

Board of County Commissioners' Employee Policies

Alachua County, Florida

Standards of Conduct

Policy No.: 2-2
Revision No.: 1

Effective: 04/14/09
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OVERVIEW: This policy describes the expectations of the Board of County Commissioners that employees will comply with all policies and procedures stated herein, State statutes and federal laws and regulations in the performance of duty and workplace behavior, as well as all safety rules and standards. Certain behaviors engaged in by employees outside of work hours may compromise their ability to do their job, which may impact their employment status.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all persons employed by the Board of County Commissioners.

PROVISIONS:

1. These standards of conduct are intended to provide guidance to employees as they undertake public service. They are not intended to provide an exhaustive listing of the County's expectations, or all of the grounds for discipline up to and including dismissal.
2. One of the primary objectives of the Board of County Commissioners is to establish and administer a system of human resources management consistent with the goal of providing superior service to the community by employing and retaining individuals of the highest qualifications and character, whose actions and decisions exemplify the ethical values held by the Board and who adhere to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct.
3. The values of any organization are reflected in the quality of the decisions made by the officers and employees.
 - a. In addition to adhering to the highest ethical standards, all employees are encouraged to develop skills and seek formal training that will enhance their personal development and add to the overall expertise of the organization.
 - b. Supervisors - Supervisors, including managers and directors, have key roles in the County organization and hold the special trust and confidence of higher level management and the Board. Supervisors have broad authority and correspondingly are held responsible for maintaining a professional and inclusive workplace environment. Thus supervisors are expected to set an example for their subordinates and are held to a higher standard of personal conduct.
4. As stewards of the public trust, all County employees must use the powers and resources of the County entrusted to them by the public to further the public interest, and not for personal gain or benefit.

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- a. No employees will knowingly use their official position, either on or off-duty, to secure special privileges or advantages for themselves or others.
 - b. Employees must be aware of and avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, and obtain their supervisor's review of a situation that may appear to be a conflict of interest for the employee.
5. The ethical obligations of public service employees go beyond mere legal obligations, and demand from each employee a greater sensitivity to the potential ramifications of the employee's conduct, as well as to the public's perception of such conduct.
- a. An employee who violates any of the Board of County Commissioners' Employee Policies shall be subject to disciplinary action.
 - b. Beyond the minimum required conduct provided by many of the offenses listed in the policy on Disciplinary Offenses, the following are types of behaviors prohibited in the workplace:
 - i) Federal, State, local laws and County policies prohibit the harassment of, or discrimination against, employees on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation or veterans' status. The Board of County Commissioners subscribes to the purpose and requirement of those laws, and employees will strictly comply with them.
 - ii) It is also Board policy that certain types of behavior, which do not rise to the level of illegal harassment or discrimination, can be just as hurtful and counterproductive. Therefore, the Board will not tolerate any conduct or behavior that interferes with the reasonable expectations of Board employees, clients, vendors and members of the general public to a professional workplace that is free from offensive, intolerant or otherwise inappropriate comments, actions or material, regardless of whether they could be found illegal under any law.
 - iii) It is a violation of expected behavior rules to engage in offensive conduct regardless of the "consent" of any employee involved in the conduct, and regardless of whether the conduct is considered to be offensive or not by the object of the conduct. While laws prohibiting harassment define such conduct as "unwanted," the expectations of the Board go beyond that standard, and it will be considered a violation regardless of whether the object of the conduct is a willing participant. In short, all conduct and materials prohibited by these rules are to be kept out of the workplace.
 - iv) Any requests for sexual favors for which an employee may, by virtue of his or her employment, feel pressured to grant, or for which the employee suffers adverse employment consequences for refusing, or which are so persistent or pointed that they create a hostile environment, will constitute a violation of these rules.
 - c. County employees are expected to demonstrate integrity and impartiality, maintain confidential information and avoid the appearance of seeking personal gain or

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advantage in order to keep the special trust and confidence of other government officials or members of the public with whom the employee works. These employees must avoid actions on or off duty that could compromise that essential trust and confidence.

- d. Actions by off duty employees that involve the County in an employee's questionable behavior, such as wearing a County uniform or insignia, using County equipment or vehicles, continuing an interaction begun while on the job, or involving the County in the behavior in a similar way may result in disciplinary action for the employee.
6. Any employee who believes that he or she has been the object of any behavior prohibited by these standards of conduct or County disciplinary policies will immediately report that behavior to the Equal Opportunity Office or the Human Resources Office, or their supervisor. Any employee who is aware of, or suspects, the occurrence of any conduct prohibited by these standards of conduct or by County disciplinary policies, regardless of whether or not he or she is the object of such conduct, including the receipt of e-mail from outside sources, is expected to report it immediately to the Human Resources Office or one of their supervisors. No employee will suffer retaliation for having made such a report or complaint in good faith.
7. The Administrating Official or designee will expeditiously investigate any reports made by an employee of conduct prohibited by these rules, in accordance with the policy on Discipline. If it is determined that a violation of these rules has occurred, supervisors will take prompt, effective and appropriate remedial action, which may include disciplinary action under the Board Employee Policies. Initial complaints or reports will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law.