyond plan limits) assessed on County issued devices if such usage is not approved by the Department Director and/or County Manager. Personal long-distance phone calls, if incurring additional charges, are not permitted on any County phone.

Failure to comply with this Section may result in disciplinary action.

### **2103 Cell Phones**

County cellular phones/Smartphone devices are provided to key individuals for the purpose of ensuring accessibility and enhancing individual efficiencies in handling County business. Cellular phones are not a personal benefit and are not intended for use as a primary mode of personal communication.

Use of mobile devices while operating a vehicle is dangerous and can result in an accident. To that extent the following rules should be applied:

- (a) Voice mail service and hands-free equipment for a phone should be used to avoid distractions. If neither is available the phone must be easy to reach without the driver removing their eyes from the road;
- (b) Whenever possible the mobile device should only be accessed when the vehicle is parked. Any conversation should be kept to a minimum;
- (c) Under no conditions should the driver use a mobile device during hazardous driving conditions or situations;

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- (d) Do not take notes or look up phone numbers while driving. The primary responsibility is to pay attention to the road. Use the preprogrammed number dial feature of the phone. Practice using this feature for commonly dialed numbers before driving;
- (e) A driver should dial or place calls before starting a trip and/or when the vehicle is not moving;
- (f) Avoid engaging in stressful or emotional conversations while driving as it is distracting and potentially dangerous;
- (g) Mobile devices should be used to call for emergency assistance by dialing 9-1-1, giving the exact location and information to the 9-1-1 operator; and
- (h) No emailing, texting, instant messaging, or internet usage should be attempted while driving or stopped at a traffic light/stop sign. It should be done while the vehicle is parked in a safe area dependent upon traffic and weather conditions.

Department Directors have the authority to restrict or prohibit the use of any mobile device, County supplied or personal, at any time while an employee is on the job if it is determined that use of a mobile device presents a safety hazard or distracts from the duties of the job.

Use of personal cellular phones should be limited to emergencies only. Excessive use of a personal cellular phone while on County duty may result in disciplinary action.

### **2104 Qualifying for a County-Issued Cellular Phones**

#### **A. Establishing New Service**

An employee may qualify for a County-owned cellular phone only if the Department Director has determined it to be required for the performance of their jobs.

#### **B. After Hour Usage**

Use of County-owned cellular phones for personal business during non-shift period is prohibited.

#### **C. Responsibilities**

1. Cellular phones are to be used only by the individual to whom they are issued.

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2. Cellular transmissions are not secure; employees shall use discretion in relaying information.
3. Employees shall be responsible for the safekeeping, care and custody of the County-issued cellular phone assigned to them. Reasonable precautions shall be taken to prevent equipment theft, vandalism, and damage.
4. Cellular phones that are no longer necessary for fulfillment of the employee's job because of termination of employment or change in job status shall be returned to the Department Director or Human Resources so that service can be adjusted.

### **2105 Communication Systems**

The County provides a variety of channels for communication to promote the efficient operation of its business. These communication systems include, but are not limited to, voicemail, e-mail, facsimile, computer networks, computers (including laptop computers, desktop computers and tablets) internet connections, on-line services, computer files, telephone systems, cellular phones, and pagers. All information and e-mails transmitted by, received from, or stored in these systems are the sole property of Catoosa County and an employee should have no expectation of privacy related thereto.

All County communications systems as described above are intended for business use only and are not to be used in a way that may be considered as disruptive, inappropriate, harassing, threatening, or offensive to others. Employees are specifically prohibited from transmitting, forwarding, downloading, or receiving offensive or pornographic materials and messages. These communication systems may not be used to send or to receive copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary financial information, or similar materials without prior authorization. Failure to comply with these provisions will result in discipline, up to and including, termination.

### **2106 Specifics on Computer and Network Usage**

#### a. Responsible Use of Resources

You are responsible for knowing what information resources (including networks) are available, remembering that the members of the community share them, and refraining from all acts that waste or prevent others from using these resources or from using them in whatever ways have been proscribed by the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners and the laws of the state and federal governments.

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### b. Use of Computer Devices

You are responsible in coordination with your Department Director for the security and integrity of Catoosa County information stored on your computer devices. This responsibility includes making regular disk backups and controlling physical and network access to the machine. Avoid storing passwords or other information that can be used to gain access to other government computing resources.

### c. Access to Facilities and Information

#### (i) Sharing of Access

Computer accounts, passwords, and other types of authorization are assigned to individual users and must not be shared with others. You are responsible for any use of your account.

#### (ii) Permitting Unauthorized Access

You may not run or otherwise configure software or hardware to intentionally allow access by unauthorized users.

#### (iii) Use of Privileged Access

Special access to information or other special computing privileges are to be used in performance of official duties only. Information that you obtain through special privileges is to be treated as private.

#### (iv) Termination of Access

When you cease being a member of the government community, or if you are assigned a new position and/or responsibilities within the County, your access authorization must be reviewed. You must not use facilities, accounts, access codes, privileges, or information for which you are not authorized in your new circumstances.

#### (v) Attempts to Circumvent Security

Users are prohibited from attempting to circumvent or subvert any system's security measures. This section does not prohibit use of security tools by system administration personnel.

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(vi) Decoding Access Control Information

You are prohibited from using any computer program or device to intercept or decode passwords or similar access control information.

(vii) Denial of Service

Deliberate attempts to degrade the performance of a computer system or network or to deprive authorized personnel of resources or access to any Catoosa County computer system or network are prohibited.

(viii) Harmful Activities

The following harmful activities are prohibited: creating or propagating viruses; disrupting services; damaging files; intentional destruction of or damage to equipment, software, or data belonging to Catoosa County Board of Commissioners or other users; and the like.

(ix) Unauthorized Monitoring

You may not use computing resources for unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications.

(x) Government Dishonesty

You should always use computing resources in accordance with high ethical standards and in correspondence with local, state, and federal law.

(xi) Use of Copyrighted Information and Materials

You are prohibited from using, inspecting, copying, and storing copyrighted computer programs and other material, in violation of copyright.

(xii) Use of Licensed Software

No software may be installed, copied, or used on Catoosa County resources except as permitted by the owner of the software. Software subject to licensing must be properly licensed and all license provisions (installation, use, copying, number of

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simultaneous users, term of license, etc.) must be strictly adhered to. Any and all new software installations must be approved in some form by the County's designated network and computing personnel.

(xiii) Political Campaigning; Commercial Advertising

The use of System materials, supplies, equipment, machinery, or vehicles in political campaigns is forbidden. Political campaign and commercial advertisement shall not be displayed on government property. The use of County computers and networks shall conform to these policies.

(xiv) Personal Business

Computing facilities, services, and networks may not be used in connection with compensated outside work or for the benefit of organizations not related to the business of the County. Any other incidental use (such as electronic communications or storing data on single-user machines) must not interfere with other users' access to resources (computer cycles, network bandwidth, disk space, printers, etc.). State law restricts the use of state facilities for personal gain or benefit.

### **2107 Management Information Services Policies**

The County's IT Director is authorized to oversee and manage all County communication systems. To facilitate that role, the County's IT Director may create additional and detailed policies consistent with this Chapter, which policies shall be complied with by employees upon distribution of same. A copy of any such policies promulgated by the IT Director shall be provided to the County Manager and will be maintained in the Human Resources Department.

The IT Director shall immediately report suspected violations of this Chapter to the County Manager.

### **2108 Acceptable Technology Usage**

This Acceptable Usage Policy covers the security and use of all Catoosa County Government information and IT equipment. It also includes the use of email, internet, voice, and mobile IT equipment. This policy applies to all Catoosa County Government employees, contractors and agents (hereafter referred to as 'individuals').

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This policy applies to all information, in whatever form, relating to Catoosa County Government business activities worldwide, and to all information handled by Catoosa County Government relating to other organizations with whom it deals. It also covers all IT and information communications facilities operated by Catoosa County Government or on its behalf.

### **Computer Access Control – Individual’s Responsibility**

Access to the Catoosa County Government IT systems is controlled by the use of User IDs, passwords and/or tokens. All User IDs and passwords are to be uniquely assigned to named individuals and consequently, individuals are accountable for all actions on the Catoosa County Government IT systems.

### **Password Requirements**

#### **User ID and Password**

- Username and password combinations provide access to assets.
- A temporary initial password may be assigned, however once the temporary password has been used it will be changed.
- All password(s) resets require the validation of user identity.

#### **Password and Session Configurations**

**Password configurations, when system limitations are not present, shall be set up to include the following:**

- Limited consecutive unsuccessful login attempts that is less than or equal to five (5).
- Minimum number of characters necessary for password(s) that is greater than or equal to eight (8).
- Alpha and numeric password enforcers.
- Periodic forced password changes that is less than or equal to one hundred-eighty (180) days.
- Disallowance of reused password(s) that is less than or equal to five (5).
- Screensavers shall be used to lock a user’s session after a period of twenty (20) minutes of idle time.
- Remote administrative console, Telnet sessions and/or SSH sessions reset after thirty (30) minutes of idle activity.

#### **Password**

**When system limitations are not present, strong password(s) shall have the following characteristics:**

- Contain at least eight (8) characters. Contain both upper and lower-case characters.
- Contain at least one (1) number to include the numbers 0-9.
- Are not based on personal information, names of family, etc.
- Are never written down or stored online.

**Additionally, it is recommended that password(s):**

- Have deliberate misspellings.

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- Are not words in any language, slang, dialect, jargon, etc.
- Are never shared.

### **Poor or weak password(s) have the following characteristics:**

- Contains some part of the user's name.
- Contains less than eight (8) characters.
- Are words found in a dictionary, i.e. English or Foreign.
- Are words found in proper names, i.e. Sports Teams, etc.
- Are common usage words as family name, pet, friend, co-worker, etc.

### **Individuals must not:**

- Allow anyone else to use their user ID/token and password on any Catoosa County Government IT system.
- Leave their user accounts logged in at an unattended and unlocked computer.
- Use someone else's user ID and password to access Catoosa County Government IT systems.
- Leave their password unprotected (for example writing it down).
- Perform any unauthorized changes to Catoosa County Government IT systems or information.
- Attempt to access data that they are not authorized to use or access.
- Exceed the limits of their authorization or specific business need to interrogate the system or data.
- Connect any non-Catoosa County Government authorized device to the Catoosa County Government network or IT systems.
- Store Catoosa County Government data on any non-authorized Catoosa County Government equipment.
- Give or transfer Catoosa County Government data or software to any person or organization outside Catoosa County Government without the authority of Catoosa County Government. Department Heads and Supervisors must ensure that individuals are given clear direction on the extent and limits of their authority with regard to IT systems and data.

### **Internet and email Conditions of Use**

Use of Catoosa County Government internet and email is intended for business use. Personal use is permitted where such use does not affect the individual's business performance, is not detrimental to Catoosa County Government in any way, is not in breach of any term and condition of employment and does not place the individual or Catoosa County Government in breach of statutory or other legal obligations. All individuals are accountable for their actions on the internet and email systems.

### **Internet Access Level**

All employees will be assigned an access usage level by their Constitutional Officer/Department Head when hired.



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Following are the Filtering Tier Levels and Blocked Categories:

<b><u>Content Filter Tier</u></b>	<b><u>Blocked Categories</u></b>
<b>Banned County-Wide</b> (Blacklisted Sites)	Pornography, Tasteless, Sexuality, Proxy/Anonymizer, Adware, Alcohol & Drugs, Dating, Gambling, Hate & Discrimination, Lingerie, Nudity, Weapons, Adult Themes, Games. ( <u>Exception</u> : It may be necessary for certain law enforcement personnel to access blacklisted websites as part of criminal investigations and evidence collection. Access to blacklisted websites will be strictly controlled by the Catoosa County Sheriff.)
<b>No Access</b>	Blocks employees from accessing <u>any websites</u> except those that are required for performing work related tasks (i.e. <a href="http://www.catoosa.com">www.catoosa.com</a> and Catoosa email (Gmail).
<b>Limited Access</b>	Provides access to required work-related websites, and other specific websites determined by the Department Head/Constitutional Officer as required and essential for the employee to do their job. Examples would be chat and social, classifieds, file sharing & point to point, forums & message boards, instant messaging, photo and video sharing, visual search engines, webmail. Specific websites will be verified by the Department Head / Constitutional Officer, and access will be limited to those websites.
<b>Full Access</b>	Access to all internet sites except those blocked by the county-wide filter. Department Head / Constitutional Officer must attest to why an employee has a work-related need to be granted full access.

### **Individuals must not:**

- Use the internet or email for the purposes of harassment or abuse.
- Use profanity, obscenities, or derogatory remarks in communications.
- Access, download, send or receive any data (including images), which Catoosa County Government considers offensive in any way, including sexually explicit, discriminatory, defamatory, or libelous material.
- Use the internet or email to make personal gains or conduct a personal business.
- Use the internet or email to gamble.
- Use the email systems in a way that could affect its reliability or effectiveness. For example, distributing chain letters or spam.
- Place any information on the Internet that relates to Catoosa County Government, alter any information about it, or express any opinion about Catoosa County Government, unless specifically authorized to do so.
- Send unprotected sensitive or confidential information externally.
- Forward Catoosa County Government mail to personal (non-Catoosa County Government) email accounts. For example, a personal Hotmail account.
- Make official comments through the internet, or email on behalf of Catoosa County Government unless authorized to do so.

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- Download copyrighted material such as music, media (MP3) files, film, and video files (not an exhaustive list) without appropriate approval.
- In any way infringe upon any copyright, database rights, trademarks, or other intellectual property.
- Download any software from the internet without the prior approval of the IT Department.
- Connect Catoosa County Government devices to the internet using non-standard connections.

### **Clear Desk and Clear Screen Policy**

In order to reduce the risk of unauthorized access or loss of information, Catoosa County Government enforces a clear desk and screen policy as follows:

- Personal or confidential business information must be protected using security features provided.
- Computers must be logged off/locked or protected with a screen locking mechanism controlled by a password when unattended.
- Care must be taken to not leave confidential material on printers or photocopiers.
- All business-related printed matter must be disposed of using confidential waste bins or shredders.

### **Working Off-site**

It is accepted that laptops and mobile devices will be taken off-site. The following controls must be applied:

- Working away from the office must be in line with Catoosa County Government remote working policy.
- Equipment and media taken off-site must not be left unattended in public places and not left in sight in a car (exceptions for law enforcement map apply).
- Laptops must be carried as hand luggage when travelling.
- Information should be protected against loss or compromise when working remotely (for example at home or in public places). Laptop encryption must be used.
- Particular care should be taken with the use of mobile devices such as laptops, mobile phones, smartphones, and tablets. They must be protected at least by a password or a PIN and, where available, encryption.

### **Mobile Storage Devices**

Mobile devices such as memory sticks, CDs, DVDs, and removable hard drives must be used only in situations when network connectivity is unavailable or there is no other secure method of transferring data. Only Catoosa County Government authorized mobile storage devices with encryption enabled must be used, when transferring sensitive or confidential data.

### **Software**

Employees must use only software that is authorized by Catoosa County Government on Catoosa County Government computers. Authorized software must be used in

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accordance with the software supplier's licensing agreements. All software on Catoosa County Government computers must be approved and installed by the Catoosa County Government IT department.

### **Individuals must not:**

- Store personal files such as music, video, photographs, or games on Catoosa County Government IT equipment.

### **Viruses**

The IT department has implemented centralized, automated virus detection and virus software updates within the Catoosa County Government. All PCs have antivirus software installed to detect and remove any virus automatically.

### **Individuals must not:**

- Remove or disable anti-virus software.
- Attempt to remove virus-infected files or clean up an infection, other than by the use of approved Catoosa County Government anti-virus software and procedures.

### **Telephony (Voice) Equipment Conditions of Use**

Use of Catoosa County Government voice equipment is intended for business use. Individuals must not use Catoosa County Government voice facilities for sending or receiving private communications on personal matters, except in exceptional circumstances. All non-urgent personal communications should be made at an individual's own expense using alternative means of communications

### **Individuals must not:**

- Use Catoosa County Government voice for conducting private business.
- Make hoax or threatening calls to internal or external destinations.
- Accept reverse charge calls from domestic or International operators, unless it is for business use.

### **Actions upon Termination of Contract**

All Catoosa County Government equipment and data, for example laptops and mobile devices including telephones, smartphones, USB memory devices and CDs/DVDs, must be returned to Catoosa County Government at termination of employment.

All Catoosa County Government data or intellectual property developed or gained during the period of employment remains the property of Catoosa County Government and must not be retained beyond termination or reused for any other purpose.

### **Monitoring and Filtering**

All data that is created and stored on Catoosa County Government computers is the property of Catoosa County Government and there is no official provision for individual

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data privacy. However, wherever possible, Catoosa County Government will avoid opening personal emails.

IT system monitoring will take place where appropriate, and investigations will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists of a breach of this or any other policy. Catoosa County Government has the right (under certain conditions) to monitor activity on its systems, including internet and email use, in order to ensure systems security and effective operation, and to protect against misuse.

**It is your responsibility to report suspected breaches of security policy without delay to your Department Head, the IT department, or the County Manager. All breaches of information security policies will be investigated. If an investigation reveals employee misconduct, the County Manager will work alongside the Constitutional Officer and/or Department Heads to determine what actions will be taken.**

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### **2200 Social Networking Policy**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

### **2201 Statement of Policy**

Employees of Catoosa County Board of Commissioners shall not use any form of social media in any way so as to tarnish the image or reputation of the County or its employees. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with Catoosa County, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

### **2202 Rules and Guidelines**

- a. Employees of the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners are prohibited from using social media during working hours or on equipment that is provided by the County, unless it is work-related as authorized by the Department Director and consistent with the Internet and Use of County Property Policy. Employees are not permitted to use their assigned County email address to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.
- b. Employees who choose to maintain or participate in social media or social networking platforms while off-duty shall conduct themselves with professionalism and in such a manner that will not reflect negatively upon Catoosa County Board of Commissioners. Employees shall be mindful that any conduct that adversely affects job performance, the performance of other County employees or otherwise adversely affects members of the community or Catoosa County's legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action.
- c. In administering this policy, Catoosa County Board of Commissioners is mindful that employees are private citizens with legitimate interests in matters of public concern. Prior to the taking of any adverse employment action in connection with this policy, the County will evaluate whether or not the activity was (1) made by the employee in his or her capacity as a private citizen; (2) addressed a matter of public concern; and (3) if the County's interest in promoting the efficiency of public services outweighs the Employee's interest in the activity.

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### **2300 Training**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

### **2301 Certification Training**

It is the County's policy to pay for required and/or necessary certification testing and related training sessions on all initial attempts as approved by the respective Department Director and County Manager on a case-by-case basis. Such approval shall be applied in a universal and non-discriminatory manner. The County shall not be responsible for arranging or making payment for the employee to take subsequent exams if the employee fails the first attempt. It will be the employee's responsibility to pay for, re-take, and pass the certification exam within the specified time frame to meet the requirements of the position. Failure to receive required certifications for the position will result in disciplinary action up to, and including, Dismissal.

### **2302 Training and Continuing Education**

The County shall arrange and pay for required and/or necessary training and continuing education that is directly related to the employee's job as approved by the respective Department Director and County Manager on a case-by-case basis. Such approval shall be applied in a universal and non-discriminatory manner. The certification testing or training is "directly related to the employee's job" if it is a requirement for the position and is designed to make the employee handle his or her job more effectively as distinguished from training him or her for another job or for the performance of a new or additional skill. If continuing education is necessary to meet the requirements of this position, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, Dismissal for failure to complete such continuing education in a timely manner.

### **2303 Compensation for Hours Spent in Certification Testing, Training and Continuing Education**

Attendance at required and/or necessary certification testing, training, and continuing education sessions or similar activities shall be compensated as hours worked unless the following four criteria are met:

- (a) Attendance is outside of the employee's regular working hours;
- (b) Attendance is voluntary;
- (c) The course, lecture, or meeting is not directly related to the employee's job; and

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- (d) The employee does not perform any productive work during such attendance.

It shall be presumed, subject to other direction from the applicable Department Director, that an employee will be compensated for hours spent during attendance at a required and/or necessary certification testing, training, or continuing education session if such session is during regular working hours, is directly related to the employee's job, and is approved for reimbursement by the applicable Department Director and County Manager. Specific questions related to compensation for attendance at required and/or necessary testing, training, and continuing education sessions or similar activities not expressly covered in this Chapter should be referred to your Supervisor or the Human Resources Director for interpretation and compliance with federal law prior to attendance at the session.

### **2304 Compensation for Time Spent in Travel to Training Session**

Pre-approved training sessions that are required by the County shall be considered as the employee's normally scheduled Workday. Employees will be compensated for travel time to and from a training session unless specific Departmental procedures provide otherwise. All training classes that require overnight lodging must be approved specifically as to mode and time of travel to the training location. Mileage for the use of a personal vehicle shall be paid consistent with the Travel and Reimbursement Policy set forth in this Handbook.

### **2305 Training Reimbursements**

Requests for payment of training, conventions, or other meetings that are submitted to the Finance Department for reimbursement must include the written approval of the applicable Department Director. For all training classes or seminars that an employee attends, a copy of the certificate of completion or comparable document must be forwarded to the Finance Department and the Human Resources Director. The certificate of completion or comparable document will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

### **2306 Training Records**

All training records, including but not limited to, requests, approvals, disapprovals, course materials and/or certifications shall be submitted to, and maintained by, the Human Resources Department.

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### **2400 Travel and Reimbursement Policy**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015  
Revision Date: 07/26/2022

#### **2401 Statement of Policy**

This Policy contains the regulations and information necessary to the traveler, and required for reimbursement of travel expenses. It is intended that this Chapter applies to Department Directors and all employees. It is the County's policy to allow travel on a limited basis provided that: (a) funding is available; (b) travel is duly authorized; and (c) travel is within the scope of the employee's employment and discharge of his/her official duties.

#### **2402 Authorized Travel and Expenses**

Travel and related expenses shall be authorized when a Department Director or employee is engaged in the conduct of official government business. A request for authorization to travel and secure reimbursement of resulting expenses must be completed in advance by the Department Director or employee and approved by the appropriate Department Director. A request that has been authorized by the Department Director will accompany each expense report submitted for reimbursement.

#### **2403 Registration, Lodging, and Travel Payments**

The following options are available for registration, lodging accommodations, or travel by common carrier as defined in Section 2409(b) herein and are subject to approval of the Department Director:

- (a) Upon receipt of a travel authorization request, the Finance Department may make necessary arrangements using a County credit card.
- (b) Upon receipt of approval to travel, the individual may arrange for registration, lodging and/or common carrier needs utilizing a personal credit card. If the individual elects to pay final costs with personal funds, reimbursement to the individual will be through the applicable reimbursement request form. If the individual elects not to pay final costs with personal funds, travel advance checks payable to the provider(s) may be generated and presented to the individual prior to departure as detailed in this Chapter.
- (c) Local and state government Elected Officials/Department Directors and employees are exempt from hotel/motel taxes while on official business in the state pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 48-13-51. Most hotels require that an



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exemption form be provided before allowing such exemption. Department Directors and employees should secure the appropriate exemption form from the Finance Department prior to travel.

### **2404 Reimbursement of Expenses**

A request for reimbursement of expenses shall be submitted to the Finance Department within thirty calendar days following the date of return to work. Such request shall be made on such form as prescribed by the Finance Department. The request for reimbursement shall contain an itemized listing of all expenses incurred for such travel and must be approved and signed by the employee's Department Director. If a Department Director or employee fails to reconcile the account within the specified time period, and an extension of time is not granted by the Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Financial Officer may void such reimbursement claim. With the approval of the County Manager or Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer shall be authorized to withhold any such cash advance or direct payment from the Department Director's or employee's paycheck.

### **2405 Documentation of Expenses**

Documented and itemized receipts or other documentation shall be required for all expenses.

### **2406 Allowability and Limitations of Expenses**

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

### **2407 Meal Expenses for Travel Outside Catoosa County and Documentation Requirements**

Department Directors are required to review the circumstances of each travel request to determine if meals are required giving consideration that meals are often provided as part of group activities and are included in registration fees. Department Directors will ensure that discretion is exercised in establishing any meal allowances on the Catoosa County Reimbursement Form. Such allowances must be reasonable and be within the budget as approved by the Board of Commissioners. Actual meal expenses should be reviewed when the request for reimbursement is submitted. As addressed above, itemized receipts are required for all such expenses.

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### **2408 Meal Reimbursement Guidelines**

- A. Employees will be reimbursed for expenses for meals while on County business at the following maximum meal rates:

- (1) \$ 40.00 a day maximum for meals.

- B. Itemized receipts must be provided for meal reimbursement.
- C. Adjustments may be made to these amounts by the County Manager for travel to high cost areas.
- D. For overnight out of town trips, a maximum of \$25.00 per meal applies only when individual meals are claimed.

### **2409 Lodging**

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

### **2410 Transportation**

- (a) Mileage Reimbursement

Travel inside or in close proximity to Catoosa County should be made in a government vehicle if available. If a government vehicle is not available for such purposes, reimbursement for mileage in a personally owned vehicle is allowable. Mileage expenses for transportation in a personally owned vehicle shall be based on the rate per mile as prescribed by the IRS. The Chief Financial Officer will publish the revised rate as changes occur. If two or more persons travel to the same location in the same vehicle, only one such payment shall be made. A personally owned vehicle may be used for travel inside or outside the State of Georgia provided, however, that the allowable expense shall be the vehicle mileage expense.

- (b) Common Carrier

A common carrier shall be any scheduled airline, train, or bus and the rate shall be limited to the minimum fare available (economy or tourist). Roundtrip fares should be obtained whenever it will result in a cost

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savings and reservations should be made sufficiently in advance to take advantage of special savings plans offered by the carrier.

(c) Ground Transportation

Ground transportation by taxi, bus, or limousine is an allowable expense when actually incurred in conjunction with common carrier transportation to and from terminals, hotels, restaurants, and meeting locations if necessary. The most economical means of ground transportation should be used.

(d) Points of Departure and Return

The points of departure and return for travel status shall be either the office at which the Department Director or employee carries out his/her duties or his/her residence; whichever is more practical under the circumstances. The County, however, will only reimburse for actual miles traveled less the normal distance traveled to and from the Department Director's or employee's residence and work.

(e) Direct Route

All travel should be by the most direct route. However, an expressway route, which involves more total mileage, may result in a savings in personnel time and, therefore, would be considered the more direct route. Reason and good judgment should be exercised in this determination.

## **2411 Communications**

Telephone and "FAX" messages directly pertaining to official government business shall be allowable expenses. Claims for payment of such charges shall be itemized and shall include the location, the person contacted, and the justification for the communications.

## **2412 Credit Cards**

Whenever allowable expenses are purchased or paid by credit card, the receipt shall include an itemization of expenditures or separate receipts must be obtained for each expenditure. A credit card receipt showing only an aggregate of charges, unless itemized, shall not constitute sufficient documentation and shall not be allowable without the County Manager's approval.

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### **2413 County Issued Credit Cards**

#### A. Purpose:

The Catoosa County Board of Commissioners recognizes that Elected Officials, the County Manager, the Chief Financial Officer, Executive Employees and Department Directors are required to make expenditures of funds in the course of performing their functions in County government. The use of credit cards allows the County to be more effective, more efficient, and more accountable to the public. Furthermore, the usage of a County issued credit card provides detailed purchase histories and other important record keeping information.

#### B. Guidelines for usage of County issued credit cards:

- For the carrying out of County business including reasonable travel, accommodation, and meal expenses.
- The County recognizes that occasionally it will be beneficial for the County's business interests for a County official to purchase meals when working with other officials, business representatives or contracted agencies. Such use of the County issued credit card is recognized to be a legitimate expense of the County.
- No private expenditure shall be incurred, even if private funds are transferred or repaid immediately, to offset the expenditure.
- County issued credit cards will not be used in lieu of the normal purchasing procedures adopted by the County.

#### C. Cancellation of County issued credit cards:

The County Manager may cancel or order the surrender of any card which has been misused or abused. Such misuse or abuse of County issued credit cards will be handled as a disciplinary matter for County employees. Misuse or abuse of County issued credit cards by Elected Officials will be reported to the Board of Commissioners who will then determine what investigation and/or legal action should be taken.

### **2414 Registration Fees**

Registration fees for required and/or necessary certification testing, training, and continuing education sessions or similar activities shall be an allowable expense and payment shall be arranged in advance of the program date. The Department Head or employee shall be responsible for submitting the registration request to the Finance

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Department in sufficient time for the payment to be processed and mailed prior to any registration deadline. Optional assessments such as special events or personal memberships, which are not included in the registration fee, may not be deemed allowable expenses.

### **2415 Tips and Gratuities**

Tips or gratuities in conjunction with an authorized expense shall be allowable if they are determined to be reasonable by the Chief Financial Officer or the County Manager.

### **2416 Parking and Toll Fees**

Expenses for parking and tolls shall be allowable if documented by paid receipt.

### **2417 Other Expenses**

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

### **2418 Unallowable Expenses**

The following expenses are specifically unallowable for payment:

- (a) Expenses incurred by any individual other than the Department Director or employee unless otherwise provided for in this policy.
- (b) Expenses for entertainment.
- (c) Laundry service.
- (d) Personal articles, toiletries, souvenirs, etc.
- (e) Expenses for alcoholic beverages.
- (f) Payments to friends or other individuals for cost of meals, lodging, or transportation not a part of the authorized activity or program.
- (g) Direct expenses of operation of a personal vehicle, such as gasoline, oil, parts, or repairs.

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- (h) Travel and related expenses incurred from a Department Director's or employee's residence to his designated work site.
- (i) Any expenses incurred that are unrelated to official government business or activities as determined by the Chief Financial Officer and the County Manager.

### **2419 Family Members**

Expenses related to any County Official's or employee's spouse or any other family members accompanying the County Official and employee will not be covered.

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### **2500 Critical Incident Policy**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

#### **2501 Introduction**

In the event of a Critical Incident, Catoosa County recognizes that appropriate infrastructure must be in place beforehand to ensure the provision of all necessary support services.

This document outlines Catoosa County's policy, support mechanisms and procedures for managing a Critical Incident. This policy ensures that Catoosa County has an effective approach in responding to Critical Incidents as they occur and provides for appropriate training and information for County employees.

#### **2502 Definition**

A Critical Incident is defined as "a traumatic event, or the threat of such which causes extreme stress, fear or injury."

Critical incidents may include, but are not limited to:

- Attempted suicide, suicide or other death;
- A missing employee;
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression, if by someone other than an employee (employee cases are addressed in policies 1200 or 1400);
- Witnessing a serious accident or incidence of violence, if by someone other than an employee (employee cases are addressed in policy 1400);
- A fire, riot/disturbance or other natural disaster (e.g. epidemic, earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm, extremes of temperature);
- Bomb-threat, explosion, gas, or chemical hazard.

#### **2503 Critical Incident Coordination**

When a Supervisor or employee observes an act of violence at work the steps to take are simple, even though the underlying issues may not be.

1. IN IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY SITUATIONS CALL 911 FOR LOCAL POLICE, SHERIFF'S OFFICE, FIRE DEPARTMENT AND/OR EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE.

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As with any other emergency involving fire, violence, or medical incidents, the first thought and action is to call 911 and report as many details as soon as possible so that the appropriate emergency response units can be dispatched.

### 2. SECOND STEP. Immediately contact:

1. Department Director involved;
2. Human Resource Director; and
3. County Manager

The Police Department, Sheriff's Office, Fire Department, and those providing emergency medical assistance in coordination with the Department Director, Human Resource Director and the County Manager will ensure that resources are coordinated in their support and response.

Other steps following a Critical Incident will flow from this initial contact, including any required disciplinary action and aftercare help for employees involved in or who witnessed the Critical Incident.

### 3. THIRD STEP. Actions to be taken:

1. Secure the area, if possible
2. Ensure the safety of all employees
3. Assess the need for support/counseling
4. Restore to regular routine as soon as possible
5. Complete Critical Incident Report

### 4. REVIEW OF REPORT AND INCIDENT

1. The Department Director, Human Resources Director and County Manager will meet to discuss the Critical Incident Report.
2. The purpose of this meeting will be to evaluate the Critical Incident process and make modifications, if necessary.



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### **2600 Pandemic Flu Outbreak or Similar Illness**

Effective Date: 03/17/2020

Revision Date:

#### **Introduction:**

The County strives to provide a safe and healthy workplace for all employees. This policy outlines our overall response to a pandemic flu outbreak or similar illness.

This policy outlines specific steps the County takes to safeguard employees' health and well-being during a flu pandemic, or similar illness, while ensuring the County's ability to maintain essential operations and continue providing essential services to our citizens. In addition, it provides guidance on how we intend to respond to specific operational and human resource issues in the event of a pandemic.

#### **Section A-11 Contagious Symptoms and Contagious Condition**

Sick employees who report to work with Contagious Symptoms and/or a Contagious Condition, as those terms are defined in this Section, may significantly impact County operations due to the potential for spreading sickness, diminished productivity, and lack of quality or attention to safety.

Employees must consider options and practices that will reduce the risk of contracting a contagious condition or passing on a contagious condition by observing healthy practices such as: receiving flu vaccinations, covering their noses or mouths when coughing or sneezing, washing, or sanitizing their hands, using sanitizers on common work areas, and other health practices that are designed to reduce infection and the spread of disease. Employees should also refrain from reporting to work with Contagious Symptoms and/or a Contagious Condition, so as not to spread a condition or disease.

In the interest of maintaining a safe and healthy workplace, the County may require persons with Contagious Symptoms and/or a Contagious Condition not to report to work and/or may send employees with Contagious Symptoms and/or a Contagious Condition home.

##### **(a) Contagious Symptoms and/or Condition**

For purposes of this Section, Contagious Symptoms and/or a Contagious Condition exist when:

- (1) An employee exhibits influenza-related symptoms (e.g., fever, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches) or other symptoms, described by a public health

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organization as indicative of other contagion, such as Coronavirus, SARS, swine flu, H1N1, etc.; and/or

(2) An employee is diagnosed with an infectious/contagious condition (e.g., influenza, strep throat, tuberculosis, bacterial meningitis, mononucleosis, mumps, measles, rubella, chicken pox, etc.); or

(3) An employee and/or family member/household member has recently traveled or plans to travel to a geographic area or has been subjected to a confined area, such as cruise ship or airplane, actively identified by a recognized health organization to present a high degree of contagion health risk or an area for which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a Level 2 or 3 travel advisory.

### (b) Workplace Requirements

The County and its employees bear responsibility for a safe and productive workplace environment. Accordingly, an employee with Contagious Symptoms and/or a Contagious Condition:

- (1) Will not report to the workplace so as not to infect other employees or members of the public.
- (2) Will not report to the workplace until his/her symptoms have subsided. A health care provider's statement that an employee may return to work may be required during epidemics, pandemics, or similar situations during which enhanced precautions are warranted.
- (3) Will not report to the workplace after returning from, or after a family/household member has returned from, a geographic area or confined area recently identified by a recognized health organization to present a high degree of contagion health risk or an area for which the CDC has issued a Level 2 or 3 travel advisory. In such case, the employee cannot return to the workplace until completion of the incubation period as identified by a public health organization and until the employee has been cleared with a health care provider's statement that the employee may return to work. (Such statement must be submitted to Human Resources for approval as provided in subsection (d), below, in advance of returning to the workplace.)
- (4) May be sent home, with or without the opportunity to work from home,

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based on observations of symptoms of a Contagious Condition.

(c) Absence Due to Contagious Symptoms or Conditions

An employee who has been sent home by the County and/or has not reported to work due to Contagious Symptoms and/or a Contagious Condition, or who has been quarantined, will be required to use accrued Sick Leave or Annual Leave. If accrued paid leave is unavailable or exhausted, the employee will be recorded as absent with approved unpaid leave. In the event that an employee's absence pursuant to an approved unpaid leave extends beyond five (5) days and/or an employee's absence pursuant to an approved unpaid leave becomes a recurring issue, and such absences are deemed to constitute an undue burden upon the County, the County may request that the employee provide a doctor's certification as to the employee's current condition. Ultimately, any prolonged absences will be addressed in compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations, including the ADA and the FMLA (where a serious health condition is involved).

The County may approve an employee to work from home or another private location while recuperating. Such approval is dependent upon consideration of factors, including the employee's position, the severity of the illness, and other safety and logistical considerations.

Any employee subject to absence due to Contagious Symptoms or a Contagious Condition must contact Human Resources to determine if the employee and medical condition qualifies for Family Medical Leave. In such case, the policy covering Family Medical Leave Act shall apply.

(d) Return to Work from Contagious Symptoms or Contagious Condition

A health care provider's statement that the Contagious Symptom or Contagious Condition that the employee experienced has been cleared and the employee may return to work without risk to other employees may be required during epidemics, pandemics, or similar situations during which enhanced precautions are warranted. The written statement must be submitted *electronically* to Human Resources, which shall review and must approve the release *before* the employee may return to work. An employee failing to provide a written return to work authorization prior to reporting to work will be immediately sent home and may be subject to disciplinary action for failure to comply with this requirement.

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### (e) Compliance

Due to the seriousness of the ramifications of non-compliance, any violation of the policy as set forth will subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.

This Section will be administered in accordance with all federal and state laws and regulations, including the ADA and the FMLA (where a serious health condition is involved).

### (f) Scope of Policy

This section applies to all employees, volunteers, interns, and any other individuals performing services on the County's behalf, whether paid or unpaid.

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### **2700 Definitions**

Effective Date: 10/6/2015

Revision Date:

Abandonment of Position – The unauthorized absence by an employee from his/her position for three consecutive Workdays.

Accident – An unplanned, undesired event that results in Property Loss valued at more than \$1,000.

Allocate or Reallocate – An action by the Board of Commissioners designating the type of position to be included in an appropriate Department or agency and setting aside the budgetary funds to support the designated position.

Anniversary Date – The date the employee first became employed by the County.

Applicant – Any person who has filed an application in accordance with the provisions of the Employee Handbook.

Appointment – The act of placing an employee in an Authorized Position.

“Avoidable” Accident or Injury – An Accident, Incident or Personal Injury involving or sustained by a County Employee arising out of conditions of his/her employment and where Risk Management staff or a designee thereof determines that the Employee could have prevented such Accident or Personal Injury.

Authorized Position – A position authorized by the Board of Commissioners, recognized in the Classification Plan, and included in an approved budget.

Body Substance Isolation – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) recommends the use of “Body Substance Isolation” when emergency response personnel work with blood or body fluids from any patient. This precaution says that emergency response personnel must consider all body substances from any patient as potentially infectious. Body substance Isolation exceeds Universal Precautions which states that blood or certain body fluids from any patient may be potentially infectious. Personnel from Catoosa County Fire Department will practice Body Substance Isolation techniques when having contact with any patient.

Business Day – The eight hours the County Administration offices are officially opened for business.

Catastrophic Illness – An illness not consistent with ordinary illness, (e.g., cancer, heart attack, stroke, major surgery), and requiring absence from employment in excess of

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eighty hours).

Chargeable Accidents – A judged avoidable Accident, Incident or Personal Injury by Risk Management or a designee thereof.

Classification Description – A written description based upon a categorical designation of positions that contain appropriate Classification Titles, essential functions, descriptions of duties and responsibilities, types of work performed, minimum qualifications, performance aptitudes, and ADA compliance factors for a certain category of positions. Numerous positions exist under each Classification Description.

Classification Plan – The official or approved system of grouping positions into Classification Descriptions that are further grouped into appropriate Grades approximately equal in difficulty, responsibility, training, and experience requirements. The Classification Plan is based upon a categorical designation of Classification Descriptions that contain appropriate Classification Titles, essential functions, descriptions of duties and responsibilities, types of work performed, minimum qualifications, performance aptitudes, and ADA compliance factors for a certain category of Positions.

Classification Title – The official designation of a position's title as set forth in the Classification Plan and assigned to a respective Classification Description. The Classification Title is used to designate each position in all budget estimates, payrolls, and other official records, documents, vouchers, and communications in connection with all personnel processes.

Communicable Disease – A communicable disease is a disease that can be transmitted from one person to another. It is also known as a contagious disease.

Compensation Plan – The system of assigning jobs to Classification Descriptions and to an appropriate pay Grade based on the similarities of positions.

Continuous Service – Continuous Service is employment that is uninterrupted, except for authorized Leaves of Absence or Suspension.

County – Catoosa County, Georgia

County Manager – The chief administrative employee of the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners.

Critical Incident – a traumatic event, or the threat of such which causes extreme stress, fear, or injury.

Demotion – Demotion means a change in the rank of an employee from a position in one

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Grade to a position in another Grade having a lower minimum starting salary.

Department – a major administrative division of County government whose employees report to a Department Director.

Department Director – The top administrative official in each major administrative division.

Dismissal – The termination of an employee.

Elected Official – A County official duly elected by the citizens of Catoosa County and presently serving in office.

Eligible Applicant – A person who has met the minimum requirements for a position as outlined in the Classification Description.

Emergency Assignment – An assignment of an employee on an emergency basis to a position without compliance with the recruitment procedures for a limited time.

Examination – Methods used to determine eligibility of Applicants for employment. Examinations may include but shall not be limited to written, oral, physical, medical, or performance tests, rating of training, and/or experience.

Executive Employees – the County Manager and all employees who report directly to the County Manager. The term “Executive Employee” does not include the Chief Financial Officer or the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners who report directly to the Board of Commissioners.

External Advertisement – A recruiting effort to notify interested Applicants who are not employed by the County of job vacancies by placing advertisements of such vacancies with the outside media and/or Internet site.

Full-time Employee – An employee who works in a position that is budgeted for twelve months of the year, scheduled to work thirty or more hours per week regularly throughout the year.

Grade – All positions in a group which are sufficiently similar as to authority, kind or subject matter of work, level of difficulty, and duties and responsibilities with the same minimum requirements of training, experience or skill, and such other characteristics that warrant the same range of compensation for each position in the group.

Grant-Funded Appointment – The placement of an individual in a position that is created as a result of a grant that provides for the position for a specific period of time.

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Human Resources Director – The official designated by the County Manager as the representative in charge of the personnel system of Catoosa County.

Immediate Family (Funeral Leave)– An employee’s spouse, children, mother, father, brothers, sisters, half-brothers, half-sisters, aunts, uncles, grandparents, grandchildren, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, step-parents and step-children.

Incident – An Incident is an unplanned, undesired event that results in minor Property Loss damage to property. Minor property Loss is defined as Property Loss valued at \$1,000 or less.

Infectious Disease – An infectious disease is an illness or disease resulting from invasion of a host of disease producing organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites.

Internal Advertisement – A recruiting effort to notify interested Applicants who are employed by the County of job vacancies by placing advertisements of such vacancies throughout the County.

Lateral Transfer – A Lateral Transfer is when an employee is moved from one position with a certain Classification Title to a different position within the same Grade, but with a different Classification Title, either within or outside the employee’s Department.

Layoff – The separation of an employee or employees from County employment for specified reasons unrelated to the employee’s performance.

Leave – Any of a number of ways in which an employee is permitted to take time off from work. Leave may be granted with or without pay.

Minimum Qualifications – Those minimum requirements as to education and experience that qualify an Applicant to be considered for Appointment as an employee with the County. Additional requirements such as licenses, certificates, and others may also be indicated where necessary.

Modes of Transmission – A communicable disease can be spread through two means: direct and indirect transmission. Bloodborne diseases spread through direct blood-to-blood contact. Blood is the single greatest source of HIV and HBV in the workplace setting. Airborne diseases spread via droplets expelled into the air by a cough or sneeze.

Motor Vehicle – Every self-propelled device in, upon, or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway, excepting devices used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks and electric personal assistive mobility devices (EPAMD).



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Motor Vehicle Accident – The collision of any Motor Vehicle or Specialized Mobile Equipment with another vehicle or with any object or fixture, or involvement of a Motor Vehicle or Specialized Mobile Equipment in any manner in which any person is killed or injured or in which Property Loss occurs.

Notice – Such publicity as may be deemed necessary to assure reasonable Notice to those concerned.

Occupational Risk – Occupational exposure may occur in many ways, including needle sticks, cut injuries or aerosols of body fluids. Government workers in various capacities may be at high risk for bloodborne infections due to routinely increased exposure to body fluids from potentially infected patients, inmates, customers, sewer systems, etc. Any exposure to a communicable disease carries a certain amount of risk. Emergency response personnel are in an occupation that directly exposes them to body fluids and must be considered at substantial risk of occupational exposures.

Part-time Employee – An employee who works in a position that is budgeted for twelve months of the year, but who works less than thirty hours per week.

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

Personal Injuries – Injuries to a County Employee arising out of and in the course of employment.

Promotion – A change in rank of an employee from a position in one Grade to a position of another Grade having a higher minimum salary.

Property Loss – The loss, loss of use, or damage to County property.

Public Safety Employee – Non-administrative personnel in the Sheriff's, Fire Suppression, or 911 agencies

Reassignment Appointment – When an employee is moved from one position with a certain Classification Title to another position within the same Department with the same Classification Title.

Reclassification – The assignment of an existing position to a different and more suitable Classification Description when it is determined that a position is incorrectly assigned. A Reclassification may produce a corresponding change from one Grade to a different Grade.

Reinstatement Appointment – The filling of a vacant position with a former Catoosa

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County employee.

Resignation – The termination of an employee at his/her request.

Risk Management – Catoosa County Human Resources Dept. & Local Government Risk Management.

Safety Coordinator – Employee selected by Department Head who is responsible for ensuring effective communication between Risk Management and the Department. Each Safety Coordinator shall, among other tasks, ensure proper display of workers compensation panel of physicians, safety posters and information and may conduct Safety Inspections of the Department. This person may also be requested to attend and/or lead safety meetings and trainings.

Safety Inspections – an in-depth investigation of a work area/location/operation to correct unsafe work conditions and to determine if safety and health rules and regulations are followed.

Safety Sensitive Position – Part of the essential job functions require: the operation of a County vehicle two or more times during a normally scheduled workweek for that position; performance of law enforcement duties as a POST-certified law enforcement officer; possession of a firearm; providing emergency medical, rescue, or fire suppression services; interacting with incarcerated persons; performing duties essential to drug interdiction; performing duties related to the operation of heavy machinery; or performing duties which directly affect public health or safety.

Seasonal Employee – An employee who works in a position that is temporary in nature which coincides with a particular season or seasons of the year or with heavy workload periods for a particular Department. The seasonal position period may recur regularly from year to year, but it is not budgeted for twelve months of the year and cannot exceed thirty-eight continuous or intermittent weeks during a calendar year.

Serious Accident – Accident requiring extensive and intensive hospitalization or at-home care and disabling an individual from performing his/her work duties for more than eighty hours.

Shift Worker – A Shift Worker employee is an employee who occasionally works one twelve hour or one twenty-four hour shift on a seasonal or part-time basis. A Shift Worker is not eligible for benefits.

Special Mobile Equipment – Every vehicle not designed or used primarily for the transportation of persons or property and only incidentally operated or moved over a highway, including but not limited to: ditch-digging apparatus, well-boring apparatus, and road construction and maintenance machinery such as asphalt spreaders, bituminous

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mixers, bucket loaders, tractors other than truck tractors, ditchers, leveling graders, finishing machines, motor graders, road rollers, scarifiers, earth-moving carryalls and scrapers, power shovels and drag lines, and self-propelled cranes and earth moving equipment. The term does not include house trailers, dump trucks, truck mounted transit mixers, cranes or shovels, or other vehicles designed for the transportation of persons or property to which machinery has been attached.

Supervisor – An individual who is authorized by the County to take tangible employment actions against subordinate employees, i.e., to effect a significant change in employment status, such as hiring, firing, failing to promote, reassignment with significantly different responsibilities, or a decision causing a significant change in benefits.

Suspension – A forced Leave of Absence without pay.

Temporary Employee – An employee who works in a position that is temporary for purposes of a special project or other work of a temporary nature. The temporary position period is established according to the special project or special circumstances requiring work of a temporary nature. The temporary position is not budgeted for twelve months of the year and does not recur regularly from year to year.

“Unavoidable” Accident or Injury – An Accident or Personal Injury involving or sustained by a County Employee arising out of condition of his/her employment and where Risk Management staff or a designee thereof determines that the Employee could have prevented such Accident or Personal Injury.

Vacancy – A position duly created and still existent, but not occupied by an employee.

Weapon – a “knife or handgun” which is further defined as follows. A “knife” means a cutting instrument designed for the purpose of offense and defense consisting of a blade that is greater than five inches in length which is fastened to a handle”. A “handgun” means a firearm of any description, loaded or unloaded, from which any shot, bullet, or other missile can be discharged by an action of an explosive where the length of the barrel, not including any revolving, detachable, or magazine breech, does not exceed 12 inches; provided, however, that the term “handgun” shall not include a gun which discharges a single shot of .46 centimeters or less in diameter.

Workday or Working Day – A Workday or Working Day is defined as eight hours for County employees; twelve hours for 911 Dispatchers who work a twelve hour shift; and twenty-four hours for Fire Department employees who work a twenty-four hour shift.

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### **Appendix A**

#### **INFECTION CONTROL**

As part of the Risk Management plan Catoosa County has established required guidelines for each department to follow as they developed an Infection Control Standard Operating Guideline specific to the needs of their department.

The applicable Department Head will be responsible for administering the departmental program.

Catoosa County is committed to full compliance with applicable laws and policies as they related to Infection Control (29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1910.1030, OSHA Instructions CPL 2-2.44B, and NFPA 1581).

Catoosa County prohibits discrimination against any member for health reasons, including infection and/or seroconversion to HIV or Hepatitis B virus.

Each employee is responsible for following the policies and procedures outlined in the departmental Exposure Control Plan. The Departmental Exposure Control Plan will contain guidelines for the following areas:

1. Precaution and Prevention
2. Personal Protective Equipment
3. Scene Management
4. Cleaning and Disinfection
5. Infectious Waste Disposal
6. Immunizations
7. Exposure Determination
8. Post Exposure Evaluation and Follow-up
9. Medical Surveillance
10. Record Keeping
11. Training Requirements

#### **1. PRECAUTIONS AND PREVENTION**

Catoosa County requires:

- A.** That all employees wash their hands when possible after removal of gloves or other personal protective equipment that have contacted blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- B.** Removal of contaminated personal equipment when possible upon leaving a contaminated scene; contaminated PPE will be placed in an appropriately designated area or container for storage, washing, decontamination or disposal.

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- C.** That all providers perform procedures involving blood or other body fluids in such a way as to minimize splashing, spraying or aerosols of these substances.
- D.** That all used needles or other sharp objects are not sheared, bent, broken, recapped or resheathed with two hands. Used needles will not be removed from disposable syringes. All sharps will be placed directly into a sharps container when possible.
- E.** That all employees follow outlined personal protection procedures in the care, treatment and transportation of patients suspected or known to have bloodborne or airborne diseases.

### 2. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Catoosa County:

- A.** Provides and assures that employees use appropriate personal protective equipment where biomedical hazards are possible.
- B.** Assures that the appropriate personal protective equipment in the appropriate sizes is readily accessible at the worksite or individually issued to the employee.

### 3. SCENE MANAGEMENT

Catoosa County:

- A.** Assures that all personnel follow infection control measures at all times.
- B.** Assures that personnel consistently and correctly answer infection control questions arising from contact with the public or any other suspected contaminated substance.

### 4. CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Catoosa County:

- A.** Provides for the cleaning, laundering or disposal of required personal protective equipment.
- B.** Repairs or replaces personal protective equipment as needed to maintain effectiveness.

### 5. INFECTIOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

Catoosa County:

- A.** Assures that personnel dispose of infectious waste according to applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

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### 6. IMMUNIZATIONS

Catoosa County:

- A.** Makes available the Hepatitis B vaccination to all employees who have a potential occupational exposure as soon as possible after their hire date.
- B.** Will provide a booster dose(s) for Hepatitis B if an employee is found to be inadequately protected as a result of testing from an exposure or at a future date, according to standard recommendations for medical practice.
- C.** Advises that employees obtain other vaccinations recommended for their specific line of employment by the Center for Disease Control.

### 7. EXPOSURE DETERMINATION

Catoosa County:

- A.** Establishes a bloodborne pathogen Level 3 exposure as any of the following:
  - a. Contaminated needle stick
  - b. Blood or body fluid contact with mucus membranes of eyes, nose, or mouth
  - c. Blood or body fluid contact with open skin (non-intact skin)
  - d. Cuts with sharp objects covered with bloody or body fluids
  - e. Injury sustained while cleaning contaminated equipment
- B.** Establishes a Level 3 airborne pathogen exposure as any of the following as evaluated by Risk Management.
  - a. Mouth to mouth contact with a person suspected or known to have an airborne disease
  - b. Unprotected contact (no mask with shield) by an employee within three (3) feet of the head of a patient suspected or known to have an airborne disease. For tuberculosis patients, the patient must have had a cough, or procedures, were being performed that produced an aerosol or mist. Final exposure determination will be done by evaluation of the incident and source (if applicable) by Risk Management.
- C.** Provides employees with a method for the reporting of occupational exposures from bloodborne and/or airborne pathogens.

### 8. POST – EXPOSURE

Catoosa County:

- A.** Provides post-exposure and follow up for all employees with an occupational exposure.
- B.** Assures that a licensed physician does, or supervises, all medical evaluations and procedures.

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- C. Assures that the employee is informed of the results of the medical evaluation; and that the employee is told about any medical conditions resulting from the exposure, that may require further evaluation or treatment.

### 9. MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE

Catoosa County:

- A. Provides all evaluations, procedures, vaccinations, and post-exposure management to the employee at a reasonable time and place, according to the standard recommendations for medical practice.

### 10. RECORD KEEPING

Catoosa County:

- A. Maintains accurate medical records for each employee for at least the duration of employment plus thirty years.
- B. Keeps all employee medical records confidential, and does not release them to any person within, or outside the workplace, except as required by law.
- C. Maintains all training records.

### 11. TRAINING RECORD

Catoosa County:

- A. Assures that all personnel who are at risk for potential occupational exposure participate in a training program.
- B. Provides training at the time of employment and at least annually after that.
- C. Assures that the training program contains those elements required by law.

The Infection Control Program will be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect significant changes in tasks or procedures.

### MEASURES FOR PREVENTION

#### Health History

A complete and detailed history for each employee is a critical preventive measure. An individual's health history helps to identify potential high-risk areas that may require special attention. A copy of the Post Offer Employment Questionnaire may be completed and kept by Risk Management.

# Catoosa County Board of Commissioners

## *Employee Handbook*

The plan is designed to educate personnel about infection control procedures in Catoosa County. The goal of infection control is to prevent infection from occurring in the patient, emergency response personnel and their families.

The dangers faced by government personnel are not always obvious. The occupational hazards of AIDS, hepatitis and other communicable diseases are unseen but very real. An effective Exposure Control Plan provides the means to minimize, but not eliminate, health risks.