



# **Town of Blacksburg Employee Handbook**

**April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021**

## **DISCLAIMER**

ALL EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWN ARE EMPLOYED AT-WILL AND MAY QUIT OR BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME AND FOR ANY OR NO REASON. NOTHING IN ANY OF THE TOWN'S RULES, POLICIES, HANDBOOKS, PROCEDURES OR OTHER DOCUMENTS RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT CREATES ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT. THIS HANDBOOK REPLACES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED POLICIES, PRACTICES AND UNDER-STANDINGS, WRITTEN OR ORAL, GOVERNING EMPLOYMENT. NOTHING CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE LIMITATIONS IN THIS PARAGRAPH CREATE ANY CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT UNLESS: 1) THE TERMS ARE IN WRITING; 2) THE DOCUMENT IS LABELED "CONTRACT"; 3) THE DOCUMENT STATES THE TERM OF EMPLOYMENT; AND 4) THE DOCUMENT IS SIGNED BY THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR OR APPROVED BY VOTE OF COUNCIL.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

\_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Administration Signature

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# Welcome to the Town of Blacksburg

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Town of Blacksburg. As employees of the Town of Blacksburg government, we are each responsible for conducting business in an open, honest, and professional manner. When conducting Town business, we must remember that the citizens of Blacksburg, the companies that do business for and with the Town, the businesses that operate within the Town of Blacksburg, and other governments and their employees and representatives within Cherokee County with whom we interact are our stakeholders and customers.

Each employee is a valuable member of the Town of Blacksburg team. In order for the Town of Blacksburg to continue to be successful as a local government, each employee must be committed to a high standard of integrity as tasks are carried out each day. At the Town of Blacksburg, we have adopted a strategic plan encompassing the following values:

## **Accountability**

We are accountable to the citizens of the Town of Blacksburg and as stewards of the public's resources, we must set and exceed expectations that ensure our intentions. We answer to each other, we answer to the citizens and we answer to every person that lives, works, and visits in Blacksburg.

## **Communication**

The Town strives to provide effective communication in a purposeful and concise manner. The Town will share information in an appropriate, transparent, and timely manner.

## **Servant Leadership**

As servant leaders the Town will foster an environment that places the best interest of the public first while setting aside personal differences and focus on what is best for the community.

## **Continuous Improvement**

The Town will align our decisions, services, policies through the collective commitment of the needs of the Town currently, and in the future. Although opinions may differ and approaches may vary, the collective mission of the Town is to provide a high-quality standard of life, as well as providing unparalleled public services for the community of Blacksburg.

# **CHAPTER I: POLICY ADMINISTRATION**

The Town of Blacksburg operates under the Council form of government. Under this form of government, the Town Council employs a Town Administrator to be the administrative head of the town government. The Town Administrator is responsible for the administration of all departments of Town government that Council has the authority to control.

## **1.1 Responsibility**

The Town Administrator is responsible for the administration and interpretation of Town policies and procedures. The Town Administrator may delegate authority for administering policies and procedures to the Assistant Town Administrator. To the extent practical, such interpretation will be based upon specific policy wishes of Council that exist or upon the principles expressed in established policies or procedures. Any policy or procedure may be amended, waived or modified by the Town Administrator. The Town Administrator is authorized to establish such administrative rules and procedures as reasonably necessary to carry out these policies.

## **1.2 Scope**

The policies set forth in this handbook are intended to establish consistent personnel policies for the Town and to establish guidelines governing employees of the Town. These personnel policies and procedures apply to all employees except those who are specifically exempted by law. Employees who work for constitutionally appointed or elected officials may be subject to policies and procedures that are not included in this handbook. Employees must further comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

## **1.3 Objectives**

The Town of Blacksburg recognizes that its employees are the most important resource for accomplishing the Town's objective of providing quality public service to the Town of Blacksburg citizens. These policies are designed to promote consistent human resource management of all covered Town employees. It is intended that these policies enable all employees to know what is expected of them in the workplace when conducting Town business and to provide employees with information as to what they can expect from the Town as an employer.

**END OF CHAPTER 1**

## **CHAPTER 2: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

### **2.1 Employee Relations Philosophy**

Every employee is important to the Town of Blacksburg. The Town is committed to attracting and retaining quality employees. To accomplish this, the Town is committed to maintaining a competitive wage and benefit program. The Town of Blacksburg wants to make the work place a pleasant and rewarding place for its employees. Most importantly, the Town wants employees to feel free to talk and discuss ideas.

The Town of Blacksburg wants employees to express their problems and suggestions directly to the Town so that the Town and employees can understand each other better. The Town is proud to deal directly with its employees rather than through a third party. The Town's personnel policies and programs are designed to meet the needs of employees, providing a positive environment wherein each employee enjoys maximum opportunity for open communication, conflict resolution and job satisfaction.

If a situation arises at work, the Town encourages every employee to use the problem-solving procedure outlined in the handbook so that we can all work together in making the Town of Blacksburg a better place to work and to live.

### **2.2 Equal Employment Opportunity**

The Town provides equal opportunity to all applicants for employment and administers hiring, conditions and privileges of employment, compensation, training, promotions, transfer and discipline without discrimination because of race, color, religion, gender, disability, genetic information, age or national origin. The Town also prohibits retaliation against employees who have reported discrimination.

### **2.3 Anti-Harassment**

Various laws and regulations generally prohibit employment decisions from being made on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, color, age, genetic information, disability or similar distinctions. In addition, it is our desire to provide a working environment in which employees are free from discomfort or pressure resulting from jokes, ridicule, slurs, threats and harassment either relating to such distinctions or simply resulting from a lack of consideration for a fellow human being.

The Town does not tolerate harassment of any kind and forbids retaliation against anyone who has reported harassment in good faith.

### **2.4 Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment warrants special mention. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical, verbal or visual conduct based on sex constitute sexual harassment when

1. Submission to the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; or
2. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision.
3. The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented kidding or teasing, practical jokes, jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene language or gestures, displays of foul or obscene printed or visual material, “put-downs” or condescending or derisive comments or terms based on gender, and physical conduct, such as patting, pinching or brushing against another person. This policy prohibits such conduct regardless of the gender of the perpetrator or victim.

Disputes sometimes arise as to whether conduct was “welcome” or “unwelcome.” Conduct that would violate this policy if it were unwelcome violates the policy if anyone complains of it. However, not all conduct prohibited by this policy constitutes a violation of the law.

## **2.5 Complaint Procedure and Investigation**

### **ALL COMPLAINTS SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN A WRITTEN STATEMENT**

If you feel that his policy has been violated by anyone with whom you come in contact on the job, regardless of whether it is by a fellow worker, a supervisor, or a member of the general public, you should report the incident(s) immediately. You may do this by reporting to your supervisor or to the Town Administrator. Supervisors and managers who receive complaints of or become aware of harassment should inform the Town Administrator immediately. Complaints against the Town Administrator should be made to the Mayor or to the Town Council.

Harassment allegations will be investigated, and the investigatory process may vary from case to case. The investigation is conducted as confidentially as possible consistent with the efficient handling of the complaint. All employees have a responsibility both to cooperate fully with the investigation and to keep the matter confidential, whether the employee is the accused person, the complaining one, or merely a potential witness. Persons who are interviewed should not discuss the matter at all with co-workers, friends or management. This does not mean, however, that employees may not complain to civil rights agencies. Employees may be asked to submit to a polygraph (lie detector).

#### **-- Important --**

To avoid misunderstandings, complaints made to members of management or to the direct supervisor require the completion of a complaint report, either by you or by the person, to whom the complaint is made, summarizing the allegations, and listing any witnesses to the alleged harassment. You should be sure to get a copy of this initial complaint report to confirm you have complied with this procedure.

These procedures have been established to enable you to get relief if you feel that you are the victim of harassment. The U.S. Supreme Court has said that as a general rule you may not sue the Town for a violation of your rights unless you first give us notice and an opportunity to end the harassment. The reporting procedures we have adopted are intended to establish a clear record of what has been reported.

## **2.6 Bullying in the Workplace**



The purpose of this policy is to communicate to all employees, including supervisors and managers, that the Town of Blacksburg will not tolerate bullying behavior. The Town of Blacksburg defines bullying as “repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment.”

Bullying may be intentional or unintentional. As in sexual harassment, it is the effect of the behavior upon the individual which is important. The Town of Blacksburg considers the following types of behavior examples of bullying but this list is not all inclusive:

- Verbal Bullying: slandering, ridiculing or maligning a person or his/her family; persistent name calling which is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; using a person as butt of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks
- Physical Bullying: pushing; shoving; kicking; poking; tripping; assault, or threat of physical assault; damage to a person’s work area or property
- Gesture Bullying: non-verbal threatening gestures

Any employee that believes he/she is being subjected to bullying must report the alleged bullying to his/her Department Head or the Town Administrator.

The Town of Blacksburg will investigate the facts and circumstances of any claim of perceived bullying as confidentially as possible. Due to the sensitivity of the issues involved in an investigation, employees interviewed by the Town of Blacksburg during the investigation must treat the information discussed as confidential. Disclosure of such information is a violation of the Town’s policies and procedures and may lead to disciplinary action.

## **2.7 Problem-Solving Procedure**

The Town of Blacksburg maintains an open-door policy of internal communications so that employees feel free to communicate about their jobs. Most employees have had a question or problem concerning their job at one time or another and the Town of Blacksburg encourages employees to ask questions and openly discuss concerns. The Town of Blacksburg cannot answer a question or solve a problem unless an employee brings it to the attention of the Town.

The Town’s problem-solving procedure offers all employees the freedom to discuss questions or concerns with the Town. Employees also should follow the procedure below if employees believe that a Town policy may have been violated. Whenever an employee has a problem, it usually can be resolved by following these avenues.

1. Employees should first discuss any questions or concern with the Department head. Very often, the supervisor is in the best position to handle the problem satisfactorily.
2. If an employee is not satisfied after speaking with the Department head, or if the employee feels that he/she cannot talk with the Department head, the employee should speak with the Assistant Administrator.

3. If an employee is not satisfied after speaking with the Assistant Administrator, or if the employee feels that he/she cannot talk with the Assistant Administrator, the employee should speak with the Town Administrator.

## **2.8 Nepotism/Employment of Relatives**

People in the same immediate family may not be employed or continue to be employed if one directly or indirectly supervises another or interacts with another in the handling of money or compensation. For purposes of this policy, immediate family is defined as spouse, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother or sister, parent-in-law, grandparent-in-law, brother-in-law and sister-in-law. The immediate family is also considered to include stepparents, stepchildren, stepbrothers and stepsisters when the employee and the step-relative have lived together regularly in the same household. Unrelated employees residing together or otherwise engaged in a close personal relationship (such as domestic partner, co-habitant or significant other) are treated as being within the immediate family of each other for the purposes of this nepotism policy. Members of the immediate family of elected officials of the Town are not eligible for Town employment.

This policy applies to conditions that may arise out of all personnel actions including, but not limited to, new appointments and promotions or transfers and/or the reviewing and/or approving of financial transactions. In addition, the Town of Blacksburg, in an effort to manage the Town as effectively as possible and not in an effort to regulate anyone's personal life, discourages supervisory and management personnel from dating, entering into romantic relationships with or in engaging in sexual activities with individuals who work in a subordinate position. If an employee is considering becoming involved in such a relationship or is involved in such a relationship, the employee is responsible for notifying the Assistant Town Administrator or Town Administrator. The Town reserves the exclusive right to determine if a relationship is disruptive to Town business and may require one the employees to give up the position or employment.

**END OF CHAPTER 2**

## CHAPTER 3: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The Town of Blacksburg is proud to offer its employees a competitive benefit package to assist employees in planning for retirement and to aid employees and their families with medical and dental care.

The following is a general summary of the benefits currently offered to eligible employees. The Town of Blacksburg may modify or eliminate any benefits or programs that it currently provides, as well as increase the cost to employees and retirees of such benefits and programs. This discretionary authority extends to all issues concerning benefit eligibility and entitlement. For the most accurate and up-to-date information on employee benefits being offered by the Town, please contact the Administrative Department.

This summary does not constitute a contract or a guarantee of specific benefits. Please note that the description of benefits is merely a highlight of the programs and benefits provided. The benefits are more fully described in the summary plan descriptions and official plan documents. These documents are available for review in the Human Resources Department or via contact with the provider. In case of conflict between the information below and official contracts and documents, the official plan documents will govern.

The Town of Blacksburg or its designee retains full discretionary authority to interpret the terms of the plans identified in this chapter, as well as full discretionary authority with regard to administrative matters arising in connection with the plans.

### 3.1 Insurance

**Health Insurance** – The Town of Blacksburg pays premium costs for each full-time regular employee who desires such coverage. Group Health/Life/Dental/Vision insurance may be provided by a carrier selected by Town Council. The Administrator and insurance agent shall work together if policy modifications are needed and present to Town Council. Should an employee wish to insure other family members or dependents the employee may do so by means of payroll deduction. The costs of dependent coverage shall be paid by the employee. Employees should notify the payroll clerk if they desire to have dependent insurance coverage. It is the responsibility of the employee to assure the application has been completed and submitted for insurance coverage. Employees should review the summary of the plan.

**Workers' Compensation** – Town employees are covered by workers' compensation for on-the-job injuries. Benefits are governed by State law and not set by the Town of Blacksburg. Employees must report any on-the-job injury immediately, regardless of the severity to their supervisor and the Town Administrator.

**Retirement** – All regular full-time employees must, as a condition of their employment, become members in the South Carolina State Retirement System or the South Carolina Police Officers Retirement System. The employee's membership is made through payroll deductions and computed as a percentage of the employee's annual salary. The employee will be notified at the time of hire of the current rates and any changes thereafter. The employee is referred to the summary plan description issued by the South Carolina Retirement System. Visit: <https://www.peba.sc.gov/> for more information.

### 3.2 Deferred Compensation

#### a. South Carolina Salary Deferral 401(K) Plan and Trust

All active employees are eligible to apply for participation in the South Carolina Deferred Compensation Program. The elected non-matching contributions are pre-tax and deducted weekly through payroll deduction.

#### b. South Carolina 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and Trust

All active employees are eligible to apply for participation in the South Carolina Deferred Compensation Program. The elected non-matching contributions are pre-tax and deducted weekly through payroll deduction.

### 3.3 Annual Leave *(Amended April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021)*

The Town of Blacksburg provides eligible employees the ability to accrue annual leave to provide an employee with time away from work with pay. From an employee's start date to their one-year anniversary they will accrue vacation time, but will not be eligible to take any annual leave until their one-year anniversary. Annual leave is based on anniversary on January 1<sup>st</sup>

Continuous Service Years (Years)	Days Per Year	
0 – 1	- 8 Days (80 Hours)	6.67 Hrs. Accrued per month
1 – 5	- 8 Days (80 Hours)	Disbursed Jan. 1.
6 – 15	- 12 Days (120 Hours)	Disbursed Jan. 1.
16+	- 16 Days (160 Hours)	Disbursed Jan. 1.

Permanent part-time employees accrue annual leave as follows: on a pro-rated basis based upon the number of hours work.

#### **The number of days of annual leave coincides with the employees work anniversary.**

Employees desiring to take annual leave should give their supervisors **no less than** two weeks advance notice. Annual leaves will be scheduled as much as practical in accordance with employee requests. The Town's workload demands, however, are paramount.

When more employees request particular days off than can be accommodated, supervisors will make annual leave assignments taking into account the date the requests were made, special needs for particular annual leave dates, and the employees' lengths of service.

Unused annual leave will be paid for at termination only if the employee is terminated for non-disciplinary reasons or if the employee gives and properly works a two week notice of resignation, which notice may be waived by the Town Administrator.

Employees may not use more than two consecutive weeks of annual leave at any one time without prior approval by the Department Head or Town Administrator.

Annual leave is taken in one-hour increments.

A maximum of two weeks of annual leave may be carried over as of January 1 with any excess amounts forfeited.

Annual leave balances may be reduced for disciplinary reasons.

### **3.4 Sick Leave**

Employees earn one (1) day of sick leave per month. If an employee begins work before the 15th of the month, then they will earn a sick leave day for that month. If an employee begins work after the 15th of the month, then they will not earn a sick leave day for that month. Sick leave is pro-rated for permanent part-time employees.

Employees may carry over a maximum of 600 hours of sick leave per year.

Sick leave is paid when an employee is excused from work due to his own non-occupational disability. Employees may be required to submit a physician's statement of disability before being eligible for sick leave payment, including when absent for prolonged periods of time or if the employee has been counseled for excessive use of sick leave. In some circumstances, employees may be required to provide certification from their physician that they are able return to work. Abuse of leave or failure to call in as required may result in denial of paid sick leave.

A physician's certificate verifying that an employee was incapacitated due to illness or injury may be required if absence exceeds two consecutive working days or at the discretion of the Administrator.

Sick leave may be used to cover absences made necessary by illness in an employee's immediate family.

Employees are not paid accrued, unused sick leave at termination.

### **3.5 Physical Disability and Personal Leave**

An employee who has completed his initial probation may request a leave of absence for up to three (3) months when unable to work because of sickness, pregnancy or injury on or off the job. Such an employee may also apply for leave of absence for personal reasons. Personal leaves are granted only in the discretion of the Town Administrator.

Employees are requested to apply for leaves of absence as far in advance of need as is possible, but an employee may be placed on leave status without application when the circumstances warrant such action. Physical disability leave begins on the first day of absence. After the employee has exhausted his annual and/or sick leave, as a general rule, an employee on leave of absence is not entitled to wages or fringe benefits and does not accrue fringe benefits.

Employees on leave of absence may not engage in other employment. Employees desiring to return to work from an unpaid leave of absence should notify the Town Administrator in writing at least ten days prior to their desired return date. If the Town finds that the employee is fit to resume his duties, the employee may be returned to his previous position if it is vacant and is to be filled, or to some other position of equal or lesser compensation for which he is qualified and where there is

a vacancy to be filled. If the employee is not returned to active employment, he may be continued on leave of absence status until he is returned to active-duty status or his leave of absence expires, whichever occurs sooner. Any employee who has not been reinstated within six (6) months following the commencement of a leave of absence is subject to termination if no reasonable accommodation can be made. Termination does not affect the employee's eligibility to be considered for hire as a new employee at some future time. Further, employees with circumstances that warrant special consideration should bring those circumstances to the attention of management.

### **3.6 Bereavement Leave**

An employee will be paid for time actually lost from straight time scheduled work up to three (3) days due to attendance at the funeral of a member of his immediate family, which is defined as spouse, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, parent-in-law, grandparent-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law. The immediate family will be considered to include step-parents, step-children, and step-brothers and step-sisters only when the employee and the deceased had lived together regularly in the same household at or prior to the time of death. The Town may require proof of relationship and attendance at the funeral.

Employees may be excused from work to attend the funerals of other family members and, upon request, may be paid for such absences out of accrued annual or sick leave balances.

### **3.7 Military Leave**

Employees are entitled to such leave of absence and reinstatement upon return from leave of absence for military service (including Reserve and National Guard duty) as may be provided by applicable state and federal law. The provisions of such laws change from time to time and for that reason no effort is made to set forth the law in this policy.

### **3.8 Jury Duty**

An employee will be paid for wages lost from scheduled straight time work due to jury service up to a maximum of eighty hours per calendar year.

In order to qualify for this payment an employee called for jury service must:

- (a) give his supervisor notice of such service within two workdays of the time the employee is called for such service;
- (b) report for work when released by the court on any day of jury service;
- (c) submit a written statement from the court indicating the days of jury service and the time released each day;
- (d) turn over to payroll any compensation received.

All time spent in court as a witness in connection with an employee's official duties shall be counted as hours worked and included in the total hours worked per week. Court attendance

occurring on a day off or holiday shall be treated in the same manner as employees who work on their day off or a holiday.

Court leave is not authorized for employees involved in personal litigation. An employee would be required to take annual leave.

### **3.9 Holidays**

The Town observes the following official holidays (Town Fiscal Year) for which employees shall be paid on:

New Years Day, January 1<sup>st</sup>  
Martin Luther King, Third Monday in January  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day, Last Monday in May  
Independence Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>  
Labor Day, First Monday in September  
Veteran's Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>  
Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>

If a holiday falls on a Friday or Saturday, the preceding Thursday will be observed as the official holiday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday will be observed as the official holiday.

Employees who are required to work on a holiday will receive an alternative day off by their supervisor or the number of per pay depending on hours worked per day.

When a holiday occurs during a period of authorized leave, that day will not be charged as a day of leave.

### **3.10 Cemetery**

The Town of Blacksburg will allow employees with a certain number of years of service to receive a cemetery plot(s) at a reduced cost. See below.

- After 5 Years of Service an employee is eligible for a 25% Discount
- After 10 Years of Service an employee is eligible for a 50% Discount
- After 15 Years of Service an employee is eligible for a 75% Discount
- After 20 Years of Service an employee is eligible for a free plot.
- Should death occur, while in service to the Town, the plot will be free.
- After 5 years of service the spouse and children of the employee living within the household are eligible for a 25% discount.

### 3.11 Longevity Pay

Longevity pay is a program that recognizes and rewards length of continuous service of Town employees. Full-time and part-time regular employees (part-time regular employees' longevity pay will be prorated based on the percentage of hours worked) who work 1,000 hours or more per year may be compensated longevity pay based on continuous years of service as of December 31<sup>st</sup> if funds are appropriated and employee's performance is in good standing at the time of disbursement. Longevity pay will be distributed in November prior to the Thanksgiving holiday and will be subject to federal, state and other deductions. Longevity pay benefit shall be at Town Council's discretion to implement per fiscal year.

- Council \$50
- Mayor \$75
- 1 year \$100
- 2-4 years \$250
- 5-9 years \$400
- 10-14 years \$550
- 15-19 years \$700
- 20 years and over \$850

**END OF CHAPTER 3**



## CHAPTER 4: DISCIPLINE

As is the case with all organizations, instances arise when an employee must be disciplined. The discipline that may be imposed includes but is not limited to oral reprimand, written warning, probation, reduction of leave balances, suspension without pay, demotion and discharge. In addition, the Town may procedurally suspend an employee pending investigation to determine if disciplinary action is appropriate. If the Town determines an unpaid suspension is appropriate discipline, exempt employees will be suspended in full-day increments; non-exempt employees will be suspended in partial or full-day increments. In addition, the Town may impose a combination of disciplinary measures. A Department head must submit terminations to the Town Administrator for review.

**THE DISCIPLINE IMPOSED IN ANY PARTICULAR SITUATION IS AT THE SOLE DISCRETION OF THE TOWN. NOTHING IN ANY OF THE TOWN'S POLICIES OR BY VIRTUE OF ANY PAST PRACTICE OF THE TOWN REQUIRES THE TOWN TO FOLLOW ANY PARTICULAR COURSE OF DISCIPLINE.**

Employees must sign counseling memoranda, policy statements, performance evaluations and other similar documents. The employee's signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with the contents of the document, only that he has been notified of the contents of the document. If an employee refuses to sign the document, the employee will be relieved of duty without pay until the document is signed. If the document has not been signed and returned by the end of the employee's next scheduled workday, the Town will consider the employee to have resigned.

### **Examples of Conduct Warranting Disciplinary Action**

It is not possible to list all acts and omissions that may result in disciplinary action. The disciplinary action that is appropriate for any particular misconduct is at the sole discretion of the Town. The following are merely examples of some of the more obvious types of misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. **THE TOWN RESERVES THE RIGHT TO TREAT EACH EMPLOYEE INDIVIDUALLY WITHOUT REGARD FOR THE WAY IT HAS TREATED OTHER EMPLOYEES AND WITHOUT REGARD TO THE WAY IT HAS HANDLED SIMILAR SITUATIONS.**

- a. Conviction of or plea of guilt or no contest to a charge of theft, violation of drug laws, sexual misconduct, offense involving moral turpitude or offense that affects the Town's reputation or that reasonably could create concern on the part of fellow employees or the community. Employees who are arrested may be relieved of duty (with or without pay) pending the Town's determination on continued employment.
- b. Incompetence
- c. Unauthorized absence or tardiness or a pattern of absenteeism or tardiness
- d. Insubordination, including disrespect for authority, or other conduct that tends to undermine authority
- e. Failure or refusal to carry out instructions

- f. Unauthorized possession or removal, misappropriation, misuse, destruction, theft or conversion of Town property or the property of others
- g. Violation of safety rules; neglect; engaging in unsafe practices
- h. Interference with the work of others
- i. Threatening, coercing or intimidating fellow employees, including “joking” threats
- j. Dishonesty
- k. Failure to provide information; falsifying Town records; providing falsified records to the Town for any purpose
- l. failure to report personal injury or property damage
- m. Neglect or carelessness
- n. Introduction, possession or use of illegal or unauthorized prescription drugs or intoxicating beverages on Town property or while on duty anywhere; working while under the influence of illegal drugs or intoxicating beverages; off-the-job illegal use or possession of drugs. For purposes of this policy, an employee is “under the influence” if he has any detectable amount of any such substance in his system.
- o. Unsatisfactory Performance
- p. Violation of Town policies
- q. Lack of good judgment
- r. Abuse of Town of Blacksburg Vehicles and misuse of vehicles when not on duty
- s. Any other reason that, in the Town’s sole determination, warrants discipline

## **END OF CHAPTER 4**

## **CHAPTER 5: WORKPLACE GUIDELINES & POLICIES**

### **5.1 Attendance and Punctuality**

Employees are expected to arrive at work on time and to start performing the work required by their job at the scheduled start time. Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to the proper operation of Town business and the ability to provide services to the Town's customers. If an employee is unable to report to work for any reason, or if the employee will arrive late or must leave early, the employee must notify the Department Head at least one hour prior to the employee's starting/leaving time or as soon as possible when extenuating circumstances exist. Questionable attendance patterns or concerns may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **5.2 Confidentiality of Information**

The Town of Blacksburg citizens and its customers entrust the Town with important information relating to their businesses and personal affairs. It is the Town's policy that all information considered confidential will not be disclosed to external parties or to employees without a need to know or as otherwise required by applicable federal, state or local laws. If there is a question of whether certain information is considered confidential, the employee should first check with his/her Department Head. This policy is intended to alert employees to the need for discretion at all times and is not intended to inhibit normal business communications.

### **5.3 Conflict of Interest**

Town employees are covered by state ethics laws that prohibit public employees from using their public position for their own personal gain or to benefit a family member or business associate. State law also prohibits employees from making governmental decisions on matters in which they, their family or business associates have an economic interest. Employees must notify their supervisors in writing of any matter in which they, their family or business associates have an economic interest and in which they must act on behalf of the Town. The supervisor must send the notification to the Town Administrator for review. If the Town determines a potential conflict or appearance of conflict of interest exists, the matter will be reassigned to another employee.

### **5.4 Dress Code Policy**

It is important for all employees to project a professional image while at work by being appropriately attired. Town employees are expected to be neat, clean and well-groomed while on the job. Clothing must be consistent with the standards for a business environment and must be appropriate to the type of work being performed. The official dress for The Town of Blacksburg is Business Casual unless otherwise indicated by management. Business Casual dress must reflect the image of a professional workplace and staff. Attire must be neat, appropriate, allow for normal office movement and not compromise professionalism or be a distraction to the business environment.

The Town of Blacksburg is confident that employees will use their best judgment regarding attire and appearance. Management reserves the right to determine appropriateness. Any employee who is improperly dressed will be counseled or in severe cases may be sent home to change clothes. Continued

disregard of this policy may be cause for disciplinary action, which may result in termination. The following list is not meant to be all inclusive; it is a guideline to provide direction on appropriate Business Casual attire.

The Following are acceptable:

- Khaki pants, casual slacks, dress slacks, dress Capri pants
- Casual shirts with collars, polo or oxford type shirts, sweaters, blouses, and vests.
- Sleeveless tops are acceptable without very large openings around the arms.
- Dresses and skirts- appropriate length should be sitting above the knee while standing or longer.
- Loafers, other leather type dress shoes and dress sandals.

The Following are Unacceptable:

- Denim or denim-like material. (Denim is only acceptable on the last day of the work week or prior approval from the Town Administrator)
- T-shirts pictured, printed or lettered
- Tight fitting clothing
- Athletic shorts or pants such as sweat-pants, basketball shorts, yoga pants etc.
- Low rise pants
- Tank tops, Halter Tops or spaghetti tops without an acceptable shirt, jacket or sweater
- Mid Drift halter tops
- Sheer garments
- Worn, tattered, ripped or cut off clothing
- Any garment displaying messages or logos that could be offensive
- Flip Flops

## **5.5 Drug Free Workplace**

All employees of the Town are prohibited from swallowing, inhaling, injecting, dealing in, or otherwise using, illegal drugs and substances (such as marijuana, cocaine, LSD, heroin, meth, etc.). Further, this prohibition applies to the misuse, abuse or any unlawful use or possession of otherwise legal drugs. These prohibitions apply to use at any time, both on the job and off the job. Town employees are, of course, permitted to possess any substance when required by their jobs or for the purpose of lawful delivery to another person.

Similarly, employees are prohibited from reporting to work, using or being anywhere on Town property while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or improperly used controlled substances. For purposes of this policy, "under the influence" means having any detectable amount of any such substance in the employee's system. Employees who are informed by their healthcare provider or pharmacist that a drug they are using may impair their ability to safely perform work must report that to their supervisors. The Town will determine whether an employee may continue to work.

1. The Town may test employees for drug or alcohol use in violation of this policy any time the Town of Blacksburg has reasonable suspicion of a violation of the policy.

2. Employees required by their jobs to possess a Commercial Driver's License must provide a specimen for testing within 32 hours following a serious accident for which they arguably are at fault. (Such employee who are injured and cannot provide a specimen at the time of the accident will provide necessary authorization for obtaining hospital reports or other documents in the employees' systems.)
3. Employees required by their jobs to possess a Commercial Driver's License must submit to a drug test whenever they are issued a citation for a moving violation in connection with an accident.
4. Particularized suspicion testing shall not be conducted without the approval of the Administrator or his designee(s).
5. Random testing for illegal or unauthorized drug use shall be conducted for all sworn police officers.
6. Random testing for illegal or unauthorized drug use shall be conducted for all employees who are required by their jobs to possess a Commercial Driver's License and are employed within natural gas division
7. If an employee refuses to submit to a drug test when ordered to do so, the Town shall terminate the employee.

#### **Notice to Employer, State and Federal Grantor/Contracting Agencies and Law Enforcement Authorities**

As a condition of employment, employees agree to notify the Town within five (5) calendar days after any criminal conviction for the workplace manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of illegal drugs and prescription drugs not prescribed for the individual employee's use. As required by the state and federal drug free workplace acts, the Town will notify within ten days all state and federal grantors/contracting agencies of such employee convictions. "Conviction" means a finding of guilt, imposition of a sentence, a plea of no contest or a plea of guilty.

The Town will notify law enforcement authorities whenever illegal drugs are found in the workplace.

#### **5.6 Gifts and Gratuities**

No employee may directly or indirectly solicit, accept or receive a gift under circumstances in which it could be inferred that the gift was intended to influence him in the performance of his official duties or was intended as a reward for an official act on his part. A gift is defined as any benefit, favor, service, privilege or thing of value that could be interpreted as influencing an employee's impartiality. A gift includes, but is not limited, to meals, trips, money, loans, rewards, merchandise, foodstuffs, tickets to sporting or cultural events, entertainment, and personal services or work provided by Town suppliers or contractors. This policy is not

intended to prohibit the acceptance of items of nominal value that are distributed generally to all employees. A determination as to whether this policy has been violated is in the Town's sole discretion.

## **5.7 Inclement Weather**

The Town of Blacksburg Town Administrator will communicate with Department Heads and staff regarding closures.

1. Employees whose departments are closed due to inclement weather are paid their regular straight time earnings if scheduled to work the day of the closure.
2. Employees whose departments are not closed due to inclement weather or whose jobs require they report are expected to report to work provided that they can arrive safely. Those who fail to report are considered unexcused and may not use paid leave to make up their work hours.

## **5.8 Outside Employment**

It is the Town of Blacksburg's policy that employment with the Town to be the principal vocation of all of its full-time employees. No employee shall engage in or accept private employment or render any service for private interest when such employment or service is incompatible or creates a conflict of interest with the employee's duties for the Town or creates the appearance of a conflict of interest. No employee is allowed to hold a public office with the Town or have conflicting employment while in the employ of the Town of Blacksburg.

Any outside employment must be disclosed to the Assistant Town Administrator and submitted to the Town Administrator by completing the "Outside Employment Form" (Located in the Appendix) and approval given prior to engaging in secondary employment. The Town Administrator may establish whatever additional procedures or limitations deemed necessary for regulating outside employment activities of Town employees in accordance with this policy. The decision as to whether outside employment violates Town policy is at the Town's sole discretion.

Employees may not engage in any private business or activity while on Town work time or at the Town workplaces. Under no circumstances may a Town employee use Town property, equipment or material in the conduct of approved secondary employment, unless without prior written consent of the Administrator, which will only be provided in exceptional circumstances. The Town will not assume any responsibility for employees engaging in secondary employment during the hours of that employment with the secondary employer, nor will it accept any liability for any illnesses, injuries or damages incurred while in the execution of secondary employment duties. As part of the submission and approval process, employees engaged in secondary employment will be required to execute a form releasing the Town from all liability for claims resulting from illnesses, injuries or damages resulting from secondary employment.

## **5.9 Political Activity**

Employees may fully and freely associate themselves in organizations of their own choosing, except those organizations whose purpose is the violent overthrow of the government of the United States, the State

of South Carolina or any of its political subdivisions. In addition, supervisory employees may not join or support labor organizations that accept to membership subordinates of such supervisors.

In certain circumstances involving real or potential conflicts, employees who run for public office may be placed on an unpaid leave of absence until after the election. If an employee is placed on leave of absence, his employment will terminate upon his election to a partisan public office.

For purposes of this policy, an employee is considered a “candidate for public office” as soon as he begins actively campaigning for nomination or election, or when he files for candidacy, whichever comes sooner.

## **5.10 Social Networks, Personal Websites and Blogs**

Social networking, personal websites, and blogs have become common methods of self-expression. The Town respects the right of employees to use these media during their personal time. Employees may not access social media sites, other than for business use, during working hours or using Town equipment.

Employees must understand that material posted on these media may be read by persons other than those for whom it is intended. Employees are cautioned that they are responsible for the contents of social media posts they make. Posts that contain obscene or harassing material, that are unlawful, that contain personal attacks on coworkers, that reasonably call into question the employee’s judgment, or that reasonably cause concern among the public may result in discipline, up to and including termination from employment. Similarly, conduct that would violate Town policies if done in person also violates Town policy if done through social media. Employees may not disclose confidential information over social media or similar sites.

Employees who post on media sites and who have identified themselves as a member or employee of the Town on those sites must make it clear that they are expressing their own views and not those of the Town.

## **5.11 Anti Scavenging**

The Town of Blacksburg prohibits any employee from removing, scattering, rummaging, or probing through, or otherwise salvaging items from or tampering with any Town-owned property. Such prohibition includes, but is not limited to, any item that has no value or otherwise appears to have no value to the Town, items that are considered surplus Town property, items that have been identified by the Town for destruction, recycling, sale or other disposition. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination from employment and will be subject to criminal prosecution for theft of Town property.

## **5.12 Travel & Training**

### **A. General Purpose**

Whenever an employee travels on behalf of the Town, whether it is for business or training, the policies and procedures stated herein shall apply. It is the expressed purpose of these policies and

procedures to provide the employee with reasonable travel accommodations and related expenses, while maintaining prudent spending policy. It is each employee's responsibility to learn and abide by these rules. The policies and procedures found in this manual supersede all previous policies, directives and rules governing Town travel and training.

## B. General Policies

Budget appropriations for travel and training should be reviewed by the Town Administrator prior to requesting travel approval.

Employees are expected to seek the most reasonable prices available for lodging and fares, considering location and services. Before training and/or conference travel occurs, the appropriate approvals must be obtained.

Expenses submitted for reimbursement must be accompanied by the itemized receipt or a copy of the itemized receipt for the expense (i.e.: receipts should be the detailed/itemized receipt, not the credit card copy showing only the total spent). Without a proper receipt, the reimbursement will not be approved unless extraordinary circumstances prevail.

Expenses for entertainment, alcohol, non-Town employees, including spouses, and for any expense deemed wasteful or extravagant will not be reimbursed.

When traveling in a group, payment and accounting of registration fees, transportation and lodging can be consolidated and reimbursed to one person in the group.

Requests for reimbursements shall include all documentation as required, including a brief narrative report on the purpose for the training or travel.

## C. Procedures

### 1. Approvals

To attend any training seminar or conference requiring travel expense, an employee must first obtain approvals from his/her Department Head. The Town Administrator must also review and approve the request. A Conference/Training/Travel Request and Report Form (Located in the Appendix) must be completed and submitted for signatures. An employee must attach conference or training registration forms and supporting materials to itemize the travel costs.

### 2. Meal

Expenses For employees on out-of-town and overnight training, a daily meal per diem totaling per diem rates allowed by the most current IRS Revenue Procedure would be reimbursed. See [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov) for the current per diem rates for major metro areas.

- Please subtract \$5 from the M&IE (meals and incidental expenses) rate listed for metro areas on the website <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/mie-breakdown> to remove incidentals and get to the meal expense.
- When claiming per diem reimbursement receipts are not necessary.



- Per diems are not to be claimed if meals are provided at no cost to the employee.
- When there is an overnight stay, the breakfast allowance will be reimbursed when travel is started before 6:00 a.m. The lunch allowance will be paid when an employee is out of town during the lunch period. For the day of return from overnight travel, dinner will be allowed if the return is after 7:00 p.m.

### 3. Reimbursements

A reimbursement of actual travel expenses must be submitted on a Travel Expense Report & Reimbursement Request Form within 30 working days of the end of the trip. To receive reimbursement for an eligible expense, the corresponding itemized receipt (original or copy) must be attached. Also attach the original signed Pre-travel request that is sent back after the request has been approved. Travel and training expenses eligible for reimbursement include registration, lodging, mileage, public transportation, and reasonable incidental expenses such as tips, parking fees, business telephone/internet use, and business supplies.

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to, the following: entertainment, alcoholic beverages, gifts, personal phone/internet use, laundry, any expense for spouse, dependents or guests, transportation costs or mileage for travel unrelated to Town Business and any incidental expense not pre-approved.

#### D. Multiple Employees Traveling Together

When two employees are attending a training seminar or a conference at the same location and on the same dates, the employees must share and coordinate transportation and lodging in order to minimize the expense to the Town. Employees should travel in the same vehicle unless there are extenuating circumstances. Employees should also share a hotel room whenever possible. This requirement is waived for employees of different sexes.

#### E. Registrations

Conference registration may be done by the employee attending the conference or training or it may be done by the Finance Department. Indicate on the Travel and Conference Request Form how the registration is to be paid. Early registration discounts should be utilized if they are available. Travel request forms must be submitted prior to the cut-off date for the Town Council meeting that precedes the registration date.

#### F. Transportation

Airfare: All air travel will be by coach class. First class fares will not be reimbursed by the Town. Preferably, requests for airline tickets should be made well in advance of the travel date, but under no circumstances less than ten working days from the travel date. Air travel will be approved, in lieu of the car, in those instances where it is deemed absolutely necessary.

Car: Unless another mode of transportation is specifically approved by the Town Administrator, all in-state travel will be by either Town vehicle or private car. Unless time is a critical factor, all out of

state travel within five hours driving time will be by car. The IRS issues standard mileage rate per mile (Issued Yearly) when using a personal vehicle. The Town encourages the use of a Town vehicle when one is available. The most direct route must always be used. The Town has gas cards that can be used for the purchase of gasoline for the Town vehicles only.

Train or bus: Travel arrangements by rail or bus are allowed. All travel by these methods will be by coach class. First class fares will not be reimbursed by the Town.

#### G. Lodging

Government discounts and conference discounts should be utilized whenever possible. Arrangements for lodging will be made through the employee's personal credit card and request reimbursement when the travel is completed. If a governmental discount is applied, the Town issued Government I.D. should be carried by the employee.

The employee must submit a hotel/motel bill upon completion of the trip. A credit card receipt alone is not sufficient documentation.

#### H. Routine

Travel Routine for meetings and work within the Town limits and Cherokee County does not require the completion of the Travel & Conference Request form or the Travel Expense & Reimbursement form. Eligible expenses, such as mileage and parking, may be filed for reimbursement on Routine Travel Reimbursement Form with receipts attached. Routine reimbursements that only involve mileage should be made at least monthly.

#### I. Forms

Conference/Training/Travel Request and Report Form - forwarded to: Department Head and Town Administrator for signatures; copies returned to: Department Head for notification to the employee. Once approved, Conference/Training/Travel Request and Report Form forms are forwarded to: Town Accounts Payable Department for processing.

### **5.13 Vehicle Use**

#### A. Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure the safety and well-being of Town employees; to facilitate the efficient and effective use of Town resources; to minimize the Town's exposure to liability; to monitor the use of Town-owned vehicles; and to comply with regulations relating to Town vehicle usage.

#### B. General Policy

The safety and well-being of employees is of critical importance to the Town of Blacksburg. Each employee has a responsibility to not only protect himself/herself when on the road but also to help protect others. Employees that are required to drive on Town business at any time will be expected to consistently follow all the policies and procedures below. Only authorized employees may operate Town vehicles. If a Town vehicle incurs any damage while under the responsibility of a particular

employee, that employee must report the damage immediately and may be responsible for paying some or all of the repair costs, to be determined in the Town's sole discretion

Likewise, if an employee receives a citation for any violation while operating a Town vehicle, the employee is responsible for paying any fine or penalty incurred and may be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate separation. All such violations or citations must be reported to the employee's immediate supervisor immediately. Failure to immediately report a violation or citation may result in disciplinary action including, immediate separation from employment. In addition, if an employee is driving a personal vehicle while on Town business and is involved in an accident, the employee must report the accident to the Town Administrator even if no injuries occurred.

The Town of Blacksburg recognizes that seat belts are extremely effective in preventing injuries and loss of life. The Town of Blacksburg cares about its employees, and wants to make sure that no one is injured or killed in a tragedy that could have been prevented by use of seat belts. All drivers and passengers must wear seat belts when operating a Town vehicle or while operating any vehicle on Town property. Seat belts must be worn whether the employee is a driver or a passenger and regardless of whether air bags are available.

Employees whose job responsibilities include regular or occasional driving are expected to refrain from using electronic devices while driving Town vehicles. Safety must come before all other concerns. Regardless of the circumstances, including slow or stopped traffic, employees are strongly encouraged to pull off to the side of the road and safely stop the vehicle before placing or accepting a call. If acceptance of a call is unavoidable and pulling over is not an option, employees are encouraged to keep the call short, use hands-free options, refrain from discussion of complicated or emotional discussions and keep their eyes on the road. Special care should be taken where there is traffic, inclement weather, or the employee is driving in an unfamiliar area. Emailing or text messaging will not be performed while driving a Town vehicle on Town business.

- Engaging in other distracting activities including, but not limited to, eating, putting on makeup, reading or changing radio stations or music, is also strongly discouraged while driving, even when in slow-moving traffic.
- Operation of Town heavy equipment or specialized machinery while using electronic devices is prohibited.
- Drinking alcoholic beverages or otherwise violating the Drug and Alcohol (Substance Abuse) Policy is prohibited in a Town-owned vehicle or in a personal vehicle while on Town business. Use of alcohol, drugs or other substances, including certain over-the-counter cold or allergy medications that in any way impair driving ability, is prohibited. No driver shall operate a Town vehicle when his/her ability to do so safely has been impaired.
- All employees are expected to follow all driving laws and safety rules such as adherence to posted speed limits and directional signs, use of turn signals and avoidance of confrontational or offensive behavior while driving.
- Employees should never allow any employee to ride in any part of the vehicle not specifically intended for passenger use and/or any seat that does not include a working seat belt.

- Employees must promptly report any accidents to local law enforcement as well as to the employee's Department Head.
- Drivers are responsible for the security of Town vehicles assigned to them. The vehicle engine must be shut off, ignition keys removed, and vehicle doors locked whenever the vehicle is left unattended.
- Head lights and windshield wipers shall be operated in accordance with state law and all other state and local laws regarding operation of a vehicle must be obeyed.

### C. Take Home Vehicle

Some positions with the Town of Blacksburg require a response to special situations, emergencies or events exceeding normal working hours on a regular basis. Employees in such positions may be assigned a take home Town vehicle by their department head with the approval of the Town Administrator. Only Town employees or those performing work for the Town, with prior approval from Town Administrator, may ride in Town owned or Town rented vehicles. Additionally, the Town's Department heads must submit a vehicle take home list for review every January for review by the Town's Administration Department. Employees with take home vehicle privileges must abide by all Town policies including but not limited to, the general policy (Section B Chapter 4 Item R) for operation of a Town vehicle and should avoid use that is other than *de minimis*, unless provided under state law.

### D. Tobacco Use in a Town Vehicle

The Town maintains a smoke- and tobacco-free office. No smoking or other use of tobacco products (including, but not limited to, cigarettes, pipes, cigars, snuff, or chewing tobacco) is permitted in any part of the building or in vehicles owned, leased, or rented by the Town. Employees may smoke outside in designated areas during breaks. When smoking or otherwise using tobacco or similar products outside, do not leave cigarette butts or other traces of litter or tobacco use on the ground or anywhere else. Dispose of any litter properly in the receptacles provided for that purpose.

Please remember to conform to the smoking or tobacco use policies of our customers when working at a customer's site.

All employees are expected to abide by this policy in all respects while at work, whether on company premises, at a customer's site, citizens home, or while in transit between work locations or assignments, as well as while the employee is off duty, if the employee is on Town premises or in vehicles owned, leased, or rented by the Town. Being permitted to use tobacco products during breaks is a privilege, as long as such use does not interfere with the employee's work, fitness for duty, or professional appearance. If that privilege is abused, it may be withdrawn altogether.

## 5.14 Workplace Privacy/Computer and Internet Use

The workplace is intended to be a place of work. An important part of work is communications and recordkeeping. No employee is at work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and there are times when management needs access to communications or records maintained by employees in their individual

workplaces. Personal items and personal communications received or stored on Town property are not entitled to a guarantee of privacy.

Management may search Town property and documents in Town-owned vehicles, employee desks, lockers, file cabinets, electronic devices, etc. Further, to help provide for the safety and security of Town employees, guests and property, the Town conducts video surveillance of Town property.

Electronic media raise similar issues. The Town provides electronic and telephonic communication and, when necessary, computers and mobile devices to employees. Although assigned to the employee, these items still belong to the Town. Similarly, any electronic files created on or software downloaded on, a Town computer or mobile device belong to the Town. Unauthorized programs and files may not be used or installed on Town computers without the written permission of the Town. Additionally, employees may not encrypt work and may not use passwords other than those assigned to them by the Town. Employees may not destroy or delete files from Town computers or mobile devices except pursuant to the Town's record retention policy.

The Town reserves the right to review voice mail, electronic mail, computer and mobile device files, text messaging, and other electronic information generated by or stored in the Town's electronic systems. The Town also reserves the right to report the finding of such reviews to appropriate agencies. The only sure way to avoid violating the Town's policy on personal computer and mobile device use is to not use the Town's computers for **any** personal purpose.

The following use is absolutely forbidden:

1. To access any material the Town considers to be pornographic; to transmit or knowingly accept receipt of any communication that is pornographic, obscene, or in the Town's opinion might contribute to a hostile work environment in that it demeans individuals on the basis of race, sex, age, national origin, disability or some similar distinction
2. To conduct business for outside employment or a side-business
3. To purchase any goods or services, even if charged to the employee's personal credit card.
4. To solicit others for non-work-related reasons

Town employees may not use personal electronic equipment (including but not limited to personal laptop computers, mobile devices and cellular phones) on Town property or at Town work sites to engage in conduct that would be prohibited if using Town equipment.

**Important Notice:** *The Town has the capacity to examine the computer and mobile device usage of individual employees in detail. Even though an item has been "deleted" and the employee cannot retrieve it, this does not mean that the Town cannot do so. It is also possible to generate a report of every Internet connection made by each user and of how much time was spent in each connection.*

## 5.15 Safety Rules

The Town of Blacksburg is committed to the safety of its employees, property and equipment. However, the most important part of safety is YOU. It is each employee's responsibility to abide by the safety rules; these rules are made for each employee's protection. Our employees perform a wide range of functions in various locations. The following is not a complete list of safety rules and these rules are not intended as a substitute for common sense and good judgment. Although some safety rules apply only to specific positions, all employees are expected to comply with the following rules:

- Use common sense in performing your duties.
- Report any and all work injury/illness to your Department Head immediately.
- Report any and all unsafe conditions to your Department Head immediately.
- Do not use any equipment, vehicles or materials when overly tired, nauseated, feverish or under the influence of any substance that may affect your judgment.
- Keep your work area neat and tidy.
- Use mechanical devices or request assistance in lifting heavy loads.
- Be sure that aisles or exits are kept clear; do not let cords interfere with walkways.
- Keep paper clips, tacks, pins and other objects off the floors.
- Store all sharp objects properly when not in use.
- Open and close doors cautiously and use extra caution at blind hallway intersections.
- Report or clean up all spills immediately.
- Report or replace frayed electrical cords.
- Hard-toed shoes must be worn when working on jobs where heavy objects may fall or as otherwise required by assigned job duties.
- Safety goggles or glasses and hearing protection will be provided when necessary. These protective devices must be used when breaking out concrete or asphalt, grinding, using a cutting torch, welding, sanding, using chisels, chipping slag, breaking rock, handling hazardous materials, operating loud power tools and machinery and as otherwise required by assigned job duties.
- Wear clothes suited for the job. This means hard-soled work shoes, shirts and long pants where appropriate. If working around equipment with moving parts, jewelry should be removed before reporting to the job.
- Locate the first aid kits that are available in the work area.
- All gasoline and petroleum-based products shall be stored in approved safety cans or the original manufacturer's container.

- Know where fire extinguishers are located and know how to use them if you need to.
- Use tools only for intended purposes. Do not use broken or dangerously dull tools. Defective materials or tools must be turned in and must not remain on the job. Do not attempt to operate special machinery or equipment without permission and instructions.

**END OF CHAPTER 5**

## **CHAPTER 6: EMPLOYMENT STATUS, COMPENSATION, SCHEDULES, AND TIMEKEEPING**

### **6.1 Classification System**

The Council may develop a system for classifying positions within the Town of Blacksburg, including pay ranges for those positions. Classification systems and pay ranges are subject to change at any time. The establishment of pay ranges or grades for any position does not guarantee the occupant of that position any particular rate of pay.

### **6.2 Employment Status**

Regular full-time employees are those that have completed their probationary periods and fill a full-time position with the Town of Blacksburg. Employees in this status are normally scheduled to work at least 40 hours per week. However, the Town of Blacksburg does not guarantee any minimum number of hours of work per week. Regular full-time employees are generally eligible for fringe benefits.

Regular part-time employees are those that have completed their probationary periods and fill a part-time position with the Town of Blacksburg. Employees in this status are normally scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week, but may be called upon to work above their normally scheduled hours of work when workloads require. Regular part-time employees are generally eligible for fringe benefits if assigned to work 30 hours or more.

Probationary employees are part-time and full-time employees who have not yet completed their probationary period.

Temporary employees are those hired for a limited period of time or until completion of a particular project or projects. Such employees may work part-time or full-time hours depending on the needs of the Town of Blacksburg. Temporary employees are generally not eligible for fringe benefits.

### **6.3 Probationary Period**

All new employees, including former employees who have been rehired, will be considered to be on probation for the first six (6) months. This period is a continuation of the selection process and is a time in which the new employee should make extra effort to demonstrate that he is well-suited for his job. If the department head concludes at any time during the probation period that the new employee is not well-suited for his position, the employee may be terminated, or may be placed on extended probation if approved by the Town Administrator.

The probation period ends successfully when the department head, not sooner than six (6) months after the employee was hired, evaluates the new employee in writing and authorizes his classification as a "regular" employee.

All newly promoted employees will be considered to be on probation in their new jobs for three months or at the duration of the Town Administrators discretion. This period is a continuation of the selection process and is a time in which the newly promoted employee should make extra efforts to demonstrate that he is well suited for the promotion.



If the department head concludes at any time during the promotion probation period that the newly promoted employee is not well suited for his new position, the employee may be removed from that position. If there is a vacancy in his former position which is to be filled, he may be returned to it. If there is no such vacancy, he may be considered for the filling of other vacancies for which he is qualified. If no other position is found for him, the employee may be terminated. This action does not prohibit an employee from applying for future vacancies with the Town of Blacksburg.

#### **6.4 Job Responsibilities**

To best serve the Town of Blacksburg's customers, the Town expects employees to do a variety of tasks from day to day. Where possible, the Town attempts to cross-train employees so that they can perform as many tasks as possible. The Town of Blacksburg does have job descriptions of the tasks to be performed by employees as part of their jobs. These descriptions are only guidelines intended to provide general information and should not be viewed as an exhaustive listing of a particular employee's job requirements

#### **6.5 Hours of Work**

The Town of Blacksburg's normal hours of business are from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. However, some departments must operate outside the Town of Blacksburg's normal hours of business, and alternate schedules of employees of those departments may differ from the Town normal hours. Each department is responsible for scheduling its employees to meet the needs of the Town. Employees may be required to work overtime.

Regular full-time employees who work during the Town's normal hours of business receive one paid meal break of 30 minutes. Breaks and meals for employees whose departments operate outside the Town of Blacksburg's normal hours are set by those departments. All breaks are workload permitting.

#### **6.6 Time Keeping**

The Town of Blacksburg is required by federal and state laws to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. Accurate recording of time worked is the responsibility of every Town of Blacksburg employee. Moreover, employees should want accurate time sheets and timecards to ensure that they are paid for all hours worked.

Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties. Nonexempt (hourly) employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work as well as any departure from work for lunch, personal reasons or an approved leave. This information should be submitted on the time sheet or timecard.

Time sheets and timecards are processed every week. Every employee (exempt and non-exempt [hourly]) must record the appropriate department name on the time sheet along the employee's name as it appears on his/her social security card. Time sheets and timecards must accurately reflect the time worked. The employee must review and sign the time sheet or timecard and submit it to the Department Head according to the established schedule. By signing the time sheet or timecard, the employee is certifying that the time sheet or timecard accurately reflects hours worked. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The Department Head is responsible for reviewing and signing off on the time sheet or timecard. Any corrections or modifications to the time sheet or timecard must be reviewed with the employee and acknowledged by the employee and the Department Head by an additional signature of each person beside each correction or modification.

All overtime must be approved in advance by the Department Head and submitted to the Town Administrator in advance, if practical, but no later than at the end of the pay period.

Failure to submit a time sheet or timecard when required or submitting a fraudulent time sheet or timecard may result in disciplinary action.

For detailed instructions on how and when to complete time sheets or timecards, employees should check with their Department Head or the Assistant Town Administrator.

## **6.7 Overtime and Compensatory Time**

Non-exempt employees, with the exception of law enforcement and fire suppression personnel, receive overtime premiums at 1.5 times their regular hourly rate for all hours worked in excess of 40. Law enforcement personnel receive overtime premiums after 128 hours in 21 days. Unless expressly agreed upon prior to the overtime work, in lieu of cash payment, the Town of Blacksburg will credit employees with compensatory time at the rate of 1.5 hours for each overtime hour worked. Employees must accurately record all hours worked and must have worked all hours recorded. Employees may not work "off the clock," and except in cases of emergency, employees may not work overtime without the permission of their supervisor.

Employees who are exempt from overtime receive a salary that compensates them for all hours worked in the work week. Such employees do not receive overtime pay. However, the Administrator may grant additional time off to exempt employees who have worked unusual amounts of time in excess of the normal work schedule, but no exempt employee has a right to such additional paid time off. There is not payment for such additional time upon termination or resignation.

Employees may accumulate a maximum of forty (40) hours of compensatory time. Prior to taking compensatory time the Department Head must get approval from the Town Administrator. The Town will allow employees to use accrued paid time off provided that the use of compensatory time does not unduly disrupt the operations of the Town.

## **6.8 Unexcused Absence**

If an employee is absent from work without prior approval from the employee's immediate supervisor or Department Head, the absence is unexcused and may thereby subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including separation from employment.

## **6.9 Payment of Wages**

The Town deducts from employees' gross pay taxes and withholding that are required by the taxing authorities. The Town may also deduct from employees' pay the employees' share of any premiums or plan

contributions for insurance, retirement, and similar plans that are elected by the employee. The Town may make other deductions as required by law or order of court.

Cash, debts owed the Town, fringe benefits, uniforms, tools, equipment, vehicles, instruction manuals, keys, Town identification cards, and other items belonging to the Town of Blacksburg and advanced or issued to an employee and not repaid or returned by him at the time of his termination are considered advances of wages the value of which may be deducted from the employee's final paycheck(s).

Employees are paid by direct deposit weekly on Thursday's.

## **6.10 Town Credit Card Usage**

The Town of Blacksburg offers Department Heads and Town Administrator positions that require regular purchases the opportunity to participate in the Town Credit Card program. Such program provides a cost-efficient, alternative method for Town purchases.

At a minimum, the Town Credit Card holder must:

1. Maintain the Credit Card in a secure location at all times
2. Not allow other individuals to use the Town Credit Card
3. Use the Town Credit Card for legitimate business purposes only. At no time may a Town Credit Card be used for a personal purchase
4. Expenses for entertainment, alcohol, non-Town employees, including spouses, and for any expense deemed wasteful or extravagant will not be reimbursed.
5. Obtain and file all sales slips, register receipts, etc., and match those receipts and slips to the card transactions before signing off on the credit card transactions. All charge slips and receipts must be retained for audit by accounts payable and external auditors.

Misuse of the Town Credit Card will subject the cardholder to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. The employee also will be required to reimburse the Town for any unauthorized or personal charges. More detailed information about Town Credit Card usage can be obtained from the Town's Administration Department.

## **6.11 Performance Reviews**

While the Town of Blacksburg encourages frequent and informal communication on performance between employees and management, it also is important to formally document the employee's performance. An employee performance appraisal is one method to facilitate communication with an employee relating to his/her job performance. Such appraisal should be conducted annually. The purpose of such appraisal is to help the employee achieve a professional level of conduct and performance. Open communication between the employee and the evaluator is needed to conduct a successful review.

An employee performance appraisal form will be issued by the Town Administration. This form will be completed by the Department Head. The employee and supervisor will review and sign the performance appraisal. The employee's signature does not necessarily indicate that he/she agrees with the appraisal, but only that it was reviewed with him/her. The employee may write a response to the review or comments on the area provided on the form or attach a response to the form.

## **6.12 Exit Interviews**

Any employee leaving the Town of Blacksburg may be asked to attend or complete an exit interview that is provided by the Administrative Department. The purpose of the interview is to determine the reasons for leaving and to resolve any questions of compensation, insurance continuation, return of Company property or other related matters.

## **6.13 Pay When Employment Ends *(Amended April 8th, 2021)***

When an employee is separated for any reason, the employee will receive the final wages through the last day worked via a live check mailed to the employee's address on record or via authorized direct deposit. Unless otherwise specified by law, final paychecks will be processed in the next payroll period following termination. Phones, keys, uniforms, identification badges, gas card and any other Town-issued property must be returned on or before the last day of employment. Any outstanding monies owed to the Town for insurance payments, uniforms, outstanding loans, personal charges, or unreturned Town property will be deducted from the final paycheck to satisfy the balance.

An employee in his/her new hire introductory period (6 months) who resigns from employment forfeits all accrued annual leave. Unused sick leave will be forfeited.

All other employees who resigns or retires from employment will receive all earned pay, including accrued but unused annual leave up to a maximum of 80 hours a current wage rate provided the employee gives the notice requested. Unused sick leave will be forfeited.

An employee who is laid off or loses his/her job because of a loss of license or certification will receive all earned pay, including accrued but unused annual leave up to a maximum of 80 hours. Unused sick leave will be forfeited.

An employee whose employment is terminated forfeits all accrued annual leave, accrued but unused longevity and sick leave.

An employee who resigns due to a pending investigation or pending disciplinary action forfeits all accrued annual leave, accrued but unused longevity and sick leave.

Compensatory time off accrued that is not used by an employee will be paid at time of separation.

## **6.14 Rehires**

The Town of Blacksburg is under no obligation to rehire former employees after any break in service. Applications received from former employees will be processed using the same procedures and standards that govern all direct applications. The Department Head must contact the Town Administrator prior to rehiring a former employee. The Town Administrator may review the former employee's personnel records and the circumstances surrounding termination of previous employment with the Town as part of the hiring process. If the former employee is hired, the employee's most recent hire date will be the applicable date for purposes of calculating Town length of service and all other Town benefits.

## Appendix



## CONFERENCE/TRAINING/TRAVEL REQUEST AND REPORT FORM

### TOWN OF BLACKSBURG

#### Section I - Request

Employee Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Departure: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Return \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section II - Estimated Costs

Registration Fee \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be taking a Town Vehicle (Circle)? Yes No

Will you be Renting A Vehicle (Circle)? Yes No

Will you be using your Personal Vehicle? If so, what is the total mileage (round trip)? \_\_\_\_\_ miles

Total Mileage \_\_\_\_\_ x current IRS mileage rate \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Airfare \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Lodging Cost per Night \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ nights \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Meals Per Diem Rate per [gsa.gov](http://gsa.gov) M & IE x \_\_\_\_\_ full days \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Partial Day Per Diem \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Estimated Costs \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section III - Purpose

Please describe the purpose served by this conference/training. What are the anticipated benefits?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Head Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Town Administrator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Attach Complete Agenda, Training Curriculum, Registration Form placed on file with Town of Blacksburg personnel & fiscal records\***



## Outside Employment Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby request approval to engage in outside employment as described below:

Nature of employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Time required for employment: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the Town of Blacksburg policy forbids me from engaging in any form of outside employment or business opportunity, for myself or another employer, which would conflict or interfere with my job especially while on Town time. Additionally, I understand that using company equipment or materials for outside employment is strictly prohibited. I understand that in order to engage in outside employment, I must receive approval from my supervisor and Department Director in advance of performing such outside employment, and that the approval may be withdrawn at any time. I also understand and agree that my outside employment must be suspended if my work status with Town of Blacksburg is sick leave, vacation leave, workers compensation leave or restricted duty. I understand that failure to comply with the policy could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### TOWN ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT ACTION

Request Approved     Request Denied

Comments or Special Conditions:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Administrator signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**\*\*A copy of this form will be put in your personnel file\*\***