Hall County Government
Employee Handbook
&
Policy Guidelines

Approved April 2013

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WELCOME MESSAGE

WELCOME TO HALL COUNTY*!*

On behalf of your colleagues, welcome to Hall County and we wish you every success here.

We believe that each employee contributes directly to Hall County's growth and success, and we hope you will take pride in being a member of our team.

This handbook was developed to describe some of the expectations of our employees and to outline the policies, programs, and benefits available to eligible employees. Employees are expected to familiarize themselves with the contents of the employee handbook as soon as possible, for it will answer many questions about employment with Hall County. If you have any questions, please contact Human Resources.

We hope that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding.

Again, welcome!

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Hall County has the responsibility to develop and administer policies and procedures to maintain a well-run organization. We believe that the policies and procedures, as described in our Employee Handbook, are reasonable. However, the contents of this handbook are presented to you as guidelines and for your information only. The policies, procedures and benefit programs will be applied to each particular situation and interpreted by Hall County at its sole discretion, subject to applicable state and federal laws.

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with Hall County and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting your employment. You should read, understand, and comply with all provisions of the handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by Hall County to benefit employees. One of our objectives is to provide a work environment that is conducive to both personal and professional growth.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy guidelines. As Hall County continues to grow, the need may arise and Hall County reserves the right to revise, supplement, suspend, or rescind any policies or portion of the handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. The handbook will be available

to all employees through the county's website. Employees are responsible to read the handbook and refer to the content should a question arise.

The language used in this Handbook is not intended to create a contract, or evidence of a contract, between Hall County and any one, or all, of our employees. Nothing in this Handbook should be construed as an offer of permanent employment. Only the County Administrator has the authority to enter into any such contacts of employment. This Handbook supersedes all previous written or verbal policies, procedures, and benefit programs. Hall County cannot guarantee any employee continued employment for any definite period of time. All employees have the right to terminate their employment at any time, and the County retains the same right to terminate your employment at any time, with or without notice. Any statement in a directive found to be illegal, incorrect, or inapplicable shall not affect the validity of the remaining contents.

These guidelines are set forth to ensure that the employees of Hall County are treated equitably, and to ensure that the citizens of the County may benefit from the work of a productive and competent staff. Violation of these guidelines may subject the employee to discipline up to and including termination in accordance with the provisions of these guidelines, County ordinances, and federal and state laws.

These policy guidelines express what is expected from you as an employee of Hall County. They are guidelines for working together for the benefit of the other employees, management and the Citizens of Hall County as stated in Hall County's Mission Statement: ***The primary goal of the organization is to promote, encourage and develop a strong, viable community and ensure that all citizens share in prosperity by providing efficient, accessible and responsible public service***.

These guidelines are based on the guiding principles and practices that have developed through years administering personnel policy and procedures. These rules and regulations are not intended to create rights for employees otherwise not provided by law and are subject to change by the County Commission as circumstances may warrant. The three general principles that guide County officials and management in making personnel decisions are:

- Employees are individuals worthy of trust, dignity and respect.
- Employees will do their best if their rewards are based on individual merit and group achievements, and if they have the opportunity for useful employment and personal security.
- Hall County's long-term success and effectiveness depends on the efforts, achievements, and teamwork of all employees.

HALL COUNTY ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

Organizational values exist to help guide the perspective of the organization as well as its actions. These values play an important role in determining how the organization confronts problems and issues and create a common purpose for which the organization works. Each employee is critical to the success of Hall County as an organization. Keeping these values in mind and demonstrating them on a daily basis will assist every individual employee in making Hall County successful as an organization.

S*erving Citizens*: We will always highly value the citizens we serve as the object of our continual focus on service. We will support the advancement of professionalism to our citizens and within the organization by our conduct, speech, demeanor and decision making.

E*nhancing Community*: We will pursue innovative and creative means of advancing the organization forward to meet the expectations of growth and economic development opportunities in our future.

R*esponsible Stewardship*: We will exhibit the highest level of stewardship to the citizens we serve, recognizing we are ultimately accountable to the public for our actions and duties.

V*aluing Transparency*: We will maintain openness and transparency as a basic tenet of our organizational structure. We will adhere to the highest ethical standards in the execution of our duties and responsibilities.

E*fficient Cooperation*: We will respect each member of staff as a necessary and vital member of the organization, recognizing the importance of the unique gifts, abilities, experiences and talents which are integral to the organization reaching its maximum potential; in order to best serve the citizens of Hall County.

SECTION 2: ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

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1) THE HISTORY OF HALL COUNTY

Hall County was created on December 15, 1818. It was named for Dr. Lyman Hall, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and later governor of Georgia. Hall County rests on the shores of the Chattahoochee River and Lake Lanier, the most northern impoundment of the river. Lake Lanier is a major recreation and tourism site and served as a venue for the rowing and kayaking events in the 1996 Olympic Games. The County is bordered by Lumpkin, Forsyth, Gwinnett, White, Dawson, Jackson, Barrow, Habersham and Banks counties.

2) SERVICES

The County provides a full range of services, including police and fire protection; the construction and maintenance of highways, streets, and other infrastructure, recreational activities and cultural events.

The County is also financially accountable for a legally separate Health Department and a legally separate Library, both of which are reported separately within the County's financial statements.

The County maintains budgetary controls to ensure compliance with State of Georgia law. Departments prepare revenue and expenditure estimates, which are reviewed by the Board of Commissioners in a hearing open to the public. The Board of Commissioners then adopts the final budget on or before June 30 at an official commission meeting.

3) ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Hall County operates under the commission form of government as set forth in its charter.

4) COUNTY COMMISSION

The Board of Commissioners is comprised of five members – one Chairman is elected at-large and the other four are elected by their respective geographical districts. Elections for the district seats are staggered so as to provide some continuity on the Board of Commissioners. As the legislative branch of Hall County and the elected representatives of the community at large, the County Commission establishes policy, direction and goals to be achieved by the organization. The County Commission establishes levels of service and appropriates funds to meet the needs of the community. By adopting ordinances and resolutions, pay and benefit programs, and other actions, the County Commission provides the basic tools for management to guide, motivate, attract and retain a productive work force.

5) COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

The County Administrator, appointed by the Board of Commissioners, serves as the chief administrative employee and is responsible for the administrative oversight of employees under the Civil Service system.

6) DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

Department Directors are responsible for ensuring the optimum performance of their department by providing leadership, guidance and direction to achieve organizational goals and assure departmental integrity through coordinated teamwork as governed by the County's Rules and Regulations. A department director includes individuals appointed by the County Administrator and elected department heads such as the Sheriff, Clerk of Courts, Tax Commissioner, Probate Judge and Juvenile Court Judges.

7) DEPARTMENTAL RULE ESTABLISHMENT AUTHORITY

Each department director has the authority to establish additional policies or standard operating procedures that specifically apply to that department's activity and may not apply to the general employee population.

Supplementary departmental policies and standard operating procedures must be consistent and compatible with these Policy Guidelines.

NOTE: Public Safety and Public Works are allowed to enforce stricter standards as deemed necessary for their operation. As in all disciplinary matters, up to and including termination, the employee shall be notified in writing of the disciplinary action and, when applicable, of the employee's right to appeal.

8) HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

The Human Resources Department is responsible for providing guidance and direction to County department directors and supervision in:

a. Managing personnel through policy development and individual consultation;
b. Facilitating the development of an outstanding workforce through effective employee recruitment and supervisory training;
c. Providing a competitive compensation and benefits program to assure the County can attract, retain and motivate a skilled workforce
d. Assuring equitable treatment of all employees through the management of the discipline and grievance procedures; and
e. Encouraging talented employees to make a career of governmental service through conscientious management of our human resource.
f. Developing policy, rules, regulations, compensation and benefit programs, pay practices, recruitment and selection and, when necessary, for presenting policy for consideration and approval to County Management.
g. Ensuring clear work standards are established.

9) MANAGER OR SUPERVISOR

The Manager/Supervisor is responsible for assuring employees perform assigned work responsibilities, enforcing rules and ensuring compliance with regulations. Every member of management is responsible for:

- developing a competent workforce
- aiding with employee career development
- providing feedback about performance and providing coaching/ counseling
- reporting or responding to improper action or misconduct
- timely documentation of performance concerns

10) EMPLOYEE

The employee's role is to perform assigned duties efficiently, effectively, courteously and professionally and to be flexible in adjusting to the changing nature of Hall County functions based on the expectations of management and the public. The employee is responsible for responding to direction from supervisors, managers or directors, including in cases of misconduct or safety matters, those not directly within his/her own chain of command Employees are also responsible to be an active participant in their career development.

The County Commission, County Administrator, all elected and appointed department directors and every employee have an important role in making the County an effective, efficient and responsive organization.

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SECTION 3: CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM ACT

The following is a compilation of the Civil Service System Act shall be effective July 1, 2015. If you wish to refer to the actual Act and its amendments, they are available in the Human Resources Department, at any time.

This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Hall County Civil Service Act". The general purpose of this Act is to establish a Civil Service System for Hall County, Georgia, providing for the recruitment, selection, development, and retention of an effective work force of capable, diligent, and honest employees. The Civil Service System shall include policies for employee hiring and advancement, training, career development and performance evaluation, employee relations, and the disposition of employee grievances, discipline, discharge, and related activities. It shall be the purpose of the Act to establish a Civil Service System in which all personnel matters shall be determined solely on the basis of merit and qualifications, without regard to race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, or political affiliation.

There is hereby created and established a civil service system to be known as the Hall County Civil Service System. All Hall County employees, now employed or hereafter employed, and all employees and deputies, now employed or hereafter employed, of the Hall County Sheriff, the Hall County Probate Judge, the Hall County Clerk of Superior Court, and the Hall County Tax Commissioner shall be members of the Hall County Civil Service System. The following shall not be members of the Hall County Civil Service System: elected officers of the County, employees of the Magistrate, Juvenile, State and Superior Courts; the District Attorney; the Hall County Solicitor; members of appointed boards, members of commissions and authorities, part-time employees, temporary employees, interns, and all employees, who as of the date of adoption of this amendment, currently have a contractual employment relationship with Hall County and all employees in the future, who, at the time of hire, by agreement with the hiring authority and with approval of the County Administrator, will enter into a contractual employment agreement instead of the Civil Service System.

The Hall County Board of Commissioners shall select an independent, impartial attorney who has been a member of the State Bar of Georgia for at least five (5) years to serve as Administrative Hearing Officer in matters for which a hearing is allowed under Section IV. The Administrative Hearing Officer shall not be a current or former employee of Hall County and shall receive such per diem compensation, if any, as deemed appropriate by the Hall County Board of Commissioners. The Administrative Hearing Officer shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Commissioners of Hall County.

Duties of the Administrative Hearing Officer shall include:

- To conduct hearings and render decisions on charges preferred against persons employed in the several departments and offices included in said Civil Service System and to hear appeals from any employee included in the Civil Service System who claims to have been improperly suspended without pay, demoted, or dismissed.
- All testimony before the hearing officer shall be transcribed, rendered under oath or affirmation, by oral testimony, depositions, or interrogatories, and with the right of cross examination. All decisions of the hearing officer shall be entered into a written record which shall be open to inspection by the public during regular office hours. The authority of the hearing officer while hearing employee appeals shall be limited to determining if management's decision is supported by the evidence, lies within the lawful discretion of management, and is consistent with County policies and procedures.

The Administrative Hearing Officer shall keep and maintain an accurate written record of his/her hearings and proceedings and shall be furnished clerical assistance by the governing authority to keep and maintain his/her records.

The Administrative Hearing Officer shall be authorized to make recommendations as to amendments, additions to, and changes in the Hall County Government Employee's Handbook and Policy Guidelines from time to time, and when said amendments, changes, or additions are adopted by the governing authority of Hall County, said amendments shall have the force of law and be binding on all parties affected by said Civil Service System.

It shall be the duty, function and responsibility of the Administrative Hearing Officer to represent the interest of the public in the improvement of personnel administration and the selection and retention of qualified personnel. All hearings before the Administrative Hearing Officer shall be open and held in offices provided, therefore, by the governing authority of Hall County. The governing authority of said County is hereby authorized to provide necessary clerical assistance to the Administrative Hearing Officer. Said Administrative Hearing Officer shall conduct scheduled hearings, and may hold additional hearings as may be required for the proper discharge of his/her duties.

In any appeal by an employee, it shall be the burden of the employee to establish and verify the action in question:

1. does not substantially comply with sound management principles, consistent with the rules and regulations of the Hall County Civil Service Act;

2. is not supported by a preponderance of the evidence; and

3. is not reasonable or relative to the severity of the offense.

No employee of any department or office of the County who is covered under the Hall County Civil Service System Act may be suspended without pay, demoted, or dismissed from employment in said department or office except for good cause and in accordance with the Hall County Government Employee Handbook and Policy Guidelines as approved by the governing authority of Hall County. Any

employee who is suspended without pay, demoted, or dismissed shall have the right of appeal pursuant to the terms of the rules and regulations prescribed for appeal. Such appeal shall be heard and determined by the Administrative Hearing Officer within forty-five (45) days of the date that said appeal was filed with the Hall County Department of Human Resources; provided, however, that such employee must file his/her appeal with the Hall County Department of Human Resources in writing within ten (10) days from the date of his/her suspension without pay, demotion or dismissal. The decision of the Administrative Hearing Officer shall be binding upon the governing authority of Hall County, the Hall County Sheriff, the Hall County Probate Judge, the Hall County Clerk of Superior Court, and the Hall County Tax Commissioner as to whether such suspension without pay, demotion, or dismissal was for proper cause.

All appeals shall be heard by the Administrative Hearing Officer. The hearing officer shall conduct the hearing, make evidentiary rulings and prepare final orders of the decision.

All costs for expenses, supplies for the establishment an operation of the Civil Service System and the Administrative Hearing Officer shall be borne by the County and paid out of County funds as a cost of administration.

The duties and functions of the Hall County Director of Human Resources shall be as follows:

To prepare and submit proposed rules and regulations and standards of the Civil Service System or amendments thereto and thereafter, recommend to the governing authority of Hall County the adoption of rules, regulations, standards and amendments effectuating the Civil Service System established under the provisions of this Act. If the governing authority shall fail to adopt such rules, regulations and standards within 45 days, they shall become of full force and effect unless the governing authority shall conduct public hearing thereon in which event the governing authority may change, modify, or disapprove such rules, regulations, or standards. Such rules and regulations shall include provisions for the establishment and maintenance of job classification and compensation plans, the conduct of examinations for appointment under the Civil Service System, the certification of eligible persons, appointment, promotions, transfers, demotions, separations, tenure, service ratings, reinstatements, appeals and such additional regulations as may be deemed to be in the best interest of impartial selection of efficient personnel and improvement of public administration. Such rules and regulations shall prohibit political activity by any employee covered by the Civil Service System or the Administrative Hearing Officer. Said rules and regulations when adopted by the governing authority of Hall County or otherwise becoming effective, shall have the force of law and be binding upon all departments and offices of the County as may be covered under the Hall County Civil Service System Act.

SECTION 4: GENERAL EMPLOYMENT

Hall County believes that the work conditions, wages, and benefits it offers to its employees are competitive with those offered by other employers in this area and in this industry. If employees have concerns about work conditions or compensation, they are strongly encouraged to voice these concerns openly and directly to their supervisors.

Our experience has shown that when employees deal openly and directly with supervisors, the work environment can be excellent, communications can be clear, and attitudes can be positive. We believe that Hall County amply demonstrates its commitment to employees by responding effectively to employee concerns.

- **ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILES**

Hall County maintains a personnel file on each employee. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's job application, resume, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals and salary increases, and other employment records.

Personnel files are the property of Hall County, and access to the information they contain must comply with the Open Records Act. Employees who wish to review their own file should contact the Human Resources Department. With reasonable advance notice, employees may review their own personnel files in Hall County's offices and in the presence of an individual appointed by Hall County to maintain the files.

1) PUBLIC INSPECTION OF PERSONNEL RECORDS
All personnel records of employees covered under these rules and all other records and material relating to the administration of the personnel system shall be considered confidential and the property of Hall County. Information obtained in the course of official duties shall not be released by any employee other than those with this responsibility as part of official duties. All requests for personnel information must be processed through the Human Resources Director. This release of personnel records is governed under the Georgia Open Records Act. (O.C.G.A. 50-18-70).

a) Within three (3) work days after the request is received, the Human Resources Department will determine if the requested information can be released;

b) Verbal requests are acceptable for any employee to see his/her own file with three (3) days advance notice;

c) A Written request is required for all others who wish to review any personnel records for files;

d) Requests by anyone other than the employee must be for specific information. General review of one or a number of files is not permissible under the Georgia Open Records Act.

e) Charges for information from the county's personnel files will be determined at a reasonable hourly rate for staff time and copies.

f) Items not subject to the Georgia Open Records Act. (O.C.G.A. 50-18-72(2)-(7) includes but is not limited to medical records, personal data such as social security numbers, similar files or related information and third party evaluations.

2) DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS
Employee records shall be kept for no less than seven (7) years after termination of employment. Such records may be kept in their original form or in any other form that the Director of Human Resources deems appropriate. Destruction of all other records including correspondence, applications and examinations is governed by and should be in accordance with Georgia Records Management Act (O.C.G.A. 50-18-90) (85)-(503).

3) APPLICATION FOR RELEASE
The following explains policies and procedures for release of resumes and applications for employment to the newspaper or other interested citizens:

A) INFORMATION TO BE RELEASED
In accordance with state law, applications, resumes, or the name of candidates who are applicants in an employment search for a position with Hall County will be released within (3) days after the request has been received. Charges for a special assembling or copying this information will be according to the standing department policy.

B) INFORMATION TO BE WITHHELD
Evaluations of candidates, or recommendations, or any reference material may not be released. It is required that such information be held as confidential.

a. Rationale of Withholding Information
Case law following the enactment of the 1988 Open Records Law further explains what is and is not to be released from a job search. In making the decision regarding what is released, we must balance the Open Records Law of Georgia with the Personal Privacy Right Laws, which, under tort law, prevents unnecessary public scrutiny. The applicant, as well as the private citizen has rights against "invasion of privacy."

b. Information Regarding Applicants' Qualifications
Discussion of applicants' qualifications and deliberations to come to a decision on an appointment are not open to public meetings. O.C.G.A., Par. 50-14-3(6) excludes from the open meeting requirements, "meetings when discussing or deliberation upon the appointment, employment hiring, disciplinary action, dismissal or

performance of a public officer or employee." This exclusion is intended to allow the decision makers to make candid, difficult comparisons of qualifications of candidates for public office employment and to discuss performance after the applicant is selected and actively working.

4) TERMINATED EMPLOYEE REFERENCE POLICY
Previous employees of the County separated due to resignation, termination, layoff, or any other form of separation have the right under privacy laws to expect that we will not release to prospective employers, the general public, or the media, any information other than dates of employment, job title, and confirmation of an employee's final pay rate (provided the employee has provided written authorization).

NOTE: In certain instances the County may be required to disclose information regarding an employee who has engaged in criminal activity

5) ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRY AND REVIEW
Records consisting of material obtained in an investigation related to the suspension, firing, or investigation of a complaint against a public official or employee are confidential. These records, materials, and reports are not to be released until ten (10) days after the investigation has been terminated and the final report has been provided to the County Administrator or authorized elected official. Such information is only to be released from the County Administrator's or authorized elected official's office. As with the release of other sensitive personnel information, the Georgia Open Records Law (O.C. G. A.) must be balanced with tort privacy laws.

- **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

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1) ATTENDANCE
Regular, reliable attendance is required of all employees. Maintaining good attendance is a condition of employment and is an essential job function of every employee. All employees are expected to be at work, fit for duty, every scheduled day and at the appropriate starting time; however, illness or family emergency may prevent one from being at work promptly as scheduled. In the event that circumstances prevent an employee from reporting to work, or reporting to work at the scheduled time, the employee is expected to communicate in a timely manner to their supervisor or designee.

Hall County does not administer its attendance policy based on an excused/unexcused basis. All absences, regardless of the reason, create an attendance problem and hardship on the county's ability to conduct business. Therefore, employees shall refrain from: abusing sick leave; absences or tardiness that causes significant disruption of service, and excessive amount of time away from work, regardless of the reason. Excessive absenteeism and/or tardiness includes but is not limited to partial days absences or illnesses; failure to keep supervisor properly informed concerning absences or tardiness; unauthorized time-swapping and/or shift-swapping; and falsifying attendance or time keeping record.

2) CERTIFICATION BY PHYSICIAN

A medical certificate signed by a licensed physician may be required by department directors to substantiate a request for sick leave for the following reasons:

a. Any period of absence consisting of three (3) or more consecutive workdays.
b. To support a request for sick leave during a period when the employee is on vacation.
c. Leave of any duration, if absence from duty recurs frequently or habitually, provided the employee has been notified or warned that a certificate will be required.

3) CONTINUED ABSENTEEISM

Cronic or regular absenteeism (including absences documented by a medical certification) will not be acceptable on a continuing basis. The determination of the amount of absenteeism constituting an attendance problem is dependent upon the circumstances and judgment of the department director. Absenteeism includes the times when an employee reports to work and then leaves work, regardless of the reason, prior to working at least four (4) hours of their scheduled shift.

4) TARDINESS

An employee shall be considered tardy when reporting to work one (1) minute after the department's established beginning of the workday, assigned shift hour or lunch/supper hour.

5) EFFECT ON PAY

For purposes of pay, timekeeping rounds time to the nearest quarter hour and as such, may result in an employee's pay being docked.

For example: If the department's regular starting hour is 8:00 a.m., an employee will be considered tardy at 8:01 a.m. For pay purposes, if an employee clocks in at 8:07, they will be paid from 8:00. If the employee clocks in at 8:08, they will be paid from 8:15. The pattern repeats itself every seven (7) minutes from the quarter hour. For example, 8:22 reverts to 8:15 and 8:23 moves forward to 8:30.

Excused late arrivals may be permitted if the employee has a valid need to arrive late and has advised the supervisor of such. Employees are expected to notify their supervisor when they will be late. Excessive excused late arrivals may also result in disciplinary action.

Department directors/supervisors will be responsible for controlling and reporting late arrivals.

6) DISCIPLINARY ACTION SCHEDULE

The following schedule will be followed in the disciplinary actions of tardiness in reporting to work:

a. Review and Warning
After the fourth (4th) occurrence in 12 months, counseling should begin.

b. Suspension

Employees may be suspended without pay for a period of one (1) day (or working shift) when, during a twelve-month period, he/she is tardy for the fifth (5th) time.

c. Progressive Discipline Process

The sixth (6th) occurrence may result in additional disciplinary action using progressive disciplinary methods. NOTE: Public Safety and Public Works are allowed to enforce stricter standards as deemed necessary for their operation. As in all disciplinary matters, up to and including termination, the employee shall be notified in writing of the disciplinary action and, when applicable, of the employee's right to appeal.

7) ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Each supervisor shall be responsible for monitoring and reporting the attendance of all employees in his/her work section. Attendance records shall be reported to the department director's office and updated on a regular basis.

- **BUSINESS ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

The successful business operation and reputation of Hall County is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of our employees. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity at all times. Staff are a reflection of Hall County at all times, on or off duty, and are expected to maintain the standards of conduct.

The continued success of Hall County is dependent upon our customers' trust and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees owe a duty to Hall County, its customers, and citizens to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

Hall County will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its directors, officers, and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct. If an employee has been charged with any illegal offense, an administrative inquiry may be conducted and disciplinary action may be taken up to and including termination.

No employee shall accept any gift, favor or reward other than a regular salary for any service rendered as an employee of Hall County.

No employee shall in any way knowingly participate in falsifying records including but not limited to purchasing, payment approval, receiving or inventory records, or payroll.

No employee may buy or charge any goods or services of any amount to the account of Hall County unless following the procedures established through the County Code and regulations established through the Purchasing Office. An exception can be made under genuine emergency conditions, and

then such purchase must be confirmed as soon as possible with a proper purchase order. (Full purchasing regulations are available through the Purchasing Department.)

In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with your immediate supervisor and, if necessary, with the Human Resources Department for advice and consultation. Compliance with this policy of business ethics and conduct is the responsibility of every Hall County employee. Disregarding or failing to comply with this standard of business ethics and conduct could lead to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

Employees should familiarize themselves with the Hall County Code of Ethics which can be found in the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2.110 (http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=12961)

1) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Hall County expects employees to avoid situations that cause a conflict of interest between their private interests and the business interests of Hall County. Employees should also be sure that their private and business activities would be perceived as proper and free of conflicting interests. Employees have an obligation to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. This policy establishes only the framework within which Hall County wishes to operate. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide general direction so that employees can seek further clarification on issues related to the subject of acceptable standards of operation. Contact the Human Resources Department for more information or questions about conflicts of interest.

Transactions with outside firms must be conducted within a framework established and controlled by the executive level of Hall County. Business dealings with outside firms should not result in unusual gains for those firms. Unusual gain refers to bribes, product bonuses, acceptance of gifts, money, loans, services, special fringe benefits, unusual price breaks, and other windfalls designed to ultimately benefit either the employer, the employee, or both. Employees shall not give, offer or promise, directly or indirectly, anything of value to any representative of an outside business

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative as a result of Hall County's business dealings. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person as defined in the Nepotism/Hiring of Relatives Policy.

No "presumption of guilt" is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, if employees have any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases, it is imperative that they disclose to an officer of Hall County as soon as possible the existence of any actual or potential conflict of interest so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties.

Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which Hall County does business, but also when an employee or relative receives any kickback,

bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving Hall County.

2) NON-DISCLOSURE / CONFIDENTIALITY

County employees, by reason of their position, may at times have confidential or privileged information. Employees are prohibited from unauthorized disclosure or release of confidential information they have learned as a result of their position, without specific approval of their department director or the County Administrator. Should an employee receive an Open Records Request, the request should be forwarded to the Department Director or designated appointee, by the end of the business day.

Non-compliance with the confidentiality obligation is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This policy is not intended to preclude employees from discussing the terms and conditions of their employment.

3) FULL DISCLOSURE

Any employee having any information that will impact the operations of Hall County should disclose that information to their immediate supervisor, who will in turn inform the department head.

4) POLITICAL ACTIVITY RULE

A) OVERVIEW

Employees of the County are encouraged to exercise their right to vote, but no employee shall make use of County time or equipment to aid a political candidate, party or cause; or use a County position to influence, coerce or intimidate any person in the interest of a political candidate, party, or cause.

B) SEEKING ELECTIVE OFFICE

Any County employee seeking elective office within Hall County shall, upon declaring candidacy, resign their position or submit a request in writing to the County Administrator or appropriate elected department head, for a personal leave of absence without pay from the date of his/her announcement through the duration of the campaign or the announcement of election results.
If elected to office, the employee shall immediately upon the date of election, be separated with the County upon the written request and approval of the County's Administrator or appropriate elected department head. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as providing the employee the right to return to work after the election.

C) PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

An employee may not:

a. Be involved in any political activity that would constitute a conflict of interest; including participation in any aspect of any local political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for office within Hall County; including municipal and/or county government offices.

b. Knowingly solicit, accept, or receive political contributions from any person, to be used in support of or in opposition to any candidate for election within Hall County, including municipal and/or county government offices.

c. Use, or promise to use, directly or indirectly, any official authority or influence, whether possessed or anticipated, to secure or attempt to secure for any person, a job or other advantage for the purpose of influencing the vote or political action of any person.

No employee shall be hired, promoted, favored, or discriminated against with respect to employment because of his/her political opinions or affiliations. An employee violating this section shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

5) CODE OF ETHICS FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE – ***O.C.G.A. 45-10-1***

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 are a party to their evasion.

III Give a full day's labor for a full day's pay and give to the performance of these 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 constructed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of his governmental duties.

VI. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of the office, since a government employee has no private work which can be binding on public duty.

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

(GA, L. 1968, p. 1369)

- **BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPENSES**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for authorization and administration of out-of-town travel expense reporting by County employees. Objectives of these guidelines are: uniformity and fairness to all travelers, conservation of public funds and a level of comfort while traveling that allows business to be conducted in a dignified manner.

These policies and procedures apply to all of Hall County employees, elected officials, and members of the advisory boards, who are authorized to travel on County business.

Definitions:

A. As used in this statement of policy, "County Business" shall pertain to either of the following:

1. "Business Travel" – travel for the purpose of conducting official County business.

2. "Professional/Educational Travel" – Travel to attend meetings, conferences and training programs for professional growth and development as well as the mutual benefit of the County.

B. "Authorizing Party" – Individual authorized to approve or disapprove all travel-related requests. Individual is assumed to be in a level of authority such that they can accurately evaluate the need for the cost and benefit of such travel.

C. "Requesting Party" – Individual who will be incurring travel costs.

D. "Out-of-Town" is considered to be outside of Hall County.

Administration:

A. Employees are expected to search out the most reasonably priced arrangements for their travel event, taking into consideration their personal safety and a reasonable level of comfort and dignity.

B. The County does not contract with a specific travel agent. Employees should book travel arrangements through the event coordinator, if applicable. If an event coordinator is not designated for the event, an agent of your choosing or utilization of one of the many Internet sites available for such purposes is appropriate.

C. Travel arrangements that include air, lodging and/or car rental should be made as far in advance as possible, preferably at least 30 days prior to the travel event, to insure the most economical and desirable arrangements. Airfare should be "refundable" in case the travel is cancelled.

D. An employee traveling on appropriate and pre-approved business will be reimbursed for reasonable costs incurred in conformance with this policy.

Guidelines for Authorization of Travel:

A. Decisions as to which travel is authorized begin with the budgetary process. Travel needs should be anticipated and submitted in the annual budget for approval by the County Commission.

B. The authorizing party's responsibility is to stay within his/her departmental budget's travel allocation as approved by the County Commission.

C. Prior to approving a travel request, the authorizing party is responsible for determining that a sufficient unexpended appropriation remains in the travel budget to pay all expected costs of the travel.

D. Personal items and alcoholic beverages are not authorized. Expense reports must be prepared to reflect only actual expenses essential to the conducting of County business by the employee.

E. All Out-of-State travel requires Department Director / Designee approval.

Travel Expense Policies:

The following payment guidelines are intended to set forth maximum standards. Employee's and officials of the County are expected to spend funds prudently. The County will only pay for expenses that are actually and necessarily incurred, for the benefit of the County.

A. Subsistence/Necessities

1. Lodging –Payment for lodging is authorized when the individual's travel requires overnight accommodation. Receipts are required for all lodging costs.

a. Employees and officials may request direct payment or be reimbursed for the cost of single standard room accommodations typically occupied by business travelers at moderately priced hotels. The minimum corporate, governmental or lowest special rate should be requested along with any other discounts which you might be entitled to receive.

b. The County will pay only actual room rental costs supported by the hotel bill for each night required for the event. Expenses beyond room rental cost are not eligible for reimbursement. This includes but no limited to pay per view movies, room service or other incidental costs.

c. All employees and officials shall attempt to incur only reasonable hotel expenses when out-of-town.

d. Hotel or electronic booking receipt must be attached to the expense report or pay request.

e. Employees and officials may be exempted from state sales tax and hotel/motel tax on rooms, lodging and accommodations when traveling on official business within the State of Georgia. ***The employee or official must obtain tax exemptions or they will be personally responsible for the tax.***

1. State of GA Sales Tax Exempt
2. Hotel/Motel Excise Tax Exempt

2. Meals - Employees, Elected Officials and other authorized personnel are entitled to reimbursement for meals based on the IRS Federal Guidelines as set in according to the IRS Standards.

http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877

DAY OF DEPARTURE

Employees may only receive per diem for meals occurring while officially on travel status. For example, if an employee departs at 3:00p.m., the employee is not eligible for breakfast or lunch per diem amounts for the day of departure.

*If an employee departs on an overnight trip *prior to 6:30a.m.,* the employee is eligible for per diem for breakfast on the day of departure.

*If an employee departs on an overnight trip *prior to 11:00* a.m., the employee is eligible for per diem for lunch on the day of departure.

*If an employee departs on an overnight trip *prior to 5:30p.m.,* the employee is eligible for per diem for dinner on the day of departure.

DAY OF RETURN

Employees may only receive per diem for meals occurring while officially on travel status. For example, if an employee returns at 11:00 a.m., the employee is not eligible for per diem for lunch on the day of return.

*If an employee returns from an overnight trip *after 6:30a.m.,* the employee is eligible for per diem for breakfast on the day of return.

*If an employee returns from an overnight trip *after 1:30 p.m.,* the employee is eligible for per diem for lunch on the day of return.

*If an employee returns from an overnight trip *after 7:30p.m.*, the employee is eligible for per diem for dinner on the day of return.

B. Modes of Travel

The mode of transportation used should be the most reasonable, convenient and economical available.

1. Air

a. It is the obligation of each employee and official to choose the least expensive flight from alternatives. In many cases a traveling employee can save hundreds of dollars by purchasing tickets on discount airlines, utilize promotional flights that may require advance booking, book flights that may entail an extra stop, or book flights that may depart and/or arrive at times slightly less convenient. The savings available on these flights frequently outweigh the traveler's inconvenience, even when they necessitate travel schedule adjustments.

In the era of lower priced airfares and electronic tickets, ticket exchanges, cancellations or credit for unused tickets has become more difficult. The traveling employee must be certain of their travel needs before booking. The County will not pay for unused airfare unless authorized by all approving parties including the County Administrator. Reasoning must be provided in writing.

b. The approved class of transportation for all employees is coach/tourist. Most major airlines offer discounted fares under certain condition. Every effort should be made to take advantage of

these rates by planning and ordering tickets within the required time frames.

c. If a business trip is canceled prior to departure, immediately begin the process of refunding the unused tickets

2. County Vehicles

a. When using county vehicles, carpooling is strongly encouraged. Most County vehicles available will accommodate four individuals comfortably. Utilize a second County Vehicle or a personal vehicle if there are more than four traveling employees. Employees driving county vehicles must be certified through the Hall County Defensive Driving Course.

3. Personal Vehicles

a. The reimbursement rate for personal mileage is equal to the rate published by the Internal Revenue Service and authorized by the County Administrator. This rate is intended to cover fuel, maintenance and liability, and physical damage insurance cost of the personal vehicle.

b. Requested mileage payment must be supported by the anticipated route obtained from a reputable internet map/direction system, which gives the anticipated mileage traveled. (i.e. MapQuest). The county will pay the shorter of the mileage distance from the employee's office or the employee's home. Part time employees, full time employees and elected officials are entitled to mileage reimbursement providing travel is part of official county business.

c. An employee who receives a vehicle allowance is permitted to use a county vehicle or personal vehicle to travel outside the county provided such travel is official county business or training. If such travel outside the normal scope of day to day use of said vehicle, mileage reimbursement may be obtained as outlined above in paragraph "B". Prior approval from the Assistant County Administrator or County Administrator must be obtained before reimbursement is granted.

4. Local Ground Transportation

a. Local Transportation cost incurred while on out-of-town business will be paid.
b. Receipts for the above services should be obtained when possible and provided to support payment.

C. Registration

1. Registration fees for conferences or seminars are paid when supported by receipts and proper approvals.

2. Whenever possible, advance registration should be used. Registration should be made in a timely fashion in order to take advantage of early registration discounts available.

D. Miscellaneous

1. Business Meals

a. Some officials and members of management are required to meet with persons of other government jurisdictions and professional institutions from which an exchange of information can be obtained that will prove beneficial to the County. When, in the opinion of the official or manager, there has been such an exchange, they may deem it appropriate to pay for the meal. A vendor may be allowed to pay if it is in compliance with the County's Code of Ethics.

b. Such meals may be reimbursed pursuant to the following stipulations:

1. The requesting party is the County Administrator, Assistant County Administrator or a Department Director or it is a part of a professional learning opportunity (ex. a Lunch and Learn).

2. A receipt is provided.

2. Other Miscellaneous Expense

a. Expenses not previously covered should be entered as "miscellaneous," and a brief explanation must be given.

b. Receipts must be attached for all items when customarily provided or easily obtained.

E. Non-Allowable Expenses, include but are not limited to:

1. Air travel and other personal trip insurance.
2. Barber, manicurist, shoe polisher, spa services, and laundry.
3. Briefcases or other items of personal use.
4. Entertainment expenses (such as airline headsets, theater, movies, and sporting events) of the employee and official while traveling.
5. Personal reading material or services.
6. Repairs, maintenance, or insurance on personal vehicles.
7. Traffic fines and court costs.
8. Unauthorized club or other membership dues or fees.
9. Unauthorized trips, entertainment, gifts or donations.
10. Laundry service/dry cleaning (unless you stayed for business for more than 4 nights).
11. Mini-bar contents
12. Movies/videos
13. Parking fines
14. The loss/theft of goods (this should be covered by your own travel Insurance of which you can reclaim $170 annually)
15. Childcare
16. Pet care
17. Any personal elements of your business trip
18. Personal car maintenance or damage to personal vehicles while on business
19. Spa treatments and health/fitness clubs
20. Toiletries

Expense Reimbursement Procedures:

Upon returning from an authorized trip, the requesting party shall present to the authorizing party a complete itemization of all trip expenses on a *HALL COUNTY GOVERNMENT EXPENSE REPORT* (Expense Report).

A. The completed Expense Report shall be prepared, summarizing all expenses incurred and deducting any prepayments and/or travel advances, and submitted to the authorizing party within ten (10) business days after returning from the trip.

B. The Expense Report will be prepared accurately, completely and will include all required receipts and explanations to facilitate its review, understanding and processing. Direct payments (registration, hotel, etc.) and advances to the employee should be deducted, with a net amount due to or from the employee shown.

C. The authorizing party shall review, sign and submit the expense statement to the Department Head within ten (10) working days.

D. An employee who knowingly submits a false claim for reimbursement will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and criminal action.

O.C.G.A §16-10-20 False Statements and writings, concealment of facts, and fraudulent documents in matters within jurisdiction of state or political subdivisions.
A person who knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals, or covers up by any trick, scheme, or device a material fact; makes a false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or representation; or makes or uses any false writing or document, knowing the same to contain any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or entry, in any matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of state government or of the government of any county, city or other political subdivision of this state shall, upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not more than $1,000.00 or by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years, or both.

- **CLASSIFICATION PLAN**

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1) CLASS SPECIFICATIONS
Class specifications are written to define each group or class and are intended to be descriptive and explanatory, not restrictive. They are designed to indicate the kinds of positions that should be allocated to a class as determined by duties and/or responsibilities, and shall not be construed as prescribing what the duties or responsibilities of any particular job in a department shall be. The use of an illustration of duties shall not be regarded as exclusive of other duties not mentioned that is similar in nature.

2) MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS
Minimum qualifications are comprehensive statements of the minimum background, education and experience required.

3) REVISIONS TO CLASSIFICATION PLAN
Revisions to the Classification Plan may be made to reflect new or changed conditions or work practices within the classified service. Suggested revisions and amendments shall be presented to the County Administrator. If additional funds are required such changes are subject to budgeting approval of the County Commission.

4) ADDITION OF JOBS
Additional positions can be authorized by the County Commission as part of the budget process. Additionally, Department Director's may request reallocation of existing staff, reclassification of existing positions, or the creation of a new classification. These requests are to be developed through Human Resources and approved by the County Administrator.

5) DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY
Department directors are responsible for submitting to the Human Resources Department new job descriptions for all affected positions each time a section or division is substantially reorganized or major changes in duties or responsibilities occur for any job. All changes are subject to approval of the County Administrator and subject to budgetary consideration. The Human Resources Department shall be responsible for maintaining an official copy of the job classification plan and Classification Specifications for each position in the system. A copy of the plan shall be available for inspection by the public under reasonable conditions during business hours.

- **COMPUTER AND EMAIL USAGE (MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY POLICY)**

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1) INTRODUCTION

Computer information systems and networks are an integral part of business at Hall County Government. The County has made a substantial investment in human and financial resources to create these systems. The following policies and directives, administered by the MIS Director, have been established in order to:

- Protect this investment
- Safeguard the information contained within these systems
- Reduce business and legal risk
- Protect the good name of the County

2) STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY
General responsibilities pertaining to this policy are set forth in this section. The following sections list additional specific responsibilities.

- Ensure that all appropriate personnel are aware of and comply with this policy.
- Create appropriate performance standards, control practices, and procedures designed to provide reasonable assurance that all employees observe this policy.

3) MIS DIRECTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Develop and maintain written standards and procedures necessary to ensure implementation of and compliance with these policy directives.

- Provide appropriate support and guidance to assist employees to fulfill their responsibilities under this directive.

4) INTERNET AND EMAIL

Access to the Internet is provided to employees for the benefit of Hall County. Employees are able to connect to a variety of business information resources around the world. Conversely, the Internet is also replete with risks and inappropriate material. To ensure that all employees are responsible and productive Internet users and to protect the County's interests, the following guidelines have been established for using the Internet and e-mail.

Acceptable use

Employees using the Internet are representing Hall County. Employees are responsible for ensuring that the Internet is used in an effective, ethical, and lawful manner. Examples of acceptable use are:

- Using Web browsers to obtain business information from commercial Web sites;
- Accessing databases for information as needed;
- Using e-mail for business contacts.

Unacceptable use

Employees must not use the Internet for purposes that are illegal, unethical, harmful to Hall County, or nonproductive. Examples of unacceptable use are:

- Sending or forwarding chain e-mail, i.e., messages containing instructions to forward the message to others.
- Broadcasting e-mail, i.e., sending the same message to more than 10 recipients or more than one distribution list.
- Conducting a personal business using Hall County resources.
- Viewing or transmitting any content that is offensive, harassing, or fraudulent or pornographic.
- Use of Hall County's internet to access personal social media sites, without authorization, such as Facebook, MySpace, and any other sites that are considered personal social media.

Downloads

File downloads from the Internet are not permitted unless specifically authorized by your immediate Supervisor or MIS.

Employee responsibilities

An employee who uses the Internet or Internet e-mail shall:

- Ensure that all communications are for professional reasons and that they do not interfere with his/her productivity.
- Be responsible for the content of all text, audio, or images that (s)he places or sends over the Internet. All communications should have the employee's name attached.
- Not transmit copyrighted materials without permission.
- Know and abide by all applicable Hall County policies dealing with security and confidentiality of Hall County records.
- Run a virus scan on any executable file(s) received through the Internet.
- Avoid transmission of nonpublic County information. If it is necessary to transmit nonpublic information, employees are required to take steps reasonably intended to ensure that information is delivered to the proper person who is authorized to receive such information for a legitimate use.

5) SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Employees are not allowed to use Hall County's Internet to view personal social media sites. However, the County recognizes that social media resources can be an effective way to reach our residents, and it

is in Hall County's best interest to leverage the social media resources available to us. It is extremely important that the County take a measured, strategic approach to the implementation of social media to avoid potentially damaging consequences such as the presence of out-of-date information, the failure to provide appropriate information to residents who have requested it, or the misrepresentation of Hall County policies, services, or values.

Accordingly, this policy addresses how and when social media sites should be established, and procedures for ensuring that information on those sites is accurate and timely.

Definitions

Social Media
Generally, social media is any site or online process designed to facilitate simple and streamlined communication between users. Social media sites differ from conventional communication media such as online newspapers and magazines in that they tend to be less structured and complex, and more friendly, personal, and intimate in nature. They tend to offer tools which allow for quick, unfiltered, and often spontaneous communication opportunities.

Social Network
For the purposes of this document, the term "social network" or "social networking" refers to any interaction between a participant and any site deemed by Hall County to be social media, including, but not limited to: Facebook, Nixle, LinkedIn, MySpace, Plaxo, Twitter, and YouTube. Interaction is not limited to accessing the website of such social media sites, but also sending to or receiving from such sites any e-mails, text messages, or any other electronic interaction.

Official
In terms of this policy, 'official' refers to any site or process set up by the County, its employees, agents, or contractors, which serves to communicate sanctioned County information or engage citizens in discussion about topics, services, or processes under the auspices of the County.

Establishment of Social Media
The Hall County website, located at www.hallcounty.org, is to be the primary online source of information of a County nature. Supplementary sites, such as social media sites and tools, should introduce information, and link to the Hall County website for complete and detailed information. In no case shall a social media site or tool be the exclusive or primary source of information of a County nature. Additionally, it is important to note that simply because the ability exists to create a presence on a social media site or tool, that it is by no means immediately appropriate to do so. An official presence on a social media site or tool should only be considered when the message and the audience are appropriate to the social media environment.

As official social media sites are considered to be a public representation of Hall County Government, the County Administrator's Office, specifically the Public Information Officer, should be included in any plan or process to create an official social media site or tool. This helps to ensure that information posted on official County social media sites or tools meet all applicable codes, policies, procedures and

laws pertaining to them, and that the structure of the official social media site or tool is consistent with the strategic goals of the County.

Grant of access

Any official Hall County social media site or tool may be accessed by the Public Information Officer, Management Information Systems personnel, or other authorized parties, if necessary, to communicate urgent information, or make corrections to inappropriate or inaccurate information, or in accordance with any policy, procedure, or law which requires such access. The County reserves the right to temporarily or permanently disable any social media site or tool which is in violation of any County network security policy or otherwise causes a threat to the security of County systems.

Open records law

The content of social media sites and tools is public record. Comments on social media sites and tools are to be treated as public comment under open meeting law. To meet the requirements of the Georgia Open Records Act, all comments will be maintained for a minimum of 30 days after a forum has ended. Any open records request for production of documents should be sent to the Clerk of the Commission, unless the request concerns documents of the courts in which case the request should be sent to Court Administration. No records shall be released by the County regarding pending investigations or prosecutions of criminal activity without proper notification and approval of the District Attorney (or Solicitor where the case is in State Court.)

Acceptable use

The Hall County Government encourages open communication with the public, which allows us to continue providing efficient and better services to the community. We want to create an open discussion based on respectful dialogue and encourage helpful and useful comments. In that spirit, the County values comments that are constructive and suitable for all participants, while respecting a range of opinions and points of view.

Comments should relate to the topic being discussed in the original post and not contain spam, advertising, solicitations or links to other sites; advocate illegal activity or violence; promote events not sponsored by the county, services, products or political organizations; infringe on copyrights, trademarks or intellectual property rights of others.

Comments should not contain abusive or vulgar language, sexually explicit subject matter, hate speech, derogatory terms or offensive content.

Comments should not contain personal or defamatory remarks about a person's age, education, ethnicity, race, family status, gender, national origin, class, physical ability or qualities, religion, sexual orientation, thought processes, or personality.

A posted comment is the opinion of the poster only and does not imply endorsement or agreement by the Hall County Government, its elected officials or employees.

Comments should not endorse candidates or a particular stance on current ballot measures.

By commenting, you agree not to misrepresent your identity or affiliation or post libelous/defamatory content.

The county reserves the right to determine which comments are unacceptable for this page, and commentators who repeatedly violate this policy may be prohibited.
Submission of a comment constitutes acceptance of this policy, which may be revised at any time.

Monitoring
All messages created, sent, or retrieved over the Internet are the property of Hall County and *may be regarded as public information*. Hall County reserves the right to access the contents of any messages sent over its facilities if Hall County believes, in its sole judgment, that it has a business need to do so.

All communications, including text and images, can be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver. This means don't put anything into your e-mail messages that you wouldn't want to see on the front page of the newspaper or be required to explain in a court of law.

6) COMPUTER VIRUSES
Computer viruses are programs designed to make unauthorized changes to programs and data. Therefore, viruses can cause destruction of County resources. Defenses against computer viruses include protection against unauthorized access to computer systems, using only trusted sources for data and programs, and maintaining virus-scanning software.

MIS responsibilities
MIS shall:

- Install and maintain appropriate antivirus software on all computers.
- Respond to all virus attacks, destroy any virus detected, and document each incident.

Employee responsibilities - These directives apply to all employees:

- Employees shall not knowingly introduce a computer virus into County computers.
- Employees shall not load storage media devices (diskettes, thumb drives, compact disks, external hard drives, etc...) of unknown origin.
- Incoming storage media devices shall be scanned for viruses before they are read.

Any Employee who suspects that his/her workstation has been infected by a virus shall IMMEDIATELY POWER OFF the workstation and call the MIS Help Desk at ext. 6704.

7) ACCESS CODES AND PASSWORDS
The confidentiality and integrity of data stored on Hall County computer systems must be protected by access controls to ensure that only authorized employees have access. This access shall be restricted to only those capabilities that are appropriate to each employee's job duties.

MIS responsibilities

- The MIS Help Desk shall be responsible for the administration of access controls to all Hall County computer systems.

- The MIS Help Desk will process adds, deletions, and changes upon receipt of a written request from the end user's supervisor. Deletions may be processed by an oral request prior to reception of the written request.
- The MIS Help Desk will maintain a list of administrative access codes and passwords and keep this list in a secure area.

Employee responsibilities - Each employee:

- Shall be responsible for all computer transactions that are made with his/her User ID and password.
- Shall not disclose passwords to others. Passwords must be changed immediately if it is suspected that they may have become known to others. Passwords should not be recorded where they may be easily obtained.
- Will change passwords at least every 120 days.
- Should use passwords that will not be easily guessed by others.
- Should log out when leaving a workstation for an extended period.
- Should not leave written passwords in visible locations.
- If employee deems it necessary to keep a written copy of a password, it should be secured in a locked drawer.

Supervisor's responsibility

Managers and supervisors should notify the MIS Help Desk promptly whenever an employee leaves the County or transfers to another department so that his/her access can be revoked. Involuntary terminations must be reported concurrent with the termination.

Human Resources responsibility

The Personnel Department will notify MIS monthly of Employee transfers and terminations. Involuntary terminations must be reported concurrent with the termination.

File Server Usage

Personal data should not be stored on the network. This would include but not be limited to pictures, music files, personal PDFs, and personal documents. In the event that personal data is discovered on the network, it will be deleted.

Cell Phone Policy

It is strongly recommended that any cellular phone (county or personal) that contains county email or other county data be password protected.

HIPAA Compliance Policy

All electronic public health information needs to be stored in a secure manner. If an employee does not know how to store data safely, they may contact MIS for assistance.

8) Physical security

It is Hall County policy to protect computer hardware, software, data, and documentation from misuse, theft, unauthorized access, and environmental hazards.

Employee responsibilities - The directives below apply to all employees:

- Storage media devices should be stored out of sight when not in use. If they contain highly sensitive or confidential data, they must be locked up.
- Storage media devices should be kept away from environmental hazards such as heat, direct sunlight, and magnetic fields.
- Critical computer equipment, e.g., file servers, must be protected by an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). Other computer equipment should be protected by a surge suppressor.
- Environmental hazards to hardware such as food, smoke, liquids, high or low humidity, and extreme heat or cold should be avoided.

Since MIS is responsible for all equipment installations, disconnections, modifications, and relocations, employees are not to perform these activities. This does not apply to temporary moves of portable computers for which an initial connection has been set up by MIS.

Employees shall not take shared portable equipment such as laptop computers out of the office without the informed consent of their department manager. Informed consent means that the manager knows what equipment is leaving, what data is on it, and for what purpose it will be used.

Employees should exercise care to safeguard the valuable electronic equipment assigned to them. Employees who neglect this duty may be accountable for any loss or damage that may result.

9) Copyrights and software license agreements

Employees using the Internet are not permitted to copy, transfer, rename, add, or delete information or programs belonging to others unless given express permission to do so by the owner. Failure to observe copyright or license agreements may result in disciplinary action by Hall County and/or legal action by the copyright owner.

<u>Legal reference</u>

Hall County and its employees are legally bound to comply with the Federal Copyright Act (Title 17 of the U. S. Code) and all proprietary software license agreements. Noncompliance can expose Hall County and the responsible employee(s) to civil and/or criminal penalties.

<u>Scope</u>

This directive applies to all software that is owned by Hall County, licensed to Hall County, or developed using Hall County resources by employees or vendors.

MIS responsibilities - The MIS Director will:

- Maintain records of software licenses owned by Hall County.
- Periodically (at least annually) scan Hall County computers to verify that only authorized software is installed.

Employee responsibilities - Employees shall not:

- Install software unless authorized by MIS. Only software that is licensed to or owned by Hall County is to be installed on Hall County computers.
- Copy software unless authorized by MIS.

- Download software unless authorized by MIS.

Civil penalties
Violations of copyright law expose the County and the responsible employee(s) to the following civil penalties:

- Liability for damages suffered by the copyright owner
- Profits that are attributable to the copying
- Fines up to $100,000 for each illegal copy

Criminal penalties
Violations of copyright law that are committed "willfully and for purposes of commercial advantage or private financial gain (Title 18 Section 2319(b))," expose the County and the employee(s) responsible to the following criminal penalties:

- Fines up to $250,000 for each illegal copy
- Jail terms of up to five years

WIFI Policy

Use of the Hall County wireless connection is entirely at the risk of the user. Users should be familiar with their own personal wireless device and should have basic knowledge of how to connect their own devices to a wireless network.

Hall County staff will not provide technical assistance with personal devices or configurations and cannot guarantee that the user will be able to make a wireless connection. If the user has problems accessing the Internet over this connection, the staff will verify the County's wireless connection is up and running.

Hall County does not offer laptops or peripheral equipment (power strips, wireless network cards, mouse pads, cables, etc.) to the public nor can the County guarantee access to power outlets. The user should bring a fully charged battery and prepare to be self-powered, as electrical outlets are not always readily available in public areas. Hall County assumes no responsibility for the safety of equipment. Users must keep their equipment with them at all times.

As with most public wireless, the County's connection is not secure and privacy cannot be protected. Any information being sent or received could potentially be intercepted by another wireless user. Cautious and informed wireless users should not transmit sensitive personal information (credit card numbers, passwords, or any other sensitive personal information) while using this or any public wireless networks.

Hall County will not be responsible for personal information (e.g. credit card) that is compromised, or for any damage caused to your hardware, or software due to electrical surges, security issues or consequences caused by viruses or hacking. All wireless access users should have up-to-date virus protection on their personal laptop computers or wireless devices.

All users are expected to use the County's wireless access in a legal and responsible manner, consistent with the informational purposes for which it is provided. Users shall not violate federal, Georgia or local laws, including the transmission or receiving of child pornography or harmful material, fraud or downloading copyrighted material.

Hard Drives, Electronic Devices and Electronic Media Disposal Policy

All computer systems, hard drives, electronic devices and electronic media must be properly cleaned of sensitive data and software before being transferred outside of Hall County MIS Department as surplus property or as trash.

Computer hard drives must be sanitized by using software that is compliant with Department of Defense standards. Non-rewritable media, such as CDs or non-usable hard drives, must be physically destroyed.

The primary responsibility for sanitizing computer systems, hard drives, electronic devices and media rests with the Hall County MIS Department.

The Hall County MIS Department is responsible for the sanitation of all county owned electronic devices, hard drives and computer systems prior to removal/Surplus from Hall County. This responsibility may be delegated within the MIS department between PC Technicians as deemed appropriate.

All Hall County employees are responsible for the sanitation of non-reusable electronic media before disposal. Similar to shredding paper reports, CDs and other non-rewritable media should either be broken or defaced by scratching before disposal.

When a computer hard drive is removed, the hard drive is returned to the MIS department where it will remain under lock and key in the equipment room until the device is either degaussed or the software DBAN is ran on the hard drive. The hard drive is then taken to our Resource Recovery Department where the hard drive is shredded.

Any disposal of computer systems and media must comply with all environmental regulations.

Any breach, infringement, or transgression of the above policy could lead to disciplinary action, including up to termination.

- **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Customers are each employee's most important concern. Every employee represents Hall County to our customers, both internal and external, and the public. The way we do our jobs presents an image by which we are viewed by the public. Customers judge all of us by how they are treated with each employee contact. Our first priority is to provide excellent customer service to any customer or potential customer. Nothing is more important than being courteous, friendly, helpful, and prompt in the attention you give to customers.

Hall County will provide customer relations and services training to all employees. New employees are expected to attend County provided customer service training. Our personal contact with the public, our manners on the telephone, and the communications we send to customers are a reflection not only of ourselves, but also of the professionalism of Hall County. A positive customer relation enhances the public's perception of and improves the image of Hall County.

- **DISCLOSING INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET AND OTHER MEDIUMS**

Hall County understands that some employees may wish to create and maintain personal web pages, logs or "blogs," use other social media or networking sites including but not limited to Twitter, MySpace, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Linkedin or comment on others' blogs, web pages or in other public forums. While the County respects each employees right to personal expression and views their web page, blog or other use of social media as their personal project, you must also understand that how you use social media and and/or your personal web page or blog can impact Hall County. Therefore, we ask that you follow these guidelines when posting information on the Internet or any other medium.

1) Personal Expression
The information you send through social media and personal blogs and web pages contains the views of a particular employee, not the County; however, readers may not immediately appreciate this concept. If you choose to discuss your employment or identify yourself as a Hall County employee, you should include a disclaimer that the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of Hall County.

2) Protect Confidential/Secret Information
As more fully described in the Non-Disclosure / Confidentiality policy, you must not improperly disclose confidential, proprietary or sensitive information of the County or third parties. Such disclosures threaten the County's ongoing business relationships with third parties, among other things. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, photographs and/or video, obtained or created by an employee who represents the County.

3) Be Respectful and Exercise Common Sense
Harassment of other employees will not be tolerated. Your use of social media, web pages and blogs must not violate the County's conduct-related policies, including anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies. When posting, be respectful of others. Assume that other employees, citizens, vendors, and business partners are reading it.

4) Company Time and Property
Hall County's MIS Policies govern use of County computer equipment. Consult such policies before using County equipment to create or update your blog/web page/social media accounts and the like. You should update your personal social media accounts, blog or web page outside of work.

As with all other policies, a violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with local disciplinary policy and procedure. The County further reserves the right to request that employees refrain from commenting on certain topics related to the County, in case of violation of this policy or in order to comply with the laws to which Hall County is subject. The provisions of this social media policy will not be construed or applied in a way that interferes with employees' rights under state, federal or local labor law.

- **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION**

Hall County is committed to complying fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. All employment practices and activities are conducted on a non-discriminatory basis.

The ADA protects qualified applicants and employees with disabilities from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, job training, fringe benefits, classification, referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of disability. The law also requires that covered entities provide qualified applicants and employees with disabilities with reasonable accommodations that do not impose undue hardship. Conduct contrary to the ADA is illegal according to the provisions set forth in the ADA and will not be tolerated.

Disability refers to a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, past or present physical or mental condition, a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such impairment. The Company will make reasonable accommodations for disabled workers when such accommodations would not impose undue hardship for the County.

Those persons needing reasonable accommodation in the application and/or employment process should contact the Human Resources Department.

Post-offer medical examinations are required for all positions. They are given to all persons entering the position only after conditional job offers. All public safety employees are required to pass a fitness for duty exam. Medical records will be kept separate and confidential.

Reasonable accommodation is available to all disabled employees, where their disability affects the performance of job functions. All employment decisions are based on the merits of the situation in accordance with defined criteria, not the disability of the individual.

Qualified individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal pay and other forms of compensation (or changes in compensation) as well as in job assignments, classifications, organizational structures, position descriptions, lines of progression and seniority lists. Leave of all types will be available to all employees on an equal basis.

Hall County is also committed to not discriminating against any qualified employees or applicants because they are related to or associated with a person with a disability. Hall County will follow any state or local law that provides individuals with disabilities greater protection than the ADA.

This policy is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Hall County is committed to taking all other actions necessary to ensure equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the ADA and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws.

- **DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE**

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1) GENERAL
It is Hall County's desire to provide a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. To promote this goal, employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner. Using or being under the influence, regardless of the level, of drugs or alcohol on the job may pose serious safety and health risks.

2) DRUG FREE WORKPLACE
Under the DrugFree Workplace Act, no employee shall store or allow storage of illegal drugs or alcohol or intoxicants upon any land or within any building owned, rented, or leased by, or under the control of Hall County. No employee shall transport any form of an intoxicant in any County vehicle equipment or machine

While on Hall County premises and while conducting business-related activities off Hall County premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or controlled substances. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace. The use and possession of controlled substances is to be in compliance with the medical provider's directions.

Engaging in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of illegal drugs in the workplace is strictly prohibited. Such activity interferes with the ability to perform and may become an increased risk for accidents and injuries involving employees and others. Employees must notify the Director of Human Resources of a violation of any criminal drug statute, including a charge indictment, arrest or conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace within five (5) days of the arrest or conviction.

To help ensure a safe and healthful working environment, job applicants and employees may be asked to provide body substance samples (such as urine and/or blood) to determine the illicit or illegal use of drugs and alcohol. Refusal to submit to drug testing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

3) COUNSELING AND REFERRAL SERVICES

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides confidential counseling and referral services to employees for assistance with such problems as drug and/or alcohol abuse or addiction. It is the employee's responsibility to seek assistance from the EAP prior to reaching a point where his or her judgment, performance, or behavior has led to imminent disciplinary action. Participation in the EAP after the disciplinary process has begun may not preclude disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

4) DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

A) PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for maintaining a drug and alcohol-free workplace in compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and in accordance with Civil Service Rule. Hall County recognizes its obligation to employees and the public to take reasonable steps to assure safety in the workplace and in the community. Hall County is aware that alcohol and substance abuse may have an adverse effect on safe, effective and productive job performance, and recognizes that employees who are impaired in their ability to perform their jobs because of their use or abuse of drugs and alcohol, jeopardize the integrity of the workplace, place the public at risk, and jeopardize the County's overall mission.

B) APPLICABILITY

This drug and alcohol policy applies, in its entirety, to all Hall County employees who hold safety-sensitive positions.

For purposes of this policy, the following positions are considered safety sensitive:

a. Paramedic and paramedic trainee
b. Positions requiring a CDL license
c. Equipment operators
d. Firefighter and firefighter trainee
e. Positions requiring the use and possession of a firearm
f. All sworn law enforcement positions
g. All employees involved in policy development and administration
h. Employees required to operate County vehicles
i. Employees involved in the handling of public funds
j. All post certified positions
k. Certified Communications Officers

C) SCOPE OF TESTING

Testing will include at a minimum, but not be limited to the testing for marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, and phencyclidine.

D) RANDOM TESTING

All safety-sensitive employees will be subjected to random, unannounced testing. The selection of employees shall be made by randomly generating an employee identifier from a pool of safety-sensitive employees.

a. Selections will be unannounced and spread reasonably throughout the calendar year.
b. The number of employees randomly selected for drug/alcohol testing during the calendar year shall be not less than 20% of the average number of safety-sensitive employees.
c. Each safety-sensitive employee will have an equal chance of being drawn each time selections are made. Employees will remain in the pool and subject to selection, whether or not the employee was previously tested.
d. A safety-sensitive employee may be tested for drug and alcohol anytime the employee is on duty.
e. Upon notification of their selection, employees are required to proceed to the collection site immediately and must complete testing within two hours of notification.
f. Should a result be inconclusive, a re-test will be ordered and upon notification a supervisor will accompany the employee to the testing site.

E) POST-ACCIDENT TESTING

County employees involved in a work related accident or automobile accident (regardless of fault) will be required to undergo drug and alcohol test regardless of injury to the employee. Employees will be directed by their supervisor or department director to proceed immediately to testing site for breath and urine testing. In the case of a workers' compensation injury, a workers' compensation panel physician will conduct the urine and breath test for drug and alcohol.

a. Any employee who is subject to post accident testing who fails to remain readily available for such testing, may be deemed to have refused to submit to testing.
b. Any employee, who is subject to post accident testing and leaves the scene of the accident prior to submission to such test, may be deemed to have refused to submit to testing.
c. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the delay of necessary medical attention for the injured following an accident, or to prohibit an employee from leaving the scene of an accident for the period necessary to obtain assistance in responding to the accident, or to obtain necessary emergency medical care.
d. Supervisors do not have discretion to waive post-accident testing. Supervisors who waive testing will be subject to disciplinary action.

F) REASONABLE SUSPICION TESTING

Hall County employees will be subject to a reasonable suspicion drug and or alcohol test when there are reasons to believe that drug or alcohol use is impacting job performance and safety. Reasonable suspicion testing can be conducted anytime the employee is on duty. Observations must be made by a supervisor who is knowledgeable of the signs and symptoms of drug use and alcohol misuse.

a. Reasonable suspicion shall mean*:*

There is objective evidence, based upon specific, contemporaneous, observations of the employee's appearance, behavior, speech or body odor that are consistent with possible drug use and or alcohol misuse, such as but not limited to:

- Slurred, fragmented or slow speech
- Disoriented / confused
- Unsteady gait
- Dilated or pinpointed pupils
- Bloodshot eyes
- Lack of motor coordination
- Odor of alcohol or controlled substance
- Admission of employee that he or she was drinking alcohol or ingesting drugs

b. Upon determination of reasonable suspicion, the supervisor shall:

- Take the employee aside to a private area but do not leave the employee unattended
- Maintain confidentiality by only discussing your suspicions with the Department Head or Manager helping you with the investigation
- Express his/her observations
- Require the employee to submit to a drug and or alcohol test in accordance with this policy
- Remove the employee from performing safety-sensitive functions pending the outcome of the test result(s)
- DO NOT accuse the employee of being "drunk" or "on drugs" or any similar accusations.

c. Transportation to testing site

Hall County shall be responsible for transporting the employee to the testing site. This is to avoid placing the employee or others in a situation that might endanger the physical safety of the employee or the public.

d. Documentation

Reasonable suspicion must be documented in writing at or near the time of observation. A written record of the observations leading to the reasonable suspicion for drug/alcohol testing must be prepared and signed by the supervisor making the observation.

e. An employee who refuses an instruction to submit to drug or alcohol test shall not be permitted to finish his or her shift and shall immediately be placed on administrative leave pending disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

G) PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING

All applicants being considered for employment shall be required to pass a drug and alcohol screening test prior to being hired.

a. Refusal to Test

- Job Applicants: Any applicant for a job with the Hall County Government who refuses a drug and alcohol test shall be denied employment.
- Employees: Any employee who refuses to submit to a drug and alcohol test as required will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

b. The following are also considered a refusal to test if the employee*:*
- Fails to appear for any test within a reasonable time, as determined by Hall County, after being directed to do so.
- Fails to remain in the testing site until the testing procedure is complete
- Fails to provide a urine specimen for any drug test
- In the case of a directly observed or monitored collection in a drug test, fails to permit the observation or monitoring of the provision of a specimen
- Provide a sample that does not meet required standards
- Fails to provide a sufficient amount of urine when directed, and it has been determined, through a required medical evaluation, that there was no adequate medical explanation for the failure
- Fails or declines to take a second test the employer or collector has directed
- Fails to undergo a medical examination or evaluation, as directed by the Medical Review Officer as part of the verification process, or as directed by the Designated Employer Representative as part of the "shy bladder" procedures
- Fails to cooperate with any part of the testing process (e.g. refuse to empty pockets when so directed by the collector, behave in a confrontational way that disrupts the collection process); and
- If the Medical Review Officer reports that there is verified adulterated or substituted test result;
- Fails or refuses to sign required documents.

H) TEST RESULTS

Refusal to test or a positive result will result in disciplinary actions up to and including possible termination. Probationary employees who test positive will be terminated. If an employee is allowed to return to work, he or she may be required to first complete a course of rehabilitation as prescribed by an approved counselor hired at the discretion of the county.

a) POSITIVE TEST RESULTS

Should an employee wish to appeal a positive test result, a second test will be performed at the expense of the employee. The retest will be conducted from the original sample and must be requested within 72 hours of notification.

b) PRESCRIPTION AND LEGALLY OBTAINED DRUGS

An employee using prescription medication while on the job shall do so in strict accordance with medical 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 their duties. The employee shall be responsible for notifying his or her supervisor of any restrictions that may affect/prevent the safe performance of the required duties.

The abuse of legally prescribed drugs shall be prohibited. Any employee whose job performance or attendance deficiencies result from abuse shall be subject to disciplinary actions. If the employee's behavior and/or job performance gives rise to a reasonable suspicion that the employee is abusing prescription drugs, the employee may be required to submit to drug testing and must not be permitted to return to duty.

Employees taking medications that are sedating in nature or modify behavior are required to inform their supervisor of use. The supervisor will be authorized to reassign or send home the employee so as not to place the employee, co-workers or the public at risk.

5) ASSISTANCE AND REHABILITATION

Voluntary participation in an employee assistance program prior to an employee being requested to submit to a test is encouraged and such participation shall be kept confidential. No disciplinary action shall be implemented because an employee volunteers to participate in such a program. Employees who, prior to being requested to take a drug and/or alcohol test, voluntarily identify themselves as a drug user or alcohol abuser and obtain counseling and rehabilitation through the government's employee assistance program shall not be disciplined for their drug use and/or alcohol abuse if they thereafter refrain from use.

Employees who have been terminated under the provisions of this chapter shall be provided with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of substance abuse professionals, counseling and treatment programs that can determine what assistance, if any, the employee may need to help him or her resolve any problems associated with substance abuse. Hall County shall not be responsible to pay for such evaluation, treatment, rehabilitation, or counseling. Hall County also has no obligation to rehire terminated employees.

6) RECORD RETENTION

The Hall County Government will maintain records of the alcohol misuse and controlled substances testing programs as required in federal rules and regulations. The records will be maintained in a secure location with controlled access.

7) RECORDS ACCESS

The Human Resources Department will keep testing records. The County will not release employee information except as specifically allowed. Employees may obtain copies of any records pertaining to his/her alcohol or drug use with a written request. DOT agencies will have access to all drivers' records.

8) GENERAL

Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment, and/or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

Employees with questions or concerns about substance dependency or abuse are encouraged to use the resources of the Employee Assistance Program. They may also wish to discuss these matters with their supervisor or the Human Resources Department to receive assistance or referrals to appropriate resources in the community.

Employees with drug or alcohol problems that have not resulted in, and are not the immediate subject of, disciplinary action may request approval to take unpaid time off to participate in a rehabilitation or treatment program. Leave may be granted if the employee agrees to abstain from use of the problem substance; abides by all Hall County policies, rules, and prohibitions relating to conduct in the workplace; and if granting the leave will not cause Hall County any undue hardship.

Employees with questions on this policy or issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace should raise their concerns with their supervisor or the Human Resources Department without fear of reprisal.

- **EEO / EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Hall County is committed to provide and promote equal employment opportunities for all applicants and employees. Additionally, Hall County is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of inappropriate or unlawful conduct. In keeping with this commitment, we will not tolerate harassment, discrimination or the unlawful treatment of employees by anyone, including any supervisor, co-worker, vendor, client or citizen of Hall County.

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that the concepts of equal employment opportunity, non-harassment, and non-discrimination are understood, abided by, and carried out by everyone.

1) NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at Hall County will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. Hall County does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. Hall County's personnel program shall, at all times, be conducted in accordance with all applicable legislation, ordinances and guidelines.

It is the policy of Hall County to hire, train, promote, compensate, and administer all employment practices without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, marital status, religion, medical condition, national origin, disability unrelated to the ability to perform essential job functions, or on account of membership in any protected category under federal, state, or local laws. Personnel actions such as compensation, benefits, transfers, training, and participation in social and

recreational programs are administered without regard to race, creed, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, military and veteran status, sexual orientation, marital status or any other characteristic protected by law, and; Employees and applicants will not be subjected to harassment, intimidation, threats, coercion or discrimination because they have exercised any right protected by law.

Any employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Department. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Each employee should be aware they have the right to file a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or other state or federal agency as provided by law. According to the EEOC, the deadline for filing any such charge runs from the last date of alleged unlawful action, not from the date that the complaint to Hall County is addressed.

2) HARASSMENT

Hall County is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of inappropriate or unlawful conduct. In keeping with this commitment, we will not tolerate harassment, discrimination or the unlawful treatment of employees by anyone, including any supervisor, co-worker, vendor, client or citizen of Hall County.

3) DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND/OR IMPROPER CONDUCT.

Harassment, discrimination and/or improper conduct consists of misconduct that includes unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status, such as sex, color, race, religion, national origin, age, disability or other protected group status or activity (e.g. opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in the statutory complaint process) as provided for by law. Hall County will not tolerate conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. No supervisor or County employee has authority to engage in such conduct. If you feel you have been subject to the type of conduct prohibited by this policy, you must report this conduct.

If you feel circumstances warrant, you may bypass your supervisor and directly file a complaint with the Human Resources Department as provided for in this policy. If you make a complaint to your supervisor and no action is taken, you are directed to report the conduct as described below to the Human Resources Department. You should report any improper conduct before it becomes severe or pervasive and you do not have to wait until it rises to the level of an unlawful action.

4) Conduct Constituting Prohibited Sexual or Discriminatory Harassment

Sexual harassment (due to one's gender) is one of the forms of harassment forbidden by this policy. Hall County prohibits certain sex-related conduct regardless of whether it amounts to unlawful sexual harassment, as such conduct is deemed to be inconsistent with Hall County's policy of promoting tolerance, respect, and dignity in the workplace.

For example, and without compiling an exhaustive list, the following are illustrative of conduct that Hall County condemns and prohibits under this policy regardless of whether the conduct is based on gender or results in an adverse employment action and regardless of whether the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create an unlawful hostile environment:

- It is prohibited for any person to condition a benefit such as a certain salary or promotion on the granting of sexual favors or the establishment or continuance of a personal relationship, or to imply to an employee that an award of such a benefit is conditioned upon the granting of sexual favors or the establishment or continuance of a personal relationship;

- It is also prohibited for any employee to state or imply that another employee's performance is attributable in whole or in part to the employee's sex or membership in any protected-group categories under federal, state, or local laws;

- It is also prohibited for any employee to state or imply that a fellow employee's promotion in the corporate hierarchy has resulted from the granting of a sexual favor or relationship; and,

- It is also prohibited for any person to engage in any type of conduct which has the effect of unreasonably interfering with another employee's work or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

As an employee of Hall County, you should be aware that the issue of whether behavior constitutes harassment or discriminatory conduct might depend on how that behavior is viewed by the employee who is subjected to the behavior. Any employee who initiates or persists in such prohibited behavior assumes the risk of violating this policy in the event that the person who is the object of the behavior views it as offensive; accordingly, such an employee may be subject to discipline even if his or his conduct might not have been intended as offensive.

5) Conduct Constituting Sexual or Discriminatory Conduct, Joking, or Epithets

For example, and without compiling an exhaustive list, the following are illustrative of conduct that Hall County condemns and prohibits under this policy:

- It is prohibited for any employee to bring any item to the work premises for purposes of an offensive sexual or discriminatory joke or epithet;

- It is also prohibited for any employee to use Company property, bulletin boards, documents, or e-mail or voice mail systems for purposes of an offensive sexual or discriminatory joke or epithet;

- It is also prohibited for any employee to deface Company property or the personal property of anyone else for purposes of an offensive sexual or discriminatory joke or epithet;

- It is also prohibited for any employee to utter or utilize any offensive sexual or discriminatory jokes or epithets at work, or when referring to or about any other person, be they an employee or a non-employee;

- It is also prohibited for any employee to harass anyone else due to their sex, sexual orientation, race, color, ethnic background, age, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, or other protected-group status; and,

- It is also prohibited for any employee to bring to or display in the workplace any materials having an offensive content (such as pornography or due to a demeaning reference to another's protected-group status), or to circulate or disseminate any such materials through Hall County's internal mail or e-mail systems.

6) Application of the Policy to Non-Company Employees

Hall County's policy also applies to the dealings of any employee with non-employees such as contractors, customers, vendors, and members of the public. Furthermore, the policy also applies to individuals who do business with Hall County, who are present on Hall County's premises, or who interact with any employee of Hall County while the employee is on-duty.

7) REPORTING PROCEDURE

All employees are responsible for helping to assure that we avoid any form of unlawful treatment.

Employees who believe they have been subjected or exposed to discrimination or harassment prohibited by this policy have the right to have any such activity terminated immediately. Every employee has a role in preventing discrimination and harassment. Every employee must avoid any conduct that reasonably could be interpreted as discrimination or harassment under this policy, and every employee should indicate when another person's conduct in the workplace is unwelcome. In addition, every employee should endeavor to protect other employees from discrimination and harassment. Employees are expected and encouraged to inform others in the workplace whenever their conduct is unwelcome, offensive, inappropriate, or in poor taste. Therefore, employees are required to come forward promptly and report any problems pursuant to this policy before the alleged offending behavior becomes severe or pervasive.

If you feel that you have experienced or witnessed harassment, discrimination or any unlawful treatment, you must immediately notify your supervisor, director, or the Director of Human Resources immediately. You may also file a complaint with any member of the Human Resources Department staff in their offices. If you are not contacted promptly about your complaint, you are to re-file it with the Director of Human Resources and also send a copy to, or contact, the County Administrator.
Hall County will not tolerate adverse treatment of any employee because he or she reports harassment or discrimination, or provides information related to such complaints. As this policy strictly prohibits retaliation of any form against anyone who complains of alleged violations of this policy, the prohibition against retaliation also applies to any employee involved in or cooperating with any investigation of alleged offending conduct under this policy. Thus, a supervisor is prohibited from making any personnel decision or taking any other adverse action against any employee because the employee complained or cooperated in good faith with an investigation of alleged conduct prohibited by this policy. Any acts of retaliation will be considered a violation of this policy, and corrective action will be taken immediately, including the possible termination of any individual who engages in retaliation of any form.

Hall County will undertake an objective and appropriate review of any complaint. To the extent practicable and appropriate, Hall County will keep any complaint and the terms of its resolution confidential. Hall County will take corrective action as appropriate, including such discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment. Hall County will undertake corrective action to stop inappropriate conduct before it rises to the level of an unlawful action. You will be notified as to the outcome of your complaint. If you have any questions about the status of your complaint, you should contact the Director of Human Resources or higher level officer.

Each employee should be aware they have the right to file a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or other state or federal agency as provided by law.

- **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Employee safety is important. Hall County asks all employees to take responsibility for knowing the locations of alarms and emergency exits, and understanding the emergency procedures so they may be able to assist themselves and other employees in an emergency.

1) Fire

All buildings are equipped with manual pull down alarms and sprinkler systems. When pulled, the alarms will automatically signal the fire department.

If the fire alarm sounds:

- EVACUATE THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY in an orderly fashion through the nearest emergency exit or stairwells. Evacuation routes are posted on bulletin boards throughout Hall County. DO NOT USE THE ELEVATORS.
- Once outside proceed away from the building staying clear of emergency vehicles and at a distance away from the building that would reasonably be considered a safe distance.
- If you notice an employee is missing, inform the emergency personnel immediately.
- Employees may not leave the grounds at any time during an alarm unless specifically ordered to do so by emergency personnel, or unless given permission by their leader in order to accurately account for all employees
- Do not reenter the building until instructed to do so by emergency personnel.

2) Power Outage

In the event of a power outage, temporary emergency backup lights will go on in all buildings.
If you are in the elevator during a power outage, use the phone in the elevator to call for help.

- **EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

1) WORK STANDARDS

The rules and regulations are designed to express what Hall County expects from each employee. In brief, your employer depends on you to do your best and to be on the job on a regular basis for the duration of your shift. The county as your employer and fellow employees expect you to be responsive and to cooperate with others in a spirit of teamwork.

All employees are expected to work in a cooperative manner with Elected Officials, Management, Supervisors, Coworkers, Customers and Vendors. Each employee is expected to abide by County and/or Department policies and to fully cooperate in any investigation that the County may undertake. Violations of established work standards, depending on frequency and severity, may result in such disciplinary actions as a verbal or written reprimand, suspension, demotion and/or termination. Work standards violations requiring supervisor intervention and possible disciplinary action include, but are not limited to the policies outlined in this handbook and:

A) PERFORMANCE

Unsatisfactory job performance resulting in unacceptable work quality, inefficiency or ineffectiveness; unsatisfactory work practices or procedures; lack of cooperation with directives from supervisors; negligence in carrying out duties; disregard for safety and security rules of the department; and job abandonment.

B) PERSONAL CONDUCT - EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

a. Insubordination
b. Conflict of interest
c. Using, selling, possessing or reporting to work/or working under the influence of drugs, illegal substances and/or alcohol
d. Theft of property of the County, customers, or other employees
e. Gambling
f. Falsifying records or documents
g. Sabotage
h. Deliberate damage to County property
i. Acceptance of a bribe
j. Mishandling cash or other County property
k. False, fraudulent, or malicious statements or actions
l. Destroying, tampering, altering, defacing, vandalizing, modifying beyond the intended use of, interfering with <u>or</u> misuse of County property or the property of other employees, customers, contractors or visitors
m. Unauthorized dealing with the media / press
n. Violation of any County policy or procedure
o. Threatened or actual physical violence, assault, fighting, violent actions or verbal intimidation

p. Unauthorized use, disclosure, or removal of confidential information
q. Fraud or deception in the course of work
r. Commission of an act which constitutes a criminal offense and which arises from or relates to work for the County
s. Violation of the County's ethics program
t. Unsatisfactory work performance
u. Violations of the County's mission and objectives or those acts which might damage the reputation of Hall County
v. Failure to maintain acceptable standards of quality or quantity of work
w. Failure to follow established work methods and procedures
x. Attendance problems
y. Violation of local, state or federal law, rule or regulation
z. Conduct or language that could be interpreted as sexual, racial, religious, or other types of harassment, including rude, discourteous, obscene, abusive or offensive conduct toward visitors, customers, vendors, or fellow employees
aa. Failure to communicate in a timely or acceptable manner with department personnel
bb. Possession of, or storage of, inappropriate material in the workplace or any county vehicle
cc. Making direct or indirect disrespectful, rude, unprofessional, harmful, threatening, disparaging, humiliating, insulting or degrading comments (whether verbal or written) toward a member of the public or anyone in contact with Hall County
dd. Engaging in any behavior that is disruptive, distracting or unsettling to orderly operations
ee. Sleeping while on duty unless specifically authorized by the appropriate authority
ff. Engaging in unprofessional conduct
gg. Interfering with the job performance of fellow employees

3) ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR

County employees must conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner. Employees shall not use inflammatory, provocative or profane language, sexual slurs; or demonstrate unresponsiveness, or disrespectful behavior to the public or fellow employees.

4) INSUBORDINATION

Insubordination is defined as disobedience to authority and implies
failure or refusal to submit to the authority of a superior, includes, but is not limited to, failure to follow rules, policies, ordinances, professional practices and willful failure to follow directives by supervisors or management. Any employee who demonstrates unresponsiveness, either verbal or physical towards a department director or supervisor in authority shall be subject to immediate suspension and/or termination.

- **EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES**

It is the intent of Hall County to clarify the definitions of employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility.

Each position is designated as either NON-EXEMPT or EXEMPT in accordance with federal and state wage and hour laws. NON-EXEMPT (hourly) employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws. EXEMPT (salaried) employees are excluded from overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. An employee's position of EXEMPT or NON-EXEMPT classification may be changed only upon written notification by Hall County Human Resources.

In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one of the following employment categories:

1) REGULAR
A regular employee has satisfied their probationary or working test period and works a regular full-time (32 hours or more) schedule. An employee given a probationary appointment shall acquire regular status and official appointment upon satisfactory completion of the working test period which lasts 12 months. Generally, they are eligible for Hall County's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

2) PART-TIME
Employees who work less than 63 hours per pay period and are not eligible for employee benefits and who do not have rights established by these rules. Part time employees are limited to working no more than 28 hours per week.

3) PROBATIONARY / WORKING TEST PERIOD
A probationary appointment is an initial appointment to a regular, fulltime position in the Civil Service System. The period of probation is the first 12-months following the appointment and during which the employee can be dismissed without appeal.

4) TEMPORARY STATUS
A temporary appointment is an initial appointment to a position for a designated period of time not to exceed six (6) months unless approved by Human Resources.

5) TIME LIMITED STATUS
A time limited appointment is an initial appointment to a position established for special programs or projects normally anticipated as being longer than six (6) months but not regular and continuing in nature.

6) ACTING CAPACITY STATUS
An employee may serve in an acting capacity only in a position that has been duly established and is vacant or temporarily vacant. Such appointment shall normally not exceed ninety (90) days unless specified.

- **EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES**

Members of a Hall County employee's immediate family may be considered for employment on the basis of qualifications. The employment of relatives in an organization may cause serious conflicts and problems with favoritism and employee morale. In addition to claims of partiality in treatment at work, personal conflicts from outside the work environment can be carried over into day-to-day working relationships.

1) DEFINITION OF RELATIVES
Relatives shall be defined as immediate family by blood or marriage to include spouse, parent or guardian, child, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, aunt, uncle niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, stepmother, stepfather, stepson, stepdaughter, stepsister, stepbrother, legally adopted parents and children, or other relative living in the employee's household. For the purpose of this rule, the interpretation of the word spousal is to include a person who lives in an espoused relationship (including domestic partners between two individuals who live together and share a common domestic life).

2) HIRING OF RELATIVES WITHIN THE SAME DEPARTMENT
If it occurs that an individual applies for an advertised position in an area where a relative is employed, that individual's application may be considered by the Human Resources Recruiter. In advance of interviewing, Human Resources must approve the employment of relatives within the same department.

3) HIRING RELATIVES WITHIN LINES OF SUPERVISION
No relative can be hired, transferred, or promoted to work in the line of authority or under the direct supervision of a relative. Relatives of department directors and their department supervisors whose span of influence extends throughout the County, such as Human Resources, Finance, and Purchasing, shall not be considered, without advance approval, for any covered position within the County.

4) GENERAL
Hall County also reserves the right to take prompt action if an actual or potential conflict of interest arises involving relatives or individuals involved in a dating relationship who occupy positions at any level (higher or lower) in the same line of authority that may affect the review of employment decisions. If a relative relationship is established after employment between employees who are in a reporting situation described above, it is the responsibility and obligation of the supervisor involved in the relationship to disclose the existence of the relationship to management. The individuals concerned will be given the opportunity to decide who is to be transferred to another available position. If that

decision is not made within 30 calendar days, management will decide who is to be transferred or, if necessary, terminated from employment.

- **EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

The purpose of establishing the following employment practices is to assure fair treatment of applicants and employees without regard to race, gender, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, marital status, veteran status, or non job-related medical conditions.

1) RECRUITMENT

Recruitment of candidates for hire by Hall County shall be planned to meet the immediate and long range needs of the County. The Director of Human Resources will make use of such information as turnover, budgeted positions, future departmental needs in order to determine particular recruitments needs. Recruitment efforts shall be directed to assure that all segments of the public have the opportunity to apply and be considered for positions.

2) FILLING VACANCIES

Vacancies may be filled by promotion, demotion, transfer, reinstatement, probationary appointment or temporary appointment. The Department of Human Resources shall use various methods of publicity and media to provide notice of vacancies to as many qualified personnel as possible and to assure obtaining qualified applicants.

Full-time vacancies shall be announced publicly for a period of time as necessary to establish a pool of qualified candidates by posting in Human Resources and/or on the Hall County website.

a. Appointments

The County recognizes two types of appointment procedures that may apply to initial appointments and/or promotions: internal competitive and open competitive appointment procedures. Additionally, the County Commission and County Administrator may appoint staff to positions that are exempt from the rules and who would serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

- Internal Competitive

It will be the County's policy and first preference to promote and transfer from within whenever possible. Internal competitive appointments shall be limited to current employees. Announcements of such vacancies may be made on a County-wide basis. Certain sworn or certified positions in the Sheriff and Fire Department may be posted only within that department based on qualifications required for the position.

- Open Competitive

Open competitive appointment procedures are the normal practice of the County. When a vacancy occurs, a recruitment plan will be developed and

implemented by Human Resources. The County will select the best-qualified applicant by using appropriate screening methods as determined by Human Resources.

b. Reclassification
Appointment of a current employee to a new position, for which a vacancy is not created by reclassifying the incumbent, may be authorized by the County Administrator. Reclassifications may or may not be associated with an increase in pay and are not considered promotions.

c. Promotion
Promotion is the advancement of an employee from a job within one class to a job in another class having a higher salary range.

d.Transfer
A vacancy may be filled by the transfer of an employee from another position of a comparable class. A transfer of an employee from one department to another department shall have the acknowledgment of both appointing authorities concerned and the County Administrator.

3) PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF JOB VACANCIES
Public announcements of vacancies shall specify the job title, general duties to be performed, minimum and/or necessary qualifications, final date on which applications will be received, a statement that Hall County is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and that applications are subject to public disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Law, and that Hall County is a Drug Free Workplace.

4) APPLICATIONS

a. Forms
Applications shall be made on the form prescribed by the Director of Human Resources. Resumes may be accepted for certain positions. The Director of Human Resources shall be custodian of all applications. Applications shall be completed in full and will require information covering training, experience, education, and other job-related information. Any data required for equal opportunity purposes or other legal purposes shall be obtained on documents to be kept separately from the application form. Applications shall be signed by the applicant attesting to the truth of all statements contained in the application form. All individuals hired by Hall County must complete an application prior to employment.

b. Denial
No individual shall be denied the right to file an application for employment for any open position; however, the Director of Human Resources may establish a system for acceptance of applications. Certain classified positions may be regarded as open for

continuous recruitment of qualified applicants, while other positions may be classified as closed until such time there is an announced vacancy.

c. Active Status

Applications will be active for a period of not more than six (6) months with the exception of Public Safety applications. Public Safety applications will remain active for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of receipt and/or completion of any examination requirements(s)

5) INVESTIGATION OF CANDIDATE'S HISTORY

The Director of Human Resources, or appointed designee, may investigate a candidate's employment, training, educational, criminal, credit and driver's history to verify the statements contained in the application. Any employee who is hired, but later found to have misrepresented or withheld any information during the job application process, is subject to discharge from County service. An employee dismissed for such fraud shall be ineligible for re-hire in the County.

6) EXAMINATIONS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Examinations shall be practical in nature, rated impartially and constructed to reveal the candidate's capacity for the particular class or position, his/her general background, related knowledge, skills, and abilities. The Human Resources Director may use or approve any job-related selection methods that will maximize reliability and objectivity. The selection procedures shall measure or sample job behaviors or knowledge, skills and representative work samples, rating of training, education, and/or experience. The Human Resources Director may also utilize tests which fairly examine the ability and fitness of all applicants to perform efficiently the duties of the position to be filled.

7) EMPLOYEE MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

All applicants recommended for employment are required to successfully complete a post-employment offer health and drug screen and be recommended by a licensed medical examiner as able to perform the job for which s/he is being considered. Each applicant will be given the screenings by a physician and/or medical facility chosen by the County. The nature of the post-employment offer health and drug screenings shall be uniform and consistent with the classes of positions. In complying with state and/or federal requirements established for certain protective services positions, the County will follow the prescribed screening procedures.

Information on an employee's medical condition or history will be kept separate from other employee information and maintained confidentially. Access to this information will be limited to those who have a legitimate need to know.

- **EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE CHECKS**

To ensure that individuals who join Hall County are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, Hall County may conduct employment reference checks of applicants.

The Director of Human Resources, or appointed designee, may investigate a candidate's employment, training, educational, criminal, credit and driver's history to verify the statements contained in the application. Any employee who is hired, but later found to have misrepresented or withheld any information in the application process is subject to discharge from County service. An employee dismissed for such fraud shall be ineligible for re-hire in the County.

- **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND APPEALS**

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1) PURPOSE OF GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The purpose of the employee grievance procedure is to provide an orderly process for resolving the grievance claims of regular employees. The objective of this procedure is to reach a fair and equitable decision in a timely manner. The internal grievance procedure, up to the County Administrator or authorized elected official, must have the opportunity to resolve any grievance. The employee and supervisor/manager should make every effort to resolve grievances informally before formally taking the complaint to higher levels of management and ultimately to the Civil Service Board for resolution.

2) GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Both formal and informal grievance procedures can be used by employees to resolve issues and conflicts with management. Under these rules, a formal grievance may be filed for the following reasons;

- Inequitable application of disciplinary procedures;
- Erroneous or inconsistent application of County Rules and Regulations;
- Employment status or productivity which has been adversely affected by unfair treatment; and/or,
- Unsafe or unhealthy working conditions exist.

The Civil Service Board is the last step in the County's appeal process. The chain of command, up to and including the County Administrator or authorized elected official, must have the opportunity to resolve any grievances. If not satisfied with the results after following the proper chain of command, the employee may, through the Director of Human Resources, file a written request for an appeal to be heard before the Civil Service Board. At any point, when following the chain of command, the employee, supervisor or department director may call upon Human Resources to assist in the resolution of the problem.

The Sheriff's and Fire Departments deserve special mention in the grievance procedure. Except in the case of sexual harassment, due to an established internal chain of command, only personnel with a rank of captain or above may call to solicit the assistance of the Human Resources Department to resolve employee conflicts.

The right of petition to the Civil Service Board is expressly granted to each employee and to any employee after completely exhausting the appeal option with County management.

3) GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

A) GRIEVANCE STATEMENT

Submit a grievance statement to the supervisor or department director in writing and it shall state the specific claim and the specific relief desired.

B) INFORMAL GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION

Request an informal grievance resolution. Informal means dialogue between employee and management should be used in an attempt to resolve the grievance in a timely fashion.

C) FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If the grievance is unresolved informally, the employee may proceed with the formal grievance review procedure. At any point in the process, either the employee or management may ask the Human Resources Department to provide assistance in resolving the matter as an impartial mediator. However, in strict chain-of-command, departments, e.g., Sheriff and Fire, only a rank of Captain or above may call on the Human Resources Department to assist in conflict resolution.

D) FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE TIMING

The following procedure is intended to define maximum time limits. Grievances should be handled as expeditiously as time and circumstances permit.

a. Department Level
    - Written Grievance statement received by Department Director from the employee within 10 calendar days.
    - Within 20 calendar days the Department Director will provide a written response to the employee filing the grievance.

b. General Management Level
    - An employee may file a request for review by the County Administrator or authorized elected official if the employee is not satisfied with the Department Director's decision. Appeal to the County Administrator, or elected department head may be filed within 10 calendar days from the Department Director's written decision. Appeals to the County Administrator apply to Departments that do not report to an elected official.
    - Within 20 calendar days the County Administrator or authorized elected official will acknowledge receipt and schedule a meeting to review the facts or will respond in writing, at his/her discretion.

c. Civil Service Board Level
    - Appeal to the Board may be filed within 10 calendar days from the receipt of a response from the County Administrator or authorized elected official, through the Director of Human Resources, if the grievance remains

unresolved, and if the action in question is an appealable matter as defined in the Rules and Regulations.

- The Civil Service Board will set a date for a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the request for a hearing.
- Civil Service Board hearings should be conducted in the manner outlined in Section V, (b) of the Civil Service Act.

d. Continuation Procedure

- The employee having a grievance scheduled for an appeal hearing before the Civil Service Board may be allowed a continuance for good cause, at the discretion of the Board. However, the Board may dismiss the case without a hearing if more than two (2) continuances are requested without justifiable cause by the employee filing the grievance.
- When a grievance, having been processed as stated above, is received by the Civil Service Board, copies of said appeal shall be promptly transmitted to each Board Member, members of the Commission and the concerned department head.
- The Chairperson of the Board shall promptly designate the appropriate time and place to conduct the hearing, and shall notify in writing the appellant, other Board members, the Commission and the concerned department head. Such hearings may be set for regularly scheduled or special meetings of the Board; the meeting will be scheduled within forty five (45) days after receipt of said appeal; and the written notification of all concerned parties shall be made at least five (5) days prior to the date of the hearing. Consideration will be given to all concerned parties in the scheduling of hearings, and all such hearings shall be open and public.

4) HEARING PROCEDURES

In the hearing of an appeal, the proceedings shall be informal as compared to a judicial hearing. The Board Attorney shall be the presiding officer, the hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of these Rules & Regulations, and the Board's decision considered final in matters of dismissals and suspensions. Employees whose appeals are upheld will, at the direction of the Board, be reinstated with full restoration of all pay and benefits lost, and shall resume previous duties without penalty. In reviewing appeal cases, the Board is guided by the following criteria. It shall be the burden of the appellant to establish and verify that the action in question:

a. Does not substantially comply with sound management principles, consistent with these rules and regulations;
b. Is not supported by a preponderance of evidence maintaining the finding of facts and judgment; and
c. Is not reasonable or relative to the severity of the offence.

A recording or official transcript shall be made of all hearings. A copy of said transcript shall be made available to the appellant, upon request, at a cost to be determined by the Board.

5) NON-GRIEVANCE ISSUES

a. Issues concluded by other procedures - Issues which are pending or have been concluded by other administrative or judicial procedures
b. Work assignments without negative impact - Work assignments which do not result in a suspension, demotion or salary reduction
c. Budget allocations, expenditures, organizational and structural changes
d. Performance appraisal without adverse impact to employment status - The content or rating of a performance appraisal except when the employee can show that the appraisal has directly adversely affected his/her employment status
e. Appointment, promotion or transfer without adverse impact to employee - The selection of an individual by the appointing authority to fill a position through appointment, promotion or transfer except when the employee can show that s/he had been adversely affected by cause of unlawful discrimination.
f. Matters not under jurisdiction of appointing authority - Any matter which is not within the jurisdiction or control of the appointing authority (County Administrator)
g. Internal Security and financial control practices - Internal Security practices and internal financial control practices established by the appointing authority or the governing authority; and
h. Non-Work related issues - Decisions, policies, practices, resolutions or ordinances made or passed by the governing authority or the appointing authority which are not work related and which do not contradict these policies.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FLOW CHART

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

EMPLOYEE AND IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR

IF THE EMPLOYEE IS NOT SATISFIED

FORMAL PROCEDURE

WRITTEN STATEMENT ABOUT GRIEVANCE AND DESIRED ACTION TO IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR AND UP THE CHAIN OF COMMAND TO INCLUDE DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR TO INCLUDE COPY TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

AFTER RECEIVING THE DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE IF NO RESOLUTION WITH DEPARTMENTAL CHAIN OF COMMAND

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

EMPLOYEE SENDS WRITTEN REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF GRIEVANCE TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR (IF THE DEPARTMENT HEAD IS NOT AN ELECTED OFFICIAL) AND A COPY TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR. IF THE DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR IS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL, THIS STEP IS SKIPPED AND PROCEED TO THE CIVIL SERVICE BOARD STEP.

IF THE GRIEVANCE REMAINS UNRESOLVED

CIVIL SERVICE BOARD

REQUEST TO PETITION THE CIVIL SERVICE BOARD IS MADE TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

CIVIL SERVICE BOARD

CONSTITUTES THE LAST STEP IN THE APPEALS PROCESS

NOTE: At any point in this chain of command procedure, the employee, supervisor, or department director may call upon the Human Resources Department to assist in a resolution of the problem.

- **HAZARDOUS WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

At times, normal county operations may be interrupted as a result of inclimate weather or other unforeseen emergencies. An interruption or suspension normal of business operations may involve closing early, delayed opening or, closing for the duration of normal business hours (8am – 5pm). The County Administrator, or his designee, shall be the individual responsible for making such a determination.

Until a determination has been made and communicated, when weather conditions make it unduly hazardous for an employee to report to his / her place of work or the employee arrives late or leaves early, the employee shall use available vacation time to cover time missed from work. If the employee doesn't have enough vacation time to cover the time missed from work, unpaid leave shall apply.
In the event of a closing, employees shall be compensated for the number of hours equal to the amount of time that normal business operations were interrupted, suspended or halted. Information regarding pay will be provided to the necessary individuals at the appropriate time.

When unable to report to work due to weather conditions, employees shall notify their supervisor as soon as possible. Employees who are on approved leave or vacation at the time of the closing are not eligible for additional time off or additional pay under this policy.

Certain Public Safety positions require mandatory coverage because they provide a critical County service such as Fire, Sheriff's and Public Works and other designated departments and individuals. The department manager may provide transportation to and from work to assure proper staffing of services.

- **IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE**

Hall County is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must complete the form. Employment eligibility must be verified prior to employment and no later than three (3) business days following an employee's hire date.

Employees with questions or seeking more information on immigration law issues are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

- **LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES IN THE WORKPLACE**

Employees with life-threatening illnesses, such as cancer, heart disease, and AIDS, often wish to continue their normal pursuits, including work, to the extent allowed by their condition. Hall County supports these endeavors as long as employees are able to meet acceptable performance standards. As in the case of other disabilities, Hall County will make reasonable accommodations in accordance with all legal requirements, to allow qualified employees with life-threatening illnesses to perform the essential functions of their jobs.

As long as these employees are able to meet acceptable performance standards, and medical evidence indicates that their conditions are not a threat to themselves or others, it is the policy of Hall County to ensure that such employees are afforded equal employment opportunities. At the same time, the County has an obligation to provide a safe work environment for all employees and visitors. Reasonable precautions will be taken to ensure that an employee's condition does not present a direct threat to the health and/or safety of themselves, or of other employees or visitors

Medical information on individual employees is treated confidentially. Hall County will take reasonable precautions to protect such information from inappropriate disclosure. Managers and other employees have a responsibility to respect and maintain the confidentiality of employee medical information. Anyone inappropriately disclosing such information is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees with questions or concerns about life-threatening illnesses are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department or Hall County's Employee Assistance Program for information and referral to appropriate services and resources.

- **MOBILE DEVICE POLICY**

Under no circumstances should employees place themselves or others at risk to fulfill business needs. Therefore, unless used in the normal course of performing the duties of one's position, Hall County does not promote the use of mobile phones and other mobile/handheld devices (such as iphone or BlackBerry devices), or other forms of multi-tasking, such as eating, taking notes or using a pager, while operating a vehicle.

Employees whose job responsibilities include driving, and who use mobile devices for business purposes, are expected to refrain from using them while driving unless using a hands free device.

Employees should plan calls to allow placement either prior to driving or while on rest breaks. Employees should never email or send text or instant messages while driving. Employees should pull off the road and safely stop their vehicle before accepting calls, texting or reviewing/sending emails. If accepting a call while driving is unavoidable, such as in an emergency situation, and pulling over is not an option, employees are expected to keep the call short and use a hands-free device so that their eyes remain focused on the road and both hands remain on the steering wheel at all time. It is your responsibility to know the laws and abide by them. Employees will be solely responsible for any traffic violations resulting from the use of a phone/handheld device while driving.

Maintain proper etiquette, being mindful of those around you, when using your mobile device. Mobile phone conversations can be loud even when you think you are being quiet. Also be aware that conversations over mobile phones are not necessarily confidential; it is possible that outside parties could tap into those conversations. If you need to communicate about a highly confidential matter, please try to use a more secure method of communication. When choosing a ring tone, be aware that some ring tones can be offensive or inappropriate for use in the workplace. If you leave your mobile device unattended at work, please turn off the ringer so that it does not disrupt others.

Some mobile devices contain cameras. If cameras are used in the workplace, employees must be mindful of their obligation to maintain the confidentiality of Hall County information and avoid photographing confidential information or, if a picture is necessary for work-related purposes, such picture must be destroyed as soon as possible after use so as not to put such information at risk.

- **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

An employee may hold a job with another organization as long as he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities with Hall County. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to Hall County's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

If Hall County determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of Hall County as they are modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain with Hall County. Outside employment will present a conflict of interest if it has an adverse impact on Hall County.

County employees are strictly prohibited from pursuing outside business activity on County time. Secondary income sources such as mailing services, etc., are not to interfere with primary business hours. Government time or property is not to be used for personal gain of any kind, in order to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

- **OVERTIME**

When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours, employees may be scheduled to work overtime hours. When possible, advance notification of these mandatory assignments will be provided. All overtime work must receive the supervisor's prior authorization. Overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as practical to all employees qualified to perform the required work. Hall County complies with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in administering overtime.

Overtime compensation is paid to all nonexempt employees in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. Overtime pay is based on actual hours worked. Time off on sick leave, vacation leave, or any leave of absence will not be considered hours worked for purposes of performing overtime calculations.

- **PAYROLL**

The Payroll Team works hard to ensure that you are paid correctly. To help us, and you, please check your pay information, each pay day, to ensure you have been paid correctly and to prevent errors from going undetected over an extended period of time. Some of the items you should look at would include your hours and benefit deductions.

1) PAYDAY

All employees are paid biweekly on every other Friday. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period.

Hall County pays its employees using direct deposit and in the majority of cases does not issue “live” checks. Employees will receive an itemized statement of wages when Hall County makes direct deposits.

2) PAY DEDUCTIONS

The law requires that Hall County make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes. Hall County also must deduct Social Security taxes on each employee's earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security "wage base." Hall County matches the amount of Social Security taxes paid by each employee.

Hall County offers programs and benefits beyond those required by law. Eligible employees may voluntarily authorize deductions from their paychecks to cover the costs of participation in these programs.

3) Garnishments

If you find yourself in a situation whereby your wages have been garnished by a court order or other legal entity, please understand that the County is required by law to honor garnishments, including child support. Given this, until notified to stop a garnishment, or unless otherwise required by law, we will deduct from your wages amounts ordered to be garnished and you will be notified by the governing agency when this is going to occur.

4) Payroll Advances

Payroll advances are difficult to manage and ultimately put employees in a state of "being behind," from which it is hard to recover. With that in mind, advances or loans on unearned wages or salaries are not provided.

If you believe there has been an error on your pay, immediately notify your manager or Payroll. We will make every attempt to correct verified errors right away and no later than your next paycheck, within the guidelines of state and federal laws where applicable. If you have questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, please contact Payroll.

- **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

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1) SIXTH MONTH REVIEW
Upon completion of six months of service, employees in the working test period may be given a performance evaluation.

2) ANNUAL REVIEW
All regular and part-time employees shall receive an annual performance review. For employees on leave on their review date, the review may be extended by the length of the leave. Generally, extending the review period should only occur if the leave exceeds a period of (3) three months.

All wage increases must be authorized by the department director, the Director of Human Resources and the County Administrator or authorized elected department head. Increases are subject to the availability of funds.

- **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

First impressions are an important part of the assessment customers, business associates, and potential employees make of our Employees, and the County's, quality and worthiness. Ensuring our first impression conveys the appropriate County image is the foundation of our dress and appearance policy.

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image Hall County presents to customers and visitors. While we respect each and every persons right to personal expression, the county reserves the right to expect that tattoos, body piercings and body modification do not negatively affect the county's image and reputation. As a result, staff who have any of the above may be required to remove piercings or body modifiers, cover tattoos that do not conflict with religious beliefs or other infringements on an individual's civil liberties.

The County Administrator has authorized the implementation of a business casual policy for office staff of the Hall County Government. The expectation of this policy is that each employee looks appropriate for their job and their expected duties and meetings for the day. Casual business attire encompasses many looks. However, for purposes of this policy, casual business attire means clothing that allows employees to feel comfortable at work, yet is appropriate for a professional office environment. Casual business attire includes, but is not limited to:

1) STANDARD FOR MEN
   - Pants or slacks in khaki, twill, corduroy, gabardine, wool blends, and flannel.
   - Collared and non-collared shirts with buttons, including oxford cloth button down, golf or polo shirts, solid, stripes, small checks, and plaids.
   - Hall County Government collared or non-collared embroidered logo shirts.
   - Casual jackets, pullover sweaters, cardigan sweaters, woven or knit vests.
   - Dress or casual business shoes with thin or medium leather or rubber soles with socks. (no sandals of any type)
   - Beards, mustaches and other facial hair is expected to be in a neatly maintained in a well groomed manner
   - <u>Exception:</u> It is expected that all staff will dress appropriately for meetings that may require more professional attire including but not limited to meetings of the County Commission

2) STANDARD FOR WOMEN
   - Pants (solid or subtle pattern) with a fitted waistline in cotton, corduroy, khaki, wools, and silks
   - Skirts at an appropriate length
   - Shirts, blouses, shells, and sweaters
   - Hall County Government collared or non-collared embroidered logo shirts.
   - Dresses and jumpers at an appropriate length
   - Casual jackets, pullover sweaters, cardigan sweaters, woven or knit vests.
   - <u>Exception:</u> It is expected that all staff will dress appropriately for meetings that may require more professional attire including but not limited to meetings of the County Commission.

3) UNACCEPTABLE ATTIRE

The following items will not be acceptable during working hours:

- Baseball style and other non-professional hats.
- Warm-up suits, sweat-suits, wind suits or any other workout attire
- Shorts, cut-offs
- Spandex (including lycra, leggings, jeggings and tights unless covered by a skirt or blouse that extends to the end of the finger tips when arms are extended full length toward the knee)
- Lounge wear
- T-shirts
- Visible spaghetti straps, halters or tank tops.
- Bare midriffs, sheer clothing or clothing that is otherwise revealing, distracting, or provocative
- Flip-flops, tennis shoes, crocs
- Any clothing that is not neat, clean and free from holes, rips or tears
- Blouses, dresses or shirts that show exposed areas of the stomach, chest, sides or back; all shirts must reach the waist and cover the shoulders

Special attire exceptions to the dress code policy will be allowed when job necessitates or health conditions require modifications with the appropriate supervisor approval.

- **PERSONAL DATA CHANGES / EMPLOYEE RECORDS**

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1) PERSONAL DATA
It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify Hall County of any changes in personal data. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. If any personal data has changed, notify the Human Resources Department.

2) PERSONNEL TRANSACTIONS & RECORDS
All appointments, separations and other personnel transactions shall be made on Request for Personnel Action forms. A separate file shall be prepared and maintained for each employee and it shall contain the original or copy of all pertinent documents. Permanent files for all County employees shall be kept in the Human Resources Department.

Human Resources shall maintain the primary personnel files on each County Employee subject to these rules. Each department is encouraged to maintain files on each employee.

- **PROBATIONARY / WORKING TEST PERIOD**

All newly hired employees and employees appointed, transferred or promoted to a position in the County's classified Civil Service system shall be required to satisfactorily complete the working test

period of twelve (12) months from appointment. The working test period, or probationary period, shall be considered an integral part of the selection process.

1) PROMOTION CONSIDERED A NEW WORKING TEST PERIOD.
A promoted employee will be under a working test period for the first twelve months on the new job. If it is determined that the employee is unsuitable for the position the department director may return the employee to the position he/she previously occupied if it is vacant. If not vacant, the department director or designee may attempt to place the employee in a comparable position for which the employee meets the requirements. Returning a working test employee to his/her previous classification must be done during the working test period and is not appealable to the Civil Service Board.

2) EXTENSIONS
The probationary/working test period may be extended with the recommendation of the department director and approval by the Human Resource Director. The department director is responsible for requesting the extension at least four (4) weeks prior to the end of the working test period. Working test extensions shall be considered only when extenuating circumstances exist or it is believed that an extension will result in improved job performance.

3) RIGHTS
During the working test period, a newly hired employee does not have the right to expect continued employment in his/her position and employment can be terminated at any time without the right of appeal. Probationary employees are not covered by progressive discipline or due process procedures. With the exception of appeal if demoted from the position, a promoted employee in a working test period in the new position retains the same employment status and protection he/she had in the position from which he/she was promoted.

4) PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS DURING WORKING TEST/PROBATIONARY PERIODS
A performance appraisal will be performed for probationary/working test employees at the end of six (6) months and not less than fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the end of the probationary/working test period. A performance appraisal report must be completed and accepted before allowing a probationary employee to attain regular status.

5) ACTIVE WORK STATUS
Only time in active work status shall be counted toward completion of the probationary/working test period. An employee in a probationary/working test period who is absent on leave for a period of more than two weeks, will have the amount of time he/she was absent added back onto the probationary/working test period. Each employee must be actively at work on the day their probationary period ends in order to be considered on regular status. In the case where they are not at work on that date, they will be considered regular status the day they return to work if the absence is less than two (2) weeks in duration.

6) DEMOTION
A reduction of a regular or working test employee to a position of a lower class is a demotion. A lower class means a class having a lower maximum salary than that of the class in which the individual is presently employed. A demotion may be made for cause or may be made on a voluntary or involuntary

basis, provided the employee meets the qualifications for the position to which s/he is being demoted. An employee who is demoted shall retain the same employment status in the lower position that he/she had in the higher, except that if the demotion is to the position from which the employee was promoted, the employment status will be that of the original position. In the event of an involuntary demotion, the department head must give notification to the employee being demoted of the action being taken, describe the action causing the demotion and give reason for the demotion.

An employee who is reclassified by demotion shall have his/her salary reduced. A demotion of one grade results in a 5% reduction; a demotion of two or more grades results in a reduction of 10% or more (depending on the number of pay grades involved). A newly reduced rate of pay is not to exceed the maximum of the new class. Exceptions to this provision must be approved by the Human Resources Director.

A) DEMOTION FOR CAUSE
Demotion for cause is a demotion based on unfitness to perform assigned duties, negligence or inefficiency in performing duties, or for misconduct, insubordination or other justifiable causes.

B) VOLUNTARY DEMOTION
Voluntary demotion is a demotion based on an employee's request to be assigned to a position of a lower class.

C) DEMOTION THROUGH TRANSFER
An employee may apply for a position that has a lower pay grade than his/her current position. In these cases, the hiring department head may request to the Human Resources Department that the employee not receive a decrease in pay. Such requests require the approval of the County Administrator.

D) Demotions should be reviewed by the Human Resources Director or designee.

- **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE**

The purpose of this policy is to state Hall County's position on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. Hall County is committed to the use of progressive discipline when possible.

1) STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
The level of discipline used, such as reprimand, suspension or termination, will be determined by the frequency and/or severity of the violation and other circumstances and instances in the employee's record. The disciplinary action taken is subject to management's discretion. Management also reserves the right to grant a lesser penalty for any particular case or violation. Such action does not imply cancellation of a rule, but is to be interpreted as recognition of an unusual or particular circumstance. However, there are egregious acts of misconduct that may justify termination without progressive discipline.

2) SUSPENSION FROM DUTY WITH PAY AND WITHOUT PREJUDICE

In order to stabilize a volatile situation or to take time to investigate a problem situation, a department head may, at any time, suspend an employee with pay and without prejudice pending an investigation. The department head should confer with the Director of Human Resources before action is taken, if possible, but in all cases will notify the Director of Human Resources as soon as possible.

3) SUSPENSION WITHOUT PAY

After due investigation of the conduct of any County employee the department head may, at his/her discretion, suspend, without pay, said employee for a period not to exceed fifteen (15) calendar days. An employee being suspended will be provided with a written notice of suspension, and shall be advised of his/her right of appeal by his/her supervisor.

4) STEPS OF PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

A) VERBAL WARNING

Supervisor should document that the verbal warning has occurred. Documentation should include explanation of the infraction or performance problem, other counseling measures that have previously been attempted, and details of the verbal warning.

B) WRITTEN WARNING

Supervisor should provide to the employee a written warning which outlines the infraction or performance problem, previously attempted corrective measures, which includes the verbal warning, the effect the infraction has upon the operations of the department, and future corrective measures leading up to the possibility of termination should the problem continue. The supervisor should maintain a copy of the written warning and maintain accurate documentation supporting this step of the disciplinary process.

C) SUSPENSION

May be paid or unpaid. In the event of an unpaid suspension, employees may not substitute vacation or sick pay in lieu of the lost regular pay due to the suspension. Additionally, an employee who is suspended may not work in any capacity for Hall County during the suspension period. If the performance problem has continued regardless of previous counseling measures including written warning, the supervisor may consider suspension as a corrective measure prior to termination. The supervisor should consult with Human Resources in determining the necessity, length of time of the suspension, and whether paid or unpaid. The supervisor should provide accurate documentation supporting the need for suspension. The supervisor may request that a representative from Human Resources attends the meeting with the supervisor and employee regarding the suspension.

D) PRE-TERMINATION HEARING PROCEDURE:

a. Determine precise reason for termination;
b. Review previous documentation supporting previous counseling and warnings relevant to the reason for termination;

c. Review the case with Director of Human Resources and when appropriate, the County Administrator.

E) TERMINATION HEARING

a. Advise employee that you intend to take action up to and including termination, citing reasons for termination.
b. Employee is given opportunity to respond to supervisor's reasons for dismissal prior to being discharged.
c. Consider Employee's response.
d. If appropriate, proceed with termination; if not, proceed with warning or other disciplinary action.
e. Advise employee of appeal rights.

F) NOTICE OF TERMINATION

The Department Director shall give notice in writing to the employee stating causes for dismissal. Prior to dismissal, the employee has been advised in writing of the County's intention to terminate employment and for what reasons. The employee is given an opportunity to respond, and is informed of appeal rights.

Some offenses may be so egregious that the formal steps of progressive discipline may be negated in lieu of immediate dismissal. Examples of egregious offenses may include but are not limited to: physical violence towards another employee, theft of county funds or property, workplace harassment, etc.

Supervisors should consult their Department Director before beginning the Progressive Discipline Process.

- **SAFETY**

To assist in providing a safe and healthful work environment for employees, customers, and visitors, Hall County has established a workplace safety program. This program is a top priority for Hall County. The Human Resources Department has responsibility for implementing, administering, monitoring, and evaluating the safety program. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

Hall County provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, memos, or other written communications.

Employees and supervisors receive periodic workplace safety training. The training covers potential safety and health hazards and safe work practices and procedures to eliminate or minimize hazards.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, such as performing work in an unsafe manner or failure to use required safety equipment; who cause hazardous or dangerous situations for employees, co-workers or the general

public, or who fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

In addition to following and abiding by all traffic regulations, the use of seat belts is required by the driver and passengers in any vehicle (personal, county or rental) while in the course of conducting County business. Law enforcement officials may be exempt from this policy as it relates to passengers when it is impossible to secure a passenger. Any accidents or damage to any vehicle shall be immediately reported to the appropriate jurisdictional authority and immediate supervisor.

One of the basic rules of safe vehicle operation is that the operator be familiar with both the vehicle and its capabilities. The day to day condition of that vehicle is of paramount importance for safe operation, with the final responsibility for care resting on the employee who will operate the vehicle.

The proper working order of county vehicles is a fundamental principle in operating the vehicle in a safe manner. Proper working order of the following should be reported when observed to be deficient or questionable.

A check / inspection of the following should completed on a periodic basis:

1. Proper inflation and condition of tires;

2. Brakes, lights, windshield wipers and washers, horn, emergency equipment, and other electrical equipment;
3. Damage to exterior and interior of the vehicle;

4. Mechanical defects. Certain conditions such as a defective exhaust, steering mechanism irregularities, alignment, or other mechanical defects can only be discovered after the vehicle is operational; and

5. These conditions, or any of the above not readily corrected shall be immediately reported to the shift supervisor on duty and a service request filed. An employee shall not operate an unsafe vehicle.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should immediately notify the Human Resources Department or the appropriate supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefits procedures.

A Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) shall be completed by Human Resources on all authorized drivers on an annual basis. The report will then be reviewed to determine if the employee (or applicant in the case of new hires) has maintained an acceptable driving record.

- **SALARY ADMINISTRATION**

The salary administration program at Hall County was created to achieve consistent pay practices, comply with federal and state laws, mirror our commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity, and offer competitive salaries within our labor market. Compensation for every position is determined by several factors, including job analysis and evaluation, the essential duties and responsibilities of the job, and salary survey data on pay practices of other employers. Hall County periodically reviews its salary administration program and restructures it as necessary. Merit-based pay adjustments may be awarded in conjunction with superior employee performance documented by the performance evaluation process.

The Compensation Plan shall provide salary schedules for each classification in the system. Salaries should be consistent between jobs with similar functions as outlined in the Classification Plan. Salary schedules shall include minimum and maximum rates of pay for each class. In establishing salary schedules, consideration shall be given to rates of pay for comparable services in other public and private employers; living costs; benefits provided to employees; the County's financial condition and policies; and other relevant factors.

The Compensation Plan shall constitute the official compensation schedule for positions under the system. Uniform regulations supplementing these rules shall provide for the administration of the plan. The regulations shall make provisions for salary advancement, reductions, and adjustment affecting employees at the time of revision or amendment of the Compensation Plan.
The Compensation Plan shall include pay tables to identify the monetary value for each class in the classified system. Department Directors have the authority to hire employees at a rate between the minimum and midpoint of the assigned grade for the classification. Appointments above the midpoint require the recommendation of the Department Director and approval from the Director of Human Resources.

Longevity salary advancements may be granted to an employee whose pay has exceeded the maximum regular salary for his/her class of positions upon completion of two (2) years of additional service from the date of the employee's last performance increase. Such employees become eligible for a longevity salary advancement provided the employee's work performance rating is at or above 3.5 for the two (2) year period.

1) PROMOTION
Promotion is the advancement of an employee from a job within one class to a job in another class having a higher salary range. Upon promotion, an employee will receive a five (5) percent increase for one grade promotion and a ten (10) percent increase for two or more grades, or to the minimum of the new grade, whichever is more, not to exceed the maximum pay for the new pay grade. At times, exceptions to the 10% increase may be made due to market conditions, experience levels and comparable salaries to those employees occupying the same position. Upon the date of promotion, an

employee begins a new working test period. The next salary review date will be one year from the date of promotion and every year thereafter. If the promotion and annual review dates are within thirty (30) days of each other, the employee will receive both annual review increase and the appropriate promotion increase.

2) DEMOTION

An employee who is reclassified by demotion shall have his/her salary reduced in accordance with the Demotion Policy. A demotion of one grade results in a 5% reduction; a demotion of two or more grades results in a reduction of 10% or more (depending on the number of pay grades involved). A newly reduced rate of pay is not to exceed the maximum of the new class. Exceptions to this provision must be approved by the County Administrator.

3) ACTING CAPACITY AND TEMPORARY PAY

A) TEMPORARY VACANCY

A temporarily vacant position is an authorized position in the current year's budget that has been temporarily vacated due to termination, disability, or leave-of-absence, and is required to be staffed by a full-time regular employee.

B) ACTING CAPACITY

The employee working in an acting capacity shall be expected to fully perform all the normally assigned duties of the position on a temporary basis until the incumbent returns to their assigned position or a full-time replacement is appointed.

C) DURATION OF ACTING CAPACITY ASSIGNMENT

An employee required to temporarily perform in a higher level job classification and perform the actual duties normally assigned to the duly authorized vacant position for a period of 30 consecutive working days (13 shifts for firefighters) or more, may be eligible for a temporary pay increase.

D) ACTING CAPACITY PAY

The amount of the temporary pay increase, if authorized, will be no less than 2.5% or the minimum of the salary range of the position being filled, whichever results in the higher wage. At the sole discretion of the County Administrator, the temporary pay may be set at a higher level. Upon conclusion of the acting capacity or interim period, the employee's rate of pay will be returned to the amount prior to appointment.

E) AUTHORIZATION

A personnel action form shall be completed and approved by the Department Director or authorized elected official and the Human Resources Director on any employee placed in an acting capacity; and the same procedure shall be followed upon discontinuation of that employee's functioning in this status. The employee serving in an acting capacity will be provided a copy of the personnel action form authorizing the additional pay.

F) APPEAL PROCEDURE
An employee who believes s/he is serving in an acting capacity and should be receiving additional compensation shall notify in writing his/her immediate supervisor. If not satisfied with the decision of the supervisor, the employee may appeal the decision by following the chain of command up to and including appealing to the Civil Service Board. The Board's decision on this matter is final. Such a written notice must be received within the first three months of the assignment in question.

4) COMPENSATION PLAN REVIEW
A review of the Compensation Plan shall be done by the Human Resources Department at least once every two years. A review of the Compensation Plan of Hall County should take into consideration such factors as:

- the competitiveness of Hall County wages versus the labor market
- living costs and
- such others as may be considered relevant.

5) FINAL COMPENSATION APPROVAL AUTHORITY
Through the budgetary process the Board of Commissioners shall have final authority in all matters concerning the Compensation Plan.

- **SEPARATION FROM SERVICE**

An employee may be separated from the service of Hall County by any of the following methods:

1) RESIGNATION
Generally, an employee shall submit to his/her supervisor written notice of voluntary resignation at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the date of resignation. Immediately upon receipt of such notice of resignation the supervisor shall forward the same to the department director or designee and then to the Human Resources Department. Failure to comply with this regulation shall be entered on the service record of the employee and may result in a denial of re-employment. Hall County does not have an obligation to honor a request to rescind a resignation once it has been accepted.

2) ABANDONMENT OF JOB
An employee who is absent from work for three (3) consecutive working days without calling in to report the absence will be considered to have voluntarily abandoned his/her job.

3) LAYOFF/REDUCTION IN FORCE
Any involuntary separation not related to an employee's performance or conduct shall constitute a layoff or reduction in force. The duties previously performed by any laid-off employee may be reassigned to another employee holding a position in the appropriate job class. When a layoff is

necessary, department directors shall provide the number and the names of the employees to be laid-off to the Director of Human Resources, to ensure that such action is carried out orderly and equitably.

A) REASONS FOR LAYOFF/REDUCTION IN FORCE

The County reserves the right to have a reduction in force due to:

- Economic reasons – shortage of funds, materials or work;
- Abolishment of a position;
- Material changes in the duties of a job or the organization; and/or
- Any other related reason that does not reflect dissatisfaction with the service of the employee.

B) ORDER OF LAYOFF

Should it become necessary to reduce the number of employees, the department director shall furnish to the Director of Human Resources the names and job titles of the employees to be laid-off and the order in which such layoff shall be affected. Such employees shall be laid-off on the basis of length of service with the County, length of service in class, and performance appraisals for the last three (3) years.

C) SPECIAL CASES

There may be cases when a department director might determine that the retention of a certain employee is essential to the efficient and effective operation of the department because the employee possesses special skills or abilities. A director wishing to retain an employee in preference to another shall submit a written request to the Human Resources Director. Such notification shall set forth in detail the specific skills and abilities possessed by the employee to be retained and the reason why said employee is essential to the effective operation of the department.

D) NOTICE OF LAYOFF TO EMPLOYEES

Employees to be laid-off shall be notified in writing by the department director at least fourteen (14) days prior to the effective date of the layoff. As an alternative, the employee may be laid-off without notice of 14 days if separation pay is provided.

E) DEMOTION IN LIEU OF LAYOFF

Any regular employee scheduled to be laid-off shall have the right to be demoted to a lower classification provided that a vacancy exists and such employee is qualified to fill the position in the lower classification.

4) LOSS OF REQUIRED CERTIFICATION OR LICENSE

Employees must maintain required licenses and certification and failure to do so may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

5) RETIREMENT

The retirement of an employee shall consist of the voluntary separation of an employee who has met the requirements under the provisions of the applicable pension plan.

6) DEATH

Separation shall be effective as of the date of the death of the employee. All compensation due to such employee as of the effective date of separation shall be paid first to the surviving legal spouse of such employee. If there is no legal spouse, payment will go to the beneficiary as designated in the applicable executed documents, or lacking such documents, to the estate of the employee as may be determined by law.

7) TERMINATION

Once the recommendation to terminate an employee is made, the department director prepares all separation documents. These documents must be completed and reviewed by the Human Resources Director and the Department Director, preferably no later than the effective date of the termination or as soon as possible thereafter.

A) PRE-TERMINATION HEARING PROCEDURES:

a. Determine the precise reason for termination
b. Review previous documentation of warnings and employee counseling relevant to the reason for termination.
c. Review the case with the Director of Human Resources and when appropriate, the County Administrator.
d. Pre-Termination Hearing:
    - Advise the employee in writing that you intend to terminate him/her; however, the employee must have the opportunity to respond to the supervisor's reasons for dismissal prior to being discharged.
    - Consider the employee's response
    - Notify the employee of a decision
    - Advise the employee in writing of the decision and of appeal rights.

    Note: The above mentioned procedure is also used in cases of suspension without pay.

B) TERMINATION PROCEDURES FOR JOB ABANDONMENT:

a. Review the case with the Director of Human Resources and, when appropriate, the County Administrator

b. Send a letter advising the employee that you intend to proceed with termination unless a response is received from him/her within five (5) days after sending the letter

c. If the employee responds, advise him/her of your intention to terminate employment and give him/her the opportunity to respond.

d. If no response is received within five (5) days after the initial letter, follow up with letter of termination. Advise the employee of appeal rights.

8) RETURN OF PROPERTY

Employees must return all Hall County property immediately upon request or upon termination of employment. Where permitted by applicable laws, Hall County may withhold from the final paycheck the cost of any items that are not returned when required. Hall County may also take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

- **SMOKING**

As of July 1, 2005, the Georgia Smokefree Air Act became law. The act prohibits smoking in most public places.

In keeping with Hall County's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoking, use of smokeless tobacco, cannibus oil, e-cigs, vapor cigarettes and hookah pipes are prohibited throughout the workplace including: county vehicles, common work areas, conference and meeting rooms, private offices, hallways, cafeterias, employee lounges, stairs, restrooms and all other enclosed facilities. In some instances, where designated, facilities and properties may be completely smoke free. Additionally, smoking, use of smokeless tobacco and use of e-cigs or vapor cigarettes is not permitted in any county vehicle. This policy applies equally to all employees, customers, and visitors. All smoking is confined to designated areas.

- **SOLICITATION**

In an effort to ensure a productive and harmonious work environment, persons not employed by Hall County may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose.

Hall County recognizes that employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace. Therefore, employees are:

- Prohibited from soliciting funds for any purpose from the public or from other County employees while on duty or during work hours, except such charitable causes as are approved in advance by the County Administrator or authorized elected official.
- Employees are also prohibited from soliciting funds from the public at any time while wearing a County uniform except such causes specifically approved in advance by the County Administrator or authorized elected official.

In addition, the posting of written solicitations on company bulletin boards or through email announcements or any other official County communications process, is prohibited. Bulletin boards and emails are reserved for official organization communications on such items as:

- Employee announcements
- Internal memoranda

- Job openings
- Organization announcements
- Payday notice
- Workers' compensation insurance information
- State disability insurance/unemployment insurance information

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- **TIMEKEEPING**

Supervisors will establish and communicate required work schedules for non-exempt (hourly) employees. Any change to the approved work schedule must be made by the supervisor.

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every non-exempt employee. Federal and state laws require Hall County to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Non-exempt employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work, as well as the beginning and ending time of each meal period. Employees may not record time for another employee. They should also record the beginning and ending time of any split shift or departure from work for personal reasons. Overtime work must always be approved before it is performed.
Shift-swapping is the practice of trading work shifts. Hall County does not allow time- or shift-swapping between employees unless it is previously authorized by all shift supervisors involved. Time- or shift-swaps without authorization are grounds for disciplinary action.

No employee shall in any way knowingly participate in falsifying records including but not limited to payroll, purchasing, payment approval, receiving or inventory records. Falsification of records may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

- **USE OF COUNTY EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES**

One of the most visible representations of Hall County is that vehicles that are operated by county staff are done so in a safe and courteous manner. Employees who are entrusted with operation of a county vehicle in the furtherance of their duties are a direct reflection on all employees of the county. The safety of all individuals on the roadway shall be a primary concern for all employees. Employees are responsible for the appearance and cleanliness of the vehicle, both interior and exterior. Employees are responsible for ensuring the vehicle is properly serviced and maintained mechanically. Only personnel authorized by Hall County shall operate a County vehicle.

In the event that a County owned vehicle is used in the course of employment and is also available for the employee's personal use in the course of performing the duties and functions of the job, that employee, together with all passengers who occupy the vehicle during the use for any purpose are

required to use seat belts at all times when the vehicle is in motion. Law enforcement officials may be exempt from this policy as it relates to passengers when it is impossible to secure a passenger.
Personnel will exercise good judgment in utilizing their assigned vehicle and shall not drive or use their vehicle so as to cause unfavorable comment or bring discredit upon the county.

Under no circumstances will an employee be under the influence of any substance (alcohol or drugs) which may impair their driving ability while operating a county vehicle.

While driving the vehicle to and from work, individuals may stop to conduct personal business only when such use is incidental in nature and on a limited basis. Such stops are for the purpose of conducting personal business that would otherwise cause an undue hardship on the individual if he or she had to first obtain their private automobile. Some examples are listed below. This list is not all inclusive.

a. Picking up or dropping off at a laundry or dry cleaners.
a. Banking business.
b. Brief stops at a grocery store.
c. Attending a medical appointment.

An Accident/Incident is an event that may cause injury to another party and/or a County employee or damage to that party's property and/or Hall County's property. These accident/incidents can result in claims filed against Hall County. They may also result in the County filing a claim against the responsible party.

An accident/incident may involve your personal vehicle while on County business in which the same steps below will apply.

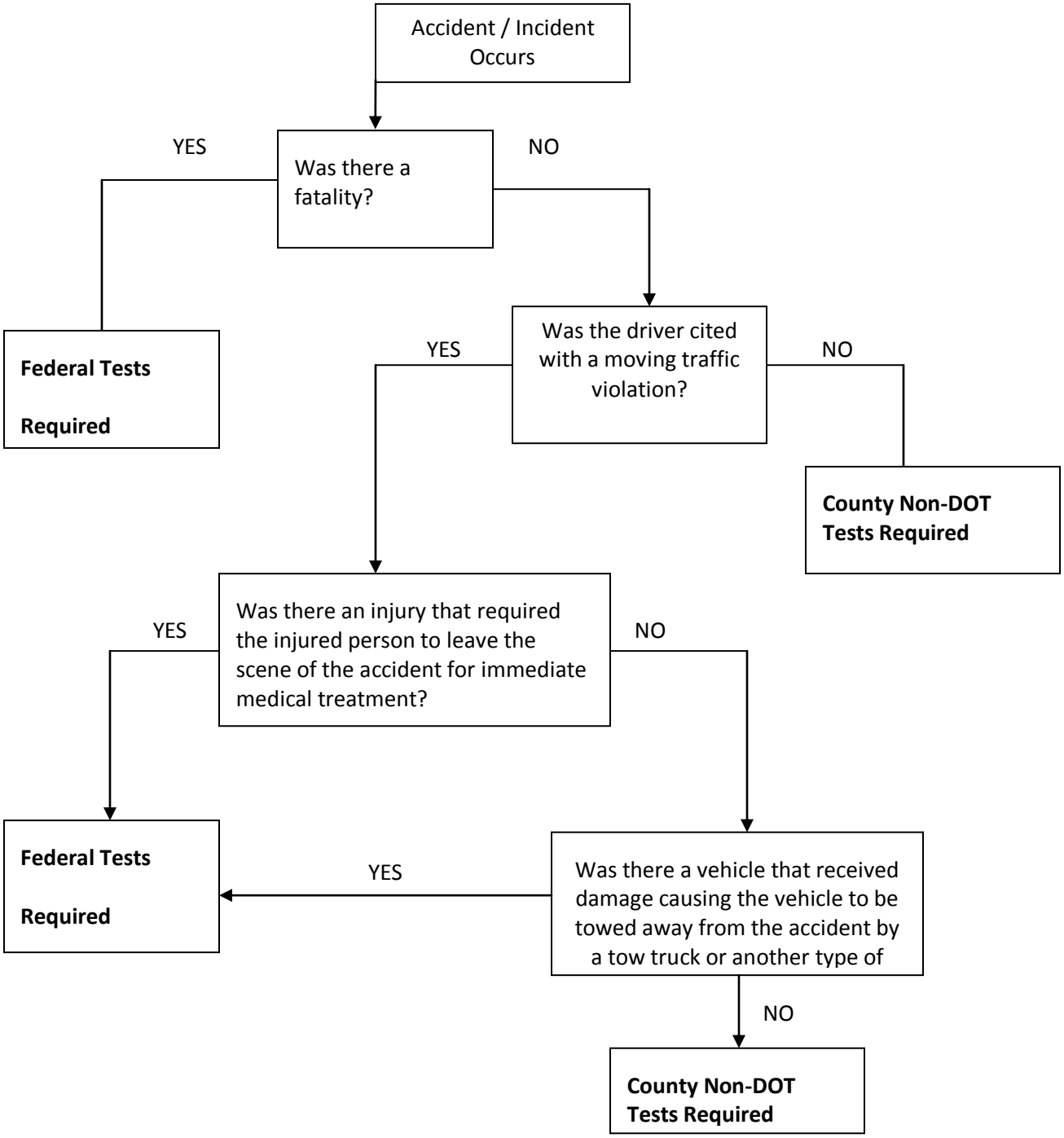
The following steps will be taken if / when an incident / accident occurs:

1. Call 911 and inform dispatch that you are a County employee and that you were involved in an accident.
2. Call the Fleet Maintenance Manager so he can come to the scene. He will ensure that proper protocol is observed in the handling of any resources needed for safety & investigation. Call your immediate supervisor and or Department Director as soon as possible.
3. Do not leave the scene of the accident before a County representative arrives and directs you to leave. Commercial Drivers License (CDL) drivers will not leave scene until released by law enforcement.
4. Do not accept or deny liability or make any statements that may imply the acceptance or denial of liability. Do not make any promises to the other party such as "the County will take care of you." If questions arise on scene regarding liability, refer them to the County Loss Control Specialist.
5. Complete an incident report form fully describing how the incident happened. Use back of form for additional comments; be sure to list witnesses if any. All claim documents should be forwarded to Human Resources.
6. The employee involved should be taken immediately after incident / accident to Hall County Clinic for a drug screen. If after hours, you may utilize the ER for screen only.
   **If employee is injured, refer to the Workers Comp Panel of Physicians for treatment options*. *

Post-Accident Drug & Alcohol Tests:
Post-accident drug screens & breath alcohol tests are ***mandatory*** regardless of who was at fault or vehicle driven (i.e., County vehicle or personal vehicle for County business). Your supervisor will ensure all post-accident drug & alcohol tests are performed.

CDL Drivers (operating CDL equipment at time of accident/incident): Supervisors will ensure CDL drivers are properly tested under the appropriate drug & alcohol testing program. (Refer to Post Accident Decision Tree flowchart)

POST ACCIDENT DECISION TREE
Federal DOT Drug & Alcohol Testing For CDL Drivers



- **VOTING**

Employees that provide reasonable notice may have two (2) hours to vote in any election for which they are qualified to vote. If the hours of work commence at least two (2) hours after the opening of the polls or end at least two (2) hours prior to the closing of the polls, however, the time off for voting is not available. (Georgia Code 21-2-404)

- **WORKPLACE SEARCHES**

The County reserves the right to search an employee's possessions kept in County offices, vehicles, desks, or lockers for appropriate reasons. Employees shall have no right of privacy with respect to County facilities, equipment e-mails and other communications. Reasons may include, but are not limited to, searches for:

- County documents
- Missing or stolen articles
- Alcohol or drugs
- Firearms or weapons.

A department director, the County Administrator, the Assistant County Administrator (or designee) may approve such a search when reasonable suspicion or investigatory procedure warrants.

It is the intent of Hall County to assign personal workspace to each of its employees. Employees are permitted to bring items of a personal nature to be left in their work spaces provided the items do not interfere with the employee's work performance or do not create a hostile or offensive work environment for other employees.

The workspace of employees remains the property of Hall County and therefore is subject to search by Human Resources, officers and leaders of the County if a reasonable cause exists to do so. The search will be conducted with the employee and a member of Human Resources present. Hall County will make its searches of workspaces non-discriminatory and as non-intrusive as possible. Reasonable cause includes, but is not limited to suspicion of misuse of drugs or alcohol, weapons, theft, safety violations, other inappropriate materials, or any other bona fide business reasons.
Employees are expected to cooperate with property searches. If an employee refuses to cooperate, that employee will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

Hall County is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. Given the increasing violence in society in general, Hall County has adopted the following guidelines to deal with intimidation, harassment, or other threats of violence that may occur during business hours or on its premises.

All regular and temporary employees, elected officials, members of the public and guests, should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that may be dangerous to others.

The County specifically prohibits the possession of weapons by any employee while on County property unless your job requires that you carry a weapon in the normal course of business. Except where permitted by law (OCGA sec. 16-11-135 authorizes an individual to transport a firearm in their vehicle on public or private property so long as it is secured in a locked area within the vehicle and the person has a concealed carry license; OCGA sec. 16-11-127 contains general prohibitions on carrying weapons by a licensed holder), this ban includes keeping or transporting a weapon in a vehicle in a parking area, whether public or private. Non-sworn employees are also prohibited from carrying a weapon while performing services within the county.

Weapons include firearms, knives, propellants, explosives, and other items with the potential to inflict harm. Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken against any employee who violates this policy.

Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a customer, or a member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods, will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes all acts of harassment, including harassment that is based on an individual's sex, race, age, or any characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

All threats of or actual violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to your immediate supervisor or any other member of management. This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by customers, vendors, inmates, solicitors, or other members of the public. When reporting a threat of violence, you should be as specific and detailed as possible.

All suspicious individuals or activities should also be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor. Do not place yourself in peril. If you see or hear a commotion or disturbance near your workstation, do not try to intercede or see what is happening.

Hall County will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of or actual violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as

much as is practical. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, Hall County may suspend employees, either with or without pay, pending investigation.

Anyone responsible for violence, or threats of violence, or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Hall County encourages employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisors or the Human Resources Department before the situation escalates into potential violence. Hall County is eager to assist in the resolution of employee disputes, and will not discipline employees for raising such concerns.

SECTION 5: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- **BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY and BENEFITS ELECTIONS**

Regular full-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work (32) hours or more in a week, on a regular basis, are eligible for coverage.

Benefits are effective the first of the month following thirty (30) days of employment. New employees have thirty-one (31) days from their date of hire to enroll. If you don't enroll within the (31) days, you may not enroll until the next open enrollment or you experience a family status change. Per the IRS Section 125 Rules, a qualifying family status change can be one of the following:

- change in legal marital status due to marriage, death of a spouse, divorce, annulment or legal separation;
- change in number of Dependents due to birth, adoption, placement for adoption, or death of a Dependent;
- change in employment status of Employee, spouse or Dependent due to termination or start of employment, strike, lockout, beginning or end of unpaid leave of absence, including under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), or change in worksite;
- change in employment status of Employee, spouse or Dependent resulting in eligibility or ineligibility for coverage;
- change in residence of Employee, spouse or Dependent to a location outside of the Employer's network service area; and
- changes which cause a Dependent to become eligible or ineligible for coverage.

With the exception of enrolling in the Flexible Spending Account (FSA), Hall County's Open Enrollment period is a passive election. This means that your benefit elections will carryover from one year to the next unless the employee makes a new election. If an employee does not wish to participate in the various insurance plans, an election of declining coverage should be made. Failure to make an election shall be considered as an election of declining coverage.

- **BENEFITS CONTINUATION (COBRA)**

Under the Hall County Welfare Benefit Plan, employees and/or their eligible dependents who may lose health and dental coverage or eligibility of coverage due to termination of employment, death, divorce, or other qualifying life events may continue the coverage for themselves and/or their families for a limited period of time under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA).

The type of life event will determine who the qualified beneficiaries are and the amount of time that the plan must offer coverage to them under COBRA. A life event is defined as a qualifying event that would cause an individual to lose health coverage.

Qualifying events for employees:

- Voluntary or involuntary termination of employment for reasons other than gross misconduct
- Reduction in the number of hours of employment that would result in the loss of coverage
- Becoming entitled to Medicare
- Qualifying events for spouses are:
    - Voluntary or involuntary termination of the covered employee's employment for any reason other than gross misconduct
    - Reduction in the hours worked by the covered employee employment that would result in the loss of coverage
    - Covered employee's becoming entitled to Medicare
    - Divorce or legal separation from the covered employee
    - Death of the covered employee

Qualifying events for dependent children are the same as for spouses with one addition:

- Loss of dependent child status under the plan rules.

Period of Coverage

Qualifying Events	Beneficiary	Coverage
Termination Reduced Hours Becoming entitled to Medicare	Employee Spouse Dependent Child	18 months
Becoming disabled during the first 60 days of COBRA continuation coverage due to the covered employee's termination or reduction of hours if the qualify beneficiary has provided notice of determination by the Social Security Administration with the first 18 months of coverage.	Disabled Beneficiary	29 months
Employee entitled to Medicare Divorce or legal separation	Spouse Dependent Child	36 months

Death of covered employee		
Loss of dependent child status	Dependent Child	36 months

General COBRA rights are described in the summary plan descriptions that all participants receive once enrolled. Employees and eligible dependents will also receive a notice of rights and an election form upon termination of employment or qualifying event.

A qualified beneficiary must notify Human Resources of a qualifying event within 60 days after divorce or legal separation or a child's ceasing to be covered as a dependent under plan rules.

The premiums for COBRA are the responsibility of the covered person, and Hall County may discontinue coverage if payment is not received timely.

This benefit will be in compliance with Federal COBRA as well as state insurance continuation laws where applicable.

Under COBRA, the employee or dependent pays the full cost of coverage at Hall County's group rates plus an administration fee. Hall County provides each eligible employee and/or dependents with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when the employee or dependents becomes eligible for coverage under Hall County's health insurance plan. The notice contains important information about the employee's rights and obligations.

- **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Bereavement leave of up to three (3) workdays with a maximum of 24 work hours will be granted with pay for an employee absent from work as a result of the death of a member of the employee's family: spouse, parent or guardian, child, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandparent, grandchild, stepmother, stepfather, stepchild, stepsister, stepbrother, or other relative living in the employee's household. Bereavement leave shall be granted for in-law relationships for mother in-law, father in-law, brother in-law and sister in-law. In all cases, bereavement leave must be approved in advance.

Only regular fulltime employees are eligible to receive Bereavement Leave.

- **EDUCATIONAL LEAVE**

An employee may be granted an unpaid personal leave-of-absence for educational purposes under certain circumstances. The request must be made in writing and approved, using the standard approval procedure for leaves-of-absence.

- **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Hall County cares about the health and well-being of its employees and recognizes that a variety of personal problems can disrupt their personal and work lives. While many employees solve their problems either on their own or with the help of family and friends, sometimes employees need professional assistance and advice.

Through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Hall County provides confidential access to professional counseling services for help in confronting such personal problems as alcohol and other substance abuse, marital and family difficulties, financial or legal troubles, and emotional distress. The EAP is available to all employees and their immediate family members offering problem assessment, short-term counseling, and referral to appropriate community and private services.

The EAP is strictly confidential and is designed to safeguard your privacy and rights. Information given to the EAP counselor may be released only if requested by you in writing. All counselors are guided by a Professional Code of Ethics.

Personal information concerning employee participation in the EAP is maintained in a confidential manner. No information related to an employee's participation in the program is entered into the personnel file.

There is no cost for employees to consult with an EAP counselor. If further counseling is necessary, the EAP counselor will outline community and private services available. The counselor will also let employees know whether any costs associated with private services may be covered by their health insurance plan. Costs that are not covered are the responsibility of the employee.
Minor concerns can become major problems if you ignore them. No issue is too small or too large, and a professional counselor is available to help you when you need it.

- **FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE ACT OF 1993 (FMLA)**

The FMLA allows employees to take up to twelve weeks of leave (may be paid or unpaid) for various personal reasons. The following is an overview of the pertinent provisions of the Act. For purposes of counting an employee's twelve (12) weeks of FMLA entitlement, FMLA shall run concurrently with Workers Compensation and Disability

1) FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE
An eligible employee may take up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for the following reasons:

- Birth of the employee's child;
- Placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care
- Employee's need to care for a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition
- Employee's inability to perform the functions of his/her position because of a serious health condition

Prior to using unpaid leave, an employee must first use accrued vacation or sick time.

2) MILITARY FAMILIES' FMLA RIGHTS
Employees with family members in the military have expanded leave rights under FMLA.

A) LEAVE TO CARE FOR ELIGIBLE INJURED MILITARY PERSON
Eligible employees may take up to 26 weeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin who has sustained serious injury or illness in the line of active duty.

B) LEAVE FOR QUALIFYING EXIGENCIES
Eligible employees may use the standard 12 weeks of FMLA leave to handle "qualifying exigencies" arising from a covered family member's active duty or call to active duty in support of a Federal contingency operation as a member of the National Guard, Military Reserve, or a retired member of the Regular Armed Forces or Reserve.

3) ELIGIBILITY
Employees employed for at least 12 months and who worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period before the leave is requested are eligible for family/medical leave.

A) BIRTH OR PLACEMENT OF A CHILD
An employee must provide 30 days advance notice before the date on which the leave would begin. If the employee is unable to provide 30 days advance notice, he or she must provide such notice as is practical. Leave may be taken on an intermittent or reduced basis if approved by the department director following the standard approval procedure.

If an employee and his/her spouse are both employed by the County and wish to take leave to care for a newly arrived child, their aggregate leave is limited to 12 weeks.

B) SERIOUS MEDICAL CONDITION
Leave for serious health conditions – either of a family member or the employee – may be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule if medically necessary, with proper notification, but without department approval. If leave is requested because of the illness of a child or the other spouse, each spouse is entitled to 12 weeks of leave.
Serious Health Condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving either inpatient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider.

In the event leave is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, employees are required to "make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to unduly disrupt operations of the department", and also are required to provide 30 days advance notice, or, if the treatment is in less than 30 days, "such notice as practicable".

C) CERTIFICATION

Employees must provide certification of his/her own serious health condition or that of a family member. Certification is to include the date on which the serious health condition in question began; the probable duration of the condition; appropriate medical facts regarding the condition; a statement that the employee is needed to care for a spouse, parent, or child (along with an estimate of the time required), or that the employee is unable to perform his or her functions; and in the case of intermittent leave, the dates and duration of treatments to be given.

Medical leaves of absence will be granted upon the onset, continuation, or recurrence of an employee's serious health condition. An employee with a serious health condition may be entitled to benefits, which will be coordinated with the short-term disability, and workers' compensation plans, if necessary.

Hall County may ask for medical certification, re-certification, or clarification for leaves of absence due to family or personal illness and for leaves of absence for military family leave, such as covered exigencies or to care for a covered service member, consistent with the regulations. The County also reserves the right to require a second and third opinion from a health care provider, at the County's expense. Prior to returning to work, the employee must provide a fitness-for-duty certificate from the attending physician, indicating any work restrictions.

4) EMPLOYMENT PROTECTIONS

An employee who completes a period of leave will be returned to the same position he/she had before or to a position equivalent in pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. Leave will not result in the loss of any previously accrued seniority or employment benefits; however, additional leave time and pension benefits do not continue to accrue while the employee is on leave.

Once the twelve (12) weeks of FMLA has been exhausted, an employee may request additional time off which must be reviewed and approved by their department. Review of the additional time off will include the expected return date to work

5) HEALTH BENEFITS PROTECTION

Employees continue to receive health benefits, life insurance, and disability insurance for up to 12 weeks during family leave on the same terms and conditions as for active employees. The employee must continue to pay appropriate premiums, co-payments, deductibles and other out-of-pocket costs.

An employee who does not return to work after a 12-week family leave, except in the case of the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition, or other circumstances beyond the employee's control, may be required to reimburse the County for premiums paid on his/her behalf during the time of unpaid leave. Exceptions are subject to certification.

An employee who does not return after a 12-week family leave is entitled to elect up to 18 months more coverage under COBRA.

6) CONCLUSIONS

This policy is a brief summary explaining how the Family & Medical Leave Act of 1993 applies to our local government jurisdictions. Further questions related to Family Leave should be directed to the Hall County Human Resources Department for clarification.

- **FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT (FSA)**

Hall County provides a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) program that allows employees to have pre-tax dollars deducted from their salaries to pay for eligible out-of-pocket expenses. The pre-tax contributions made to the FSA can be used to pay for predictable non-reimbursed health care expenses and dependent care expenses during the plan year. Through the FSA program, you can reduce your taxable income without reducing your real income, so that you can keep more of the money you earn.

Only regular fulltime employees are eligible to participate in the Flexible Spending Account program.

Participation in the Health Care and/or Dependent Care FSA is optional and determined on an annual basis for the plan year. You must enroll for each plan year. You determine how much to contribute to the account, up to a specified maximum, based on anticipated expenses during the plan year. You may contribute up to a maximum as determined by the IRS each year for your Health Care FSA. The maximum contribution for your Dependent Care FSA is determined by the IRS. Contributions are directed to the account through salary reduction on a pre-tax basis. This tax-free money is then available to you for reimbursement of out-of-pocket eligible expenses. Since the amounts that remain in the account at the end of the plan year are forfeited, you should take care not to over-fund your account.

Details of the Flexible Spending Account program are described in the Summary Plan Description (SPD). Contact the Human Resources Department for more information on the Flexible Spending Account program and to obtain enrollment and reimbursement forms and worksheets with examples of reimbursable and non-reimbursable expenses.

- **HEALTH INSURANCE**

Hall County's health insurance plan provides eligible employees and their dependents access to medical and dental insurance benefits. Only regular fulltime employees are eligible to participate in the health insurance plan.

Eligible employees may participate in the health insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between Hall County and the insurance carrier.

Details of the health insurance plan are described in the Summary Plan Description (SPD). A SPD and information on cost of coverage will be provided in advance of enrollment to eligible employees. Contact the Human Resources Department for more information about health insurance benefits.

- **HOLIDAYS**

Hall County will grant holiday time off to all full-time employees on the holidays listed below:

- New Year's Day (January 1st)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (third Monday in January)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day (first Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November)
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve (December 24th)
- Christmas (December 25th)

When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the County may designate the preceeding Friday or following Monday as the holiday. In order to qualify for holiday pay, employees are required to be actively at work as a regularly scheduled workday the day before and the day after a holiday unless the employee is off on approved vacation OR is on pre-approved and extended sick leave (for example: maternity, surgery, long term illness). Holidays that occur during approved vacation or sick leave shall not be charged against vacation or sick leave. Holidays that occur while the employee is on medical leave, workers compensation or personal leave of more than 30 calendar days, are not paid as holidays.

A full-time employee who is required to work or called in to work shall receive payment for the eight (8) hours of holiday pay, plus the regular rate of pay for hours actually worked. Holiday hours are not considered time worked for overtime purposes. Part-time and temporary employees are not eligible for paid holidays.

- **JURY DUTY**

An employee called for jury duty or subpoenaed as a witness for non-personal issues will be excused from work upon presentation of a court notice to his/her immediate supervisor. The employee will be paid his/her normal pay provided she/he submits evidence of the amount received from the court. The jury duty stipend is not deducted from the employee's pay. (For further information regarding Jury Duty see O.C.G.A. 15-12-1 et seq.)

Employees must show the jury duty summons to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate their absence. Of course, employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.

- **LIFE INSURANCE**

Life insurance offers you and your family important financial protection. Hall County provides a basic life insurance plan for eligible employees. Additional supplemental and/or dependent life insurance coverage may also be purchased.

Only regular fulltime employees are eligible to participate in the life insurance plan per the terms of the plan.

Eligible employees may participate in the life insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between Hall County and the insurance carrier.

Details of the basic life insurance plan including benefit amounts are described in the Summary Plan Description provided to eligible employees. Contact the Human Resources Department for more information about life insurance benefits.

- **MILITARY LEAVE**

Every employee is entitled to have a leave-of-absence from his/her duties while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from such duty. As such, all leaves must be documented with military orders.

1) RESERVE DUTY
The County provides the employee reservist time off if activated to reserve duty and scheduled to work on a day when he/she is called up for reserve training.

Every employee shall be paid the appropriate salary or other compensation for all periods of absence while engaged in the performance of ordered military reserve duty and while going to and returning from such duty, not exceeding a total of thirty (30) days in any one calendar year and not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one continuous period for such absence. For firefighters, this represents ten (10) 24-hour shifts of paid military leave time annually.

2) ACTIVE DUTY

The County provides the employee time off if ordered to active military service in accordance with law and the following provisions.

A) JOB

If an employee's active service does not exceed five (5) years, they may return to their current job or an equivalent job if Hall County Government is notified within ninety (90) days following discharge from active service.

B) TRANSITIONAL PAY

During active service, the employee will be paid the difference between their normal base pay and the total amount of military compensation for up to six months in a 24-month period. Because the intent of our plan is to provide transitional assistance, this pay differential is limited to six months in a 24-month period, in case of multiple calls. The employee must provide proof of military salary in order for transitional pay to be utilized.

C) HEALTH and DENTAL INSURANCE

These benefits will stop at the time the leave-of-absence for active duty begins, but will become effective again when the employee returns to work. Through payroll deductions, Hall County will continue to pay for family coverage through the first of the month following 30 days of leave. The family is eligible for "COBRA extension" to continue current health insurance coverage. Deductions for this insurance may be made from the pay received from the Hall County Government. All military personnel and family are also eligible for coverage through CHAMPUS following 32 days of service.

D) LIFE INSURANCE

Coverage under this Plan will be suspended at the start of active duty military leave.

E) LEAVE ACCRUAL

Accruals for vacation and sick leave will stop for an employee while he/she is on active duty military leave. The employee's leave balances at the time of call-up to active duty will remain intact.

F) RE-EMPLOYMENT

Upon completion of ordered active duty, the employee shall be entitled to the same or comparable position including seniority, status and pay, provided written notification of the employee's desire to return to work is submitted to the Human Resources Department within ninety (90) days from completion of ordered duty. The returning employee shall also be entitled to any increase in salary or any advancement in grade, which would normally be accorded to the incumbent of the position, with the exception of any increase or advance in grade, which would normally be dependent on meritorious performance of duties of the position. Re-employment does not necessitate the laying off of another person who was appointed at an earlier date than the person returning from military leave.

- **LONG-TERM DISABILITY**

Hall County offers a long-term disability (LTD) benefits plan fully paid by employee premiums to help eligible employees cope with an illness or injury that results in a long-term absence from employment. LTD is designed to ensure a continuing income for employees who are disabled and unable to work. Only regular fulltime employees are eligible to participate in the LTD plan.

Eligible employees may participate in the LTD plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between Hall County and the insurance carrier.

LTD benefits are offset with amounts received under Social Security and certain retirement benefits and/or workers' compensation for the same time period.

Details of the LTD benefits plan including benefit amounts, and limitations and restrictions are described in the Summary Plan Description provided to eligible employees. Contact the Human Resources Department for more information about LTD benefits.

Upon the employee's transition to long term disability, Hall County may no longer be able to continue to employee the affected individual thus resulting in the employee's termination.

- **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

1) FITNESS FOR RETURN TO DUTY REPORT
The employee who has been out on leave due to personal illness must submit a physician's note returning them to work and submit to a drug screen in accordance with the drug testing policy.

2) FAILURE TO RETURN TO WORK AT THE EXPIRATION OF APPROVED LEAVE
Failure of an employee to return to work at the expiration of approved leave shall be considered absence without approved leave, constituting grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

3) RETURN TO WORK BEFORE THE EXPIRATION OF APPROVED LEAVE
An employee granted a leave-of-absence who wishes to return to work before the leave period has expired shall be required to notify his/her immediate supervisor. Upon approval of the department director, the employee shall be permitted to return to work. Employees wishing to return early from medical leave, need to provide a physician certification.

4) SICK OR VACATION LEAVE ACCRUAL DURING APPROVED LEAVE WITHOUT PAY
No sick or vacation leave will be earned by an employee for the time that the employee is on leave-without-pay.

5) WORKING ELSEWHERE DURING APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE
An employee, while on an authorized leave-of-absence may not obtain either part-time or full-time employment elsewhere without the prior approval of the employee's department director and the Director of Human Resources.

6) CONTINUATION OF HEALTH BENEFIT COVERAGE DURING APPROVED LEAVE WITHOUT PAY
Employee health insurance will be provided by the County while the employee is on approved FMLA or medical leave-of-absence. An employee on personal leave for more than one month is required to pay the employee COBRA contribution rate in order to continue health benefits.

7) PAY INCREASE DURING APPROVED LEAVE
Pay increases scheduled during the leave time will be suspended until the employee returns to work.

- **PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE (other than FMLA or State-Mandated Leave)**

Hall County recognizes that unavoidable circumstances, either personal or medical, may require an employee to be absent for a prolonged period.

The County will review unpaid leave requests based on business conditions and operating requirements and reserves the right to deny such requests. If leave is approved, the County cannot guarantee that a position will be available at the conclusion of the leave. All requests for unpaid leave must be submitted to the employee's supervisor in advance. The employee's manager, department head, and Human Resources must approve requests for personal leave.

Group insurance benefits will continue for the first thirty (30) calendar days of the leave and the employee must continue to pay insurance premiums. An employee who has been granted an unpaid leave beyond thirty (30) calendar days will be given the option of continuing insurance. The employee must do this at their expense under the terms and conditions of COBRA.

An employee's vacation accrual will continue for the first thirty (30) calendar days. After thirty (30) calendar days of personal leave, the employee will cease accruing vacation time until they return to work. Employees on unpaid leave are not eligible for holiday pay.

An employee who does not return to work at the end of the approved leave of absence will automatically become voluntarily terminated at the discretion of the County.

- **RETIREMENT PLANS**

Hall County offers both a 401(a) Money Purchase Plan and a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan for your future retirement needs. You are eligible to participate if you are a regular full time employee with the County.

Upon approval by the Board of Commissioners, the County may contribute to the Plan, or match funds contributed by the employee. The Board of Commissioners reserves the right to modify, suspend or revoke contributions or matching funds. For information about County contributions or matching funds, please contact Human Resources.

Hall County may contribute a percentage of your salary into your 401(a) plan regardless of your contributions.

Hall County may contribute up to 2% matching funds into your 401(a) plan at the rate of up to a maximum of 2% that you contribute into your 457 Plan.

All contributions made by Hall County go directly into your 401(a) Plan. All contributions made by the employee go directly into your 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. You may contribute up to 25% of your salary into the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan within the dollar amounts set by the law (this dollar amount is subject to IRS dollar maximums that may change from year to year). Keep in mind that all of the money that is saved in your 457 account is tax deferred.

Participation begins at the 1st of the month following 30 days of employment and you are fully vested in the County's contributions after seven (7) years of service.

- 5 years of service: 50% vested
- 6 years of service: 75% vested
- 7 years of service: 100% vested

You choose from a wide variety of ways to invest your money. An investment Advisor may be available to help you determine your most comfortable method of investing.

- **SHORT-TERM DISABILITY**

Hall County provides a short-term disability (STD) benefits plan to eligible employees who are unable to work because of a qualifying disability due to an injury or illness. Only regular fulltime employees are eligible to participate in the STD plan. Eligible employees may participate in the STD plan subject to all terms and conditions of the plan. Time off under Short Term Disability shall run concurrently with FMLA eligibility.

Disabilities arising from pregnancy or pregnancy-related illness are treated the same as any other illness that prevents an employee from working and short term disability benefits are coordinated with Workers Compensation payments.

Details of the STD benefits plan including benefit amounts, when they are payable, and limitations, restrictions, and other exclusions are described in the Summary Plan Description provided to eligible employees. Contact the Human Resources Department for more information about STD benefits.

- **SICK LEAVE BENEFITS**

An employee may use accrued sick leave for personal illness, doctors' appointments, or provide care for their spouse or their dependent child in need of continuous short-term care. Exceptions to the policy must be reviewed in advance with the HR Director. The employee shall report an illness prior to his/her scheduled work time providing as much notice as reasonably possible. If not possible, she/he must report the tardiness or absence within thirty (30) minutes after the time she/he is scheduled to have reported to work: otherwise, the absence or tardiness, will be unpaid. The direct supervisor must also be contacted on each additional day of absence.

1) RATE OF ACCRUAL
Full-time employees earn annual sick leave at the rate of 80 hours (or a total of 112 hours for firefighters) per year. Sick time will be accrued and earned each pay-period at the rate of 3.077 hours (4.308 hours per pay-period for firefighters) in the same manner that vacation time is accrued and earned. Employees hired during the year receive sick leave from the first day of employment on a prorated basis. Certain Defined Benefits participants will continue to receive five (5) sick leave days annually, based on previous elections.

2) CERTIFICATION BY PHYSICIAN
A medical certificate signed by a licensed physician may be required by department directors to substantiate a request for sick leave for the following reasons:

- Any period of absence
- Any period of absence consisting of three (3) or more consecutive workdays.
- To support a request for sick leave, due to extenuating circumstances, during a period when the employee is on vacation
- Leave of any duration, if absence from duty recurs frequently or habitually.

3) MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE ACCUMULATION
Sick leave may be accumulated to a maximum of 720 hours. It may be taken at any time and in any amount of one hour or more and is subject to administrative review. Additional accrued sick leave hours beyond the 720 hours are maintained in a reserve bank that may be released for an employee's use with approval by the County Administrator. Prior to using hours in the reserve bank, all available vacation time must be used.

4) CHARGEABLE SICK LEAVE
Employees are charged with sick leave for absences only on days which they would otherwise work and receive pay. No charge is made against sick leave for absence on holidays or other non-workdays unless the employee is scheduled to work. In the event that an employee has exhausted all available sick leave, available vacation time will be substituted in its place. An employee may not elect to take sick time off as unpaid when the employee has an available balance of vacation time.

5) FORFEITURE OF SICK LEAVE/NO REINSTATEMENT
An employee who separates from the County shall forfeit all unused sick leave. No employee, regardless of the circumstances, shall be compensated for unused sick leave. The County does not reinstate sick leave for employees being re-hired.

6) CONTRIBUTED LEAVE PROGRAM

A) PURPOSE**:** To allow employees to contribute vacation leave to employees who are out of work due to illness or injury. This benefit coordinates with short-term disability.

B) OBJECTIVE
The primary objective of this plan is to coordinate existing Hall County short-term disability benefits to ensure that employees are able to maintain a level of income replacement to avoid severe financial hardship to the employee and their family during times of serious and prolonged illness, injury or family emergency.

C) ELIGIBILITY
All requests for leave must be made through the employee's department director. The director should be able to show the employee's immediate need and recommend an estimated number of hours needed to cover the employee's initial absence and any follow-up care.

D) USAGE
Employees may use their personal accruals and contributions at a rate of 100% except when the short-term disability program dictates otherwise.

E) APPROVAL
The department director will submit a letter that summarizes the employee's need, the number of hours requested and who would contribute. The director will submit the request along with a recommendation to the Human Resources Department, who will review and confirm information and submit the request, with a cover letter explaining the situation, to the County Administrator for review and consideration.

F) MAXIMUM DISBURSEMENT OF HOURS
This plan will disburse a maximum of 144 hours of sick leave hours to non-public safety employees. Public Safety disbursements will be calculated individually based on the employee's current schedule. Employees who receive contributed leave will use leave at the rate specified in the short-term disability plan.

G) MINIMUM DISBURSEMENT OF HOURS
Employees must have a qualifying event that lasts for a period of longer than three working days in order to participate in the contributed leave plan. The minimum disbursement of hours will be the equivalent of 100% of three days or 24 hours.

H) TRANSFER OF LEAVE HOURS
Employees may contribute **vacation leave** on a direct basis to specified individual employees. (Vacation leave is used rather than sick leave because employees are encouraged to save sick leave to use for personal injuries or illnesses.)

- **VACATION BENEFITS**

The purpose of vacation leave is to provide paid time away from work.

1) ELIGIBILITY
All full-time, regular employees are entitled to accrue leave. Part-time and/or temporary employees are not eligible for leave under these policies.

2) RATE OF ACCRUAL
Employees shall accrue vacation leave upon completion of each biweekly pay period. Years of Service includes service as full time benefit eligible and does not include service for time worked in a part time or temporary status.

ACCRUAL FOR ALL EMPLOYEES (EXCLUDING FIREFIGHTERS)

	ACCRUAL		MAXIMUM	
Years of Service	DAYS	HOURS	DAYS	HOURS
Less than 1	5	40	5	40
1 – 4	15	120	22.5	180
5 – 9	20	160	30	240
10 or More	25	200	37.5	300

ACCRUAL FOR FIREFIGHTERS

	ACCRUAL	MAXIMUM
Years of Service	HOURS	HOURS
Less than 1	108	108
1 – 4	216	324
5 – 9	288	360
10 or more	360	360

Note: Accrual rate to be based on a full-time fifty-six (56) hour per week position. Vacation accruals over the maximum for ten (10) or more years of service as shown above will be converted to sick leave.

3) REQUEST FOR VACATION LEAVE
A request for leave shall be submitted to an employee's immediate supervisor. Leave may be taken only after an employee has completed six months of full-time service and received approval by the department director.

4) PAYMENT OF UNUSED VACATION LEAVE
Upon termination, employees or their estates will be paid for accumulated unused vacation leave provided all equipment issued to the employee by the County has been returned and no outstanding liabilities or debts remain.

5) EMERGENCIES WHILE OUT ON VACATION LEAVE
Employees on vacation leave are subject to recall in case of emergency.

6) RE-EMPLOYMENT
Former employees who are re-hired by Hall County within one (1) year of termination of employment may have their prior years of service counted toward vacation accrual.

- **WORKER'S COMPENSATION**

Hall County provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, worker's compensation insurance provides 66 2/3 salary replacement benefits after a consecutive seven (7) day waiting period from the date of injury, or, if the employee is hospitalized immediately. If the injury results in lost time from work that exceeds seven (7) consecutive days, Hall County may provide for lost income as though the employee worked. If the injury results in lost time from work that DOES NOT exceed seven (7) consecutive days, an employee may elect to utilize their personal leave time (sick and/or vacation) during the initial waiting period of workers comp leave. Once the employee has returned to work, sick or vacation time shall be used by the employee for time off due to follow up doctor's appointments. A medical note from the ATP (Actual Treating Physician) must be provided to the immediate supervisor or Department Head.

An employee who suffers an injury or illness directly in the performance of his/her work is covered by the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. Under Georgia State Law, employees are required to use the "panel" physicians to provide the workers' compensation medical treatment. The names, addresses and phone numbers of the panel physicians are available to each employee and are posted on official County bulletin boards. Time off under Worker's Comp shall run concurrently with FMLA eligibility.

An employee who suffers an injury or illness should inform their supervisor immediately and provide complete information on the forms provided by the Human Resources Loss Control Specialist. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important, and required, that all incidents and/or accidents be reported immediately. All reports are to be filed with the Human Resources Loss Control Specialist. Under no circumstances should a report be made, by the employee or supervisor that exceeds (3) three days.

If the injured employee requests medical treatment, he/she must choose a doctor from the posted Workers' Compensation approved Panel of Physicians. Hall 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.

Failure to report an incident and/or injury within (3) three days is grounds for disciplinary action.
A fraudulent claim is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The Workers' Compensation Law provides you, as the employee with certain rights and responsibilities.
O.C.G.A. (34-9-81.1) State Board of Workers' Compensation Bill of Rights for the Injured Worker.

Neither Hall County nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by Hall County, or in the course of employment other than with Hall County.

Section 6: Summary of Revisions

- **April 25, 2013**
  - Revised and Updated Handbook is approved by Commissioners and published for all employees via the County website
- **June 6, 2013**
  - Revised Business Ethics and Conduct to state that "staff are a reflection of Hall County at all times, on or off duty, and are expected to maintain the standards of conduct."
- **August 23, 2013**
  - Revised Progressive Discipline – Suspension to clarify that an employee can't perform any work for Hall County during the suspension period.
- **January 22, 2014**
  - Clarified the definition of sick leave for eligibility to receive holiday pay.
  - Clarified vacation accrual to further define years of service.
- **January 22, 2014**
  - Expanded the Business Travel section to provide more detailed policy information
- **June 4, 2014**
  - Clarified the Business Travel section
  - Updated the workplace violence section to reflect the 2014 new weapons law
- **September 2015**
  - Addition of Hall County's Organizational Values
  - Added the updated county logo to the cover page
  - Updated the section on Civil Service to reflect the changes as adopted by the Commission
  - Updated the Personal Appearance Policy to exclude leggings from acceptable attire and address tattoos, piercings and body modifications and beards/facial hair
  - Updated the section on Workers Compensation
  - Added content related to ecigs, vapor devices to the Smoking policy
  - Added WIFI usage content to the Computer and Email Usage (MIS) policy
  - Clarified that part-time employees may not work more than 28 hours per work week
  - Clarified that time off for short term disability and workers comp shall run concurrently with FMLA eligibility
  - Clarified that FMLA will run concurrently with Workers Comp and Disability
  - Removed the Employee Advisory Committee section
  - Clarified under the Drug and Alcohol policy that under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol is regardless of the level
  - Updated the Safety section
  - Updated the Employee Conduct section to provide more clarification of expectations
  - Updated and expanded the section on Use of County Equipment and Vehicles
  - Added a section for Benefits Eligibility and Benefits Elections
- **November 2015**
  - Clarified the use of sick leave benefits

- **January 2016**
  - Addition of the Hard Drive Disposal procedure to the section on Computer usage
  - Updated sick leave benefits to reflect sick time will be accrued and earned each pay-period rather than receiving a lump sum of hours at the beginning of the year
  - Updated the Workers Comp section to state that incidents and/or injuries must be reported to HR within (3) days. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action
  - Updated the section on Performance reviews removing references to merit increases which are have been frozen
  - Updated the section on Performance reviews to further clarify the extension of the review as a result of an extended absence from work