

# *Ascension Parish Government Personnel Policy Manual*



*The Constitution of Louisiana*  
*Revised Statute Title 33 Municipalities and Parishes*

*Ascension Parish Home Rule Charter*  
*Adopted May 4, 1993 – Approved by electorate July 17, 1993*

*Ascension Parish Code of Ordinances*  
*Adopted March 19, 1987 – Effective April 15, 1987*

*Chapter 16 Personnel – Article 1 In General*  
*Section 16-1 Personnel Policy Manual &*  
*Classification Plan*  
*Adopted June 20, 1996 – Revised January 18, 2024*

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## INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this manual to establish and maintain a uniform system for managing personnel matters of the Parish of Ascension (hereinafter also referred to as: the Parish, Ascension Parish Government, or Parish Government), to assure compliance with applicable state and federal employment laws, and to provide for the standards, terms and conditions of employment with the Parish of Ascension in a clear and comprehensive manner to facilitate the effectiveness and efficiency of Parish government.

The rules, policies, and procedures set forth in this personnel manual shall serve as a guide for employees in their performance of routine work activities. Nothing contained in this personnel manual or any verbal statement about the provisions of this manual shall constitute any type of employment contract, express or implied, with any employee, nor is any of the information presented herein intended to make any commitment to any employee concerning how individual employment action can, should, or will be handled. The information contained in this personnel manual is subject to change at any time as deemed necessary to ensure effective application of the Rules of the Ascension Parish Government. While the Parish will normally attempt to provide employees advance notice of any change, the Parish Council reserves the right to alter these rules, policies, and/or procedures at any time without advance notice.

The Parish Council and Administration do not knowingly violate the law and do not tolerate those who do. If an employee believes that anyone in or associated with Ascension Parish Government has requested or directed him/her to do anything that violates local, state or federal law, or has prohibited the employee from doing anything that is required by such laws, the employee shall report any such incident immediately to their department director, Director of Human Resources, Chief Administrative Officer, or Parish President.

## PARISH COUNCIL

Parish of Ascension is a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana. With regard to personnel matters, the Parish of Ascension Council shall have all powers and duties necessary, requisite, or proper for the management of its affairs, not denied by the Home Rule Charter or general law, or inconsistent with the Constitution.

Duties and Responsibilities: Specifically, personnel duties of the Parish Council include, but are not limited to the following:

Adopt and/or amend all personnel rules, regulations, and procedures necessary for efficient and effective administration of the Parish personnel system.

Appoint the Human Resources Review Board, which shall hold hearings and hear appeals of employees on certain matters.

Fix the compensation of all employees except those provided for in the Charter.

Create, abolish, or consolidate parish departments, offices, or agencies in addition to those created by the Home Rule Charter.

Approve methods to determine the eligibility of candidates for original appointment or promotion.

Reinstate any employee who has been removed by the Parish President, but only upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the Parish Council.

Remove department heads by a favorable vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of its members.

Require periodic and special reports from all Parish officers concerning the affairs of their respective departments, offices, agencies or special districts, which reports shall be submitted by and through the Parish President in the case of departments, offices, agencies and special districts subject to his/her jurisdiction.

Make investigation of Parish affairs and make inquiries into the conduct of any department, office, agency, or special district of the Parish, including the investigation of the accounts, records, and transactions of the department, office, agency or special district.

Create Parish departments, offices, or agencies in addition to those created by the Charter, by an ordinance adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the governing authority.

By ordinance, abolish or consolidate any Parish department, office, agency, board or commission or provide for the consolidation and transfer of any of the functions of such

departments, offices, agencies, boards or commissions.

Members of the Parish Council shall not direct or supervise Parish employees or Parish officers who are subject to the direction and supervision of the President, except through the office of the President.

## PARISH PRESIDENT

The Parish President for the Parish of Ascension Parish Government, elected by the qualified voters of the Parish, serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Parish. With regards to personnel matters of the Parish, the Parish President has several explicit duties, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

Review and recommend to the Parish Council all rules, policies and procedures necessary for the efficient and effective administration of the Parish personnel system.

Appoint, subject to ratification by the Parish Council, such officers and department heads as may be provided.

Approve the appointment or removal of all employees, except those provided for in the Charter.



## CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

A Chief Administrative Officer for the Ascension Parish Government may be appointed by the Parish President. If appointed, the duties with regards to personnel matters shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Supervise the heads of all departments with the approval of the President;

Appoint or remove, with the approval of the President, all employees, except those whose appointment or removal is otherwise provided for by the Charter;

Give general oversight over all departments for the purposes of coordinating their activities;

Prescribe accepted standards of administration practices, to be followed by all offices, departments and boards;

Attend all meetings of the Parish Council and any board or committee when requested by the President;

Attend meetings of the Parish Council at its request and make available information as it may require; and/or

Perform all others duties assigned in writing by the President.

## HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Created by the Home Rule Charter within the Ascension Parish Government is a Human Resources Department, which shall consist of a Personnel Director, the Human Resources Director, and a Review Board.

Human Resources Director – The Human Resources Director, appointed by the Parish President, shall be responsible for the efficient and effective administration of the personnel system for the Parish, including all Parish departments, offices, agencies, and special districts in accordance with personnel rules adopted by the Parish Council. The Personnel Director shall submit to the Parish President all proposed rules, regulations, and procedures necessary for the administration of the Parish's personnel system. In addition, the duties of the Human Resources Director shall include, but not be restricted to the following:

To develop and, upon adoption, to administer job descriptions on the basis of the duties and responsibilities of each position.

To develop and, upon adoption, to administer a salary plan for all non-appointed positions in the Parish service.

To prepare personnel rules to administer the personnel system. Such rules shall apply to all Parish departments, offices, agencies, and special districts and shall provide for:

Policies and procedures for the administration of non-appointed positions.

Policies and procedures for the administration of the salary plan.

Policies and methods for holding competitive examinations or other methods approved by the Parish Council to determine the eligibility of candidates for original appointment and promotion.

The establishment and maintenance of lists of persons eligible for appointment by reason of successful participation in competitive examinations or tests or other approved methods and procedures for the certification of persons from the eligibility lists for filling vacancies.

The procedure for lay-off, suspension, demotion or dismissal of employees.

Regulations governing hours of work, attendance, sick and vacation leaves.

A retirement system for Parish employees which shall take into account any existing retirement system(s).

Other rules, policies, practices and procedures necessary to the administration of the Parish personnel system.

The Ascension Parish Government's Human Resources Review Board is created by the Home Rule Charter. The functions of the Human Resources Review Board shall be advisory in nature. The Human Resources Review Board is empowered to conduct appeal hearings for employees who are dismissed, demoted, disciplined or non-promoted. The Review Board shall conduct such hearings within thirty (30) days of the appealable action in accordance with applicable personnel rules, as outlined in Rule XVIII, Appeals and Hearings. After any hearing, the Review Board shall submit their advisory recommendations to the Parish President for his consideration.

ASCENSION PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES – TITLE 16 PERSONNEL  
CHAPTER 1. IN GENERAL  
PART I. PERSONNEL MANUAL & OFFICIAL CLASSIFICATION PLAN  
SUBPART A. EMPLOYMENT  
*Paragraph 7. Revised January 18, 2024*

1. Nature of Employment
  - A. Employment with Parish of Ascension is at will. At will employment is an employment relationship in which the employer or the employee may end the working relationship at any time and for any reason without fearing legal action.
  - B. Policies set forth in this handbook are not intended to create a contract. They are not to be construed to constitute a contractual obligation of any kind, or a contract of employment between the Parish and any of its employees. The provisions of this handbook have been developed at the discretion of the Parish and may be amended or canceled at any time, at the Parish's sole discretion.
  - C. The provisions of this handbook supersede all previous employee policies and practices, including, but not limited to, the Ascension Parish Government Personnel Manual and the Ascension Parish Government Substance Abuse Policy. This handbook shall be amended by ordinance upon the favorable vote of at least a majority of the authorized membership of the Parish Council and approval of the Parish President as provided in the Home Rule Charter. Where State or Federal mandates differ with this handbook, those mandates shall prevail.
  
2. Equal Employment Opportunity
  - A. Ascension Parish is committed to providing equal employment opportunities. We will not discriminate against employees or applicants for employment on any legally recognized basis including, but not limited to: veteran status, race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, age or political affiliation. If you have any concerns regarding equal employment opportunities, or you feel you have been discriminated against, you must discuss them with your supervisor, the Department Head, the Human Resources Director, Chief Administrative Officer, or the Parish President. Such matters shall be turned over to the Human Resources Director or Chief Administrative Officer for investigation.
  
3. Hiring Considerations
  - A. The Parish of Ascension shall make a concerted effort to recruit and select for employment the best qualified person available. Consideration for employment will be based on a person's eligibility as determined by selection techniques to assess the person's fitness to perform the duties assigned. The Human Resources Director shall be responsible for developing and maintaining all employment procedures and determining recruiting and selection tools to be used.
  - B. All job openings shall be requisitioned through the Human Resources Department.
  - C. Whenever possible, vacancies in staffing may be filled by promotions and transfers

from within the Parish government based upon individual qualifications for the available position to be filled. The Parish reserves the right to conduct recruiting and selection activities in the best interest of the Parish Government through internal and/or external job candidates.

(1) Recruiting Sources

- (a) The Human Resources Director shall determine which recruiting sources will be used to recruit for vacant positions. Generally, employees are notified of job openings via a job posting.
- (b) When a position is posted, notices stating the position title, requirements and posting deadline shall be placed in prominent locations, such as departmental bulletin boards or near time clocks.
- (c) Employees interested in the posted position may apply by signing the job posting notice or notifying the Human Resources Department in writing prior to the deadline for application for the posted position.
- (d) Current Parish employees may be given preference over external candidates for posted positions only if their qualifications for an open position meet the position requirements, and at least meet or exceed those of the external candidate.

4. Applications/Resumes

- A. Applications and resumes shall be accepted by the Human Resources Department and will be maintained on file for a period of one (1) year.
- B. The Parish relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions of any of this information or data may result in exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

5. Selection Techniques

- A. The selection techniques used in the examination of prospective new or promotional employees shall be impartial and of a practical nature and relate to the criteria and content of the position.
- B. Examinations may be developed at the discretion of the Human Resources Director for certain positions based on the position's responsibilities. Examples of such examinations include, but are not limited to, performance, achievement and/or aptitude tests, other written examinations, work samples, personal interviews with Human Resources Staff and the hiring manager/supervisor, etc.
- C. Selection techniques shall not be intentionally discriminatory.
- D. The Human Resources Department shall ensure that reasonable accommodations are made in testing procedures to assure that persons with disabilities can be tested in an appropriate manner.

## 6. Job Offers

- A. The Human Resources Director or his/her designee may offer employment upon the conclusion of the hiring process upon the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer or Parish President.
- B. All offers of employment shall be conditional, subject to satisfactory results of any background investigation, reference checks, pre-employment alcohol and drug tests, and necessary documentation to assure the prospective employee meets all legal requirements.

## 7. Probationary Period

- A. The probationary period is intended to give newly hired, promoted, or transferred employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations.
- B. The Parish of Ascension uses this period to evaluate employee capabilities, work habits, and overall performance.
- C. The probationary period is not intended to, nor does it create a contract for or obligation of employment for a specified period of time.
- D. All new, rehired, transferred, and promoted employees work on a probationary basis for the first 180 days after their date of hire, rehire, transfer, or promotion.
- E. If the Department Director determines that the designated probationary period does not allow sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate the employee's performance the probationary period may be extended for a specified period approved by the Director of Human Resources, Chief Administrative Officer, or Parish President.
  - (1) A performance appraisal shall be conducted by the supervisor at the conclusion of the employee's probationary period.
  - (2) If the employee's performance is rated overall as "satisfactory," the employee may be placed at "regular" employment status.
  - (3) If the employee's performance is rated overall as "needs improvement," or if the employee's performance in any individual performance factor is rated as "needs improvement," and there is no reasonable expectation that the employee will be able to improve performance sufficiently to effectively perform the job duties, the employee shall be subject to termination of employment.
- F. Additionally, a new employee may be released from employment at any time during the probationary period if the department or agency in which the employee works recommends such action. The Human Resources Director shall review the recommendation and take appropriate action upon the approval of the Parish President.

## 8. Temporary Appointments

- A. When a vacancy is to be filled for a position for which there are no candidates available following the above Hiring Considerations, the Human Resources Director

or his/her designee with the approval of the Chief Administrative Officer or Parish President, may make a temporary appointment of any person whom he/she deems qualified for a period not to exceed three (3) months, and can be subject to renewal up to one (1) year.

9. Conditional Appointments

- A. When a position is temporarily vacated because the incumbent is on authorized leave of absence with or without pay and the department or agency desires to fill the position for the duration of the leave, the department or agency must do so by submitting a formal request for such an appointment to the Human Resources Department.
- B. Any person appointed to a position in a department or agency subsequent to the date that the incumbent is granted authorized leave from the position shall be considered a conditional appointee.

10. Emergency Appointments

- A. When an emergency exists requiring an immediate appointment, an emergency appointment may be made by the Human Resources Director or his/her designee, upon approval of the Chief Administrative Officer or Parish President, of any qualified person until the position involved can be filled under the normal provisions outlined in these Rules or until the emergency no longer exists.
- B. An emergency appointment may be made for up to forty-five (45) calendar days.
- C. If the emergency condition continues to exist beyond the initial forty-five (45) day period, the Human Resources Director may make a recommendation to the Chief Administrative Officer or Parish President for one (1) additional emergency appointment.

11. Seasonal or Special Project Appointments

- A. Work that is seasonal in nature or related to a project which will last for less than ten (10) months may be performed by seasonal or special project appointees who will work for the duration of the season or until the completion of the project.

12. Granting of Temporary, Conditional, Emergency, Seasonal or Special Project Appointments

- A. The Human Resources Director shall determine the manner in which temporary, conditional, emergency, seasonal or special project positions shall be filled.
- B. If such positions cannot be filled by a transfer, the Human Resources Director or his/her designee with the approval of the Chief Administrative Officer or Parish President may appoint the person whom he/she deems most qualified.
- C. When a current Parish employee is granted a temporary, conditional, emergency, seasonal, or special project appointment as defined in the above sections, the employee shall remain at his/her same pay classification and pay amount if the new position is in a pay classification equal to or lower than the employee's current pay

classification.

- D. If the pay classification of the new position is higher than the employee's current position, then the employee shall be paid at least the minimum of the new position's pay classification, at a pay rate sufficient to grant the employee at least a three percent (3%) increase in pay.
- E. Upon the end of the temporary, conditional, emergency, seasonal or special project appointment, the employee shall be required to vacate the position and shall be reinstated to his/her former position at his/her former pay classification and rate of pay.
- F. The employee shall sign the Payroll Authorization form before Human Resources can proceed with the temporary, conditional, emergency, seasonal, or special project appointment.

### 13. Termination of Temporary, Conditional, Emergency, Seasonal or Special Project Appointments

- A. The appointments defined in this subsection shall terminate upon the regular filling of the vacancy in any manner authorized under the Charter or upon the completion of the season or project for which the appointment was made.

### 14. Submission of Application

- A. Except as is specifically authorized by the Human Resources Director, every person appointed as defined in this section shall submit a formal application. The application shall be a condition of employment on a temporary basis and shall be submitted to the Human Resources Department in accordance with these Personnel Rules.

### 15. No Preferred Rights Given Appointments

- A. Persons holding the above-defined appointments shall not be given preferred rights or preferred consideration for any position.

### 16. Promotion

- A. Vacancies in positions may be filled by promotion of qualified employees. Selection of an employee for a promotion shall be based on the employee's performance record, qualifications, skills and abilities specific to the advanced position.

### 17. Transfer

- A. An employee may be transferred from a position to any other position for which no additional or different qualifications are prescribed for original entrance, on recommendation of the department or agency and approval of the Human Resources Director and Chief Administrative Officer or Parish President.
- B. However, no employee shall be transferred from a position in one department or agency to a position in another department or agency without the consent of the heads of both departments or agencies concerned, except as otherwise specifically



provided in these Rules.

- C. Any employee may request a voluntary transfer by putting the request in writing to the head of the department or agency, who shall forward such request to the Human Resources Director for appropriate action, if any.
  - (1) An employee who is granted a voluntary transfer shall be paid in the appropriate pay range for the position to which he/she transfers, even if this results in a decrease in pay.
  - (2) The employee shall sign the Payroll Authorization Form before Human Resources can proceed with the transfer.

#### 18. Outside Employment

- A. Employees may hold outside jobs as long as they meet the performance standards of their job with the Parish, such as attendance, quality and quantity of work, work habits, relationships with people on the job, etc.
- B. All employees will be judged by the performance standards of their respective positions and will be subject to the Parish's scheduling demands and "on call" assignments as required, regardless of any existing outside work commitments.
- C. If the Parish determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of their employment with the Parish as they are modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain employed with The Parish.
- D. Outside employment that constitutes a conflict of interest is prohibited. Some positions by their nature are prohibited from outside employment.
  - (1) Employees may not receive any income or material gain from individuals outside Parish government for materials produced or services rendered while performing their Parish jobs.
  - (2) Furthermore, any conduct which creates a conflict of interest in violation of the Code of Governmental Ethics (La. R.S. 42:1101 et seq.) is prohibited by the Parish of Ascension.
- E. Employees should refer any questions about outside employment to their supervisor, Department Director, or the Human Resources Director. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Human Resources Director, and Chief Administrative Officer or Parish President.

#### 19. Employment of Relatives ("Nepotism")

- A. Two members of an immediate family may not be employed at the same time in any full or part time position, regardless of administrative department, for any of the reasons enumerated below. Immediate family includes the employee's: parents, stepparents, parents-in-law, grandparents, children, stepchildren, children-in-law, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers, stepsisters, brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law.
  - (1) One immediate family member would have the authority to supervise, appoint,

remove, discipline, or evaluate the performance of the other.

- (2) One immediate family member would be responsible for auditing or inspecting the work of the other.
  - (3) Other circumstances exist which would place the immediate family members in a situation in which there is actual or reasonably foreseeable conflict between the interest of the Parish and their own.
- B. No employment will be allowed that would violate the anti-nepotism laws of the State of Louisiana. A violation of this law may lead to employment dismissal.

20. Your Supervisor

- A. Your supervisor is your main source of information and instruction.
- B. They are responsible for keeping you informed about everything that can affect your job and your performance as an employee of the Parish of Ascension.
- C. You are encouraged to speak with your supervisor about any problem or concern you have which is affecting your job.
- D. Your supervisor will do whatever is possible to correct those work-related problems or concerns.
- E. It is the Parish's goal to have you and your supervisor work closely together and communicate openly and honestly with each other.

## SUBPART B. EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND RECORDS

*Paragraph 5. Revised March 29, 2022*

*Paragraph 7. Revised January 18, 2024*

### 1. Personnel Records

A. The Parish of Ascension shall require the maintenance of a uniform system of personnel records for all employees. The Human Resources Director shall supervise and maintain a complete personnel records system that will assure the orderly and efficient management, in accordance with statutory provisions, of all personnel records, forms, letters, reports, information and any other documentation on each employee that is to be used by all departments or agencies within the Parish Government. The Human Resources Director shall have ultimate discretion to determine which documents shall go in each employee's personnel file.

#### (1) Access and Disclosure

- (a) Internal Access and Disclosure – The Human Resources Director shall be designated custodian of all personnel records, and the staff of the Human Resources Department permitted to have access to, review and modify all such records and documents for custodial purposes during the normal processing of employment matters. Additional staff personnel, such as the employee's immediate supervisor, department or agency head, or appropriate management personnel may be permitted access to personnel files and records when necessary due to relevant and stated purposes. Other Parish personnel or representatives may have access to personnel files or records for legitimate purposes as approved by the Human Resources Director.
- (b) Employee's Review of Personnel File – Employees who wish to review their own file should contact the Human Resources Department. With reasonable advance notice, employees may review their own personnel files in the Parish offices and in the presence of a member of the Human Resources Staff. After having reviewed the contents of his or her personnel file, should an employee disagree with any documentation within the file, the employee may submit a rebuttal or response within fifteen (15) calendar days of the date of the review by the employee. The time period may be extended for ten (10) calendar days provided a written request is made for such an extension within the original fifteen (15) day period. Any rebuttal or response to a document shall be dated and signed by appropriate personnel and shall be attached to the original document when placed in the personnel file.
- (c) Third-Party Access and Disclosure – The contents of an employee's personnel file shall not be divulged to third parties without the expressed written consent of the Human Resources Director or the employee, except when ordered by a court or by subpoena, or in accordance with this Rule. In case a personnel file should be accessed by a third party, the employee

whose file was so accessed shall receive written notice of the fact and the name and title of the person permitted access. All persons permitted access shall maintain confidentiality of those documents in the file which are not matters of public record.

(2) Employee's Responsibility for Information

- (a) It shall be the employee's responsibility to keep information, such as address, marital status, birth of children, emergency notification, and other important personal information current in his or her file by notifying the Human Resources Department promptly as information changes.

(3) Contents of Personnel Files

- (a) The Human Resources Director shall be responsible for setting up and maintaining a system for determining which documents shall be included in an employee's personnel file and how these documents shall be maintained. Documentation to be included in a personnel file shall, prior to placement of any document in a file, be reviewed by Human Resources Department personnel for appropriateness and approved for placement in the file. Medical data are maintained in a separate file only accessible to Human Resources Department personnel. Any uncertainties regarding appropriateness of documentation shall be referred to the Human Resources Director for clarification and final approval.

- (b) All official personnel files shall be stored in a secure and locked depository located in the Human Resources Department. Personnel files shall not leave the premises without expressed written consent of the Human Resources Director.

- (c) Except as specifically provided in this Rule, all records of the Personnel Department shall be public records; and shall be open to public inspection during normal business hours of the Department. For reasons of public policy, the following records shall be confidential and open for inspection only under the conditions described herein:

- i. Examination, examination materials, and the results of test.
- ii. Confidential reports and investigations on the character, personality and history of employees or candidates for positions in the Parish.
- iii. Service ratings, except as provided in these Rules.

- (4) In addition, statutory provisions require the following to be kept confidential. These items shall not be disclosed for public record inquiries.

- (a) The home telephone number of the public employee where such employee has chosen to have a private or unlisted home telephone number because of the nature of his or her occupation with such body.
- (b) The home telephone number of the public employee where such employee has requested that the number be confidential.
- (c) The home address of the public employee where such employee has requested that the address be confidential.

(5) Preservation of Records

(a) Personnel records shall be maintained in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations.

(6) Duplication of Records

(a) Parish Government records, including most personnel records, are public records. However, there is no obligation to the Parish Government to reproduce any records except for appropriate official agencies. No copies of Parish Government records shall be made on Parish equipment or duplicated at a cost to the Parish Government unless it is for official business as approved by the Parish President and/or Parish Attorney. Copies of records made shall be at the expense of the person or agency making the request, unless specifically required by appropriate official agencies. Duplication of any record classified as privileged information shall not be permitted. Parish of Ascension employees who request copies from their personnel folder will allow up to three (3) business days for processing of the copies.

2. Department or Agency Rules

A. Each separate and identifiable department, office, agency and special district of the Ascension Parish Government may develop, implement and revise as necessary such rules, policies and/or procedures pertaining to operational requirements of the department, office, agency and special district. Such rules, policies, and/or procedures shall not conflict with the Rules and amendments of the Parish Council and shall be approved by the Human Resources Director and Chief Administrative Officer, or Parish President prior to implementation. Where conflicts arise, the rules, policies, and/or procedures of the Parish Council shall take precedent.

3. Employment Reference Checks

- A. To ensure that individuals who are employed with the Parish of Ascension are well qualified and have strong potential to be productive and successful, it is Parish policy to verify the employment history and references of applicants.
- B. The Parish also receives requests for reference checks and verification of employment for its employees. The Human Resources Department will respond to those reference check inquiries that are submitted. Responses to such inquiries will confirm only dates of employment, employment status, and position(s) held. Wage information is provided (outside of public record requests) if prior written authorization is received from the employee.
- C. All requests for verification of employment (reference checks) shall be directed to the Human Resources Department. No other employee, supervisor, manager, or director is authorized to release employment data.

4. Personnel Data Changes

A. It is the responsibility of each employee to notify their supervisor or the Human Resources Department of any changes in personal data within seven (7) days of the

change. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of emergency, educational accomplishments, and job-related awards and commendations, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times.

5. Performance Evaluation System – The goal of the Parish of Ascension Performance Evaluation System is to involve employees in improving organizational effectiveness by integrating processes that communicate and clarify mission and organizational goals and objectives; identify employee, team, and supervisory accountability for the accomplishment of goals and objectives; clearly communicate the expectations of each position; use the results of a performance appraisal as a basis for merit pay personnel actions; encourage employees to take responsibility to continuously improve, support team endeavors, develop professionally and perform at their full potential
  - A. Performance Evaluation System is a scored system with numeric ratings of core competencies that employees are evaluated against, such as:
    - (1) Attendance & Observation
    - (2) Quality of Work
    - (3) Initiative & Cooperation
    - (4) Safety
    - (5) Knowledge
    - (6) Personal Appearance
    - (7) Reports & Correspondence
  - B. The numeric competency ratings are:
    - (1) Unsatisfactory, (2) Needs Improvement, (3) Satisfactory, (4) Above Satisfactory, and (5) Outstanding.
  - C. The numeric ratings for each competency are weighted and combined for a total Overall Performance Rating, the five possible ratings of record of any Parish employee are:
    - (1) Outstanding
    - (2) Above Satisfactory
    - (3) Satisfactory
    - (4) Needs Improvement
    - (5) Unsatisfactory
  - D. Appraisal Period – An annual appraisal is required for an employee to be eligible for a merit pay increase. The annual rating period is January 1 through December 31 for all positions covered by this system. To receive a rating of record, an employee must serve a minimum appraisal period of 90 days in the same position.
  - E. Conducting Performance Appraisals – Formal performance evaluations are conducted to provide both supervisors and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals. Performance appraisals will be conducted upon the following occasions:
    - (1) Within 30 days after the end of the appraisal period

- (2) At other times as directed by the Parish President
  - F. Ratings of Record – The standards of performance are:
    - (1) Outstanding: Employee performance consistently exceeds the expected level that is required to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.
    - (2) Above Satisfactory: Employee performance occasionally exceeds the expected level that is required to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.
    - (3) Satisfactory: Employee performance consistently meets the expected level that is required to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.
    - (4) Needs Improvement: Employee performance is occasionally below the average level that is required to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.
    - (5) Unsatisfactory: Employee performance is consistently below the level that is required to successfully perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.
  - G. Supervisory comments are required if an employee scores a Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory on any competency or the overall rating of record.
  - H. Performance Evaluation Cycle – For all employees, the following cycle will be used to manage performance evaluations and merit pay actions.
    - (1) January 1: Performance Evaluation Cycle Begins
    - (2) October 1: Last effective date for new hires or recently moved employees to be eligible for merit pay based on the new position
    - (3) December 31: Performance Evaluation Cycle Ends
    - (4) February 1: Performance evaluations completed and acknowledged by employees
    - (5) March 1: Merit pay percentages approved by Administration
    - (6) April 1: Merit payouts effective first pay period in April
    - (7) Merit Pay Percentage. The percentage of merit pay and its distribution is at the discretion of the Parish President and will be decided upon annually. The availability of merit pay is not an entitlement and should not be relied upon as an automatic increase in salary on an annual basis.
  - I. Employees with an overall Rating of Record of Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory are ineligible for a merit pay increase for that fiscal year. This is a permanent feature of the Parish of Ascension performance evaluation system and is not decided upon annually.
6. Application of Fair Labor Standards
- A. The Parish of Ascension shall follow the guidelines set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regarding the definition of “Exempt” and “Non-Exempt” employees as applicable to positions within the Parish. Exempt Employees are not protected by the FLSA, and therefore, are not subject to the provisions of the FLSA. For example, exempt employees are ineligible to earn overtime pay, and they are not covered by other employment conditions as prescribed in FLSA. In accordance with the FLSA, Exempt employees may be required by their Supervisor to either make up the time later in the pay period or use applicable sick/vacation time for partial time missed during a workday. If an Exempt employee does not have

accrued sick/vacation and cannot make up the time missed, then the employee cannot be docked for missing a partial day, this would interfere with their Exempt status. Non-Exempt Employees are covered by the provisions of FLSA or other applicable laws and shall be paid overtime for any hours worked in excess of forty (40) in one payroll week.

7. Other Employment Categories

- A. In addition to the application of FLSA, each Parish employee shall be categorized as follows:
  - (1) Regular Employee – An employee who has successfully completed the prescribed probationary employment period.
  - (2) Regular Full Time Employee – An employee who is hired for an indefinite period and works more than an annual average of thirty (30) hours per week, and receives full benefits of full-time service to the Parish for the assigned position.
  - (3) Regular Part Time Employee – An employee who is hired for an indefinite period, but who works less than a normal workweek.
- B. Probationary Period Employee – An employee who is newly hired or transferred and whose performance is being evaluated to determine eligibility for regular employment status.
  - (1) Special consideration for new hires. Only for the purpose of determining participation in insurance and retirement benefits, new hires who are within their probationary period and will enter into the “regular full time” employment category upon completion of the probationary period will be treated as regular full-time employees during their probationary period.
- C. Temporary Employee – An employee who is hired for a specified period of time or for completion of a specified project. Usually, employees who are hired for a temporary, conditional, emergency, seasonal or special project appointments fall into this category. Such employees are not eligible for the benefits generally associated with full time employment.



## SUBPART C. EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION, WAGE AND SALARY ADMINISTRATION

*Paragraphs 2.,3., & 5. Revised January 18, 2024*

1. It is the policy of the Parish of Ascension to pay and provide other compensatory benefits and incentives to its employees in a competitive and equitable manner to attract and retain the most capable and qualified employees available. The Parish shall adopt a compensation plan for all employees.
2. Job Descriptions
  - A. The Parish shall maintain job descriptions for each position within parish government and each position shall be assigned a labor grade based upon the job description and internal and external pay equity factors as identified by the Human Resources Department. When new positions are added to the Classification Plan, a job description shall be written, and a pay range shall be assigned by the Human Resources Department within the framework of the Pay Scale adopted by the Parish Council.
  - B. Job descriptions serve as a guide for duties that the employee should generally perform along with position qualifications. The job description also states the position's FLSA Status and labor grade. Job descriptions are maintained by the Human Resources Department and shall be reviewed periodically to determine their continued accuracy, completeness, compliance with applicable state and federal statutes, and relevance to the Parish's pay and performance appraisal systems.
  - C. All job descriptions are subject to change at any time as the public service may allow or require. Also, employees may be required from time to time to perform work outside the scope of the normal duties listed on their job description. Refusal to follow a supervisor's instructions shall be construed as "insubordination" and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
3. Classification Plan
  - A. Each position in the Classification Plan falls under Ascension Parish Government Pay Scale approved by the Parish Council, which sets a minimum and maximum pay range for each labor grade. The Classification Plan assigns titles and labor grades with pay ranges authorized by the Pay Scale.
  - B. Changes in the official title or duties for any given position may result in reassignment to a new position or labor grade. The Classification Plan shall be maintained by the Director of Human Resources and may be modified from time to time based upon internal and external pay data or emerging requirements. The Human Resources Department shall conduct periodic reviews (at least once every three years) to assure that the Classification Plan remains competitive and fair.
  - C. Recommendations along with justification for new position titles, modifications of duties, or changes in existing labor grades may be submitted to the Human Resources Director for review and analysis. The Human Resources Director shall

present any proposed adjustments to the Classification Plan for approval by the Parish President. However, no changes to the Ascension Parish Government Pay Scale may be made without the approval of the Parish Council. Changes in the annual or hourly rate for each labor grade or the addition of a new labor grade requires the approval of the Parish Council.

- D. No employee shall be paid more than the maximum wage or salary of their labor grade established by the Pay Scale unless an employee's position is downgraded by reclassification or changes in the labor market through no fault of the employee. In this instance, the employee may continue to receive their former wage or salary until the rate on the new wage or salary range equals or surpasses the old wage or salary.
  - E. All new positions added to the Classification Plan shall be reported to the Governing Authority at the monthly Finance Meetings via Monthly Finance Reports Agenda Item as well as with the quarterly Human Resources update to the Governing Authority.
4. Original Appointment Wage or Salary
- A. Original appointment to any position of a class shall generally be at the minimum or new hire rate for the job classification. The Human Resources Director may hire an applicant above the minimum established for the position taking into consideration the job market for the position, and/or the applicant's experience, preparation, and other documented qualifications.
5. Wage or Salary Upon Promotion
- A. An employee promoted to a position in a higher pay range shall be compensated at the minimum of the pay range for that position or at a pay rate sufficient to grant the employee at least a three percent (3%) increase in pay, provided the employee does not exceed the maximum of the pay range.
    - (1) The pay increase for a promotion to a position in a higher pay range may exceed 3% if written justification for the increase is approved by the Human Resources Director and Chief Administrative Officer or Parish President.
  - B. An employee who moves to a different position within the same pay grade generally shall not be eligible for a pay increase at the time of the lateral transfer, unless the move was made at the request of the Parish and for the benefit of the operation of Parish Government.
6. Overtime Compensation
- A. In accordance with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the Parish of Ascension defines a standard workweek as forty (40) hours. From time to time employees may be required, as a condition of their employment, to work more than 40 hours in one workweek. Only "non-exempt" employees are eligible for overtime compensation. If required to work overtime, non-exempt employees will be compensated at a rate not less than 1 and ½ times their regular hourly rate.

“Exempt” employees in the administrative, professional, and supervisory categories as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act are not eligible for overtime pay.

- B. Overtime compensation at the rate of 1 and ½ times the employee’s regular hourly rate is paid to all nonexempt employees for any hours worked over 40 hours in a one-week period. “Nonexempt” employees are those employees whose job functions do not fall within the “exempt” classification as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act and its regulations.
  - C. All overtime work must receive the Department Head’s prior authorization. Overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as practical to all employees qualified to perform the required work and supervisory personnel shall attempt to request or order overtime work in advance, when possible.
  - D. Time off for illness or any leave of absence, other than paid holidays and paid vacation, will not be considered hours worked for purposes of performing overtime calculations. For example, if an employee misses work on a Monday and uses sick leave and on Tuesday they work 12 hours instead of 10, the two extra hours will not be considered overtime, since sick leave hours are not considered actual hours worked.
  - E. Overtime Pay for Public Works and Drainage Supervisors: When a Public Works or Drainage Supervisor is called out to supervise a crew, they may receive overtime for any hours worked over 40 in the week. The overtime shall be calculated as straight time.
7. Call Out
- A. Call out time shall be paid to non-exempt employees for time worked outside of regular work hours at the overtime rate for which an employee is called after leaving the job.
  - B. A minimum of four (4) hours shall be recorded and paid for employees who are called back to work. If the employee is called out to work and the work required is less than four (4) hours duration, then the supervisor has the option of requiring the employee to work for four (4) hours. When an employee is called to work before his regular hours and works continuously through his regular hours, the additional hours shall be recorded as additional hours worked. Call out time consists of time worked outside of regular hours and shall not include time in transit.
8. Disaster Pay for Exempt Employees
- A. On occasions when exempt employees are required by their Department Head to work beyond 40 hours in a work week due to non-routine overtime, they may be eligible to be compensated at a rate of 1 and ½ times their regular hourly rate for any hours worked over 40 hours in a one-week period. This non-routine overtime must be the result of catastrophic events related to a state of emergency or other disaster as authorized by the Parish President. Overtime incurred as a result of routine operations, errors in planning, or as a result of non-compulsory overtime is

not compensable for exempt employees.

- B. Employees who are eligible for this overtime will be required to complete a time sheet listing hours worked authorized by their department head.

#### 9. Timekeeping

- A. Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every non-exempt employee. Federal and state laws require the Parish to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties.
- B. Non-exempt employees should accurately record the time they begin and end work. They should also record the beginning and ending time of any split shift or departure from work for personal reasons. Overtime work (more than 40 hours in one week) must always be approved by the Department Head before it is performed.
- C. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, recording time on another employee's time record, or failing to obtain prior approval for overtime work may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- D. It is the employee's responsibility to sign their time records to certify the accuracy of all information recorded. The supervisor shall also review and sign the time record before submitting it for payroll processing.

#### 10. Payroll Period

- A. Employees shall be paid by check on a monthly or bi-weekly basis as may be designated.
- B. The payroll week for purposes of calculating overtime and determining the beginning and end of the payroll period shall begin on Monday at 12:00 AM and end on Sunday at 11:59 PM each week.
- C. The bi-weekly payroll period shall run from Monday through Sunday, with checks being distributed every other Thursday afternoon. Time records are submitted to the Payroll Department every other Monday for the preceding two payroll weeks worked. Payroll checks are distributed to employees by 5:30 PM on the following Thursday of the same week in which the time sheets were submitted. If the scheduled payday falls on a holiday, employees will be paid on the last working day prior to the regular payday.
- D. The monthly payroll period shall run from the first day of the month through the last day of the month or as defined by the Payroll Department.

#### 11. Payroll Deduction

- A. The Parish government maintains that salary deductions which are considered statutory, including, but not limited to, federal income tax, state income tax, retirement, etc., shall be deducted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Any other deductions may be authorized by the Chief Financial Officer or Parish President upon recommendation of the Human Resources Director or

Chief Administrative Officer, when such action is determined to be in the best interest of the Parish government. Other deductions can only be approved if at least 10% of employees are enrolled in the program. The employee shall also sign a form authorizing said salary deduction unless the salary deduction is established by a court order or other lawful process.

- B. Under no circumstances shall special arrangements be made as to the commencement or transaction of salary deductions. Any and all processing fees allowed by law shall be assessed.

## 12. Paychecks

- A. Employees who discover a mistake in their paycheck, lose their paycheck, or have it stolen should notify their supervisor or the Treasurer immediately. Errors, whether in favor of the employee or the Parish, must be reported to either the supervisor or Treasurer immediately. Failure to report such discrepancies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- B. If an error is found and verified, it will be corrected as soon as practicable, but normally by the next payroll check. Accurate timekeeping directly affects the accuracy of paychecks. Failure to prepare and submit an accurate time report may result in a delay in preparing the employee's paycheck. In some cases, it may be impossible to correct these discrepancies before the next regularly scheduled payroll.
- C. In the case of loss or theft, the Treasurer will attempt to stop payment on the check at the cost of the employee and reissue a new check to the employee. However, the employee is solely responsible for the monetary loss and the Parish cannot be responsible for the loss or theft of a check if it cannot stop payment on the check.
- D. All newly hired employees will be required to enroll in direct deposit. All employees who are currently on direct deposit will be required to stay enrolled, unless they can prove that there are special circumstances for canceling.

## 13. Compensation Upon Separation

- A. The Parish shall require that final compensation to employees upon separation from employment be in a timely and accurate manner and in accordance with state and federal laws. According to Louisiana State Law, upon separation of employment, an employee shall be paid all final wages on or before the next regular payday, or not later than fifteen (15) days following the date of discharge, whichever occurs first. Final compensation shall consist of all hours worked from the last pay period up to date and time of separation and any accrued hours deemed compensable, less any offset allowed by law and any normal deductions required. Final paychecks shall be sent via certified mail to the employee's last known address on record, unless the employee provides written instruction otherwise to the Human Resources Department at least 48 hours prior to the issuance of the payroll check.
- B. In the event employment separation is the result of an employee's death, the

employee's beneficiary as shown on his/her official personnel records shall be entitled to receive the employee's final paycheck.

14. Garnishments and Wage Assignments

- A. As may be required by a court order, employees may be subject to a deduction from their wage or salary to satisfy a judgment against the employee. The Human Resources and Payroll Departments shall be immediately notified of any court order setting forth garnishment of an employee's pay and shall make the deduction as required. The amount of said deduction shall be forwarded to the creditor(s) as directed by the court order.
- B. Employees with three or more garnishments for unrelated debts within any consecutive 24 months may be subject to termination of employment. Voluntary wage assignments are not accepted from employees.

## SUBPART D. EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PROGRAMS

*Paragraph 12. Revised May 4, 2023*

### 1. Workers' Compensation

- A. Employees who are injured in the course of their employment are entitled to appropriate workers' compensation benefits. Benefits received shall be in accordance with the provisions of applicable Louisiana Workers' Compensation statutes.
- B. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if the employee is hospitalized, immediately.
- C. Employees who have a work-related injury or illness should inform their supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on the job injury may appear or whether immediate medical attention is needed, it must be reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible. If an injury warrants, medical attention should be obtained promptly.
- D. Employees absent from work while on workers' compensation are required to maintain routine contact with their supervisor and the Human Resources Department, and, if eligible, to return to work on light duty, if available. Employees absent from work on worker's compensation will also be required to turn in uniforms while absent from work. Once the employee returns to work they will be able to order new uniforms. Upon discharge from the health provider, the employee shall submit to the Human Resources Department a report from the treating physician authorizing the employee to return to work.
- E. While on workers' compensation, employees will not be allowed to use any accumulated sick or vacation leave, except for the first seven days after an accident.
- F. The Parish will vigorously defend any misrepresentation or fraudulent claims presented to the Parish or our insurance carrier. Intentional misrepresentations by the employee may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### 2. Modified Duty/Reduced Hours – Return to Work Program

- A. It is the goal of the Parish of Ascension to allow employees to return to work following a work-related injury or illness. Employees eligible to return to work on Modified Duty or Reduced Hours following a work-related injury or illness will provide a written authorization from a physician, nurse practitioner or psychologist. If the employee's home department (department where injury occurred) cannot work with the employee's restrictions, the Human Resources Department in coordination with the parish's Safety Director and workers' compensation claims consultant will make a concerted effort to place the employee in another area. The employee's home department will be charged for all hours worked.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to reintegrate employees with work-related injuries

back into the workforce, based on recommendations provided by appropriate healthcare providers and the Workers' Compensation Claims Consultant. This process recognizes that while injuries generally occur at a specific time and place, healing occurs gradually over time. It is in the best interests of the injured employee and Ascension Parish that such injured employees be accommodated during this recovery period.

(1) Procedures

- (a) The employee will provide a written Return to Work authorization to the Workers' Compensation Claim Consultant.
- (b) The employee will discuss with the Workers' Compensation Claims Consultant the written authorization and the restrictions and approved activities in relation to the employee's current job description.
- (c) The Workers' Compensation Claims Consultant and the employee's manager will discuss opportunities for the employee to return to work in a modified capacity and establish in writing those tasks for which the employee is responsible.
- (d) If there is no modified duty available in the employee's home department, the employee will be assigned to another area where work is available and restrictions can be accommodated.
- (e) The employee will be allowed to remain on modified duty for an initial 90-day period. At the end of this 90-day period, the Workers' Compensation Claim Consultant will discuss work consistency and reliability with the employee's supervisor, review the employee's functional capacity and reassess the employee's modified duty status. Modified Duty positions and availability will be reviewed at that time. An extension of up to 60 days can be made, subject to approval by the Human Resources Director, provided there is a reasonable expectation of the employee's work restrictions ending by the end of this additional 60 days. Otherwise, such modified duty on a temporary basis will be terminated and the employee will receive vocational assistance in finding other, suitable employment.
- (f) Any exception to this parish policy must be approved by the Parish President.

3. General Leave Provisions

A. In order to establish uniform standards governing the use of sick leave and vacation provisions for employees, the Parish Government sets forth the following provisions:

- (1) Leave Accrual – Annual vacation leave and sick leave shall be accrued on a pay period basis but not accumulated until the end of the pay period. All vacation and sick leave accumulate on a pro-rata basis.
- (2) Eligibility to Accumulate Leave – Employees shall not be eligible to accumulate any leave days during all periods of absence due to unpaid leave, workers' compensation, or periods of suspension.



- (3) Continuous Service – Continuous service with any department or agency of the Parish of Ascension shall be considered in determining the amount of leave for which an employee is eligible.
  - (a) An employee who has left the service because he or she has voluntarily resigned, “quit without notice,” or has been dismissed shall be considered as having interrupted service so that the employee’s continuous service shall be computed from the date on which the employee last entered the service of the Parish.
  - (b) When an employee has been laid off through no fault of his/her own and subsequently re-employed within six (6) months, the period of absence shall not cause the employee to lose prior service credit, but neither shall it be counted in computing the employee’s continuous service.
  - (c) The periods of absence from work due to authorized leave of less than two (2) months duration, funeral leave, civil leave, military leave, family/medical leave, vacation leave, sick leave, periods of suspension less than two (2) months duration, or workers’ compensation shall not interrupt the employee’s continuous service nor shall they be deducted from his/her service. However, periods of absence from work due to authorized leave without pay of two (2) months or more shall be deducted from the employee’s continuous service.

#### 4. Sick Leave

- A. Paid sick leave is a gratuitous benefit of employment provided to eligible employees for periods of temporary absence due to the employee’s personal illness or injury or the illness or injury of the employee’s immediate family member(s). Sick leave may not be used for personal or vacation time or any purpose other than stated above.
- B. Maximum sick leave granted to an employee during any year is ninety-six (96) hours. Sick leave shall accumulate equally each pay period for active full-time employees. Newly hired full time employees will accumulate sick leave from the first day of employment and will be eligible to use sick leave after completing three (3) months of continuous employment.
- C. Paid sick leave benefits will be calculated based on the employee’s base pay rate at the time of the absence. Sick leave hours may be accumulated. However, because sick leave is a gratuitous benefit of employment, which does not accrue as a wage, sick leave will not be paid out upon an employee’s termination or resignation.
- D. Employees who retire under the Parochial Retirement System will be paid for accumulated sick leave up to a maximum of 480 hours. Additionally, employees retiring through the Parochial Retirement System may be allowed to apply the balance of their unused sick leave towards retirement service credit according to the rules set forth by the Parochial Retirement System.
- E. Employees who meet retirement criteria, but chose not to enroll in the Parochial Retirement System will be paid for accumulated sick leave up to a maximum of 480 hours.

- (1) Certification of Sick Leave and Return to Work
  - (a) An employee who has taken sick leave shall file with his/her department or agency a statement stating the cause of the absence and the amount of time taken. A certification from the employee's treating physician indicating the nature of the illness or injury and the necessity for absence shall be required if three (3) or more days of sick leave are taken. Such notification should be sent to the Human Resources Department. The supervisor may also require a certification from the employee's doctor if the employee's use of sick leave exhibits a pattern, the supervisor suspects the employee is abusing sick leave, or there is other legitimate reason to request medical certification.
  - (b) Medical Exam: If the department or agency has reason to doubt the validity of the certification provided by the treating physician, or if the department or agency requires further clarification due to the specific demands of the employee's position, the department or agency may require, at the Parish's expense, a second medical opinion of a physician approved by the Parish. If requested, an employee shall be required to submit to such a medical exam as a condition of employment.
- (2) Unpaid Sick Leave – If all accumulated sick leave is exhausted prior to the time a regular full-time employee is able to return to work, the employee may be placed on unpaid sick leave. However, no employee shall be granted leave which exceeds more than six (6) months, whether paid or unpaid, unless a such leave is recommended by the department or agency head and the Director of Human Resources, and approved by the Chief Administrative Officer or Parish President. When an employee does not return to work at the expiration of this time period and is not on any other form of leave, the employee shall be considered as having resigned his/her position.
- (3) Planned Medical Treatment – If sick leave is used in accordance with a scheduled surgery, planned medical treatment, or birth of a child, the employee shall provide the department or agency with thirty (30) days notification, if possible.

5. Vacation

- A. Employees with at least three (3) months continuous full-time service are credited with vacation leave at the end of each payroll period, and are eligible to use paid vacation based on the schedule below. Newly hired full time employees shall be granted vacation time once they have completed three (3) months of continuous full-time service, at which time, the employee shall be eligible for leave and shall be credited with vacation leave retroactive to the date of full-time employment.

Length of Service	Annual Leave	
Up to 4 years	80 hours	(2 weeks)
5 – 10 years	120 hours	(3 weeks)

11 – 16 years	160 hours	(4 weeks)
17 – 29 years	200 hours	(5 weeks)
30 or more years	240 hours	(6 weeks)

- (1) Vacation Requests – Employees must submit vacation requests on the appropriate form to their supervisor at least two weeks in advance. Only in emergency situations will vacation time be approved when the request is made less than one week in advance. Each request will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Availability of vacation time will be based on staffing needs and requests for leave that have already been submitted in your department.
- (2) Carrying Leave Forward – Any accumulated and unused vacation earned by an employee shall be carried forward to the succeeding calendar year, but not in excess of 360 hours, except for “banked” hours which were previously accumulated and banked due to a change in policy.
- (3) Payment for Accumulated Vacation Leave – Upon separation of employment, employees will be paid for any vacation time accumulated prior to the implementation of this policy. Employees will also be paid for any vacation leave granted for the current year. The rate of pay shall be computed on the basis of the rate the employee is receiving at the time of separation of employment.
- (4) Upon death, the balance of vacation leave due the employee shall be paid to his/her beneficiary, as designated in the employee’s personnel file for such payment, based upon the rate of pay the employee was earning at the time of death. If no beneficiary is designated in the personnel file, the check shall be made payable to the estate of the employee.
- (5) Recall – If an employee is required to work during a scheduled or approved vacation period, that employee shall be paid for hours worked during the scheduled vacation at the rate of 1 and ½ times the employee’s regular rate of pay and the employee’s vacation will be rescheduled.
- (6) Planned Medical Treatment – If sick leave is used in accordance with a scheduled surgery, planned medical treatment, or birth of a child, the employee shall provide the department or agency with thirty (30) days notification, if possible.

6. Funeral Leave

- A. Employees who wish to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify their supervisor immediately. A listing of employee relationships along with the allotted amount of days off is listed below.

Relationship to Employee	Amount of Funeral Days
Spouse	3 days
Parent (or step parent)	3 days
Child (or step child)	3 days

Sibling (Brother/Sister) (or step Brother/Sister)	3 days
Mother-In-Law	3 days
Father-In-Law	3 days
Brother-In-Law	3 days
Sister-In-Law	3 days
Daughter-In-Law	3 days
Son-In-Law	3 days
Grandparents	3 days
Grandchildren	3 days
Aunt	1 day
Uncle	1 day
Aunt-In-Law	1 day
Uncle-In-Law	1 day

- B. Unless otherwise approved by the department director and Human Resources Director to allow for extraordinary circumstances, the three (3) days for immediate family shall be limited to: the day before the funeral, the day of the funeral, and the day after the funeral. Holidays or scheduled days off which may fall within the three-day period shall be counted towards the three (3) days of funeral leave.
- C. Any additional request for extended leave could be addressed on a case by case basis, and the employee will be required to use leave without pay or vacation for the additional days off.
- D. Supervisors of employees who use funeral leave must make a notation on the employees' timecard and state in the comments section the relationship that they have to the deceased. If this is not done, the employee will be docked for time that was taken off.
- E. Funeral leave will normally be granted unless there are unusual business needs or staffing requirements.

7. Civil Leave

- A. Civil leave shall be granted when an employee is performing jury duty in any local, state or federal court, or is serving as an election commissioner in either a primary or general election. Employees must show the jury duty summons or notification for work as an election commissioner to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate the absence.
- B. Pay for civil leave will be calculated on the employee's base pay rate times the number of hours the employee would otherwise have worked on the day(s) of the absence less the jury fees or commissioner pay.
- C. Employees on civil leave are expected to report for work for partial or full days whenever the court schedule permits.
- D. Employees are responsible for calling the number provided on the jury summons one day in advance to check for court cancellation. If court has been cancelled the

employee must report for work at their normal start time the next day. If an employee does not call one day in advance, and court has indeed been canceled, and the employee does not report to work at their normal start time, then the employee will be required to use accrued vacation or leave without pay for anytime missed. The employee may also receive a disciplinary action for not following policy.

#### 8. Military Leave

- A. A military leave of absence will be granted to employees, except those occupying temporary positions, to attend scheduled drills or training or if called to active duty with the U.S. Armed Services Reserves or National Guard.
- B. Copies of an order requesting the employee to report to military duty shall be presented to the employee's supervisor and forwarded to the Human Resources Department ten (10) days prior to commencement of the duty if possible, or as soon as obtained thereafter.
- C. The Parish will compensate regular full-time employees while on Reserve Training for up to 15 calendar days in one calendar year. The amount paid shall be the difference between the employee's regular pay (excluding overtime and any other special compensation) and the amount of military pay.
- D. Employees on two-week active duty training assignments or inactive duty training drills are required to return to work for the first regularly scheduled shift after the end of training, allowing reasonable travel time. Employees on longer military leave must apply for reinstatement in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws.
- E. Every reasonable effort will be made to return eligible employees to their previous position or a comparable one. They will be treated as though they were continuously employed for the purposes of determining benefits based on length of service, such as job seniority.

#### 9. Family and Medical Leave

- A. The Parish provides leaves of absence to eligible employees who are temporarily unable to work due to a serious health condition or to fulfill family obligations relating directly to childbirth, adoption, or placement of a foster child; or to care for a child, spouse or parent with a serious health condition. For purposes of this policy, serious health conditions means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; continuing treatment by a health care provider; and periods of temporary incapacity associated with pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions.
- B. Employees who have completed twelve (12) months of service and 1250 or more hours of service in the past 12-month period are eligible to request family or medical leave as described in this policy.
- C. Employees are required to use their available vacation prior to taking an unpaid leave of absence for any of the reasons listed above. Additionally, employees are

required to utilize any available sick leave or disability leave before taking an unpaid leave of absence to care for a family member with a serious health condition or for the employee's own health condition. Available vacation and sick leave are in lieu of, and not in addition to, the unpaid twelve weeks of leave under this section. Qualifying periods of paid and/or unpaid leave will be counted towards the employee's 12 weeks of FMLA leave. For example, an employee with six weeks of available sick leave must exhaust those six weeks first and will then have an additional six weeks (not an additional twelve weeks) of unpaid leave under this section.

- D. A rolling twelve-month period will be used to determine an employee's available leave under this section. Thus, the amount of leave which an employee is eligible to take at any given time is to be determined by the amount of leave which the employee may already have used during the twelve months immediately preceding the leave.
- E. Eligible employees should make requests for family or medical leave to their supervisors at least 30 days in advance of foreseeable events and as soon as possible for unforeseeable events.
- F. A health care provider's statement must be submitted verifying the need for the leave and its beginning and expected ending dates. Any changes in this information must promptly be reported to your supervisor and the Human Resources Department. Employees returning from medical leave must submit a health care provider's verification of their fitness to return to work.
- G. Eligible employees may request up to a maximum of 12 weeks of leave within any 12-month period. Any combination of family leave and medical leave may not exceed this maximum limit. If this initial period of absence proves insufficient, consideration will be given to a written request for a single extension of no more than 30 calendar days. Married employee couples may be restricted to a combined total of 12 weeks leave within any 12-month period for childbirth, adoption, or placement of a foster child; or to care for a parent with a serious health condition.
- H. Employees who sustain work related injuries are eligible for a medical leave of absence for the period of incapacity in accordance with all applicable laws covering occupational injuries. Such a leave covered under workers' compensation shall run concurrently with family and medical leave.
- I. So that an employee's return to work can be properly scheduled, an employee on medical leave is requested to provide their supervisor with at least two weeks advance notice of the date the employee intends to return to work. When a family or medical leave ends, the employee will be reinstated to the same position, if it is available, or to an equivalent position for which the employee is qualified.
- J. If an employee fails to report to work promptly at the end of the leave, the Parish will assume that the employee has resigned.
- K. While an employee is on family and medical leave, the Parish will continue to pay premiums for the basic life, dental and health insurance coverage at the same percentages as paid for active employees. However, the employee will be fully

responsible for submitting payments for the portion of the insurance premium normally paid by the employee or other benefits paid through payroll deduction. Failure to promptly pay these premiums will result in cancellation of the unpaid coverage. If the employee does not return to work following family and medical leave for any reason other than the employee's inability to perform the job due to continued illness or injury, the employee shall be required to reimburse the Parish for any premiums paid by the Parish on the employee's behalf.

#### 10. Pregnancy Leave

- A. In accordance with Louisiana (Revised Statutes 23:341, et seq.) and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), it is the policy of the Parish of Ascension to comply with the requirements of those laws pertaining to maternity leave.
- B. Under this Louisiana Statute female employees who are not eligible for FMLA may take leave on account of pregnancy for a reasonable amount of time that shall not exceed four (4) months. The reasonable amount of time shall cover the period during which the female employee is disabled on account of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Employees will be required to use all available leave before leave without pay can be granted. All rules for insurance premium payments while out on leave without pay will apply to this situation as well. Employees returning from pregnancy leave must submit a health care provider's verification of their fitness to return to work.
- C. Female employees who meet FMLA criteria are eligible for 12 weeks of unpaid leave under FMLA as well as an additional 4 weeks covered under the Louisiana Statute. The additional 4 weeks will be granted if there is a medical complication as a result of the pregnancy. Rules for using available leave and insurance premium payments will also apply here.

#### 11. Leave of Absence without Pay

- A. The Human Resources Director may, after consultation with the appropriate department or agency and upon the written request of an employee, grant the employee leave of absence without pay for a period not to exceed five (5) working days in any twelve (12) month period whenever such leave is considered to be in the best interest of the Parish Government.
- B. The Human Resources Director may, upon the written request of an employee with three (3) or more years of continuous service submit to the Parish President a request for a leave of absence without pay for the employee for a period not to exceed twelve (12) consecutive months. Such a leave may be granted if an employee who is off duty for medical reasons and has exhausted his/her family/medical leave provides medical certification that he/she will be able to return to work at the conclusion of the leave; if the leave is for educational purposes which are considered to be in the best interest of the Parish; or other such justifiable reasons which are in the best interest of the Parish.
- C. Requests for a leave of absence without pay shall be submitted thirty (30) days

prior to the requested leave date, if possible.

- D. Any leave of absence without pay shall run concurrently with any applicable family/medical leave. An employee who is on leave of absence without pay for more than thirty (30) days shall be responsible for one hundred percent (100%) of the cost of his/her portion of employee benefits, which will be due no later than the 5th day of each month. If payment is not made on time, benefits will be canceled.
- E. When an employee does not return to work at the expiration of the time period granted and is not on approved family/medical leave, he/she shall be considered as having resigned his/her position.

## 12. Parish Holidays and Holiday Pay

- A. The regular parish holidays for all employees, except temporary and seasonal employees, shall be those established by the Parish Council as follows:

New Year's Eve	(December 31 <sup>st</sup> )
New Year's Day	(January 1 <sup>st</sup> )
Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday	(Third Monday in January)
Mardi Gras	(Tuesday before Ash Wednesday)
Good Friday	(Friday before Easter Sunday)
Memorial Day	(Last Monday in May)
Juneteenth	(June 19 <sup>th</sup> )
Independence Day	(July 4 <sup>th</sup> )
Labor Day	(First Monday in September)
Veterans Day	(November 11 <sup>th</sup> )
Thanksgiving Day	(Fourth Thursday in November)
Day after Thanksgiving	(Friday after the Fourth Thursday in November)
Christmas Eve	(December 24 <sup>th</sup> )
Christmas Day	(December 25 <sup>th</sup> )

- B. All parish holidays are observed according to a schedule outlined by the Parish President. The schedule should include observances that distinguish between those employees with varying work schedules, such as, those who work 4 days per week, 4½ days per week, 5 days per week, or other work schedules as may be implemented by the Parish. The parish holiday schedule may also establish a variation in parish holiday observances for parish employees whose daily work duties are performed in a State agency.
- C. If a parish holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday is designated as the date of observance. If a parish holiday falls on a Sunday, the next non-parish holiday work day is designated as the date of observance.
- D. Part-time employees with a set schedule are eligible for holiday pay if the parish holiday falls on a regularly scheduled work day for that employee. Part-time employees are paid holiday pay for the same number of hours they would have had to work on that scheduled day. This policy shall not apply to part-time firefighters, part-time concession stand workers, or any other part-time employee who works without a set schedule.



- E. Special and Regular Holidays – Whenever an employee is required to work on a regular parish holiday or on a special parish holiday proclaimed by the Parish Council or the Parish President, in addition to the holiday hours, the employee shall be granted time off from duty at the rate of time and one-half for the hours actually worked, to be given at such time or times as the department or agency shall designate within three (3) months of the date of the holiday; or the employee shall be paid on an hourly basis at the rate of pay of time and one-half for the hours actually worked plus holiday pay. No other type of leave or compensation shall be allowed the employee required to work on a special or regular parish holiday.

### 13. Other Employee Benefits

- A. The Parish provides health, life and dental insurance, credit union membership, retirement programs and other employee benefits for eligible employees. Details on eligibility and benefits offered by the Parish are available from the Human Resources Department. These benefits are at the discretion of the Parish and are not a guaranteed condition of employment.

### 14. Benefits Continuation

- A. The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under the Parish’s health plan when a “qualifying event” would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee’s hours or a leave of absence; an employee’s divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.
- B. Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at the Parish’s group rates plus an administration fee. The Parish provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when the employee becomes eligible for coverage under the Parish’s health insurance plan. The notice contains important information about the employee’s rights and obligations.

### 15. Bulletin Boards

- A. The Parish of Ascension maintains bulletin boards to communicate Parish information to employees and to post notices required by law. These bulletin boards are for the posting of Parish information and notices, and only persons designated by the Director of Human Resources may place notices on or take down material from the bulletin boards. Parish bulletin boards are not for employee use to post solicitations or other unapproved personal or business messages. The unauthorized posting of notices, photographs, or other printed or written materials on bulletin boards or any other Parish property is prohibited.

## SUBPART E. WORKING CONDITIONS

*Paragraph 18. Revised January 18, 2024*

### 1. Safety

- A. To assist in providing a safe and healthful environment for employees and the general public, the Parish of Ascension has established a workplace safety program. This program is a top priority for the Parish. The Safety Department has responsibility for implementing, administering, monitoring, and evaluating the safety program. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.
- B. The Parish provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as safety training programs, regular meetings, bulletin board postings, written communications, and the Parish's Safety Manual, which is provided to all new employees.
- C. Failure to adhere to the Safety Manual, safe work practices and procedures, and other safety communications may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- D. All on the job accidents whether or not resulting in an injury must be reported immediately (on the day of the accident) to the employee's supervisor and the Safety Department.

### 2. Training Programs

- A. Training programs may consist of lectures, demonstrations, hands-on usage, or such other methods that may aid in improving the skills and knowledge of employees in the performance of work. Employees may be required to attend training programs, meetings, or conferences as designated by their department or agency.

### 3. Employee Medical Exams

- A. To help assure that employees are able to perform their duties safely, medical examinations may be required.
- B. After an offer of employment has been made to an applicant entering a designated job category, a medical examination may be performed at the Parish's expense by a health professional chosen by the Parish. The offer of employment and assignment to duties is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the exam.
- C. Current employees may be required to submit to medical examinations to determine fitness for duty or according to Federal or State law governing their positions. Such examinations will be scheduled at reasonable times and intervals and performed at the Parish's expense.
- D. Information on an employee's medical condition or history will be kept separate from their employee information and maintained confidentially by the Human Resource Department.

### 4. Work Schedules

- A. Work schedules for employees vary throughout the Parish depending upon the demands of each of the various departments. Supervisors will advise employees of their individual work schedules. Staffing needs and operation demands may necessitate variations in starting and ending times, as well as variations in the total hours that may be scheduled each day and week. Schedules may be changed at the discretion of management.
5. Overtime and Emergency Work Hours
- A. As business or specific operational needs of the Parish may dictate, it may become necessary for employees to be available for work beyond their daily or weekly work schedule, or to return to work after departing the Parish premises, following completion of their normal work schedule.
6. Use of Phone and Mail Systems
- A. Personal use of telephones for long distance and toll calls is not permitted. Employees may use Parish telephones for local personal calls only during lunch and break periods provided it does not interrupt the normal course of operations.
  - B. Ascension Parish employees shall not use a cell phone while driving a Parish vehicle unless they have a hands-free device. If a call must be made and a hands-free device is not available the employee should wait until they can stop the vehicle.
  - C. Unless on an approved break or lunch period, Ascension Parish employees will not be allowed to use personal cell phones. Exceptions may be made for emergency situations. Personal cell phones should be kept on silent or vibrate while employee is on duty.
  - D. The use of Parish paid postage for personal correspondence is not permitted.
  - E. To ensure effective telephone communications, employees should always use the approved greeting and speak in a courteous and professional manner. Please confirm information received from the caller and hang up only after the caller has done so.
7. Computer, Internet and E-Mail Usage
- A. Computers, computer files, the E-mail system, and software furnished to employees are Parish property intended for business use only. As such, employees do not have a privacy interest, nor an expectation of privacy in stored or retained computer files, e-mail (sent or received), stored phone mail messages, and any other electronically maintained messages or files. Employees should not use a password, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization. To ensure compliance with this policy, computer and E-mail usage may be monitored. All parish-owned computers may be subjected to a computer audit, if requested by a supervisor.
  - B. The Parish of Ascension strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and sensitive to the diversity of its employees. Therefore, the Parish prohibits the use of computers and the E-mail system in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or

- harmful to morale.
- C. For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, and cartoons is not allowed. Other such misuse includes, but is not limited to, ethnic slurs, racial comments, off-color jokes, or anything that may be construed as harassment or showing disrespect for others.
  - D. The Internet or e-mail is provided for Parish business. They may not be used for personal, business, financial or commercial gain. Other examples of prohibited uses include, but are not limited to, the solicitation of others for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-business matters; posting personal messages without the author's consent; invading the privacy of another user; transmitting or downloading any material in violation of state or federal laws (including copyright laws); etc.
  - E. All subscriptions to list servers, bulletin boards or on-line services shall be coordinated with the Technology Department. No activities will be allowed that may damage or interrupt software or equipment on the Parish's network. It is each user's responsibility to safeguard the integrity of the Parish's computer system by making sure that all files downloaded, including attachments, are checked for viruses before opening and any other reasonable measures are taken.
  - F. Employees are required to notify their supervisor, department or agency head, or the Human Resources Director upon learning of violation of this policy. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
8. Personal Property on Parish Premises
- A. The Parish shall assume no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property of any employee that is brought onto Parish premises. Also, it shall be prohibited for employee to carry personal property in Parish vehicles without the express written permission of the employee's supervisor.
9. Use of Equipment and Vehicles
- A. Equipment essential in accomplishing job duties is often expensive and may be difficult to replace. Employees may be required to sign for any equipment, uniforms or other Parish property issued to them as a condition of employment.
  - B. When using Parish property, vehicles, or equipment, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines. Parish property, vehicles and equipment are intended to be used solely for parish purposes. If an employee who normally operates a Parish vehicle has a situation that must be taken care of during work time, prior approval from the employee's supervisor must be obtained, but such approval shall be restricted to unusual circumstances. Employees are expressly forbidden from using parish equipment for personal use. Drivers of Parish vehicles and equipment must not pick up riders or make unauthorized stops.
  - C. Employees should notify their supervisor if any equipment, machines, or tools

appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defect, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or the general public. Supervisors can answer any questions about employee's responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment used on the job.

- D. The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

#### 10. Smoking

- A. In keeping with the Parish's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoking is prohibited throughout the workplace. Smoking is allowed only during the employee's normally scheduled breaks in designated smoking areas located outside Parish buildings. Smoking is prohibited within 25 feet of any Parish building entrance.

#### 11. Break Periods

- A. If authorized by their department or agency head, employees may take no more than two fifteen (15) minute break periods during each full work day. Break periods shall never interfere with the operational requirements of the department. Failure to return promptly from break periods will be considered a "tardy" and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

#### 12. Eating

- A. All full-time employees are provided with one meal period each workday. Employees should maintain the cleanliness of the kitchen by washing their own dishes and cleaning any spills on tables, floor or countertops.
- B. Supervisors will schedule meal periods to accommodate operating requirements. Except for specific jobs which may require employees to work through their lunch period as designated by the Department Director, employees will be relieved of all active responsibilities and restrictions during meal periods and will not be compensated for that time.

#### 13. On Call

- A. In order to serve the public most effectively, many employees within Parish government are routinely required to work "on call" from time to time. In cases of emergencies, all Parish employees are subject to being called in for work during their off-duty hours.
- B. Some employees may be required to wear a pager or carry a portable telephone depending upon departmental needs. All employees must maintain their address and telephone number current in the Human Resources Department so that they can be reached in the event of an emergency call out.
- C. Failure by an employee to respond to an emergency call or maintain their current

address and telephone number in the Human Resources Department may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

#### 14. Solicitation

- A. Solicitation of employees for the purposes of soliciting funds or signatures, conducting membership drives, distributing literature or gifts, or the sale of merchandise or services is prohibited during working hours and at Parish work sites except for individuals duly authorized to conduct business with the Parish by the Department Director, Director of Human Resources, Chief Administrative Officer, or the Parish President.

#### 15. Personal Appearance

##### A. Dress Code

- (1) We place a high emphasis on the importance of dress in helping to promote a positive image of our government to our parish residents and to the public.
- (2) Employees Who Meet the Public and Customers Face to Face
  - (a) If your position requires that you deal with the public and customers on a face to face basis you are responsible (but not limited to) the following policies:
    - i. Your attire should always be professional, should create a good image of our government and never be revealing or offensive.
    - ii. Will Not Be Allowed (but not limited to):
      - aa. Low cut blouses, shirts, tops, or dresses that reveal cleavage
      - ab. Short skirts that are shorter than two (2) inches above the knee
      - ac. Blouses, shirts, tops, that expose the midriff
      - ad. Tank tops, muscle shirts
      - ae. Clothing with inappropriate print on them
      - af. Jeans of any color\*
      - ag. Clothing made of see-through materials
      - ah. Loose, baggy clothing
- (3) All Employees
  - (a) All employees are to dress in a fashion that helps to promote a good image of our government and should be clean, tidy and not wrinkled. Shoes must be appropriate with respect to the employee's work environment and job duties. Personal hygiene is a very large part of your personal appearance.
- (4) Friday Casual Dress Day
  - (a) We believe "Casual Friday" is a good way to end a week of good work. However, there are certain clothing items that are not allowed, not even on a Casual Friday.
  - (b) Casual Friday – Not Allowed (but not limited to):
    - i. Low cut blouses / shirts / tops or dresses that reveal cleavage
    - ii. Short skirts that are shorter than two (2) inches above the knee

- iii. Blouses / shirts / tops that expose the midriff
- iv. Tank tops / muscle shirts
- v. Clothing with inappropriate print on them
- vi. Clothing made of see-through materials
- vii. Jeans are ALLOWED on Casual Friday as long as there are no holes, strings, or ravel

(5) Dress Codes Violations

(a) Helping to promote a professional image of our business, Dress Codes / Personal Hygiene will be strictly enforced. Violation of the Dress Codes / Personal Hygiene policy will be as follows:

- i. Inappropriately dressed employees or employees with poor personal hygiene may be sent home and directed to return to work with proper attire or proper hygiene. Employees will not be compensated for time away from work
- ii. Employees who continue to violate Dress Codes and the Personal Hygiene policy risk serious disciplinary action

16. Uniforms

A. Uniform Employees

- (1) Uniforms provided by the Parish shall be kept in a neat, clean and properly maintained condition.
- (2) If an employee is issued uniforms, they must wear them. The employee may not substitute jeans for uniform pants.
- (3) Such uniform apparel shall not be used as personal attire outside the work location.
- (4) Uniforms, which no longer meet the Parish's standards of appearance, should be turned in for replacement.
- (5) Employees who separate employment with the Parish will be required to turn in to Human Resources any uniform apparel supplied in a clean and neat condition
- (6) Uniform shirts should be buttoned at all times.
- (7) Uniforms should fit properly; loose or baggy uniforms will not be allowed.

B. Health Unit Employees

- (1) Your profession requires that you deal with the public and customers on a face to face basis, either in the health unit or during medical home visits. You also deal with human blood and blood products, medical waste and vaccines that may ruin your regular clothing. You are required to wear medical scrub uniforms to work daily. They must not be wrinkled or worn out. The parish will provide you with three (3) sets of medical scrub uniforms and one (1) knit shirt with the Parish of Ascension logo for casual wear on Fridays. If these medical scrubs become worn, stained, or torn, you will be required to replace them at your own expense. Upon your separation of employment with the Parish of Ascension, these articles of clothing must be turned into your supervisor. The Parish of Ascension owns these uniforms.

17. Personal Visitors

- A. Friends, relatives, and unauthorized persons shall not be permitted to visit employees during work hours or at work locations without the express permission of the employee's supervisor or, department or agency head. Realizing that unforeseen visits may occur for legitimate reasons, such as an emergency, the employee is expected to obtain permission from their supervisor for a break from work for purposes of the visit.

18. Travel Expense Reimbursement

- A. Per diem will be paid to Parish employees who are required and approved to travel overnight in the course and scope of their employment. Any such travel or attendance at a seminar must be submitted to the Chief Administrative Officer through the Division or Department Director for approval prior to the employee registering for the travel or seminar.
- B. If the employee's private vehicle is used for authorized and approved travel, mileage will be reimbursed at a rate designated by the Treasurer and approved by the Parish President. For mileage reimbursement, overnight travel is not required.
- C. The maximum per diem amount shall be according to the following schedule: Per Diem \$125.00 per day. If travel commences after 2:00 p.m., the per diem rate is \$62.50 for the initial travel day only. For return travel, if the employee returns to the worksite on or before 2:00 p.m., the per diem rate is \$62.50 for the return travel day only. No receipts or expense report required; however, per diem payments are taxable.

19. Auto Usage

- A. Take home parish vehicles shall be limited to the Parish President, Chief Administrative Office, Department Directors, Inspectors, and those employees who are subject to regular call-outs. Each Director is responsible for the use and assignment of Parish vehicles in his/her respective departments that are subject to regular callouts. Subject to approval of the Parish President, Parish administrators may use their private vehicles in lieu of Parish owned or leased vehicle. Parish Administrators, that use their private vehicle will be responsible for providing insurance in accordance with the Parish Insurance requirements, and shall be reimbursed mileage, at the rate established by the State of Louisiana, Department of Administration travel regulations. The mileage rate is in lieu of actual expenses for fuel, oil, repairs, tags, insurance, and depreciation; therefore, actual expenses for these items will not be reimbursed. It is the responsibility of the vehicle owner to carry adequate insurance coverage for their protection and that of any passengers.
- B. Commuting miles, defined in the Internal Revenue Code as between an employee's residence and his or her "tax home," (main or regular place of work) are not reimbursed. However, if an employee's first or last stop on Parish business is other than his or her "tax home" then all miles are Parish business miles and will be



reimbursed. For example, if an employee's "tax home" is the governmental complex and that employee starts the day at a meeting at the Department of Public Works East, then the miles from the employee's residence to the DPWE, are considered business miles and are reimbursed. Out-of-parish travel begins and ends either at the employee's residence or his/her tax home, whichever is applicable.

- C. Filing: The Parish reserves the right to deny reimbursement when a receipt/form justifying the business purpose, according to Internal Revenue Code regulations, is not provided. Falsification of expense reports and forms will result in disciplinary action which may include immediate termination.
- D. All other parish employees using Parish-owned vehicles shall be limited to normal working hours, and such vehicles, shall be parked in the area assigned by their Directors overnight and on weekends.
- E. Non-parish personnel are prohibited from driving a Parish vehicle, except under the following condition: (1) an emergency condition, or (2) in the course of official business when authorized by the Parish President.
- F. All Parish employees who operate a Parish vehicle shall report to their immediate Supervisor (daily) when they take medications that may impair their judgement.
- G. Parish personnel shall be responsible for the care of every vehicle they are assigned to drive. This shall include keeping the auto clean, ensuring that routine maintenance is done and reporting any malfunctions to fleet operations.
- H. Parish vehicles, may not be transferred from one department to the other, without approval from the administration.

## 20. Driver's License

- A. Employees driving parish owned vehicles are required to maintain a valid Louisiana Driver's License appropriate to the vehicle or equipment assigned. Likewise, any employee who may be temporarily assigned driving duties from time to time is required to maintain a valid Louisiana Driver's License. The Parish Safety Department shall examine the motor vehicle records (MVR's) of all drivers of parish owned vehicles. Disciplinary action may result from an unsatisfactory MVR.
- B. Any accident, moving violation, or other infraction in a Parish vehicle must be reported to the Safety Department immediately.
- C. Revocation or suspension of a driver's license or conviction of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) must also be reported to the Safety Department immediately. Any employee whose driving privileges are revoked or suspended, or who has pled guilty to or been convicted of a DWI offense, is subject to demotion or termination of employment.

## 21. Confidentiality of Information

- A. The protection of confidential business information is vital to the interests of Parish Government. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to the following examples: confidential employee data, medical data, citizen data, etc.
- B. Employees who are exposed to confidential information may be required to sign a

non-disclosure agreement as a condition of employment. Whether or not such an agreement is signed, no official or employee shall under any circumstances use confidential information to advance the financial or other private interest of himself or others. Employees who improperly use or disclose confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

- C. Furthermore, employees who erroneously or maliciously release confidential information, which is not covered by public records laws, may subject themselves to personal legal liability.
- D. Information provided pursuant to public information laws shall be released only according to prescribed administrative procedures.

## 22. Employee Separation

- A. Resignation – Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with the Parish. Although advance notice is not required, the Parish requests at least two weeks written notice of resignation from any employee who chooses to resign. If an employee does not provide advance notice as requested, the employee will be considered ineligible for rehire.
- B. Involuntary Discharge – Employees may terminate employment with the Parish at will, with or without cause, and at any time. Likewise, the Parish may discharge employees at will, with or without cause, and at any time. Regular employees may only be involuntarily dismissed from employment with the approval of the Parish President. Recommendations for dismissal of any employee may originate in any department or agency. Such recommendations, together with pertinent documentation explaining the recommendation of dismissal shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Director, who in turn, shall submit the recommendation to the Chief Administrative Officer or Parish President for consideration.
- C. Retirement – The Parish of Ascension shall require sufficient written notice, usually at least thirty (30) days, of retirement of any employee wishing to retire. Such retirement shall become effective as may be approved by the Parish government.
- D. Layoff – Whenever a position is eliminated or must be vacated because of a work stoppage, lack of funds, or other cause, the employee(s) in the department or agency affected shall be laid off according to seniority based upon the number of years of continuous service with the Parish. The employee in the position with the least amount of continuous service shall be laid off first, progressing from there to the employee with the most continuous service. The department or agency shall recommend in writing to the Human Resources Director every proposed layoff. Notice of the proposed layoff shall be submitted a reasonable time before the proposed date of the layoff. Orders relating to any proposed layoff necessary to secure compliance with this Handbook shall be prepared by the Human Resources Director and submitted to the Chief Administrative Officer and Parish President for review. The name of every regular employee laid off shall be placed on an appropriate re-employment list by the Human Resources Director. Notice of any

approved layoff shall be sent to each affected employee at least ten (10) working days prior to the effective date of the layoff.

- E. Return of Property – Employees are responsible for all uniforms, keys, property, materials, or written information issued to them or in their possession or control. All Parish property must be returned by employees on or before their last day of work. The Parish may withhold from the employee’s check or final paycheck the replacement cost of any items that are not returned when required and take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

## 23. Electronic Timekeeping Policy

### A. Overview

- (1) The Parish has an electronic timekeeping system which uses electronic time clocks and time management software. Employees time worked will be transmitted to their supervisor/managers electronically – and then passed to payroll for processing. All employees will be required to submit timesheets bi-weekly, including exempt employees, even if vacation or sick time is not used.
- (2) It is up to all supervisors to approve time bi-weekly before transmitting the information to payroll.
- (3) Supervisors/Managers who approve time shall choose a designee to make approvals in their absence. This temporary designee should also be communicated to Finance.
- (4) If an employee believes that the electronic time clocks are showing in-accurate times, or that a time stamp was not recorded properly, it is up to the employee to notify his/her supervisor immediately. If it is determined that the clocks are not recording the timestamps properly, the supervisor should notify a member of the Technology office.
- (5) Supervisors must approve all subordinates’ times, and transmit the information to Finance by the pre-determined deadline. (Except when an alternate schedule has been set by the administration, e.g., during Holiday pay periods.) If procedures are not followed correctly, it can result in an unpaid employee. If this occurs, the supervisor responsible for the delay can be subject to disciplinary action.
- (6) Employees using a time clock will record a time stamp using their ID badge, and a finger swipe. The time clocks do not record finger prints; rather they record physical biometric information about an employee that is unique.
- (7) Non-exempt employees who have access to a PC can clock in using a computer in lieu of a time clock with the approval of their immediate supervisor.
- (8) Employees will not need to clock in/out for lunch breaks. A 30-minute lunch period will automatically be deducted if an employee works 6 continuous hours. If an employee works through their lunch period, it must be approved by their supervisor in advance. If necessary, any adjustments can be made by the supervisor.

### B. Identification Badges

- (1) Unless approved by the Parish President or their designee, all parish employees are required to display his/her ID badge provided by the parish at all times.
- (2) Employees should wear their photo ID when hosting or appearing at Parish functions or community events, especially if it is important to draw attention to the Parish's participation or attendance.
- (3) Badges will be provided by the Parish and will include a photo of the employee, the employee's name, the department/division in which the employee works, and the employee's ID number.
- (4) Badges shall be worn using a breakaway lanyard unless there is a safety concern, i.e. a concern that wearing something that hangs loosely might get caught in machinery, in which case a clip-on type is acceptable. Both lanyards and clips will be made available to all employees.
- (5) Employees shall surrender his/her ID to the Human Resources Department upon termination of employment, or when requested. ID badges that are not returned at the employees' separation will be charged to the employee.
- (6) Lost or misplaced IDs are to be immediately reported to the employee's supervisor. Replacement IDs will be issued as necessary and a record of the lost ID noted.
- (7) Managers and supervisors observing employees without ID will, at their discretion:
  - (a) Approach the person to determine their status, or
  - (b) Immediately report the person to his/her supervisor
- (8) Employees who cannot produce an ID badge may be subject to disciplinary action as determined by their supervisor.
- (9) Initially, ID badges will be provided to parish employees at no charge. Each employee may obtain (1) additional ID badge at no charge, if the original badge is lost or misplaced. Additional replacement badges will be at a charge to the employee. Human Resources will have the discretion to issue additional badges at no charge, under unexpected circumstances.
- (10) Badges that are no longer usable due to wear/tear will be replaced, and provided to the employees at no charge, if the original ID badge is returned to the Human Resources office.

#### 24. Media Policy

- A. While freedom of speech is one of the most important rights we hold as Americans, it is also important that as a Parish we portray a consistent message to the media. It is a message that goes through the media to reach the public at large who it is our duty to serve.
- B. It is Parish policy that all interview requests must be directed through the Public Information Officer. If an employee is contacted by a media person for comment, they must refer them to the Public Information Officer's office. After that, the employee may be contacted to give expertise or perspective on the subject at hand.

## SUBPART F. EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

*Paragraph 7. Revised January 18, 2024*

### 1. Ethics

- A. All Parish employees are subject to the requirements of the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics. Violation of this Code subjects an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- B. Some examples of ethics considerations affecting Parish employees are stated below. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list or explanation of the ethics laws that apply to governmental employees. Any employee who is uncertain as to whether a certain action or inaction might be in violation of ethics laws should consult with their supervisor, department or agency head, or the Human Resources Director.

#### (1) Prohibitions and Conflicts of Interest

- (a) As a result of his/her position, no elected officer, appointed official or employee of Ascension Parish Government shall directly or indirectly solicit or receive any privilege, rebate, reduced rate, or any other thing of value from any person, firm, or corporation doing business with the Ascension Parish Government.
- (b) Any elected officer, or appointed official of the Parish or any individual or firm engaged in a professional capacity by the Parish government, shall make known any substantial financial interest, direct or indirect, or by reason of ownership of stock in any corporation, in any proposed contract with the Parish government or in the proposed sale of any land, material, supplies, or services to the Parish government, or to a contractor or subcontractor supplying the Parish and shall be prohibited from voting or otherwise participating in the making of such sales or the making or performance of such contract. Violation of this subsection with the knowledge, express or implied, of the person or corporation contracting with or making a sale to the Parish shall render the contract or sale voidable.
- (c) Any officer, official, or employee of the Parish who willfully conceals a substantial financial interest or willfully violates the requirement of this section shall forfeit his office or position.

#### (2) Illegal Practices

- (a) Illegal conduct by an employee may subject them to statutory sanctions. Prohibited illegal conduct shall include, but not be limited to the following:
  - i. No person employed with the Parish or seeking admission thereto shall be appointed, promoted, reduced, or any way favored or discriminated against because of his political or religious opinions or affiliations.
  - ii. No person shall willfully or corruptly make any false statement, certificate, mark, evaluation or report in regard to any test, certification, promotion, reduction, dismissal or appointment held or

made or in any manner commit or attempt to commit any fraud preventing the impartial execution or application of these Rules.

- iii. No person shall either directly or indirectly pay, render or give any money, service, or other valuable thing to any person for or on accounts of or in connection with any examination, report, or employment related duty or responsibility.
- iv. Any person who is convicted of committing any illegal practice, such as those listed above, shall for a period of five (5) years be ineligible for appointment to or employment in a position of the Parish, or any district of which the Parish Council is the governing body, and shall, if he/she is an officer or employee of any of the above, immediately forfeit the office or position he holds.

### (3) Acceptance of Gifts

- (a) Employees may not accept any benefit of economic value, gift, gratuity, present, property, or service of any kind or nature, regardless of value, which may be directly or indirectly offered as a result of, or in anticipation of, an employee's position or performance of duties under the Parish government. The only exception to this rule is for employees who may be invited as the guest of someone to share a meal. For example, a gift certificate to a restaurant offered by a vendor may not be accepted, but the employee may accept a vendor's invitation to go out to lunch, provided the vendor eats lunch with the employee.

## 2. Felony Indictment or Charge

- A. Any employee indicted or charged with a felony offense must report such charge or indictment immediately to the Human Resources Director. If the employee fails to report such a charge or indictment, the employee's employment shall be terminated.
- B. If found guilty, said employee shall be dismissed from the employ of the Parish.
- C. Employees placed on leave without pay for this purpose may continue their hospitalization and life insurance benefits provided the employee makes timely payment of their portion of all necessary premiums.

## 3. Employee Conduct and Work Rules

- A. To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the Parish of Ascension expects employees to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interest and safety of employees and the general public. As representatives of the Parish, employees are to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner, especially in dealing with fellow employees, council members, and the general public.
- B. It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. While the Parish may terminate employment with or without cause, the following are examples of infractions of rules of conduct that may result in

disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

- (1) Theft or inappropriate removal or unauthorized possession of company records, equipment, or other Parish property.
- (2) Sleeping during working hours.
- (3) Falsification of timekeeping or other documents or records.
- (4) Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- (5) Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment. Also, anyone who after appropriate testing, the use of alcohol or prohibited drugs is revealed (whether or not such employee may be physically affected by such use at the moment of testing.)
- (6) Fighting, horseplay, or threatening violence in the workplace.
- (7) Insubordination, or failure or refusal to carry out supervisor's instructions.
- (8) Intimidating, coercing, or interfering with other employees, supervisors, or the public.
- (9) Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace.
- (10) Negligence or improper conduct leading to personal injury or damage of employer or public property.
- (11) Destruction or abuse of company vehicles, property, tools, equipment, or the property of other employees or the general public.
- (12) Violation of safety or health practices.
- (13) Smoking in prohibited areas.
- (14) Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment.
- (15) The making or publishing of false, vicious or malicious statements concerning another employee, supervisor, manager, or Parish government elected official.
- (16) Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives, firearms, or other weapons in the workplace or on Parish premises.
- (17) Failure to cooperate in any search, inspection, examination, or screening test.
- (18) Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice.
- (19) Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, computers or other Parish equipment.
- (20) Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.
- (21) Intentional or unintentional infliction of emotional distress or physical harm to another Parish employee or member of the public.
- (22) Use of profanity or foul language.
- (23) Unauthorized work elsewhere while on leave of absence or failure to return to work at the end of a leave of absence.
- (24) Failure to report any accident involving a Parish owned vehicle or piece of equipment.
- (25) Gambling during working hours.
- (26) Partisan political activity while on duty.
- (27) Conviction of a crime.

#### 4. Workplace Violence

- A. It is the Parish of Ascension's intent to provide a safe environment for its employees. The Parish is committed to working with its employees to promote and maintain a work environment free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behaviors. While this kind of conduct is not pervasive in our workplaces, no one is immune. Any department or location could be affected by this type of disruptive behavior at any time.
- B. Violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior in our workplace will not be tolerated; that is; all reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. Such behavior can include, but is not limited to, oral or written statements, or gestures or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action, criminal penalties, or both.
- C. The cooperation of all employees is essential to implement this policy effectively and maintain a safe working environment. Violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating or other such disruptive behavior by anyone on Parish premises, whether he or she is an employee or not, must be reported immediately to a supervisor, manager, or the Human Resources Department/Safety Officer. Supervisors and managers shall report such incidents to the Human Resources Department/Safety Officer to initiate an investigation of the incident and appropriate action. Threats or assaults that require immediate attention by the police should be reported first to the police at 911.

#### 5. Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment

- A. It is the goal of the Parish of Ascension to provide employees with a work environment free of harassing or hostile behavior. Therefore, the Parish of Ascension will not tolerate harassment or discrimination against any employee by another employee, supervisor, vendor, or constituent for any reason including, but not limited to: veteran status, race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, age or political affiliation. Additionally, pregnancy and use or non-use of tobacco products outside the workplace is protected classes in Louisiana and harassment or discrimination on these bases will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that the workplace remains free of impermissible behaviors and harassment.
- B. The Parish also prohibits sexual harassment of any employee by another employee, supervisor, vendor, or constituent. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that no employee is subject to harassment in the workplace. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and/or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including, but not limited to drawings, pictures, jokes, teasing, uninvited touches, or other sexual comments made by an employee or supervisor of the same or opposite sex as the offended individual. Sexual harassment of an employee will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy will



result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment.

- C. Any employee that feels he/she is a victim of any form of harassment described in this handbook or has personal knowledge of such harassment being inflicted upon another employee must immediately report the matter to his/her supervisor or Department Director, the Director of Human Resources, Chief Administrative Officer, or the Parish President. If the employee prefers not to discuss the matter with his/her supervisor or Department Director, the employee may report the matter directly to the Director of Human Resources, Chief Administrative Officer, or the Parish President. Failure to report such matters as outlined in this policy may lead to disciplinary action. The Parish will investigate every reported incident as soon as possible and as confidentially as possible.
  - D. The Parish of Ascension recognizes that such investigation requires a factual determination. The Parish also recognizes the serious impact that false accusations can have. We trust that all employees will act in a mature and responsible manner in participating in such investigations. Depending upon the outcome of the investigation, disciplinary action may be taken as deemed necessary. Outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the alleged victim as well as the accused as soon as practicable following the conclusion of the investigation.
6. Attendance and Punctuality
- A. To maintain a professional, safe and productive work environment, the Parish of Ascension expects employees to be reliable and punctual in reporting for work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and the general public. In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they must personally (if possible) notify their Department Head or supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence, but not later than 15 minutes prior to the time they are scheduled to report for work.
  - B. Unauthorized absences of three (3) or more days in any twelve-month period will result in immediate termination of employment, unless the employee provides the Parish with acceptable and verifiable evidence of extenuating circumstances as determined by the Human Resources Director.
  - C. Failure to report for work without calling in for two (2) work days in any twelve-month period shall result in immediate termination of employment, unless the employee provides the Parish with acceptable and verifiable evidence of extenuating circumstances as determined by the Human Resources Director.
  - D. Employees are required to be at their workstation at their regularly scheduled start time. Continued tardiness is inexcusable and will not be tolerated. After five (5) accumulated tardies in a calendar year, the employee shall be suspended without pay for one (1) day. On the sixth tardy, the employee is automatically dismissed, unless the employee provides the Parish with acceptable and verifiable evidence of extenuating circumstances as determined by the Human Resources Director.

- E. Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Either may lead to disciplinary action as described above, up to and including termination of employment.

## 7. Discipline

- A. The purpose of this policy is to state the Parish's position on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory performance and/or conduct in the workplace. The major purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct the problem, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future. Therefore, it shall be the duty of the department or agency to take such action as circumstances may warrant maintaining the standards of effective employment. In all disciplinary cases, discipline shall bear a reasonable relationship to the violation.
- B. Disciplinary action may call for any of the following:
  - (1) Verbal Warning
  - (2) Letter of Reprimand
  - (3) Suspension without Pay (up to 30 calendar days in any 12-month period)
  - (4) Demotion
  - (5) Termination of Employment
- C. The Discipline policy pertains to matters of conduct as well as the employee's competence. An employee who violates the conduct provisions of this job, or does not display satisfactory performance and accomplishment on the job may be dismissed, in certain cases, without resorting to the steps set forth in this policy.
- D. The steps set forth in this policy are a guideline to supervisors, however, the seriousness of an offense is the primary guide to determine which disciplinary action is taken.
- E. To ensure that Ascension Parish Government business is conducted properly and efficiently, the employees must conform to certain standards of attendance, conduct, work performance and other work rules and regulations.
- F. When problems in these areas do arise, the supervisor may counsel the employee to develop an effective solution. If, however, the employee fails to respond to counseling, the following may occur in no exclusive order and will be consistent with the seriousness of the offense.
  - (1) Verbal Warning – The supervisor will meet with the employee to discuss the problem, making sure that he/she understands the nature of the violation and the expected remedy. The purpose of this conversation is to remind the employee of exactly what the rule or performance expectation is, and also reminds him/her that it is their responsibility to meet that expectation. The verbal reminder will be documented on a form, placed in the employee's personnel folder in Human Resources.
  - (2) Letter of Reprimand – If the employee's performance or conduct does not meet standards or if the employee is once again in violation of Ascension Parish practices, rules or standard of conduct, the supervisor may discuss the problem

with the employee, emphasizing the seriousness of the problem and the need for the employee to remedy this problem. Following the conversation, the supervisor will fill out the approved disciplinary action form. The supervisor and employee will both sign this document, and it will be forwarded to the Human Resources Department to be placed in the employee's file.

(3) Suspension Without Pay

- (a) If in the Supervisor's opinion, the employee has committed a violation of this manual which justifies suspension without pay, or the employee's work performance does not improve after either a verbal or written warning, or if he/she is again in violation of policy, the employee may be terminated or placed on suspension without pay.
- (b) Employees on suspension without pay should spend the day(s) away from work deciding whether to correct the immediate problem and conform to all of the parish's practices, rules and standards of conduct, or to quit and terminate their employment with the Parish of Ascension. Sick, vacation may not be used during a disciplinary suspension.
- (c) If the employee returns to work, they will return under the condition that if a change of conduct does not occur or if another disciplinary action occurs, the employee will be terminated.
- (d) The department or agency must provide notice of the disciplinary action to the employee in writing, including a written statement of the employee's rights to appeal the discipline to the Human Resources Review Board. The employee and the supervisor administering discipline shall sign the original disciplinary action form, and it shall be filed with the Human Resources Department in the employee's personnel file.
- (e) If the employee chooses to appeal the disciplinary action, he/she must submit a letter to the Human Resources Director requesting the appeal no later than ten (10) calendar days following the issuance of the discipline in order for the employee to appear before the Human Resources Review Board. A hearing by the Human Resources Review Board shall be held within thirty (30) calendar days of the Human Resource Director's receipt of the employee's request. It shall be the responsibility of the Human Resources Director to investigate the validity of any recommendation for discipline of an employee that comes before the Human Resources Review Board.

G. Discipline in Personnel Folders

All disciplinary actions are permanently filed in personnel folders.

## SUBPART G. APPEALS, HEARINGS AND GRIEVANCES

*Paragraph 3. Revised January 18, 2024*

1. Human Resources Review Board
  - A. It shall be the policy of Ascension Parish Government to treat all employees in a fair and impartial manner. In order to afford employees an impartial avenue to resolve certain employment related problems, the Parish Government, through its Home Rule Charter, has created the Human Resources Review Board. The Board, consisting of five (5) citizens from Parish of Ascension who hold no other elective office, shall hear certain disputes of an employee. A hearing may be held only if a quorum of at least three (3) members is present. The Human Resources Review Board, after conducting a hearing on the employee's dispute, shall submit their advisory recommendation to the Parish President. All Human Resources Review Board meetings will be recorded.
  - B. Employees who seek resolution of employment-related disputes by requesting a hearing before the Human Resources Review Board shall not be subjected to discrimination or retaliations, or be penalized in any way for their use of the hearing process.
  
2. Appeals
  - A. Matters Appealable Directly to the Board – Any regular employee subject to the provisions of the Charter and the Rules made pursuant thereto, who has been subjected to an adverse employment action, such as, discharge/termination, suspension, discipline, demotion, non-promotion, may appeal such action directly to the Human Resources Review Board. Temporary or employees within their probationary period are not eligible to appeal any personnel actions to the Human Resources Review Board.
  - B. Appeal of Certain Employees – A regular employee who was dismissed during the probationary period following promotion or is dismissed while serving provisionally in a position to which he or she has been promoted and who is denied reinstatement in his or her former position may appeal such action to the Board.
  - C. Appeal Request – The request for appeal shall be submitted to the Human Resources Director no later than ten (10) calendar days from the date of the adverse employment actions covered in the above sections.
  
3. Hearings
  - A. Scheduling Hearings – Whenever an appeal has been made for a hearing before the Board, the Board shall schedule a date, place and hour for hearing such appeal and the Human Resources Director shall give the employee's department or agency and the appellant at least two (2) days' notice in writing that such appeal will be heard at the place and time scheduled by the Human Resources Review Board. A hearing shall be held not less than ten (10) nor more than thirty (30) calendar days from the date the notification was served by the employee upon the Human Resources

Director to determine the reasonableness of such action. If the employee's department or agency personnel fail to appear at the place, date, and time fixed for the hearing, the Board may, in its discretion, review the issue involved on the basis of the evidence introduced and may render a recommendation based on the information given. If the appellant fails to appear, the appellant appeal is dismissed and the employee will have no further rights to overturn the action.

- B. Hearing Evidence – Evidence introduced at a hearing may include the employee's entire personnel folder. The employee or the department or agency recommending the personnel action shall have the right to appear before the Board in such matters in person or through counsel of their own choosing. However, it shall be the sole responsibility of the employee to notify counsel of the hearing. Neither the Parish, nor the Review Board has the obligation of notifying counsel of the date and time of the hearing. The Parish Human Resources Director may present the evidence for the basis of the discipline or the employee's supervisor or a Parish employee may appear as deemed necessary by the Human Resources Director.
- C. Power to Administer Oaths; and Take Testimony – The Board or each member of the Board shall have the power to administer oaths and take testimony.
- D. Recommendation of the Human Resources Review Board; Final Action – After hearing and considering the evidence presented to the Human Resources Review Board regarding the appeal of personnel action, the Board shall submit its recommendation regarding the appeal and resolution thereof to the Parish President. The parish President shall decide the matter, taking into consideration the recommendation(s) of the Human Resources Board. The decision of the Parish President shall be final, unless overruled by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Parish Council present.
- E. Parish Council – If the employee chooses to further appeal the disciplinary action to the Parish Council, they must submit a written or electronic email request to the Council Secretary no later than five (5) parish working days following the date of issuance of the Parish President's final action letter. The decision of the Parish Council shall be final.

#### 4. Complaints and Grievances

- A. It shall be the policy of the Parish of Ascension to treat all employees in a fair and impartial manner. The Parish believes that undisclosed problems which remain unresolved will eventually lead to deterioration of the work environment and a decline in operational efficiency. The Parish Government has therefore, established a grievance procedure, the intent of which is to solve problems as quickly, fairly, and informally as possible.
- B. The primary purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the most immediate level possible, equitable solutions to a claim of the aggrieved person. Complaints and grievances not appealable to the Human Resources Review Board shall be handled expeditiously, and in accordance with these procedures. Both parties agree that these proceedings shall be kept as confidential as possible at each level of

procedure.

(1) Definitions

- (a) A grievance is a claim by an employee that he or she has suffered harm or injury by the interpretation, application or violation of a contract, a rule, policy, or procedure, a law or constitutionally guaranteed rights. The term “grievance” does not include matters for which the method of review is prescribed by law or provisions of the Home Rule Charter, or where the Parish Government is without authority to act.
- (b) Group grievances are not allowed but, with consent of the aggrieved persons involved, several individual grievances may be consolidated for consideration.
- (c) An “aggrieved person” is the person making the claim.
- (d) A “respondent” is the person or persons responsible at each level of the procedure for responding to the claim of the aggrieved person.
- (e) A “party in interest” is the person making a claim (aggrieved person) and any person or persons who might be required to take action or against whom action might be taken in order to resolve the claim (respondent).
- (f) The terms “day” or “days” shall refer to working day.

(2) Levels of Grievance The number of days indicated at each level is a maximum, and every effort shall be made to expedite processing the grievance.

- (a) Level One – An employee with a grievance must first discuss it orally with his or her immediate supervisor. Within five (5) working days thereafter, the supervisor shall render an oral decision.
- (b) Level Two – In the event the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the disposition of his or her grievance at Level One, or, if no decision has been rendered within five (5) working days after presentation of the grievance, the aggrieved person shall file an Employee Grievance Form with the Human Resources Department. An employee who wishes to file an Employee Grievance Form should contact the Human Resources Department for information on how to do so. This written grievance must be presented to the Human Resources Department within fifteen (15) days after the initial incident which caused the grievance. The Human Resources Director shall communicate his or her decision on the grievance to the aggrieved person in writing within five (5) working days of receipt of the written grievance.
- (c) Level Three – In the event the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the disposition of his or her grievance at Level Two, or, if no decision has been rendered within five (5) days from the date of receipt of the grievance by the Human Resources Director, the aggrieved person may appeal to the Parish President. The appeal shall be in writing and shall set forth the same types of information called for at Level Two and copies of all decisions previously rendered in connection with the grievance must be attached to the appeal. The Parish President may meet with the parties in interest, but, in any event, must render a decision on the grievance within ten (10)

working days from the date of his or her receipt of it.

There shall be no recrimination against a person because a grievance has been filed in accordance with the provisions outlined herein.

(3) Miscellaneous

- (a) A grievance may be withdrawn at any level without prejudice or record. Additionally, there shall be no recrimination against a person because a grievance has been filed in accordance with the provision outlined herein.
- (b) Copies of all written decisions of grievances shall be sent to all parties involved.
- (c) All documents, communications, or records dealing with a grievance shall be made a part of the personnel files of the participants.
- (d) Appeals of grievance decisions will be limited to the specific issues raised in the original grievance. The parties in interest will not be allowed to expand the issues during the grievance procedure, except to the extent necessary to respond to administrative decisions made along the way.
- (e) Failure by the aggrieved person to meet the timeliness and requirements of this procedure shall result in dismissal of his or her grievance. Failure by respondent to meet timelines and requirements of this procedure shall allow the aggrieved person, at his or her option, to proceed to the next level of appeal.
- (f) If the aggrieved person voluntarily or involuntarily leaves the employment of the Parish during the pending, at any level, of a complaint or grievance, then such aggrieved person loses the right to continue the complaint process.
- (g) Termination or disciplinary action against an employee or other offenses appealable to the Human Resources Board may not form the basis of a complaint process.

(4) Representation

- (a) An “aggrieved person” shall have the right to present his or her own grievance or may designate a representative to appear with him or her at any level of the above procedure. The “aggrieved person” who chooses to have representation shall provide advance notice of such in writing to the respondent at the respective procedural level at least two (2) days prior to the hearing on the grievance. Any employee that seeks representation shall have the sole responsibility of notifying their representatives of any meeting or meetings.

(5) Exception to Stated Procedures

- (a) The Parish Government recognizes that there may come to pass certain circumstances in which it may be inappropriate for employees to pursue the grievance in the prescribed sequence. Employees who are uncertain as to the proper authority that should hear the grievance should discuss the matter with the Human Resources Director.

## SUBPART H. SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

### 1. Introduction

- A. The Parish of Ascension has a strong commitment to provide a safe work environment, and to establish policies promoting high standards of employee health and safety. In keeping with this commitment, it is the Parish's intent to maintain a drug/alcohol-free work place and a drug/alcohol-free work force.
- B. It is the policy of the Parish of Ascension to comply with the spirit of the Federal Drug Free Workplace Act. Therefore, use of illegal drugs and abuse of alcohol by certain Parish employees, defined below, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In order to further its goals of compliance with federal directives, the Parish has instituted a drug-testing plan for affected employees and applicants in compliance with La. R.S. 49:1001 through 1012, effective immediately.

### 2. Scope

- A. This policy will apply to all employees or contract employees, and to applicants for employment. Compliance with this policy is required as a condition of original or continued employment.

### 3. Purpose and Objectives

- A. To maintain a safe and healthy environment for Parish employees and employees of contractors.
- B. To maintain a drug/alcohol-free work place and a drug/alcohol-free work force.
- C. To prevent accidental injuries and to protect Parish property.
- D. To minimize absenteeism, tardiness, improve productivity, and to insure quality workmanship.
- E. To provide counseling and/or rehabilitation assistance for employees, when appropriate.
- F. To protect the reputation of the Parish and employees within the community.
- G. To comply with existing laws and contractual obligations.

### 4. Policy

- A. The following is strictly prohibited:
  - (1) Reporting to work or working under the influence of intoxicants, narcotics or drugs.
  - (2) Use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation or trafficking in narcotics or drugs or drug paraphernalia in any manner on or off Parish property, before, during or after working hours.
  - (3) Use or possession of intoxicants in any manner on or off Parish property during working hours.
  - (4) Use of Parish property or an employee's position with the Parish, directly or indirectly, to manufacture, dispense, distribute or traffic in intoxicants, narcotics or drugs.



## 5. Definitions

- A. Illegal Drugs – Non-prescribed controlled substances as defined by 21 USCA § 812 Schedules I, II, III, IV and V, and the La. Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Law (La. R.S. 40:964) which include but are not limited to drugs such as opiates narcotics, marijuana, hashish, cocaine, and other controlled substances.
- B. Prescription Drugs – Drugs prescribed by a physician for treatment of illness or disease.
  - (1) The use of drugs/medicine prescribed by a licensed physician for an individual employee is permitted provided the employee advises the Parish that he is using prescribed drugs and provides the Parish with assurance from a physician that such drug will not affect the work performance.
  - (2) The Parish at all times reserves the right to have a licensed physician determine if use of a prescription drug or medication by an employee produces effects which may increase the risk of injury to the employee or others while working.
  - (3) If it is concluded that a prescribed drug will affect performance, the Parish reserves the right to limit or suspend the work activity of the employee during the period that the physician advises that the employee's ability to perform his/her job safely may be adversely affected by the consumption of such medication.
  - (4) Employees who have been informed that medication could cause adverse side effects while working or where medication indicates such warning, must inform their supervisor prior to using such substances on the job.
- C. Safety Sensitive Position – An employee occupies a safety-sensitive position when he/she operates a public vehicle, performs maintenance on a public vehicle, or supervises any public employee who operates or maintains a public vehicle. This listing is not exclusive. There may be other positions that are classified as safety-sensitive.
- D. DOT Covered Position – An employee occupies a DOT (Department of Transportation) covered position when he/she operates equipment or vehicles for which are covered specifically by DOT regulations. DOT regulations shall be followed in the application of this drug/alcohol policy as it applies to covered employees. In the event of a conflict between this policy and the regulations prescribed by DOT, DOT regulations shall prevail.

## 6. Testing Situations

- A. The Parish shall require a medical examination, including blood and urine tests for drugs and/or alcohol. The Parish will require blood and urine tests where required by federal regulation. All other drug tests will be administered at the discretion of the Parish, in accordance with the following conditions:
  - (1) With respect to new employees, on all pre-employment or pre-placement physicals.
  - (2) With respect to all employees recalled after lay-off.
  - (3) In all cases involving a person associated with an on-the-job accident or injury.

- (4) In any circumstances where there is reasonable suspicion that an employee may be under the influence of intoxicants, narcotics or drugs.
  - (5) With respect to all employees who complete a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program before returning to work.
  - (6) Random testing of employees.
7. Sample Collection for Alcohol
- A. In the event an employee is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, he shall be required to take a blood or breathalyzer test conducted by a person so educated and authorized in testing.
  - B. Employees who test positive for intoxication due to alcohol (showing a blood alcohol of 0.08 or above) shall be subject to immediate discipline, as per this policy.
8. Sample Collection for Drugs
- A. All sample collection and testing for marijuana, opiates, cocaine, amphetamines, and phencyclidine will be performed under the following procedures and conditions:
    - (1) Collection procedures will comply with NIDA guidelines and be conducted in accordance with applicable law.
    - (2) The collection of samples shall be performed under sanitary conditions by a laboratory certified by the Department of Health and Human Resources, which is additionally a NIDA or CAP-FUOT certified laboratory.
    - (3) Samples shall be collected and tested with due regard to the privacy of the individual being tested, and in a manner reasonably calculated to prevent substitutions or interference with the collection or testing of reliable samples.
    - (4) Samples shall be collected and tested initially with the use of an iScreen One Step Drug Screen Test Card for immediate results. Should an employee test positive for an illegal substance using the iScreen Test Card, they will be immediately sent home without pay until the results can be received from the lab. The lab will either confirm or deny a positive screen.
    - (5) Sample collections shall be documented, and the documentation shall include:
      - (a) Labeling of samples so as reasonably to preclude the probability of erroneous identification of the test results; and
      - (b) An opportunity for the employee to provide notification of any information which he considers relevant to the test, including identification of currently or recently used prescription or non-prescription drugs or other relevant medical information.
  - B. Sample collections, storage, and transportation to the place of testing shall be performed so as reasonably to preclude the probability of sample contamination or adulteration; and,
  - C. Sample testing shall conform to scientifically tested analytical methods and procedures. Testing shall include verification or confirmation of any positive test result by gas chromatography, gas chromatography-mass spectroscopy, or other

comparably reliable analytical method, before the result of any test may be used as basis of disqualification from employment. Test results which do not exclude the possibility of passive inhalation of marijuana may not be used as a basis for disqualification from employment; however, test results which exceed 50 nanograms shall exclude the possibility of passive inhalation.

- D. All affected employees will be required to sign a Testing Consent form.
- E. All drug testing laboratories utilized by the Parish shall be located in and licensed to do business in the State of Louisiana, except in the event no qualified laboratories are located in the State.
- F. All information, interviews, reports, statements, memoranda, or test results received by Parish government through its drug testing program are confidential evidence, obtained in discovery, or disclosed in any public or private proceeding, except in a proceeding related to an action under La. R.S. 23:1601(10) in a claim for unemployment compensation; La. 23:1081, in a claim for workers' compensation; or in any other civil litigation or arbitration where drug use by the tested employee may be relevant.
- G. Employee Assistance Program: The Parish of Ascension will ensure that all employees receive employee counseling and rehabilitation assistance through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP will make available to all employees: informational materials, a copy of this drug policy, and certain hot-line telephone numbers for their assistance. Training will be available, under the EAP, for supervisory personnel who are required to determine whether an employee must be drug tested based on a reasonable cause. This training will include one 60-minute period of training on specific, contemporaneous physical, behavioral, and performance indicators of probable drug use.
- H. The Parish will establish a working relationship with a licensed physician as its "Medical Review Officer" ("MRO"), who will perform all necessary duties of that designated position as required by federal or state laws and regulations.

## 9. Sanctions

- A. An employee who violates the Substance Abuse Policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Disciplinary Situations will be as follows:
  - (1) Refusal to cooperate or to participate in the testing program when requested to do so, pursuant to this policy, will result in automatic termination of employment.
  - (2) Substituting or tampering with a urine or blood sample will result in automatic termination of employment.
  - (3) First offense of testing and confirming positive for prohibited measures of alcoholic or prohibited drugs in breath, urine or blood test will result in a thirty (30) day suspension without pay, and the employee will be required to cooperate in a rehabilitation program.
  - (4) Second offense of testing and confirming positive for prohibited measures of

alcoholic or prohibited drugs in breath, urine or blood test will result in automatic termination of employment.

## CONCLUSION

We have tried to cover in this handbook the basic policies, rules, regulations, benefits, responsibilities, and obligations that affect your employment with the Parish of Ascension. There are some points, however, that have not been covered. When questions arise, you should not hesitate to try to find a solution with your supervisor. You should keep this handbook accessible so that you can review it from time to time.

Any changes in the policies, as outlined, will be made known to you by notices placed on the bulletin boards in addition to notices given to each employee. Changes should be placed with your copy of the employee handbook.

Any references in this handbook to gender or use of pronouns referring to a specific gender are to be construed to mean any employee regardless of sex. The terms "Parish", "Parish of Ascension", and "Parish Government" have been used interchangeably throughout this handbook to refer to the organization comprised of the office of the Parish President, his appointees, and their subordinates.

This employee handbook is not an employment contract between you and the Parish of Ascension. The contents of this handbook may be changed to reflect changes in policy, or changed rules. Employment with the Parish is for no set term and you are free to leave at your will. We hope this does not occur. We hope you give sufficient advance notice if you decide to leave (customarily two-week notice). Also, the Parish reserves the right to adjust its work force at any time, including the right to separate employees when necessary.