

COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



EFFECTIVE DATE

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County Philosophy

APPLICABILITY AND AT-WILL STATUS

This employee handbook is not intended to serve as a contract of employment, express or implied. All employees subject to this employee handbook are employed “at will”, meaning that employees may quit or be terminated at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice.

EXCLUSIVITY/SUPERSEDING POLICY

The policies, procedures, and benefits described in this handbook are the exclusive policies of the County. These policies, procedures, and benefits override and supersede all previous policies, practices, and oral and written statements of anyone associated with the County.

RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The County reserves the right to make changes in its policies, practices, and benefits at any time, with or without notice. Changes in these policies, practices, and benefits must be in writing and signed by the County Executive Committee or adopted by written resolution of the county board to be effective. No other changes, additions, or deletions, whether oral or in writing, shall be effective.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

In accordance with and to the extent required by federal, state, and local laws, it is the policy of the County to recruit, hire, promote, and treat all employees without regard to their race, color, religion, national origin, citizenship, sex, age, misdemeanor arrest record, marital status, military status, student status, sexual affinity or orientation, height, weight, or disability (ies) with reasonable accommodation.

Disabled or handicapped employees who require accommodation or believe that they have been denied accommodation should give written notice to the County.

HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

Overview. The County seeks to foster an environment that promotes respect and dignity for all individuals and that is free of harassment and unduly offensive behavior. Harassment, as defined in various forms below, is in conflict with a harmonious and productive work environment. Harassment will not be tolerated by employees or non-employees.

Sexual and Gender Harassment.

Sexual harassment is defined by law to include any unwelcome sexual advance or touching, request for sexual favors, or other verbal, non-verbal, or physical communication of a sexual nature if:

- submission to such conduct is a term or condition of employment or continued employment, whether explicitly or implicitly; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a factor in decisions affecting the individual's employment; or
- such conduct or communication substantially interferes with the individual's employment or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

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Examples of prohibited sexual harassment would include the following:

- offensive sexual flirtations
- suggestive comments/sexual innuendo
- jokes about sexual topics
- use of vulgar or sexually degrading words or humor
- insults or verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body
- display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures
- non-verbal, suggestive, or sexually insulting actions such as leering, whistling, suggestive sounds, or obscene gestures
- advances, propositions, or repeated requests or pressure for "dates"
- unwanted physical contact or unwelcome touching of a sexual nature including grabbing, pinching, and intentional brushing of the body
- sexual assault/coerced sexual acts

Gender harassment is actions or behaviors that are based on a person's sex or gender and create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Gender harassment would include, among other conduct, the following:

- sexist comments or slurs or offensive stereo-type characterizations
- offensive communications, insinuations, and innuendo based on gender
- sexist or gender-degrading humor, including jokes about gender-specific traits
- insults or verbal abuse based on gender
- threats or other offensive or insulting conduct based on gender

Racial/Ethnic/Religious Harassment.

Racial/ethnic/religious harassment is prohibited and is defined to include, among other conduct, communications, threats, insinuations, innuendo, racial, ethnic, or religious slurs, demeaning jokes, or humor, offensive stereo-type characterizations, or other offensive statements or conduct based upon race, religion, or ethnicity or directed at an individual or a racial, ethnic, or religious class or group. The terms "ethnic" and "ethnicity" are broadly defined to include any reference to a person's national origin, ancestry, relations through blood or marriage, etc.

Personal and Other Kinds of Harassment.

Harassment based upon any status or class protected by law is prohibited, including, but not limited to harassment based on age, disability, past or present medical condition, pregnancy, personal characteristics or mannerisms, height, weight, student status, veteran/military status, marital status, and sexual orientation. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, offensive communications, verbal abuse, threats, insinuations, innuendo, slurs, jokes, or humor or other conduct based upon a person's status or class that is protected by law or directed at an individual or members of such status or class.

Personal harassment, i.e., harassment that is not necessarily attributable to a particular status or class protected by law, is also prohibited. Personal harassment would include any unduly offensive, excessively rude, or injurious behavior or communication directed at an individual, including, but not limited to, assault, physical, emotional, or verbal abuse, threats of violence or other undue threats, stalking, insults, invasion of privacy, spreading of false and malicious rumors or gossip about an individual, use of vulgarity/profanity directed at an individual, etc.

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Duty to Report Harassment.

Any employees who experience any kind of harassment, as broadly defined in this policy, shall immediately report such harassment to the County. Any employees who witness violations or suspected violations of this harassment policy shall report such to the County. Although staff are obligated to report violations of the harassment policy as indicated above, employees are not prevented or discouraged from reporting harassment or alleged harassment to law enforcement agencies where criminal conduct appears to be involved.

Investigation of Harassment Complaints.

Upon receipt any report or complaint of alleged harassment the County promptly investigates and take appropriate remedial measures. The County will take reasonable measures to treat complaints discreetly and respect the personal privacy rights of the person making the complaint and any accused party.

Retaliation Protection.

No retaliation shall be taken against any individual because s/he has filed a harassment complaint or report, participated in a harassment investigation, or otherwise opposed unlawful harassment. No staff shall be disciplined or subject to reprisal because s/he reports or complains about harassment act(s) merely because such is not substantiated.

Sanctions and Penalties.

Any employee who is found to have violated this policy may be subject to corrective action as appropriate. A person suspected of serious offenses of this policy may be subject to an investigatory suspension, pending the outcome of the investigation. Anyone who deliberately makes a false statement or who fraudulently submits false evidence concerning harassment may be subject to severe corrective penalties, including immediate discharge.

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Office Policies

DRESS CODE

All employees of the County shall be dressed in an appropriate business fashion as outlined by the County. If an employee reports for work dressed inappropriately, he/she may be sent home to change his/her clothing. As an employee of this County, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner and dress in appropriate attire.

Guidelines for appropriate dress:

- Sweaters or vests
- Slacks or pants
- Sweat pants
- Blazers
- Blouses or shirts (with collars, including banded collars and pullover "polo" shirts)
- Skirts or dresses
- "Skort" outfits (dress style or with jacket)
- Hosiery or trouser socks

Examples of inappropriate dress:

- Shorts
- Blue Jeans
- T-shirts
- Apparel with rips, holes or tears
- Halter tops, tank tops, muscle shirts
- Exposed midriffs
- Sandals
- Exposed undergarments

TELEPHONE

All incoming telephone calls to the County shall be answered "Thank you for calling [redacted] County Farm Bureau", followed by the employee stating his/her name and asking "How may I help you?"

OFFICE HOURS

The County hours are from [redacted] to [redacted] Monday through Friday. Employees receive a [redacted] minute lunch break. If there is more than one staff person in the office, lunch breaks should be staggered so the office may remain open during the lunch period.

PUNCTUALITY

All employees are expected to be punctual in reporting for work. However, we understand that this may not always be possible for you, due to circumstances beyond your control. Employees who know they are going to be tardy in reporting for work should contact the County Regional Representative and County office, at the appropriate phone number(s).

You are expected to be at your designated work area ready for work at the scheduled starting time on scheduled workdays and after breaks. Repeated, unauthorized, unexcused, or unexplained tardiness will be subject to corrective measures, including suspension and/or termination.

If County Staff have the need to be out of the office to run county errands or visit agent offices, etc., and will be out of the office for more than half an hour, they should first notify the regional representative.

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PAY PERIOD

Payroll is processed through ADP.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The County observed holidays will follow the Michigan Farm Bureau holiday schedule on an annual basis.

Full-time employees are granted holiday pay at their standard salary

Part-time employees who work a variable workweek will receive normal pay based on the hours they are normally scheduled to work. A part-time employee scheduled to work on a day, which happens to be an observed holiday will receive normal pay. Conversely, if an observed holiday occurs on a day not normally scheduled for work, the part-time employee will not receive standard pay. Employees shall complete 90 days of employment before being eligible for the floating holidays.

VACATION POLICY

Established full time employees shall be granted paid vacation credits as of January 1 each year according to the following schedule:

The Vacation Leave Schedule for established employees is as follows:

Vacation Leave Schedule	
Month Employment Begins	Hours of Vacation Leave During First Vacation Year of Employment
January	80
February	80
March	80
April	80
May	80
June	80
July	40
August	40
September	32
October	24
November	16
December	8

Vacation Year of Employment	Vacation Leave Hours
2 through 5	120

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6 through 10	160
11 and over	200

Established Full-Time Employees Working Less Than the Standard Workweek

Established full-time employees working 30 or more hours per week, but less than 40 hours per week, are granted vacation leave at the rate of 75 percent of the number of vacation leave hours that are allowed in the Vacation Leave Schedule.

Established Part-Time Employees

Established part-time employees are defined as those employees working less than 30 hours per week. In order to qualify for vacation leave, an established part-time employee must be scheduled to work an average of 20 hours per week during the calendar year.

Vacation leave granted to established part-time employees is 50 percent of the number of vacation leave hours that are allowed in the Vacation Leave Schedule.

- Employees must complete **90** days of employment before taking any vacation.
- Vacation qualifying and account date will be January 1 of each calendar year. All scheduling of vacation as to time and length of vacation period shall be with the approval of the county administrative manager and/or county president.
- Earned vacation credits should be taken during the current year of the qualifying date. Five days vacation may be carried over to the next calendar year upon the approval of the immediate supervisor or County President.
- Upon termination of employment, employees shall be paid for any unused vacation time, unless two-week notice has not been given or if termination is due to illegal activities (i.e. fraud, embezzlement). In this situations the county Farm Bureau will not pay for unused vacation days.
- The vacation credits of employees whose standard workweek is less than 30 hours shall be reduced in the same proportion that their average time worked deviates from the standard **40** hour workweek.
- **All vacation requests will be made so in writing, getting the County Presidents signature, at least two weeks prior to the vacation time, except emergency situations.**

SEVERANCE POLICY

The employee must provide two weeks notice before resigning their employment position. All County equipment and key(s) must be returned to the County immediately.

If two-weeks notice has not been given, unused vacation days will not be paid.

ACCIDENTS AT WORK

Injuries that occur at work, even minor ones, must be reported to the County. Injuries must be reported as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the day in which the injury occurred. An injury report must be completed and signed by the employee. Prompt compliance with this policy will assure that injured employees are properly covered by workers' compensation insurance.

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MEDICAL INSURANCE (IF APPLICABLE)

NONE

-OR-

Medical Insurance as outlined in the Section 125 plan is available to established full time employees after completion of 30 days of continuous employment. Established full-time employees may elect a medical insurance plan option offered by the Company. An employee may add his/her spouse and/or eligible dependents at the time he/she elects a medical insurance plan option or during the open enrollment period (if available). An employee may add dependents within 30 calendar days after marriage, birth, adoption, or legal guardianship (if available). An employee may add his/her spouse and/or eligible dependents to the employee’s medical insurance plan option at any time by providing proof that such spouse and/or dependents are losing or have lost their medical insurance coverage through another source. Medical insurance coverage shall terminate in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate contract.

DENTAL INSURANCE (IF APPLICABLE)

NONE

-OR-

Dental Insurance as outlined in the Section 125 plan is available to established full time employees after completion of 30 days of continuous employment. Established full-time employees may elect a dental insurance plan option offered by the Company. An employee may add his/her spouse and/or eligible dependents at the time he/she elects a dental insurance plan option or during the open enrollment period (if available). An employee may also add dependents within 30 calendar days after marriage, birth, adoption, or legal guardianship (if available). An employee may add his/her spouse and/or eligible dependents to the employee’s dental insurance plan option at any time by providing proof that such spouse and/or dependents are losing or have lost their dental insurance coverage through another source. Dental insurance coverage shall terminate in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate contract.

RETIREMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

The County will match dollar for dollar up to 3% when the employee defers from pay into the SIMPLE IRA or may elect to contribute 2% for all eligible employees towards a SIMPLE IRA retirement plan, regardless of employee deferrals. An eligible employee is anyone who earns, or expects to earn, at least \$5,000 annually. Employees are eligible for enrollment after the completion of 90 (months/days/years – not to exceed 2 years) of employment.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The County will not tolerate any substance abuse in the office, on the premises, or reporting to work or other county events under the influence of alcohol or controlled drugs. Any employee reporting for work under the influence of alcohol or controlled drugs will be asked to leave immediately. Under these circumstances, assistance will be provided to ensure that the employee arrives home safely. Any employee who repeatedly reports to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs may have their employment terminated immediately.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Upon a request from an employee (or their representative in case of disability or illness) a leave of absence may be granted for personal illness; personal business; jury duty; military service and attendance at a funeral of an immediate family member. In the event an employee is absent from work on 7 or more instances within a 12-month period, the supervisor will meet with the employee to discuss the employee’s attendance.

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If the county employee is not able to come into work due to illness, they should contact the County President, Regional Representative and the County Office.

The following are explanations of various types of absences and the County's policy related to them.

Jury Duty

Employees required to serve on a jury or subpoenaed, as a witness in a court case will be granted a leave of absence during such period of service. Employees will be paid their regular wages in addition to any fees received from the court. The employee's supervisor must be notified prior to the date such service begins.

Short-Term Disability Leave of Absence

Established full-time salaried employees are eligible for short-term disability leave benefits after completing **90** days of continuous employment. Employees requiring a short-term disability leave of absence must request such leave from his/her supervisor.

Established full-time hourly employees are eligible to accrue short-term disability pay credits after completing **90** days of continuous employment. Accrual rates are as follows:

30-40 hours per week	8 hours per month
25-29 hours per week	6 hours per month
At least 20 hours per week	4 hours per month

If any employee will be absent due to illness/disability for more than 3 consecutive days, a physician's written statement of the employee's inability to work is required. A physician's written statement of the employee's ability to return to work will also be required before the employee may return to work.

Established full-time employees on a short term disability leave of absence will be paid **100** percent of their normal salary for the first 30 calendar days. Established full-time employees on a short term disability leave of absence 31 or more calendar days will be paid **70** percent of their salary not to exceed an additional 60 calendar days. If a short-term disability leave of absence is expected to exceed 90 calendar days for established full-time employees, long-term disability benefits may apply.

If the employee returns to work from a short-term disability leave of absence and is again disabled due to the same or a related condition within 30 calendar days, the disability is considered a continuation of the prior disability. Short-term disability benefits will resume for the balance of the short-term disability benefit period applicable to the original disability.

If an employee is eligible for workers' disability compensation benefits, the amount of benefits will be deducted from the short-term salary continuation benefits.

Employee benefits remain in effect during a short-term disability leave of absence. Standard payroll deductions will continue to be taken out of each paycheck received for the period of disability.

In the event an employee benefit plan is implemented or revised while an employee is on leave, the employee will be informed.

An employee returning from a short-term disability leave of absence will be reinstated to his/her former position at the same rate of pay when he/she began his/her short-term disability leave of absence. However, if a personal business leave precedes a short-term disability leave, and both combined continue beyond 180 calendar days, reinstatement is not guaranteed.

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If an employee is unable to return to work within 90 calendar days because of a short-term disability leave of absence, the employee may be eligible for long-term disability benefits.

Temporary and established part time employees are not eligible for short term disability benefits.

**Long-Term Disability Insurance & Group Life Insurance
(Counties are responsible for securing this benefit if it is to be provided to their employees)**

Insert description of coverage provided based on provider.

Funeral of Immediate Family Members

Established employees will be granted paid funeral leave, up to three days in duration, for the funeral of an immediate family member. If the funeral is not for an immediate family member, an employee may be granted time off without pay. For the purpose of this policy only, the following are considered immediate family members:

- Mother or father
- Stepmother or stepfather
- Stepbrother or stepsister
- Grandmother or grandfather
- Wife or husband
- Mother-in-law or father-in-law
- Son or daughter
- Son-in-law or daughter-in-law
- Stepson or stepdaughter
- Grandson or granddaughter
- Brother or sister
- Parent surrogate
- Those living in the same household

Employee's supervisor must be notified as soon as possible when leave is necessary.

COMPANY HARDWARE, SOFTWARE AND INTERNET USE

The Michigan Farm Bureau Family of Companies and County reserves the right to monitor, as it deems appropriate and with or without notice, any Employee's access (including the attempt to access) and/or use of the Network.

User privacy does not extend to the User's use of the Network and/or any other equipment, systems, services, and/or supplies of any of the Companies, and Users have no expectation of privacy in such use, and by using the Network, Users consent to such use being monitored by and/or messages being accessed and disclosed to individuals who are authorized to do so by the Companies. Users should be aware that the rules set forth in this policy might affect their privacy in the workplace.

The Network shall not be accessed and/or used to access, or attempt to access, any data or information that is not necessary to properly carry out the duties and responsibilities of this position, as those duties and responsibilities are set forth in the position description, to attempt to disable or circumvent any of the Companies' or County's security features or to access, store, and/or transmit any communication, data, or material where such communication, data, or material, or its transmission or distribution, would violate any local, state, and/or federal law or regulation, or the legal rights of any person, or would be defaming, harassing, intimidating, sexually suggestive, threatening, offensive, or discriminatory.

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EMAIL USAGE

Although e-mail is the most commonly used facility on a computer network, no message that is sent by e-mail is private. An e-mail message is out in the open and can be intercepted, viewed, altered, copied, read, forged, or destroyed during the e-mailing process. A User must not put anything in an e-mail message that the User would not want posted on a bulletin board or used in a lawsuit or shared with the wrong person.

E-mail, like all forms of communication, data, or material, is an asset of the Companies and cannot be considered to be the private property of the sender or receiver. Therefore, the Companies have the right to review any communication, data, and/or material, including e-mail, whether or not it is stored on the Network.

Do not use the Network for non-Company business activities, including, but not limited to, moonlighting, searching for external employment, and/or conducting business on behalf of yourself or another individual or entity.

NEPOTISM

 County Farm Bureau may limit the hiring, promotion, and transfer or terminate the employment of individuals who have an immediate family member who is a member of the County Board of Directors or County Administrative Manager.

Topic: Definition of Immediate Family Members

For the purposes of this policy, the following are considered to be immediate family members: mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, stepgrandmother, stepgrandfather, grandmother-in-law, grandfather-in-law, wife, husband, daughter, son, stepdaughter, stepson, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, granddaughter, grandson, step-granddaughter, stepgrandson, sister, step-sister, half sister, brother, stepbrother, half brother, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, parent surrogate, and those residing in the same household.

Topic: Immediate Family Members of Board Members

Hiring or employing an immediate family member of a member of the County Board of Directors or County Administrative Manager is prohibited.

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Personnel Policies

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

The employment status of each employee is determined on the date of hire using the criteria of projected work hours and length of employment. Employees can be classified into one of the following categories:

- Temporary full-time – 30 or more hours per week for a period of up to 90.
- Temporary part-time – 29 or less hours per week for a period of up to 90.
- Established full-time – 30 or more hours per week for a period in excess of 90.
- Established part-time – 29 or less hours per week for a period in excess of 90.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Employees may be required to attend training sessions at the discretion of the County.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Employees will receive a performance appraisal following the first six months of employment. Thereafter, employees will receive a performance appraisal annually during the summer months.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

While employment is “at-will”, in its discretion, the County may elect to correct an employee behavior, as it deems appropriate. The County does not follow a particular form of corrective action, but forms of corrective action include, but are not limited to:

- Discharge
- Oral Reprimands
- Required Counseling and Remedial Measures
- Written Reprimands

The objective of the corrective action is to correct an employee’s job performance and/or to maintain the high standards of service and quality of work expected from the agent and clients. The decision at any time to invoke corrective action less than discharge does not affect the County’s policy that the employment is “at will”.

It is impossible to list every type of misconduct or offense that typically would be considered serious enough to warrant corrective action including discharge.

The following list contains examples of the types of infractions that typically would result in corrective action. It is not intended to be a complete list, and, as at-will, employees would be subject to corrective action including discharge, on other grounds or for other reasons.

1. Unlawful use, sale, or distribution of controlled substances or narcotics.
2. Working while intoxicated or drinking alcohol (except as allowed at officially sponsored social events of the County).
3. Any unethical behavior(s) or action(s) or any form of dishonesty
4. Fighting with another or committing assault while on duty or at work.
5. Theft or misuse of the County property or removing from the premises or borrowing for personal use County property without prior written authorization.
6. Unauthorized use, possession, or theft of tools, machinery, or equipment belonging to others.
7. Falsifying a record or report, including any application for employment, a time card, an expense record, a Board motion, or any other records of the County.
8. Intentionally defacing, damaging, or destroying County property or the property of others.

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9. Divulging without authorization personal or confidential information to an unauthorized party.
10. Violation of the County Non-Discrimination or Harassment policies.
11. A conviction of guilt, including a plea of *nolo contendere* (no contest) for violation of a criminal drug statute.
12. Unlawful or blatantly immoral conduct, on or off duty, on or off the premises of the County, if the nature of such conduct would create a safety risk or severely impede the ability of the employee to work with co-workers, the Board of Directors, or the community.
13. Horseplay, boisterous behavior, loafing or loitering during work time.
14. Excessive, unexcused, or abusive patterns of tardiness or absenteeism.
15. Leaving the premises without permission (AWOL) during scheduled work hours or prior to quitting time.
16. Possession of guns, weapons, or explosives, while working or on duty.
17. Discourtesy and/or abusive or profane language.
18. Engaging in unsafe behavior or failing to comply with safety rules and practices.
19. Failure to follow or comply with policies, practices, and directives of the County.
20. Negligent, unacceptable, or poor work performance as determined in the sole discretion of the Agency.
21. Telephone Abuse (for example, unauthorized long distance or toll calls; excessive time in personal telephone calls).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received and read a copy of the [redacted] County Employee Handbook. I understand that the policies, rules, and benefits described in it are subject to change at the sole discretion of the employer at any time.

This Employee Handbook neither expresses nor implies a promise of any kind and is not a legal contract of employment between the employer and myself. I further understand that my employment is terminable at will, either by myself or my employer regardless of the length of my employment. Also, no one, other than the County Executive Committee may alter this employment relationship or change any policy or provision contained in this Handbook and to be valid, such alteration or change must be in writing and signed by the County President.

Employee Signature

Date

Employee Printed Name

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