

2016



Lamar County Personnel Policy

Lamar County Board of Commissioners
Lamar County, Georgia

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Section 1 Introduction

A. Purpose

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with the County and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting your employment. You should read, understand, and comply with all provisions of this handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by the county to benefit employees. One of our objectives is to provide a work environment that is conducive to both personal and professional growth.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As the County continues to grow, the need may arise and the County reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portion of the handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. **The only policy which will not change is our employment-at-will policy permitting you or the County to end our relationship for any reason at any time. Employees will, of course, be notified of any changes to the handbook as they occur.**

The purpose of these personnel policies and procedures, together with the position classifications and pay plan, is to provide the basis for an effective system of personnel administration and benefits management for covered employees of the Lamar County Board of Commissioners, Constitutional Officers, Legislative Approved Board of Elections, and the Legislative Approved Board of Assessors. Nothing in these personnel policies and procedures is intended to create a contract of employment. It is the intent of the Board of Commissioners, Constitutional Officers, and Legislative Approved Boards that all employees of Lamar County adhere to the Code of Ethics for Government Service as provided for in O.C.G.A. Section 45-10-1. If you have any questions about the County's personnel policies, you are encouraged to consult with your Department Head, County Administrator, Constitutional Officer, or the Chairperson of the Board for which you work.

B. Administration

The County Administrator has formal executive authority and responsibility for all personnel matters for all employees under his/her supervision and is the designated agent to administer the procedures provided for under this policy. The County Administrator shall provide a monthly report to the Board of Commissioners should he/she be required to give a suspension, demotion with reduction in pay, or the termination of a County employee. The Constitutional Officers, and members of the Legislative Approved Boards has the formal executive authority and responsibility for all personnel matters for all employees under their supervision.

C. At-Will Employment

Lamar County is an "At-Will Employer" pursuant to the Georgia Employer-At-Will law. These personnel policies and procedures create non-contractual obligations on the part of employees, supervisors and the County and do not alter the at-will relationship. Employment with the County is at the will of the County, and either the employer or the employee may at any time terminate the employment with or without cause. No statement (written or oral) by any employee, Commissioner, or agent of the County contrary to this

paragraph shall have any force or effect. Disciplinary procedures and terms or conditions of employment may be changed by the County at any time and without notice whether these are stated in the policies and procedures or are established employment practices. Notwithstanding the at-will relationship, both the County and employees are obligated to follow the policies and procedures set forth herein.

D. Employees Covered

These personnel policies and procedures apply fully to all employees of Lamar County, Georgia.

E. Equal Opportunity Employer

Lamar County, Georgia, is an equal opportunity employer. Lamar County's policy, from recruitment, hiring, upgrading, training, promotion, transfer, discipline, layoff, recall, and termination, is to provide equal opportunity at all times without regard to race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical handicap, veteran status, or medical condition.

Any employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Manager. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Section 2 Definitions

For the purpose of these policies and procedures, the following terms shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them below, unless another meaning is specifically indicated.

Administrator – The person who has formal executive authority and responsibility for their department or jurisdiction.

Anniversary Date - The employee's original date of employment with the county service in a permanent position.

Appeal - The right of an employee to appeal a decision in the manner prescribed in these policies and procedures.

Classified Service - The classified service consists of all positions included in the classification and pay plan with the exception of those positions specifically excluded by the County Commission.

Classification and Pay Plan - The system of assigning jobs to classes and to appropriate pay grades.

County Administrator – The person responsible for the day to day operations of the County.

Constitutional Officer – Those persons whose positions draw their authority from the Georgia Constitution.

Continuous Service - Continuous service is employment that is uninterrupted except for authorized leaves of absence, suspension or separation due to a reduction in work force.

County – This refers to Lamar County, Georgia.

County Commission - This refers to the Lamar County Board of Commissioners.

Demotion - Demotion means a change in the rank of an employee from a position in one class to a position in another class having a lower minimum starting salary and less discretion and/or responsibility.

Department Head - The position with overall administrative responsibility for a department.

Dismissal - The termination of an employee.

Elected Officials - The persons filling the offices of Sheriff, Tax Commissioner, Clerk of Superior Court, Magistrate Court Chief Judge, and Probate Judge and Lamar County Commissioners are considered to be elected officials.

Eligible - A person who has made a passing score on any examination required under these regulations or who has otherwise qualified to be employed by the County.

Employee - A person, including Department Heads, hired to work for the Lamar County Board of Commissioners for which he or she is compensated on a full-time or part-time basis.

Full Time Employee – An employee who works forty (40) hours per week.

Immediate Family An employee's wife, husband, mother, father, guardian, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild, and grandparent, as well as the various combinations of half, step, in-law, and adopted relationships that can be derived from those family members named herein.

Lay-Off - The separation of an employee from the classified service due to lack of work, lack of funds, abolishment of the position or for other material changes in duties or organization.

Merit Increase - An increase in pay based on an employee's job performance.

Overtime - Time worked in excess of the regular work schedule for the position in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Part-time Employee - An employee who works on a continuing basis, but who works thirty (30) hours or less per week.

Performance Evaluation - A method of evaluating each employee on a periodic basis as to his or her performance on the job.

Personnel Officer – The person designated by the County to oversee the personnel department of the County.

Probationary Employee - An employee serving the first six (6) months of his or her employment, re-employment, or reinstatement to any position in the classified service. A probationary employee is not a regular employee until completion of the six (6) months probationary period.

Probationary Period - The completion of six (6) months of consecutive employment shall be a period of adjustment for new employees of Lamar County.

Promotion - A change in rank of an employee from a position in one class to a position in another class having a higher minimum salary and carrying a greater scope of discretion and/or responsibility.

Regular Employee - An employee who has completed the probationary period.

Reprimand - A formal means of communicating to an employee that a problem exists and that it must be corrected.

Resignation - The termination of an employee at the employee's request.

Salary Increase - An increase in salary within the salary range prescribed for the class by the classification and pay plan.

Suspension - An enforced leave of absence, either with or without pay, for either a disciplinary purpose or pending investigation of charges against an employee.

Temporary Employee - An employee who works on an intermittent, seasonal or occasional basis and who may work more or less than 30 hours per week while completing the temporary assignment or task.

Section 3 Position Classification and Pay Plan

A. Establishment

The County Administrator and County Commission shall be responsible for developing, maintaining and administering a position classification and pay plan covering all employees in the classified service of Lamar County, Georgia. This plan shall be approved and amended by the County Commission and shall constitute the official approved system of grouping positions into appropriate classifications and pay scales. Each employee is designated as either **NONEXEMPT** or **EXEMPT** from federal and state wage and hour laws. **NONEXEMPT** employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws. **EXEMPT** employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. An employee's **EXEMPT** or **NONEXEMPT** classification may be changed only upon written notification by the County management.

B. Definitions

For the purpose of this section, the following words shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them below.

1. To "allocate" a position shall mean assigning the position to an appropriate class on the basis of the similarity of work performed and level of responsibility inherent in the position.
2. A "classification" shall mean a group of positions (or one position) that:
 - a. has similar duties and responsibilities;
 - b. requires like qualifications; and
 - c. can be equitably compensated by the same salary range.
3. The "classification title" shall be the official designation or name of the classification as stated in the job description. It shall be used on all personnel records and actions. Different working or office titles may be used for purposes of internal administration.
4. A "position" shall mean a group of currently assigned duties and responsibilities requiring the full or part-time employment of one person. A position may be occupied or vacant.
5. "Reclassification" shall mean the assignment of an existing position from one classification to a different classification due to a significant change in duties or responsibilities.

C. Allocation of Positions

Initial Allocation: The County Commission and County Administrator shall be responsible for the initial allocation of the position of every employee of the County to one of the classifications in the Master Classification Plan.

1. New Positions: When a new position is established and approved by the County Commission, the Department Head involved shall complete a position description covering the duties and responsibilities of such new position. The County Administrator shall allocate the position to one of the classes in the classification plan, unless a suitable classification does not exist, in which case the County Administrator shall recommend that the County Commission establish a new classification. Upon the recommendation and approval of such new classification by the County Commission, the County Administrator shall allocate the new position to it.
2. Allocation Appeals: If an employee has reason to believe that his or her position has been improperly allocated, such employee may, with the knowledge of the Department Head, request the County Commission to review the allocation of such position. Any such request must be submitted in writing and contain a statement of justification.

D. Maintenance of Plan

1. Vacancies Each time a vacancy occurs; the Department Head shall submit a description of the vacant position to the County Administrator for a review of the allocation of the position. The County Administrator may waive this requirement for cases in which he/she has determined that no significant changes have occurred.
2. Departmental Reorganization Each time a department or division under the jurisdiction of a Department Head is significantly reorganized, such Department Head shall submit to the County Administrator new position descriptions for all affected positions.
3. Changes in Duties of Position The County Administrator may require departments or employees to submit position descriptions on a periodic basis to him or her when there is reason to believe that there has been a change in the duties and responsibilities of one or more positions.

4. New and Abolished Positions Each time a new position is established a position description shall be written and incorporated into the existing plan. Likewise, an abolished position shall be deleted from the classification plan, after approval of the County Commission.

E. Interpretation of Job Descriptions

The job descriptions are descriptive and not restrictive. The use of a particular description as to duties, qualifications or other factors shall not be held to exclude others of similar kind or quality.

F. Official Copy of the Plan

The County Administrator shall be responsible for maintaining an official copy of the Position Classification and Pay Plan. The official copy shall include a list of class titles and job descriptions plus all amendments. A copy of the official plan shall be available for inspection by the public under reasonable conditions during business hours.

G. Amendments to the Plan

When there is a need to establish new positions or abolish current positions, the County Administrator shall submit findings and recommendations to the County Commission who shall take such action as deemed appropriate. All changes in the position classification and pay plan shall be in the form of amendments to the plan approved by the County Commission.

Section 4 Rate of Pay

A. New Employees

New employees shall typically be paid the minimum rate of pay for the classification to which they are assigned, subject to the following exceptions:

1. If an employee in a particular position does not meet the minimum qualifications stated in the job description or if certain classifications of work require a formalized training period that is of unusual duration, the needs of the County can best be met by placing an individual in a training capacity. Employment in a "trainee" position shall be at a salary range below the minimum rate established for the classification at a rate not more than two pay grades below the grade.
2. If an employee exceeds the minimum qualifications for the position, such employee may be started at a higher classification. Approval of the County Commission is required in such instances.

B. Rehire/Reinstatement

If a former full-time employee who left employment with Lamar County in good standing and/or left through no fault of their own is rehired within one (1) year, that person will be eligible for service restoration provided the following are met.

Service Restoration Rules for Eligible Employees

1. If a former employee with less than one year's prior service is rehired, the employee will be considered a new employee and will not be eligible for prior service recognition for seniority or benefit plan participation purposes.
2. If a former employee with more than one year's prior service is rehired, the employee's seniority and eligibility to participate in the county's benefit plans will be bridged if the employee is rehired where the period of prior county service exceeded the duration of the period of absence. Service recognition will include prior service recognition for accrued leave plans.
3. If a former employee with more than one year's prior service is rehired where the duration of the period of absence exceeded the period of prior county service, the employee will be considered a new employee and will not be eligible for prior service recognition for seniority or benefit plan participation purposes.

C. Promotion

1. An employee will be considered promoted when:
 - The employee is transferred to a position classified in a higher pay range.
 - The employee's position is reclassified to a classification having a higher pay range.
 - The "trainee" meets the minimum requirements for the job for which he or she was hired.
2. Promotions may occur within a department or between departments.
3. At the time an employee is promoted to an approved position in a classification with a higher pay range, a salary increase may be granted upon approval and is signed by the County Administrator and Chairman.

D. Demotion

An employee will be considered demoted when:

1. The employee is placed in a different classification having a lower pay range.
2. The employee's position is reclassified to a classification having a lower pay range.

When an employee receives a demotion of the type stated in 1 above, such employee's pay may remain unchanged or may be reduced at the discretion of the County Commission.

E. Part-Time and Temporary Employment

Pay for continuous part-time employment must be agreed upon by the employee, Department Head and County Administrator or Constitutional Officer.

F. Overtime

Compensation for overtime will be in accordance with the provisions of the federal and state law, as amended. The County will allow compensatory time off in lieu of overtime. Each hour of compensatory time earned shall be compensated at a rate of time and one half. It shall be the responsibility of the Department Head to manage compensatory time. All earned and used compensatory time must be accurately recorded and reported to the personnel officer along with payroll information. Compensatory time earned should be used within three (3) months and must be used prior to the end of the calendar year. Department Heads must provide a monthly status report of compensatory time accrued and used within that department to the County Administrator.

G. Increases in Salaries

Increases in pay for County employees shall be governed by the following principles:

1. The pay plan consists of various pay grades. The County Commission may add or delete pay grades as deemed necessary.
2. Each pay grade shall have a pay range with an entry rate and steps placed at 11/4 percent intervals. The range between the entry rate and the maximum rate is approximately 50 percent.
3. After an employee reaches the maximum rate within a pay grade, such employee shall only be entitled to across-the-board salary adjustments and merit payments in bonus form.
4. Each Department Head shall file an annual performance evaluation report on each employee within that department. This report shall become a permanent part of each employee's personnel file. The performance evaluation report must be completed and submitted to the County Administrator two weeks prior to employee's anniversary date. Department Heads shall receive an annual performance management review conducted by the County Administrator or their designee.
5. In order for an employee to receive a merit increase, the following are required:
 - a. performance evaluation for current fiscal year;
 - b. recommendation by the Department Head;
 - c. increase has been properly budgeted; and
 - d. approval by the County Administrator and three 3 or more County Commissioners.
6. In order to move to a higher pay grade, an employee must apply for a new position within a higher pay grade or be an incumbent in a position which has been reclassified to a higher pay grade.
7. Upon the adoption of the annual budget, the County Commission shall determine what percentage increase, if any, will be allotted for increases to employee salaries.
8. Employees below the top step of their grade, whose work is exceptional, may be granted a special merit increase. A special two-step merit increase requires the written justification and recommendation of both the Department Head and County Administrator and the approval of the County Commission.

H. PROHIBITION AGAINST IMPROPER DEDUCTIONS FROM THE SALARY OF EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

It is the County's policy not to make improper deductions from the pay of any employees. If any employee feels that his/her pay has been reduced improperly, he/she is entitled to contest that deduction by making a claim with the County Administrator. The County will not retaliate against any employee who makes such an inquiry or claim and, if it has merit, the employee will be reimbursed promptly. Further, the County will undertake actions designed to ensure that the same type of improper reduction does not reoccur in the future.

Section 5 Applications and Examinations

A. Announcement of Vacant Positions

Except as otherwise provided below, all vacancies in the classified service shall be publicized by posting announcements in the office of the County Commission, on the official bulletin board in the County Administration Building, and in other places and by such other means as the County Administrator deems advisable. The announcements shall

specify the titles and salary ranges of vacant positions, qualification requirements, manner of making application and other pertinent information, and shall specify the date, time, and place of examinations (if required) for the positions. All vacancies shall be posted in-house for a period of three (3) working days. After the completion of the three (3) day in-house posting, the vacancy will be posted in the area newspaper. Applications will be accepted at the County Administration Building by the personnel officer.

B. Application Forms

All applicants for positions in the classified service of Lamar County may submit an application with the Personnel Officer. All applicants shall provide proof of citizenship as required by federal law and E-Verify. Such forms shall require information concerning training, experience, and other pertinent information, and shall be signed by the applicant. No person shall be employed by the County unless and until such person has made application with the County Administrator.

C. Employment Requirements

All positions in the classified service shall be open only to persons who meet such requirements as are listed on the public announcement of the examination. Such requirements may include but are not limited to experience, education and training.

D. Receipt and Duration of Applications

Applications from all persons desiring employment with the County may be accepted during regular business hours at the office of the Personnel Officer. Applicants must complete a new application for each announced position vacancy.

E. Rejection of Applications

The County Administrator may reject an application that indicates that the applicant is deficient in any or all of the requirements as specified in the public announcement of the vacancy. An applicant may also be rejected for fraud or deception in the completion of the application, or if his or her past record of employment is determined to be unsatisfactory by the County Administrator. The applicable Department Head will be notified of all rejections.

F. Open Competitive Employment

Positions to be filled by recruitment from outside the classified service shall be filled through a competitive process open to the public. This process may include, but not be limited to, ratings of training and experience, job-related tests or any combination of these as determined by the County Administrator. Factors such as education, job-related qualifications, and experience may be taken into account in making employment decisions. The County Administrator will require the applicant to submit proof of education and military service or other necessary documentation.

All information provided on the application must be true and correct. Providing false information may be grounds for elimination from consideration for a vacant position.

G. Testing

Upon offer of open position, the applicant must sign documents authorizing county to administer a criminal background check and completion of a physical including drug test.

Applicants must submit a seven year driving record if applicant will be driving county vehicle or equipment. After hire, employees who drive county vehicles or operate county equipment must provide an updated driver's history upon request.

H. Direct Deposit

All new hires will be required to utilize direct deposit with the financial institution of their choice.

Section 6 Probationary Period

A. Objective

The probationary period is designed to allow the employee and the Department Head time to determine if the employee is capable of performing satisfactorily prior to being included in the classified service. The probationary period shall be six (6) months in duration.

B. Probationary Period Report

Prior to the expiration of the employee's probationary period, the Department Head shall notify the County Administrator in writing of whether or not the employee has satisfactorily completed the probationary period.

Section 7 Promotions and Transfers

A. Policy

It shall be the policy of the County to fill vacancies in the classified service, as far as practicable, by promotion. To this end, closed examinations may be held at the call and under the direction of the County Administrator. No one shall be considered for any position in the County working directly with finance or in a department head position who has been convicted of a felony.

B. Political or Partisan Endorsement Prohibited

Promotions to positions in the classified service shall be based upon merit and fitness for promotion only. No consideration shall be given to political or partisan endorsement.

C. Promotional Examinations

The County Administrator shall conduct competitive promotional examinations where applicable and/or required in accordance with these regulations and shall admit the examination to all employees who meet the published qualification requirements.

D. Intra-Departmental Transfers

The appropriate Department Head may, at any time, transfer an employee in the classified service under his or her jurisdiction from one position to another in the same class within the same department. An intra-departmental transfer of an employee to a position in a different class shall be made only with the approval of the County Administrator and only between classes within the same pay range.

E. Inter-Departmental Transfers

A transfer of an employee from one department to another shall require the approval of both Department Heads concerned and the County Administrator. Requests for such transfer shall show how the employee concerned meets the qualification requirements of the class to which the transfer is proposed.

F. Pay Grade After Transfer

An employee who is transferred shall continue at the same rate of pay unless otherwise provided.

Section 8 Employee Performance Evaluation

A. Objective

The purpose of the employee performance evaluation shall be primarily to inform employees of how well they are performing their work and how they can improve their work performance. Such performance evaluation may also be used in determining merit raises; as a basis for training, promotion, demotion, transfer or dismissal; and for such other purposes as set forth in these policies.

B. Period of Evaluation

All employees except temporary workers shall be evaluated annually. An employee shall not be eligible for a merit pay raise until the performance evaluation form has been completely processed. Employees may also be evaluated at the time of separation.

C. Evaluations

Evaluations shall be prepared by the Department Head and reviewed by the County Administrator.

D. Review with Employees

The evaluator shall discuss each performance evaluation with the employee being evaluated. If an employee disagrees with statement(s) in an evaluation, such employee may submit, within five working days following the conference with his or her supervisor, a written statement that shall be attached to the evaluation form and sent to his or her supervisor. If an agreement is not reached with the supervisor, a written statement shall be attached to the evaluation form and forwarded to the Department Head and then to the County Administrator.

E. Performance Evaluations Confidential

Performance evaluations shall be confidential and shall be made available only to the employee evaluated, the employee's supervisor and Department Head, the County Administrator, and County Commission. However, nothing in this policy shall prevent the disclosure of all or part of performance evaluations if the law mandates such disclosure.

Section 9 Separations

A. Types of Separation from the Classified Service

Separations and/or terminations from positions in the classified service shall be designated as one of the following:

1. Resignation
2. Abandonment of job
3. Lay-off or reduction in force
4. Dismissal or discharge
5. Retirement
6. Death

B. Resignation

An employee shall submit to the Department Head written notice of resignation at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the date of resignation. Immediately upon receipt of such notice of resignation, the Department Head shall forward the same to the County Administrator. Failure to comply with this rule shall be entered on the service record of the employee.

C. Abandonment of Job

An employee who is absent from work for three (3) consecutive work days without having received leave approval or without having called in to report the absence will be considered as voluntarily abandoned their job. This separation will not be in good standing and may affect opportunities for re-employment.

D. Lay-off or Reduction in Force

Any involuntary separation not related to an employee's conduct should constitute a lay-off or reduction in force.

1. Reasons: Any employee may be laid off because of shortage of funds or work, abolishment of the position, material changes in duties or organization, or related reasons beyond the employer's or the employee's control that do not reflect dissatisfaction with the service of the employee. The duties previously performed by any laid-off employee may be reassigned to other employees holding positions in appropriate classes.
2. Notice to Department Head: Whenever the lay-off of any employee becomes necessary, the County Commission, through the County Administrator, shall notify the Department Head as far in advance of the intended action as practicable of the necessity and the reasons of such lay-off. The Department Head shall thereupon furnish to the County Administrator the names and job titles of the employees to be laid off and the order in which such lay-off shall be affected.
3. Order of Lay-off: Should it become necessary to reduce the number of employees within a given classification in any department, such employees shall be laid off by reverse seniority order.
4. Notice to Employees: Regular employees to be laid off shall be notified in writing by the County Administrator fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the effective date of the lay-off, if practicable.
5. Demotions: Any regular employee scheduled to be laid off shall have the right to be demoted to a lower classification, provided that a vacancy exists and such employee is qualified to fill the position in the lower classification and if the lay-off is not due to dissatisfaction with employee's performance.
6. Dismissals: When a regular employee is charged with misconduct that serves as just cause for dismissal, wherein the County deems the employment relationship between the employee and the County no longer workable, they will be terminated.

All layoffs and reductions in force shall be first approved by the County Commission.

F. Retirement

The retirement of an employee shall consist of the voluntary separation of an employee who has met the requirements of age and length of service under the laws governing any applicable pension fund of which such employee may be a member. All employees who retire with at least ten (10) years of service shall receive a plaque from the county

The county reserves the right to require eligible employees to retire at ages earlier than those stated above when it has been medically determined and approved by the Lamar County Commissioners. Such factors may include but are not limited to the fact that age-related degenerative conditions(s) have rendered an employee incapable of safely and efficiently performing all duties of his/her assigned position.

G. Death

Separation shall be effective as of the date of the death of the employee. All compensation, including annual leave pay, due to such employee, as of the effective date of separation, shall be paid to the beneficiary of the employee, the surviving spouse of such employee, or to the estate of such employee, as may be determined by law or by the applicable executed documents in the personnel folder of such employee.

Section 10 Disciplinary Actions

A. Intent

Effective supervision and good employee relations should reduce to a minimum those instances necessitating disciplinary action. The establishment of rules and regulations and the imposition of disciplinary action for a violation thereof are not intended to restrict the rights of any employee, but are for the purpose of insuring the rights of all and for securing cooperation and orderliness throughout the classified service. The County will not allow discrimination against any employee because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or political affiliation.

B. Conduct Subject to Disciplinary Action

The following actions are grounds for disciplinary action; however, the imposition of disciplinary action shall not be limited to the offenses set forth below. The person recommending that an employee be suspended or terminated must appear before the County Administrator with the facts justifying the need to suspend or terminate. Department Heads must consult with the County Administrator to review facts before termination.

1. Indictment for or conviction of a felony, or of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude.
2. Absenteeism.
3. Absence without leave, or failure to report after the expiration of a leave of absence.
4. Tardiness.
5. Abuse of leave.
6. Insubordination or breach of proper discipline.
7. Inefficiency or incompetence after proper documentation and counseling.

8. Abuse or theft of County property.
9. Borrowing/Misappropriating County equipment.
10. Loss of a job requirement, such as the loss of a necessary license, which prevents the adequate performance of the essential functions of the position.
11. Making of false statements to supervisors, officials, the public, boards, commissions, or agencies.
12. Violating County ordinances, regulations, or departmental rules.
13. Discovery of a false statement in an application.
14. Consumption, sale, or possession of alcoholic beverages and/or illegal substances while at work, or being under the influence or being otherwise affected on the job because of the prior use of such substance.
15. Accepting gratuities in conflict with state law or County ordinance.
16. Political activity in conflict with Section 19 of these Policies and Procedures.
17. Engaging in offensive conduct or using offensive language toward the public, supervisory personnel, or fellow employees.
18. Harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, or disability as provided in Section 17 of these Policies and Procedures.
19. Unsafe operation of equipment or destruction of material or property.
20. Ignoring safety rules or safety procedures.
21. Unexcused or excessive tardiness or absences after proper documentation and counseling.
22. Failure to follow the chain of command. (Exceptions are sexual harassment, discrimination and other sensitive issues where the supervisor has been alleged to be the aggressor.) Each employee shall follow the chain of command unless the complaint involves a member of that chain. If so, the employee shall report immediately to the next in command without fear of retribution.
23. If it is discovered at *anytime* an employee falsified any part of his or her application.

C. Types of Disciplinary Action

Department Heads shall have the following alternatives when disciplining an employee.

1. Reprimands

Oral Reprimand: An oral reprimand is a progressive disciplinary measure that may be issued for an incident, action, or behavior that does not warrant more severe disciplinary action. In the oral reprimand, the supervisor will verbally and privately explain to the employee that he or she is being reprimanded, describe the problem, and indicate what must be done to correct the problem. Oral reprimands should be documented in the employee file and may be referred to in annual performance reviews.

Written Reprimand: A written reprimand may be issued for first or second offenses where the incident, action, or behavior of the employee is such as not to initially warrant a more severe type of disciplinary action. The Department Head shall issue written reprimands to the affected employee, and a copy of it shall be forwarded to the County Administrator and filed in the personnel folder of such employee.

2. Suspension

- a. The County Administrator or a Department Head may suspend without pay any employee under his or her supervision who is not exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act for a period of not less than one (1) or more than ten (10) working

days. The County Administrator or Department Head may suspend without pay any employee under his or her supervision who is exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act for a period of not less than one (1) nor more than two (2) whole work weeks provided that the period of suspension coincides with the employee's official work week.

- b. A written statement specifically setting forth the reasons for such action and the length of time of such suspension shall be furnished by the County Administrator or Department Head to the affected employee, and a copy of it shall be filed by the County Administrator in the personnel folder of such employee.
- c. If an event, action or allegation is of such nature to require the temporary reassignment of an employee to permit a thorough review of the issue, the County Administrator may suspend an employee, with or without pay, or assign other duties without a reduction of pay until any necessary investigation is concluded or the issue is resolved.
- d. Anyone recommending suspension or termination must appear before County Administrator with all facts prior to suspension or termination. The County Administrator will inform the Commissioners of the action taken.

3. Demotion

The County Administrator or Department Head may reduce the salary of a regular employee within the range provided in the pay plan or demote the employee to a lower-graded position.

A written statement specifically setting forth the reasons for any such action shall be furnished by the County Administrator or Department Head to the affected employee, and a copy of same shall be filed by the County Administrator in the personnel folder of such employee within three (3) working days of the effective date of the action. The County Administrator will inform the Commissioners of the action taken.

4. Department Heads

All provisions of subsection (1), (2), and (3) above apply to Department Heads, with the County Administrator being the person charged with imposing such reprimand, suspension, or demotion.

5. Dismissal

The County Administrator may dismiss an employee for cause as outlined in this Section. The employee shall be furnished notice of dismissal in writing stating the reason(s) for such dismissal. A copy shall be placed in the employee's personnel file. The County Administrator will inform the Commissioners of the action taken.

Section 11 Complaints and Appeals

A. Intent

County employee complaints should receive prompt consideration and equitable resolution. At the same time, complaints must be handled in a manner that will require minimal intrusion into the functioning of County government.

These procedures governing the processing of complaints and providing a procedure for an appeal are established for the purpose of eliminating or correcting justifiable complaints of employees.

B. Complaint and Appeal Procedures

Any complaints or appeals are subject to the following process:

1. Prior to initiating a formal appeal, an employee shall discuss the complaint with their Department Head. Within three (3) working days of such discussion, if the employee is dissatisfied with the Department Head's action or inaction, the employee must submit their written complaint to the County Administrator.
2. Within three (3) working days of the receipt of the written complaint, the County Administrator shall arrange an appointment with the employee and the Department Head to discuss the problem and attempt to reach a solution.

If a settlement is not reached, the matter shall, within three (3) working days, be submitted to the County Commission for a hearing and review of the complaint at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The County Commission will have three (3) working days following the hearing to reach a **final** decision.

Section 12 Records and Reports

A. Personnel Transactions

All appointments, separations, and other personnel transactions shall be recorded on forms provided by the County Administrator. A separate file folder shall be prepared and maintained for each employee and shall contain the original or a copy of all pertinent documents.

B. Public Inspection

Information relative to employees and former employees shall be available for public inspection at reasonable times and in accordance with Official Code of Georgia Annotated as allowed by the Georgia Sunshine laws.

C. Maintenance of Records

Employee service records shall be kept in accordance with state and federal regulations after termination of employment. Such records may be kept in their original form or in any other duplicate form the County Administrator deems appropriate.

D. Attendance Records

Regular attendance reports shall be prepared and submitted by each Department Head to the personnel officer. The personnel officer shall make available to the County Administrator reports as required for the purpose of monitoring benefits usage.

Section 13 Payroll

A. Initial Employment

Upon initial employment of a new employee, the Department Head shall submit to the County Administrator and Personnel Officer such information as is necessary to certify the employment status, title or position, and salary or wage of such employee.

B. Paydays

All employees, except for elected officials are paid biweekly on every other Thursday. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period. Time sheets will be submitted to the Payroll Officer by 12:00 pm Friday prior to payroll week. Abuse of absences on Friday after payday will result in paychecks being held until Friday afternoons on pay weeks. The county requires that all employees pay be deposited into a Direct Deposit Account of the employees choice.

In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a County-wide day off such as a holiday, employees will receive pay on the last day of work before the regularly scheduled payday.

If a regular payday falls during an employee's vacation, the employee's paycheck will be available through direct deposit as scheduled. No individual vacation checks will be issued early.

C. Payroll Adjustments

Each Department Head shall be responsible for immediately notifying the Personnel Officer of any occurrences or actions taken which require an adjustment in the salary or wage of any employee or employees under the supervision of such Department Head.

Upon the approval of such notice by the County Administrator, or upon the taking of any budget action by the County Administrator which requires an adjustment in the salary or wage of any employee or employees, the County Administrator shall make such payroll adjustments for such employee or employees as may be required.

D. Recovery of Salaries Improperly Paid

Officers and employees may be held liable for the return of salaries improperly, accidentally or illegally paid to employees.

E.. Voluntary Deductions

Upon the request in writing of any employee, the County shall be authorized to provide for automatic payroll deductions for such employee, in such amount as the employee shall specify, for the purpose of contributing to personal savings plans, pensions or other personal financial investment plans.

F. Involuntary Deductions

The county Personnel Officer is authorized to make legal deductions from an employee's gross pay to cover federal and state income taxes, court order garnishments and child support.

Section 14 Business Travel Expenses

The County will reimburse employees for reasonable business travel expenses incurred while on assignments away from the normal work location. All business travel must be approved in advance by the County Administrator or Elected Official.

When possible, employees should use County owned vehicles for travel to and from an authorized event. Reimbursement for fuel and servicing will be according to the actual amount spent and the employee must provide receipts.

Reimbursement for transportation expenses incurred by use of a personally-owned vehicle will be as follows:

- a. Mileage will be calculated at the rate that is permitted by the Internal Revenue Service for actual miles traveled in the performance of official duties or to attend training. Departure and return odometer readings must accompany the request.
- b. Mileage is to be calculated from the location of the employee's department or the employee's home, whichever is nearer the Event.
- c. The authorized mileage rate is to include the normal expenses incurred in the operation of a personal vehicle, such as fuel, oil, repairs and towing fees.

Reimbursement for meals will be based on a rate of not more than \$40.00 per day, to include tax and tips. Charges for three meals including tax and tips in excess of \$40.00 per day will not be allowed. When expenses for less than three meals a day are incurred the following table shall be used:

Breakfast only	\$ 8.00
Lunch only	\$12.00
Dinner only	\$20.00

County employees and officials may be required to meet with persons or other organizations or other officials to exchange information to benefit Lamar County. When in the opinion of the county commissioners or county administrator there is such a need, it shall be appropriate. A receipt is required and the purpose of the business topic/project must be documented on the expense report.

Section 15 Attendance and Leave

A. Hours of Work

The established work week and the hours of work shall, insofar as practicable, be uniform within occupational groups and shall be determined in accordance with the needs of the County and the reasonable needs of the public who may be required to do business with various County departments. The Department Head, with the approval of the County Administrator, shall establish the work schedule of 40 hours a week or 80 hours a pay period for full time employees and establish hours for part-time and temporary employees based on the department's approved budget. Offices are to remain open during lunch hours unless permission is obtained from the County Administrator. Departments should organize staff accordingly.

B. Attendance

Each Department Head shall be responsible for maintaining a copy of the attendance records of all persons in his or her department.

Call-in procedure: When an unexpected illness or crisis arises and an employee is unable to report to work or is going to be late, the employee is required to call-in immediately or at least one hour after the employee's scheduled start time. The employee should report to their immediate supervisor. "Call-in" is required every day of absence unless otherwise approved by the Department Head.

C. Emergency Closings

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, power failures, or tornadoes, can disrupt County operations. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require the closing of work facilities.

When the decision to close is made AFTER the workday has begun, employees will receive official notification from their immediate supervisor. In these situations, time off from scheduled work will be paid. When the decision to close is made BEFORE the workday has begun, time off from scheduled work will be unpaid unless administrative leave is assigned by the County Administrator. Employees in essential operations may be asked to work on a day when operations are officially closed. In these circumstances, employees who work will receive regular pay.

D. Holidays

All covered full-time employees shall be eligible for holiday leave for the following days and other days as designated by specific action of the County Commission: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday (Observed), Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

Whenever a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be designated a substitute holiday and observed as the official holiday for that year. When the holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday shall be designated as the official holiday for that year. An employee who is not on approved vacation and fails to report on his or her scheduled work day before or after a holiday shall not be paid for the holiday.

Holidays that occur during personal leave shall not be charged against personal leave. Covered full-time employees shall be paid for holidays based on the number of hours they normally work each day, exclusive of overtime. Temporary and part-time employees will not be paid for holidays not worked.

Any employee whose regularly scheduled workday falls on an official County holiday shall be paid at the regular rate. Any essential employee called in to work on an official County holiday, for whatever reason, shall be paid at one and one-half times the regular rate for each hour worked or take a subsequent day off in lieu of the holiday worked.

E. Sick Leave/Vacation Leave

Each full-time or probationary county employee working a forty (40) hour work week shall earn annual leave as follows:

LENGTH OF SERVICE	MAXIMUM PTO PER YEAR
After completion of Probationary Period (6) months	Accrued 48 hours Sick leave (only use after the 6-month probationary) Every month accrual of 8 hours of sick leave
Monthly after probationary period accrual of 8 hours of sick leave	12 Sick days per year
Vacation leave After 1 year of service	Vacation Leave 10 days per year (80 hours)
Vacation leave After 5 years of service	Vacation Leave 15 days per year (120 hours)
Vacation Leave After 10 years of service	Vacation Leave 20 days per year (160 hours)

Each year on your anniversary date, the total vacation days which you will be eligible for throughout the year are accrued in your vacation account. A year is defined as the time period running from your anniversary date of the present year to the anniversary date of the following year. Vacation Leave must be taken prior to December 31st, of the year you receive it. Upon completing your 10 years of service, you may elect to receive pay for the 4th week of vacation leave. Due to our accounting system a separate check can not be issued. Vacation leave may be used for rest and relaxation or for medical and legal appointments when sick leave is exhausted.

1. The County Administrator is authorized to pay, as terminal pay, all unused annual leave time, but in no case shall this terminal pay be for more than thirty (30) days. Upon the death of a permanent employee, there shall be paid to his estate a sum equal to all unused annual leave, but not to exceed thirty (30) days.
2. After all annual leave is exhausted, upon written request of the employee, a period of leave without pay may be granted at the discretion of the department head, and with the approval of the County Administrator, not to exceed ten (10) days for recreational purposes within a two (2) year period.

F. Sick Leave – Policy

Sick leave is intended to only be used in times of illness and for other related purposes. Employees should think of sick leave as insurance and should use sick leave only when necessary. Our sick leave policy is designed to prevent abuse of sick leave, but is intended to allow employees time for use in cases of major illness or disability.

Use of Sick Leave. Sick leave is not to be considered a right which an employee may use at his/her discretion, but a privilege not to be abused. Department Heads that have a reason to believe that an employee is abusing sick leave may place the employee on a 6-month Sick Leave Assessment and require the employee to furnish a physician’s certificate for each period of absence regardless of the provisions of Subsection (j) below.

Sick Leave Defined. Sick leave is paid leave that may be granted to each eligible employee who through illness or injury becomes incapacitated to a degree that makes it impossible for him to perform the duties of his position; an employee who has been quarantined by a physician because he has been exposed to a contagious disease; for medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment; or illness or injury of a member of an employee's immediate family as stated in subsection d. below. Sick Leave shall be granted for the following purposes only:

- a. In the case of actual sickness (including pregnancy) or injury of the employee.
- b. Medical, dental, optical or chiropractic examination or treatment for which arrangements cannot be made outside of working hours.
- c. Exposure to contagious disease which would endanger others as determined by a Physician.
- d. Illness or injury of a member of an employee's immediate family. Immediate family member is defined for sick leave purposes as "spouse, child, step-child, mother, father, mother-in-law, father in-law, grandparent or grandparent in-law who is domiciled in the employee's household and is financially dependent upon the employee."

Refer to Section 15 M Family Medical Leave Act for other leave available to care for the employee or family member.

G. Sick Leave Accumulation

Each full-time, permanent trainee and probationary employee shall earn sick leave at the rate of one (1) day per month.

H. Sick Leave - Use and Reporting

Employees are required to notify their supervisors as soon as possible, but no later than one (1) hour after the beginning of their regular workday, if they are unable to be at work because of illness. In departments where replacements or schedule changes are necessary, employees are required to notify their supervisors no later than one hour before work is scheduled to begin. Department heads are authorized to determine requirements for notification.

I. Sick Leave - Physician's Certification

For all absences due to illness extending beyond three (3) days, a physician's certificate providing proof the employee was unable to work due to illness, injury, or illness in the employee's family, shall be required upon request. A physician's certification regarding an employee's ability to return to work after an illness or injury may also be required. The department head, County Administrator or Board of Commissioners have the authority to request the certification.

Failure of an employee to provide requested proof shall constitute a reason for nonpayment of the days taken or the deduction of annual leave. Such action may also be construed as grounds for further disciplinary action.

J. Sick Leave - Payment Upon Separation

Employees will not be paid for any portion of unused sick leave when they leave the employment of the county, for any reason.

K. Donated Leave

This Policy shall apply to all employees of Lamar County who are eligible to accrue and use vacation and sick leave.

Donated Leave - Purpose:

The purpose of the Lamar County Leave Donation program is to provide employees with sick leave for use after their own leave has been exhausted. Donating leave days to an eligible employee is optional and voluntary.

Donated Leave - Policy:

To be eligible to receive donated leave days, the employee must have been continuously employed for at least one year and be entitled to leave. An employee must exhaust all accumulated sick leave, vacation and compensatory time before becoming eligible under the leave donation program.

No employee receiving worker's compensation or any other compensation (i.e. disability) for the absences shall be eligible to receive donated days.

An employee requesting donation of leave must have an absence due to a non-occupational, personal, or immediate family illness or disability for which they have medical documentation (medical documentation must be provided at the time donations are requested and at any time thereafter as required). Immediate family includes spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, or any other person who resides in the employee's household and is recognized by law as a dependent of the employee.

An employee shall NOT be permitted to use the leave donation program if the personal illness or personal temporary disability is related to an illegal activity (e.g. driving under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.)

An employee cannot solicit leave donations after returning to work in order to retroactively cover a period of absence.

Employees are ineligible to receive donated leave during the period of any disciplinary suspensions.

The Lamar County Leave Donation program shall NOT be used for maternity leave unless the mother experiences personal illness and/or personal temporary disability that are catastrophic in nature and requires absences beyond the accrued vacation and sick leave of the employee.

If an employee is physically or mentally unable to make a request to the Leave Donation program, a family member or agent may file the request on the member's behalf.

No employee shall threaten, coerce, or attempt to threaten or coerce another employee for the purpose of interfering with rights involving leave donation, receipt of leave donation, or the use of donated leave.

If an employee is found to have knowingly abused the use of the Leave donation program, the employee shall repay the days and be subject to such other disciplinary actions determined by Lamar County.

Approval by the Constitutional Officer or the County Administrator for non-constitutional officer employees must be granted before donated leave may be solicited and initially used by the Recipient.

When an employee has been approved as a Recipient, the recipient shall be assisted in developing a Solicitation for Leave Donations Notice. The Recipient or the Recipient's designee shall agree, in writing, that the announcement is satisfactory prior to the solicitation's circulation. The solicitations shall be circulated to all employees. Solicitation announcements shall be posted for twenty (20) business days; however, days may be used as they are accumulated.

Donated Leave Recipient:

Each employee requesting donated leave must submit a Request to Solicit Leave Donations along with a Certification of Health Care Provider for Donated Leave Form to the County Administrator or his/her supervisor no earlier than forty (40) calendar days prior to absence. A copy of the Policy for Donated Leave will be provided to each applicant.

The initial number of hours any employee may receive per occurrence is two hundred eighty-eight (288) hours. Additional use of donated leave shall be requested by the recipient by contacting the County Administrator or his/her supervisor. Additional medical certification may be required before approval is granted. An employee may receive up to 864 hours of donated leave within a rolling year (any period of 12 consecutive months).

If there is no reasonable expectation that the employee will be able to return to work and the employee qualifies for disability or service retirement or social security disability, the employee must apply for these benefits. Leave Days shall not be granted for periods of time for which the employee is eligible for and receives these benefits.

While using donated leave, the recipient may also accrue vacation and sick leave. This newly acquired leave will be used prior to the continuation of donated leave use by the recipient.

Donations shall be credited to the recipient in the order they are received by the County Administrator. Donations received after the maximum 288 hours has been reached will not be accepted and will be returned to the donors.

The recipient will be advised in writing by the appropriate designated individual of the amount of leave donated.

Prior to returning from use of donated leave for personal illness or injury, the Recipient will furnish a Release to Return to Work form from a licensed physician authorizing his/her ability to perform the essential functions of his/her job.

Upon return to full-time unrestricted duty, unused donated leave shall be returned to the Donor pro-rata as the same type of leave originally donated. All donated leave time given by one individual will be used until it has all been taken. When the first donated leave is used, the recipient will begin use of the second donated leave. The donor whose leave is being used at the time will be re-credited to the donor. Other donors whose time is unused will be returned to the donors.

Donated Leave - Donor:

The donor may contribute not more than 120 hours of vacation or sick leave per calendar year. The minimum donation is 8 hours. The donor of vacation leave must have a minimum of 40 hours of vacation leave remaining immediately after donation. The donor of sick leave must have a minimum of 40 hours of sick leave remaining immediately after donation.

The identity of donors is confidential and will not be provided to the recipient or any other individual unless necessary to administer the donation or required by law.

The donor must provide a completed Leave Donation Authorization form to the County Administrator or his/her supervisor within the time frame set forth by the Recipients Solicitation for Leave Donations Notice.

L. Childbirth Policy

In accordance with the policy on Equal Employment Opportunity, female employees shall not be penalized in their employment because they require time away from work caused by or contributed to/by pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, childbirth and recovery. Disabilities resulting from pregnancy shall, for sick leave purposes, be treated the same as any other temporary disability suffered by an employee. Accumulated sick leave may be used for the period of actual disability as a result of child bearing or recovery there from. Since there is no certainty as to when disability actually begins and ends, a doctor's certificate shall be required verifying the employee's period of temporary disability. Maternity leave is a period of approved absence for incapacitation related to pregnancy and confinement. Maternity leave may be charged to personal leave and leave without pay in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act.

M. Family Leave

A full-time employee is permitted to take family leave in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, effective August 5, 1993. The employee may elect to use accrued annual or sick leave before going on leave without pay status. Paid leave runs concurrent with Family and Medical Leave. Family leave may be used for the following:

1. Pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, childbirth, or recovery there from, initial child care and adoption and foster care.
2. Personal illness or disability. A doctor's certificate will be required verifying the employee's period of illness or disability.
3. Illness or disability of an immediate family member. Immediate family is defined as spouse, parents, and children including half step, and in-law relationships, or a member of the employee's household.

An employee desiring to take family leave shall notify the county in writing thirty (30) days prior to the use of such leave, whenever possible, stating the nature of the condition, the anticipated dates and duration of the requested leave and the types of leave requested. A permanent employee may be granted an additional leave of absence without pay for up to six (6) calendar months at the discretion of the Commissioners. Failure to report to work at the expiration of family leave, unless an extension has been requested and granted, shall be considered a resignation. Reinstatement to the same position or one of like classification, seniority and pay shall be made upon the employee's return to work. However, with the mutual agreement of the Commissioners and the employee, an employee may return to work at less than the normal number of work hours.

Accumulated sick leave is available to employees for any period of temporary disability before childbirth in the same manner as for any other temporary disability. The attending physician shall indicate in writing the period during which the employee is physically unable to work.

N. Leave Without Pay Policy

A County employee may be granted a leave of absence without pay for up to six (6) months by the Board of Commissioners, upon recommendation of the County Administrator and Department Head. An employee granted a leave without pay may be carried on the County's books in a non-pay status without benefits. The leave will be used for extenuating personal or immediate family circumstances, completion of education, or special work that will permit the County to benefit by the experience gained or the work performed. The employee will apply in writing to the Department Head for leave. He/ She is obligated to return to duty within, or at the end of the time determined appropriate by the Board of Commissioners. If he finds that he will not return to work, he should notify the Department Head immediately. Failure to report at the expiration of a leave of absence, unless an extension has been requested, will be considered a resignation.

An employee who continually exhausts their available leave will be subject to the following: An employee not reporting to work for three days anytime within a fiscal year under leave without pay due to poor planning resulting in exhaustion of all available leave will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Leave without pay is a benefit not to be abused. Employees should strive to conserve their leave days in an effort to be best prepared for unforeseen circumstances.

O. Use of Accumulated Annual and Sick Leave and Continuation of Benefits in General

Accumulated annual leave will be exhausted when an employee goes on leave without pay, except when he is drawing Workmen's Compensation payments. If an employee desires to go on leave without pay for reasons of personal disability, he must first exhaust accumulated sick leave, except when he is drawing Workmen's Compensation payments. A physician will furnish on a prescribed form when the period of disability actually begins and ends. When on leave without pay, an employee will not continue to earn leave or be paid for holidays. However, the employee will continue to be eligible for merit increases, and be eligible to receive benefits under the county's group insurance policies through COBRA. An employee going on leave without pay for reasons of personal or family disability will be reinstated to the same position or one of like classification, seniority and pay upon his return to work.

P. Military Leave

Employees who are members of the National Guard or Armed Forces Reserve will be allowed fifteen days military training leave, at adjusted pay, in one year. Adjusted pay means that the County will make up the difference between military pay and regular County base pay. Under emergency conditions, the Board of Commissioners may grant additional days of emergency leave. While on military leave, benefits and leave will accrue as though on regular County duty.

Employees serving a probationary period, and all part-time employees, must take leave without pay to serve any required duty. Employees serving military duty will be allowed to keep pay received from such duty.

Permanent employees who are guardsmen and reservists have all job rights specified in the Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act.

Q. Civil Leave

Civil leave may be granted when an employee is called for jury duty or as a witness in any civil or criminal legal proceeding. The employee will receive leave with pay for such duty without charge to accumulated leave.

An employee may keep fees and travel allowances received for jury or witness duty in addition to regular compensation, except that employees must turn over to the Finance Officer any witness fees awarded for court appearances in connection with official duties. When an employee's obligation for jury or witness duty ends during the work day, the employee should return to work as soon as practical.

While on civil leave, benefits and leave shall accrue as though the employee has been at work.

Exception: An employee who is a principle in private litigation shall not be entitled to civil leave, but may take annual leave or leave without pay for necessary court appearances with the approval of the County Administrator.

R. Funeral Leave/Bereavement Pay

Full time employees may be granted up to three (3) working days (the day before, the day of and the day after the funeral) paid leave as bereavement pay for funeral leave for immediate family. Only scheduled work days will apply. For any additional days required, an employee may use sick or annual leave days if approved by the department head. Employees must submit written documentation of the funeral in order to receive pay for days granted. Bereavement pay will not be used to calculate overtime.

Immediate family is defined as the following:

Wife	Half-sister	Stepdaughter	Daughter-in-Law
Husband	Half-brother	Stepson	Son-in-Law
Son	Mother	Stepmother	Grandmother
Daughter	Father	Stepfather	Grandfather
Sister	Mother-in-Law	Brother-in-Law	Grandson

Brother

Father-in-Law

Sister-in-Law

Granddaughter

S. Workers' Compensation

An employee who is temporarily disabled because of an injury or illness sustained directly in the performance of his or her work may be covered by the provisions of the Georgia Workers' Compensation Act.

Procedures

Non-emergency Occupational; Accidents or Disease (Car Accidents not Included)

- A. Accidents must be reported to your immediate Department Head within 24 hours.
- B. The Department Head must investigate the accident, complete a first report of injury or disease in full detail and forward immediately to Human Resources.
- C. If medical attention of physician is needed, the Human Resource Administrator or designee makes appointment for employee with physician of choice, selected from the six (6) physician's panel appointed by the Board of Commissioners for Worker's Compensation treatment.
- D. Department Head should direct any problem or question concerning claim to Human Resources.
- E. The Human Resources Department must be informed of date employee returns to work.

Emergency Accidents

- A. If a work-related accident occurs that requires immediate emergency treatment, the supervisor should be notified immediately and treatment received in the emergency room.
- B. After treatment is received, the First Report of Injury should be completed and submitted to the Commissioners' Office.
- C. Subsequent treatment must be directed to one of the County Workers' Compensation Insurance Physicians, unless the injury requires specialized treatment and the emergency room doctor refers the employee to a physician who specializes in the type of injury incurred.

If a Non-emergency occupational disease or injury should occur at night or on weekends that requires medical attention before regular office hours, procedure for emergency accidents should be followed.

Section 16 Return to Work

A. Purpose

It is the policy of Lamar County to provide and establish a return to work policy and procedure for employees with work-related injuries and illnesses who are unable temporarily and permanently, to return to their permanent job duties.

B. Process

Lamar County will seek return to work opportunities through the use of transitional employment for all employees who are temporarily disable due to on-the-job injury as quickly as medically possible. Transitional employment opportunities will be considered in all departments, not just the department in which the injured employee

was working before the injury or illness occurred. Transitional employment assignments are intended to assist workers who are transitioning back to work after temporary disability that resulted from a work-related injury. All transitional employment duties must be productive. Duties must never be demeaning or appear worthless in any way. Lamar County, through their reasonable accommodation program, will make efforts to retain employees who are permanently disabled.

Section 17 Nepotism

No person shall be appointed or employed in any regular classified position in the County if such appointment or employment would cause the employee to come under the supervision of a relative, either directly or through a chain of authority.

An employee may not be promoted into a position in which they would have supervisory responsibility over a relative, unless either relative can be transferred to another position that would break the chain of supervision.

For this nepotism policy, a relative includes mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, son, daughter, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepson, stepdaughter, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, half brother, half sister, grandchild, step-grandchildren, grandparent, grandparents of spouse, cousin, and any person domiciled in the employee's household.

Section 18 Outside Employment

Employees may hold outside jobs after obtaining written approval from the County Administrator and as long as they meet the performance standards of their job with the County. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to the County's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

If the County determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of the County as they are modified from time to time, the employee may be required to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain with the County.

Outside employment that constitutes a conflict of interest is prohibited. Employees may not receive any income or material gain from individuals outside the County for materials produced or services rendered while performing their jobs with the County.

Section 19 Substance Abuse

- A. Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide all employees of Lamar County with notice of the provisions of the County's drug testing program and policy.
- B. Policy: It is the policy of Lamar County that the nature of the work performed by County employees justifies the maintenance of a drug free work environment through the use of a reasonable employee drug-testing program. In order to ensure integrity and preserve public

trust and confidence in a fit and drug-free government agency, Lamar County shall implement a drug-testing program to detect prohibited drug use by employees.

C. Definitions

Probationary Employee: For the purposes of this policy only, a probationary employee shall be considered to be any person who is conditionally employed with Lamar County.

Supervisor: Those employees assigned to a position having day-to-day responsibility for supervising subordinates, or who are responsible for commanding a work element.

Sworn Employee: Those employees who have been formally vested with full law enforcement powers and authority.

High Risk Employee: Employees in safety and health sensitive positions, including, but not limited to, sworn employees, firefighters, and employees operating County vehicles and/or County equipment during the course of their job duties.

Drug Testing: The compulsory production and submission of urine or other approved testing method by an employee, in accordance with County procedures, for chemical analysis to detect prohibited drug usage.

Reasonable Suspicion: That quantity of proof or evidence that is more than a hunch, but less than probable cause. Reasonable suspicion must be based on specific, objective facts and any rationally derived inferences from those facts about the conduct of an individual that would lead the reasonable person to suspect that the individual is or has been using drugs while on or off duty.

Employee: An employee shall be considered to be any person employed by Lamar County on either a full-time or part-time basis who does not fall under the category of probationary employee.

Drugs: For purposes of this policy, drugs shall be defined as those illegal substances outlined in Chapter 13, Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated as well as alcoholic beverages.

D. Procedures and Rules

Prohibited Activity: The following rules shall apply to all applicants, probationary employees, and employees, while on or off duty.

1. No employee shall illegally possess any drugs or controlled substance while on duty or off duty.
2. No employee shall ingest any drugs or controlled or other dangerous substance unless as prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner.
3. High Risk Employees shall notify their immediate supervisor when required to use prescription medicine which they have been informed has the potential to impair job performance. The employee shall advise the Department Head of the known side effects of such medication and the prescribed period of use.

4. Department Heads shall document this information through the use of an internal memorandum and forward copies of said memorandum to the County Administrator.
5. High Risk Employees may temporarily be assigned to other duties when appropriate.
6. No employee shall ingest any prescribed or over-the-counter medication in amounts beyond the recommended dosage.
7. Any employee who unintentionally ingests, or is made to ingest, a drug or controlled substance shall immediately report the incident to their supervisor so that appropriate medical steps may be taken to ensure the employee's health and safety
8. Any employee having a reasonable basis to believe that any High Risk Employee is illegally using, or in possession of any controlled substance shall immediately report the fact and circumstances to his/her supervisor.

Employees must, as a condition of employment, abide by the terms of this policy and report any conviction under a criminal drug statute. A report of a conviction must be made within five (5) days after the conviction to the Department Head and the County Administrator. Within (30) days of learning of an employee's criminal conviction for illegal drug activity, the County will take appropriate personnel action.

Disciplinary Action: Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and may have legal consequences.

E. Applicant Drug-Test

Any applicant seeking employment with Lamar County shall be required to take a drug test as a condition of employment during a pre-employment medical examination. The test will be required after the interview process has verified that the applicant has the necessary skills required to perform the job duties. All applicants will be informed in advance that said testing shall be required. A candidate for employment shall not be allowed to start working until his/her drug test results have been reviewed and approved by the medical review officials.

Disciplinary Action: Applicants shall be disqualified from further consideration for employment under the following circumstance:

1. Refusal to submit to a required drug-test, or
2. A confirmed positive drug-test indicating drug use prohibited by this policy.

F. Employee Drug Testing

To ensure the success of this drug and alcohol policy, the County will require employees to undergo urinalysis or other medical drug and alcohol detection procedures under the circumstances described below.

All required medical tests will be conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy, in accordance with the guidelines established by the Georgia Department of Health and Human Services, at the County's expense by qualified, County-designated medical personnel. All job applicants and employees who are required to undergo testing must sign a consent form authorizing the medical personnel to conduct testing.

G. Sensitive Position (High Risk Employee) Testing

Certain positions are critical to the public welfare and fellow employees in regards to health and safety. High Risk Employees shall be required to submit to a drug and alcohol-screening test on an unannounced or a periodic basis from time to time as determined by the Department Head and the County Administrator. The following positions are to be considered sensitive:

1. Emergency Management: All personnel
2. Fire Departments: All certified and volunteer personnel
3. Roads and Bridges: All personnel
4. Recreation Department: All personnel

High Risk Employees may expect to be tested on an unannounced basis. The County Administrator is authorized to develop an unannounced and anonymous method of selecting employees for testing on a periodic basis. In each unannounced selection, the names of all employees subject to drug testing shall be included for each draw of names to be tested. The County Administrator, in conjunction with the County Commission, shall determine a percentage of employees to be tested each time, which is deemed both cost effective and sufficient to insure that the goals of the Policy are implemented. The County Administrator, with the concurrence of the County Commission, may direct the testing of any or all of the employees subject to testing on an occasional or periodic basis.

The County Administrator, with the approval of the County Commission, may designate additional positions which are deemed to be safety sensitive and subject to testing on an unannounced or periodic basis.

It is understood that certain firefighters are volunteers and contribute their time unselfishly for the protection of the citizens of their cities and County. The County recognizes the fact that volunteer firefighters ordinarily hold full time employment elsewhere, and in order to avoid disrupting their employment, volunteers shall be tested on their regular meeting night. In the event a volunteer is absent, his name shall be automatically submitted for unannounced testing at the next meeting.

H. Drug and Alcohol Screening Based on Reasonable Suspicion

Testing will be required when a supervisor reasonably suspects that an employee is impaired and/or unfit for duty due to illegal drug(s), controlled substances, or alcohol. Testing based on a reasonable belief that an employee is using or has used drugs or alcohol in violation of the policy may be drawn from specific objective and documented facts and reasonable inferences drawn from those facts and may be based upon, among other things:

1. Observable phenomena, such as direct observation of possession, transfer, drug use/or the physical symptoms of being impaired and/or unfit for duty due to a drug.
2. Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior while at work that includes but is not limited to: slurred speech, staggered gait, flushed face, dilated/pin point pupils, deterioration of work performance to include absenteeism and tardiness.
3. A report of drug use during assigned working hours provided by reliable and credible sources and which has been independently corroborated.

Each employee is subject to, but not entitled to, drug or alcohol testing whenever the County is under a reasonable suspicion that the employee uses illegal drugs or controlled substances, abuses legally obtained drugs, or abuses alcohol.

An employee who is tested pursuant to a reasonable suspicion will be suspended pending the test outcome. If the test is negative, the employee will be allowed to return to work with full back pay, unless the suspension was imposed for additional reasons unrelated to this Policy.

I. Testing After Work-Related Accidents

All employees involved in a work related incident which requires medical attention, involves personal injury, or property damage **must** be tested **immediately** for drug and/or alcohol use in accordance with department policies. Any employee involved in a motor vehicle accident while driving a County vehicle on a public roadway will be subject to testing for drugs and alcohol. This section shall also apply to any employee involved in a motor vehicle accident while driving his or her private vehicle on County business. A drug test shall be administered when a sworn employee is involved in shooting incident.

J. Treatment as Part of Physical Examination

If the County requires a physical examination for employees, then employees will be required, as part of the examination process, to submit to a substance abuse test during the examination.

K. Return to Work

The County has the right to require any employee who returns to regular employment after being placed on layoff status for more than fourteen (14) calendar days or after medical leave of absence or personal leave, other than vacation, of more than fourteen (14) calendar days, to undergo a drug test as a condition of his or her return to work.

L. Treatment Program Testing

The County has the right to require any employee who has been referred by the County for chemical dependency treatment or evaluation to undergo drug testing before returning to work and randomly for up to one (1) year following the completion of the rehabilitation program. The County will provide a list of treatment facilities for the employee's benefit.

M. Disciplinary Action

Any High-Risk Employee who tests positive on a confirmatory drug test and who does not timely and successfully refute the test result by explanation or retesting will be discharged. A confirmed positive test of employees, other than High Risk Employees, will be suspended without pay and referred for counseling, which may include suitable medical treatment and/or rehabilitation. If an employee refuses to seek assistance or tests positive upon return to work, the employee will be discharged.

N. Drug Testing Policies and Procedures

Pre-test Interview:

A pre-test interview shall be conducted by testing personnel with each applicant or employee in order to ascertain a list of those prescriptions and over the counter medications that he or she has recently used. The list of medications shall be kept confidential. The list of medications shall be disclosed only to the medical review officials who will determine whether a false positive result might be due to the lawful use of any of the listed medications.

O. Drugs to be Tested For

1. The drugs to be tested for include, but are not limited to the following: Marijuana, Sedatives, Methaqualone, Methamphetamine, Opiates/Narcotics, Stimulates, Amphetamines, Benzadiazepines, Hallucinogens, Alcohol, and Cocaine.
2. Any employee who undergoes any test for alcohol and the results indicate a blood alcohol concentration of 0.04 or more shall be considered to be in violation of this policy and shall subject the employee to all the terms and conditions of the policy.

P. Consent

Before a test is administered, the job applicants will be asked to sign a consent form authorizing the test and permitting release of test results to the employer and the medical review officials. The consent form shall provide a space for employees and job applicants to acknowledge that they have been notified of the requirements of this policy.

Q. Refusal to Consent

Job Applicants: any applicant for a job with Lamar County who refuses to consent to a drug test shall be denied employment.

Employees: Any employee who refuses to sign the consent form or submit to a drug and alcohol test as required herein shall be subject to termination. Employees who fail to appear at the designated collection site to take the test when so directed shall also be subject to termination.

R. Failure to Cooperate

Any employee who (1) fails to cooperate with a County investigation into possible violations of this policy or (2) refuses to sign the consent to, or to take, a drug test or alcohol test, will be discharged.

S. Collecting and Testing Procedures

All drug testing shall be conducted by licensed medical practitioners at a facility authorized by the County Administrator. All specimen collection and tests for drugs will be performed in accordance with the Department of Health and Human Services guidelines to insure accuracy of drug test results, quality control over laboratory analysis procedures and the protection of privacy.

Security: The laboratory and/or medical facility selected shall meet the requirements of the United States Department of Health and Human Services to ensure proper security, proper chain of custody, and proper integrity and identity of the specimens. The procedures and guidelines for testing shall be available for inspection by contacting the office of the County Commission.

Access to Records: Any applicant or employee who is the subject of a drug test will, upon written request, have access to records relating to his/her drug test.

T. Drug-Test Results and Confidentiality

All records pertaining to County required drug tests shall remain confidential, and shall not be provided to other employers or agencies without written permission of the person whose records are sought.

Section 20 Harassment

A. Policy Against Harassment and Retaliation

No discrimination should exist against any employee, or applicant for employment because of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability, with respect to hiring, promotion, firing, compensation or other terms, and conditions or privileges of employment.

The work environment shall remain free from illegal discrimination and harassment. Any harassment that is imposed upon an employee because of that employee's race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or the employee's status as being physically or mentally disabled violates this policy and may violate federal and state law.

The harassment prohibited by this policy includes unprofessional comments, slurs, jokes, innuendos, cartoons, pranks, physically intimidating harassment, requests or demands for sexual favors from subordinates or co-employees when such actions are taken, in whole or in part, on the basis of the affected employee being a member of the class of individuals referred to in the preceding paragraph.

Prohibited harassment also includes actions of a retaliatory nature which are taken against a subordinate or co-employee because of that employee's participation in activities protected by federal and state discrimination laws, such as reporting an incident of discrimination or harassment.

Employees have the right to be free from illegal harassment and retaliation on the job by co-workers, supervisors, management, and business visitors. The harassment and retaliation prohibited by this policy includes, but is not limited to, the types of activities specifically referred to herein. However, the activities identified do not represent an exhaustive list of prohibited harassment or retaliation, but are representative of the types of activities that have been found to violate federal and state law under certain circumstances. It is equally important to note that mere disagreements or differences of opinion as to personal or employment matters (which exist without regard to either employee's race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or existence of physical or mental disability) do not violate this policy.

The harassment prohibited by this policy also constitutes a violation of state and federal law when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or otherwise creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Such conduct would include carrying out acts of retaliation.

B. Sexual Harassment and Retaliation

Lamar County takes all complaints regarding illegal harassment seriously.

As a particular form of harassment, sexual harassment interferes with the integrity of the employment relationship. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature, but refers to behavior that is unwelcome, that is personally offensive, that lowers employee morale, and which, as a result, adversely effects the work environment. Sexual harassment is not limited to supervisory/employee relationships, but can involve co-employees, and under certain circumstances non-employees. Sexual harassment has been defined under federal and state law to include, but not be limited to:

1. Unwelcome sexual advances;
2. Requests for sexual favors;
3. Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature; or
4. Creating (or maintaining) a sexually hostile or offensive work environment.

C. Procedure for Complaints Regarding Prohibited Harassment and Retaliation

Any employee who believes that he or she is being harassed or retaliated against in violation of this policy should provide a written complaint immediately (within 10 days) to the first level of supervision in their chain of command who is not directly involved with the incident. If an employee chooses, the complaint can be brought directly to the County Administrator or the County Commission.

D. Investigation and Discipline

Once notified pursuant to this policy of any form of harassment or retaliation, the County Administrator shall initiate an investigation as soon as possible, though such investigation should begin within three working days of such notice. The investigation will include separate interviews with the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator, as well as other persons who may have observed the alleged harassment or retaliation or who may be in a position similar to that of the alleged victim.

In determining whether the investigation has revealed a violation of this policy, the investigation may rely upon federal and state anti-discrimination laws, as well as guidelines promulgated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the applicable provisions of this policy. The entire record will be evaluated in determining whether any action constitutes harassment or retaliation and the context in which the alleged incident occurred will be considered. Each determination under this policy will be made from the facts of the particular incident, or series of incidents, on a case-by-case basis. To the extent practicable under the circumstances of each situation, each investigation will be handled as promptly and with as little dissemination of the information gathered as possible. All such investigations will be, to the extent practicable, conducted in a manner that will protect all employees' privacy and minimize unfounded accusations with respect to all parties concerned. Nevertheless, because of the importance of thorough investigations, as well as obligations placed upon the employer by federal and state law, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, though every effort will be made to keep access to information regarding complaints and investigations as limited as possible under the law.

If the investigation reveals that an employee did engage in harassment or retaliation prohibited by this policy, the County Administrator will take appropriate action which

will, at a minimum, include a warning that any further harassment could result in negative employment action, including and up to termination. However, the County Administrator will attempt to take appropriate action based upon the particular acts of each incident, or series of incidents. Additional action taken by the County Administrator may include verbal and/or written reprimands, a letter documenting the incident to the employee's personnel file, employee transfers, or other actions deemed appropriate to sufficiently resolve the problem identified.

In situations where the complaint can neither be substantiated nor proven false, a general reminder will be made to all employees regarding the potential ramifications of substantiated harassment complaints. Allegations, which are proven to be false, may result in similar disciplinary action to that described above.

Any employee dissatisfied with the decision of the County Administrator may appeal that decision as provided in Section 11 (B) (3).

Section 21 Smoking

This smoking policy establishes the County Commission's intent to comply with all applicable state and local regulations regarding smoking in the work place and to provide a work environment that promotes productivity and the well-being of its employees.

The County Commission recognizes that smoking in the work place can adversely affect employees; therefore, as the legal custodian of all County properties, it is the County's policy to prohibit smoking inside all County facilities and vehicles.

This smoking policy applies to ALL employees during working time and to customers and visitors while on County premises. The County will not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their use of legal products, such as tobacco, if the use occurs during non-working time and not on County employment premises.

The County does not have an obligation to accommodate smokers with "smoking areas" or "smoke breaks"; however, the designated open air areas where smoking would not be intrusive to others and would not depict an established "smoking area," may be feasible in certain instances. The County Commission has designated all "smoking areas" to be ten (10) feet away from all County owned buildings.

Smoking employees have a special obligation to keep County property free of smoke related litter.

Employees who violate the policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with this policy.

Section 22 Breaks

Breaks are not required by law and consequently should be considered as a privilege and limited to the time indicated by the department head. Breaks should not interfere with the employee's work and should not be taken unless work circumstances warrant. Office personnel and other employees responsible for answering the telephone and serving walk-

in visitors shall arrange to have their duties handled by another employee while they are on break.

Breaks shall be confined to county property unless otherwise allowed by the Department Head. Under no circumstances may break time be carried over into another time period, saved for another day, combined with other types of leave or added together to make one long break. Break time will not exceed fifteen (15) minutes each for the morning and afternoon.

Section 23 Internet Use Policy

Computer and Internet are to be used for County business only. Because of the possibility of viruses Employees are not to connect to any Social Network site or download files or programs from unreliable sites.

Section 24 No Solicitation

Vendors are not allowed to market products, services, etc. on county property during office hours excepting those vendors representing a company dealing in products or services related to the business of Lamar County. Approval for those excepted will be at the discretion and direction of the Department Head or County Administrator to ensure minimal office disruption.

Section 25 Use of County Property and Vehicles.

Use of property owned or leased by the county is intended for official county business only. Property including supplies, tools, materials, and equipment are not for personal use and should not be removed from county premises except in the conduct of official county business.

Vehicle Fleet Safety

The purpose of the Vehicle Fleet Safety policies and procedures is to insure that each employee who operates a vehicle on county business maintains acceptable standards of proficiency and safety.

1.01 *RESPONSIBILITY*

Human Resource Administrator – will perform a Motor Vehicle Record check on all post offer applicants. The human resource department will further ensure that all potential employees meet the minimum driver qualifications as listed below when the open position requires driving a County vehicle, and review semi-annual MVR record (Annual checks will be performed on employees driving County vehicles on a sporadic basis.)

Supervisor – will ensure all drivers have a valid Georgia drivers' license before placing the employee in a position requiring operation of a County vehicle.

Supervisors will also make sure employee is familiar with County vehicle before allowing them to leave County property.

Authorized Driver – employee given permission by the department to drive either a County or a personal vehicle on County business. Employee must obey all motor vehicle laws, maintain the vehicle properly at all times, and otherwise follow the procedures listed in these guidelines.

2.01 POLICIES

The County is dedicated to eliminating conditions that adversely affect the well being of employees and otherwise threaten financial stability through accidental losses.

Employees shall operate all vehicle used for county business in a safe and economical manner. In order to accomplish this, the following practices will be followed:

- A. **Drivers License:** All drivers must have a valid Georgia driver's license for the class of the vehicle operated, and must be able to drive the vehicle. License acquisition and renewal is a personal expense. Commercial Drivers' Licenses (CDL or CDL/HAZMAT) is handled according to the departmental procedure.
- B. **Driver Qualifications:** All drivers of County vehicles must meet the following criteria with the exception of Public Safety employees who have completed a course in emergency vehicle operations:
 - 1. Must be at least 18 years of age;
 - 2. They are an authorized driver for the County;
 - 3. Must meet licensing requirements;
 - 4. Will not qualify to drive a County vehicle, or be hired or transferred into a position requiring driving a County vehicle if the driver/applicant has had any of the following within the prior 36 months:
 - a. been convicted of a felony;
 - b. been convicted of sale, handling or use of drugs;
 - c. been convicted of an alcohol or drug-related offense while driving;
 - d. had drivers' license suspended or revoked for a moving violation;
 - e. been convicted of three or more speeding violations or one or
 - f. more other serious violations;
 - g. been involved in two or more chargeable accidents.

Exceptions to the above qualifications, excluding Public Safety employee/applicants, require advance approval, in writing by the Lamar County Board of Commissioners or his/her designee.

A. Maintenance of Vehicle

Authorized drivers are required to properly maintain their County vehicle at all times. Vehicles should not be operated with any defect that would inhibit safe operation during current and foreseeable weather and light conditions. Preventive maintenance, such as regular oil changes, lubrication, tire pressure and fluid checks determine to a large extent whether employees will have a reliable safe vehicle to drive and support

County work activities. Employees should have preventive maintenance completed on their assigned county vehicle as required.

B. Prescription and non-prescription drug use

Employees are responsible for informing their treating physician(s) regarding required job duties to ensure that the physician approves the use of prescription medicine while at work. The employee reporting to work must inform their supervisor of any therapeutic drug use with related driving restrictions. Over the counter drugs must not be used when the label states “do not operate machinery,” or similar language. Employees must report non-prescription drug use to their supervisor when side effects may interfere with driving duties.

C. Seat Belts – All drivers and passengers in all County vehicles shall wear seat belts while the vehicle is in operation for non-emergency situations (All emergency personnel exempt).

D. Theft – The County is not responsible for loss or theft of personal items left in County vehicles.

E. Personal Use of Vehicles – authorized employees for official County business shall use county vehicles, unless a county vehicle is not available. The Board of Commissioners may authorize Departments Heads, or other personnel, because of their position, duties or the emergency nature of work, to take County owned vehicles to their residences following normal duty hours. No unauthorized passengers or drivers will be allowed to either operate or ride in the vehicle. Transporting family members in County vehicles shall be allowed only when the family member is accompanying an employee to a business meeting or official functions. Vehicles assigned, are not to be used in such a manner as to bring discredit upon the County.

Roadside work

Any employee working on the roadside must be conscious of dangers of oncoming traffic hazards and observe safety rules.

The normal cautions used in Certified Safety Flagging class are to be followed. (Flaggers are to be certified.)

1. All heavy trucks must be equipped with adequate and working warning lights.
2. When less than five minutes is expected for roadside work, at a minimum, an escort truck with flashing amber lights must be provided behind the work area at a sufficient distance to protect the workers with appropriate signage.
3. All workers are to wear florescent safety vest, especially when working near traffic.
4. Adequate signage and cones are to be used.
5. Every effort should be made to locate a working truck out of the lane of traffic.

Section 26 Personal Telephone Calls

County phones, including cell phones, are to be used for county business and may be used for personal business on a very limited basis. Telephone calls received during business hours must be held to both a minimum number and time limit and must not interfere with the employee's work. Under no circumstances are employees allowed to conduct any business pertaining to other employment on County phones. Personal long-distance calls should never be made without Department Head approval unless they are charged to your home phone or a calling card. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that no cost to the County results from personal telephone calls. Violation of this policy will result in reimbursement to the County and possible disciplinary action.

Section 27 Dress Code and Grooming Code

The image of the county is directly related to the employees of the county and the way in which they conduct and present themselves.

All employees are expected to dress at all times in an acceptable and professional manner, which is consistent with good business practice and weather conditions. The department head is responsible for determining what acceptable attire for the department is. (The following clothing items are not appropriate at any time: halter necks, tank tops, mini dresses, spaghetti strap tops, leggings, jeans/khaki's with holes, overalls, low front or back, sheer clothing, clothing that is too tight or too short, flip flops and slippers, crocs of any kind, or clothing/hats that have inappropriate words, pictures, scenes, etc., that would be disruptive to the work environment.

Section 28 Employee Ethics

All employees are expected to abide by the County's Code of Ethics found in the Employee's Handbook.

Section 29 Employee Benefits

Only full-time employees shall be eligible to receive any employee benefits provided by the County. Members of the Lamar County Board of Commissioners are eligible for county insurance and the pension.

Section 30 Contributions, Gifts and Gratuities

The following rules apply to contributions and solicitations, as well as the distribution of literature on Lamar County property:

1. People not employed by the Lamar County Board of Commissioners may not solicit or distribute unauthorized literature on County property at any time for any purpose or cause.
2. A copy of proposed literature for internal distribution must be approved in writing by the County Administrator prior to dissemination.

3. No employee shall accept anything of value from anyone when the basis for such gratuity is related to the employee's condition and status as an employee of Lamar County. Value is defined as anything that exceeds \$50. Attendance at sponsored receptions and general functions open to a broad range of persons is excluded from this prohibition. The County shall pay its own way at events and activities when a representative should be authorized. General gifts such as food baskets that are received at holiday time should be discouraged, but if received may be distributed at a common area for employees. Any gift that exceeds \$50 should be returned to the contributor, if practical, or turned over to the County Administrator as a public property for public disposal or accounting as County property.

Section 31 Political Activities

A covered employee shall not engage in political activities at the work place or during business hours.

Section 32 Policy Changes and Miscellaneous Matters

No part of this policy nor any of the procedures hereunder is intended to affect the County's right to manage its workplace, to discipline its employees, or guarantee employment, continued employment, or terms or conditions of employment. This policy in no way creates an obligation or contract of employment. The County reserves the right to alter or amend the policy at any time at its sole discretion.

If any part of this policy is determined to be void or unenforceable under state or federal law, the remainder of the policy, to the extent possible, will remain in full force and effect.

These policies supersede all previous personnel policies, benefits and considerations. All policies not expressly referred to herein are hereby rescinded and null. These policies shall reflect, and be superseded by, any changes mandated by state or federal legislation.

Any changes, supplements, additions, or deletions to this policy will be distributed as soon as possible. A delay in distribution will not delay the effective date of the changes, supplements, additions, or deletions.