

IMPERIAL COUNTY



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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I. INTRODUCTION TO HANDBOOK

This employee handbook contains information about the employment policies and practices of the County of Imperial in effect at the time of publication. All previously issued handbooks and any inconsistent policy statements or memoranda are superseded. Specific terms and conditions of employment are set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) between the County and each individual bargaining unit. The County of Imperial reserves the right to revise, modify, delete or add to any and all policies, procedures, work rules or benefits stated in this handbook or in any other document. All such revisions must be signed by the County Director of Human Resources and Risk Management. No oral statements or representations can change or alter the provisions of this handbook. This handbook is intended for guideline purposes. In the event any provision of this handbook needs clarification, or in the event of an inadvertent typographical error, please contact the Human Resources Department.

Not all County policies and procedures are set forth in this handbook. We have summarized only some of the more important ones. If you have any questions about this handbook or any other policy or procedure, please ask your supervisor. If you require further information, please contact the County Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

Information that is more specific is contained in sections 24100 through 24900 of the Ordinances of Imperial County. If your position is included in a bargaining unit for which there is an MOU, you should be familiar with its contents as well. A copy of the ordinances and each of the MOU’s is maintained in the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. You may read the appropriate sections of the ordinances and refer to the MOU in the event you have questions not answered in this handbook. Please read this booklet carefully and keep it for future reference.

II. STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Imperial County Board of Supervisors that the County conduct its relations with employees and applicants for employment without unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, gender, age, national origin, creed, marital status, political affiliation, medical condition, disability, ancestry, sexual orientation or any other matter presently or ensuingly determined not to be unlawful. This policy shall be implemented through the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office and the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

The County of Imperial had adopted specific policies and procedures to implement this policy, including the assurance that employees are provided a work environment free from unlawful sexual harassment. Copies of these policies and procedures are located in the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. If you have any questions regarding these policies, please contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management or the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer.

To comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, the County will make reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or an employee unless undue hardship would result.

Any applicant or employee who believes he or she requires any accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of the job should contact their supervisor and the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. The individual with the disability must specify what accommodation he or she needs to perform the essential functions of the job. The County will then conduct an investigation to identify the barriers that make it difficult for the applicant or employee to have an equal opportunity to perform the essential functions of his or her job. The County of Imperial will identify reasonable possible accommodations, if any, that will help the employee perform the essential functions of the job. If the potential reasonable accommodation will not impose an undue hardship, the County of Imperial will make the accommodations.

For additional information, please contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

III. A WORD OF WELCOME

Welcome to the government service of Imperial County. You are now a part of a local governmental entity established by law which directly and indirectly affects the well-being of the residents of this County through the provisions of services either required by state or federal statute or established through County ordinance. As a member of County government, you will be fulfilling certain duties and responsibilities that are necessary to the functioning of your department and the County as a whole. Each and every position in the County has been created to fulfill a need.

The manner in which you carry out your assigned duties and responsibilities will determine the satisfaction you gain from working for Imperial County. We sincerely hope that your association with the County is as valuable to you as it is to us and that you will gain skills, experience and abilities in the performance of your work, and progress in the County service.

IV. OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The governing body of the County is the Board of Supervisors, comprised of five members elected by the voters for four (4) year terms in each of the five County districts. Normally, the Board meets every Tuesday, plus other special meeting times, to conduct the affairs and business of the County.

Certain departments are administered by elected department heads, while others are administered by persons selected and appointed by the Board.

A brief description of the functions of each of the County departments is contained in the County budget book, a copy of which is available in each department for your examination.

V. DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The County's Human Resources program is administered by the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management which operates within the general framework of policies and ordinances established by the Board of Supervisors.

Referral and selection procedures, classification of employees, maintenance of Human Resources records, wage and salary administration, deferred compensation, health benefits administration, employee development and employee relations and Risk Management are some of the activities of the Department of Human Resource and Risk Management.

VI. DRESS CODE

Employees are expected to wear clothing appropriate to their job and work site. Employees should be well groomed and adhere to reasonable standards of personal hygiene. Clothing should be clean and in good repair, reflecting professionalism and recognition of the workplace environment. It is also important that appearance, clothing and / or shoes not constitute a safety hazard. "Casual Day" will be allowed at the discretion of the Department Head. If it is determined that an employee is inappropriately dressed for work, the employee may be sent home to change clothes on a leave without pay basis.

VII. YOUR SUPERVISOR

The most important person you will meet during our first few days on the job will be your immediate supervisor. Establishing a good relationship with your supervisor at the very beginning will assist you in getting off to a good start in your new job. Your supervisor will provide training and orientation for your new job. Your supervisor is responsible for getting the job done, seeing that the proper equipment or supplies are used, and assuring that the working area is clean, orderly, and safe. Your supervisor is your best resource when you have questions about your job or working conditions.

VIII. TYPES OF APPOINTMENTS

The following are brief descriptions of the types of appointments made by the County. These descriptions do not cover

all aspects of these categories and are not intended to modify County ordinances, policies, and MOUs.

Probationary: Effective January 1, 1998, every full-time County employee must serve a probationary period of twelve (12) months. Some employees in law enforcement serve a probationary period of eighteen (18) months.

Regular: Upon satisfactory completion of your probationary period, your status will be changed to that of a "Regular" employee. Upon receipt of a promotion, or an appointment to a different classification, you must serve a new probationary period before obtaining regular status in the new classification.

Limited-Term: This category means employment which is designated for a special project, program, service or position in which the duration of employment is limited to a specific termination date or conditioned upon the continuation of special funding. If you are a limited term employee, you are eligible for all compensation benefits conferred upon regular employees in the same classification by the County.

Temporary: Temporary employees are entitled to all compensation benefits conferred by the County upon regular employees in the same classification.

Substitute: Substitute employees include any employee appointed to a position which is occupied by a regular County employee who is off work due to service-connected injury or illness for more than 30-calendar days or on sick leave for more than 30-calendar days. Such employees are eligible for all compensation benefits conferred by the County of Imperial upon its regular employees relating to sick leave, vacation, overtime, holidays, mileage and travel expense, and merit pay increases. The employment of such employees shall be automatically terminated when the regular incumbent employee returns to work. Substitute employees have access to the County's Retirement System.

Extra-Help: Extra help employees are retained from time to time for temporary or emergency help. Extra help employees do not receive or accrue benefits and are not eligible for membership in retirement or group medical / dental insurance plans. However, per federal law, the County requires a contribution to a Deferred Compensation plan by the employee. The contribution is refundable to the extra-help employee upon application at the time of separation from County employment.

Part-Time: Part-time employees are assigned to work less than a normal full-time schedule. Part-time employees are not entitled to County health benefits unless they work 20 hours or more per week. Part-time employees who work fewer than 30 hours or more per week are not entitled to Retirement but are required, per federal law to contribute to a deferred compensation plan. The contribution is refundable to the part-time employee upon application at the time of separation from County employment. Part-time employees who regularly work 30 hours or more are members of the County Retirement System.

IX. THE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The authority for classification and salary matters for the County of Imperial rests with the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management and the Board of Supervisors. All positions in the County are classified according to their duties and responsibilities. Positions which are similar in the type of work, the level of difficulty and responsibility are placed in the same classification. Positions within each classification are treated similarly for purposes of recruitment, minimum qualifications, salary, promotions and departmental organization. Minimum education, experience and physical standards are established for each position. A person who meets the minimum education and experience requirements for a classification for a particular job is not automatically entitled to another job within the same classification and must qualify and be selected for each new position.

X. EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

The probationary period is of benefit to you and your supervisor. You are given this period of time to adjust to your new duties and determine if this is the right job situation for you. Your supervisor will help you learn and improve by reviewing your performance and discussing it with you. If, after a period of time on the job, and prior to the end of your probationary period, it is found that you are not suited for your job or your performance does not meet standards or your conduct is unsatisfactory, you may be terminated. The probation period serves as an on-the-job performance evaluation,

which must be successfully completed.

Your performance will be evaluated at the end of five (5) months and at the end of ten (10) months during this probationary period. For some employees in law enforcement, your performance will be reviewed a minimum of once during the fifth month, once during the tenth month and once during the sixteenth month of your probationary period of employment. You may be advised of any improvements expected from you at this time.

At the end of your probationary period, the County will decide if you should continue to be employed in your new position. If you successfully complete your probationary period and the County decides to continue to employ you, you will be placed on regular status.

As a regular employee, you will be evaluated approximately thirty (30) days prior to your anniversary date each year. For most employees, your anniversary date is one year from your initial date of hire. All employees may be evaluated more often than as described in this section. When you receive the evaluation, you will be given an opportunity to respond in writing, and the response will be attached to the evaluation in the personnel file.

The review of your performance by your supervisor is designed to assist you in overcoming any weaknesses in your job performance. It also helps you to establish goals and determine areas where improvement is needed.

XI. DISCIPLINE

County employees are expected to conduct themselves in such a manner that the work of their departments is effectively accomplished. This includes observing the requirements of courtesy consideration and promptness in dealing with the public. Employees who do not meet work or County standards, or whose conduct is detrimental to County service, are subject to disciplinary action by their supervisor or department head. The action taken may vary with each case depending on the seriousness and frequency of infraction, but is usually one of the following:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Written Reprimand
3. Suspension
4. Demotion
5. Dismissal

Depending upon the seriousness of the offense, it may result in dismissal without any prior disciplinary action. The causes for such action are listed in the Imperial County Ordinance section 24452. Your supervisor can provide additional details. All departments have copies of the Ordinances. If you engage in any of these prohibited actions or any other behavior which is detrimental to County service, you will be subject to disciplinary action by your supervisor.

Suspension, demotion or dismissal of a regular employee may be appealed to the Employment Appeals Board and, in the case of personnel in the Social Services and Civil Defense Departments, to the State Merit Systems Division.

XII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If you are covered by an MOU, that document may contain a grievance procedure which covers violations of the MOU itself. If an employee's particular concern is covered by the MOU, that procedure will apply to the issue. If not, the following procedure may apply. You should contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management to find out which procedure applies.

1. Definition of Grievance

A grievance, for the purposes of these procedures, is the complaint of a regular employee alleging unfair treatment, improper working conditions or benefits to himself / herself which are subject to, and within, the prerogatives or control of County management to resolve.

2. Grievance Procedures

Grievances must be initiated within five (5) working days after the occurrence of the event which caused the grievance.

- (a) Step I - An employee who has a grievance shall informally discuss his or her complaint with his or her immediate supervisor. Within five (5) working days, the supervisor shall give his or her decision to the employee orally.
- (b) Step II - If the employee feels his or her grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, or if he/she receives no response from his or her immediate supervisor, he/she shall have five (5) working days from the date of the supervisor's response, or from the time specified under Step I for the supervisor's response to formally submit the grievance in writing to the next higher authority. The higher authority shall, within five (5) working days of the receipt of the written grievance, supply an answer in writing to the aggrieved employee, explaining clearly his or her decision or proposed action.
- (c) Step III - If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the written answer received at Step II, he/she may, within five (5) working days of receipt of such written answer, appeal in writing to the department head. The department head shall confer with the employee and prior levels of supervision involved in an attempt to effect a harmonious solution. The department head shall reply in writing within five (5) working days following receipt of the written grievance unless by mutual agreement the time limitation is extended. A copy of the department head's response shall be filed with the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

3. Special Provisions

The multi-level steps of the grievance procedure are designed to permit sufficient steps within larger departments having more than one supervisory level. In the case of departments with only one supervisory level between the employee and the department head, Step II is waived. In departments that have more than three (3) levels of supervision, the department head may require that the grievance be processed through all supervisory levels. If the department head is the immediate supervisor, Steps I and II are eliminated. A grievance originating in a department that does not have supervisory levels between the employee and the department head shall be responded to in writing by the department head.

4. Waiver of Grievance

Failure of the aggrieved employee to file within the specified time limit for any step of the grievance procedure shall constitute an abandonment of the grievance. Failure of any designated level of management to respond within the specified time limits shall cause the grievance to move to the next step, if so desired by the employee, effective as of the date by which the management is required to respond.

5. Appeals

Under County Ordinance section 24979, the employee may request review by the Employment Appeals Board of the department head's decision, if the employee has followed this grievance procedure correctly. The request for review must be filed in writing with the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management within ten (10) working days of the department head's decision.

XIII. GENERAL EMPLOYMENT APPEALS

Under County Ordinance section 24978 some issues may be appealed to the Imperial County Employment Appeals Board. For your appeal to be granted, the issue must be an appealable issue, and you must meet all provisions of the ordinances governing employment appeals, Sections 24975 through 24986 of the County Ordinances. Your Department has a copy of these ordinances or you may go to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management to review them. But remember, all steps and provisions of these ordinances must be met to enable the Director of Human Resources and Risk Management to grant a request for review by the Employment Appeals Board.

Complaints of illegal discrimination are first to be filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer.

XIV. DISCRIMINATION / HARASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

1. Definition of Discrimination or Harassment Based on Protected Class

A complaint of discrimination for the purposes of these procedures is a complaint of an employee alleging unlawful

discrimination with regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender, age, national origin, creed, marital status, political affiliation, medical condition, disability, ancestry, sexual orientation, or any other matter presently or ensuingly determined not to be job related.

2. Complaint Resolution Procedures Intra-department

- (a) An employee who has a discrimination complaint should informally discuss their complaint with their immediate supervisor or department management personnel. The department should respond orally to the employee within five (5) days.
- (b) If their department does not respond or if the response does not satisfactorily address the complaint, the employee may formalize the complaint within the department or the employee may contact the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office for assistance in informally resolving the complaint. (Formal complaint resolution is covered in the following section.)

The EEO Analyst / Officer can offer advice on how to resolve the complaint, as well as provide assistance by speaking with appropriate persons in the department. If the circumstances are sufficiently severe or if sexual harassment is involved, the EEO Analyst / Officer may conduct a formal investigation.

3. Formal Discrimination Complaint with EEO Office

The employee may initiate a formal Discrimination Complaint through the EEO Office if the intra-department efforts to resolve the discrimination complaint have been unsuccessful or if there are barriers to reporting the complaint to their department. Discrimination complaints filed with the EEO Office can be handled one of two ways: informally or formally.

- (a) Informal complaints of discrimination will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Informal complaints may be verbally to the EEO Analyst / Officer. The EEO Analyst / Officer can offer advice on how the complaint-employee may resolve the complaint. The EEO Analyst / Officer may work with appropriate individuals in the complainant-employee's department to resolve the complaint without conducting a formal investigation. In some cases, the EEO office can provide mediation to resolve problems. If the circumstances are sufficiently severe or if sexual harassment is involved, the EEO Analyst/Officer may conduct a formal investigation.
- (b) Formal Complaints of Discrimination are addressed when the complainant-employee files a written complaint of discrimination with the EEO Analyst/Officer. The EEO Analyst/Officer will review the complaint and determine if it is within their authority to pursue. If the complaint is within the scope of the EEO Office, an investigation will be conducted. The investigation will consist of review of relevant data and documents, interviews with individuals familiar with the discrimination allegation, and other review as needed. The investigation will be completed in approximately twenty (20) working days. At the completion of the investigation, a report of findings and recommendations will be filed with the Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Department is responsible for distribution of the report to the appropriate personnel.

The complainant-employee may request review by the Employment Appeals Board of the EEO Officer's opinion. The request for review must be filed in writing with the Department of Human Resources within ten (10) working days of the EEO Officer's decision.

XV. RESIGNATION

If you find it necessary to resign from your position, you are expected to provide your department with sufficient time to provide for your replacement. Giving sufficient notice, usually a minimum of two weeks prior to the effective date of resignation, will help your department to plan the workload so that a minimum of disruption occurs.

XVI. EXIT INTERVIEW

It is important that, if you terminate your service with the County, you have an exit interview with your department head or supervisor prior to your date of termination. The purpose of the exit interview is to ensure that you are aware of potential benefits that you may be entitled to, to ascertain the reasons for termination, and to discuss any other pertinent information relating to your employment with the County. Any employment related material, keys, ID cards, electronics,

or other equipment issued, by the County shall be turned in to the Department in which employed or the Department of Human Resources before the end of last working day.

XVII. THE PAY PLAN

The salary schedule consists of a series of ranges containing six steps with an approximate five percent increase between each step. Each position in the County is assigned to one of these ranges according to the degree of responsibility and nature of duties required by the position.

As a new employee, you will normally begin at Step "A" of the range to which your classification is assigned. Most employees are eligible to receive an increase on their anniversary date to Step "B" and each step thereafter up to Step "E" after 12 months of continuous satisfactory service in each step and providing such increase is recommended and approved by the department head.

An employee is eligible for Step "F", the sixth step, upon completion of nine (9) years of continuous satisfactory service and at least one year in Step "E" in his or her current classification.

However, an employee is only eligible for advancement to Step "F" of the applicable salary schedule provided such increase is recommended by the department head and approved by the Director of Human Resources.

XVIII. PAYDAY AND DEDUCTIONS

County employees are paid biweekly on Friday (every two weeks). Your paycheck represents earnings for the previous pay period, running from Friday of one week through Thursday two weeks later. Five days normally lapse after the end of the pay period before the employee is paid. Accompanying your check will be a statement of earnings, deductions, and accrual of vacation and sick leave benefits. The following deductions may be indicated.

1. Federal Income Tax
2. State Income Tax
3. Medicare/FICA
4. Retirement Contributions
5. Group Insurance
6. Special deductions for certain personnel

If you feel there has been an error in any paycheck you receive, or if you have any questions concerning the amount of your check, you should see your immediate supervisor or the payroll section of the Auditor-Controller's Office.

XIX. WORK SCHEDULES

Work schedules are individually defined by each department within the County. For those departments which are required to work in shifts, such shifts are scheduled by the department head. Your supervisor will assign your individual work schedule. You are expected to be at your work station at the start of your scheduled shift, ready to perform your work.

XX. WORK BREAKS

All employees are entitled to two 15 minute rest periods for each eight (8) hours worked, except for specific job assignments designated by the department head where periodic breaks occur through out the day due to work peaks and stoppages. No employee shall leave an office or telephone unattended to take a rest period unless another employee temporarily covers his / her work station. This 15 minute work period is calculated from the time the employee leaves his work station until he returns.

In general, the first break shall be scheduled between hours of 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and the second 15 minute break between the hours of 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Work breaks cannot be used to extend lunch hours or to shorten your daily work schedule.

XXI. OVERTIME AND COMPENSATORY TIME

As a general policy, overtime work is discouraged. However, some departments are authorized to assign overtime work in emergency or urgent situations. Hours actually worked in excess of forty (40) in a single work week are compensated at the rate of one and one half times the regular rate of pay or in compensatory time off at the rate of one and one half times the overtime hours actually worked. For employees engaged in law enforcement and fire protection activities, overtime hours are hours actually worked in excess of the designated number of hours within the specific work periods established by the Board of Supervisors. All overtime hours worked must be approved by your supervisor.

XXII. HOLIDAYS

In observation of New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day (and the day after), and Christmas Day, regular employees enjoy a paid holiday on the following days:

1. January 1st
2. The third Monday in January
3. The third Monday in February
4. Spring Holiday, Friday before Easter
5. The last Monday in May
6. July 4th
7. The first Monday in September
8. Veteran's Day, November 11th
9. The Thursday in November appointed Thanksgiving Day
10. The Friday after Thanksgiving
11. December 25th

If any of the above days falls on Sunday, the following Monday becomes a holiday and if it falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday is a holiday. If you are a regular employee and you are required by your department to work on a holiday, you will receive equivalent time off at a later time.

BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY: Regular Employee(s) are now entitled to a "Birthday" Holiday.

XXIII. VACATION

Employees holding a regular position in the classified service are entitled to an annual vacation of 15 working days vacation computed at the rate of .05769 of an hour for each hour of paid time up to a maximum of 80 hours per pay period. Employees who have completed 15 years of continuous service may earn 20 days vacation. Vacation credits may be accumulated up to 30 working days by employees with less than 15 years of service or 40 working days for employees with 15 or more years of service. Vacation credits may be used after one (1) year of continuous service. All vacations and leave requests are subject to prior approval and scheduling of your department head or supervisor.

XXIV. GROUP HEALTH BENEFITS AND GROUP LIFE INSURANCE

Upon commencement of regular employment on at least a half time basis you are eligible to enroll in the County's group health benefit program. Each employee has thirty (30) days to select from among the available coverage options. If you do not choose a plan, you will be placed on Plan IV. In addition, details on the program, benefits, and administrative rules are provided in the group health benefit plan booklet which will be provided to you. You are urged to read the booklet carefully. More specific information on the County's health benefit plans is also provided in the plan document. You may review the plan document in the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. Questions concerning the group health benefit plan should be directed to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management which can also provide you with claim forms if needed.

XXV. RETIREMENT

Imperial County has a Retirement System based on California law, "Retirement Act of 1937." This program is

administered by the County Treasurer. For current information, and a copy of the "Retirement Benefits Booklet," regarding eligibility, employee requirements, contributions, and benefits, contact the Retirement Division of the County Treasurer's Office.

XXVI. SICK LEAVE

You will be given credit for one (8 hours) day of sick leave for each month you are in fully paid employment status with the County, with unlimited accumulation. Sick leave may be used when you are unable to work because of illness or injury. It may also be taken, with permission of your department head, when you have a medical, dental or optical appointment. Up to six days of accumulated sick leave may be taken within one year when a member of your immediate family is critically ill. Sick leave cannot be used for:

- a. Sickness or disability sustained while on leave of absence without pay
- b. Vacation
- c. Sickness or injury incurred while working for an employer other than the County of Imperial.

Upon request of the department head, an employee may be required to furnish proof of illness, such as a certificate from a licensed physician. You are required in every case to notify your department head on the first day of your absence.

Remember that sick leave is provided in order that loss of income may be prevented while you are sick or disabled and is, in fact, a form of insurance for you. Save it and use it as little as possible; you may have an urgent need for it in the future.

Upon retirement or deferred retirement, accumulated sick leave may be applied toward retirement credits or you may have the option of being compensated for a percentage of your sick leave (except some employees in law enforcement).

Under a resolution adopted by the Board of Supervisors, County employees may be eligible for a "buy back" of sick leave benefits, under the formula specified in County Ordinance section 24205.5 and applicable provisions of certain MOUs. The Department of Human Resources and Risk Management can provide additional information.

XXVII. BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Every employee covered herein shall be entitled to three (3) days of "bereavement leave" per fiscal year for each death in the employee's immediate family, without a charge being made for such leave to the employee's accumulated sick-leave benefits. "Immediate Family," shall include the following for either the employee or the spouse: grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, grandchild, or any relative living in the immediate household. No employee shall be entitled to more than nine (9) days of leave under this provision per fiscal year. Unused leave under this provision shall not accumulate from year to year.

XXVIII. LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

Sometime you may find it necessary to take time off other than sick leave or vacation. The County provides for such leave but it must be taken without pay. Requests for leave of absence must be in writing and must indicate the reasons for your request for leave, the beginning date, and the date of your return. Copies are to be submitted to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management, prior to taking such leave. Unpaid leaves of absence may be granted for not more than fifteen (15) calendar days by your department head for substantive reasons which, in the opinion of the person authorizing such leave, are justifiable, are of benefit to the County and the employee involved, and which will not create hardship in the department concerned. Additional time may be authorized by the Director of Human Resources and Risk Management, for periods not exceeding 120 calendar days.

XXIX. FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE

Pursuant to state and federal law you may be entitled to family care and medical leave. The County has adopted a

policy which details the specific requirements for such leave. In general, family care and medical leave is leave for a period of no more than twelve (12) work weeks during a rolling twelve (12) month period. Accrued paid leave (including vacation and compensatory time off) may first be used during the period of family care and medical leave; the rest of the leave period is unpaid. Family care leave is granted for the birth or adoption of a child, to care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition or if you yourself are suffering from a serious health condition which makes you unable to perform your job. If you anticipate the need to request family care leave you should contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management as soon as the need is known to you. You are required to provide written notice of your anticipated need for family care leave within five (5) working days of learning of the need for the leave. You may also be subject to specific eligibility and certification requirements set forth in the Family Care Leave Policy. During any period in which the employee is eligible under the Family Care and Medical Leave Policy, the County will maintain group health benefits coverage if such benefits were provided before the leave was taken and on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. It is important for employees to understand that the County contribution for an eligible employee on leave will not exceed the contribution which the County would have made if the employee had been on duty. In some instances, the County may recover premiums it paid to maintain health coverage for an employee who fails to return to work following leave. The Department of Human Resources and Risk Management can provide you with additional information.

XXX. PREGNANCY DISABILITY LEAVE

The County will grant an unpaid pregnancy disability leave to employees disabled due to their pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions. Such employees may take up to a maximum of four months leave. As an alternative, the County may transfer the employee to a less strenuous or hazardous position if the employee so requests, with the advice of her physician, if the transfer can be reasonably accommodated.

Leave taken under the pregnancy disability policy runs concurrently with family care and medical leave under federal law, but not family care and medical leave under California law. Consequently, eligible employees may take a maximum of four (4) calendar months leave in addition to leave under the Family Care and Medical Leave Policy.

Pregnancy disability leaves are without pay. However, employees may utilize accrued vacation time and any other accrued paid time off during the leave.

Unless eligible under the Family Care and Medical Leave Policy, employees on pregnancy disability leave will be eligible for benefit coverage on the same basis as employees taking other unpaid leave. Employees on pregnancy disability leave who do not qualify for continued paid coverage, or whose paid coverage ceases after 12 workweeks, may continue their group health benefit coverage through the County by making monthly payments to the County for the amount of the benefit cost. Employees should contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management for additional information.

XXXI. IMPERIAL COUNTY POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR THE GRANTING OF PARENTAL LEAVE

It is County policy to allow regular employees who are parents, grandparents having legal custody, or legal guardians to participate in the school activities of a child in kindergarten or grades 1 through 12, Employees are allowed up to forty (40) hours per school year, not to exceed eight (8) hours in a calendar month. An employee may use leave without pay, vacation or administrative leave or compensatory time off for this purpose.

XXXII. IMPERIAL COUNTY MEDICAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

Under certain circumstances, employees may be required to submit to a medical evaluation to determine whether they are medically qualified for a specific position. For example, a department head at any time may require a "fitness for duty" examination when the department head determines the examination to be justified under County Ordinances. The specific details of the medical evaluation system are set forth in sections 24370-24380 of the County Ordinances. Each department has a copy of the Ordinances. In the event an employee is determined to be medically disqualified for a particular position, the employee has the right to appeal the determination. The appeal procedure are explained in section 24379 of the County Ordinances. If you have any questions regarding the medical evaluation or the appeals process, contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

XXXIII. SKIN TESTS / X-RAYS

Annual skin tests or x-rays are scheduled by the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management for each employee during the month in which his or her birthday falls for each employee for whom the test is required. Prior to this, you will receive notice from the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management and given instructions to report to the Health Department.

XXXIV. JURY AND WITNESS DUTY

You may, at some time, be called to serve on a jury or as a witness in a court proceeding. During the time of your service, you will continue to receive your full salary, providing you are not a litigant in the proceedings and that any fees received, except mileage, are submitted by you to the Treasurer's office through your department head. If you are a defendant in civil litigation involving your conduct in the course and scope of your duties, you may qualify for paid release time, as determined by the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. You must notify your department head, in writing, that you have been called for such duty as soon as a notice or summons is received from the court. You may be requested to provide written verification from the court clerk of having attended. If any of your regularly scheduled work time remains after you are released by the court on any day of jury selection or jury duty, you are expected to return to work for the remainder of your shift.

XXXV. CREDIT UNION

The Government Agencies Federal Credit Union (GAFCU) provides you the opportunity to save money conveniently through payroll deductions and may enable you to borrow money. Loans can be repaid through payroll deductions. GAFCU will be glad to give you further information.

XXXVI. DEFERRED COMPENSATION

The County provides access to various Deferred Compensation Programs for regular County employees. For additional information, contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

XXXVII. TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Most regular full-time employees are eligible for the tuition reimbursement program as administered by the Department of Human Resources. Reimbursement is limited to text books, tuition, registration and laboratory fees up to a maximum cost limit and applies to courses related to your job. Authorization is necessary from your department head and Director of Human Resources no later than thirty (30) days after commencement of the course of study.

In order to receive reimbursement, you must submit an official transcript of your grades and receipt(s) for the cost of text books, tuition, registration and your entry fees.

XXXVIII. SAVINGS BONDS

The County has established a program under which employees can purchase United States Savings Bonds by automatic payroll deduction. For additional information, contact the Department of Human Resources.

XXXIX. STATE DISABILITY INSURANCE

The County and some of the employee organizations representing County employees have arranged for the group of employees represented by those organizations to decide whether that group should participate in the State Disability Insurance program. As a result, some County employees are eligible to receive disability income in the event of a disabling illness or injury. These benefits are paid for by automatic payroll deduction. To find out whether you are covered by this program and to obtain additional information, contact the Department of Human Resources.

XL. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The County has established an Employee Assistance Program to provide confidential counseling services to eligible

employees to help them cope with the wide range of personal pressures and problems. These services are intended to help employees recognize and deal with these pressures and problems in a healthy and effective way. For additional information about this program, contact the Department of Human Resources.

XLII. PARKING

Off-street parking is provided at various locations around the Administration Center for employees and the public. The lots are marked with County identification. Please note and observe any signs reserving spaces for the disabled or for other purposes. The County is not responsible for any loss or damages to employee vehicles or contents while parked on County property, nor is the County responsible for fines for employees who park unlawfully.

XLIII. ATTENDANCE

Regular and prompt attendance is an important requirement of your job. In the event you are going to be absent from work, you are required to notify your department head in advance. If illness or some other emergency causes an unplanned absence, you must notify your immediate supervisor as soon as possible on the first day of absence. If you fail to return at the expiration of an authorized leave of absence or are absent without prior authorization, you will be deemed to have automatically resigned.

XLIV. VISITORS AND PERSONAL PHONE CALLS

As an employee you are reminded that you were hired to perform an important job function; therefore, personal business is not to be handled during your scheduled work hours. Personal telephone calls and visits with employees by friends, relatives, or others are discouraged by the County of Imperial and are to be limited, except in the event of an emergency.

XLV. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Prior written authorization from the department head is required before you may accept outside employment. Such employment must not conflict in any way with your duties for the County. Also, you are prohibited from engaging in any activity that is considered incompatible with your regular duties. If you have any questions, you should contact your department head or the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

XLVI. EMPLOYEE RELOCATION REIMBURSEMENT, ASSIGNMENT COMPENSATION AND RESIDENT BENEFIT PROGRAMS POLICY

A) POLICY.

This policy applies to County employees who are assigned, reassigned, transferred and / or relocated to certain remote areas of the County and are required to reside and / or work in these areas. This policy consists of three separate and distinct programs: Relocation Reimbursement Program, Assignment Compensation Program and Residence Benefit Program. If you have any questions, please contact your department head or the Department of Human Resources.

B) RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENT HEADS.

Department heads shall have sole authority to relocate, assign and / or reassign departmental personnel to meet work load authority to determine where departmental personnel shall be relocated, assigned and / or reassigned under this policy. The Department Head shall notify the Department of Human Resources as it regards any employee who may qualify to receive any benefits under this policy.

C) RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES

Those employees entitled to County housing shall acknowledge that he/she is financially responsible for any damage to that property, reasonable wear and tear expected, and further that upon voluntary or involuntary separation from the

County service, must vacate this property within 30 days of the effective date of separation.

XLVI. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

County Employees are encouraged to vote in local, state, and national elections and to be active in the political party of their choice.

The County Board of Supervisors has adopted a policy entitled "Permitted and Prohibited Political Activity by County Officers and Employees." This policy is available at the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

XLVII. POLITICAL RIGHTS

As employees of the County of Imperial, there are certain limits on your political rights because of your special position as a public employee.

Those limits include but are not limited to:

- 1) A county employee may not engage, nor a supervisor, allow other County employees to engage in campaign activities of any sort including soliciting political contributions while on county property, such as copying machines and / or fax machines, computers or telephones, be used for political activities.
- 2) A County employee may not campaign or participate in political activities while in uniform. This includes wearing of political buttons or signs when at work and / or on duty, and placing signs on County property. However, this does not exclude an employee's right to display a bumper sticker on an employee's personal vehicle.

XLVIII. CHANGE OF NAME OR ADDRESS, STATUS

If you change your name, address or telephone number for any reason, remember to report this change to your supervisor and the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. Any change in your personal status such as marriage or divorce; or any change in your beneficiaries or dependents should also be provided to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

XLIX. EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES

No department head shall employ a member of the department head's immediate family in his / her department. No employee shall participate in the selection process for any member of his or her immediate family. No person shall be employed in a position where that position will be directly supervised by a member of the person's immediate family or where it is reasonable to believe and it can be shown that employment of immediate family members in the same department, division, or facility involves potential conflicts of interest or other hazards.

"Immediate Family" shall mean and include an employee's spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, sister, brother, or spouse of any of the preceding.

If you have any questions concerning the employment of relatives, refer to Ordinance section 24200 (2). Your department has a copy of this ordinance.

L. INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM AND SAFETY

The County of Imperial has adopted an Injury and Illness Prevention Program which is a comprehensive health and safety program designed to identify and abate hazards known to be associated with workplace violence, accidents, injuries and illnesses in order to provide a safe and healthy place in which to work.

You are responsible for your own safety as well as the safety of others in the workplace. To achieve our goal of

maintaining a safe workplace, everyone must be safety conscious at all times. You can help by looking and thinking before acting, by using the safety equipment provided, by reporting all unsafe working conditions or equipment and by following safety rules and regulations. Be sure to obtain proper instructions before you start a new task or operate a new machine. Remember to keep your work area free of clutter or extraneous items which may create a safety hazard.

LI. ON-THE-JOB INJURY

If you are injured on the job, the County's Workers' Compensation program will pay for all eligible medical expenses and temporary disability benefits as provided by law.

Your sick leave, earned vacation credits or earned compensatory time credits may also be used to compensate you at a pro-rate of pay. However, if these benefits are exhausted, and you are still medically eligible, the County's workers' compensation carrier will continue to pay appropriate workers' compensation disability benefits until you can return to work.

If you are injured on the job, you must report the injury to your supervisor. In no event shall such notification be delayed beyond twenty-four (24) hours.

After you have been injured on the job, a doctor's return to work release is required. If you are off the job for 30 calendar work days or more, you are required to obtain certification from the County Health Officer before returning to work. However, if off for less than 30 days a fitness for duty exam may be requested if return to work release is conditioned upon work restrictions. Additional information can be obtained from the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

LII. CARE OF COUNTY PROPERTY

Every job in the County requires the use of supplies and some type of equipment. You are charged with the responsibility of maintaining such property in the best possible condition and making the most economical use of supplies issued to you. You can help keep costs down by exercising reasonable care over County property for which you are responsible.

LIII. POLICY ON SEARCHES/E-MAIL/INTERNET

Because of the need for access to information and County property, as well as health and safety considerations, all work space may be subject to search at any time. Further, since access to the Internet and electronic mail system is provided to certain County employees to aid them in the performance of their duties, personal use of both is to be avoided. Use of offensive or derogatory language in E-mail is prohibited.

LIV. COUNTY VEHICLES

County vehicles are assigned to certain employees whose jobs require them. Some employees are also authorized to take such vehicles home due to the nature of their work. All other employees using County vehicles must return them before going home at the end of their work shifts. If you are assigned a County vehicle, you are responsible for its care. Make sure that maintenance checks are made as scheduled, the appropriate records are maintained, and when repair is needed, that it is reported promptly to the garage. It is your responsibility to obey all safety laws when operating or riding in county vehicles, including use of seat belts at all times.

Needless to say, County vehicles are to be used only for County business and not for personal business. Certain persons are either required or authorized to use their privately owned vehicle on County business. Reimbursement to the employee is provided on a monthly basis at a rate designed to cover cost of operation. That rate is adjusted from time to time by the Board of Supervisors. Authorization is provided by the department head to use your private vehicle after proper verification of insurance is provided to County officials by the employee. Any employee operating a vehicle must maintain a valid California Driver's license which authorizes operation of the vehicle. Specific criteria for County vehicle usage is covered in Sections 24600 through 24608 of the County Ordinances.

LV. COUNTY OF IMPERIAL SUPPLEMENTAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR APPLICANTS AND EMPLOYEES IN POSITIONS REQUIRING SPECIAL DMV LICENSING

It is County policy to ensure that all employees are physically able to perform their duties. All applicants and employees requiring special DMV licensing are required by the State of California DMV to undergo exams every two (2) years. It is County policy that these exams be conducted exclusively by the County Health Officer in order to ensure that all employees are physically able to perform their duties. DMV exams are scheduled by the Department of Human Resources to be conducted by the County Health Officer. The exams must be successfully completed with the County Health Officer prior to placing any applicant, or prior to continued employment of any County employee in a County position requiring special DMV licensing.

LVI. ELECTION TIME POLICY

This policy applies to all employees of the County of Imperial, regardless of classification.

If an employee does not have sufficient time outside of his or her working hours, as assigned by his or her supervisor, to vote at a statewide or local public elections in which the employee is eligible and registered to vote, the employee may, without loss of pay take off enough working time which, when added to the voting time available outside of working hours, will enable the voter to vote.

The time off for voting shall be only at the beginning or the end of the regular working shift. Absent unusual circumstances as determined by the immediate supervisor and / or department head, no more than one (1) hour of paid time off will be permitted. In any case, no more than two hours of the time taken off for voting shall be without loss of pay.

The employee shall give his or her immediate supervisor and/or department head at least two working days' notice that time off for voting is desired, in accordance with the provisions of the policy.

LVII. REDUCTION OF FORCE

Although infrequent, layoff of County employees may be necessary because of changes in service(s), lack of work, discontinuance of a program, or for other reasons or circumstances as determined by the Board of Supervisors. Layoff policies and procedures are set forth in County Ordinance sections 24550-24558 and some of the MOU's.

LVIII. CONCLUSION

The mission of our department is to continually strive to efficiently plan, organize, coordinate, and direct the County's comprehensive, centralized Human Resources and Risk Management programs, which promote a healthy, positive productive and safe work environment; to provide our County departments with a highly qualified and trained staff that is diverse in nature, appropriately classified, and equitably compensated; and to assist all County employees and the general public in a professional and timely manner. It is our desire that your employment with the County be a meaningful experience, and in the event you have questions that are not answered in this booklet, please do not hesitate to ask your supervisor or the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

Nellie D. Lerma
Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

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