

# Employee Handbook



Bluffs Regional



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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>SECTION I: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
WELCOME TO DOUGLAS COUNTY!	2
ETHICS CENTERED GOVERNMENT	3
<b>SECTION II: CORE POLICIES</b>	<b>4</b>
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY / UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT	4
ADA AND RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION	4
PREGNANCY ACCOMMODATION	4
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	5
COMPLAINT PROCEDURE	5
WORKPLACE SAFETY	6
DRUG FREE WORKPLACE	6
<b>SECTION III: WORK HOURS AND PAY PRACTICES</b>	<b>8</b>
EMPLOYEE CATEGORIES	8
WORKWEEK AND HOURS OF WORK	8
LUNCH AND WORK BREAKS	9
ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY	9
NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE	9
UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE / JOB ABANDONMENT	9
CLOSURE OF COUNTY FACILITIES	9
PAY DAY	10
RECORDING WORK TIME	11
OVERTIME / COMPENSATORY TIME	11
SALARY FOR EXEMPT EMPLOYEES	12
OUT-OF-OFFICE TIME	12
ON-CALL TIME	12
TELECOMMUTING / WORKING REMOTE	13
<b>SECTION IV: EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES</b>	<b>14</b>
JOB VACANCIES	14
JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS / OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT	14
BACKGROUND CHECKS	14
POSITIONS REQUIRING CDL LICENSE	14
EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES	15
COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY	15
SERVICE AWARDS	15
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	15
PROMOTION	15
CAREER PROGRESSION	15
LATERAL TRANSFER	16

DEMOTION	16
RESIGNATION	16
REHIRED EMPLOYEES	16
LAY-OFF / REDUCTION IN FORCE	16
EXIT INTERVIEWS	16
PERSONNEL RECORDS	17
CONTRACT EMPLOYMENT	17
OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT	17
 <b>SECTION V: TIME OFF AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE</b>	 <b>18</b>
ELIGIBILITY AND PRORATION OF BENEFITS	18
HOLIDAYS	18
VACATION	19
SICK LEAVE	20
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY-RELATED PAID LEAVE	21
SICK LEAVE CONVERSION	22
LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA) PAY	22
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)	23
NON-FMLA LEAVE	25
PERSONAL LEAVE	26
JOB PROTECTION DURING LEAVES OF ABSENCE	26
BENEFIT PREMIUMS WHILE ON LEAVE	26
FAMILY CARE ACT (FCA) LEAVE	27
COLORADO FAMLI	27
WORKERS COMPENSATION	27
MEDICAL LEAVE STATUS	28
BEREAVEMENT LEAVE	28
DOMESTIC ABUSE LEAVE	28
MILITARY ABSENCES	28
JURY DUTY	29
WITNESS SUMMONS	29
EMPLOYEE TESTIMONY FOR NON-COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS	30
TIME OFF FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE	30
TIME OFF FOR VOTING	30
 <b>SECTION VI: BENEFITS</b>	 <b>31</b>
ELIGIBILITY OF BENEFITS	31
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	31
 <b>SECTION VII: WORKING TOGETHER</b>	 <b>32</b>
WORKPLACE CONDUCT	32
EMPLOYEE MANDATORY DISCLOSURES	32
PROBLEM RESOLUTION	32
WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS	33
DISCIPLINE	33
APPEARANCE AND DRESS	34

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS	34
MEDIA RELATIONS	34
INSPECTIONS AND SEARCHES	34
SMOKING	35
SAFETY AND REPORTING	35
TELEPHONE COURTESY	35
PROPERTY AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT	36
BUILDING ACCESS / SECURITY	36
MEALS, MILEAGE AND TRAVEL	36
CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION	36
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	37
SERVICE ON COUNTY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS	37
POLITICAL ACTIVITY	37
HONESTY / THEFT	38
<b>SECTION VIII: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS</b>	<b>39</b>
PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION	39
COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS	39
INTERNET USE	39
SOCIAL MEDIA	40
PORTABLE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES (PECD)	40
COMPUTERS	41
<b>DOUGLAS COUNTY POLICIES</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>44</b>

## ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

This Handbook is designed to acquaint employees with Douglas County and to provide information about working here. ***The Handbook is not all-inclusive but is intended to provide the employee with a summary of some of Douglas County's policies and guidelines.*** This **March 2025**, edition replaces all previously issued editions.

Although the general provisions of this Handbook are intended to apply to all Douglas County Employees, some departments such as the Douglas County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) and the 23<sup>rd</sup> District Attorney's Office (DA23), may also provide a Policy and Procedure Manual with additional provisions specific to their department. For DCSO and DA23 employees, in the event of a conflict between the provisions of the Handbook and the department Manual, the provisions of the department Manual control.

**EMPLOYMENT WITH DOUGLAS COUNTY IS "AT-WILL."** An employee has the right to end the work relationship with Douglas County, with or without advance notice for any reason. Douglas County has the same right. ***The language used in this Handbook and any verbal statements made by management are not intended to, and do not constitute a contract of employment, either express or implied, nor are they a guarantee of employment for a specific duration.***

No employee Handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question. After reading the Handbook, if an employee has questions, the employee should and is encouraged to immediately talk to their direct supervisor or the Human Resources Department.

The need may arise to change the guidelines described in the Handbook. ***Except for the at-will nature of employment, Douglas County reserves the right to modify, suspend, interpret or cancel them with or without notice.*** Additionally, any Douglas County employee may propose suggested amendments to the Employee Handbook. In the event that an amendment is proposed, it shall be forwarded through supervisory levels to the Human Resources Department. The County Manager has final approval of all Employee Handbook changes or amendments. Amendments to the original adopted Employee Handbook may be communicated through electronic and/or hard copy distribution to all employees and will be provided in whole on DCNet.

## **Section I: INTRODUCTION**

### **WELCOME TO DOUGLAS COUNTY!**

Each employee is a very important member of the team at Douglas County. We take a great deal of pride in the caliber of our workforce, and we hope you find the work here challenging and rewarding. Each member of the Douglas County team is vital to the success of our organization and our primary purpose of serving the citizens of Douglas County.

Douglas County strives for excellence in local governance and public service. Each employee plays a major role in ensuring that this reputation continues. We believe in working together to meet common goals, and we invite you to join with us in achieving these goals. Naturally, much of that success depends on your knowledge about working here. That is why we have prepared this Handbook and made it available to you electronically or by hard copy upon your request. We hope it will answer your employment related questions about Douglas County.

If you have any questions, you should contact your immediate supervisor as your primary source for information about Douglas County and your job. Other sources of information include the Human Resources Department and DCNet (our internal website for employees).

As a member of our team, you are a part of a County well known for providing quality service. We are confident you can help continue to build on that reputation.

We hope you support these ideals and enjoy working for Douglas County.

## **Ethics-Centered Government**

Douglas County's Ethics-Centered Government model shapes the environment in which we serve our citizens, taxpayers, and communities. As such, employees of Douglas County must carry out their job responsibilities in accordance with the following principles:

- We are stewards of the public trust, responsible for the property and resources of Douglas County
- We make decisions and policies using the proper channels of the government structure, free of improper influence
- We shall act in the best interests of Douglas County, our citizens, taxpayers and communities, and not for any personal interest or for the interest of family, friends, business or political associates
- We should avoid any action that would give a reasonably prudent person the impression that we are using our public employment for private gain; giving special treatment to any person or group; or failing to be neutral in conducting County business
- We must ensure that policies, practices and decision-making processes are free from the undue pressure of any special group, individual or organization
- We conduct Douglas County business in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations

**The complete Ethics Centered Government policy may be found on DCNet.**

## **Section II: CORE POLICIES**

### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT**

Douglas County is dedicated to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity in any term, condition, or privilege of employment. We do not discriminate against applicants or employees on the basis of age (40 and over), race, sex, sexual orientation (including gender identity), creed, ancestry, marital status, color, religion, national origin, disability, military status, genetic information, veteran status or any other status protected by federal, state or local law (collectively referred to as protected classes).

Douglas County is further committed to maintaining a positive working environment free of unlawful harassment and sensitive to the diversity of its employees. In doing so, the County prohibits harassment based on any protected status.

This applies to all terms, conditions and privileges of employment including recruitment, selection, compensation, benefits, training, placement, transfer, promotion, termination, leaves of absence, and any other employment-related process or issue.

This policy applies to all employees including Elected Officials, directors, managers, supervisors, co-workers, and non-employees such as volunteers, customers, vendors, consultants, citizens, etc. If an employee feels this principle has been violated, refer to the complaint procedure set forth in this section.

### **ADA AND RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION**

The County will make reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with known disabilities and employees whose work requirements interfere with a religious belief, unless doing so would result in substantial increased costs in relation to the conduct of operations. Employees needing such accommodation should contact their supervisor or Human Resources.

### **PREGNANCY ACCOMMODATION**

Employees have the right to be free from discriminatory or unfair employment practices because of pregnancy, a health condition related to pregnancy, or the physical recovery from childbirth. Employees who are otherwise qualified for a position may request a reasonable accommodation related to pregnancy, a health condition related to pregnancy or the physical recovery from childbirth. If an employee requests an accommodation, the County will engage in a timely, good-faith, and interactive process with the employee to determine whether there is an effective, reasonable accommodation that will enable the employee to perform the essential functions of their position.

The County may require that an employee provide a note from their health care provider detailing the medical advisability of the reasonable accommodation. The County will not deny employment opportunities or retaliate against an employee because of an employee's request for a reasonable accommodation related to pregnancy, a health condition related to pregnancy, or the physical recovery from childbirth. Employees who have questions about this section or who wish to request a reasonable accommodation should contact the Human Resources Department.



The County is supportive of providing a work environment for employees who are breastfeeding or expressing milk. There are various lactation room locations throughout the County. Please contact your supervisor or Human Resources for additional information.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Because sexual harassment raises issues that are to some extent unique in comparison to other types of harassment, the County believes it warrants separate emphasis. Douglas County strongly opposes sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual conduct. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

All employees are always expected to conduct themselves in a professional and business-like manner. Inappropriate sexual conduct is expressly prohibited by this policy. Such inappropriate sexual conduct may include, but is not limited to, sexually implicit or explicit communications whether in:

- Written form: Such as cartoons, posters, calendars, notes, letters, e-mail, text messages, social media or other forms of electronic communication.
- Verbal form: Such as comments, jokes, foul/obscene language of a sexual nature, gossiping or questions about another's sex life, or repeated requests for dates.
- Physical gestures and other nonverbal behavior: Such as unwelcome touching, grabbing, fondling, kissing, massaging, and brushing up against another's body.

This policy applies to all employees including Elected Officials, directors, managers, supervisors, co-workers, and non-employees such as volunteers, customers, clients, vendors, consultants, etc.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

The County cannot investigate an issue until it is aware of the concerns. If an employee believes there has been a violation of the policy against harassment based on any of the protected classes mentioned above, including sexual harassment, the employee must make a timely report of the circumstances to either the Department Director, Elected Official or designee (Department Official) or to the Human Resources Department. The County will investigate reported violations and keep reported information as confidential as possible under the circumstances. Confidentiality must also be balanced with the County's need to investigate and fully understand the facts behind the alleged misconduct so that appropriate action can be taken.

If, after an investigation, it is determined that an employee's behavior is in violation of this policy, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination, against the offending employee(s).

Douglas County prohibits retaliation against an employee for filing a complaint under this policy or for assisting in a complaint investigation. If an employee perceives retaliation for making a complaint or as a result of participating in the investigation, immediately report the circumstances to the Human Resources Department. The situation will be promptly investigated.

### **WORKPLACE SAFETY**

Employees must not engage in, or be subjected to, physical and/or verbal intimidation, threatening or violent conduct, hostile behaviors, physical/verbal abuse, vandalism, sabotage, arson, bullying, or any other act, which, in Douglas County's opinion, is inappropriate to the workplace. In addition, bizarre or offensive comments regarding violent events and/or behavior are not tolerated. In addition, we will not tolerate the use of weapons and/or carrying weapons into any County building, unless specifically required to do so in the performance of the employee's duties, or as specifically authorized by section 18-12-201 et seq., C.R.S.

Employees should immediately report any such occurrences to a supervisor or to Human Resources. The County will promptly investigate complaints. If it is determined that an employee's conduct is in violation of this policy, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken against the offending employee(s). Employees should directly contact law enforcement, security and/or emergency services if they believe there is an imminent threat to the safety and health of themselves, co-workers, customers, clients, vendors, consultants, etc.

Douglas County has the right to conduct an inspection and/or search of any County-owned or leased property to help maintain a safe, healthy and efficient working environment, and to protect Douglas County property, equipment, operations as well as its employees, customers and citizens. Please see the section on Inspections and Searches in this Handbook for details.

### **DRUG FREE WORKPLACE**

It is the goal of Douglas County to foster a work environment free from the behavior altering effects of drugs, alcohol or controlled substances. NOTE: For purposes of this section and with respect to the Drug Free Workplace policy, the County defines usage, possession or working under the influence of controlled substances to include marijuana, as it remains federally illegal.

Use of illegal drugs, legal drugs used contrary to physician orders, and alcohol alter employees' judgment resulting in increased safety risks, workplace injuries and faulty decision making.

- Working under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance, any illegal substances, or the abuse of any other substances is prohibited.
- Possession, purchase, consumption (use), or sale of a controlled substance, marijuana or any by-product, or an open container of alcohol on County premises or while conducting County business is prohibited.
- Testing positive for controlled substances or alcohol pursuant to the Drug Free Workplace Policy is a violation of the policy.
- Employees are expected to follow all physician, manufacturer, or package insert directions when taking a prescription or over the counter (OTC) drug.
- Excluded from this policy are prescribed drugs or OTC drugs when used in the manner,

- combination and quantity intended unless job performance could be affected.
- If prescribed or OTC drugs could possibly impair the employee's ability to perform their job, work restrictions may be implemented for the duration of the period while the employee is under the influence of the drug. Any work restrictions will be made in coordination with the employee's immediate supervisor and when appropriate, a doctor.

Additionally, in cases where the County has reasonable suspicion that an employee is under the influence of alcohol, drugs or a controlled substance, the County reserves the right to require an employee to submit to reasonable suspicion drug and/or alcohol testing. This process will be conducted by a third-party vendor using testing methods that meet accepted standards of reliability and accuracy. Refusal to cooperate with a requested drug and/or alcohol test is a violation of the Drug Free Workplace policy.

A violation of the Drug Free Workplace policy, even a first offense, may result in disciplinary action. The degree of discipline administered will depend on the circumstances of each case. However, employees need to be aware that certain offenses, including but not limited to possession, sale, or use of controlled substances on County property, will not be tolerated.

Douglas County supports sound treatment efforts. Whenever practical, Douglas County will assist employees in overcoming drug, alcohol, and other problems which may affect employee job performance as long as this policy has not already been violated. Should an employee affirmatively seek help for alcohol misuse or use of drugs or other controlled substances prior to reporting for duty, they may be allowed to participate in a voluntary rehabilitation program.

Refer to the complete Drug Free Workplace policy on DCNet.

## **Section III: WORK HOURS AND PAY PRACTICES**

### **EMPLOYEE CATEGORIES**

For administrative purposes, Douglas County classifies employees into the following employee categories.

- Regular, Full-Time Employee
- Regular, Part-Time Employee
- Temporary, Limited Benefits Employee
- Temporary/Seasonal Employee

Additionally, all County employees are classified as either exempt from overtime pay or non-exempt from overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Exempt or non-exempt status is determined in accordance with the law and the actual job duties, not just the job title.

Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay. Generally, the County expects that exempt employees work a minimum of 40 hours a week based upon approved work schedules. Due to the types of job duties typically found within exempt employee job descriptions, it is also more likely than not, that the employee will regularly exceed 40 hours a week. Managers may provide Out-of-Office Time (see page 12) generally in the event of a large-scale project or extended periods of extra work hours, or as otherwise authorized by the Department Official.

Non-exempt employees are compensated at one and one-half times their regular rate or with compensatory time for hours worked in excess of 40 during a workweek.

Exempt employees will be paid on a salary basis. The Organization is committed to complying with salary basis requirements which allows properly authorized deductions. If you believe an improper deduction has been made to your salary, you should immediately report this information to Human Resources. Reports of improper deductions will be promptly investigated. If it is determined that an improper deduction has occurred, you will be promptly reimbursed.

### **WORKWEEK AND HOURS OF WORK**

Our normal workweek for purposes of calculating overtime for non-exempt employees consists of 40 hours within a seven-day period, 12:00 a.m. Sunday to 12:00 midnight Saturday. Most Douglas County offices are open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Your Department Official with the approval of the County Commissioners (mostly delegated to the County Manager) is responsible for establishing and communicating variations to these standard hours of operation.

Some positions may be eligible for a flexible schedule depending upon the specific department's business needs. Flexible schedules are generally allowed within the County and include a 4 x 10 schedule (four 10-hour days in a normal week) or a 4-5-9 schedule (four 9-hour days plus one 8-hour day in a 7-day week and four 9-hour days in the next 7-day week). Also, the starting and ending times of an individual employee's work schedule may be different from the normal 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and may change from time to time according to the needs of the department. Employees must check with their supervisor with questions about their work schedule, or with needs for any adjustments to the amount of time they actually worked. For information, see your immediate supervisor.

In the event of an emergency/disaster in or near the County, all County employees are expected to make every effort to be available to assist the County Manager, Elected or Appointed Officials and Department Directors to ensure the continued operation of any and all necessary County functions. This may mean being available to perform additional duties and hours beyond what is normally required. In the event that an exempt employee does work more than 40 hours a week in support of County operations during an emergency, such employee may receive overtime or other appropriate wage compensation in accordance with existing County policies or at the discretion of the County Manager.

### **LUNCH AND WORK BREAKS**

Scheduling and length of lunch and work breaks are determined by each department's business needs and constraints. Generally, meal periods are 30-60 minutes in length and breaks are 10-15 minutes long. While meal periods are unpaid time for non-exempt employees, break periods are included in paid work time. An employee may not work through their lunch break without obtaining prior approval from their supervisor as it may result in overtime. Additionally, employees may not skip their lunch breaks in order to leave early or arrive late unless they have prior approval from their supervisor. Time adjustments, whether increases or decreases, to lunch and other breaks should be immediately reported to a supervisor so that hours and pay will be correct.

### **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Each employee is an integral part of Douglas County, and our citizens and fellow employees depend on us. The presence of each employee on the job and during an assigned work schedule is an essential function of every position. All employees are expected to be on time and punctual when reporting to work. Attendance and punctuality are considered, along with work performance, in granting pay increases, promotions or lateral transfers. Absenteeism or tardiness may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Any leave without pay must be approved by the Department Official, and in advance whenever possible. The County may require that an employee provide a note from a medical provider when requesting leave without pay if the absence is medically related.

### **NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

There are times when an employee must be late or absent due to illness or other valid reasons. If it is necessary for the employee to be late or absent from work due to illness, injury or an emergency situation, contact an immediate supervisor as soon as possible and in advance of the employee's work schedule. If their immediate supervisor is unavailable, the employee should contact the appropriate manager within the department. Each employee should notify their supervisor of the reason for the absence and expected return date. If it is necessary to leave a message, it is the sole responsibility of the employee to leave the message directly with their immediate supervisor or supervisor's designee in a manner designed to timely reach the appropriate person. Leaving messages with other employees or passing messages through other employees is not acceptable.

### **UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE / JOB ABANDONMENT**

If an employee does not report to work for three or more consecutive work shifts, without providing proper notification the absence may be viewed as job abandonment. Job abandonment will result in termination.

### **CLOSURE OF COUNTY FACILITIES**

The County Manager will make all final decisions regarding closures or delayed openings of any facility. If the County offices officially close due to inclement weather or for any other non-holiday related reason,

each employee actually scheduled and expected to work during the closure may be compensated for the hours missed due to the closure. These hours will count as actual hours worked for the computation of overtime for non-exempt employees. If an employee is on an approved leave during the unexpected closing, the employee's leave time balances will still be charged as if the closure had not occurred.

For office closures during regular business hours, each department will be notified directly, and an Employee Alert will be issued via email, phone and/or text message. To find out if the County offices are closed due to inclement weather, employees may also call 303.660.7400, 303.660.7401, or 303.660.7300 for a recorded message. Notice is also posted in the News Room on the home page of the County's website. Notification is also given to 850 KOA-AM News Radio, as well as all Denver-based television stations. Generally, the delay or closure message will be recorded no later than 5:30 a.m. on any day that adverse weather or road conditions exist.

If an employee is in a position considered "essential" for snow removal or other emergencies, the employee will be required to report to work if reasonable efforts will enable them to travel safely to the work site. Examples of positions which are considered "essential" include but are not limited to, Emergency Management staff, Deputies, Equipment Operators, Dispatchers, etc. Any employee unsure of their classification needs to discuss it with an immediate supervisor. Non-exempt essential employees who cannot reasonably and safely report to work will be compensated only for the hours that the County is closed. However, the use of vacation, personal, Floating Holiday, or compensatory time to make up a normal day schedule is permitted.

A non-exempt "essential" employee who reports to work will be paid at their regular rate for the hours the County is officially closed. The non-exempt "essential" employee will also be paid for the hours actually worked on that day at their regular rate of pay. The County closure will count as actual hours worked for the computation of overtime.

With the supervisor's approval, a non-exempt employee may be allowed to make up time caused by a late arrival within that workweek according to the needs of the County or the employee must report vacation or personal time. If an employee has exhausted all vacation and personal time, their missed time should be recorded as leave without pay.

## **PAY DAY**

Payday for Douglas County is the last business day of each month. The pay period includes time worked between the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the previous month through the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the current month. For example, the paycheck received on the last business day of March is for the time worked from February 21<sup>st</sup> through March 20<sup>th</sup>.

Full-time new hires with a start date between the 21<sup>st</sup> and the end of the month will receive a one-time advance of 40 hours of pay on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month following their start date. Subsequently, their first full paycheck will be less 40 hours of pay accordingly.

The County issues paychecks via direct deposit. For the convenience of the employee, the County offers employees the option of having their paycheck electronically deposited into up to four separate accounts. Direct deposit information may be completed through the Employee Self Service option on DCNet.

Paycheck questions about the amount of pay, automatic deductions such as additional tax withholding, reimbursements, etc. should be discussed with Payroll.

Automatic deductions such as contributions to voluntary benefit plans and individual retirement plans are arranged through the Human Resources Department.

### **RECORDING WORK TIME**

Employees must submit an official time record for each pay period, which is accessed through Employee Self Service Timekeeping on DCNet. Both the employee and their supervisor or designee must authorize the time record. For the non-exempt employee, all hours worked, rounded to the nearest quarter-hour, must be documented and recorded accurately. It is necessary for each employee to indicate whether the recorded hours are for time worked or for paid time off such as holiday, vacation, personal time, or sick leave. In the employee's absence, the supervisor or designee may complete the time record for the employee.

These records are the only ones used by the County to calculate employee pay and paid time off balances. It is very important that they are accurate and complete. Non-exempt employees are expected to submit accurate and complete time records reflecting all hours worked. Employees who also choose to keep their own personal time records must provide them to the County if they find a discrepancy between the County's records and their records. Employees should contact their supervisors or Human Resources with questions about how their pay is calculated. Employees must promptly notify their supervisors or Human Resources of any mistakes or concerns about their time records or pay.

### **OVERTIME / COMPENSATORY TIME**

At times, a non-exempt employee may be required to work overtime to attend a meeting or an event during unscheduled hours, or to work additional hours. In these instances, the employee is expected to be given as much advance notice as practical.

Overtime for a non-exempt employee will accrue at the rate of 1½ times their regular hourly rate for hours worked in excess of 40 hours during the established seven-day workweek. Each workweek must be considered separately when computing overtime worked. Compensatory time, earned at 1½ times the hours actually worked beyond 40 hours, may be substituted for overtime pay at the discretion of the Department Official. With the supervisor's approval, compensatory time can be taken in any following workweek within the same calendar year. Compensatory time accrued and not used by December 20th is paid out to the employee as paid overtime in the last pay period of the year, or at the time of separation, whichever comes first.

It is important to remember that overtime must be authorized and approved by your supervisor. All trainings offered by the County must be authorized by your supervisor in advance when it will result in overtime. Working unauthorized overtime may result in disciplinary action. For purposes of calculating overtime payments, only the following will apply toward the calculation of overtime:

- Actual hours worked
- Holidays
- County Closure

Compensatory time and/or overtime only apply to non-exempt employees, unless otherwise prescribed in policy.

### **SALARY FOR EXEMPT EMPLOYEES**

The County complies with the salary basis requirements of the FLSA. Therefore, we prohibit all supervisors from making any improper deductions from the salaries of exempt employees.

Deductions from salaries that are permissible:

- **Personal absences.** The County may deduct for full day absences for personal reasons other than sickness or disability.
- **Absences for illness or injury.** The County may deduct for full day absences due to illness or injury if bona fide sick pay/disability plans are in place.
- **Absences for an approved Leave of Absence.** The County may deduct for full day absences taken as FMLA, Non-FMLA, FCA and/or Personal leave and partial day absences for hours taken as intermittent leave.
- **Absences associated with FAMLI.** The County may deduct for full day and/or intermittent absences for hours compensated under the Colorado FAMLI program.
- **Infractions of safety rules.** The County may deduct for penalties imposed when exempt employees violate safety rules of major significance.
- **Infractions of workplace conduct rules.** The County may suspend exempt employees without pay for full days for infractions of written workplace conduct rules.
- **First or last weeks of employment.** The County may make partial week payments during an employee's first or last weeks of employment.

If you believe that an improper deduction has been made from your salary, you should immediately report this information to Human Resources. Reports of improper deductions will be promptly investigated. If it is determined that an improper deduction has occurred, you will be reimbursed.

### **OUT-OF-OFFICE TIME**

Due to the nature of exempt positions, work hours outside the normal workweek may be required. Full-time salaried employees who are exempt from overtime under the FLSA may be granted out-of-office time as compensation for additional hours worked at the discretion of the supervisor. Such time off may not be taken without pre-approval of the Elected Official or Department Director. Approval for out of office time shall not exceed a maximum of 40 hours in any calendar year, without the County Manager's prior approval. Generally, out-of-office time off is only granted in the event of a large-scale project or extended periods of extra work hours. The use of this leave time is limited by the work requirements of the department. All out-of-office compensation must be documented on the employee's time sheet as an exception for reporting purposes.

### **ON-CALL TIME**

Douglas County recognizes that it may be necessary for various Elected Offices and departments to require employees to be available on an on-call basis. It is the County's general guideline that on-call assignments should be kept to a minimum. It is at the discretion of the Elected Official/Director and the business needs of their offices as to whether this guideline applies. The complete on-policy for non-exempt employees may be found on DCNet.



## **TELECOMMUTING / WORKING REMOTE**

Telecommuting is the practice of working at home or from a site other than a department's central workplace. This is not an employee benefit but an alternative method of meeting the County's needs. Telecommuting is a privilege; employees may express a desire to, or not to telecommute and the Department Official may consider the employee's wishes along with the operational needs of the County in making a determination. The County has the right to implement, refuse and/or terminate telecommuting arrangements at any time.

Equipment issued to employees in connection with telecommuting is subject to all Information Technology policies, including but not limited to the Portable Electronic Communication Devices and Computers sections outlined in this Handbook. Generally, the County is not responsible for providing office furniture for telecommuting arrangements.

A work schedule should be established by the supervisor and the Attendance and Punctuality section of the Handbook would apply. Telecommuting employees are expected to produce the same level and quality of work that would be expected onsite.

The County does not generally offer out of state employment except for in exceptionally rare circumstances and when approved by the County Manager. There are established procedures required prior to allowing out of state employment. Please contact Human Resources for more information.

## **Section IV: EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

### **JOB VACANCIES**

Recognizing the need to fill available positions with the best-qualified individuals, Douglas County may consider qualified candidates from within our current workforce as well as recruit external candidates. Absent an intervening legal requirement, promotions and transfers between departments are made on the basis of performance and qualifications.

### **JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS / OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT**

Douglas County has an established job-posting process to give employees an opportunity to apply for posted positions for which they are interested in and qualified for.

The County encourages employees to seek advancement opportunities. Employees may obtain career guidance from their supervisor and/or the Human Resources Department. An employee's basic eligibility for transfer, promotion, or reclassification is determined by the requirements of the posted position and the employee's qualifications and skills. The employee generally must have held their current position for at least six months, have a satisfactory performance record, and have not received any disciplinary actions in the last 12 months. However, prior to the completion of six-months of employment, the employee's current Department Official may voluntarily choose to allow a transfer, promotion or reclassification.

Job descriptions and job openings are posted on the Douglas County website, [www.douglas.co.us](http://www.douglas.co.us). Promotion/Transfer opportunities are only open to Douglas County employees. Applications should be completed on-line by the posted closing date.

### **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Per the pre-employment background check policy, a background check process may include but is not limited to: (1) Criminal Background Check (2) Driving Record Check (3) Reference Check, and/or (4) Degree Verification. Any of these checks may be performed on individuals who transfer to a new position or department. Additionally, specific positions in Douglas County that have unfettered access to the Sheriff's Office and/or their information systems will be required to pass a national background check via fingerprinting. This applies to all regular and temporary positions regardless of FTE.

If an employee has questions about the pre-employment background check or fingerprinting process, they should contact their supervisor, the hiring manager, or the Human Resources Department. The complete Pre-Employment Background Check and Fingerprinting policies can be found on DCNet.

### **POSITIONS REQUIRING CDL LICENSE**

Douglas County complies with minimum federal safety standards for safety sensitive duties as regulated by the federal Department of Transportation. These regulations are designed to reduce accidents that result from employee use of controlled or illegal substances and alcohol.

Douglas County also complies with regulations of the Department of Transportation for all drivers required to hold a commercial driver's license (CDL) in order to perform their job as reflected in the Douglas County policy regarding "DOT Drug and Alcohol Regulations for CDL Positions," which may be accessed on DCNet.

## **EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES**

**Generally, the following guidelines apply:**

- No employee shall personally appoint, hire, or advocate, when not solicited by the hiring party, for the appointment or hiring of any person who is the employee's relative.
- No employee shall participate directly or indirectly in the recruitment and selection process that involves a relative.
- No employee shall supervise or be supervised, directly or indirectly, by any relative of the employee.
- No employee shall audit, verify, receive or be entrusted with monies received or handled by a relative.
- No relative of an employee shall have access to that employee's confidential information, including payroll processing and personnel records within their organization without supervisory approval and/or audit trail.

## **COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY**

Douglas County recognizes that employees are among our most valuable resources and has adopted a pay-for-performance, market-based approach to compensation. We use a number of tools to support our compensation philosophy and determine appropriate pay levels, such as job descriptions, a structure of market-based salary ranges, and our performance management system.

## **SERVICE AWARDS**

After each consecutive five years of service with Douglas County, an employee may qualify for a Service Award to include a certificate of recognition and the award option(s) that may be available at the time of their anniversary. This recognition is available to regular full-time and regular part-time employees.

## **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

Douglas County believes that each employee should be recognized and rewarded based on job performance and contributions toward the organization's success. Ongoing coaching, and performance review are designed to align the efforts of all employees around the County and department-specific vision, mission, strategic initiatives, and goals. The performance management process supports an employee's potential annual pay-for-performance salary increase.

## **PROMOTION**

A promotion is considered a movement from one position to another of greater responsibility at a higher skill level and pay range. An employee may be eligible to receive a promotional increase based on a number of factors including the scope and significance of the change, and qualifications and experience.

## **CAREER PROGRESSION**

Career progression is considered movement from one level of a position to another level of the same position based on meeting required metrics. Each department is responsible for establishing metrics for career progression and partnering with Human Resources on establishing agreeable parameters for career progression.

## **LATERAL TRANSFER**

A lateral transfer may occur through the job posting process or when an employee is reassigned to a position at the same classification level or to a new classification that has a similar pay range. Typically, a two-week notice is expected and honored during the transition to a new department. A salary increase is generally not associated with a lateral transfer.

## **DEMOTION**

A demotion typically occurs when it is determined that an employee is not able to perform at the current level or there is a change in either business strategy or organizational structure. A demotion is the movement of an employee to a position of lesser responsibility at a lower classification level and pay range. An employee who accepts a demotion is subject to the wages, benefits, and policies of the new position.

## **RESIGNATION**

If an employee wishes to leave employment with the County, the County requests a letter of resignation be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor, preferably at least two weeks in advance of the employee's desired last day.

After notice is given Human Resources should be notified, via the separation personnel action process (a copy of the resignation letter should be included with the notification), to help ensure proper payment of the final paycheck, which normally occurs on the next regular pay date after the final day of employment. On or before the last day of work for a resignation, all Douglas County property should be returned. Generally, an exit interview survey will be e-mailed to the employee prior to their last day.

## **REHIRED EMPLOYEES**

Douglas County's practice is to reinstate rehired employees, who have been gone 30 days or less, as if there was no separation of employment. Rehired employees who have been gone 31 days or more, will be considered new hires. In this case, employees will be given a new employment start date and will be eligible for the benefits available to new employees, unless otherwise required by law. Any benefit plan documents that contradict and precede this practice, such as a retirement plan, will supersede application of this policy.

## **LAY-OFF / REDUCTION IN FORCE**

A Douglas County employee may be involuntarily separated from service with the County because of reorganization, lack of work, lack of funding, or for any other reason. As much notice as is practical will be given to the employee in these situations. On or before the last day of work, all Douglas County property should be returned to the supervisor. The complete policy may be found on DCNet.

## **EXIT INTERVIEWS**

Exit interviews with the Human Resources Department are normally scheduled upon request. The purpose of the exit interview may include the review of eligibility for benefit continuation and conversion, to ensure the necessary separation forms are completed, to verify all Douglas County property in the employee's possession (e.g., ID badge) is returned, and to provide the employee with an opportunity to discuss specific job-related experiences.

## **PERSONNEL RECORDS**

Douglas County keeps personnel records for each employee as a record of employment. It is important for employee records to be current and complete. Employee records enable the County to reach an employee in an emergency, distribute mail, and properly maintain insurance and other benefits. It also tracks pay, performance information, payroll deductions, and many other items that apply to each employee.

To ensure County records are complete, accurate and current, employees should notify the Human Resources Department immediately to complete appropriate procedures in the case of any of the following types of changes: name, marital status, insurance changes, educational, or training courses, and other relevant information. Employees must change/update address, phone number, emergency contact information and W-4 information through the Employee Self Service portal.

Information provided by an employee that is knowingly inaccurate and/or false will not be tolerated. Employee personnel records are accessible for the employee to review or discuss. Please contact the Human Resources Department to schedule a time that is mutually convenient.

## **CONTRACT EMPLOYMENT**

Any regular or temporary employee may not also enter into contractual employment agreements to work for Douglas County in any capacity.

## **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Douglas County shall be the primary employer for each regular full-time or regular part-time employee. An employee may engage in outside employment provided the following conditions are met:

- The outside employment does not interfere with County job performance.
- The outside employment does not conflict with the interests of Douglas County.
- The outside employment does not give rise to an appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest.
- Conflicts with an outside job will not be an acceptable excuse for not meeting job expectations or attendance requirements, including required overtime work.

Employees should notify their Department Official of any outside employment. If the Department Official determines that outside employment is not meeting the above conditions, the employee may be required to terminate either the outside employment or employment with Douglas County.

## **Section V: TIME OFF AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

Employees who are out of the office for more than 40 hours due to their own medical condition or injury or to care for an ill family member, must contact the Human Resources Department to initiate a leave of absence. The employee is expected to make contact with the Human Resources Department as soon as practicable under the circumstances.

An employee who has been on leave for their own medical condition, whether work related or not work related, and is able to return to work, is expected to present a doctor's statement indicating their fitness for duty and the date when the employee is able to return to work.

### **ELIGIBILITY AND PRORATION OF BENEFITS**

Regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible for time-off benefits and leaves of absence as covered in this section of the Handbook, whereas temporary limited benefit (LB)'s and temporary/seasonal employees are not eligible, unless otherwise stipulated in these guidelines or required by law.

Regular part-time employees receive pro-rated benefits based on the following schedule:

- Regular part-time employees working 20 – 29 hours per week receive a 50% pro- rated amount.
- Regular part-time employees working 30 – 39 hours per week receive a 75% pro- rated amount.

### **HOLIDAYS**

Each year the Board of County Commissioners determines the official holiday schedule. Generally, the following holidays are observed:

New Year's Day	Veteran's Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Thanksgiving Day
President's Day	Friday after Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve Day (4 hours)
Juneteenth	Christmas Day
Independence Day	Floating Holiday (See Below)
Labor Day	

Most County facilities will be closed for each holiday. When a holiday falls on a Saturday, it is generally observed on the preceding Friday. Generally, when the holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday is observed. When Christmas Day falls on a Saturday it will be observed on the following Monday. Holidays that occur during an employee's vacation period are counted as holiday pay for those days.

The Floating Holiday may be taken anytime during the year prior to December 20<sup>th</sup>, upon prior approval of the employee's supervisor. New employees are eligible for the Floating Holiday during their first year of employment on a pro-rated basis. Full-time employees with a hire date from January to June are eligible for eight hours, and those with a hire date from July to December are eligible for

four hours. Limited benefit (LB) employees are eligible for holiday pay.

Non-exempt employees on a flexible work week and scheduled to work in excess of eight hours on an observed holiday will receive only eight hours of holiday pay. Any additional scheduled hours must be taken as vacation, compensatory time, or personal time.

Employees on a leave without pay, or those receiving LOA Pay, MLS Pay, Long-Term Disability, or Workers Compensation, are not eligible for holiday pay.

A non-exempt employee who must report to work on a holiday because of the vital nature of the employee's job duties will be paid at eight hours of holiday pay plus all additional hours actually worked at their regular rate of pay. Holiday hours shall be included in the computation of overtime.

Employees in positions classified as "essential" are not eligible for holiday pay but rather accrue vacation at a different rate as outlined in the Vacation section of the Handbook. For essential service personnel in the Sheriff's Office see the Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedure manual, for holiday accrual information.

**Separation:** Upon separation from the County, employees will not be paid any unused portion of Floating Holiday, additionally, a holiday should not generally be an employee's first or last day of employment.

## VACATION

Douglas County has established a vacation policy to grant each regular full-time and regular part-time employee time off from work.

**Eligibility and Accrual of Vacation:** Currently, each regular full-time employee is eligible for vacation in accordance with the schedule below. New hires will have their first month vacation accrual pro-rated to the nearest quarter hour based upon date of hire. Employees continue to accrue vacation during periods of leave with pay, except when paid by LOA Pay, MLS Pay or Long-Term Disability. Vacation does not accrue during periods of leave without pay.

### Vacation Accrual Non-Essential

Completed Years of Continuous Service	Accrual Rate Per Month in Hours	Current Annual Vacation Benefit	Maximum Accrual*
0 - 5 years	9.0 hours	108 hours (13.5 days)	216 hours
6 - 10 years	11.0 hours	132 hours (16.5 days)	264 hours
11 - 15 years	13.0 hours	156 hours (19.5 days)	312 hours
16 - 19 years	14.0 hours	168 hours (21 days)	336 hours
20 years +	15.0 hours	180 hours (22.5 days)	360 hours

*\*Maximum accrual equals double the employee's current annual accrual rate.*

**Vacation Accrual Essential**

<b>Completed Years of Continuous Service</b>	<b>Accrual Rate Per Month in Hours*</b>	<b>Current Annual Vacation Benefit</b>	<b>Maximum Accrual*</b>
0-5 years	17.34 hours	208.08 hours (26 days)	316 hours
6-10 years	19.34 hours	232.08 hours (29 days)	364 hours
11-15 years	21.34 hours	256.08 hours (32 days)	412 hours
16-19 years	22.34 hours	268.08 hours (33.5 days)	436 hours
20 years +	23.34 hours	280.08 hours (35 days)	460 hours

*\* Accrual Rate Per Month Includes 92 Hours/12 Months for Holiday Hours*

**Requesting and Using Vacation:** Vacation may be utilized in quarter-hour increments and may be used in the pay period that it accrues. Employees may not borrow against future vacation accruals. Vacation time must be scheduled and approved in advance with the employee's supervisor and should not conflict with the work requirements of the Department.

Each employee is encouraged to use all accrued vacation each year. An employee may carry over unused vacation from one calendar year to the next up to the maximum accrual amount. Excess vacation hours over the maximum accrual amount will be monetized and contributed to the Retirement Health Savings Account. Upon separation, employees may use these funds to pay for insurance premiums and eligible out-of-pocket expenses related to medical, dental and vision expenses.

**Separation:** Upon separation from the County, employees will be paid for the unused portion of accumulated vacation hours including any pro-rated amount during the month of their separation up to the maximum accrual amount. Vacation time is paid at the employee's rate of pay at the time of separation.

**SICK LEAVE**

**Eligibility and Accrual of Sick Leave:** Currently, all full-time employees accrue eight hours of sick leave per month, part-time accrual is pro-rated. New hires will have sick leave accruals pro-rated to the nearest quarter hour for the first month of employment based upon date of hire.

Sick leave accrual for regular full-time and regular part-time employees is unlimited and carries forward from year to year. The County also offers a Sick Leave Conversion based on years of service and the employee's sick leave balance at the time of the request.

Temporary limited benefits and temporary/seasonal employees may accrue up to 48 hours of sick leave annually. Unused accrued sick leave will carry forward from year to year. Non-benefited, temporary and seasonal employees are not eligible for Sick Leave Conversion.

Employees continue to accrue sick leave during periods of leave with pay, except when on LOA Pay, MLS Pay, or Long-Term Disability. Sick leave does not accrue during periods of leave without pay.



**Requesting and Using Sick Leave:** Sick leave may be used for an employee's illness, pregnancy or birth of a child, medical or dental appointments, an off-the-job injury, to care for an ill member of the employee's family, additional bereavement, or when an employee is required to evacuate their place of residence or care for a family member whose school or place of care has been closed due to inclement weather, loss of power, loss of heating, loss of water, or other unexpected events or circumstances.

Sick leave may be used in quarter- hour increments and may be used in the pay period it accrues. Employees may not borrow against future sick leave accruals. An employee requesting sick leave must notify their supervisor prior to the start of the applicable work shift, or if medically unable, as soon as practical under the circumstances. Employees must also notify their supervisor of anticipated return date as soon as possible. Failure to notify the supervisor may lead to disciplinary action.

Your supervisor may request documentation for use of sick leave to the full extent permitted by law. In the event an employee is absent for more than 40 work hours, medical certification from a healthcare provider is required and must be provided to Human Resources. This absence may qualify for FMLA leave if all requirements are met.

**Personal Time:** Currently, Douglas County permits each regular full-time employee the use of 16 hours per year of unused sick leave for personal reasons while employed, to be used by December 20<sup>th</sup> . Employees must have accrued sick leave at least equal to the amount of personal time requested. Personal time must be scheduled in advance with the employee's supervisor and must accommodate the work requirements of the Department. Unused personal time does not carry forward into the next calendar year except as sick leave.

**Separation:** Upon separation from the County, employees will not be paid for any of the unused portion of accumulated sick leave unless eligible to use Sick Leave Conversion.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY-RELATED PAID LEAVE**

During a public health emergency as defined by C.R.S. 8-13.3-402, the County will provide up to 80 hours of Public Health Emergency-Related (PHER) paid leave at an employee's regular rate of pay for the following purposes:

- When required to self-isolate (or care for a family member who is self-isolating) due to the employee (or family member) being diagnosed with, or having symptoms of, a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency;
- To seek or obtain (or care for a family member needing) medical diagnosis, care or treatment if experiencing symptoms of a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency;
- To seek for oneself (or care for a family member needing) preventative care concerning a communicable illness that is the case of a public health emergency; or
- If the employee is excluded from work or has to care for a family member who's excluded from work, by a government health official, or by an employer, due to the employee or the employee's family member having exposure to, or symptoms of, such an illness (whether or not they are actually diagnosed with the illness);
- Being unable to work due to a health condition that may increase susceptibility or risk of such

- an illness; or
- To care for a child or other family member whose school, childcare provider, or other care provider is either unavailable, closed, or providing remote instruction due to the public health emergency.

All current employees are eligible. Employees have the right to file a complaint or bring civil action if PHER paid leave is denied or they are retaliated against for exercising their rights under the law. Retaliation against an employee requesting and/or using this leave will not be tolerated. This sick leave does not count toward annual sick accrual balance for purposes to include sick leave conversion.

### **SICK LEAVE CONVERSION**

Regular full-time and regular part-time employees, who have a minimum of five years of continuous employment and an accrued sick leave balance of at least 480 hours, may convert a portion of their sick leave hours to a cash payout or may deposit the funds into a 457 deferred compensation account. Sick Leave Conversion payouts are done on a monthly basis and employees may request only one conversion payout in a rolling 12-month period.

The Sick Leave Conversion schedule is as follows:

Continuous Years of Employment	Accrued Sick Leave Balance	Maximum Hours To Convert	Hours of Cash Payout
5	480 hours or more	80	40
10	480 hours or more	120	60
15	480 hours or more	160	80

To convert a portion of the sick leave balance, the employee should complete a “Sick Leave Conversion Form” and submit it directly to the Payroll division. Forms are available in the Payroll division, Human Resources Department or on DCNet.

At separation, an employee may request a Sick Leave Conversion payout only if they meet the minimum years of service, minimum accrued balance, and if they have not received a conversion payout in the previous rolling 12-month period. Such request must be made on the “Sick Leave Conversion Form” and prior to the employee’s final day of employment.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE PAY (LOA PAY)**

The County provides LOA Pay to assist eligible employees who have exhausted their available accrued leave time, including sick leave, vacation and compensatory time during the course of an FMLA or Non-FMLA eligible event.

Regular full-time, regular part-time and limited benefit employees are eligible to participate in the LOA Pay program. Eligible employees who have exhausted their accruals would receive 80% of their rate of pay through the end of the approved FMLA or Non-FMLA leave. The full policy may be accessed through DCNet.

## **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)**

The County provides up to 12 weeks job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- Incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent, who has a serious health condition;
- A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

An employee may, or may not, be compensated by the County while on an approved FMLA leave in accordance with current paid leave policies.

### **Military Family Leave Entitlements**

Eligible employees with a spouse, child, or parent on active duty or called to active duty status in the Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

Eligible employees may also take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred or aggravated in the line of duty or while on active duty. A covered service member also includes veterans who were members of the Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves at any time during the period of five years preceding the start of treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

The injury or illness must make the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list. In the case of a veteran, the qualifying illness or injury must be incurred or aggravated in the line of duty and manifest itself before or after the service member became a veteran.

### **Benefits and Protections**

During FMLA leave, the County maintains the employee's health coverage under any group health plan on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Employees must continue to pay their portion of any insurance premium while on leave. If the employee is able but does not return to work after the expiration of the leave, the employee will be required to reimburse the County for payment of insurance premiums during leave.

Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee may be restored to their original or equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. Certain highly compensated employees (key employees) may have limited reinstatement rights. While an employee is on FMLA leave and where County operations require, their position may be filled, or essential duties may be reassigned.

Use of FMLA leave should not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave. If on an unpaid leave, the employee may not accrue any vacation or sick leave during this period. Holiday, bereavement, County closure, and jury duty are not granted if on unpaid leave.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

Employees are eligible if they have worked for the County for at least 12 months, for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and if they work at a work site with at least 50 employees within 75 miles.

### **Definition of Serious Health Condition**

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job or prevents a qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive full calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

### **Use of Leave**

The maximum time allowed for FMLA leave is either 12 weeks in the 12-month period as defined by the County, or 26 weeks as explained above under the heading Military Family Leave Entitlements. The County uses the 12-month rolling period measured backward from the first day of an employee's leave.

Leave may be taken in a block, intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the County's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

Employees taking intermittent or reduced schedule leave based on planned medical treatment and those taking intermittent or reduced schedule family leave with the County's agreement may be required to, at least for the period of the leave and possibly longer if the employee's previous position has been filled, transfer to another job with equivalent pay and benefits that better accommodates that type of leave.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

Employees should provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with the County's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the County to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions; the family member is unable to perform daily activities; the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the County if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. The County may require second and third medical opinions at the County's expense. Documentation confirming family relationship, adoption, or foster care may be required. If notification and appropriate certification are not provided in a timely manner, approval for leave may be denied. Continued absence after denial of leave may result in disciplinary action.

Employees on leave should contact Human Resources at least two days before their first day of returning to work.

### **The County's Responsibilities**

The County will inform employees requesting leave whether the employee is eligible under FMLA. If eligible, the notice will specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If not eligible, the County will provide a reason for the ineligibility.

The County will inform an employee if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the County determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the County will notify the employee.

### **Unlawful Acts**

FMLA makes it unlawful for the County to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

### **NON-FMLA LEAVE**

Regular full-time, regular part-time, and limited benefit employees may be granted a Non-FMLA Leave if they do not currently meet the FMLA "Eligibility Requirements". Non-FMLA Leave may not exceed 12 weeks during a 12 month period, except potentially as a reasonable accommodation for an employee with a qualified disability under the parameters of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its amendments. Potential accommodations will be determined in an interactive process between the employee and the organization.

Non-FMLA Leave is available to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent, who has a serious health condition (as defined under FMLA regulations);
- Serious health condition (as defined under FMLA regulations) that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job, including the employee's medical

- incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth.
- Up to 4 weeks of bonding time including but not limited to maternal and paternal bonding following childbirth, adoption and/or foster care placement. Bonding time may not exceed the 12 weeks during a 12 month limitation of Non-FMLA Leave.

For a Non-FMLA leave to be granted, the following conditions must be met:

- The employee must notify their supervisor and the Human Resources Department as soon as possible of the need for leave; and
- The employee should apply for a Non-FMLA Leave, including providing a Certification of Health Care Provider form to the Human Resources Department.

If an employee subsequently meets the FMLA “Eligibility Requirements” while on Non-FMLA Leave, their leave will be characterized as FMLA from the date of eligibility forward and Non-FMLA Leave will end.

### **PERSONAL LEAVE**

A Personal Leave of absence may be granted to regular full-time, regular part-time and temporary limited benefits employees, at the discretion of the employee’s Elected Official or Director and in consultation with the Human Resources Department, if the employee and/or the reason for the absence does not qualify for any other leave. Personal Leave is not applicable to absences related to the employee’s own medical need, whether work related or not work related. Personal Leave would not normally exceed 60 days. Except for emergencies, a Personal Leave should be requested at least 4 weeks in advance.

Several factors are considered in determining whether or not the leave is granted:

- The workload in the department
- The employee's performance and length of service with the County; and
- The urgency of the situation prompting the leave request

### **JOB PROTECTION DURING LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

Because of the nature of our business, it is not always practical to hold a position open during an employee’s leave, unless required by law. In the event an employee’s job is filled during their leave, an employee may be considered along with other candidates for any vacant position for which they are qualified.

### **BENEFIT PREMIUMS WHILE ON LEAVE**

When a benefit eligible employee is on paid leave, County contribution and appropriate benefit deductions will continue.

An employee on an approved unpaid leave of absence will be retained on all enrolled Douglas County benefit plans. The County contribution benefit allowance will continue, with the exception of Personal Leave. An employee on an unpaid leave must make arrangements with the Human Resources Department for payment of the employee portion of the benefit premiums. Employees on an unpaid Personal Leave of absence may also be responsible for the County contribution. In the event an employee fails to return from an approved unpaid leave of absence, the employee may be liable

for the premiums paid by the employer to maintain insurance coverage unless the failure to return occurs from medical circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

### **FAMILY CARE ACT (FCA) LEAVE**

Douglas County provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to eligible employees to care for their partners in a civil union or domestic partnership, who have serious health conditions. Generally, leave under the Family Care Act is administered consistent with FMLA regulations. Contact your supervisor or Human Resources if you need family care leave.

### **COLORADO FAMLI**

Douglas County has opted out of the State FAMLI program. Employees who elect to enroll themselves in the State FAMLI program will not be eligible to use County paid leave options and should instead file a claim with the state to be paid by the State while on an approved and applicable County leave of absence. FAMLI will run concurrently with an approved FMLA, Non-FMLA, FCA or Personal Leave. As with other types of unpaid leave, the employee will not accrue any vacation or sick leave during this period. Holiday, bereavement, County closure, and jury duty are not granted when on unpaid leave. During an approved leave, the County will maintain the employee's health coverage under any group health plan on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Employees must continue to pay their portion of any insurance premium while on leave. If the employee is able but does not return to work after the expiration of the leave, the employee may be required to reimburse the County for payment of insurance premiums during leave.

### **WORKERS COMPENSATION**

Douglas County provides workers compensation benefits, as required by statute, for all employees who are injured within the course and scope of their employment. Douglas County shall provide paid leave benefits at 100% of current salary for scheduled hours missed due to an on-the-job injury/illness for a Maximum Benefit Period of the lesser of:

1. The duration of the time period the employee receives treatment for the injury/illness;  
OR
2. A maximum of 1 year from the original date of injury or illness.

The Risk Management division of the County coordinates workers compensation benefits. An employee who sustains an injury resulting from a work-related injury shall notify their supervisor, in writing, by completing the Notification of Work Injury forms, within four days of the injury. If medical treatment for an on-the-job injury is needed, it must be obtained from one of the County's designated physicians unless there is an emergent risk of loss of life or limb. If not, the employee may be responsible for the cost of medical treatment.

The Notification of Work Injury procedures are available on DCNet. The injured employee is to keep Risk Management updated on their progress, work status, and all issues related to their injury. Prompt reporting helps ensure appropriate coverage through Workers Compensation.

Employees who miss more than 40 work hours due to a work-related injury will be placed on an applicable leave of absence, running concurrently with Workers Compensation.

For complete details, including information regarding general exclusions, return to work, expiration of worker's compensation leave, and salary continuation, contact Risk Management. The complete policy may be found on DCNet.

### **MEDICAL LEAVE STATUS**

Employees who have a non-work-related medical condition and are unable to return to work after the expiration of FMLA may be moved to medical leave status for a maximum of one year from the original date of the qualified medical condition given all medical condition certification and eligibility requirements are satisfied. During this medical leave status, the County will continue to pay the premiums for medical, dental, and vision insurance coverage (in that order) as elected by the employee for their-self and their enrolled dependents, up to the maximum contributions made by Douglas County, if applicable.

To qualify for Medical Leave Status, the employee must be in good standing and approved for, or actively in the approval process for, LTD benefits under the County LTD plan. Exceptions may be approved at the discretion of the Department Official when MLS leave has been determined to be a reasonable accommodation.

For complete details, including information regarding general exclusions, medical leave certification requirements, return to work and/or expiration of medical leave status, and pay while on medical leave status, contact the Human Resources Department. The complete policy may be found on DCNet.

### **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

If there is a death in the immediate family of an eligible employee, the employee may be granted up to 32 hours of bereavement pay. The definition of immediate family is at the discretion of the Department Official. If the death is not an immediate family member, employees may request the use of personal time, vacation, compensatory time, Floating Holiday or sick time, at the discretion of the Department Official. If approved by the Department Official, additional time off such as, personal time, vacation, sick, compensatory time or Floating Holiday may be taken to extend the Bereavement Leave period.

### **DOMESTIC ABUSE LEAVE**

Employees dealing with issues related to domestic abuse may be eligible for a leave of absence. Please see the Human Resources Department for more information.

### **MILITARY ABSENCES**

Military related absences are granted to an employee, subject to the USERRA federal law (Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act). The employee should notify their supervisor and/or the Human Resources Department as far in advance as is reasonable under the circumstances of the need to take time off work for military related duty or training unless military necessity precludes giving notice or the giving of notice is otherwise impossible or unreasonable. Douglas County will reinstate employment in compliance with USERRA.

Military related absences with the County falls into two categories:



**Three Weeks of Military Pay:** As required by Colorado law, employees serving in the Reserves or National Guard will retain both military and County pay in full up to three weeks during a calendar year. Employees on duty beyond three weeks in a calendar year may use compensatory time, personal time, vacation, Floating Holiday, or unpaid leave. The use of sick leave is not allowed

Douglas County extends this benefit to any military service member performing any form of military service or training.

**Military Leave of Absence Policy:** Any eligible employee on Active Duty, Active Training Duty, or any other similar Active service in support of a war and/or national crisis qualifies for additional supplemental pay up to the employee's current base pay amount and supplemental benefits for a maximum 12 months during a rolling 5 year period. Eligible employees who have received compensation and benefits for the maximum 12-month period will cease to be eligible for supplemental pay from the County and will be eligible for COBRA insurance continuation.

These benefits are available under the Douglas County **Military Leave Policy**. The complete policy may be found on DCNet or by contacting Human Resources.

## **JURY DUTY**

Douglas County recognizes jury duty as a civic responsibility and grants leave when the employee is summoned to serve. All employees will receive regular pay during periods of jury duty for normally scheduled work hours. Additionally, employees may retain any compensation received for the jury duty. If excused from jury duty during regular work hours, the employee is expected to return to work promptly.

The employee must submit to their supervisor a juror service certificate or other forms furnished by the Clerk of the Court, which reflect the amount of time served as a juror.

## **WITNESS SUMMONS**

In most cases, when County employees are sued for something that occurs during the performance of their duties, it is a suit against the County even if employees are individually named. The Attorney's Office represents the County in these lawsuits and is required to provide legal defense for County employees. Exceptions to this rule are rare and would generally involve illegal or willful and wanton conduct. Any employee who has any questions or concerns about litigation or their own liability should promptly contact the County Attorney's Office.

Employees must notify and advise the office of the County Attorney as soon as possible, but in all cases within 24 hours of when the subpoena to testify, summons, or notice of deposition is received and is a matter involving Douglas County as a party or involving your employment and/or expertise related to your County position. When a summons arises as a result of the employee's duties with the County, an employee will receive regular pay during periods of witness duty for normally scheduled work hours. The employee must submit a copy of the summons or other forms furnished by the Clerk of the Court that indicate the time of service. This provision does not apply to instances in which the employee is a party to litigation involving their employment against the County.

If an employee receives a mileage reimbursement or witness fee for appearance in litigation involving

their official role with the County and such employee uses a County vehicle to comply with a mandatory appearance, mileage reimbursement and/or any witness fee (even if driving personal vehicle) shall be forwarded to the County Finance Office.

When summoned to serve as a witness for non-County business, an employee will receive administrative leave with pay at their regular rate during periods of witness duty for normally scheduled work hours. The employee must submit a copy of the summons or other forms furnished by the Clerk of the Court that indicates the time of service. This provision does not apply to instances in which the employee is a party to litigation involving their employment against the County. In this case the employee may use compensatory time, personal time, vacation or leave without pay. When excused as a witness during regular work hours, the employee is expected to return to work promptly.

### **EMPLOYEE TESTIMONY FOR NON-COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS**

As part of job duty requirements, County employees are sometimes asked to give testimony or present County information to other organizations, particularly other governmental agencies. Therefore, any County employee who is requested to present information or provide testimony to another jurisdiction (or who wishes to provide such testimony, whether solicited or not) on behalf of the County must receive approval by their immediate supervisor prior to making the presentation or testifying. For purposes of testifying, the County Attorney must be notified in advance regarding the details of any proposed testimony and the nature of the entity to which the testimony is intended to be provided. The complete policy may be found on DCNet.

### **TIME FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

Douglas County will attempt to allow an employee time off for observance of a religious holiday that is not a Douglas County observed holiday. Requests for time off must be made in advance with the employee's supervisor and the employee must use vacation, Floating Holiday, personal days, or compensatory time.

### **TIME OFF FOR VOTING**

Voting is an important responsibility we all assume as citizens. We encourage each employee to exercise his or her voting rights in all municipal, state and federal elections.

Under most circumstances, it is possible for the employee to vote either before or after work. If an employee does not have three or more non-scheduled work hours between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. in which to vote, the employee may be granted up to two hours off with pay during the workday to do so. The employee must arrange for the time off with their supervisor at least a day in advance of the election.

## Section VI: BENEFITS

### ELIGIBILITY OF BENEFITS

Our benefit plan year runs from January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>. Employees are eligible for benefits on the first day of the month following their date of hire. Regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible for the benefits covered in this section of the Handbook, whereas temporary limited benefits, temporary/seasonal, and contract employees are not, unless otherwise stipulated in these guidelines.

### EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Douglas County currently offers a comprehensive and competitive employee benefit package for regular full-time and regular part-time employees.

**Employer Provided Benefits:** Currently, regular full-time and regular part-time employees are immediately enrolled and receive the following benefits at no cost:

- Basic Life, Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance
- Long-Term Disability Insurance
- Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)

**Employee Insurance Benefits:** Currently, Douglas County offers the following insurance benefits effective on the first of the month following their date of hire, or at each annual open enrollment period, provided the employee completes the necessary enrollment information:

- Medical Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Voluntary Insurance Plans

**Douglas County Contributions:** The County currently provides regular full-time and regular part-time employees a discretionary contribution amount per month toward medical and dental insurance offered by the County and elected by the employee. Temporary limited benefit employees receive a discretionary contribution amount per month toward medical insurance offered by the County and elected by the employee.

**Retirement Plans:** The County's primary retirement plan is a 401(a) Plan. It is a qualified mandatory retirement plan that provides income after retirement for eligible officials and employees. Retirement benefits through the plan are in addition to those provided under Federal Social Security. The plan consists of a mandatory contribution by the employee and a match by the County. Employees may also voluntarily contribute to a 457 deferred compensation plan. This plan is offered exclusively to public employees and non-taxable entities and is designed to help you build financial security.

For detailed information employees should consult the Benefits Guide, Summary Plan Descriptions, information on DCNet, or contact the Human Resources Department. In the event the Handbook information conflicts with the terms and conditions of coverage, the latter governs.

## **Section VII: WORKING TOGETHER**

### **WORKPLACE CONDUCT**

Douglas County's goal is to ensure employee professionalism and civility and to prohibit hostility. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each Douglas County employee to serve the citizens and fellow employees in a courteous and efficient manner. The County expects all employees to observe the highest standards of conduct and integrity in the performance of work-related duties. Creating and maintaining good relations with the public and with fellow employees is of primary importance. Any behavior that unnecessarily increases any workplace disagreement or workplace tension is unacceptable and all employees are expected to assist in resolving rather than escalating workplace issues. Further, intentional efforts to harm the reputation or to question the integrity of another employee in any manner that is designed to or that does negatively and unnecessarily affect the workplace, violates this standard of acceptable workplace conduct.

Douglas County wants to be clear in conveying that any inappropriate behavior, language, jokes or the use of social media, emails/texts that create in the workplace, an unprofessional or hostile work environment, or any form of retaliation, will not be tolerated.

### **EMPLOYEE MANDATORY DISCLOSURES**

Employees are expected to provide timely and accurate information related to encounters with any law enforcement agency that resulted in being arrested, charged, or convicted of any crime. Human Resources and the Office of Professional Standards at the DCSO will work together to ensure consistency of the process and procedures, and confidentiality, to the extent permitted by law, of the results. The complete policy can be found on DCNet.

### **PROBLEM RESOLUTION**

No matter how good our basic communication system may be, problems sometimes arise. To assure consideration is given to an employee's individual problem, Douglas County encourages employees to use the following procedure:

- When practical, employees should attempt to resolve the issue between themselves to find a mutually acceptable resolution. Employees are more likely to resolve work related issues by respectfully speaking directly with each other. Please consider what type of communication is best to help resolve the workplace issue.
- If unable to resolve individually for any reason, discuss the situation with your supervisor as soon as practicable.
- If a resolution is not reached with your supervisor or if it is inappropriate to go to your supervisor, discuss the situation with the appropriate next level manager.
- If you are still not satisfied or it is inappropriate to go to this next level manager, an "open door" policy exists. You have complete freedom to take your problem to a representative of the Human Resources Department and/or to higher levels of management in your department. For non-elected offices, employees may also contact the Deputy County Manager or County Manager.

## **WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS**

The County recognizes that complaints of inappropriate employee conduct, harassment and discrimination may occur in the workplace and that the County will promptly and appropriately address all such reported complaints. At times, the County's efforts may include the requirement of a more extensive internal investigation involving interviews and written employee statements or other additional activities. Such an investigation's purpose would be to objectively establish the facts and determine the merits of the allegations. An investigation may also assist the County in determining what action, if any, may be suitable to correct and prevent any inappropriate conduct or to simply improve the workplace.

Different situations may call for different responses. Consistent with the guidelines above, the County shall, in its discretion, determine what sort of investigation, if any, is appropriate in the particular situation. The County's actions in one situation do not establish a precedent and should not give rise to employee expectations regarding all situations.

The County has particular expectations of our employees regarding workplace investigations. Upon request, every employee is required to participate in any investigation in good faith, provide truthful and complete information, and to not take action that inhibits the County's ability to learn the truth regarding an investigation. Whether an employee is merely a fact witness to some activity being investigated or alternatively is or becomes the subject or focus of an investigation, each employee is required to participate fully to allow the investigation to conclude, without unnecessary interference.

The County prohibits retaliation of any kind against anyone who participates in an investigation, or who raises issues that initiate an investigation. However, the County in its discretion may take appropriate corrective action against any employee who engages in misconduct that is discovered by the County, even if the discovery takes place as a result of an employee's participation in an investigation, whether or not the misconduct is related to the matter being investigated. The County may take any appropriate corrective action it deems necessary for any employee who fails to participate in an investigation in a manner consistent with the above expectations. Failure to fully and/or honestly cooperate in an investigation is grounds for discipline up to and including termination.

## **DISCIPLINE**

It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain a standard of conduct and level of performance that is essential for the efficient, effective, and safe operation of the County.

Each employee must at all times comply with the Department Official's stated expectations for work, performance, and conduct. An employee's failure to comply will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination and will be based on the facts and circumstances of the situation.

Management will determine which appropriate level of discipline would most effectively resolve the problem. The fact that the County has or has not utilized any of the various disciplinary actions available does not set any precedent and should not be relied upon in future disciplinary situations by any employee.

## **APPEARANCE AND DRESS**

To promote a professional image, Douglas County believes an employee's dress and grooming should be appropriate to the work situation. Each employee is expected to dress neatly and appropriately and practice good grooming and hygiene.

The supervisor of each Elected Office/Department determines appropriate dress. Generally, the supervisor will consider the following to determine what constitutes appropriate dress:

- Amount of direct customer contact in the department;
- Amount of physical wear and tear on employee's clothing;
- Safety issues and requirements; and
- Other relevant factors.

If an employee reports for work improperly dressed or groomed, their supervisor may instruct them to return home to change clothes or to take other appropriate corrective action.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Occasionally Douglas County will encounter an emergency situation that requires notification of employees. Examples may be a weather-related emergency, fire, natural disaster or haz-mat situation.

Employees who feel that the specific emergency requires them to leave their position will need to notify their supervisor prior to departing. Employees may use appropriate time-off such as vacation, sick, personal, compensatory time, or Floating Holiday for such absences.

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

Only designated spokespersons should provide information to any media agency, reporter, or representative of the media as the 'official' County position on any matter concerning or affecting Douglas County. Media may include broadcast organizations, print reporters, bloggers/website editors, newsletters producers (such as HOAs), news applications, or social media influencers. The Public Affairs Director is the primary media contact and source of County information. For issues related to a specific elected or appointed office, the Elected/Appointed Official will be the designated spokesperson or appoint an appropriate designee.

Employees should immediately refer and notify their immediate supervisor or Department Official if contacted by the media. The supervisor or Department Official should contact the Public Affairs Director.

## **INSPECTIONS AND SEARCHES**

Employees do not have an expectation of privacy in any County owned or leased real or personal property. Douglas County has the right to conduct an inspection and/or search of any County-owned or leased property to help maintain a safe, healthy and efficient working environment, and to protect Douglas County property, equipment, operations as well as its employees, customers and citizens.

With respect to any and all County-owned property, such as computers, desks, offices, file cabinets, etc., employees have no privacy interest and the County reserves the right to search such

property if in the County's sole discretion, a search is deemed to be appropriate under the circumstances. For non-County owned property that is located in a County facility or vehicle, Douglas County must weigh respect for individual privacy against the need for maintaining and protecting the appropriate work environment. If the employee has personal items which they would not like subjected to search or inspection, these items should not be brought onto Douglas County premises. Any such search must be authorized by the County Manager and Director of Human Resources or their designees.

Searches may be conducted under the most reasonable circumstances as applicable to the facts of the situation. Douglas County will consider such issues as the availability of the employee, the consent of the employee's manager, and the likelihood of finding materials or information that is deemed relevant and appropriate to the situation, or in its sole discretion.

Any employee refusing to cooperate with or submit to an inspection or search may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **SMOKING**

In keeping with the County's intent to provide a safe and healthy work environment, any and all smoking, to include e-cigarettes, is prohibited in all County buildings and vehicles and within 15 feet of the main entrance to County buildings. Smoking, to include e-cigarettes is also prohibited on County grounds except in the designated areas. This restriction applies to all employees and visitors. The employee should ask their supervisor about the designated areas for smoking.

### **SAFETY AND REPORTING**

It is Douglas County's goal to maintain a high standard of employee health and safety. Toward this end, we provide training, safeguards, and programs to promote safety and to prevent accidents and damage to property.

Each employee is responsible for abiding by all applicable safety rules and regulations of the Office or Department and the County. It is the employee's responsibility to locate, read, and understand all such rules and regulations, and to ask their supervisor any questions they may have. We expect every employee to do their job in a manner that ensures their personal safety and that of fellow employees. Safety is the responsibility of everyone. Every safety precaution should be observed no matter how routine or urgent a job might become. The best way to ensure the County knows about a safety concern so that it can be addressed is for every employee to immediately report safety concerns to their supervisor.

Failure to adhere to required safety procedures will not be tolerated.

### **TELEPHONE COURTESY**

Each employee represents Douglas County and courteous telephone etiquette gives a favorable impression. Therefore, work telephones need to be available during work hours for effective communication with Douglas County's customers and business associates.

Personal calls, including those made with cell phones, should be limited to those that are

necessary and should be as brief as possible. This guideline also applies to making unnecessary personal calls to fellow employees within the County.

### **PROPERTY AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT**

Each employee is responsible for the proper care, maintenance and condition of any County property assigned to them. Loss of or damage to assigned County property shall be reported to the appropriate supervisor within 24 hours of the loss or damage to ensure necessary equipment is replaced or fixed in a timely manner.

County letterhead, envelopes, postage, and business cards are to be used for business related communication only. The copier, fax, and other business equipment and supplies should be limited to County business use.

### **BUILDING ACCESS / SECURITY**

Building office keys and/or access ID cards are issued to all employees. Only employees who have prior authorization from a supervisor may enter facilities outside of normal work hours. Employees are expected to return office keys and access cards at separation from the County. Lost or stolen keys or access cards should be reported immediately to Facilities.

### **MEALS, MILEAGE, AND TRAVEL**

County employees who travel outside Douglas County for official travel must be familiar with the County policy governing such travel.

All employees who travel on County business using either a County vehicle or personal vehicle must have a valid Colorado driver license and current proof of insurance in their possession while operating that vehicle. A copy of the employee's Colorado driver license must be on file with the County prior to using a County vehicle.

Employees who travel on behalf of County business are eligible to receive mileage reimbursement for personal vehicle use. The mileage reimbursement rate shall be established per published IRS regulations. This reimbursement covers employees traveling in a personal vehicle on official County Business. The complete policy may be found on DCNet.

### **CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

County employees may frequently come into possession of confidential information including documents, software, etc. Although there is no single statutory definition of confidential information, such information may include financial information, proprietary information, software, information on victims of crimes or juveniles, etc. Employees must work with supervisors to understand any confidential information they have access to and how to ensure such information maintains its confidentiality.

Unauthorized use, copying or dissemination of confidential information is strictly prohibited. It is the responsibility of every County employee not only to avoid personal misuse of confidential information, but also, to maintain the confidentiality of such information. Any breach of this responsibility will not be tolerated.



The release of confidential information is controlled by the Colorado Open Records Act (Section 24-72-201, et seq., C.R.S.) and other applicable laws. Any County employee who receives a request under the Open Records Act for the disclosure of information that may be confidential should immediately contact the County Attorney's office for guidance. The complete policy may be found on DCNet.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

County employees may not use privileged information or exert any undue influence as a result of their relationship with the County for personal gain or benefit or to benefit relatives, friends, and other acquaintances.

If an employee or employee's family has any interest (including, but not limited to, serving as partner, stockholder, manager or employee) in any business that sells products or services to the County or if an employee has access to County information that may be used for private gain, the employee shall advise their Department Official in writing of such interest. The Department Official shall determine whether a conflict of interest exists and shall then advise the employee, employee's supervisor and Human Resources. If such a conflict is found to exist, the employee shall be given the option of terminating either employment with the County or interest in the business.

### **SERVICE ON COUNTY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

Employees may not serve on advisory boards or commissions that are established by the Board of County Commissioners and that are associated with Douglas County government except in the capacity of serving as a staff representative. Any individual who serves on such an advisory body who is subsequently hired as an employee is no longer eligible to serve on such board or commission and must resign the advisory position upon employment by Douglas County. This practice is not intended to preclude employees from civic participation.

### **POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

Consistent with applicable state and federal law, County Departments, Divisions, Boards or Commissions shall not make cash or in-kind contributions to any campaign involving the nomination, retention, or election of any person to any public office. This prohibition does not apply to individual members of such Departments, Divisions, Boards or Commissions making individual donations of personal funds.

No employee shall be subjected to pressure or coercion to participate in any political activity. Violations of this policy should be reported to the Human Resources Department or the County Manager and may result in disciplinary action.

Additionally, federal law prohibits, in most cases, a County employee who works in connection with any activity that is funded with federal loans or grants from:

1. using their official authority or influence to interfere with an election;
2. coercing an employee to contribute to a political purpose; or
3. running for public office in a partisan election.

Exceptions to this law can be complicated. Questions may be directed to the County Attorney's Office.

### **HONESTY / THEFT**

It is important that each employee upholds a standard of honesty and integrity at all times. These are values important to our existence. Each employee is expected to follow all Douglas County procedures that ensure a work environment that is honest.

If an employee witnesses a work-related act of dishonesty, theft, or pilferage, the employee shall report the incident immediately to the appropriate supervisor or Department Official. Cooperation by each employee is also expected in the investigation of any such situation. Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken for violations of this policy.

## **Section VIII: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS**

### **PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

In the State of Colorado, laws exist to ensure that government is open, and that the public has a right to access appropriate records and information possessed by County government. These laws also apply to all work-related employee communications such as emails and voicemails left on County owned devices. At the same time, there are exceptions to the public's right to access public records that serve various needs, including the privacy of individuals. Both state and federal laws provide exceptions.

In the event of a conflict between the provisions of the Employee Handbook and the Colorado Open Records Act or other law governing the agency's disclosure of records, the Colorado Open Records Act or other applicable law will control.

The County has invested a number of resources to help ensure that its website and all of the County's technology is made easier to use and more accessible for people with disabilities, with the strong belief that every person has the right to live with dignity, equality, comfort, and independence. The Douglas County Accessibility Statement and the County's Technology Accessibility Plan is available on the County website [www.douglas.co.us](http://www.douglas.co.us).

### **COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS**

Douglas County utilizes systems where the employee receives and sends communications through various systems (e.g., email, telephone, voicemail, etc.). Although employee accounts may be password protected, Douglas County maintains the right to access any communications at any time. Because of this, the employee should not assume that this communication is confidential or that access by Douglas County or its designated representative will not occur. Care should be taken that all communications within and outside the County represent the highest form of professionalism in both the content and form. In keeping with this intention, the communication systems are intended for business use. Inappropriate use of these systems will not be tolerated. Each employee is expected to regularly check and make any necessary responses to messages. Data stored on or transmitted over the County's communication systems are considered the County's records and, therefore, employees should assume that each record will be treated as and considered public records subject to inspection.

Passwords must not be shared with anyone. Each employee must safeguard the security of the systems they use (e.g., log-off or lock systems, use screen privacy filters, etc.).

### **INTERNET USE**

Use of the Internet by employees of Douglas County is permitted and encouraged where such use supports the goals and objectives of the County. Douglas County understands that the use of the Internet is a valuable business tool. However, misuse of this asset can have a negative impact upon employee productivity and the reputation of the County. The Internet Use Policy (available on DCNet) describes in detail the requirements by which employees must ensure that they comply.

In addition, all of the County's Internet-related resources are provided for business purposes.

Therefore, the County maintains the right to monitor and log the volume and type of Internet and network traffic, together with the Internet sites visited. The specific content of any transaction may also be monitored if there is a suspicion of improper use. The County will hold the employee responsible for any actions that deliberately compromise the integrity and/or performance of network resources and/or violate the law and/or the County's ethics and integrity standards. Failure to comply with these guidelines will not be tolerated.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

With minor exceptions, such as those social media sites managed by staff in County Elected Offices, Douglas County's social media accounts – including posting and responding content on the sites are managed by the County's Communications and Public Affairs Department. Please contact the Communications and Public Affairs Department with questions regarding the use of social media when there is a perceived need to post information on behalf of the County.

All other posting to social media made by an employee is considered personal communications and not County communications. When using social media, use good judgment and be fair. We request that you be respectful of the County, our employees, our citizens, our consultants, our vendors and others. Avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparages others or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment. Ultimately, employees are solely responsible for the content they publish including the possibility of workplace discipline for social media posts that create workplace violations.

Posting messages to social media is not an appropriate method of reporting a workplace incident or concern to the County and may make a situation and ability to investigate at work worse. For workplace concerns and investigations, County complaint procedures must be followed. However, nothing in these guidelines is meant to interfere with employees' rights under federal law to engage in protected and concerted activity, including employees' ability to discuss terms and conditions of their employment.

## **PORTABLE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES (PECD)**

County owned PECDs are provided to enhance customer service and business efficiency and should not be used as the primary means of personal, non-County business communication. Infrequent or occasional personal use may be acceptable within individual department discretion.

Individuals that have been issued a County PECD will be responsible for reimbursing the County for excess charges that are not related to County business. Employees that have not been issued a County PECD but conduct periodic County business using their own personal PECD and incur charges for that purpose should submit an expense reimbursement request. The County also has a policy that may provide a technology allowance for employees to obtain and maintain their own PECD to be made available for job performances in the same manner as a County issued device.

Violation of this policy may result in loss of PECD privileges and will not be tolerated.

Upon separation of employment from the County, all County-issued PECDs must be returned to the IT department.

## **COMPUTERS**

### **Systems**

During employment with Douglas County, the employee may have access to Douglas County's computer systems through various computing devices (e.g., desktop and laptop computers, tablets, smartphones, etc.), and local and wide area networks, while on or off Douglas County's premises. Use of Douglas County's computer resources is restricted to Douglas County business only. Therefore, documents or files sent to, stored on, or created thereon are the property of Douglas County. All information regarding access to Douglas County's computer resources, such as user identifications, passwords, URL's and other access information is Douglas County confidential information and may not be disclosed to unauthorized personnel. Computer-related systems are considered the County's property and records and, therefore, may be considered public records subject to public inspection.

All computer files, documents and software sent to, created, or stored on Douglas County's computer systems are subject to review and reasonable inspection at any time. In this regard, the employee must not assume that any such information is confidential.

Computer equipment may not be removed from Douglas County premises without prior approval. Non-County supplied hardware, including laptops, PC's, or peripherals, are not allowed access to the Douglas County network without prior approval from IT. Upon termination of employment, all County supplied computer hardware must be returned to the County.

Each employee should make every effort to store critical, sensitive or confidential information on a network drive instead of individual PC's, laptops or removable media. Network drives are secure from outside intrusion, can be configured to allow specific internal access, and are regularly backed-up and are recoverable.

### **Software**

Each employee is indirectly responsible for the on-going integrity of Douglas County's computer data and computer security system. Access to computer files is restricted to job-related needs and the appropriate supervisor must authorize access.

Douglas County has numerous licenses to utilize computer software. The license agreements contain restrictions concerning the software use, duplication and federal copyright protection.

Each employee who uses Douglas County's computer resources assumes the responsibilities listed below:

- Only software that has been authorized and/or purchased by Douglas County may be loaded or used on any Douglas County computer. Unauthorized personal or downloaded software may contain computer viruses or other malware, which could be potentially damaging to Douglas County's systems and database.

- Douglas County or vendor software and software manuals should not be duplicated or reproduced in any manner unless expressly permitted by the owner of the software. Such actions are in violation of license agreements by which Douglas County and its employees are obligated to abide.
- Douglas County software is not to be altered in any manner, including, but not limited to, decompiling, disassembling, cross-compiling, reverse engineering, or creating derivative products.
- Computer software or documentation should not be removed from Douglas County premises without written approval from the immediate supervisor.
- Upon separation of employment, all computer software and manuals must be returned to the employee's immediate supervisor.

Violation of any of the above provisions will not be tolerated.

## **DOUGLAS COUNTY POLICIES**

Douglas County policies, including those referenced in the Employee Handbook, may be located in their entirety on DCNet <http://www.douglas.co.us/commissioners/policies/> or provided upon request by the Human Resources department.

## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

Douglas County provides the Employee Handbook electronically, and hard copy format upon request. I have accessed the Employee Handbook electronically or received a copy of the Douglas County Employee Handbook dated **March 2025**. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with the contents of the Handbook as it outlines Douglas County policies and guidelines. If I have questions, I understand that I should talk to my supervisor and/or the Human Resources Department.

Further, I have read and understand:

- *Since my employment is at-will, I have the right to end my work relationship with Douglas County for any reason or no reason at all, with or without advance notice. Douglas County has the identical right.*
- *The contents of this Handbook and any verbal statements by management do not constitute an express or implied contract of employment.*
- *This Handbook represents a brief summary of some of Douglas County's policies and guidelines and it is not all-inclusive. It replaces all previously issued editions.*
- *Except for the at-will nature of employment, Douglas County retains the sole right to modify, suspend, interpret, or cancel in whole, or in part, any of the published or unpublished Douglas County policies, guidelines and/or practices. Douglas County can take such actions without advance notice and without having to give justification.*

I acknowledge I have received a copy of the Handbook and understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with the contents. I also understand I have the opportunity to ask any questions or seek clarification about the content through my supervisor or Human Resources.

Employee Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Employee #: \_\_\_\_\_