

CITY OF PATASKALA
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND POLICY MANUAL
SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Article I Introduction

Section 1.01 Purpose and Coverage:

Clarified that the use of masculine and feminine language throughout the manual shall be construed to include all genders.

Clarified that the City adheres to the doctrine of employment “at-will”, unless or except as modified by applicable statute and/or collective bargaining agreement.

Article II General Provisions

Section 2.01 Equal Employment Opportunity:

Added genetic information to the list of protected classes and clarified that gender includes sexual orientation/preference.

Section 2.04 Weather Emergencies / Dismissal from Work:

Removed the requirement that extreme weather conditions can only include a level 3 snow emergency in Licking County.

Article III Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment

Section 3.01 Purpose:

Added genetic information and veteran’s status to the list of protected classes and clarified that gender includes sexual orientation/preference.

Section 3.03 Unlawful Harassment / Bullying:

Added genetic information and veteran’s status to the list of protected classes and clarified that gender includes sexual orientation/preference.

Section 3.04 Complaints:

Added language that requires that investigations be conducted confidentially to the extent possible.

Section 3.06 Policy Enforcement:

Removed the requirement that all managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing training for harassment. This is administration's responsibility and not a manager/supervisor responsibility.

Article IV Employee Selection and Employment Practices

Section 4.02 Selection:

Added assessment centers and alcohol testing to the list of processes that may be included in the selection process.

Section 4.03 Personal Reference / Verification of Employment:

Corrected reference to appendix.

Section 4.04 Nepotism:

Added "If the hiring or hiring process would violate the Ohio Ethics' Laws" to the list of situations that would prevent the City from hiring a relative of a current employee.

Section 4.07 Probationary Period:

Changed the requirement to conduct the first evaluation after 100 days to 180 days.

Article V Hours of Work and General Employment Policies

Section 5.02 Employee Files:

Changed the language so that employees receive written authorization from the City Administrator or designee, previously Mayor, in order to alter, add, or remove documents or other information contained in their personnel files.

Section 5.03 Employee Classifications:

Added non-covered employee, removed provisional employee, and revised the definition of intermittent employee.

Section 5.09 Performance Evaluations:

Removed the language that prohibits employees from receiving their performance evaluation without prior authorization from the City Administrator.

Section 5.11 Attendance and Hours of Work:

Removed sub-section (f) that refers to breaks for employees who work a regular shift of 8 ½ hours. This is no longer a shift.

Extended the requirement to report absences within fifteen (15) minutes after the start of the workday to thirty (30) minutes.

Modernized the language in sub-section (i) and (j) to allow employees to notify, versus speak with, and receive acknowledgement from the Department Head and/or designee if unable to report to work. Additional language was added to clarify that the employee is responsible for ensuring they receive acknowledgement from the Department Head and/or designee.

Section 5.14 Flex Time (Exempt Employees): – NEW

This is a new section that was added to the manual to allow exempt employees to flex their schedule when working in excess of forty (40) hours in one workweek. The flexible hours must be used within the two (2) week pay period and must be approved in advance by the City Administrator.

Section 5.15 Reductions in Work Force:

Clarified that the City shall comply with not only local rules and state and federal laws but also Personnel Board of Review rules whenever a layoff is implemented.

Section 5.23 Work from Home / Telework Policy: – NEW

This is a new section that provides the City with the flexibility to allow employees to work from home/telework for extenuating situations as determined by the City Administrator.

Article VI Workplace Standards

Section 6.01 Ethics in Employment:

Added language that requires the City to provide a copy of or direct a new hire to electronic access of the Ohio Ethics' Laws.

Section 6.04 Workplace Violence:

Revised the list of warning signs and risk factors to be less specific.

Section 6.05 Weapons in the Workplace:

This section was revised to ensure compliance with Ohio's new "Permitless Carry" Law. The law does not change the location of where weapons may/may not be permitted.

Section 6.08 Use of City Property and Vehicles:

Removed “pagers” and “typewriters” from this section.

Added that employees who operate a city-owned motor vehicle are required to maintain insurability.

In sub-section (vi) added language that requires post-accident drug/alcohol testing if an employee is in an accident involving a city vehicle and 3rd party or where there is reasonable suspicion that the employee was under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Added “texting, browsing the internet, e-mailing, etc. on a mobile device while driving” as an irresponsible action while operating a motor vehicle. In the same section, clarified that smoking in a city-owned vehicle also includes vaping and other tobacco related products (not to include smokeless tobacco).

Section 6.11 Service Animal: - New

This is a new section that allows employees to request an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to bring a service animal into all City-controlled buildings.

Article VII Employee Wage Payment Policies and Procedures

Section 7.02 Employee Timesheets:

In sub-section (d) updated the position title of Finance Manager to Assistant Finance Director.

Section 7.03 Payroll Deductions:

In sub-section (b) updated the position title of Finance Manager to Assistant Finance Director.

In sub-section (c) referring to pension system contributions, added language to clarify that members of City boards and commissions who do not qualify for participation in OPERS will be paid via the City’s accounts payable systems and will have a 1099 issued, if appropriate. Additionally, language was added in this same sub-section requiring newly-elected officials who elect not to participate in OPERS and instead have Social Security deducted to make this election within fourteen (14) days of starting office.

Added cell phone reimbursements to the list of miscellaneous deductions.

Article VIII Employee Benefits, Vacation, Sick, and Other Leaves

Section 8.02 Insurance Program Eligibility & Participation:

Added language to clarify that when two employees work for the City, the primary holder will be determined based on the employee whose birthday occurs first in the calendar year.

Section 8.05 Vacation:

Revised the language to allow for vacation leave to be charged in fifteen (15) minute increments versus two (2) hours.

Clarified that employees may convert up to forty (40) hours of vacation leave to cash per calendar year versus on a rolling twelve (12) month basis.

Section 8.06 Sick Leave:

Added language clarifying that employees do not accrue additional sick leave for overtime hours worked.

In sub-section (e) revised the language to be consistent with the changes made in Section 5.11 regarding reporting absences. Additionally, rather than requiring employees to justify sick leave on a written, signed statement, revised the language to documenting sick leave in the appropriate HR system.

In sub-section (f), abuse of sick leave, added that a consistent pattern of call-offs includes using sick leave as it accrues.

In sub-section (j), catastrophic sick leave donation program, revised the policy to allow employees to receive a donation of 400 hundred hours versus 240 hours.

Section 8.08 Other Paid Leaves:

Revised the Military Leave section to ensure compliance with O.R.C. 5923.05.

Section 8.11 Tuition Reimbursement Program:

Revised the maximum reimbursement from \$3,000 to \$5,000 and removed the language that prohibits reimbursement for correspondence courses. Additional language was added to this section that requires employees who receive tuition reimbursement to pay the City in full for all expenses incurred by the City if the employee's employment is terminated with the City within two (2) years of completion of the schooling for which the employee received reimbursement.

Article IX Discipline

Section 9.01 Tenure in Service:

Added language to clarify that classified and unclassified service is established by City Council and/or City Charter.

Added unsatisfactory performance to the list of what an employee may be reduced in pay or position, fined, suspended, removed from their job, or otherwise disciplined for.

Added “while employed in the civil service” to felony conviction.

Article X Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Section 10.02 Definitions:

Modified the list of qualifying events to be in compliance with the FMLA.

Section 10.03 FMLA Eligibility:

Clarified that in order for employees to be eligible for FMLA that they must have worked for the City for at least twelve (12) months, or fifty-two (52) weeks within a seven (7) year period.

Section 10.04 Concurrent Use of Leaves:

Changed “Service Member’s Leave” to “Qualifying Exigency Leave”. Removed the entitlement to twenty-six (26) weeks of leave to care for a service member injured in the line of duty.

Section 10.08 Intermittent / Reduced Schedule Leave:

Added language clarifying that an employee’s failure to comply with the agreed upon schedule may result in the denial of FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis.

Article XI Drug and Alcohol Policy

Section 11.03 Conditions Resulting in Employee Drug and/or Alcohol Testing:

In sub-section (a)(iii), post-accident testing, added language that requires post-accident drug/alcohol testing if an employee is in an accident involving a city vehicle and 3rd party or where there is reasonable suspicion that the employee was under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Also clarified that this testing should be conducted immediately after an accident and an alcohol test at no time shall be administered eight (8) hours after an accident.

Removed the requirement to test if there is property damage in excess of \$750.

Should an employee test positive, the language was modified to require employees to undergo follow-up testing for a period of one (1) year as a condition of employment.

Section 11.08 Confidentiality of Test Results:

Clarified that test results will remain confidential to the extent allowed by law.

Section 11.19 Testing Procedure:

Clarified that the alcohol test is based on blood alcohol content (BAC).

Section 11.20 Employee Assistance Program:

Removed the Discipline/Rehabilitation options language stating that “Any discipline shall be for just cause and shall take into account all facts and circumstances, including the employee's desire for and/or progress in treatment, and the employee's work record.”

In sub-section (c), referral to treatment, removed completing a course of counseling or treatment prescribed, including an "after-care" group for a period of up to twelve (12) months as a condition of continued employment and revised the language to be consistent with the random testing requirement previously noted in the manual.

In sub-section (d), right of appeal, clarified that if an employee challenges the results of a drug or alcohol test, it is at their cost.

Removed sub-section (f) regarding confidentiality because this is already covered in this section.

Article XII Electronic Mail, Internet Access and Phone System

Section 12.06 Social Media:

Updated/Modernized the Policy.

Section 12.10 Telephone System:

Removed language referring to long-distance calls.

Article XIII, Administrative Policies and Procedures

Removed this article from the manual. These should be kept separate from the employee handbook.

Article XIV, Financial Policies and Procedures

Removed this article from the manual. These should be kept separate from the employee handbook.