



# Employee Handbook

Yakima County  
128 N 2nd Street  
Yakima, Washington

**Updated: September 1, 2022**

**The mission of Yakima County government is to provide accessible, responsive and responsible public service through leadership and teamwork committed to understanding and meeting public needs.**

**Our Values:**

*Integrity  
Common Sense  
Innovation  
Accountability*

*This Handbook is intended to give you a general overview of the County and may not deal with all of the policies which govern its operation. Please do not hesitate to ask for more information from either your supervisor or the Human Resources Department.*

# **ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK/DISCLAIMER**

We prepared this handbook to assist you in finding the answers to many questions that you may have regarding your employment with Yakima County. The County's policies described in this handbook serve the purpose of providing a standard method of dealing with personnel-related matters encompassing the terms and conditions of employment with Yakima County. Additionally, they provide a means for the County to carry out its philosophy of developing the capabilities of employees; providing a safe and pleasant work environment; providing appropriate employee compensation, recognition, and benefits; and providing equal employment opportunity for all employees.

We do not expect this handbook to answer all of your questions. Your supervisor, Department Head or Elected Official and Human Resources are also major sources of information, as well as the County internal employee website, YCShare.

Yakima County has the right to manage its workplace and direct its employees. This includes the right to hire, transfer, promote, demote, reclassify, layoff and terminate employment.

**THE LANGUAGE IN THIS HANDBOOK IS NOT INTENDED TO CREATE A CONTRACT BETWEEN YAKIMA COUNTY AND ANY ONE OF ITS EMPLOYEES OR ALL OF ITS EMPLOYEES. IN THE ABSENCE OF A WRITTEN CONTRACT, EMPLOYMENT CAN BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME AT THE WILL OF EITHER THE EMPLOYER OR THE EMPLOYEE. PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT OR EMPLOYMENT FOR ANY TERM IS NOT INTENDED BY STATEMENTS IN THIS HANDBOOK. NO EMPLOYEE, SUPERVISOR OR MANAGER IS AUTHORIZED TO MAKE ANY ORAL ASSURANCE OR PROMISES OF CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT.**

The statements contained in this handbook are simply general statements of County policy and are not intended to limit Yakima County's discretion in any way. As the dynamics of County government are constantly changing and in order to serve this purpose, the policies referred to in this handbook will change from time to time. We will notify you of these changes through appropriate distribution such as posting them on the YCShare, bulletin boards, via email or in Workday. Changes will be effective on the dates determined by the Board of County Commissioners. As such, you may not rely on policies that have been superseded.

This handbook does not establish policy. The contents are presented as a matter of information only, and are NOT conditions of employment. Nothing contained herein is intended to guarantee continuity of benefits or rights. If you are uncertain about a policy or procedure, please check with your management and/or the Human Resources Department.

Certain matters covered by this handbook, such as benefit plan descriptions, are also described in separate County documents. These County documents are always controlling over any statement made in this handbook or by any member of management.

**This Employee handbook supersedes all previous employee handbooks and management memos which may have been issued on these topics.**

**This handbook is subject to the terms of any applicable collective bargaining agreement.** Language in individual bargaining unit contracts takes precedence over language in this handbook where there are conflicts. If you are a member of a bargaining unit, you can also direct questions to your union representatives.

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## Section 1 - Governing Principles of Employment

### 1-1. Welcome Statement

September 1, 2022

Dear Yakima County Employee:

Welcome to employment with Yakima County! We hope your new job will live up to your expectations and your employment with us will be rewarding. We urge you to take pride in your job, set high standards, and to perform your job to the best of your abilities; in doing so serving the citizens of Yakima County while enhancing your own career opportunities.

This Employee handbook has been prepared as a guideline for our employees. It shall not be construed to form a contract between Yakima County and any employees. Rather, it provides an overview of Yakima County's general employment philosophy and a summary of important policies and procedures. Copies of the policies and procedures are available in Human Resources and may also be available on the Yakima County Intranet. Yakima County may revise this handbook or its policies, practices, or procedures from time to time.

I extend to you my best wishes for your work success and satisfaction here at Yakima County. We understand that it is our employees who provide the services that our customers rely upon, and who will grow and enable us to create new opportunities in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Jacqui Lindsay, Human Resources Director

### 1-2. Equal Employment Opportunity

Yakima County is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employer that does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived age, color, creed, sensory, mental or physical disability, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political belief, race religion, sex, sexual orientation, and military status, or any other protected status under federal, state, or local law. Our management team is dedicated to this policy with respect to recruitment, hiring, placement, promotion, transfer, training, compensation, benefits, employee activities and equitable treatment during employment.

The County will endeavor to make a reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of qualified employees with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of our business. A disabled employee may notify a direct supervisor, manager, or department head/elected official of a need for accommodation, but the request must also be submitted in written form to the Yakima County ADA Coordinator within five (5) business days of the original request for accommodation.

The County will endeavor to accommodate religious beliefs of its employees to the extent such accommodation does not pose an undue hardship on the County's operations. If you wish to request such an accommodation, please speak to your management and/or the Human Resources Department. The request should also be submitted in writing to the Human Resources Department.

Employees with questions or concerns about equal employment opportunities in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Human Resources Director. The County will not tolerate any form of retaliation against individuals who raise issues of equal employment opportunity. All employees must cooperate with all investigations.

### **1-3. Non-Harassment**

It is Yakima County's policy to prohibit both intentional and unintentional harassment of any individual by another person on the basis of any protected status including, but not limited to age, color, creed, sensory, mental or physical disability, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, military status, or any other protected status under federal, state, or local law. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate our employees' personal morality, but to ensure that in the workplace, no one harasses another individual.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex or gender discrimination. It is Yakima County's policy to prohibit harassment of any employee by any Supervisor, employee, customer, volunteer or vendor on the basis of sex or gender. While it is not easy to define precisely what types of conduct could constitute sexual harassment, examples of prohibited conduct can be found in the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

If you feel that you have been subjected to conduct which violates this policy, you should immediately report the matter to your Department Head/Elected Official and the Human Resources Department. If you have not received a satisfactory response after reporting any incident of what you perceive to be harassment, please contact the Prosecuting Attorney's Corporate Counsel Division or the Elected Prosecutor.

Every report of perceived harassment will be fully investigated, and corrective action will be taken where appropriate.

The County will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report unwelcome conduct to management or who cooperate in the investigations of such reports in accordance with this policy. All complaints must be made in good faith. All employees must cooperate with all investigations. False reporting or being dishonest during an investigation may lead to disciplinary actions up to and including discharge.

The County's Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy is attached to this handbook.

### **1-4. Whistleblower Policy**

Yakima County encourages good faith reporting by its employees of improper governmental action taken by County Elected Officials, Department Heads or employees and protects County employees who have reported improper governmental actions in accordance with the County's Whistleblower Policy.

If you become aware of improper governmental actions you should raise the issue first with your supervisor. If you reasonably believe the improper governmental action involves your supervisor or if you don't feel comfortable raising it with your supervisor for any reason, you may raise the issue directly with the Human Resources Director.

Your supervisor and/or the Human Resources Director will take prompt action to properly investigate the report of improper governmental action.

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If you are not satisfied with the response from your supervisor or the Human Resources Director, you can report concerns about improper governmental action to the Prosecuting Attorney.

At any time, you may report information about improper governmental action directly to the appropriate State or Federal government agency with responsibility for investigating the improper action.

Yakima County Elected Officials, Department Heads, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from taking retaliatory action against an employee because they have reported an improper governmental action in accordance with these policies and procedures.

If you believe that you have been retaliated against for reporting an improper governmental action you should advise your supervisor, the Human Resources Director or the Board of County Commissioners. If no action is taken within a reasonable timeframe by your supervisor, please contact the Human Resources Director or the Board of County Commissioners.

### **1-5. Record Retention**

The County has the responsibility to preserve information relating to litigation, audits and investigations. Unauthorized destruction or modification of information can result in employee discipline and possible civil and criminal sanctions against the County and its employees as destruction of records prior to the expiration of the retention period is a criminal act. In addition to referral to law enforcement agencies for investigations, violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

As an employee you have an obligation to contact the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Corporate Counsel Division, to inform them of a potential or actual litigation, external audit, investigation or similar proceeding involving the County that may have an impact on record retention protocols.

### **1-6. Workplace Violence**

Yakima County is strongly committed to providing a safe workplace at all times. The County's policy is to minimize the risk of personal injury to employees and damage to County and personal property. It is important for us to be aware of any potential danger to our employees.

Threats, threatening language or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any County employee will not be tolerated. A threat includes any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, any attempt at intimidating or instilling fear in others, menacing gestures, flashing of weapons, stalking or any other hostile, aggressive, injurious or destructive action undertaken for the purpose of domination or intimidation.

If there is an issue of violence, employees should report the issue to law enforcement and/or call 911 or the Department of Security.

All potentially dangerous situations, including threats by co-workers or third-party vendors or outside parties, must be reported immediately to any member of management with whom you feel comfortable or you can call 911 or the Department of Security. All threats will be promptly investigated. All employees must cooperate with all investigations. No employee will be subjected to retaliation, intimidation or disciplinary action as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this policy.

## 1-7. Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace

To help ensure a safe, healthy, and productive work environment for our employees and others and to ensure efficient operations, the County has adopted a policy of maintaining a workplace free of drugs and alcohol.

The unlawful or unauthorized use, abuse, solicitation, theft, possession, transfer, purchase, sale or distribution of controlled substances, drug paraphernalia or alcohol by an individual anywhere on County premises or in any County owned equipment, while conducting County business (whether or not on County premises) or while representing the County, is strictly prohibited. Employees and other individuals who work for the County also are prohibited from reporting to work or working while they are using alcohol or any controlled substances, which may impact an employee's ability to safely perform his or her job or otherwise pose safety concerns. Employees taking prescribed medication with warning labels detailing possible side effects that may affect their ability to do their job should immediately notify their supervisor.

Yakima County receives federal funding and must continue to maintain a drug-free workplace. Federal law considers marijuana a banned substance, and as such, all sections of this policy are applicable to marijuana possession and use. Additionally, employees who are required to have a commercial driver's licenses (CDL) must comply with drug testing regulations under federal law. Yakima County reserves the right to drug-test and discipline employees with a CDL, up to and including termination, if they are found with any detectable amount of THC in their system.

Yakima County is required to conduct pre-employment queries for drug and alcohol related violations in the Federal Clearinghouse for current or prospective employees prior to hiring them into any position requiring a CDL, and to conduct annual queries for all employees currently employed in positions requiring CDLs. If consent is not obtained from each driver prior to running a query on their records, they will be removed from safety sensitive functions until consent is received and possible termination if refusal is consistent past a reasonable period of time.

If an employee is cited, arrested, or convicted for an offense occurring within or outside the workplace where the consequences of such action pertain to the qualifications of his/her position with the County, the employee must notify their supervisor or department head within five (5) calendar days of the event. Such employees will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

Yakima County or its third-party administrator will report information about drug testing for CDL drivers to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Clearinghouse.

The County maintains a policy of non-discrimination and will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations to assist individuals recovering from substance and alcohol dependencies, and those who have a medical history which reflects treatment for substance abuse conditions. However, employees may not rely on a request for accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act/Washington Law Against Discrimination to avoid discipline for violating the alcohol and drug policy by misusing substances while on duty or while working.

Substance abuse counseling is available through the Employee Assistance Program (See Section 3-10).

## **1-8. Smoke-Tobacco-Free Workplace**

Yakima County, in an effort to protect the health and welfare of all County employees, has banned smoking, including the use of electronic smoking devices and hookahs, within County buildings, facilities, vehicles and within twenty-five (25) feet of building entrances.

Facilities and buildings include, without limitations, common work areas, conference and meeting rooms, private offices, elevators, hallways, employee lounges, stairs, restrooms, shop areas, construction sites, temporary offices such as trailers, and any off-site area utilized for the purpose of conducting a function of County business.

A vehicle is defined as any County-owned car, truck, van, bus, other motorized vehicle, or heavy equipment operated by an employee.

Smoking shall also be prohibited in any outdoor County worksite.

The Smoke-Tobacco-Free Workplace Policy applies to employees, clients, volunteers, contractors, and visitors.

## **1-9. Federal Contractors: Pay Transparency**

Yakima County will not discipline or in any other manner discriminate against employees or applicants because they have inquired about, discussed, or disclosed their own pay or the pay of another employee or applicant. However, employees who have access to the compensation information of other employees or applicants as a part of their essential job functions may not disclose the pay of other employees or applicants to individuals who do not otherwise have access to compensation information, unless the disclosure is: (a) in response to a formal complaint or charge; (b) in furtherance of an investigation, proceeding, hearing or action, including an investigation conducted by the employer; or (c) consistent with Yakima County's legal duty to furnish information (requests under the Public Records Act are one such example).

## **1-10. Job Accommodation**

Yakima County will attempt job accommodations as required by law.

The County will not take adverse action against an employee who requests, declines, or uses an accommodation. Further, the County will not deny employment opportunities to an otherwise qualified employee or prospective employee if such denial is based on the County's need to reasonably accommodate an employee's or prospective employee's condition related to pregnancy, childbirth or any other medical condition. Additionally, the County will not require an employee to take leave if another reasonable accommodation can be provided for the employee's health condition.

If employees have any questions about or would like to request a reasonable accommodation pursuant to this policy, they should contact the County's ADA Coordinator.

## Section 2 - Operational Policies

### 2-1. Your Paychecks

Yakima County employees are paid on a semi-monthly basis.

Employees receive their regular payroll checks on the 25th day of the month for salary or wages earned from the 1st through the 15th of the month provided the employee and/or supervisor has submitted the time in Workday in accordance with the Auditor's Office published schedule. Hours not submitted timely will be paid in the next pay cycle.

Employees receive their regular payroll checks on the 10th day of the month for salary or wages earned from the 16th through the end of the previous month provided the employee and/or supervisor has submitted the time in Workday in accordance with the Auditor's Office published schedule. Hours not submitted timely will be paid in the next pay cycle.

Should payday fall on a weekend or a County recognized holiday, payroll checks will be issued on the preceding work day.

Payslips for employees on direct deposit will be available in Workday. For employees not on direct deposit, your payroll check will be given only to you, unless you request that it be mailed, or authorize in writing another person to accept your paycheck for you.

Your payslip itemizes deductions made from your gross earnings. By law, the County is required to make deductions for Social Security, Medicare, federal income tax and any other appropriate taxes. These required deductions also may include retirement contributions and any court-ordered garnishments. Your payslip will differentiate between regular pay received and overtime pay received. In addition, leave accruals, use and balances will be reported. Voluntary deductions from your pay for items such as health insurance, union dues, parking fees, charitable contributions, deferred compensation, etc., may only be made or changed with your written authorization or via a Workday business process.

It is your responsibility to review your payslip for accuracy and report any discrepancies immediately to your department the Payroll Clerk so the County can resolve the matter quickly and amicably.

### 2-2. Payment Elections (Direct Deposit)

Yakima County encourages employees to use payment elections. Payment Elections (direct deposit) ensure the safety and security of your employee paycheck and the convenience of immediate access to funds without having to deposit or cash the paycheck.

Participation in this program allows Yakima County to automatically deposit your paycheck directly into your checking or savings account the morning of each pay day. Most financial institutions will accept direct deposit paychecks. It is your responsibility to initiate payment election changes in Workday and provide the required documentation to Human Resources if, and when, a financial institution changes ownership or if account and/or routing numbers change.

Your semi-monthly payslips are available in Workday on payday.

## **2-3. Your Employment Records**

Important events in your employment history with the County will be recorded and kept in your personnel file. Regular performance reviews, data change forms, commendations, certifications and corrective action warnings, and employee benefit beneficiaries are examples of records maintained.

Your personnel file is available for review in the Human Resources Department. Contact Human Resources three (3) days in advance of your request so your records can be made available. Costs may be incurred when copies are requested.

You are responsible for updating your personal data in Workday for changes in address, telephone number, and/or family status (births, marriage, death, divorce, legal separation, etc.) as income tax status and group insurance may be affected by these changes.

## **2-4. Employment Verification**

Verification of employment requests are provided through Vault Verify. Vault Verify will provide general public information concerning the employee such as date of hire, date of termination, and positions held. Non-public information will only be released upon written authorization from the employee.

Please refer all requests for verification of employment to Vault Verify at [www.vaultverify.com](http://www.vaultverify.com), company code 40861.

## **2-5. Working Hours and Schedule**

The Board of County Commissioners and the Elected Official or Department Head shall exercise their discretion in determining the number of hours to be worked by employees in each work day. The normal County seven (7) day work period is 12:00 a.m. Sunday through 11:59 p.m. the following Saturday. The normal work schedule is typically 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. However, regular hours may vary in accordance with the different work requirements of certain departments and Collective Bargaining Agreements.

The options for consecutive hours of work include but are not limited to: seven and one-half (7.5) consecutive hours of work, eight (8) consecutive hours of work, ten (10) consecutive hours of work, and/or twelve (12) consecutive hours of work within a twenty-four (24) hour period.

**Rest Breaks and Meal Periods:** Employees assigned to work seven and one-half (7.5), eight (8) or ten (10) hour shifts, shall be allowed two fifteen (15) minute breaks and a minimum of one thirty (30) minute meal period. Employees assigned to work twelve (12) hour shifts shall be allowed two fifteen (15) minute rest breaks and a minimum of two thirty (30) minute meal periods per shift. The rest periods shall normally be scheduled at the middle of each one-half shift. Rest breaks and meal periods are mandatory and may not be waived. Rest breaks shall not be used to extend the meal period or adjust the normal daily work schedule to arrive late or leave early.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they take rest breaks and designated meal periods. Employees, who are unable to take rest breaks or designated meal periods due to workload, must notify their supervisor as

soon as possible, but no later than the end of the work shift.

## **2-6. Lactation Breaks**

Yakima County will provide reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for up to one year after the child's birth. The break time, if possible, must run concurrently with rest and meal periods already provided to the employee. If the break time cannot run concurrently with rest and meal periods already provided to the employee, the break time will be unpaid, subject to applicable law.

The County will provide employees with the use of a room or location for the employee to express milk in private. Please contact Human Resources for more information about different locations for this purpose in County buildings.

Employees will not be discriminated against or retaliated against for exercising their rights under this policy.

Please advise management if you need break time and an area for this purpose. Please consult the Human Resources Department if you have questions regarding this policy.

## **2-7. Overtime**

Hours worked and certain paid time off hours are counted as "time worked" for the purpose of determining whether overtime or FLSA compensatory time is earned. Hours taken under the Washington State Paid Sick Leave (WPSL) are not counted as "time worked" for overtime purposes.

All time worked in excess of the regularly scheduled shift must be authorized in advance by the supervisor. All time worked by non-exempt employees in excess of forty (40) hours per week will be compensated by either cash payment at one and one-half (1 ½) the employee's hourly rate of pay or by compensatory time off at the rate of one and one-half (1 ½) times the amount of time worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week.

**Note:** Employees who normally work less than forty (40) hours per week will be compensated at straight time pay or compensatory time off for hours over their normal work schedule until they exceed forty (40) hours.

If the Department Head/Elected Official allows an employee to earn Comp Time in lieu of overtime pay, the employee may elect either payment at the overtime rate on their next regular paycheck or compensatory time to be added to their Comp Time Bank for use at a later date. Employees may be asked to designate their preference in writing for overtime or compensatory time.

An employee's Comp Time Bank may not exceed a maximum of 60 hours.

Compensatory time, once banked, may be used for time off from regularly scheduled work with prior approval. At the end of December of each year, any unused compensatory time accumulated in the Comp Time Bank is typically paid to the employee in combination with the December wages. Compensatory time may not be carried forward into the next calendar year unless this is specifically included in the applicable bargaining unit agreement or with Department Head's/Elected Official's approval as provided in the Compensatory Time Policy.

## 2-8. Safe Harbor Policy for Exempt Employees

Exempt employees receive a salary which is intended to provide compensation for all hours worked for the County during the pay period. This salary is established at the time of hire or appointment. While it may be subject to review and modification from time to time, the salary will be a predetermined amount that will not be subject to deductions for variations in the quantity or quality of the work performed.

Under federal and state law, an exempt employee's salary is subject to certain deductions. For example, unless state law requires otherwise, salary can be reduced for the following reasons:

- Full-day absences for personal reasons, sickness or disability.
- Full-day disciplinary suspensions for major safety violations.
- Family and Medical Leave absences (either full- or partial-day absences).
- The first or last week of employment if only a partial week is worked.
- Any full work week in which no work is performed.

***Note: Deductions will also be made to accrued time off leave banks for full- or partial-day absences.***

Salary may also be reduced for certain types of deductions such as state, federal or local taxes; social security; legally mandated deductions or other voluntary deductions.

In any work week in which work is performed, salary will not be reduced for any of the following reasons:

- Partial day absences not covered by FMLA for personal reasons, sickness or disability.
- Absence on a day because the employer has decided to close a facility on a scheduled work day.
- Absences for jury duty, attendance as a witness, or military leave in any week in which any work is performed.
- Any other deductions prohibited by state or federal law.

If you believe you have been subject to any improper deductions, you should immediately report the matter to your supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable, you should immediately contact the Human Resources Department.

## 2-9. Timekeeping Procedures

Non-exempt employees must record their actual time worked on a daily basis for payroll and benefit purposes in Workday or on forms determined by management.

Non-exempt employees may not start work until their scheduled starting time.

All employees are required to submit requests for absences from work in Workday.

It is your responsibility to sign your time/attendance record to certify the accuracy of all time/attendance recorded. Any errors in your time record should be reported immediately to your Supervisor and reviewed for adjustments for consideration in a future pay period.

Unauthorized altering, falsifying, or tampering with time/attendance records is prohibited and subjects the employee to discipline, up to and including discharge.

## **2-10. Out-of-Town Travel Time for Non-Exempt Employees**

*Per Washington State Department of Labor & Industries Employment Standards Administrative Policy Number ES.C.2 - Hours worked.*

In Washington, all travel time related to work is compensable, regardless of the number of hours or when the trip takes place. It also includes any time necessary to get to an airport, train station, or other transit center necessary to complete the out-of -town travel.

## **2-11. Business Expense Reimbursement**

Yakima County reimburses employees for travel related expenses paid by the employee in conjunction with official County business when properly documented and authorized. The responsible Elected Official and/or Department Head may limit and/or refuse to authorize the reimbursement of expenses which they determine to be non-compliant with the Yakima County Business Expense Reimbursement Policy (Travel Policy). Employees are expected to exercise restraint and good judgment when incurring expenses.

Out-of-area travel must be authorized in advance by your Elected Official, Department Head or Supervisor. You should contact your Elected Official, Department Head, or Supervisor in advance if you have any questions about whether an expense will be reimbursed.

Refer to the Yakima County Business Expense Reimbursement Policy (Travel Policy) for more information. The policy is available on the County's YCShare > Auditor.

## **2-12. Probationary/Trial Period**

During the probationary/trial period, employees receive training, assistance, and supervision to allow them to become familiar and proficient with their duties and responsibilities. Supervisors will observe the employee's ability and adaptability to the particular position.

Newly hired employees, other than Extra Help or At-Will employees, are required to serve a probationary period of not less than six consecutive months. During the probationary period, either the employer or the employee may terminate the employment relationship without cause and without recourse.

Employees who transfer to other departments, receive promotions within their own department, or change classifications through a competitive process may be required to serve a trial period in the new position. During the trial period, the Employer or employee may determine the employee is not capable of performing the work in the new position. The employee may request to return to their former position, if available. The request will be subject to approval by the Department Head/Elected Official who has budgetary authority over the former position.

## 2-13. Employee Classifications

The following terms are used to describe Yakima County employment status:

**Regular Full-time:** Employees scheduled to work thirty-seven and one-half hours or more per week who have successfully completed a probationary period in a regular budgeted position and who are eligible for benefits.

**Regular Part-time:** Employees scheduled to work less than thirty-seven and one-half hours per week who have successfully completed a probationary period in a budgeted position. Pro-rated benefits are provided for regular part time employees who work at least 20 hours per week. Regular part-time employees who work less than 20 hours per week receive pro-rated holiday pay benefits only.

**Extra Help:** Employees scheduled to work on a temporary, seasonal/intermittent or on-call basis and who are not eligible for benefits. Some Extra Help employees are placed in the retirement system according to the Washington State Department of Retirement System rules. Extra Help employees are considered At-Will employees.

**Acting/Interim Appointment:** A temporary appointment of an employee to a supervisory or management position.

**Emergency Appointment:** An appointment to a classified position, not to exceed thirty days, made in an emergency to prevent disruption of County services.

**Probationary:** A trial period of six months to one year of employment during which an employee is required to demonstrate fitness for continued employment.

**At-Will:** Employees who serve at the will of the hiring authority and may be terminated with or without cause. At-Will Employees are not required to serve nor are they required to successfully complete a probationary period.

In addition to the above definitions, employees are categorized as either **"exempt"** or **"non-exempt"** for purposes of federal and state wage and hour laws. Employees classified as exempt do not receive overtime pay; they generally receive the same salary regardless of hours worked.

You will be informed of your employment status upon hire and informed of any subsequent changes to your employment status.

## 2-14. Position Reclassifications

Each non-elected position is allocated to a job classification with a designated job title, set of assigned duties, and level of responsibility.

A reclassification request is appropriate when the employee or supervisor believes that the duties essential to the position which the employee currently performs are at a level other than those described in the position description questionnaire for the job classification to which the position is allocated. A request to reclassify a position may be submitted to the Human Resources Department by the employee through the Department Head or Elected Official or as outlined in the employee's bargaining unit agreement.

The Department Head/Elected Official will submit to the Human Resources Department a written request for

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reclassification and an original Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) signed by the Department Head and employee (if applicable). In no case will a classification review begin without the completion of a PDQ.

Human Resources will typically conduct a position analysis that consists of review of the revised PDQ, personal interview (desk audit) with incumbent/Department Head/Elected Official or designee and application of the Decision Band Methodology. A classification recommendation shall be given to the Personnel Committee, who shall make a classification determination and forward a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners.

The Department Head/Elected Official may appeal the determination of the Personnel Committee and submit a request for reconsideration. The Board of County Commissioners makes the final decision.

Requests for reclassification are limited to once per 12 month period.

### **2-15. Job Postings**

Generally, notices of vacancies are posted a minimum of seven (7) days on the Human Resources Department bulletin board, within the department, on the bulletin board adjacent to the 2nd Street entrance of the Courthouse and at offsite County work locations. Notices are also mailed to various organizations and posted on the Yakima County Internet/YCShare. Yakima County reserves the right to post positions internally, externally or both. Exceptions to posting can only be granted by the Board of County Commissioners or as required by Federal law.

Yakima County ensures equal employment opportunities regardless of a person's age, color, creed, sensory, mental or physical disability, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and military status, or any other protected status under federal, state, or local law. Disabled applicants may request accommodation to participate in the job application and/or selection process for employment.

For more specific information about job postings, please contact the Human Resources Department. If you find a position of interest on the job posting website and meet the eligibility requirements, an application must be completed in order to be considered for the position.

### **2-16. Promotions/Transfers**

For most positions, an employee will receive a minimum 5% salary increase when promoted. An employee who accepts a transfer to a position within the same pay range will not receive a salary adjustment.

### **2-17. Discipline**

The disciplinary actions which the Department Head/Elected Official may take against an employee include but are not limited to the measures listed below. (Note that the specific procedures for bargaining unit employees vary slightly depending upon bargaining agreements. Consult the union contract for specifics.)

- Counseling
- Oral reprimand
- Written reprimand

- Suspension from work without pay
- Demotion
- Discharge or termination

Normally, disciplinary action will be administered in progressive fashion. However, the disciplinary action administered depends upon the severity of the employee's conduct as determined by the Department Head or Elected Official and disciplinary actions may be implemented without regard to the sequence indicated above.

The Department Head/Elected Official may suspend, demote, discharge or terminate an employee for cause. The specified charges shall be made available to the employee in writing. In general, disciplinary meetings will be held prior to disciplinary action. Probationary and At-Will employees may be discharged with or without cause.

## 2-18. Grievances

A grievance is defined as a complaint regarding working conditions or application, interpretation or violation of rules and regulations of the County or the department/office for which the employee works.

Employees having a problem regarding their employment should first discuss the problem with the immediate supervisor. If the problem is not settled to the employee's satisfaction, the employee has the right to present a grievance. Grievance forms are available in the Human Resources Department or, in the case of an employee covered by a collective bargaining agreement, from a union representative.

It is the policy of Yakima County to treat all employees in a fair and equitable manner. Each employee of the County will be provided an opportunity to resolve matters which the employee believes are unjust. Employees have the right to present their grievances without fear of reprisal.

Employees in bargaining unit positions must adhere to the Grievance Procedures under their appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

**Note:** Discrimination complaints may be filed at any time, with or without a grievance form, directly with the Human Resources Department.

## 2-19. Resignation

Any employee wishing to leave County employment in good standing must notify his/her Supervisor by submitting a written letter of resignation stating the resignation date or initiating the resignation in Workday and attaching a resignation letter. In order to leave the County in good standing and receive pay for accrued leave, a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice is normally required. Substituting paid leave for a portion of the required two weeks is not allowed unless approved by the Department Head. Employees who separate from County service during their first six months of employment do not receive payment for any accrued leave.

All County property including, but not limited to, keys, security cards, laptop computers, work files, uniforms, etc. must be returned prior to separation. Employees also must return all of Yakima County's Confidential Information prior to separation.

## **2-20. Reduction in Force**

The Elected Official or Department Head is the sole determiner of when layoffs are necessary. Layoffs are non-disciplinary and are ordinarily for lack of work and/or lack of funds but are not limited to these reasons. A regular employee who has been laid off may be reinstated to a position of the same class in the department or office within one year of the effective date of separation. The Department Head/Elected Official or Human Resources will send a certified letter to the employee advising of the recall. An employee interested in returning to work must respond either in writing or by personal notification within time limits specified in the recall letter.

Regular full-time or regular part-time employees recalled to employment after a reduction-in-force will have previous seniority, sick leave credits and leave accrual rates restored; however, no credit will accrue during the period in which the employee was on layoff status. Recalled regular full-time and regular part-time employees are not required to serve a new probationary period. Employees laid off during their probationary period will be required to complete their probationary period upon recall.

## **2-21. Exit Interview**

A regular employee who leaves employment with Yakima County, will be asked to schedule an exit interview with the Human Resources Department on or before the last day of work. The purpose of the exit interview is to discuss the continuation of benefits, to make arrangements for the final pay and to solicit feedback to help improve County employment practices.

## **2-22. Remote Work/Telecommuting**

Yakima County may allow employees to work remotely if their job duties are determined to be eligible for remote work and the employee's work performance remains productive while working remotely. There are many departments within Yakima County where remote work is not feasible given the duties of the job. Eligibility will be decided on a case-by-case basis by Elected Official or Department Head. Employees also may be required to work remotely during periods of public health emergencies if government orders and mandates recommend such work and remote work is available.

This policy provides general information regarding remote work/telecommuting. Employees who are approved to work remotely should consult their Elected Official or Department Head for specific details of their remote work/telecommuting arrangement, such as expected work hours, equipment provided, and other important information, including the length of the remote working assignment.

Any remote work/telecommuting arrangement may be discontinued by the Elected Official or Department Head at any time and for any reason.

### **Hours of Work**

Exempt and nonexempt employees will work their standard scheduled hours from home. Scheduled hours of work will be set by the employees' manager or supervisor. Employees are required to maintain regular contact with their supervisors and managers.

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Nonexempt employees must accurately record all hours worked pursuant to the County's timekeeping system and take rest and meal breaks as if in the County's workplace and as required by law. Nonexempt employees may not work beyond scheduled working hours without prior, written authorization from their manager or supervisor.

### **Location**

Employees are responsible for maintaining their work area in a safe, secure, and nonhazardous condition at all times. Employees will maintain security devices and procedures necessary to prevent use by unauthorized persons. This includes preventing the connection of any County-furnished computer system, network, or database to any connections not provided or authorized by the County.

### **Duties**

Employees are expected to follow all existing County policies and procedures. The duties, obligations, responsibilities, and conditions of employment with the County remain unchanged. Employees must stay engaged with work throughout the workday and be fully available during their regularly scheduled hours. If employees do not successfully perform their job duties remotely, this arrangement will be revoked. Employees are expected to follow existing County policies with respect to scheduled and unscheduled time off, including the obligation to speak with their manager or supervisor before the scheduled start time in the event of an unscheduled absence, tardy, or early departure.

### **Accidents and Injuries**

Employees must notify their supervisor or manager immediately of any injury that occurs while performing their duties during their scheduled work hours. Employees must complete all necessary and/or requested documents regarding the reported injury.

### **Equipment**

The County provides equipment for remote/telecommuting use. Employees agree to provide a secure location for County-owned equipment and will not use, or allow others to use, such equipment for purposes other than County business. Employees have no expectation of ownership of such equipment.

### **Return of County Property**

All equipment, records, and materials provided by the County will remain County property. Employees agree to return County equipment, records, and materials upon request. All County equipment will be returned by employees for inspection, repair, or replacement as needed or requested or immediately upon termination of the remote work/telecommuting arrangement. All equipment must be returned within five (5) business days of the termination of the remote work/telecommuting arrangement. Should the employee fail to return equipment, the Elected Official or Department Head will be responsible for ensuring the return of County equipment, records, and materials.

Employees hereby release the County from any damage or liability incurred in the installing or removal of the equipment provided by the County.

### **Confidentiality**

Employees agree that they are subject to the County's policies prohibiting the nonbusiness use or dissemination of the County's confidential business information. Employees will take all appropriate steps to safeguard the County's confidential business information, including segregating it from personal papers and documents, not

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allowing nonemployees to access such information, and keeping such information in secured areas when not in use. Employees will maintain confidential information, including, but not limited to, information regarding the County's products or services, processing, client lists, client e-mail addresses and mailing addresses, client data, orders, memoranda, notes, records, technical data, sketches, designs, plans, drawings, research and development data, experimental work, proposals, new product and/or service developments, project reports, sources of supply and material, operating and cost data, and financial information etc.

### **Contact**

If employees have any questions concerning this section of the Employee Handbook, they should contact the Human Resources Department.

## Section 3 - Benefits

### 3-1. Benefits Overview/Disclaimer

In addition to good working conditions and competitive pay, Yakima County provides a combination of supplemental benefits to all eligible employees. In keeping with this goal, each benefit program has been carefully selected or designed. These benefits include paid leave, health, disability and life insurance, financial retirement programs, and other voluntary benefits. Yakima County is constantly studying and evaluating our benefits programs and policies to better meet your present and future requirements. These policies have been developed over the years and continue to be refined to keep up with changing times and needs. The County reserves the right to modify, amend or discontinue these benefits at any time and for any reason.

The next few pages contain a brief outline of the benefits programs Yakima County provides for you and your family. The information presented here is intended to merely highlight certain aspects of the plans for your general information.

The details of the plans are spelled out in the official plan documents, which are available for review upon request from the Human Resources Department. Additionally, you can access summary benefits coverages (SPCs), which include eligibility and benefits provisions, on the YCShare or on each health plan's website. The terms of the official plan documents shall govern or take precedence over any SPDs or this handbook.

If you have any questions regarding your benefits, please contact the Human Resources Department.

### 3-2. Insurance Programs

The County provides a comprehensive package of insurance benefits for employees in regular, budgeted positions who work at least twenty (20) hours per week or are deemed eligible by the Affordable Care Act. There are a number of medical plans to consider. Plans available to employees may vary based on collective bargaining agreements. The County pays a portion of the cost of a comprehensive medical, dental, vision, basic long-term disability and basic life insurance program for employees and covered dependents. Benefits effective dates can vary. Please check with Human Resources for more information.

Open enrollment periods are held once per year in the Fall, during which employees may change benefit plans, and add or delete eligible dependents. Outside the open enrollment period, changes may only be made due to qualifying events as outlined in the plan documents or as designated by the health plan.

Dental coverage, basic long-term disability, and basic term life insurance may be available to employees and dependents who are eligible for medical insurance but choose to waive coverage.

Upon becoming eligible to participate in these plans, you will receive certificates of coverage (COCs) describing the benefits in greater detail. Please refer to the COCs for detailed plan information. Contact Human Resources or the benefit provider if you have any further questions.

### **3-3. Pre-Tax Medical Premium Plan**

As provided under Section 125 of the IRS guidelines, Yakima County maintains a Pre-Tax Medical Premium Plan. This plan allows you to pay your share of insurance premiums through payroll deduction before federal income and Social Security/Medicare (FICA) taxes are withheld. This results in lower taxes and greater spendable pay.

### **3-4. Flexible Spending Accounts**

As provided under Section 125 of the IRS guidelines, Yakima County maintains a Flexible Spending Account Plan. The Flexible Spending Program consists of two accounts: a Health Care Account and a Dependent Care Account. An employee may elect to enroll into either or both accounts. The dollars you contribute to these accounts reimburse you for eligible healthcare expenses not normally covered by health insurance and/or dependent childcare expenses. Contributions are pre-tax, with a minimum and maximum contribution for health care and childcare expenses per year. Funds remaining at the end of the plan year are forfeited. The current maximum contribution amount is available on YCShare.

Outside the open enrollment period, changes may only be made due to qualifying events as outlined in the plan documents.

### **3-5. Health Savings Account (HSA)**

Yakima County offers a Health Savings Account program in order for you to make pre-tax contributions from your paycheck to go towards the payment of out-of-pocket health care expenses. To qualify, you must:

- be enrolled in a Qualified High Deductible Health Plan;
- have no other health insurance coverage ("double coverage"), including any dependents enrolled on your plan;
- have no other pre-tax health care account in which contributions are being made (Exception: Health Reimbursement Account (HRA VEBA) or Flexible Spending Account (FSA) reimbursements are allowed for dental and vision expenses only); and
- open an account at a financial institution designated by Yakima County.

In addition to your semi-monthly pre-taxed contribution, Yakima County or your health plan may make contributions to your account as well. All contributions and investment earnings roll over annually and are owned by you and go with you should you leave employment. Account access and contributions are subject to IRS regulations. Your account may be subject to banking fees.

### 3-6. Voluntary Benefits

Additional voluntary benefits are available, at the employee's expense, for eligible employees who wish to enroll. Refer to the vChoice brochure for more information regarding:

- Accidental Death & Dismemberment
- Injury/Accident Medical Insurance
- Critical Illness for employees and dependents
- Short Term Disability Insurance
- Long Term Disability Insurance
- Supplemental Term Life Insurance for employees and dependents
- Vision Hardware and Exam Insurance for employees and dependents
- Pet Insurance (Direct Billing)

Premiums for voluntary insurance benefits are paid by the employee through payroll deduction or direct billing.

### 3-7. Workers' Compensation

As an employee, you are covered for work-related injuries and illnesses under Yakima County's self-insured program. If you experience a work-related illness, injury or hazardous exposure, immediately notify your Supervisor and the Human Resources Department and complete an Incident/Accident Form. You will also need to complete an Accident Report (SIF-2) form if you require medical services. Your Supervisor will provide you with the form.

**Leave of Absence Due to Work Injury:** Every effort will be made to return the employee back to work performing his/her regular duties after the employee has been injured. At times, work may not be available or the employee's work restrictions are such that work cannot be accommodated or the employee is not medically authorized to return to work for a specified time. Should this occur, the employee may request to use his/her accrued but unused leave to continue receiving a full paycheck from the County and remain eligible to receive time-loss payments.

Please contact your Supervisor or the Human Resources Department for more information about Yakima County's workers' compensation program or if you have questions about a claim for benefits.

### 3-8. Retirement Programs

**Retirement Benefit:** All County employees meeting eligibility requirements must become members of one of the following Washington State Department of Retirement Systems:

- Public Employees Retirement System (PERS)
- Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters (LEOFF)
- Public Safety Employee Retirement System (PSERS)

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The retirement systems are financed jointly by employees and the employer.

PERS employees hired before October 1, 1977, are enrolled in the PERS Plan I. Employees hired on or after October 1, 1977, are enrolled in the PERS Plan II. Employees hired after September 1, 2002 will have the option of joining PERS Plan II or PERS Plan III.

The Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters Plans (LEOFF) cover fully commissioned Sheriff's Department officers. Those hired before October 1, 1977, are enrolled in LEOFF Plan I. Those hired on or after October 1, 1977 are enrolled in LEOFF Plan II.

Employees hired on or after July 1, 2006 into a Public Safety Employee Retirement System (PSERS) position, must enroll in PSERS.

If you plan to retire or want information about retirement, please contact the Human Resources Department at least three to six months before your anticipated retirement date. This will allow time for you to contact the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) for a calculation of your estimated retirement benefits and your retirement application can be processed by DRS in advance.

**Deferred Compensation:** Yakima County offers employees an opportunity to participate in a supplemental retirement program by making contributions from their regular semi-monthly pay check to a Deferred Compensation Plan. Yakima County offers three (3) deferred compensation plans (Empower, Nationwide and WA State DCP). Tax deferred contributions may not exceed the maximum limit set each year by the Internal Revenue Service. The annual maximum contribution limit is set annually by the IRS. Employees 50 and older may make additional contributions. Minimum contributions vary based on each plan. Please check with Human Resources for the current minimum contribution and maximum limit amounts. Enrollment and changes to the plan may be made on a semi-monthly basis.

Please contact Human Resources if you have questions regarding the Retirement Systems or Deferred Compensation Program.

### 3-9. Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is an employee benefit that provides private and confidential counseling assistance at no cost to the employee and qualified dependents for a specified number of visits. These services are designed to help employees and their families resolve problems that interfere with their well-being or impair the employee's job performance. For contact information, refer to YCShare or contact Human Resources.

## Section 4 - Leaves of Absence

### 4-1. Absences

The County recognizes that employees must establish a balance between their work lives, their personal lives and their obligations as citizens and/or residents of the United States, the State of Washington and Yakima County. In balancing their obligations, employees may, from time to time, need approved leaves of absence from work.

In recognition of employee needs and obligations, Yakima County provides reasonable opportunity for employees to obtain approval for both paid and unpaid leaves of absence from work.

**Administration:** Leave is earned by full-time and part-time employees budgeted at 50% or greater (excluding Extra Help employees and Elected Officials) according to the length of service and regularly scheduled work week. One working day is equivalent to seven and one-half (7 1/2) hours for employees working a total of thirty-seven and one-half (37 1/2) hours per week and eight (8) hours for employees working a total of forty (40) hours per week.

Part-time employees (20 hours per week minimum) earn leave on a pro-rated basis.

Leave is accrued at the end of each pay period.

Employees on an unpaid leave of absence and whose leave is covered under FMLA or Workers Compensation, will continue to accrue leave and neither their Continuous Service Date (accrual date) nor time off plan accruals will be adjusted. Employees on an unpaid leave of absence and not on leave covered by FMLA or Workers Compensation, will not accrue leave and their accrual date will be adjusted if the employee is on leave without pay status and the leave without pay status exceeds fifty percent (50%) of their regularly scheduled hours for the pay period.

**Records:** The Department Head/Elected Official is responsible for keeping permanent records for all leave for each employee.

**Paid Time Off (PTO):** PTO leave is not available to the employee for use until after having served thirty (30) consecutive days of employment. All hours thereafter are available for use in the pay period following the pay period in which they are accrued. See HR 012 Leave of Absence Policy for more information.

**Annual Leave:** Annual Leave is a benefit offered for specific bargaining units. Please refer to your collective bargaining agreement for rules regarding accrual and use of this leave.

**Leave Sharing Program for Catastrophic Illness or Injury:** A leave contribution program has been established to permit employees to transfer a specified amount of leave to another employee of Yakima County. See HR 015 Catastrophic Leave Policy for more information.

#### **Sick Leave:**

**Grandfathered Sick Leave Plan:** This bank is designated for employees with a sick leave balance as of December 31, 2011. These employees may choose to use sick leave from the until such time as the sick leave bank balance is exhausted. This plan is not eligible for accruals. See HR 012 Leave of Absence policy for

more information.

**Sick Leave:** This bank is a benefit offered for specific bargaining units. Please refer to your collective bargaining agreement for rules regarding accrual and use of this leave.

**Bereavement Leave:** Employees may use up to five (5) days of sick leave or other paid time off for bereavement when there is a death of the following immediate family members (spouse, state registered domestic partner, child, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, brother or sister. Under County sick leave policy "child" means a biological, adopted, foster or stepchild or legal ward under eighteen (18), or a child older than eighteen (18) and incapable of self-care and "parent" means a biological parent or someone who stood in place of a parent ("in loco parentis") to the employee when the employee was a child. See HR 012 Leave of Absence policy for more information.

**Extended Sick Leave (ESL):** Extended sick leave is a benefit provided to eligible employees in the event of a serious extensive injury or illness for the employee or certain qualifying family members. To be eligible for ESL an employee must meet the following conditions:

1. have an extended illness or injury lasting two (2) consecutive weeks of a normal work schedule or have a qualified family member with an extended illness or injury lasting two (2) consecutive weeks of a normal work schedule (cannot be used for intermittent absences); and
2. have served thirty (30) consecutive days of employment; and
3. have used one (1) standard work week of PTO, SL, WPSL, CT, other paid time off or LWOP

See HR 012 Leave of Absence policy for more information.

**Holidays:** Employees in regular budgeted positions receive compensation for the following legal holidays:

**Holiday (Date Usually Observed):**

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Martin Luther King Day (Third Monday in January)
- Presidents Day (Third Monday in February)
- Memorial Day (Last Monday in May)
- Juneteenth (June 19)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (First Monday in September)
- Veteran's Day (November 11)
- Thanksgiving Day (Fourth Thursday in November)
- Day Following Thanksgiving Day (Fourth Friday in November)
- Christmas Day (December 25)
- Two (2) Unpaid Religious Holidays

See HR 012 Leave of Absence policy for more information.

**Military Leave:** An employee who is a member of the National Guard or Reserves of the United States, and who is ordered to active military duty shall be granted military leave of absence with pay for a period not to exceed twenty-one (21) work days each year beginning October 1st and ending the following September 30th. Additional leave due to military orders shall be charged to the employee's available leave bank(s) or taken as

leave without pay. See Human Resources for more information regarding eligibility for Military Leave. See HR 012 Leave of Absence policy for more information.

**Court Leave:** All full-time and part-time employees who submit a summons for jury duty, subpoena or other proper legal documentation from a court may be given court leave from their regularly scheduled work for the purpose of serving as a member of a jury or as a witness in Federal, State, County or City Court. Court leave will not be charged against any other accrued leave and there will be no deduction in regular compensation for the absence. All authorized fees for jury duty will be forfeited to the County by the employee, except for payment of mileage and other travel related expenses. An employee shall not receive Court Leave for civil cases where the employee is a party in a legal dispute, unless the dispute is related to actions taken by the employee while performing or purporting to perform duties in the course of employment with the County. See HR 012 Leave of Absence policy for more information.

**Special Meetings and Training:** Whenever it is deemed in the best interest of the County, an employee may be granted time off with pay to attend professional, technical institutes, conferences, or special educational training directly appropriate to the employee's position. See HR 012 Leave of Absence policy for more information.

**Personal Leave (Leave without Pay):** Authorized leave of absence without pay will not interrupt prior continuous employment. Absences may result in an adjusted continuous service date, seniority date or union seniority date.

The Department Head/Elected Official has the discretion to authorize a leave of absence without pay prior to other time banks being exhausted. Authorization under this provision is on a case by case basis and will take into consideration employee performance, history of bank accrual/usage, and position held within the organization.

See HR 012 Leave of Absence policy for more information on the above leave types.

**Family and Medical Leave:** Employees may be entitled to a leave of absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). To qualify for FMLA, a worker must have worked for the County for at least 12 months (not necessarily consecutive) and 1,250 hours within the 12 months immediately prior to the request. The FMLA establishes job-protected leave of absence for up to 12 weeks a year to:

1. care for a new child, whether for the birth of a son or daughter, or for the adoption or placement of a child in foster care;
2. care for a seriously ill family member (spouse, son, daughter, or parent);
3. recover from a worker's own serious illness;
4. address qualifying exigencies arising out of a family member's military deployment; or
5. care for an injured service member in the family (provides for up to 26 weeks of leave)

See HR 008 Family and Medical Leave Policy for more information.

**Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML):** The Washington Paid Family and Medical leave program provides up to 12 weeks of paid leave benefits similar to the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and is administered by the State of Washington ([www.esd.wa.gov](http://www.esd.wa.gov)).

**WA Family Care Act:** The Washington Family Care Act (WFCA) allows for employees to substitute their accrued paid leave for unpaid leave or exercise their choice of paid leave to care for a sick family member as

defined below:

- Children-under the age of 18 with a health condition that requires supervision or treatment;
- Spouse-same or opposite sex married partner or state registered domestic partner;
- Parent, parent-in-law, or grandparent with a serious or emergency health condition; or
- An adult son or daughter incapable of self-care due to a disability.

**Pregnancy and Parental Leave:** There are several state and federal laws dealing with pregnancy, adoption, and parental leave. These laws allow certain employees to take job-protected leave to care for and bond with a new child, or to respond to pregnancy-related conditions before and after the delivery of a child.

There are five laws that determine how much pregnancy and parental leave is available to employees in Washington.

- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD).
- Washington Family Care Act (WFCA).
- Paid Sick Leave (Initiative 1433).
- Paid Family Medical Leave Program (PFML) (benefits begin Jan. 1, 2020).

Female employees are eligible to take unpaid leave for the actual period of time that they are sick or temporarily disabled because of pregnancy or childbirth.

See HR 009 Pregnancy Leave Policy for more information.

## Section 5 - General Standards of Conduct

### 5.1. Workplace Conduct

It is extremely important that all employees act in a courteous, friendly, helpful and prompt manner in dealing with the public, customers, other employees, supervisors, officials, and members of both internal and external organizations.

The County may, when it deems appropriate, establish rules to ensure the safe and effective operation of County government. All County employees are expected to abide by the general standards of conduct and work rules outlined in this handbook and department policies and procedures manuals. The following basic work rules are applicable to all County employees. These rules are not intended to be all-inclusive. Employees shall not:

1. Obtain employment, promotions or transfers on the basis of false or misleading information.
2. Misuse, falsify or destroy without authorization County records, property or other materials.
3. Disclose confidential information without authorization.
4. Engage in excessive personal, unethical or non-work-related activities during working time.
5. Steal, remove or deface property of Yakima County, co-workers, or other public or private entities.
6. Willfully or carelessly destroy or damage County assets or the equipment or possessions of others.
7. Engage in conduct detrimental to the good order and discipline of the department or the County, including restricting or unnecessarily interrupting the work of others, neglecting duties, refusing to perform assigned work, soliciting, horseplay or other such harmful behavior.
8. Report for and/or remain at work when unfit for duty.
9. Violate work rules regarding punctuality and attendance.
10. Use or possess unauthorized firearms or weapons in County buildings or vehicles.
11. Violate safety and security work rules.
12. Fight, threaten or disrupt the work of others.
13. Disobey or refuse to follow the lawful instructions of a supervisor.
14. Perform assigned job duties in an unsatisfactory manner.
15. Violate any Yakima County Policy, including, but not limited to:
  - HR 016 Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace Policy
  - HR 020 Fitness for Duty Drug and Alcohol Policy
  - HR 019 Smoke-Tobacco-Free Workplace Policy
  - HR 003 Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy
  - HR XXX Personal Use of County Resources Policy
  - Technology Services Policies

Yakima County reserves the right to impose whatever discipline the County determines appropriate, in a particular instance. The County will deal with each situation individually and nothing in this handbook should be construed as a promise of specific treatment in a given situation. Yakima County will endeavor to utilize progressive discipline but reserves the right to impose disciplinary actions in accordance with the level of policy violation up to and including termination of employment.

The observance of these rules will help to ensure that our workplace remains a safe and desirable place to work.

## **5-2. Punctuality and Attendance**

In order to deliver services effectively, it is important that you follow the attendance rules as required by your Department or personally notify your Supervisor of your status when you are off work due to illness, injury or accident. If you are incapable of reporting your own status, a family member or designee may contact your Supervisor on your behalf. Failure to timely report absences of three consecutive work days or more will generally be considered a voluntary resignation of your employment with the County.

It is important that you report to work regularly and on-time. The citizens of our County and your Supervisor and co-workers depend on you to complete your work. If you will be late or cannot report to work for any reason, contact your Supervisor as early as possible by following your departmental reporting policies. Prompt notification will allow for the assignment of your essential work to others.

## **5-3. Conflict of Interest and Business Ethics**

It is Yakima County's policy that all employees avoid any conflict between their personal interests and those of the County. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the County's honesty and integrity, and therefore its reputation, are not compromised. The fundamental principle guiding this policy is that no employee should have, or appear to have, personal interests or relationships that actually or potentially conflict with the best interests of the County.

The County recognizes the right of employees to engage in activities outside of their employment which are of a private nature and unrelated to County business.

It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of situations that might involve violations of this policy. However, the situations that would constitute a conflict in most cases include but are not limited to:

1. Using his or her position to secure special privileges or exemptions for the employee or others.
2. Disclosing confidential information gained by reason of an employee's position, nor using such information for the employee's personal gain or benefit.
3. Directly or indirectly, giving, receiving or agreeing to receive any compensation, gift, reward, or gratuity from a source except the County for the performance of the employee's services. (Contact the Civil Division of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office for more information.)
4. Holding an interest in or personally profiting from an organization that does, or is seeking to do, business with the County, by any employee who is in a position to directly or indirectly influence either the County's decision to do business, or the terms upon which business would be done with such organization.
5. Being employed by (including as a consultant) or serving on the board of any organization which does, or is seeking to do, business with the County.
6. Accepting employment or engaging in business or professional activities which may require the employee to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his or her official position.
7. Engaging in unapproved soliciting or use of an employee's position to directly or indirectly coerce others.

8. A member of an employee's immediate family who is involved in situations such as those listed above.

A policy of full disclosure must be followed to assess and prevent potential conflicts of interest. It is your responsibility to report any actual or potential conflict that may exist between you (and your immediate family) and the County.

Contact your Supervisor or Human Resources if you have questions regarding a possible conflict of interest or outside work.

#### **5-4. Health and Safety**

The health and safety of employees and others on County property is important to Yakima County. The County intends to comply with all health and safety laws applicable to our business. To this end, we must rely upon employees to ensure that work areas are kept safe and free of hazardous conditions.

Employees are required to be conscientious about workplace safety, including proper operating methods, and recognize dangerous conditions or hazards. Any unsafe conditions or potential hazards should be reported to management immediately, even if the problem appears to be corrected.

Periodically, the County may issue rules and guidelines governing workplace safety and health. All employees should familiarize themselves with these rules and guidelines, as strict compliance will be expected.

Any workplace injury, accident, or illness must be reported to the employee's Supervisor as soon as possible, regardless of the severity of the injury or accident.

#### **Yakima County Accident Prevention Program**

It is the policy and intent of Yakima County to provide all employees with a work environment which is free from recognized hazards likely to cause an accident, physical injury, illness, or death. Accordingly, the prevention of accidents, incidents and occupational illnesses to preserve a safe working environment shall be of paramount importance.

The County has developed and implemented a comprehensive Accident Prevention Program which includes: safety committees, education and training, inspections, accident reporting, investigations, and statistics. Employee cooperation with safety guidelines and active participation in the Yakima County Accident Prevention Program is an important part of being a Yakima County employee.

The Central Safety Committee is made up of members from departments across the organization. It meets quarterly. These meetings facilitate the flow of information from the department level to an organization-wide level and also allow information to be communicated to each employee. The purpose of the Central Safety Committee is to increase safety awareness, resolve safety issues and foster a positive safety attitude.

#### **Exposure Control**

Yakima County has established programs to provide information and training for employees regarding potential dangers and controls of biological, chemical and physical hazards in the workplace, and to establish procedures to prevent or reduce potential injuries and illnesses.

Designated employees with potential exposure to hazards are offered, free of charge, specific vaccinations, training or periodic medical testing.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

PPE is specialized equipment or clothing required by certain job classifications due to the risk of injury or illness associated with duties performed.

Yakima County provides required PPE to employees at no cost. Each department is responsible for maintaining and providing all necessary PPE and controls, as well as ensuring an adequate supply of PPE is available in the appropriate size and type. Each affected employee is responsible for adhering to safety protocols and proper use, care and disposal of PPE.

Employees are informed of the procedure and trained by their respective department in the use and disposal of PPE for their job classifications and the duties they perform.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Employees should contact their supervisors for emergency procedures and training for their specific locations. Yakima County has also implemented the use of the emergency notification program that provides employees with emergency notification via computer terminal, telephone and cell phone texts.

## **First Aid/CPR Training**

First Aid/CPR/AED training is provided by the County for designated supervisors, crew leaders and other employees who may be asked to acquire First Aid/CPR certification for their jobs. All other Yakima County employees are encouraged to receive this life-saving training.

Additional information regarding accident prevention and workplace safety can be found on the County YCShare.

## **5-5. Employee Dress and Personal Appearance**

You are expected to report to work well groomed, clean, and dressed according to the requirements of your position and the standards set by your department. Some employees may be required to wear uniforms or safety equipment/clothing.

Bare midriffs, improperly fitting, or torn clothing, clothing with writing and/or logos not related to work purposes, or any other inappropriate garments are not considered acceptable attire for work at the County. If you report to work dressed or groomed inappropriately, you may be prevented from working until you return to work well-groomed and wearing the proper attire.

Please contact your Supervisor for specific information regarding acceptable attire for your position.

## **5-6. Nepotism (Hiring Relatives/Employee Relationships)**

Familial or intimate relationships among employees can create an actual or at least a potential conflict of interest in the employment setting, especially where the two employees also share a supervisor/subordinate relationship.

Parties to any type of intimate personal or familial relationship must inform management when nepotism or conflict of interest may occur per the County's Nepotism Policy.

## Yakima County Employee Handbook

If two employees marry, become related, or enter into an intimate relationship, they may not remain in a reporting relationship or in positions where one individual may affect the compensation or other terms or conditions of employment of the other individual.

Yakima County generally will attempt to identify other available positions, but if no alternate position is available, County retains the right to decide which employee will remain with County.

Intimate relationships include personal relationships of a consensual romantic or sexual nature.

Familial relationships include:

1. Spouse-a person who is a husband or a wife through marriage.
2. Registered Domestic Partner-an unmarried partner as defined in Chapter 26.60 of the Revised Code of Washington whose partnership has been recorded in the Washington Domestic Partnership Registry.
3. Parent-the parent of the employee.
4. Parent-in-law-the parent of a Spouse or Registered Domestic Partner.
5. Child-biological, adopted or foster child of the employee or of the Spouse or Registered Domestic Partner.
6. Sister-the sister of the employee who is related by blood or adoption.
7. Brother-the brother of the employee who is related by blood or adoption.
8. Sister-in-law-the sister of the Spouse or Registered Domestic Partner.
9. Brother-in-law-the brother of the Spouse or Registered Domestic Partner.
10. Grandparent-the grandparent of the employee.
11. Grandchild-the grandchild of the employee.

## 5-7. Political Activity

Employees of Yakima County are protected from unlawful partisan political pressure.

Employees have the right to vote and express their opinions on all political subjects and candidates and to hold political office or manage a campaign, unless holding such office is incompatible with or substantially interferes with the discharge of their work duties.

Covered state and local employees may not:

- be candidates for public office in a partisan election if their position is fully funded by the federal government;
- use official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the results of an election or nomination; or
- directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise a state or local officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for political purposes.

State and local employees subject to the Hatch Act should note that an election is partisan if any candidate is to be nominated or elected as representing a political party, for example, the Democratic or Republican Party.

## **5-8. Publicity/Statements to the Media**

All media inquiries regarding the official position of Yakima County as to any issues must be referred to the appropriate Department Head or Elected Official for response.

No employees, unless specifically designated by their Department Head or Elected Official, are authorized to make statements on behalf of Yakima County.

## **5-9. Inspections**

Yakima County reserves the right to require employees while on County property, or on client property, to submit to the inspection of County owned property and work areas. There is no expectation of privacy in such work areas or any expectation of privacy while using County computers, email systems, or County owned phones or other devices. This includes lockers, vehicles, desks, cabinets, workstations, as well as communications sent to the County or to its clients through County owned or leased telecommunication equipment or services. Employees are expected to cooperate in any search or inspection.

## **5-10. Parking**

Yakima County has limited reserved parking available for employees for a semi-monthly fee. In addition, free parking for County employees and members of the public is available in designated County parking lots on a first come, first served basis. Unauthorized parking in reserved employee parking spaces can result in fines and/or towing. More information may be obtained from the Facilities Services.

## Section 6 - Personal Use of County Resources

### 6-1. Personal Use of County Resources Overview

County Elected Officials, Department Heads and employees are obligated to conserve and protect County resources for the benefit of the public interest, rather than their private interests. Responsibility and accountability for the appropriate use of County resources ultimately rests with the individual County Elected Official and County Department Head who uses County resources or who authorizes such use. Users shall have no expectation of privacy when using any technology system, equipment or device that is used to access County resources. This includes use of any access for official County business or allowed personal use as provided herein. All technology, except as specifically excluded in writing by the Information Technology Committee, will be vetted and approved by the Technology Services Department. This includes operations, maintenance, purchases, system development, contracting for services and all other functions regarding technology, regardless of the department or agency that will employ it.

Use of County Resources for Personal Use is Prohibited. No employee may use County resources for the personal benefit or gain of the employee or any other person, except as provided in this policy.

See HR xxx Personal Use of County Resources Policy for more information. The above includes information from the proposed policy which has not yet been adopted. This will be updated with the Policy number once it's been finalized.

### 6-2. Personal Visits and Telephone Calls

Disruptions during working time can lead to errors and delays. Therefore, we ask that personal guests or telephone calls be kept to a minimum, and should be restricted to non-work hours, or during lunch or breaks.

### 6-3. Personal Mail

Yakima County asks that employees refrain from either receiving personal mail or sending out personal mail from the County facilities. The County does not have adequate staff to process mail other than County business mail.

### 6-4. Vehicle Use

**Vehicle Use:** County employees shall be authorized to operate a vehicle on County business only as provided in the Auditor's Office Business Expense Reimbursement Policy.

Employees required or authorized to operate a vehicle on County business, whether a private vehicle or a County vehicle, must:

- Possess a valid Washington State driver's license and comply with any licensing restrictions.
- Possess current comprehensive, collision and liability auto insurance.

Employees operating a vehicle on County business, whether a private or a County vehicle, may be subject to additional rules and requirements based on individual departmental procedures.

Employees authorized to operate a vehicle on County business shall immediately notify the employee's supervisor or Department Head of any suspension or revocation of licensed status or any restriction placed upon the employee's license. Failure to report a change in license status is a violation of this policy.

### **Portable Communication Device Use While Driving**

Employees who drive on County business must abide by all state or local laws prohibiting or limiting portable communication device (PCD) use, including cell phones or personal digital assistants, while driving. Further, even if use is permitted, employees may choose to refrain from using any PCD while driving. "Use" includes, but is not limited to, talking or listening to another person or sending an electronic or text message via the PCD. Full attention must be paid to the task of driving.

Regardless of the circumstances, including slow or stopped traffic, if any use is permitted while driving, employees must proceed to a safe location off the road and safely stop the vehicle before placing or accepting a call. If acceptance of a call is absolutely necessary while the employee is driving, and permitted by law, the employee must use a hands-free option and advise the caller that he/she is unable to speak at that time and will return the call shortly.

Under no circumstances should employees feel that they need to place themselves at risk to fulfill business needs. safety comes first in all instances.

Since this policy does not require any employee to use a PCD while driving, employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their PCDs while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.

Texting and e-mailing while driving is strictly prohibited in all circumstances.