



Gaston County Procedure Manual

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Administration Procedures Manual Version Control

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Note The content of a manual does not constitute nor should it be construed as a promise of employment or as a contract between Gaston County and any of its employees.

Policies are defined in a separate document called "Gaston County Personnel Policy."

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	OVERVIEW	5
2	SPECIAL PROVISIONS	5
3	ETHICS	5
4	POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN	6
4.1	NEW POSITIONS.....	6
4.2	RECLASSIFICATION.....	6
5	HIRING	7
5.1	IMPLEMENTING EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY.....	7
5.1.1	<i>Recruiting Sources</i>	7
5.2	ANNOUNCING VACANCIES.....	7
5.2.1	<i>Internal Posting</i>	7
5.2.2	<i>Public Posting</i>	7
5.3	PROCESSING APPLICATIONS.....	8
5.4	APPLICATION SCREENING.....	8
5.5	SELECTION PROCESS.....	8
5.6	JOB OFFERS.....	9
6	APPOINTMENTS	10
7	CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT	10
8	PROBATIONARY PERIOD	11
8.1	PROBATION PERIOD EXTENSION.....	11
9	PROMOTIONS AND DEMOTIONS	12
9.1	PROMOTIONS.....	12
9.2	DEMOTIONS.....	12
10	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	13
10.1	EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.....	13
10.1.1	<i>Reimbursement</i>	13
10.1.2	<i>Repayment</i>	13
10.2	WORKER'S COMPENSATION.....	13
11	LEAVES OF ABSENCE	14
11.1	FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA).....	14
11.2	JURY DUTY.....	14
11.3	DONATION OF LEAVE.....	14
11.4	WORKER'S COMPENSATION.....	15
12	COMPENSATORY TIME OFF	16
13	INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OFFICE CLOSINGS	17
13.1	ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE.....	17
14	DRUG POLICY	18
14.1	PRE-EMPLOYMENT DRUG TESTING.....	18
14.2	RANDOM TESTING.....	18

14.3	POST-ACCIDENT TESTING	18
14.4	REASONABLE SUSPICION TESTING	18
14.5	TESTING SUBSEQUENT TO ARREST CONCERNING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE	19
15	TRAVEL POLICY	20
16	VEHICLE USE	20
17	PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS	21
18	GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS	22
19	WORKPLACE VIOLENCE.....	22
20	CORRECTIVE ACTIONS.....	23
20.1	COACHING	23
20.2	VERBAL REMINDER	23
20.3	EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.....	23
21	DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	24
21.1	DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	24
21.1.1	<i>Employee Appeal for Suspensions, Demotions, and Discharges.....</i>	24
21.2	INVESTIGATION STATUS WITH PAY	25
22	SEPARATION.....	26
23	PERSONNEL COMMISSION.....	27
24	USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES	28
24.1	TECHNOLOGY USE MONITORING AND REPORTING	28
24.1.1	<i>Department Requests for Use Reports</i>	28
24.2	SECURITY	28
24.2.1	<i>Passwords and User System Access.....</i>	28
24.2.2	<i>Third Party Access to Gaston County Systems</i>	28
24.2.3	<i>Reporting Violations</i>	28
24.3	REMOTE ACCESS	29
24.3.1	<i>Requests for Remote Access.....</i>	29
24.4	HARDWARE/SOFTWARE STANDARDS, PROCUREMENT, AND INSTALLATION	29
24.4.1	<i>Hardware and Software Standards</i>	29
24.4.2	<i>Technology Procurement.....</i>	29
24.4.3	<i>Technology Installation.....</i>	30
24.5	TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT	30
24.5.1	<i>Request for Support – System Outage or Problem</i>	30
24.5.2	<i>Request for Support – New technology, Changes, Moves, etc.</i>	30
24.6	COUNTY INTERNET CONTENT	30
24.7	PHONE	31
24.8	CELL PHONES.....	31
24.9	STORAGE MEDIA RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL	31
24.10	SURPLUS.....	31
24.11	RECEIVING USED HARDWARE OR SOFTWARE.....	31
24.12	ELECTRONIC RECORD MANAGEMENT	32
24.12.1	<i>Self-warranty (paperless records).....</i>	32
25	COLLECTION AND USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS	33
26	PERSONNEL RECORDS AND REPORTS	33

27	COMMUNICABLE DISEASES	33
28	REDUCTION IN FORCE.....	34

- 1 OVERVIEW**
- 2 SPECIAL PROVISIONS**
- 3 ETHICS**

4 POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN

4.1 New Positions

Department Directors must submit requests for new positions to the HR Director. Requests must include a Job Analysis Questionnaire describing the duties and responsibilities of the new position, suggested minimum qualifications, a memorandum explaining the need for the new position and how it will be funded, and an indication of ancillary costs related to the creation and maintenance of the position. The HR Director shall determine the job class, classification title, and pay grade to which the position shall be allocated, and make a recommendation to the County Manager, or their designee. The new position will then be requested via a Board Action to the Board of Commissioners and upon their approval added to the approved budgeted positions.

4.2 Reclassification

To reclassify a position, Department Directors must submit a Job Analysis Questionnaire (HR Form 503) describing the current duties and responsibilities of the position requested, and a memorandum explaining how these duties and responsibilities differ from the position as previously classified and how the reclassified position will be funded to the HR Director. Classification reviews will be the responsibility of the HR Director with the approval of the County Manager, or his/her designee.

5 HIRING

5.1 Implementing Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

All staff responsible for recruiting and employing personnel shall regularly review the implementation of this policy and relevant practices to assure that equal employment opportunity based on reasonable performance-related job requirements is being actively observed so no employee or applicant for employment shall suffer discrimination because of sex, age, race, color, religion, national origin, or disabling condition.

5.1.1 Recruiting Sources

All recruiting sources shall be periodically advised of the County's EEO policy. The County shall recruit job applicants from organizations and institutions, and through news media which are used by and available to minority group members as well as the general public. Candidates for employment shall be recruited from a geographic area as wide as necessary to obtain well qualified applicants. In addition to general recruiting sources, the County may recruit applicants for specialized and professional positions from publications and organizations that relate specifically to individuals who may meet the qualifications for such positions.

5.2 Announcing Vacancies

All County departments shall be provided written job announcements by the Human Resources Department, which will include a brief synopsis of position duties, location, salary and required qualifications. Department Directors are required to ensure all employees have access to job announcements and opportunities to apply. At the request of Department Directors, the Human Resources Department shall also advertise positions in newspapers or other publications with general circulation throughout the County or region. Recruiting to fill vacant positions shall continue through a specific closing date.

5.2.1 Internal Posting

Departments will submit a Staffing Requisition Form to the HR Analyst specifying that the request is for an internal posting. Once the request is approved, the HR Analyst will return the job announcement to the department. The department will post the job announcement for 10 business days in a place designated for internal postings that is accessible to all employees. Following the 10 day posting, the HR Analyst must be notified if the department wants to post the position externally.

5.2.2 Public Posting

Departments will submit a Staffing Requisition Form to the HR Analyst. Once the request is approved the job announcement will be posted the following Monday. All announcements will be posted for 10 working days. (When a holiday occurs during the posting period, the posting will be extended one week.) The department shall contact the HR Analyst to close any job posting that is "open until filled."

5.3 Processing Applications

All applications postmarked by the closing date will be accepted. In the event that an insufficient number of applications are available to form a reasonable selection pool, the closing date may be extended at the discretion of a Department Director. In those cases where positions are designated “open until filled”, the Department Director shall advise the Human Resources Department when they determine the applicant pool to be sufficient. All eligible applications shall be considered before a final hiring decision is made.

5.4 Application Screening

During the recruiting period, the Human Resources Department shall assess the qualifications of all applicants. Any application or applicant shall be rejected when it is determined the:

- Application was not postmarked on or before the closing date;
- Application was not filed on the provided form;
- Applicant does not meet the minimum requirements as described in the position classification specification;
- Applicant falsified or did not complete pertinent information on the application;
- Applicant is physically or mentally unfit to perform the duties of the position, even with reasonable accommodations;
- Applicant was previously employed by the County and was dismissed for cause, or resigned not in good standing;
- Applicant is related to a County employee and would supervise or be supervised by related employee per County Personnel Policy;
- Applicant did not meet the minimum age for hiring employees as required by federal and state labor laws, rules, and regulations.

All other applications shall be forwarded to the hiring department.

5.5 Selection Process

Procedures for identifying the best qualified applicants will vary according to the position and may include preliminary screening of qualifications, written or oral examinations, structured interviews, testing at an assessment center, or other methods.

County employees who meet the minimum requirements for posted positions and who apply for these positions shall be considered for interviews. The hiring department shall consider the qualifications of all other applicants and interview those who are determined to be best qualified.

The hiring department will select the most suitable applicant for appointment among those interviewed. The Department Director shall then notify the HR Department on a Personnel Action Form (HR Form 500) supplied by the Human Resources Department and return the selected candidate’s application. All other applications provided for

consideration shall also be returned to the Human Resources Department with written statements describing why applicants were not selected for interviews and why those who were interviewed were not hired.

Before hiring an individual as an independent contractor, a contractor checklist (HR Form 519) must be filled out and returned to the HR Director for review and determination of independent contractor status.

5.6 Job Offers

All offers of employment should be made in writing. All offers will be conditional offers that require successfully passing the drug test and criminal background check and their ability to provide proof of education.

When a selection has been made, the hiring department will e-mail the Safety and Work Comp Coordinator, the Risk Manager, the Benefits Specialist, HR Coordinator, and the Personnel Analyst in one e-mail. The information provided in that e-mail is:

- Person's name
- Position title
- SS#
- Salary

From that, the drug test will be scheduled, background check run, benefits packet prepared and education verified.

When the employee comes in for their drug test, they will present their proof of education, sign the background check waiver, take the drug test and leave with their benefits packet.

The deadline for turning in paperwork on a new hire is 5:00 pm on the Wednesday prior to orientation.

Orientation will only be held if there is a minimum of 5 new hires. In the event Orientation is cancelled, HR will provide instructions on what that employee needs to do to get their necessary paperwork done so they can start work as scheduled. They will be required to attend the next Orientation session.

6 APPOINTMENTS

7 CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

8 PROBATIONARY PERIOD

The appointing authority shall, within 15 days before the expiration of an employee's probationary period, notify the Human Resources Department on Personnel Action Form (HR Form 500), if the probationary employee is recommended for permanent status.

8.1 Probation Period Extension

Extending the probationary period shall be based on identified deficiencies in the employee's job performance which, in the view of the Department Director, may be alleviated with the passage of time, additional training, or increased effort by the employee. A Personnel Action form must be submitted to HR to extend probation. The supervisor shall provide the affected employee with a written corrective action plan outlining performance deficiencies and specifying actions necessary to bring performance to an acceptable standard. Probationary employees may be terminated at any time during the extended probationary period without right of appeal or hearing. At the end of the extended probationary period, the employee shall either be granted permanent status or discharged.

9 PROMOTIONS AND DEMOTIONS

9.1 Promotions

Promotions will be made using a Personnel Action Form (HR Form 500) indicating the type of promotion and the new salary range.

9.2 Demotions

Demotions will be made using a Personnel Action Form (HR Form 500) indicating the new salary range. In the case of involuntary demotions, employees shall be notified in writing of the effective date of and the reason for the demotion as well as their right to appeal. All supporting documents related to an involuntary demotion shall be attached to the PAF.

10 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

10.1 Educational Assistance

10.1.1 Reimbursement

Upon completing a course, the employee shall submit to the Department Director a request for reimbursement or a reconciliation of the advance, including receipts for tuition, fees, and books and documentation that a grade of "C" or better was earned. Upon approval the Department Director will approve the advance reconciliation or authorize reimbursement for tuition, fees, and books to the employee. Reimbursements and advances shall be drawn from travel and training funds contained in the department's approved budget.

10.1.2 Repayment

Employees who receive educational assistance must sign a written agreement, Form HR 505, which defines their plan of study and specifies the expected date of completion. The agreement shall also state that, following completion of their course of study, or at the expected date of completion, the employee will remain in County employment for at least 6 months for each course reimbursed, or 2 years, whichever is shorter. The agreement shall further state that the employee agrees to repay all, or a portion, of their received educational reimbursement if they leave County employment before completing the provisions of the agreement. The amount of reimbursement due the County shall be based on the amount of time worked after the last reimbursement has been made for educational assistance.

10.2 Worker's Compensation

Supervisors must provide their investigative report to the Occupational Health Nurse within 24 hours of the incident.

11 LEAVES OF ABSENCE

11.1 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

Within 5 business days of an FMLA request or FMLA qualifying event issue a WH-381 Notice of Eligibility and Rights and Responsibilities to the employee. If the employee is eligible, include one of the following Certification forms:

- WH-380-E Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee's Serious Health Condition (include a list of the employee's essential job functions if you want the Health Care Provider to specify which functions the employee cannot perform).
- WH-380-F Certification of Health Care Provider for Family Member's Serious Health Condition
- WH-384 Certification of Qualifying Exigency Leave
- WH-385 Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Service Member

Employee must return the Certification within 15 calendar days. If the form is returned incomplete or insufficient issue a written notice to the employee stating what needs to be corrected. The employee then has 7 days to return the corrected Certification.

As soon as there is an eligible FMLA request or FMLA qualifying event issue a WH-382 Designation Notice. If a Fitness for Duty certification will be required prior to the employee returning to work that **MUST** be included in the notice. If the Fitness for Duty is expected to address specific job functions a copy of the employee's essential job duties must be included with this notice.

A copy of the WH-381, WH-382 and a Personnel Action Form shall be sent to the HR Department immediately for timely changes to pay status.

Departments shall keep the completed WH-380-E, WH-380-F, WH-384 or WH-385 in a separate and secured file for 3 years.

A Personnel Action Form shall be completed at the conclusion of each FMLA event and sent to the HR Department.

11.2 Jury Duty

Employees shall provide their supervisor with their Notice of Jury Duty.

Jury Duty time shall be marked on the 'Jury Duty' line of time sheets.

11.3 Donation of Leave

The department director will forward the approved request to the HR Benefits Manager for processing. When the donation is complete, the HR Benefits Manager will provide written notice to the donor stating the hours debited from their accrued leave, and to the recipient stating the hours credited to their accrued leave.

11.4 Worker's Compensation

- Employee notifies supervisor of injury. Employee or supervisor notifies Safety/Workers' Comp Coordinator.
- Safety/Workers' Comp Coordinator will authorize a MD visit if needed. Do not see your primary care MD for work related injuries. They may not accept workers comp.
- After seeing the MD, the employee should bring all paper work, especially the work note, to the Safety/Workers' Comp Coordinator prior to returning to work. If the employee is unable to bring the note, a designated person will bring it or fax it to the Safety/Workers' Comp Coordinator.
- The MD note will determine if the employee is on regular duty, light duty, or out of work.
- If light duty is assigned, the Safety/Workers' Comp Coordinator will call the supervisor of the injured employee and notify them of the restrictions. Work accommodations will be made. If there is no light duty available in that department, the Safety/Workers' Comp Coordinator or HR Director will call other departments for possible light duty work elsewhere.
- If the injured employee is out of work, they will use sick leave for the first 7 calendar days they are out. Beginning on the 8th day, workers comp payments will pay wages. Wages are 2/3's of the gross hourly wage at the time of the accident. NC State workers comp law sets this. No taxes are taken out on this money. It is not classified as taxable income. No direct deposit is available; no deductions are taken out. It is the responsibility of the employee to handle this. If the employee is out more than 21 days Workers' Comp will pay the first 7 days retroactively and the employee will be given an opportunity to "buy back" their sick leave.
- While out of work, the employee is to keep all scheduled appointments made regarding the worker's comp injury. If the employee is on light duty and they work 8-5, Monday – Friday, appointments will have to be during working hours. Adequate time will be allowed to get to and from the MD office in addition to office time. The employee will be given a note for time in and out to be filled in by the PT and signed. If the employee has a work schedule that includes days off on a weekday, they may be asked to make some appointments on their own time.
- If the employee is on light duty or regular duty and desires to be out of work, they need approval from their supervisor and may then take sick leave. The employee will not be paid wages under worker's comp unless the MD has written a note stating employee is out of work. The note must have an "out of work until" date.
- The MD usually will bring an out of work employee back to light duty before returning them to full duty. Previous statements will then apply.
- As soon as the employee is returned to full duty or light duty, the county will resume the regular pay
- Payment for all approved MD visits, prescriptions, physical therapy, for the worker's comp injury will be paid by worker's comp. Do not file this on BCBS. They will deny the claim.
- Individual circumstances will be handled on an as needed basis. Contact the Safety/Workers' Comp Coordinator regarding these.

12 REASONABLE ACCOMODATION

An employee must request a reasonable accommodation in writing using the Reasonable Accommodation Request Form HR form 601. On the form the employee should describe the general nature of the disability, and more specifically, how it limits the performance of the essential functions of the job, as well as what accommodations are needed to enhance the ability to do the job.

The ADA Coordinator will verify the existence of the disability by contacting the employee's health care provider if necessary to obtain medical information and/or records and suggestions for accommodations. Verification will not be necessary when the disability is obvious, or if a previous accommodation was satisfactory for all parties involved. The employee is expected to fully cooperate in this process including signing the necessary consent forms for information to be released, if necessary. If the employee does not provide the necessary consent, the ADA coordinator will terminate the processing of the request for accommodation.

When all forms including consents if necessary have been completed, the employee should submit the information to the attention of the ADA Coordinator for consideration. The ADA Coordinator has 20 working days to approve or modify the request using the form, unless extended by mutual agreement.

13 COMPENSATORY TIME OFF

Employees must agree to compensatory time using HR Payroll Form 402.

14 INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OFFICE CLOSINGS

14.1 Administrative Leave

Administrative Leave will be reported on the Administrative leave line of time sheets.

Admin Leave is only for employees who were scheduled to work during the time of the office closing.

Employees who are on vacation, called in sick, are on FMLA, or who didn't come in at all because of the weather are not eligible for Admin Leave. They must use 8 hours of leave.

During a delayed opening, only employees who come to work at the scheduled opening time may use Admin Leave. Employees who come to work after the scheduled opening time, do not get the benefit of Admin Leave and must use their own leave for the entire time they missed work. (Example: Following a two hour delay an employee comes to work at noon. That employee must use 4 hours of annual leave or comp time.)

Employees who come to work while the offices are closed do not get Admin Leave to "flex" their schedules or use at a later date.

15 DRUG POLICY

15.1 Pre-employment Drug Testing

The Safety/Workers' Comp Coordinator (S/WCC) shall be informed by e-mail of all potential new hires so a pre-employment drug test can be scheduled. The supervisor will then notify the new hire.

For all DOT-related pre-employment drug tests, the S/WCC will contact the previous employer (s) to request DOT-related drug test results.

15.2 Random Testing

Employees who receive notice of a random drug test shall report for the drug test immediately. The employee's supervisor shall notify the S/WCC that the employee is coming for the drug test and to document the time the employee leaves the premises for the drug test. The employee will fill out the proper forms in Human Resource and proceed to Caromont Occupational Medicine for the testing. Any DOT testing- Access, Fleet Maintenance, and certain Solid Waste- will have DOT specific forms and be subject to breath alcohol testing as well as a DOT drug screen. This will be done at Caromont Occupational Medicine.

Employees who are currently off shift when they are selected for a random drug test shall be notified immediately upon their return to work to report for the drug test. Supervisors shall not notify the employee of the pending test prior to their return to work.

15.3 Post-accident Testing

The supervisor shall call the S/WCC to notify of the accident. During office hours, the test will be done by Caromont Occupational Medicine. After hours, weekends, or holidays, the on-call nurse will authorize drug testing at Cox Rd. Urgent Care or have the employee report to the S/WCC the following morning for testing. In the event the S/WCC is out of the office, the employee will pick up proper paper work from HR and will be sent to Caromont Occupational Medicine for testing. All Access employees will be sent to Caromont Occupational Medicine Monday – Friday 8:00-4:00 for DOT and breath alcohol testing following an accident.

15.4 Reasonable Suspicion Testing

The supervisor or department director will notify the S/WCC of the reasonable suspicion. The employee will be escorted to the S/WCC's office. Reasonable suspicion drug testing procedure will be discussed with the employee:

- Employee will be placed on administrative leave until the drug test is confirmed by the Medical Review Officer- possibly 7-10 working days.
- The employee will be given the Employee Medication Information Form to fill out prior to having the drug test. They will be instructed to list all substances used within the last 30

days to include prescription medicines, over the counter treatments, supplements, alcohol, someone else's medications, and illegal substances.

- The employee will then be escorted to Caromont Occupational Medicine by a supervisor with the proper forms for the drug screen. The employee will not drive them self.
- The S/WCC will notify the Department Director upon receipt of the negative drug test or the confirmation of the drug test from the medical review officer.
- The employee will be enrolled in mandatory EAP if they are to remain as an employee of Gaston County after a positive drug screen. The employee is expected to adhere to all standards set by EAP, and to undergo random drug screens administered by EAP, while under their treatment.
- After completion of EAP treatment, the employee will agree to random drug screening up to 1 year by Gaston County. Refusal to do so will result in discharge.

15.5 Testing Subsequent to Arrest Concerning Controlled Substance

The employee will notify their supervisor within 5 working days of any arrest or conviction concerning controlled substances. The supervisor will escort the employee to the SWCC office and complete the proper forms. They will then escort the employee to LabCorp for drug testing.

16 TRAVEL POLICY

17 VEHICLE USE

18 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

All employee evaluations must be completed on an official Gaston County Employee Evaluation Form HR504 accompanied by Personnel Action Form (HR Form 500) and be received by the Director, Human Resources Department at least 30 days before the employee's evaluation date.

19 GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

20 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

21 CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

21.1 Coaching

Notes made regarding coaching with an employee shall be kept in the department's file on the employee.

21.2 Verbal Reminder

Verbal Reminders shall be documented on HR Form 509, but may be kept in the department's file on the employee. If subsequent progressive discipline occurs on the same subject the Verbal Reminder shall be forwarded to Human Resources along with the new disciplinary action.

21.3 Employee Assistance Program

The employee, the supervisor and the EAP shall be notified in writing when EAP is required. The supervisor shall call EAP at 704-529-1428 to start the process. If EAP is required the EAP requirement shall be recorded on HR Form 509.

22 DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

22.1 Disciplinary Actions

Any Verbal Reminder, Written Warning, Suspension without Pay, Investigation Status with Pay, and required EAP shall be documented on an Employee Corrective/Disciplinary Action Form (HR Form 509). There is no need to use a Personnel Action Form.) The HR form 509 shall be sent to HR with all supporting documentation attached.

Demotions and discharges require a Personnel Action Form (HR Form 500) to accompany all other supporting documents.

A Written Warning, Suspension without Pay, and Discharge must be approved by the Department Director. Supervisors wishing to utilize one of these Disciplinary Actions must present their recommendation to the Department Director in writing.

Department Directors who wish to Suspend or Discharge an employee must contact the HR Director. In the event the HR Director is out of the office the County Attorney must be contacted.

A Pre-Disciplinary Conference must be held for any employee facing Suspension without Pay or Discharge. The employee must receive written notice of the date, time and the exact reason for the Pre-Disciplinary Conference prior to the Conference with sufficient time to prepare his/her response. The Pre-Disciplinary Conference is the employee's opportunity to present any information related to the circumstance for the Department Director's consideration. No determination of discipline shall be made prior to the following day. If the decision involves a suspension or discharge, a letter will be prepared stating the specific reasons for the suspension or discharge, and the employee's appeal rights. This letter will be delivered, by hand, if appropriate, to the employee preferably by the close of the next business day, but as soon as practical. A copy of the letter will be placed in the employee's permanent personnel file.

Following Discharge, the Supervisor and Department Director shall arrange for the employee to remove their personal items from their work area; turn in keys, identification badge, and other County equipment; and, shall escort them from the building. This shall be done in a manner that minimizes employee embarrassment and workplace disruption.

22.1.1 Employee Appeal for Suspensions, Demotions, and Discharges

Employees have the right to appeal a Demotion, Suspension without Pay or a Discharge. Employees who are subject to the State Personnel Act (G.S. 126) or Civil Service Board shall appeal directly to those governing bodies. All other employees have the right to appeal to the Gaston County Personnel Commission. Employee's appealing to the Gaston County Personnel Commission must provide written notice of the request to appeal within 3 business days.

The Department Director shall, within 3 working days of receipt of the notice of appeal, forward a copy of the employee's written request to the HR Director.

The HR Director shall schedule a hearing by the Gaston County Personnel Commission, as soon as possible, after receiving the employee's notice of appeal, pursuant to its jurisdiction set forth in the Gaston County Personnel Policy.

The Gaston County Personnel Commission shall conduct a hearing to consider the facts and issues relevant to all aspects of the Demotion, Suspension or Discharge. After considering all pertinent evidence, it shall issue findings regarding the facts and issues presented and rule on the questions presented by the requesting employee. The Personnel Commission's ruling on the appeal shall be final.

22.2 Investigation Status with Pay

Investigation Status with Pay shall be accounted for on the Admin Leave line on the employee's time sheet. Requests to extend Investigation Status with Pay must be approved by the HR Director.

23 SEPARATION

Departments shall forward a Personnel Action Form to HR and encourage the employee to schedule an exit interview with the HR Benefits Manager.

In the event of the death of an employee, survivors should be provided with the name and phone number of the HR Benefits Manager to call to make necessary arrangements. The County Manager's office should also be informed of the death of an employee by the department.

24 PERSONNEL COMMISSION

25 USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

25.1 Technology Use Monitoring and Reporting

Gaston County IT routinely monitors network operations health. In very rare circumstances, IT staff will detect a problem on the network, and track it down to an individual user PC. When this occurs, it is usually related to a virus or other malware. Again, this is somewhat rare.

Gaston County IT does not monitor individual use behavior. While IT has implemented systems and reporting for this purpose, those reports are not monitored by IT staff. A few standard reports are automatically generated and delivered directly to department heads. The onus is on respective department management to review reports generated by IT and determine whether or not the report content is in line with departmental operations, and expected employee performance.

The only circumstances under which IT will bring user behavior to the attention of a department is if that behavior in some way violates County policy and either jeopardizes the security or integrity of the County computing environment, or creates significant additional cost for the County.

25.1.1 Department Requests for Use Reports

Gaston County IT can produce cell phone, office phone, and web use reports. In a limited fashion, email use reports can be produced as well. All use report requests **MUST** be in writing (either ACTION or email). Email requests are to be addressed to the County CIO or Assistant IT Director. IT will not process any use requests without the authorization of the requesting department head. A supervisor may request a use report for his or her employee, but at a minimum the respective department head must be cc'd in the request email. If ACTION is used for the use report request, IT will follow up with the respective department head to confirm authorization.

25.2 Security

Security of Gaston County's information systems is every user's responsibility!

25.2.1 Passwords and User System Access

All requests for user access to Gaston County systems are to be submitted via an ACTION Service Request.

25.2.2 Third Party Access to Gaston County Systems

Third-parties include vendors, contractors, or other guests that require access to Gaston County technology resources. All requests for third-party access to Gaston County systems are to be submitted via an ACTION Service Request. The business reason for access must be specified in the request.

25.2.3 Reporting Violations

Critical violations (evidence of hacking, theft, etc.) must be reported to a department supervisor and the IT Service Desk immediately after discovery.

Non-critical violations (simple policy violations, use complaints, etc.) should be communicated in writing to the Information Technology Department. ACTION or email may be used. If email is used, it should be addressed to the IT Service Desk, or to Senior IT Management (CIO, Assistant IT Director).

When possible, IT will honor requests for anonymity.

25.3 Remote Access

“Remote access” means access to Gaston County systems from external systems, e.g. via the Internet, or a modem, from home, hotel, vehicle, etc. Security risks associated with remote access are much higher than the risks of internal access. Additionally, remote access consumes technology resources above and beyond those required for internal access. Due to the higher risk, additional security requirements may be established for remote access systems by the Information Technology Department.

25.3.1 Requests for Remote Access

All requests for remote access must be submitted to IT via an ACTION Service Request. Due to additional licensing and costs associated with remote access, the business need for access must be specified in the request.

25.4 Hardware/Software Standards, Procurement, and Installation

The Gaston County Information Technology Department has the sole responsibility for establishing standards, procuring, maintaining inventory, and installing technology required for County operations. Information Technology is also responsible for engaging and managing relationships with technology vendors. Technology hardware and software includes but is not limited to applications, programs, PCs, laptops, printers, plotters, fax machines, phones, cell phones, PDAs, scanners, firewall, wireless network equipment, servers, network routers and switches, etc.

25.4.1 Hardware and Software Standards

Because of the changing nature of technology, Gaston County IT is constantly updating standards for hardware and software.

IT maintains a list of standard hardware and software on the County Intranet site.

To request an exception to the standards, departments should submit an ACTION Service Request. It may be beneficial to have a conversation with IT staff before such a request is made. In many circumstances, a solution for a business need may be found within standard systems.

25.4.2 Technology Procurement

The Gaston County Information Technology department maintains relationships with dozens of technology vendors. By doing so we are able to leverage those relationships and volume purchasing to achieve the most efficient costs for the County.

All technology for the County must be purchased through County IT. Requests for procurement must be submitted to IT via an ACTION Service Request.

IT will work with the user to clarify specifications, and then obtain quotes from vendors. The best fit and lowest cost will be assessed. IT will then produce requisitions for department approval. The department is to return a signed copy of the requisition to IT, and submit a purchase order to Purchasing (see Purchasing Policy and Procedures document). All technology purchases must be shipped to IT for the purposes of inventory and installation.

25.4.3 Technology Installation

Gaston County's technology environment is carefully designed to meet business needs, and secure data. Straying from this design may jeopardize the operation and security of Gaston County systems. To help preserve the standards and integrity of Gaston County systems it is required that all technology installations be performed by Information Technology staff.

Requests for technology installation must be submitted to IT via an ACTION Service Request.

25.5 Technology Support

The Gaston County Information Technology Department has sole responsibility for technical support to users for all Gaston County systems. Unless Information Technology has specified otherwise for a particular system, users should always contact Information Technology for all technology-related needs.

25.5.1 Request for Support – System Outage or Problem

In the event that support is needed regarding a system outage, or a problem, user should contact the Service Desk. Gaston County IT's Service Desk is staffed from 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. The Service Desk is frequently very busy responding to user calls. In the event a call during these hours goes to voicemail, the user needs to leave a voicemail. Voicemails are responded to in the order they are received.

Outside of staffed hours (nights and weekends) system outages and problems should still be reported to the Service Desk via voicemail. During off-hours, the Service Desk voicemail system will place a call to Service Desk staff on call. Although the Service Desk is not physically staffed off-hours, the calls still receive a response. We do ask that off-hour support requests be limited to urgent issues.

25.5.2 Request for Support – New technology, Changes, Moves, etc.

In the event support is needed regarding routine technology changes, the request should be submitted via an ACTION Service Request.

25.6 County Internet Content

All County Internet content (text, pictures, new pages, links, etc.) requests must be submitted to the County Web Master via email. New or changed content should be submitted to the Web Master in digital form. The Web Master will work closely with users to ensure content meets County web site look and feel standards.

Any new web-based application systems requests by a department must be submitted to IT via ACTION Service Request. IT works closely with the Web Master to ensure look and feel of application systems aligns with County web site look and feel standards.

25.7 Phone

Requests for changes in phones (new, move, change, remove, etc.) must be submitted to IT via ACTION Service Request.

25.8 Cell Phones

Request for new cell phones must be submitted to IT via the 'Cell Phone Request' form found on the IT Intranet web site. Forms are submitted to the IT Service Desk for processing.

Requests for changes or moves to existing cell phones must be submitted to IT via an ACTION Service Request.

25.9 Storage Media Recycling and Disposal

When data is deleted from storage media (hard drives, floppies, RW-CDs or DVDs, thumb drives, tape, etc.), the data is not actually permanently removed! In some circumstances utilities can be used to recover data that has been deleted.

In the event users have media which is no longer needed, an ACTION Service Request should be opened so IT can pickup and appropriately process the media. IT has utilities which can permanently 'cleanse' media so that data is no longer retrievable. IT will then recycle or dispose of the media as appropriate.

25.10 Surplus

Per County Policy, Gaston County IT is responsible for disposition of all surplus software and hardware. Request for County IT to pick up and process surplus technology must be submitted to IT via an ACTION Service Request.

25.11 Receiving Used Hardware or Software

Donated, or otherwise "acquired" used technology may help Gaston County reduce or avoid costs. However, software or hardware which is unserviceable, or incompatible with the County's established technology environment may actually increase cost for the County. Before used technology is received, the receiving department must request a review of said technology via an ACTION Service Request. IT will assess the technology for supportability, serviceability, and compatibility within the County computing environment.

25.12 Electronic Record Management

Any department that wishes to convert paper files to an electronic form must submit a request to IT via an ACTION Service Request.

25.12.1 Self-warranty (paperless records)

If a department wishes to become self-warranted (completely replace paper records with digital records), they must go through a self-warranty process with the State. It can provide the information necessary for this process.

- 26 COLLECTION AND USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS**
 - 27 PERSONNEL RECORDS AND REPORTS**
 - 28 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**
-

29 REDUCTION IN FORCE

{Procedure to be documented}.
