

to provide clear working hours for all departments. Those working hours are set forth in the Shift Categories listed in the Time and Attendance policy of this Handbook. Overtime may be scheduled as required by business necessity.

## **Advance of Wages**

Cash debts owed by the employee to the County, fringe benefits, uniforms, tools, equipment, vehicles, instruction manuals, keys, beepers, computers, and other items belonging to the County and advanced or issued to an employee and not repaid or returned by the employee at the time of termination are considered “advances of wages,” the value of which may be deducted up to the full amount of the employee’s final paycheck(s). By accepting or continuing employment, the employee authorizes these deductions.

Special Note: If an employee believes that an improper deduction to wages or salary has been made, the employee must report this information immediately to the Human Resources and Finance directors. Reports of improper deductions will be promptly investigated and, if it is determined that an improper deduction has occurred, the employee will be promptly reimbursed.

## **Performance Appraisals**

The purpose of a performance appraisal is to formally assess and appraise an employee’s performance over a designated period and to provide an opportunity for the supervisor and the employee to discuss all aspects of the individual’s performance with respect to fulfilling the requirements, duties and responsibilities of the position held by the employee. Formal employee performance appraisals are to be conducted at established intervals during an individual’s employment. For new employees, performance appraisals may be scheduled at the end of six (6) months and for promoted and transferred employees, at the end of three (3) months. After an employee has achieved regular status, the County shall strive to evaluate the employee’s job performance once a year. Informal appraisals may be conducted periodically as each supervisor deems necessary.

If a performance appraisal is given, it will be in writing. After the employee’s supervisor has presented and discussed the written performance appraisal with the employee, the employee

must sign an acknowledgement that the appraisal has been presented and discussed with the employee. The employee's signature on the acknowledgement does not mean the employee agrees with the appraisal.

Special note. An employee who refuses to sign the acknowledgement will be suspended until the document is signed. If not signed within three work days, the employee will be deemed to have resigned and will be administratively separated from County employment with the administrative separation decision subject to reconsideration at the employee's request through the grievance process.

All performance appraisals shall be conducted by the appropriate supervisor, reviewed by the appropriate department head and County Administrator, and discussed with the employee under the following guidelines:

New Employees.

- Satisfactory performance appraisal. If the introductory employee receives a satisfactory rating and is recommended for regular status by the employee's supervisor, then the employee shall be granted regular status as an at-will employee of the County.
- Marginal performance appraisal. If the introductory evaluation is marginal, the employee will be terminated unless the County grants a three-month extension of the introductory period. Any extension of the introductory period shall be based on the judgments of the supervisor, the department head, and the County Administrator that the employee has improved in deficient areas during the introductory period and has shown the potential to reach a satisfactory appraisal within a short extension of the introductory period. If an extension is granted, a subsequent rating of marginal or below at the completion of the extended time may result in termination of employment.
- Unsatisfactory performance appraisal. If the introductory employee receives an unsatisfactory performance rating, the employee will be terminated.

Promoted Employees.

- Satisfactory performance appraisal. If the promoted employee receives a satisfactory rating and is recommended for regular status by the department head, the employee shall be granted regular status as an at-will employee of the County.

- Marginal performance appraisal. If the promoted employee receives a marginal performance appraisal, a three-month extension may be granted. The extension shall be based on the judgments of the supervisor, the department head, and the Administrator that the employee can improve to satisfactory performance in deficient areas within a short extension period. If an extension is granted, a subsequent rating of marginal or below at the completion of the extended time may result in termination unless it is in the County's best interest to take other action, such as transfer or move of the employee to an existing vacancy for which the employee is determined by the County to be qualified.
- Unsatisfactory performance appraisal. If the promoted employee receives an unsatisfactory performance rating, the employee may be terminated unless it is in the County's best interest to take other action, such as a transfer or move of the employee to an existing vacancy for which the employee is determined by the County to be qualified. If transferred or moved, the employee shall be subject to a three (3) month introductory period in the new position.

Transferred Employees. The performance appraisal procedures for promoted employees will apply to transferred employees.

Regular Employees.

- Exceptional. Employee consistently meets and frequently exceeds the requirements of the job. This level of performance is characterized by exemplary accomplishments throughout the review period. Accomplishments must be documented and justified.
- Exceeds Requirements. Employee consistently meets and sometimes exceeds the requirements of the job throughout the review period.
- Meets Requirements. Employee consistently meets the requirements of the job throughout the review period.
- Needs Improvement. Employee sometimes meets the requirements of the job; however, employee occasionally fails to meet the requirements of the job. An employee who receives an overall evaluation of Needs Improvement will be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan. The Performance Improvement Plan will be completed by the

evaluator and the employee. This plan shall provide the employee an opportunity to improve the substandard performance.

- Unsatisfactory. Employee consistently fails to meet the requirements of the job. When an employee receives an unsatisfactory performance appraisal, the employee may be terminated or placed on a Performance Improvement Plan.

Merit Pay. Merit pay may be awarded to introductory employees on a schedule prescribed by the County Administrator based upon the performance appraisal system. The amount of funding for the merit pay program, if any, shall be determined by Council during the annual budgetary process.

## **Administrative Separation**

If an employee has exhausted all leaves to which the employee is entitled pursuant to the provisions of this Employee Handbook and is unable to return to work, then the County will terminate its employment relationship with the employee unless the employee has timely requested and the Administrator has granted Administrative Leave to the employee. If the employee has timely requested and been granted Administrative Leave, at the conclusion of the Administrative Leave or, if applicable, an extension of the Administrative Leave, then the County will terminate its employment relationship with the employee. A termination under the circumstances described in this section will be listed as an administrative separation. From the point of administrative separation forward, the person shall have the same opportunity as any other person to apply for County employment.

## **Neutral Reference**

The County's general policy is to provide only neutral references in response to inquiries by prospective employers seeking information about current or former employees. This means that the County normally will provide to prospective employers only the following information: the beginning and ending dates of employment, position(s) held, and confirmation of a former employee's compensation rate or range at termination.