



**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK
FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF THE
CITY OF NICEVILLE**

Revised: September 2025

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INTRODUCTION

TO ALL STAFF

Welcome to the City of Niceville,

We are thrilled to have you as a part of our team. Your role within our organization is vital, and we have full confidence in the significant contribution you will make to provide exceptional municipal services to the residents. Your unique abilities and skills make you an integral member of our team, playing a key role in our collective success.

Our overarching goal is to continually elevate our municipal services, and we see you as a representative of our city in achieving this objective. We hold our employees to high standards, expecting a display of pride in your work and adherence to the performance benchmarks established by your respective departments.

In order to maintain a harmonious and productive work environment, we require that all employees comply with the rules and regulations outlined in this manual. While this handbook serves as a guide, it is important to note that it does not constitute a contractual agreement between the City and any employee. It doesn't bind either party to specific procedures, policies, benefits, working conditions, or terms of employment. Additionally, it's not an exhaustive document, and policies are subject to change at any time.

Our employment relationship is at-will, granting both parties the ability to terminate it at any time. This handbook is effective as of July 2025 and supersedes any previous documents that might conflict with the policies presented herein. We retain the right to amend, revise, modify, or remove certain provisions of the handbook, with or without prior notice.

We sincerely hope that your experience as an employee of the City of Niceville is fulfilling and rewarding, and we look forward to achieving great success together.

David Deitch
Niceville City Manager

I. AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

Please keep in mind as you read to refer to this handbook that its contents are not intended to and do not create a contract between the City and any employee. This includes Department heads, who work at the discretion of the City Manager. Nothing in this handbook binds the City or any employee to any specific procedure, policy, benefit, working conditions or period of employment, nor is the handbook designed to be all inclusive. These policies may be changed at any time. Employment with the City is at-will, meaning that the employment relationship can be terminated at any time, with or without cause, by either party. Only the City Manager or an authorized representative has the authority to enter into an agreement that alters the at-will employment relationship, and any such agreement must be in writing and signed by City Manager or an authorized representative.

II. COMMITMENT TO EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A. Equal Employment Opportunity

The City of Niceville is an Equal Opportunity Employer. People who are selected for employment in the City are hired on the basis of merit and qualifications. Discrimination is strictly prohibited with respect to recruitment, examination, hiring or appointment, training, promotions, retention, compensation or any other terms and conditions of employment for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, (including childbirth, lactation and related medical conditions), national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, veteran status, political affiliation, age (40 and over), genetic information (including testing and characteristics), sickle cell traits or testing, HIV or AIDS (actual or perceived), marital status, or any other class protected by law or non-merit factors. Preference will be given to preference-eligible veterans in accordance with applicable law.

Any individual who believes that they or someone else has been subjected to discrimination in violation of this policy should report it pursuant to the Complaint Procedures described in the City's Discrimination and Harassment policy. If the City determines this policy has been violated, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, will be taken.

B. Recruitment

In accordance with Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) regulations and our policies, recruitment for the City's positions shall be carried out in the manner necessary to obtain well-qualified candidates and shall insure that all segments of the population are given an equal opportunity to apply and be considered for employment.

The City's hiring process is centralized, with all applications being received by Human Resources. Departments should refer applicants to Human Resources.

All applicants who meet the minimum qualification requirements for the position (as specified in the position description) shall be eligible for further consideration for employment and may be tested, interviewed, reference checked or subjected to similar selection processes. To qualify for any position that is identified “sensitive”, the applicant will require a full background check. Additionally, firefighters and sworn police officers are required to complete a physical exam and psychological evaluation.

Employees who have successfully completed their probationary period may apply for open positions within the City. If the employee meets the requirements for the position, as advertised, the employee will be granted an interview. Employees should submit an application to the Human Resources.

C. Disability Accommodations

The City will make reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of qualified applicants and employees with a disability unless they would result in undue hardship for the City or a direct threat to the health and/or safety of the individual or others. Qualified individuals with a disability are encouraged to discuss their need for accommodation with the Director of Human Resources. The Director of Human Resources will communicate with the individual and engage in an interactive process to determine the nature of the issue and what, if any reasonable accommodation may be appropriate. If necessary, the Director of Human Resources shall provide the employee requesting accommodation with copy of his/her position description and a certification form requesting that a health care provider of the employee’s choice 1) determine if an accommodation is needed to perform the essential requirements of the position due to a disability, and 2) identify recommended accommodations. The Director of Human Resources and the City Manager will then consult with legal counsel, if necessary, to determine if the accommodation being requested is reasonable and effective. Once the legal sufficiency review is completed, the Director of Human Resources or the City Manager shall discuss the City’s findings with the employee. If an identified accommodation is reasonable and will not impose an undue hardship on the City and/or a direct threat to the health and/or safety of the individual or others, the City will generally make the accommodation, or it may propose another reasonable accommodation that may also be effective. Employees are required to cooperate with this process by providing all necessary documentation supporting the need for accommodation, and being willing to consider alternative accommodations when applicable.

D. Religious Accommodation

The City will provide reasonable accommodations for an employee’s religious beliefs, observances and practices when a need for such accommodation is identified and reasonable accommodation is possible without causing undue hardship to the conduct of the City’s business. Any employee who perceives a conflict between job requirements and a religious belief, observance or practice should bring the conflict and their request for accommodation to the attention of the Human Resources Director to initiate the

accommodation process. The City asks that accommodation requests be made in writing, and in the case of schedule adjustments, as far in advance as possible.

E. Pregnancy Accommodation

In accordance with the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA), the City will make reasonable accommodations for known physical or mental limitations related to the pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions of a qualified applicant or employee, unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the City's business. Employees or applicants who wish to inform the City of such a limitation and request a reasonable accommodation under this policy should contact the Human Resources Director, preferably specifying in writing what barriers or limitations prompted the request and their requested accommodation.

The City will evaluate information provided regarding any reported or apparent barriers or limitations and will then communicate with the applicant or employee and engage in an interactive process to determine the nature of the limitation and what, if any, reasonable accommodations may be appropriate. The City will not require a qualified employee to take leave if another reasonable accommodation can be provided. If leave is provided as a reasonable accommodation, it may run concurrently with leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act and any other applicable leave as permitted by law.

III. GENERAL EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

A. Employee Classifications

City employees are classified as either exempt or nonexempt under federal and state wage and hour laws, and are further classified for administrative purposes.

- a. Regular Full Time – These employees work on a continuing career basis, and are generally scheduled to work 40 or more hours weekly, on average. Employees in this category are regularly established positions and receive all the rights and benefits as provided by the Human Resources System.
- b. Regular Part Time – These employees work on a continuing career basis, and are generally scheduled to work 29 hours or less weekly, on average. Employees in this category are not eligible for fringe benefits such as holiday pay, Paid Time Off, or Group Health Insurance, but are eligible to participate in the Florida Retirement System and are covered by workers' compensation.
- c. Temporary - Temporary employees are those employees engaged to work for a limited period of time. These positions are not subject to competitive examination until such time as their status with the City is considered for Regular Full Time or Regular Part Time employment. At that time, these employees must compete for the regular positions on the basis of qualifications. Due to the temporary nature of their employment, temporary employees are

not regularly established positions and will not accrue fringe benefits such as holiday pay, Paid Time Off, or Group Health Insurance afforded to Regular Full Time and Regular Part Time employees except as specifically authorized in writing by the City Manager.

- d. Probationary Employees - Each new Regular Full Time or Regular Part Time employee is on probation for the first six (6) months of their employment. Additionally, employees will be on probation for a period of three (3) months following a promotion, transfer, or reinstatement.
- e. Exempt – These are employees whose job assignments meet specific tests established by the federal and state law and who are exempt from minimum wage and overtime pay requirements. Exempt employees are compensated on a salary basis.
- f. Nonexempt – These are employees whose job positions do not meet federal and state exemption tests, and who are not exempt from minimum wage and overtime pay requirements. Nonexempt employees are eligible to receive overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a given week, or as otherwise required by applicable state law.

If you are unsure of your classification, please ask your supervisor.

B. Romantic and Family Relationships at Work

This policy is aimed at upholding the principles of fairness, transparency, and integrity in our workforce.

We will not take any adverse employment action against any employee for engaging in romantic relationships during non-working hours away from City premises. However, we will consider such relationships when they affect an employee's job performance, occur during working time, occur on City premises or pose a potential conflict of interest.

A familial or intimate relationship among employees can create an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in the employment setting, especially if one relative, spouse, partner or member of such a relationship supervises another relative, spouse, partner or member. To avoid this problem, we may refuse to hire or place a relative or other intimately associated individual in a position where the potential for favoritism, nepotism, or a conflict of interest exists.

If two employees marry, become related or enter into an intimate relationship, they may not remain in a reporting relationship or in positions where one individual may affect the compensation or other terms or conditions of employment of the other individual. In other cases where a conflict or the potential for a conflict arises, even if there is no supervisory relationship involved, the parties may be separated by reassignment or terminated from

employment, at the discretion of the City Manager. For the purposes of this policy, a "relative" is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

Employees are required to promptly inform the Director of Human Resources of any change in their relationship status that may violate this policy so the potential impacts on City operations or potential conflicts of interest can be evaluated and appropriate actions can be taken.

C. Personnel Files

Human Resources will maintain employee files containing employment and work history, records of personnel actions, and a current correct address, phone number, marital and dependent statuses. Employees must notify Human Resources of any change of address, phone number, or personnel status. Access to employee personnel files shall be in accordance with Florida State Statutes.

Human Resources will monitor, coordinate, provide, support and maintain appropriate records data, analysis and reports on recruitment, selection, placement and all other personnel actions.

D. Performance Reviews

New probationary employees in Regular Full Time or Regular Part Time positions should receive an evaluation sixty (60) days after their hire date, ninety (90) days after their hire date, and immediately prior to the end of their probationary period. Employees who transfer from Regular Part Time to Regular Full-Time positions will receive an evaluation after sixty (60) days in the new position. After the probationary period, Regular Full Time and Regular Part Time employees should receive an evaluation semi-annually for the duration of employment. The purpose of these evaluations is to assess and evaluate the work performance of the employee. However, supervisors and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, day-to-day basis.

Performance evaluations not only impact potential pay adjustments, but also influence decisions regarding training, promotion, retention, and potential separation from City employment.

E. Personal Data Changes

To better assist employees and/or their families in the event of personal emergencies, the City needs to maintain up-to-date contact information. Maintaining accurate information in our files is also important for recordkeeping, payroll, tax, and benefits-related purposes.

Changes in name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, next of kin and/or beneficiaries should be given to Human Resources promptly.

F. Discipline

The City's progressive discipline policy is designed to address unsatisfactory performance or violations of City policy, including workplace rules. It is the City's intention that discipline be used to help employees identify and correct their performance or violation of policy. It is intended that the first violation or instance of unsatisfactory performance be addressed with the lowest level of discipline, a coaching session, and that subsequent violations or instances be addressed with increasingly severe forms of discipline. However, the City reserves the right to skip any of the steps of progressive discipline and progress to higher steps in the progress depending upon the nature and number of the employee's violation or performance issues. Discipline, excluding coaching, should not be conducted until after discussion with Human Resources.

If an employee's violation of policy or work rules is so severe that the supervisor determines immediate action is necessary in order to maintain the safety of the public and/or other employees, the supervisor may instruct the employee to leave the premises and not return until advised by Human Resources, department head, or City Manager. The supervisor should notify the department head and Human Resources immediately.

G. Voluntary Open-Door Policy

Several arrangements are available for employee communications. The first and most valuable is for the employee to discuss matters of mutual interest with their immediate supervisor. Communications needing to proceed further up the administrative staff and that do not fall under the Grievances policy should observe the appropriate chains-of-authority. Human Resources may be contacted at any time for communication of personnel-related information. Constructive suggestions, especially those which may improve the service of the City to the public, are always welcome.

While we provide employees with this opportunity to communicate their views, please understand that not every complaint can be resolved to the employee's satisfaction. Even so, we believe that open communication is essential to a successful work environment, and all employees should feel free to raise issues of concern without fear of reprisal.

Please note that some City policies, such as the Discrimination and Harassment policy, contain specific reporting procedures that should be followed by employees seeking to report violations of those policies. Employees should utilize this policy for reports and ideas that are not addressed through the City's specific reporting or Grievances procedures.

H. Grievances

General Policy

The grievance policy provides regular employees with a fair and equitable review of any grievance without fear of discrimination, coercion, restraint or reprisal. Further, it ensures that every reasonable effort will be made to resolve the matter as efficiently and effectively

as possible. Grievances should be about the misapplication or misinterpretation of this manual or applicable departmental rules and regulations. It is expected that the procedures set forth below will encourage employees to discuss with their supervisors' matters pertaining to conditions of employment as they affect individual employees. It is the intent and desire of the City to resolve complaints or grievances informally, and both administrative staff and employees are expected to make every effort to resolve problems as they arise and at the lowest level possible. However, it is recognized that there will be grievances which cannot be resolved on an informal basis. This grievance procedure is established to provide full opportunity for employees to bring to the attention of administrative staff or the City Manager complaints, grievances or situations that the employee feels need either resolution or information.

Grievance Procedure

A written complaint should be as detailed as possible, including the names of individuals involved and witnesses, date and any documentary evidence. The City will conduct a prompt investigation and make a determination. If City policies have been violated the City will take action proportionate with the circumstances.

Level 1 - Whenever a grievance arises, the employee shall, within five (5) working days of the occurrence of the incident, explain and discuss the complaint, grievance, or inquiry orally with his/her supervisor, who may then call the department head into the discussion, in an effort to achieve a prompt, satisfactory adjustment. Once all relevant circumstances have been discussed with the employee, the supervisor will make a decision and notify the employee within three (3) working days after the discussion with the employee. To ensure consistent application of policy, the supervisor should consult with his/her department head, the City Manager and Human Resources before rendering a decision on the matter.

Level 2 - If the complaint is not resolved within three (3) working days as outlined in Level 1, the aggrieved employee may choose to submit his/her grievance in writing to the next highest level of supervision (usually the department head). A written grievance submitted above the level of immediate supervisor and department head should contain the following:

1. The date and place at which the grievance took place, if applicable.
2. A statement of the grievance and the facts upon which it is based.
3. The remedy, adjustment or information requested.
4. The signature of the aggrieved employee.

The supervisor will forward the original complaint form and reply to the department head. A meeting will then be scheduled with the employee within five (5) workdays after receipt

of the appeal. The department head will provide a written decision to the employee within three (3) days after the scheduled meeting.

Level 3 – If the complaint cannot be resolved by the department head, the employee may appeal to Human Resources. The appeal should be initiated within three (3) workdays of the department head decision. The employee should provide all information, which was considered by the supervisor and department head, and any other useful information to Human Resources for consideration and review. The department head will forward the original complaint form and the reply. A meeting will be scheduled with the employee within five (5) workdays after receipt of the appeal. Human Resources will provide a written decision to the employee within three (3) days after the scheduled meeting.

Level 4 – If the complaint cannot be resolved by Human Resources, the employee may appeal to the City Manager. The appeal shall be initiated within three (3) workdays of Human Resource’s decision. The employee and Human Resources should provide all information from previous levels, and any other useful information to the City Manager for consideration and review. A meeting will be scheduled with the employee within five (5) workdays after receipt of the appeal. The City Manager will provide a written decision to the employee within three (3) days after the scheduled meeting.

Please note that some City policies, such as the Discrimination and Harassment policy, contain specific reporting procedures that should be followed by employees seeking to report violations of those policies. Employees should utilize this policy for Grievances reports not addressed through the City’s specific reporting procedures.

Non-Retaliation Policy

No one will be subject to, and the City prohibits, any form of discipline, reprisal, intimidation or retaliation for good faith reporting of a grievance. Additionally, no employee shall be punished solely on the basis that he or she reported in good faith what was reasonably believed to be a violation of City policy or law. False and malicious complaints; however, may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.

IV. CODE OF CONDUCT

A. General Standards of Conduct

As public employees, all City employees must strictly comply with all legal and ethical standards in work-related matters, as well as acceptable behavior during the performance of duties and in certain situations outside of assigned duties. Adherence to applicable laws, regulations, and policies is mandatory. Employees are expected to act with integrity, civility, and professionalism at all times. While examples of unacceptable performance or conduct are provided in this policy, it is important to note that this list is not exhaustive. Examples of unacceptable conduct include, but are not limited to:

- a. Violation of laws, regulations, or City policies
- b. Illegal discrimination or harassment in any form
- c. Theft, fraud, or dishonesty
- d. Destruction or misappropriation of City resources
- e. Falsifying records, or providing false information
- f. Insubordination
- g. Disrespectful behavior towards colleagues or the public
- h. Unprofessional or disreputable off-duty conduct that reflects poorly on the City or the employee's character and judgment
- i. Failure to comply with the drug and alcohol policy
- j. Conducting or attempting to conduct personal business of any kind during work hours or on City property without prior permission

Any violation of these standards of conduct, whether explicitly mentioned or not, may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Disciplinary measures will be determined based on the severity of the violation and may range from counseling and retraining to suspension and termination.

While the City respects the privacy of its employees, it's important to recognize that their behavior, even while off-duty, is a representation of the City to the public. Certain types of behavior may reflect poorly on the City, impacting public trust and an employee's standing with the City. Employees should be mindful that certain off-duty behaviors, especially unprofessional, disreputable or illegal actions may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees are required to promptly report any arrests to their supervisor immediately.

B. Conflicts Of Interest

To avoid misunderstandings and potential, actual or perceived conflict of interest, all City employees must abide by the following policies:

- i. Employees shall not accept any gifts, including Christmas gifts, favors or services that is valued at more than \$20 or that may reasonably tend to improperly influence them in the discharge of their official duties.
- ii. Employees shall not use or attempt to use their position to secure special privileges or exemptions for themselves or others, except as explicitly permitted by policy and/or law.
- iii. Employees shall not accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity which they may reasonably expect would require or induce them to disclose confidential information acquired by them by reason of their official position.

- iv. Employees shall not disclose confidential information gained by reason of their official position, nor shall they otherwise use such information for their personal gain or benefit.
- v. If an employee of the City is an officer, director, agent or member of, or owns controlling interest in, any corporation, firm, partnership or other business entity which is subject to regulation of, or which has substantial business commitments with the City, they are required to provide a written statement disclosing their interest to the City Manager.
- vi. Employees shall not transact any business in their official City capacity with any business entity of which he or she is an officer, director, agent, or member, or in which he or she owns a controlling interest, excluding civic, charitable or religious organizations.
- vii. Employees shall not have personal investments in any enterprise which will create a substantial conflict between their private interest and the public interest.
- viii. Employees should not receive personal mail or other deliveries at their place of work at the City. Such deliveries may be refused or opened in the course of the City's business. Personal visits by friends, relatives or other contacts should be limited during work hours.

C. Political Activity

Employees are prohibited from leveraging their official authority or influence, either in support of or against candidates vying for elective office (municipal, county, state or federal), during their working hours or in any way that could disrupt the execution of their job responsibilities.

Solicitation of assessments, contributions, or services for any political party from fellow employees, whether orally, through written communication, or otherwise, during their working hours or while fulfilling their duties for the City, is strictly forbidden. Furthermore, employees are barred from interfering with elections or nominations or attempting to coerce, command, or advise City employees to contribute a portion of their salary, kick back money, anything valuable to any political candidate or entity. Engaging in political activities during work hours, or the unauthorized use of City resources for political purposes is also prohibited. However, employees maintain their right to vote and freely express their political opinions on any subject or candidate. They are also entitled to participate in political campaigns during off-duty hours, provided such actions do not conflict with any provisions of Florida law. When in doubt, please ask first to ensure compliance with this policy.

D. Confidentiality of City Business

In regard to City business, employees are advised that information related to ongoing discussions or considerations often undergoes changes in context and meaning before reaching a finalized state. Premature release or compromise of such information prior to a final decision or resolution can result in misunderstandings, confusion, and embarrassment for the City. While the City does not intend to be secretive or withhold valid information, employees must exercise great care to ensure that any released information is based on true facts, authorized by the department heads, and devoid of supposition, rumors, or guess work.

All employees are obligated to treat City business as confidential until it is confirmed to be ready for public release. They are expected to be aware of the confidential nature of various aspects within certain City departments. Exercise of good judgment is essential when considering the release or discussion of official matters or any information that may impact the personal or business affairs of others. Prior written approval from your supervisor is required prior to the release of sensitive or privileged information. When in doubt, ask your supervisor.

Employees found to have improperly used or disclosed confidential information will face disciplinary action, up to and including potential termination of employment and legal consequences, even if they do not derive direct benefit from the disclosed information. This policy encompasses confidential information relating to, but not restricted to, our customers and citizens.

E. Privacy and Confidentiality

While we strive to support public trust through transparency and accountability, certain information, files, and data are subject to privacy and confidentiality requirements. Each employee should use all reasonable care to protect or otherwise prevent the unauthorized disclosure of such information. In no event should employees access or disclose private and confidential information regarding residents, businesses, processes, or similar information without proper authorization or purpose.

Additionally, employees who have the following information by virtue of the performance of their job responsibilities should not disclose such information for any reason, except as required to complete job duties or with permission: Social Security Numbers, driver's license or resident identification numbers, financial accounts, credit or debit card numbers, and security and access codes or passwords that would permit access to medical, financial or other legally protected information.

Nothing in this Employee Handbook prohibits an employee from communicating with any governmental authority or making a report in good faith and with a reasonable belief of any violations of law or regulation to a governmental authority; disclosing confidential information that the employee acquired through lawful means in the course of their employment to a governmental authority in connection with any communication or report;

or from filing, testifying or participating in a legal proceeding relating to any violations, including making other disclosures protected or required by any whistleblower law or regulation.

V. WORKPLACE CONDUCT

A. Public Relations

As an employee of the City, you are expected to treat people with dignity and respect and manage their matters in a professional manner that fosters respect for the City's reputation for courteous and efficient service. Friendliness, cheerfulness, helpfulness, courtesy, informality, and sincerity are crucial qualities to display in service to the public.

B. Dress And Personal Appearance

The image the City projects to the public is reflected in the appearance of our employees. Simply stated, employees should look neat, clean and well-groomed and should be dressed appropriately to perform their specific duties. Employees are expected to use good judgment in their appearance and grooming, keeping in mind the nature of the work, their own safety and the safety of co-workers, and their need to interact with the public.

Below are a few guidelines for professional appearance:

- Clothing should be well-fitting and not constitute a safety hazard.
- All employees should practice common sense rules of cleanliness and comfort.
- When jeans are appropriate for the position, the jeans must be in good condition.
- Tank tops, jogging suits, slippers, garments that are unnecessarily revealing, sweats, and other similar apparel are generally not permitted unless approved by a particular department based on job duties.
- If an employee shaves, then the employee's facial hair should be clean-shaven or trimmed. If an employee does not shave, facial hair should be clean.
- Jewelry may be restricted for safety reasons, based on the position.
- Uniformed employees are expected to abide by the dress code for their department.

We encourage employees to seek the advice of their supervisor if they have questions regarding appropriate dress, appearance or uniform requirements at work.

Employees who report to work in a manner that violates this policy may be instructed by their supervisor to return home to change. The time that Nonexempt employees are absent for this purpose will be unpaid unless state law requires otherwise.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent employees from wearing a hair or facial hair style that is consistent with their cultural, ethnic or racial heritage or identity. This policy will be interpreted to comply with applicable local, state or federal law.

The City will reasonably accommodate an employee's religious beliefs, medical condition or disability by making exceptions to this policy. Employees who need such an accommodation should contact their supervisor or the Director of Human Resources

C. Outside Employment

The City does not prohibit employees from holding other jobs; however, the following types of outside employment are prohibited:

- Employment that conflicts with the employee's work schedule (including mandatory overtime and call-back hours), job duties and responsibilities to the City;
- Employment that creates an actual or potential conflict of interest;
- Employment that impairs or has a detrimental effect on the employee's work performance;
- Employment that requires employees to conduct work or related activities during work time for the City or using any of the City's resources; and
- Employment that discredits the City or damages public trust.

For the purposes of this policy, self-employment is considered outside employment.

Employees are required to inform their supervisor of any outside employment to ensure transparency and compliance with these guidelines.

D. Use Of City Property

The City provides all necessary equipment and materials for employees to fulfill their job responsibilities. It is the duty of every employee to respect the value of all equipment, materials, supplies, or other resources, recognizing that these are funded by the taxpaying residents of Niceville.

Personal use of City equipment, materials, supplies or other resources is strictly prohibited. Employees are expected to utilize these resources exclusively for work-related purposes and in a manner that maximizes efficiency and effectiveness.

Employees are encouraged to report any observed violations of this policy to their supervisor, Human Resources, or the City Manager. Reporting plays a vital role in ensuring accountability, upholding the integrity of the organization, and retaining public trust. Any misuse or unauthorized use of equipment, materials, supplies or other resources may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

E. Driving for City Business

Employees assigned a City-owned vehicle or other equipment for job-related tasks are responsible for proper use and arranging any needed maintenance or repairs with the appropriate City department. Other than emergency vehicle responses, employees are

expected to comply with all local, state and federal laws while operating City vehicles and other equipment, and while driving a personal vehicle for City business. This includes, for example, wearing seat belts, traveling at a safe speed, refraining from using a wireless communication device to type, send or read a non-voice communication (including texting, e-mailing and instant messaging), and obeying all traffic laws. The improper, careless, negligent, destructive or unsafe use or operation of equipment or vehicles, as well as excessive or avoidable traffic and parking violations, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees will be responsible for all liabilities, fines, etc., that result from such traffic and parking violations, to the extent permissible under the law.

Employees are to use City-owned vehicles or other equipment for work-related purposes only, and the driver and any passengers must be authorized by the City. Smoking within any City vehicle is strictly prohibited.

Any accidents while driving on City business, regardless of severity, must be reported immediately to the police and to the Director of Human Resources. Failing to stop after an accident or failing to report an accident may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Drivers are responsible for the security of vehicles assigned to them. Other than certain emergency vehicles, the vehicle engine must be shut off, ignition keys removed and vehicle doors locked whenever the vehicle is left unattended.

Employees whose job responsibilities necessitate holding a valid Florida driver's license must ensure that their license remains current and without any legal issues. Additionally, employees whose position requires a Florida chauffeur's license or a valid Florida Commercial Driver's License (CDL) are expected to obtain the appropriate license within their first year of employment and maintain it in a current and valid status, free from any legal complications. Any alterations in the status of a required license must be promptly reported to the employee's supervisor. Failure to maintain the necessary license or report changes may impact the employee's job classification and could result in employment consequences up to and including termination.

F. Attendance And Punctuality

Timely and regular attendance is an essential function of each employee's job at the City. Any tardiness or absence can cause problems for fellow employees, supervisors, and the public.

Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled, be on time, and be prepared to start work. Employees are also expected to remain at work for their entire work schedule, except for meal or break periods or when required to leave on authorized City business or otherwise authorized to leave. Non-approved late arrivals, early departures or other absences from scheduled hours are disruptive and must be avoided.

The City is aware that emergencies, illnesses, or unforeseeable personal matters may arise unexpectedly. If you are unable to report for work or will be late due to unforeseen circumstances, you are required to notify your supervisor with as much notice as possible for each day you will be late or absent. If you know in advance that you will need to be late or absent, you are required to request PTO or other leave time from your supervisor in accordance with those policies.

Excessive unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departures may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, unless legally protected. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Even one unexcused absence or tardiness may be considered excessive, depending upon the circumstances.

Absent extraordinary circumstances or a legally protected reason, if an employee fails to report for work without notification to their supervisor and their absence continues for a period of two days, the City will consider the employee to have abandoned and voluntarily terminated their employment.

G. I.D. Card Policy

All employees are required to adhere to the I.D. Card Policy issued by the City Manager, as may be updated from time to time and distributed to all employees. The most recent policy is also available from the Network Operation Team. Employees are required to abide by the most recent policy to maintain the security and integrity of the City's facilities and systems. In general:

Ownership and Responsibility:

- I.D. Cards are the property of the City and must be returned upon request, or termination of employment.
- Employees are responsible for keeping their I.D. Card secure at all times and must wear or carry their I.D. card at all times while on City premises.

Securing Your I.D. Card:

- Employees must store their I.D. cards in a safe, secure location when not in use to prevent loss, theft, or unauthorized use.
- Any loss, damage, or theft of the I.D. card must be reported immediately to the Network Operations Team or Human Resources

Prohibition on Sharing I.D. Cards:

- I.D. cards are assigned to specific individuals and must not, under any circumstances, be shared, loaned, or given to others.
- The use of another individual's I.D. card is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

Prohibition on Cloning I.D. Cards:

- Cloning, duplicating, or tampering with I.D. cards in any form is strictly forbidden. Any attempt to replicate an I.D. card for unauthorized access will result in immediate investigation and potential disciplinary action.
- The use of unauthorized devices or methods to read or clone I.D. card data is a serious violation of the City's security protocols and will be handled accordingly.

Enforcement and Disciplinary Action:

- Any employee found to be in violation of this policy may face disciplinary actions, including suspension of access privileges, disciplinary measures in line with City of Niceville policies, and potential legal consequences for serious breaches.

Card Replacement:

- In the event of a lost, stolen, or damaged I.D. card, employees must notify the Network Operations Team or Human Resources immediately to receive a replacement. Replacement fees may apply in cases of repeated loss or damage.

H. Solicitation And Distribution

The City believes that, at their places of work, employees should be free of unnecessary distractions or undue pressure to donate, purchase items/services or "lottery" tickets, sign petitions, or participate in similar non-work-related fundraising or activities. Therefore, while at work, we ask that that employees limit these activities, as well as distribution of written materials related to such activities, to non-work time and on a strictly voluntary and occasional basis. Supervisors in particular should avoid situations where subordinates feel pressured to participate due to the working relationship. Under no circumstances should the City's electronic resources or equipment be used to engage in these activities.

Strict compliance with these rules is required absent written approval from the City Manager. This policy does not apply to solicitation and/or distribution by the City or in connection with official City business.

I. Disciplinary Actions, Causes and Guidelines

Violation or work rules may result in disciplinary action up to and including unpaid disciplinary suspension and/or dismissal. It is impossible to compile a complete list of offenses, so **you should use good judgment, responsible conduct and common sense as a guide.** Please note that violation of any of the policies in this handbook or violation of any other City policy or procedure may result in the denial of unemployment benefits. For the guidance of all employees, the following are examples of offenses which can result in disciplinary action:

1. Using or possessing power equipment to which the employee has not been assigned or has not been properly trained to use safely and in accordance with City requirements.
2. Quitting work, wasting time, loitering, or leaving assigned work area during working hours without permission.
3. Taking more than the specified time for meals or rest breaks.
4. Productivity or workmanship not up to required standards of performance.
5. Discussing, directly or indirectly, or the disclosure without authorization of any privileged information concerning a City matter learned in the course of working for the City.
6. Discourtesy to persons with whom the employee comes in contact while in the performance of duties.
7. Unexcused or excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or leaving early.
8. Violating safety rules or safety practices.
9. Creating or contributing to unsafe or unsanitary conditions, littering or poor housekeeping.
10. Threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing, or interfering with fellow employees or supervisors at any time including use of abusive, offensive, or derogatory language; including racial or ethnic slurs, as well as sexually offensive language.
11. Sleeping or loafing during duty hours.
12. Publishing or causing to be published, false, vicious or malicious statements concerning any employee, supervisor, the City Manager or the operation of the City.
13. Reporting for work, or being at work, while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
14. Mistakes due to negligence which affect the safety of other personnel, equipment or property.
15. Vending, soliciting or collecting contributions for any purpose whatsoever at any time at work unless authorized.
16. Knowingly harboring a serious communicable disease which may endanger other employees.
17. Wanton or willful neglect in the performance of assigned duties.
18. Deliberate misuse, abuse, destruction or damaging of any property of the City or the property of an employee.
19. Receipt from any person, or participation in, any fee, gift, or other valuable thing in the course of work, when such fee, gift or other valuable thing is given in the hope of or expectation of receiving a favor or better treatment than that accorded other persons in the line of official duty.
20. Dishonesty, including but not limited to the falsification of personnel records or any official records of the City.
21. Deliberately making false claims or misrepresentation in an attempt to obtain sickness or accident benefits, or Workers' Compensation.

22. Insubordination or refusal to comply with the written or verbal instructions of a supervisor.
23. Violation of the Drug-Free Workplace and Alcohol policy
24. Use or attempted use of political influence or bribery to secure an advantage of any manner.
25. Concerted curtailment, restriction of production, or interference with work in or about workstations, including, but not limited to: instigating, leading or participating in any walkout, strike, sit-down, stand-in, slowdown, or refusal to return to work at the scheduled time for the scheduled shift.
26. Conviction of any serious crime which brings disrepute or embarrassment to the City or which would be considered as not conducive to the employee's continuing his/her assigned duties, or which would affect coworker's morale adversely should the employee remain in the City's employment.
27. Engaging in horseplay, running, scuffling, throwing things, or similar types of disorderly conduct.
28. Distributing written or printed matter of any description on City premises unless approved by City Manager.
29. Making of false, vicious, or malicious statements concerning any employee, the City or its methods of operation.
30. Provoking, or instigating a fight, or fighting at any time on City premises.
31. Theft or removal from the premises without proper authorization, any City property or property of any employee.
32. Unauthorized possession of firearms, explosives or weapons on City premises.
33. Use or possession of another employee's tools without the employee's consent.
34. Engaging in sabotage or espionage.
35. Gambling while at work or on City premises.
36. Failure to contact your supervisor as soon as reasonably practicable (preferably at least one hour in advance) of any absence from scheduled work time.
37. Smoking in areas not designated as smoking areas.
38. Failure to follow instructions or rules regarding the wearing of identification badges, Personal Protective Equipment or employee parking requirements.
39. Entering City premises when not authorized to do so.
40. Refusing to take a drug or alcohol test when requested by the City.
41. Failing to timely report an injury, accident, incident or unsafe condition to your supervisor or Human Resources.
42. Failure to follow dress code that the City requires for your position.
43. Violation of any Federal or State law.

This is not intended to be an inclusive list, and disciplinary action may result for any other valid cause.

In all cases, a memorandum of the disciplinary action shall be placed in the employee's personnel file and a copy thereof furnished to the employee.

VI. DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE AND ALCOHOL POLICY

A. Purpose

The City acknowledges the problem of substance abuse, including alcohol abuse, in our society. The City regards substance abuse as a serious problem and desires to take appropriate steps to shield its employees from injuries and other ill effects of substance abuse. The Florida legislature has found that individuals abusing alcohol and using illegal drugs have a serious adverse effect on morale, productivity, absenteeism, and workplace safety. This problem results in unnecessary costs and imposes an unfair burden upon employees who choose not to abuse alcohol or use illegal drugs, and it creates an unsafe work environment for everyone. Problems associated with substance abuse can be eliminated by striving to obtain and maintain a workforce that does not use illegal drugs or abuse prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, or alcohol.

It is the goal of the City to have a workforce free of those who choose to use illegal drugs, misuse prescription drugs, or abuse alcohol. In addition to providing a safer workplace, the City expects to enjoy reduced workers' compensation costs. This policy will help the City achieve these goals. This policy became effective on the 2nd day of January, 1993. All employees who remain in the City's employ after that date shall, by remaining employed, be considered to have signified their agreement to abide by the terms and conditions of this policy as it currently exists and as it may, from time to time, be amended.

B. Scope

The City Council of the City of Niceville has authorized the City Manager to develop and implement a drug testing program to comply with the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Drug-Free Workplace Program, F.S. 440.102 This policy shall apply to the following:

- (1) To all employees of the City of Niceville, from the City Manager to each new hire.
- (2) To all others who fall under the umbrella of the City's Workers' Compensation liability.
- (3) Job applicants – All job applicants who have received a conditional offer of employment.

C. Penalties

In order to ensure the effectiveness of this program, the City intends to take full advantage of the penalties provided by law. With respect to job applicants who have not successfully passed the drug screen described below, the offer of employment and any further consideration of employment with the City shall be withdrawn. With respect to employees found to be in violation of this policy, the appropriate penalties include the following:

- i. Denial of workers' compensation benefits as provided by law.
- ii. Denial of unemployment compensation benefits as provided by law.
- iii. Disciplinary action, including termination, pursuant to the procedures provided by law.

D. Prohibited Conduct

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of employees, fellow employees, and the citizens of the City of Niceville, the following conduct is strictly prohibited:

- i. Reporting for work or engaging in work for the City of Niceville with any of the following substances in your bloodstream:

Alcohol, including distilled spirits, wine, malt beverages, and intoxicating liquors.	Opiates	Cannabis (marijuana)
Amphetamines	Barbiturates	Ecstasy
Cannabinoids	Benzodiazepines	LDS
Cocaine	Methadone	Peyote
Phencyclidine (PCP)	Propoxyphene	Methamphetamine
Methaqualone	Heroin	Morphine
Vicodin	Fentanyl	Opium
Steroids	Ketamine	Oxycodone

- ii. When testing is conducted, the City will engage an independent laboratory to conduct tests for the above substances according to State and Federal Law.
- iii. Job applicants offered a position with the City, who refuse to be tested, will receive no further consideration for employment. Employees who refuse to be tested will be subject to the penalties described above, including termination, subject to the procedures provided in this policy.

E. Policy

- i. Requirements of employees: All employees are expected to report to work in a state of mind and physical condition so as to be able to perform their assigned duties safely and competently as defined by the Drug-Free Workplace Program set forth in F.S. 440.102, and the rules promulgated by the Division of Workers' Compensation of the Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security as these rules appear in the Florida Administrative Code, Vol. 38 F-9.001, et seq. For this reason employees must:
 1. Not use or be under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal controlled substances while on duty or consume alcohol/drugs outside the workplace that would affect their ability to perform their job.
 2. Not report to work, or return to work, with the odor of alcohol on their breath, regardless of whether or not one is under the influence of alcohol or intoxicated. If drugs or alcohol, as defined in F.S. 440.102, are found to be present in an employee's system at the level prescribed by the division drug testing rules, one is in violation of this program.
 3. If an employee uses an over-the-counter or prescription drug which is in any way influencing the employee's ability to perform his job (causing drowsiness, slowing reaction time, distorting perception, etc.), he/she must request temporary reassignment or leave the job as appropriately determined by the supervisor. Under no circumstances shall an employee work in a condition which increases risk of harm to life or property. This notification shall be kept strictly confidential in accordance with law. An employee's failure to notify his or her supervisor before starting any work-related activity will cause the employee to lose this exemption and be subjected to discipline under the terms and conditions of this policy.
 4. Immediately report any observed violation of this policy to his or her supervisor, or any supervisor within the department.
 5. Notify your supervisor immediately or by the close of the next business day, if you have been charged with, arrested for, or convicted of an alcohol or drug-related offense occurring at the workplace, or a conviction of a drug-related offense occurring outside the workplace, or if a driver's license has been suspended or revoked for a drug-related or alcohol-related offense and a valid driver's or commercial driver's license is required to perform the job.

6. Not refuse to submit to a test for drugs or alcohol when so requested in accordance with this policy, thereby subjecting the employee to forfeiture of eligibility for medical and indemnification benefits under the workers' compensation statute upon exhaustion of the procedures prescribed in F.S. 440.102.

7. Observe this policy as a condition of continued employment. Violation of any aspect of this policy will result in discipline up to and including termination.

F. Testing Procedures

i. The City of Niceville will conduct drug tests under the following circumstances:

1. All applicants who have been offered employment with the City of Niceville shall be required to take and successfully pass a drug screen in order to obtain employment with the City.

2. Follow-up drug testing will be performed on an annual, semiannual, or quarterly basis for up to two years following a return to work by an employee who has entered an employee assistance program for drug-related problems or an alcohol and drug rehabilitation program.

Follow-up drug testing shall be conducted routinely and on a random basis. Its frequency shall be determined by a process of random selection among the pool of affected employees.

3. A drug test will be required of an employee as part of a routinely scheduled employee fitness-for-duty medical examination when such examination is scheduled for all members of an employment classification or group.

4. A drug test will be required whenever there exists a reasonable suspicion that an employee is using or has used drugs, including alcohol, in violation of this policy. Such a reasonable suspicion must be drawn from specific objective and articulable facts and reasonable inferences drawn from those facts. Such facts and inferences may be based upon the following, non-inclusive, factors:

a. Observable phenomena while at work, such as direct observation of drug use or of the physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of a drug.

- b. Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior while at work or a significant deterioration in work performance.
 - c. A report of drug use, provided by a reliable and credible source.
 - d. Evidence that an individual has tampered with a drug test during his employment with the City of Niceville.
 - e. Information that an employee has caused, or contributed to, or been involved in an accident while at work.
 - f. Evidence that an employee has used, possessed, sold, solicited, or transferred drugs while working or while on the City of Niceville's premises or while operating the City's vehicle, machinery, or equipment.
- 5. Post-accident drug testing is required whenever an employee has caused, or contributed to, or been involved in an accident at work.
- ii. The Drug Test Process. When drug testing is required under this policy, the following procedures will be followed:
 - 1. An employee injured on duty will receive appropriate medical treatment for the injury prior to drug testing. When it is determined that testing is appropriate, the employee shall be tested at a designated collection site as soon as medically feasible, where specimens shall be obtained.
 - 2. Urine will be used for the initial test for all drugs except alcohol and for the confirmation of all drugs except alcohol. Blood will be used as the initial and confirmation test for alcohol; however, breath may be used as a specimen for alcohol testing provided that it is tested in accordance with F.S 440.102.
 - 3. The City of Niceville shall pay the costs of initial and confirmation drug tests which are required of employees. An employee shall pay the costs of any additional drug tests not required by the City.
 - 4. An appropriate specimen will be collected by a physician, a physician's assistant, a registered professional nurse, a licensed practical nurse, a nurse practitioner, or a certified paramedic who is present at the scene of an accident for the purpose of rendering

emergency service or treatment, or by a qualified person employed by a licensed laboratory as authorized by law.

5. At the time of testing and following testing, the employee shall be provided with a form for the purpose of providing any information the employee considers relevant to the test, including identification of currently or recently used medications. The form shall also provide notice of the most common medications by brand name or common name, as well as chemical name, which may alter or affect a drug test result. Such information provided will be reviewed by a medical review officer in interpreting any positive confirmed results.

6. All laboratory procedures and chain of custody requirements will conform to the requirements of F.S 440.102. and the implementing rules and regulations. The initial screen for all drugs will use an immunoassay except that the initial test for alcohol shall be an enzyme oxidation methodology. All specimens identified as positive on the initial test shall be confirmed using GC/MS, except that alcohol will be confirmed using gas chromatography.

7. The results of the drug test shall remain confidential as provided by law; however, upon request, the applicant or employee shall be provided with a copy of the test results. In any event, when the drug test produces a positive confirmed test result, the City shall inform the employee or job applicant in writing of the positive test result, the consequences of the result, and the options available within five (5) working days after the City receives the test result from the testing laboratory. Employees and job applicants have the right to consult the testing laboratory for technical information regarding prescription and non-prescription medications. Employees and job applicants have a statutory responsibility to notify the testing laboratory of any administrative or civil action brought pursuant to F.S 440.102.

8. An employee or job applicant who receives a positive confirmed drug test result may contest or explain the result to the City Manager within five (5) working days after receipt of written notification of the positive test result. The employee or job applicant may submit information to the City Manager explaining or contesting the test result or describing why the results do not constitute a violation of the City's policy. If an employee's or job applicant's explanation or challenge is unsatisfactory to the City Manager, a written explanation as to why the explanation is unsatisfactory, along with the report of positive results, shall be provided by the City Manager to the employee or applicant, and all pertinent documentation shall be kept confidential by the City and shall be

retained by the City for at least one (1) year. The employee or applicant may contest the drug test result pursuant to rules adopted by the Department of Labor and Employment Security. A copy of these rules is maintained in the City Manager's Office and is available for inspection and copying.

iii. Confidentiality:

1. Any information received by the City through its drug testing program constitutes a confidential communication, and may not be used or received in evidence, obtained in discovery, or disclosed in any public or private proceeding, except in accordance with F.S. 440.102 of the Florida Workers' Compensation Drug-Free Workplace Act, or in determining compensability under Florida Workers' Compensation law.

2. The City, laboratories, employee assistance programs, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, and their agents who receive or have access to information concerning drug test results shall keep all such information confidential. Release of such information under any other circumstance than those set forth in this policy shall be solely pursuant to a written consent form signed voluntarily by the person tested, pursuant to the procedure established by F.S. 440.102

3. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the City, its agents, or the laboratory conducting a drug test, from having access to employee drug test information when consulting with legal counsel in connection with actions brought under or related to this section or when the information is relevant to its defense in a civil or administrative matter.

G. Employee Assistance Programs

The City recognizes the importance of providing employees with the opportunity of participating in appropriate employee assistance programs. These programs are designed to provide counseling, rehabilitation, and therapy to employees who, voluntarily and on their own, recognize that they may have a substance abuse problem and choose to obtain assistance. The City has contacted local resources for such programs, has provided them with a copy of this policy, and maintains a list of resources available for those employees who may choose to seek assistance.

F.S. 440.102 provides that the City shall not discharge, discipline, or discriminate against an employee solely upon the employee's voluntarily seeking treatment for a drug-related problem if the employee has not previously tested positive for drug use, entered an employee assistance program for drug-related problems, or entered an alcohol and drug

rehabilitation program, and is not making the request for voluntary treatment in response to a notice that they are required to complete a drug test,

H. Collective Bargaining Agreements

This policy is subject to the terms of collective bargaining agreements concluded between the City and appropriate categories of employees.

I. Notice

This Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy constitutes notice of its provisions. A copy of this policy will be maintained in the Administrative Office building and a copy will be placed in the Library. Notices concerning the drug-free workplace will accompany all job vacancies.

VII. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

A. Personal Communications

City-owned telephones, cellular phones, laptops, voice mail systems, tablets, and fax machines are provided for City business use.

Personal use and both incoming or outgoing communications should be restricted as much as possible. If personal use during office hours becomes necessary, it should be brief and reserved for urgent matters.

Text Messaging

All City employees shall comply with the City of Niceville Text Messaging Policy. In general, employees must use a City of Niceville issued phone to send and receive text messages related to City business. Text messaging City business on a personally owned device is not allowed. Text messaging should only be used to send messages of “transitory” nature. Messages relating to actions and outcomes of City business should be handled via email. No personal or private information shall be sent over text message, including but not limited to: attorney-client privileged communication, social security numbers, credit card numbers, and passwords.

Employees shall delete transitory (records created or received by the City which are typically of short-term, temporary informational use) text messages from their City phone as soon as they are no longer needed. Any non-transitory public record information must be forwarded to the employee’s email account for accurate record-keeping.

Text messages are subject to public disclosure under the Public Records Act. If the City receives a public records request for any text message correspondence,

the City Clerk’s Office will ask staff to produce any responsive text messages that exist on their City-owned devices at the time of the request. Compliance is mandatory.

Below is a list of examples that show when text messaging can be used and when it should not.

Allowed to Text	Not Allowed to Text
I’ll be late to the meeting.	I’ll be late, but I think we should appoint “_____” to the “XYZ” committee.
I just sent you an email.	We need a decision on the preferred alternative for this “_____” public contract. What do you think?
Could you please call me?	Use the following language in the press release “Announcing....”
The Mayor is trying to get in touch with you.	The Mayor wants to know your thoughts on city council proposal for “_____”.
Can you pull the elected/appointed official out of this meeting?	We need to schedule a closed door meeting with So and So Official and the other board members for later today.
Can you cover me in today’s meeting?	We need to meet with all the stake holders about this issue.
I emailed you a draft, please review.	Use this language in the staff report: “_____.”
We’re out of paper clips.	Office Depot has a best price on paper clips. I’ll send you the link so you can buy some for us.
Please review the list of trees to be removed on the SharePoint site.	Please remove the hazardous tree at _____ park.

Exceptions

Text messaging is an important communication tool for employees working in the field and responding to an uncommon, unexpected, or major emergency. In these situations, employees are allowed to relay important time-sensitive information. Once the emergency is over a copy of the text should be forwarded to the employee’s City email account for accurate record-keeping, unless dialpad is used.

B. Workplace Computer, E-Mail And Internet Use

Electronic mail, Internet access and other electronic media and equipment are business tools that are provided by the City of Niceville to its employees to facilitate timely and efficient conduct of business. To help ensure that these tools are used appropriately, the City has developed the following acceptable use policy. This policy addresses access, use and disclosure of data, electronic mail, and Internet messages and material created, sent, or received by the City’s employees using the City’s workplace computers, e-mail, and internet system (“The System”). The City intends to honor the policies set forth below,

but reserves the right to change and add to them at any time as may be required under the circumstances.

The System is primarily for business use, but limited personal use is permitted so long as such use is not excessive and does not interfere with business needs or operations or incur additional costs;

- The e-mail system is the property of the City and all e-mail messages composed, sent, or received are the property of the City. The mere deletion of a message or file by an employee may not eliminate it from the System;
- Incoming and outgoing messages and attachments are subject to monitoring at the sole discretion of the City, at any time, with or without notice, and notwithstanding any password protection;
- The City reserves the right to track and monitor employee use of the Internet, including web sites visited and files downloaded by the employee;
- Employees must not consider any information on the System, including e-mail messages and web sites visited, to be private;
- The System must not be used to communicate improper messages or material (such as those that are defamatory, derogatory, obscene or otherwise inappropriate, including sexually harassing or other offensive messages);
- The System must not be used to visit offensive or inappropriate websites;
- The System must not be used to violate any law, regulation, or City policy;
- The System must not be used to send (upload) or receive (download) copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary financial information, or similar materials without prior management authorization;
- Employee passwords are confidential and employees shall be held accountable for all usage under their password on the City's computer system;
- Confidential or privileged information should not be sent over the Internet unless sent with appropriate warnings, safeguards or encryption;
- Encrypted messages shall be read only by authorized employees using City approved encryption methods;
- Employees with Internet access must take particular care to comply with and understand the copyright, trademark, libel, slander and public speech control laws of other government and non-government agencies with which our City maintains business relationships;
- Executable files may not be downloaded without prior authorization; these include, but are not limited to, .exe, .vbs, .scr, and .dll file extensions;
- Employees should make clear when they are or are not representing the City in their e-mail or Internet communications;
- Employees must not send or forward "chain letter" e-mails;
- Employees should not open e-mail or attachments unless they are confident of the identity of the sender;
- Employees must not access other employee's e-mail without prior management authorization;

- Employees may not install or modify any software, including MS Windows settings and drivers, without prior authorization from the Information Systems Department;
- Care must be taken to ensure that all software licensing laws are complied with;
- Each employee is responsible for storing and retaining all documents and correspondence, including e-mail and other electronic documents, as required by law.

A violation of the City's Workplace Computer, E-mail, and Internet Use policies may result in disciplinary action ranging from a verbal warning up to discharge from employment.

VIII. DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

A. Discrimination and Harassment Strictly Prohibited.

The City is committed to providing a work environment free of all forms of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, (including childbirth, lactation and related medical conditions), national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, veteran status, political affiliation, age (40 and over), genetic information (including testing and characteristics), sickle cell traits or testing, HIV or AIDS (actual or perceived), marital status, or any other class protected by law. The City and all of its employees have an obligation to refrain from discrimination and harassment. Regarding sexual harassment, no one (male or female) should be subjected to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtones, comments or conduct, either verbal or physical.

The harassment prohibited by this policy applies to conduct by any person involved in City operations, including employees, supervisors, managers, temporary or seasonal workers, agents, clients, vendors, customers, or any other third party involved in the City's operations, and this policy specifically prohibits conduct that creates or contributes to a hostile or offensive working environment for any City employee or applicant based on protected characteristics. If such harassment occurs, which an employee believes to be a violation of this policy, the procedures set forth in the Complaint Procedures in this policy should be followed.

The City prohibits harassment and sexual harassment and prohibits harassing conduct (as defined in this policy), even if such harassment does not rise to the level of being unlawful. This policy is not designed or intended to limit the City's authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct that violates this policy that the City deems unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of unlawful harassment or sexual harassment.

B. Sexual Harassment Defined

Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of employment; or

- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment, even if the individual making the report is not the intended target of such conduct.

Sexual harassment also includes various forms of offensive behavior based on sex. The following is a non-exhaustive list of the types of conduct prohibited by this policy:

- Unwanted sexual advances or propositions (including repeated and unwelcome requests for dates).
- Offers of employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors.
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.
- Visual conduct: leering, making sexual gestures, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, websites, emails or text messages.
- Verbal conduct: making or using sexually derogatory comments, innuendos, epithets, slurs, sexually explicit jokes or comments about an individual's body or dress, whistling or making suggestive or insulting sounds.
- Verbal and/or written abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal and/or written sexually degrading commentary about an individual's body or dress or sexual experiences, sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations, emails, text messages, tweets or other social media postings.
- Physical conduct: unwelcome or inappropriate touching, physical violence, intimidation, assault or impeding or blocking normal movements.
- Hostile actions taken against an individual because of that individual's sex, sexual orientation, such as:
 - Interfering with, destroying or damaging a person's workstation, tools or equipment, or otherwise interfering with the individual's ability to perform the job;
 - Asking intrusive questions about a person's sexual orientation or about their intimate body parts;
 - Sabotaging an individual's work; and
 - Bullying, yelling, or name-calling
- Retaliation for making reports or threatening to report sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment can occur regardless of the gender of the person committing it or the person who is exposed to it.

C. Other Types of Prohibited Harassment

Harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic is prohibited. Prohibited harassment may include behavior similar to the illustrations above and may also include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal conduct including taunting, jokes, threats, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs based on an individual's protected characteristics;
- Visual and/or written conduct including derogatory posters, photographs, calendars, cartoons, drawings, websites, emails, text messages or gestures based on an individual's protected characteristics;
- Sharing pornography or sexually demeaning depictions of people, including AI-generated and deepfake images and videos;
- Mimicking or mocking a person's disability, accent or religious garments, jewelry, or displays; and
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching or blocking normal movement because of an individual's protected characteristics.

D. Protection Against Retaliation

Retaliation is prohibited against any person by another employee or by the City for using the Complaint Procedures provided below; reporting prohibited discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or retaliation; objecting to such conduct; or filing, testifying, assisting or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding or hearing conducted by a governmental enforcement agency. Prohibited retaliation includes, but is not limited to, termination, demotion, suspension, failure to hire or consider for hire, failure to give equal consideration in making employment decisions, failure to make employment recommendations impartially, adversely affecting working conditions or otherwise denying any employment benefit.

E. Complaint Procedures

The City will promptly investigate every incident of claimed discrimination or harassment. This investigation will be conducted in a professional and confidential manner that, as much as possible, protects the identity of both the person lodging the complaint and the person accused. Pursuant to this, the City complaint procedure, which is available to every employee, should be followed:

Step 1. Report it to your supervisor

If you have a complaint, discuss the situation with your supervisor or submit your complaint in writing. Many complaints can be settled by a frank discussion of the facts. Supervisors are required to immediately notify the City Human Resources Department of all complaints. You are not required to report any prohibited conduct to a supervisor who may be hostile, who has engaged in such conduct, who is a close associate of the person who has engaged in the conduct, or with whom you are uncomfortable discussing such

matters. In that case, or if the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should begin with Step 2.

Step 2. Report it to Human Resources or the City Manager.

If Step 1 is not a satisfactory option or the matter is not resolved, bring the matter to the attention of Human Resources or the City Manager directly, orally or in writing. They will promptly and thoroughly investigate the complaint and make a determination as to the appropriate action required. All discussions will be confidential to the extent reasonably possible. The employee lodging the complaint will be advised as to the Administration's determination.

The City complies with the law in conducting investigations and requires employees to cooperate with an investigation. Employees are expected to provide truthful information when participating in an investigation.

If the Administration determines that the actions violate this policy against discrimination and harassment, the guilty party will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions, up to and including termination of employment.

Each alleged incident will be treated on a case-by-case basis, and therefore the outcome of each case will depend on its precise facts and individual circumstances.

Employees who make good faith complaints of discrimination or harassment or who participate in an investigation will be protected against retaliation even if the allegations cannot be substantiated. If you believe that you have been subjected to retaliation, you should immediately report it using the complaint procedures set forth in this policy. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent reasonably possible.

IX. PAY PRACTICES

A. Payment of Wages

Employees will be paid weekly on Fridays, preferably by direct deposit. If you do not have access to a bank account for direct deposit, please discuss available alternatives with Human Resources. Pay is one week in arrears, so each paycheck covers the workweek immediately preceding the prior pay date. For example, new employees will receive their first pay deposit -at the latest- on their 11th work day; terminated employees will receive their last check the week after the close of their last pay period.

The City is required by state and federal law to make certain deductions from employees' paychecks each pay period. Such deductions typically include federal and state income taxes and Social Security. Depending on the benefits you choose, additional deductions may occur. The amount of deductions is shown on each paycheck stub.

Employees are advised to promptly report any changes that may affect payroll deductions to Human Resources. Employees should also review their pay stub each week and promptly report any errors to their supervisor.

B. Stand-By Pay

Certain employees, especially those with the fire or police department or public works during hurricanes or other emergencies, may be required to be available (on stand-by) to provide emergency services if needed during a specified period. During the designated stand-by time, employees assigned to stand-by status are unrestricted in movements or location but must remain accessible by phone and in a fit condition to work. These employees are entitled to stand-by pay to compensate them for remaining on stand-by as follows: an employee on stand-by shall be paid one hour of their standard pay for one day of stand-by, and two hours of their standard pay for one day of stand-by on weekends, City observed holidays, and days they are not scheduled to work. Employees assigned to stand-by status that cannot be located, who do not respond in a timely manner, or who fail to report to work when called will forfeit stand-by pay and may be subject to disciplinary action.

C. Call-Back Pay

An employee called back to work during their scheduled work week shall be entitled to "call-back" pay for actual time worked. Hours worked in excess of their regular work week will be compensated in accordance with overtime provisions, with a minimum of two (2) hours pay or compensatory time off guaranteed for all call-ins. Call-back pay may not apply in instances whereby the employee works a scheduled stand-by shift.

Out-Of-Title Pay And Promotion - Employees may be temporarily assigned on occasion to perform duties in a higher classification due to a vacancy in that higher classification, or because of the incumbent's illness or absence due to an authorized leave. In cases where such assignments exceed 160 continuous hours, the assigned employee will receive pay at the higher classification rate for the duration of their out-of-title work.

Employees who are permanently promoted will receive pay at the higher classification commencing with the date that the duties of the assigned higher position were actually assumed.

D. Wages, Salaries and Performance Evaluations

The annual City budget, approved by the Council, sets the parameters for maintaining wages and salaries. The position classification plan and pay structure delineate the permissible compensation levels and ranges for each position.

Wages and salary increases will be merit-based and are contingent upon a positive recommendation regarding performance and the approved budget. They are not

automatic or guaranteed and rely on a positive recommendation regarding the employee's performance.

E. Work Schedules

The City is generally open for business from 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday. An employee's actual schedule will be determined by their department heads and approved by the City Manager. Certain departments and positions may have alternative or varying schedules, and may require employees to be on call. Please discuss your assigned schedule and any variations with your supervisor, especially if your position is with the police, fire department, library, or maintenance department. Supervisors will also schedule meal and rest breaks as appropriate.

Staffing needs and operational demands may necessitate variations in starting and ending times, as well as variations in total hours that may be scheduled each day and week.

The City's standard work week is midnight on Friday to 11:59pm on Thursday.

F. Timekeeping

The City is required by applicable federal, state, and local laws to keep accurate records of hours worked by certain employees. To ensure that the City has complete and accurate time records and that employees are paid for all hours worked, Nonexempt employees are required to record all working time using City timecards. Speak with your supervisor for specific instructions.

You must accurately record all time worked to ensure you are paid for all hours worked. Timecards are to be turned in to your supervisor weekly.

Notify your supervisor or the Payroll Department of any timecard errors, pay discrepancies or unrecorded or mis-recorded work hours.

Falsifying time entries is strictly prohibited. Actions such as completing another employee's timecard, having someone else complete your timecard, altering a timecard, allowing another employee to clock in and out on your behalf, or falsifying hours worked are considered serious violations. Such actions may result in disciplinary measures, up to and including termination.

Falsifying time entries includes working "off the clock." If you falsify your own time records, or the time records of co-workers, or if you work off the clock, you will be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Immediately report any employee or supervisor who falsifies your time entries or encourages or requires you to falsify your time entries or work off the clock.

G. Overtime/Compensatory Time

In general, each employee will be assigned regular work duties and responsibilities that can normally be accomplished within their established workday and workweek. The City does not consistently grant permission for overtime; however, with prior approval of the Department head a supervisor may request that an employee work overtime when necessary to meet emergency situations or operating needs. The acceptance of overtime work by the employee is voluntary. Nonexempt employees are otherwise prohibited from working more than 40 hours per workweek.

Nonexempt employees who work more than 40 hours during a workweek will be compensated at time and one-half of their regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40. Compensatory time off at the rate of one- and one-half hours for each hour of overtime worked may be given in lieu of overtime, up to 240 hours per year. Compensatory time off may be used for any reason but must be requested in advance and approved by the employee's supervisor. Compensatory time must be used within the fiscal year it was earned or it will be forfeited. Compensatory time-off replaces overtime pay.

The Police Department and Fire Department are excluded from this section, and those employees should discuss the special FLSA regulations applicable to them with their supervisor.

Each Department is required to maintain accurate records of all hours worked, including overtime and compensatory time off, by its employees. Overtime pay or compensatory time off will be based on such records, and all such records shall be available at all times for review by Human Resources.

H. Lactation Accommodation

For up to one year after the birth of an employee's child, the City will provide an employee with a reasonable amount of lactation break time each time the employee needs to express breast milk for their child. Employees needing breaks for lactation purposes may use ordinary paid rest breaks or may take other reasonable break time when needed. If possible, the lactation break time should run concurrently with scheduled meal and rest breaks already provided. If additional time is needed, the lactation break time will be unpaid for Nonexempt employees.

For lactation breaks when an employee is working at a physical location of the City, the City will provide employees with the use of a room or a private area, other than a bathroom or toilet stall, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and the public. The City will make a reasonable effort to identify a location within close proximity to the work area for the employee to express milk. This location may be the employee's private office, if applicable.

The City will otherwise treat lactation as a pregnancy-related medical condition and address lactation-related needs in the same manner that it addresses other non-

incapacitating medical conditions, including requested time off for medical appointments, requested changes in schedules and other requested accommodations.

Employees should discuss with their supervisor the location for storage of expressed milk. In addition, employees should contact their supervisor before their return to work following the birth of a child to identify the need for a lactation area.

Employees who believe they have not been provided lactation break time and the use of a room or private area in accordance with this policy and federal law should immediately notify Human Resources.

I. Travel

City employees are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred during official City business trip, as outlined in Section 112.061, F.S. and the City of Niceville Travel Policy. Employees are expected to read and comply with the current version of the Travel Policy and should ask their supervisor if they have questions.

Nonexempt employees authorized and directed to travel are required to accurately report overtime in compliance with overtime regulations.

X. SAFETY AND SECURITY

The City offices, shops or worksites are shared workspaces for all employees and are also subject to public scrutiny. It is imperative that all work areas are maintained in an orderly, clean, safe, and well-secured manner. Any form of carelessness, horseplay, practical jokes, vandalism, or neglect will not be tolerated.

A. Safety And Health

The continuous development and maintenance of safe working conditions, practices, and habits are central objectives to our city's safety program. Achieving these objectives will benefit all employees and the City at large. Accidents, injuries, disabilities, property damage, loss of time and pay, medical expenses, and improper or dangerous equipment usage are operational problems that can be prevented through the collective efforts of all employees. We encourage employees to promptly report any working conditions or hazards that are perceived to be harmful to their health and safety.

All employees must utilize appropriate medical or health aids, such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, orthopedic shoes, braces, etc., to ensure their safety. However, the use of prescribed medications on the job is prohibited unless explicitly confirmed by a health care provider as suitable for the employee's work situation. No employee shall be permitted to work if their ability or alertness is so impaired through fatigue, illness, or other causes to make it unsafe for them or fellow employees. The City reserves the right to require a fitness-for-duty certification when there is a reasonable safety concern.

Each department head is responsible for promoting state and federal safety rules and standards and for developing safety rules, policies, and regulations pertinent to their specific operations. It is the duty of each employee to familiarize themselves with and adhere to these safety rules and regulations applicable to their work area or worksite they may visit.

B. Reporting Accidents and Injuries

All employees are required to immediately report any on-the-job injuries to a supervisor. Delay in reporting such injuries may cause complication of the injury, delay or denial of Workers' Compensation benefits, and result in disciplinary action, up to termination.

The supervisor, upon notification of an accident, will direct the employee either to a medical facility or Human Resources to complete a "First Report of Injury" form. Regardless of the severity of the injury, the employee's well-being takes precedence. All accidents or injuries, including minor first aid incidents, must be reported, and the injury form must be completed. If an employee is out of work related to a Worker's Compensation claim, they must contact Human Resources before returning to work. Supervisors will receive confirmation of the employee's readiness for work.

Aside from accident prevention, we expect all employees to maintain awareness of safety and health with regard to communicable diseases. It is essential to consider the wellbeing of others and oneself. Employees should stay home if they are unwell, seek appropriate medical attention, and promptly report any serious diseases to the relevant health officials.

C. Workplace Violence Prevention

The safety and security of employees is of vital importance to the City. Therefore, the City has adopted a zero-tolerance policy concerning work-related violence. Threats or acts of violence that involve or affect employees or that occur on the City's property or City-sponsored functions will not be tolerated. For positions that may require a certain level of violence, such as police officer, this policy will not apply as long as the employee is acting within the scope of their duties.

It is our goal to have a work environment free from acts or threats of violence and to respond effectively to such acts or threats. For their own safety, employees are discouraged from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual.

Work-related violence is any intentional conduct that is sufficiently severe, abusive or intimidating to cause an individual to reasonably fear for their personal safety or the safety of their family, friends and/or property such that employment conditions are altered, or a hostile, abusive or intimidating work environment is created for one or several employees. The conduct prohibited by this policy applies to conduct by all persons involved in our operations, including employees, supervisors, managers, temporary or seasonal

employees, agents, residents, vendors, customers, or any other third party interacting with the City.

Work-related violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Threats or acts of violence occurring on City property or at City-sponsored functions, regardless of the relationship between the parties involved in the incident;
- Threats or acts of violence occurring off City property involving someone who is acting in the capacity of a representative of the City;
- Threats or acts of violence occurring off City property involving an employee if the threats or acts adversely affect the interests of the City;
- Threats or acts of violence resulting in the conviction of an employee under any criminal code when the act or conviction adversely affects the legitimate business interests of the City.

A threat of violence includes any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate others, menacing gestures, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, and/or destructive actions taken for the purposes of intimidation.

All City employees bear the responsibility of keeping our work environment free from violence or potential violence. Any employee who witnesses or is a victim of violent or threatening behavior should promptly inform their supervisor, the Director of Human Resources, or City Manager. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this guideline.

Any individual engaging in violence against the City, its employees, third parties, or property will be investigated, and the appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or violent behavior or threat of violent behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Police Department employees who engage with violent or potentially violent individuals as a part of their duties are not subject to this policy to the extent they are acting with the scope of their duties.

D. Weapons in the Workplace

The City strictly prohibits employees (other than police or other employees who are authorized to carry weapons as part of their job duties), or any other person providing services to the City or located on the City's premises, from possessing weapons of any kind at the workplace. The workplace includes any property owned or leased by the City or occupied by groups of City employees or persons providing services to the City. The workplace specifically includes the City's parking areas and vehicles; however, in compliance with Florida law, the City permits employees who lawfully possess firearms or ammunition to store their firearms or ammunition inside their locked, privately-owned

vehicles in the City's parking lots or other parking areas provided by the City. Such lawfully possessed firearms and ammunition may not be removed from the employees' personal vehicle or displayed to others. Employees are not permitted to transport or store weapons in vehicles owned or leased by the City unless the employee is required to transport or store a weapon as part of the employee's job duties. This policy prohibits the possession of concealed weapons as well as weapons carried openly.

This prohibition specifically includes guns, rifles and firearms of any type, including those for which the holder has a legal permit. Other examples of prohibited weapons include, but are not limited to, knives, ammunition, bombs, bows and arrows, clubs, slingshots, blackjacks, metal knuckles and similar devices that by their design or intended use are capable of inflicting serious bodily injury or lethal force.

E. Right to Search

The City wishes to maintain a work environment that is free of illegal drugs, alcohol, firearms, explosives, or other improper materials. To this end, the City prohibits the control, possession, transfer, sale, or use of such materials on its premises to the extent permitted by applicable law. We require the cooperation of all employees in administering this policy.

Desks, lockers, and other storage devices are provided for the convenience of employees but remain the sole property of the City. Employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy for items placed therein. Accordingly, desks, lockers, and other storage devices, as well as any articles found within them, can be inspected by any agent or representative of the City at any time, with or without prior notice.

As a public employer, the City is charged with the duty to protect employees and others from violence and injuries. Accordingly, to ensure the safety and security of employees and others on our premises, upon reasonable suspicion we reserve the right to question and inspect or search any employee or other individual entering or leaving City premises or job sites, with or without prior notice. The inspection or search may include any packages or items that the individual may be carrying, including briefcases, handbags, backpacks and shopping bags.

Any inspection of an individual's person will be limited to a self-inspection, whereby they will be requested to self-inspect their personal property or person by displaying the contents of any packages and/or turning out their pockets, etc., in the presence of a representative of the City, typically a management employee of the same sex or gender.

F. Inclement Weather/Closures.

In the event of hazardous or severe weather, the City is authorized to decide to close its offices, delay opening, or cancel events. In the event of an official closure, all employees will be paid on the basis of their normal workday.

When the City is open but an employee is unable to report to work because of hazardous or severe weather, the employee should report any delay or absence to their supervisor at the earliest possible time.

If the workplace remains open, employees must make a reasonable effort to report to work as scheduled. However, employees should not take unnecessary risks to report to work in unsafe conditions.

XI. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Benefit plans offered by the City are defined in legal documents, such as insurance contracts and summary plan descriptions. If employees are offered benefits, and if a question arises about the nature and extent of plan benefits or if there is a conflict in language, the formal language of the plan documents govern, not the informal wording of this Handbook. Plan documents, if applicable, are available for employees' inspection. The City and its designated benefit plan administrators reserve the right to determine eligibility, interpretation and administration of issues related to benefits offered by the City. Employment benefits vary according to the position and status of the employee.

Unless otherwise required by law, employee benefits are available to all Regular Full-Time employees only, except Florida State Retirement is available to both Regular Full Time and Regular Part Time employees. Worker's Compensation is available to all employees. Regular Part Time employees who are permanently transferred into Regular Full-Time positions will be eligible for benefits available to Regular Full-Time employees on the first day of work in a Regular Full-Time position.

A. Group Health Insurance

Regular Full-Time employees are eligible to enroll in the City's Group Insurance Program, which encompasses life, accidental death or dismemberment (AD&D), health, dental, and vision insurance. The City will provide fundamental coverage under this plan for all employees and extend coverage options to their dependents as a fringe benefit within budgetary constraints. The City pays the entire premium for employee life, AD&D and medical coverage and a percentage of coverage for their dependents, striving to maintain this support as long as financially viable. Dental insurance premiums are partially covered by the City, while vision coverage is offered to employee at their own cost.

Employees are entrusted with using the available insurance coverage prudently and responsibly to minimize plan costs. It is incumbent upon employees to acquire all relevant information pertaining to the group health insurance plan in effect. Participation in the program is voluntary, and employees have the option to decline enrollment.

Effective from August 23, 2001 onwards, retired former employees with 20 or more years of continuous Regular Full-Time service with the City shall maintain eligibility for the City

Group Health Insurance Plan. The premium responsibilities for employees are outlined based on years of service:

1. **20-25 years of service:** Employee is responsible for paying the entire premium.
2. **25-30- years of service:** Employee pays half the premium, and the City covers the other half.
3. **Over 30 years of service:** The City covers the entire premium for the employee.

For eligible plan option buy-up plans, the employee is responsible for additional premium costs.

Upon reaching the age of 65, employees have the option to convert the City Insurance Plan to a Medicare Supplement and maintain the premium benefits as previously stated.

B. Retirement

The City of Niceville presently participates in the Florida Retirement System. This plan is compulsory for those eligible employees hired or rehired after October 1, 2004, for police officers; and October 1, 2005, for all other employees. Human Resources maintains up-to-date information on the Florida Retirement System.

Employees that elected to remain in the deferred compensation plan with Empower, instead of opting for the Florida Retirement System, the City will contribute a matching portion according to years of service as provided in the plan document. All other employees are not eligible for matching funds but may utilize payroll deductions for personal contributions.

C. Holidays

Holidays are paid for Regular Full-Time employees only. If a holiday falls on a Friday, employees working a 4/10 schedule will observe the holiday on the following Monday. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed on the Friday before the holiday, except for those working a 4/10 schedule. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday. The specific holidays to be observed are as follows

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. New Year's Day | |
| 2. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day | 7. Veterans' Day |
| 3. Memorial Day | 8. Thanksgiving Day |
| 4. Juneteenth | 9. Day After Thanksgiving |
| 5. Independence Day | 10. Christmas Eve |
| 6. Labor Day | 11. Christmas Day |

In addition, Regular Full-Time employees can take, if they choose, a paid day off for their birthday. Due to varying shift hours, a day is defined by each department. The actual day they take off should be at their option within the week before or the week after their actual birthday, as long as scheduling conflicts do not occur.

Work on holidays shall be held to an absolute minimum, subject to workload requirements. Holidays with pay will not be given to an employee if he/she is on leave of absence without pay, on suspension, or on any other non-paid status on the day before or after the holiday. Employees receiving Workers' Compensation benefits will not be entitled to additional holiday pay.

If an employee is eligible for holiday pay and also works on the holiday, they will be compensated at the rate of time and a half for those hours worked on the holiday. This is in addition to the normal pay for the holiday.

D. Paid Time Off

The City believes that its employees are the key to what makes the City of Niceville great. Although work makes up a substantial portion of employees' life, we believe that a balance between work and nonwork activities is essential to maintain quality performance and a positive work atmosphere. To support this philosophy, the City has designed a paid time off (PTO) plan for Regular Full-Time employees only that incorporates vacation, personal and sick leave into one program. For the purposes of this policy, the year begins on an employee's Regular Full-Time date of hire.

Employees shall start to accrue PTO as of their first (1st) day of Regular Full-Time employment. PTO may be used once earned.

The accrual rate for all Regular Full-Time personnel is as follows:

- a. All Regular Full-Time employees, with less than seven (7) years of service shall accrue 16 hours of PTO every month.
- b. All Regular Full-Time employees with seven (7) or more years of continuous service with the City shall accrue 21 hours of PTO every month.
- c. Firefighters, and fire department shift workers working a 48/96 schedule, with less than seven (7) years of continuous service shall accrue 23 hours of PTO every month in accordance with their union contract.
- d. Firefighters, and fire department shift workers working a 48/96 schedule, with seven (7) or more years of continuous service shall accrue 30 hours of PTO every month.
- e. Sworn police personnel who work at least a 40 hour a week work schedule shall accrue 21 hours of PTO every month.

Accrual rates are subject to review and potential adjustment in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and organizational considerations.

No PTO will accrue to an employee during any period of work for which an unpaid or uncompensated absence occurs. Employees shall continue to accrue PTO while using PTO.

All City of Niceville employees are encouraged to use their PTO during the year. In addition to vacation or personal reasons, PTO is designed to cover leave for personal sickness, family sickness, family activities and extra holiday time.

Approval of PTO is subject to applicable workloads and departmental and City policies. To minimize disruption to the workplace, employees must schedule their PTO as far in advance as possible. Except in the case of an emergency or other unforeseeable circumstances, PTO request(s) shall be submitted to the employee's supervisor no less than two weeks prior to the start date of the requested PTO period. Seniority will generally be the deciding factor in scheduling preferred leave among employees. During the 14-day notice period for a resignation, PTO may be denied to allow for an orderly transition period.

In case of a genuine emergency, employees shall be allowed to take unscheduled PTO with less than 24 hours' notice, provided they obtain department head approval. It is expected that such instances will be infrequent and managed with discretion. If there is abuse of the unscheduled emergency PTO, leave may be denied. The City may require reasonable documentation of the reason for emergency and inability to schedule PTO in advance. In the case of an unexpected illness or injury, a note or certification from your health care provider will be required if the absence exceeds three consecutive workdays.

Holidays occurring while an employee is on paid time off shall not be charged against PTO.

E. PTO Buyback Program

Employees with more than one (1) year of service who are terminated, resign with at least 14 days advance notice, or are laid off will be paid for accrued but unused PTO at time of termination as follows:

- a. 240 hours of PTO for employee's terminating at 1-6 years of continuous Regular Full-Time service
- b. 360 hours of PTO balance for employees' terminating at 7-14 years of continuous Regular Full-Time service
- c. 480 hours of PTO balance for employees' terminating at 15 plus years of continuous Regular Full-Time service

F. PTO Annual Sellback Program

Once per calendar year, an employee will be able to sell a portion of their accumulated PTO back to the City at 75% of his/her hourly rate. The amount of PTO that an employee will be allowed to sell back will be determined by the City Manager annually. Employees must retain a minimum of 144 hours of PTO after selling. All requests must be made after November 15th

and no later than November 30th and will be paid out no later than the second week of December.

G. Grandfathered Sick Leave

Effective October 1st, 2023, sick leave balances were frozen, and this type of leave will no longer accrue due to incorporating sick leave into PTO. Employees may continue to use their accrued sick leave for qualifying purposes, but it will not be considered for the PTO Buyback or Annual Sellback programs.

Accrued but unused sick leave may continue to be used for the following purposes until exhausted:

- a. Employee's health
- b. Medical, dental, or optical treatment or examination
- c. Quarantine due to contagious disease
- d. Pregnancy Disability Leave
- e. Serious injury or illness of an immediate family member

Requests for sick leave shall be submitted as soon as possible. Employees are expected to inform their supervisor promptly in the event of illness or the need for sick leave.

In cases where the use of sick leave may appear to be abused or when an employee consistently uses sick leave, the employee requesting sick leave may be required to furnish acceptable proof of the necessity for a qualifying absence.

The use of sick leave on false claims of illness, injury, or exposure to contagious disease, or falsification of proof to justify such leave may result in disciplinary action, including potential dismissal.

H. Bereavement Leave

A maximum of three consecutive days, or a maximum of 30 hours for police and firefighters, with pay, will be granted to Regular Full-Time employees when a family death occurs. Bereavement leave will be limited to the family members listed herein and will not be charged against accumulated PTO. The City defines immediate family as a spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, father-in-law, mother-in-law, or any relative who was living in the employee's immediate household.

I. Jury Duty

The City will grant employees time off for mandatory jury duty (not in connection with their job duties as City employees) or subpoena to attend court during scheduled work hours. A copy of the court notice is required to be submitted with the request for use of leave. It is the employee's responsibility to provide documentation and request appropriate leave. The employee should notify their direct supervisor immediately.

Employees attending court for jury duty or due to a subpoena during their normal hours shall receive full pay equal to their normal work schedule for the hours they attend court. This time shall be charged as leave with pay and does not impact PTO balances. Employees attending court for only a portion of a regularly scheduled workday are expected to report to their supervisor when excused or released by the court.

Those employees who become parties to litigation are not eligible for leave with pay unless they become such parties in the course of their employment with the City.

J. Time Off to Vote

The City encourages all employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities and to vote in official public elections. Generally, working hours are such that an employee will have ample time to cast a vote before or after the work shift. If employees do not have sufficient time to vote, they should discuss the matter with their supervisor.

K. Domestic or Sexual Violence Victim Leave

Employees who are victims of domestic or sexual violence or that have a family or household member who is a victim of domestic violence may take up to three working days of unpaid leave time within a 12-month period. Employees employed with the City for three or more months are eligible for this leave. Employees must exhaust any available PTO and sick leave, if applicable.

"Family or household member" is defined as "spouses, former spouses, persons related by blood or marriage, persons who are presently residing together as if a family or who have resided together in the past as if a family, and persons who are parents of a child in common regardless of whether they have been married."

Eligible employees may use leave available under this policy to seek legal, medical, psychological or other services or to take action to secure their safety.

L. Military Leave

The City complies with applicable federal and state law regarding military leave and re-employment rights. A military leave of absence will be granted to members of the uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA, with amendments) and all applicable state law. You must submit documentation of the need for leave to your supervisor. When returning from military leave of absence under USERRA, you will be reinstated to your previous position or a similar position, in accordance with state and federal law. You must notify your supervisor of your intent to return to employment based on the requirements of the law. For more information regarding status, compensation, benefits, and reinstatement upon return from military leave, contact Human Resources.

Under Florida state law, all employees who are commissioned reserve officers or reserve enlisted personnel in the United State military or naval members of the National Guard shall be entitled to leaves of absence from their respective duties, without loss of already accrued PTO, pay, time or

efficiency rating, on all days during which they shall be engaged in training ordered under the provisions of the of the United States military or naval training regulations for such employees when assigned to active duty.

Leaves of absence granted as a matter of legal right under the state law may not exceed 240 working hours in any one annual period (F.S. Ch. 115.07). Administrative leaves of absence for additional or longer periods of time for assignment to duty functions of a military character shall be without pay or charged to PTO. Employees are not eligible for holiday pay while on authorized military leave.

Requests for military leave shall be submitted in writing or verbal with a copy of the military orders attached at least one month (if possible) prior to the commencement date of the proposed leave.

M. Civil Air Patrol Leave

The City shall provide up to 15 days of unpaid Civil Air Patrol leave annually to an employee without loss of already accrued PTO, pay, time or efficiency rating while on Civil Air Patrol leave. Upon completion of Civil Air Patrol Leave, the employee shall promptly notify the employer of his or her intent to return to work, subject to the conditions in this section. (F.S. Ch. 252.55)

N. Leave Without Pay

The decision to grant leave without pay is a matter of management discretion. It shall be incumbent upon each department head to determine each case on its own merits. Leave without pay shall be granted only when it will not adversely affect the interest of the City. Employees must exhaust all PTO and sick leave, if applicable, before beginning leave without pay.

O. Workers' Compensation

All City employees are covered by workers' compensation insurance. Workers' compensation coverage refers to insurance coverage for individuals who incur an injury or illness sustained in the course of employment. Please contact Human Resources for any questions regarding workers' compensation or to report an accident.

Absences due to Workers' Compensation illness/injury are subject to the provisions outlined below:

- a. Employees may not return to work without a physician's certification and clearance.
- b. Workers' Compensation begins on the eighth day of absence and is equal to 2/3rd of the average weekly salary paid to the employee as determined by the preceding 13-week period.
- c. Employees may use PTO or any remaining sick leave to compensate for the difference in pay.
- d. Workers' Compensation leave runs concurrently with FMLA.

P. PTO Donation

The City recognizes that employees may have a family medical emergency or be affected by a major disaster, resulting in a need for additional time off in excess of their available leave. To address this need, all eligible employees will be allowed to donate accrued PTO from their unused balance to their co-workers in need of additional paid time off, in accordance with the policy outlined below. This policy is strictly voluntary.

Guidelines

Subject to the restrictions and limitations listed below, employees may donate accumulated PTO or unused sick leave to another employee. Such a donation is completely voluntary and is an exclusive agreement between the two employees. Donations must comply with all the following criteria:

- a. The donation must be completely voluntary. Supervisors are prohibited from asking their subordinates to donate PTO or sick leave to themselves or make the request for an employee.
- b. Donations may only be made to employees who are eligible to earn PTO themselves. Probationary employees (probationary period is six months) are not eligible to receive donations.
- c. The employee receiving donations must qualify as having a serious health condition, or an immediate family member must qualify as having serious health condition, that will require a prolonged/extended absence of the employee from duty and will result in a substantial loss of income to the employee due to the exhaustion of all paid leave available.
 - o A serious health condition is defined as: An illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care or continuing treatment that makes the employee unable to perform the function of the position of such employee.
 - o Immediate family member is defined as: The employee's spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, father-in-law, mother-in-law, or any relative who is living in the employee's household.
- d. The employee receiving the donation must first exhaust all PTO and accumulated sick leave prior to receiving donated time off from a co-worker.
- e. Employees may not donate to an immediate supervisor.
- f. All requests and donations of PTO must be processed through Human Resources.

Donation Of Time

- a. The donation is on an hourly basis, without regard to the dollar value of the donated or used leave.
- b. A donor employee may not donate more than a total of 120 hours of PTO, sick leave, or a combination of PTO and sick leave to the same recipient in a 12-month period without approval from the City Manager.
- c. Donors must maintain a minimum of 160 hours of PTO after donation.
- d. Employees cannot borrow against future PTO to donate.
- e. Employees who are currently on an approved leave of absence cannot donate time.
- f. Recipients may not receive more donated time than necessary for them to return to work.

Requesting Donated Time

Employees who would like to request donated leave time are required to complete a Donation of Leave Time Request Form and submit it to Human Resources, along with supporting documentation of their or their family member's serious health condition. If the recipient employee has available PTO or sick leave, it must be exhausted prior to any donated leave time.

Donated time may only be used for time off related to the approved request. Recipients may not receive more donated time than necessary for them to return to work.

Employees who receive donated leave time may receive no more than a combined 240 hours within a 12-month period.

Nothing in this policy will be construed to limit or extend the maximum allowable absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

XII. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Employees may be entitled to a leave of absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). This policy provides employees with information concerning FMLA entitlements and obligations employees may have during such leaves. If employees have any questions concerning FMLA leave, they should contact Human Resources.

A. Eligibility

To be eligible for FMLA leave an employee must: 1) have been employed by the City for at least 12 months (which need not be consecutive); 2) have been employed by the City for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave; and 3) be employed at a worksite where 50 or more employees are located within 75 miles

of the worksite. Eligibility requirements may differ for employees who have been on a protected military leave of absence.

B. Basic FMLA Leave Entitlement:

Eligible employees may take up to 12 work weeks of unpaid FMLA leave during a 12-month period for any of the following reasons. The 12-month period is measured forward from the date the employee first uses any FMLA leave.

- The birth, adoption, or foster care of an employee's child within 12 months following the birth or placement of the child;
- To care for an employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent (but not in-law) with a serious health condition;
- To care for the employee's own serious health condition that makes them unable to perform the essential functions of their position (including any period of incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or childbirth);
- Due to a qualifying exigency (as defined in the FMLA) arising out of the fact that an employee's spouse, child or parent is a covered servicemember on covered active duty or called to covered active duty status (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty) in the Reserves component of the Armed Forces in support of contingency operation in a foreign country, or the Regular Armed Forces during deployment to a foreign country.
- To care for a spouse, child, parent or next of kin (nearest blood relative) who is a Covered Servicemember (as defined in the FMLA) and who has a serious injury or illness related to or aggravated by their military service. For this type of leave, the maximum amount of FMLA leave is a combined FMLA leave total of 26 workweeks in a single 12-month period. Employees should consult with Human Resources for additional details regarding this type of leave.

C. Notice

Employees who require FMLA leave must provide Human Resources with 30 days' advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not reasonably possible, or the approximate timing of the need for leave is not foreseeable, employees must provide the City notice of the need for leave as soon as practicable. Employees who fail to give 30 days' notice for foreseeable leave without a reasonable excuse for the delay, or otherwise fail to satisfy FMLA notice obligations, may have FMLA leave delayed or denied.

When planning medical treatment, employees must consult with the City in advance and make a reasonable effort to schedule treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the City's operations, subject to the approval of an employee's health care provider.

D. Certifications

Depending on the nature of FMLA leave sought, employees may be required to submit complete and sufficient certifications or other documentation supporting their need for FMLA leave. Certification forms are available from Human Resources. Certifications and other medical information are treated as confidential medical records.

- i. Initial Certification. When the leave relates to medical issues, employees must submit a completed Certification of Health Care Provider form from their health care provider within 15 calendar days (for military caregiver leave, an invitational travel order or invitational travel authorization may be submitted in lieu of a Certification of Health Care Provider form). If warranted, the City may require a second or third medical opinion regarding the employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of the employee's family member or covered servicemember, at the City's expense. Employees are expected to cooperate with the City in obtaining any additional medical certifications it may require.

For military exigency leaves, the City may require a copy of the covered servicemember's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military indicating the covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty status and the dates of the covered military member's active duty service, as well as a completed Certification of Qualifying Exigency form. Documents must be submitted within 15 calendar days, absent extraordinary circumstances.

- ii. Recertification. Depending on the circumstances and duration of FMLA leave, Human Resources may require employees to provide recertification of medical conditions giving rise to the need for FMLA leave. Human Resources will notify employees if recertification is required and will give employees at least 15 calendar days to provide the recertification.
- iii. Fitness for Duty Certification. Unless notified that providing such certifications is not necessary, employees returning to work from FMLA leaves due to their own serious health condition must provide Human Resources with an acceptable release from a health care provider that certifies the employee can perform the essential functions of their position as those essential functions relate to the employee's serious health condition. For an employee on intermittent or reduced schedule FMLA leave, such a release may be required if reasonable safety concerns exist regarding the employee's ability to perform their duties, based on the serious health condition for which the employee took the intermittent or reduced schedule leave. The City may delay and/or deny job restoration until employees provide return to work/fitness for duty certifications.

E. Intermittent and Reduced Schedule Leave

FMLA leave usually may be taken for a period of consecutive days, weeks or months. However, employees also are entitled to take FMLA leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary due to a serious health condition of the employee or covered family

member, due to a qualifying exigency, or due to the serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember. When taking unscheduled intermittent leave, employees must specify that it is for FMLA reasons when requesting time off.

For approved intermittent leave, the supervisor and employee shall attempt to work out a leave schedule that meets the employee's needs without unduly disrupting the City's operations, subject to the approval of the employee's health care provider. In addition, the City may temporarily transfer the employee, during the period that the intermittent or reduced schedule leave is required, to an alternative position with equivalent pay and benefits for which the employee is qualified and which better accommodates recurring periods of leave.

F. No Similar Work While on Leave

FMLA leave presumes that an employee is temporarily prevented from performing their City job. Taking another job or performing work that requires the same or similar duties or physical/mental ability as your City job while on FMLA or any other authorized leave of absence may be grounds for immediate termination, to the extent permitted by law.

G. Group Health Insurance Benefits

During FMLA leave, eligible employees are entitled to continue their group health plan coverage under the same conditions as if they had continued to work. Unless Human Resources notifies the employee of other arrangements, the City will continue to deduct the employee portion of the group health plan premium from available pay in the same manner as if the employee was actively working. If pay is not available, the employee must separately pay their portion of the group health premium through a method determined by the City

H. Substitute Paid Leave for Unpaid FMLA Leave.

Employees must use any accrued PTO (including any accrued compensatory time off) while taking FMLA leave that is unpaid and not subject to wage replacement through disability or worker's compensation benefits. Upon written request, the City will allow employees to use accrued PTO to supplement any paid disability or worker's compensation benefits during FMLA.

The substitution of PTO for unpaid FMLA leave time does not extend the length of FMLA leave and the paid time will run concurrently with an employee's FMLA entitlement.

Leaves of absence taken in connection with a disability leave plan or workers' compensation injury/illness shall run concurrently with any FMLA leave entitlement.

I. Restoration of Employment and Benefits

At the end of FMLA leave, employees generally have a right to return to the same or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment, subject to some exceptions including situations where job restoration of "key employees" will cause the City substantial and grievous economic injury. Use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any

employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an eligible employee's FMLA leave. The City will notify employees if they qualify as "key employees," if it intends to deny reinstatement, and of their rights in such instances.

J. Questions and/or Complaints about FMLA Leave

If you have questions regarding this FMLA policy, please contact Human Resources. The City of Niceville is committed to complying with the FMLA, and whenever necessary, shall interpret and apply this policy in a manner consistent with FMLA.

The City will not 1) interfere with, restrain or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA; or 2) discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice that is unlawful under the FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA. If employees believe their FMLA rights have been violated, they should contact Human Resources immediately. Human Resources will investigate any FMLA complaints and take prompt and appropriate action to address and/or remedy any FMLA violation.

K. Effect on Other Rights and Policies

The FMLA does not affect any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights. In certain situations, FMLA leave may run at the same time as leave available under another federal, state or local law, provided eligibility requirements for that law are met. For additional information concerning leave entitlements and obligations that might arise when FMLA leave is either not available or exhausted, please consult the other leave policies in this handbook or contact Human Resources.

XIII. LEAVING CITY SERVICE

A. Resignation and Job Abandonment

Employees of the City are employed on an at-will basis. This means that employment may be terminated by either party at any time, with or without cause or notice. Nothing in this policy is intended to limit or alter the at-will nature of employment.

Any employee wishing to leave the City's service in good standing will file with his/her supervisor, and Human Resources, a written resignation stating the date the employee intends to leave and the reasons for leaving. The resignation should be submitted at least 14 days before leaving to allow Human Resources to make a proper replacement for the employee's class of work. To allow for an orderly transition period, PTO may be denied during this time. Failure to comply with this policy shall be cause for denying such employee future employment with the City and will result in denial of payment of any accrued PTO.

Unauthorized absences from work for a period of two (2) consecutive working days may be considered as the employee's voluntary resignation, but not in good standing, and shall be cause

for denying such employee future employment with the City and will result in denial of payment of any accrued PTO.

The effective date of separation from the City shall be at the close of business on the last day the employee reported for duty; the date specified in the written resignation; or the last day of leave granted should the employee fail to report for duty on the first working day following the expiration of the leave.

B. Layoffs

In the event layoffs become necessary, they will be considered in the following order:

1. Temporary employees
2. New Probationary employees
3. Regular Part-Time employees
4. Regular Full-Time employees

The order of layoff of all employees within each particular status of employment shall be determined by the City Manager after he/she has given due consideration to all relevant factors which shall include, but not be limited to, seniority and the relative efficiency of the employee. Any employee who is laid off will be given a minimum of five (5) working days' notice of the pending layoff.

C. Exit Procedures

An employee leaving the employment of the City shall, prior to departure, comply with the following required steps:

1. Notify the department head and Human Resources (with due advance notice) of the expected last day of work.
2. Turn into the department head or Human Resources, all equipment, supplies, keys, tools, files, I.D. Cards documents, etc., issued to the employee.
3. Participate in an exit interview with Human Resources, if requested.
4. Leave adequate forwarding addresses and phone numbers.

D. References/Verifications of Employment

All requests for references must be directed to Human Resources. No other person or department is authorized to release references for current or former employees. Our policy concerning references for employees is to disclose only the dates of employment and the title of the last position held. If an employee authorizes disclosure in writing, we may also provide a prospective employer with information on the amount of the salary or wage last earned.

E. Reinstatement

Employees who were dismissed because of a reduction in force, or those who have otherwise been terminated in good standing, shall be eligible for rehire. An employee reinstated to the same

position after a layoff will be placed in the same pay grade and step they were in at the time of the layoff.

XIV. CONCLUSION

Your privileges, duties and responsibilities are, of course, much more numerous than those outlined in this manual. Should any questions arise about your job, your supervisor, or your department head, Human Resources will be happy to answer them. Each supervisor or department head will issue policies at various times governing his or her department. Employees of the City of Niceville should not presume that the City of Niceville Employee Handbook is an employment contract. The City reserves the right to amend rules and policies from time to time.

Acknowledgement and Receipt

By signing below, I agree and acknowledge that:

- I have received a copy of the City of Niceville Employee Handbook and that I have read it, understand it, and agree to comply with it.
- The City of Niceville has the maximum discretion permitted by law to interpret, administer, change, modify, or delete the rules, regulations, procedures, and benefits contained in the handbook at any time with or without notice.
- No statement or representation by a supervisor, manager, or any other employee, whether oral or written, can supplement or modify this handbook. Changes can only be made if approved in writing by the City Manager.
- Any delay or failure by the City of Niceville to enforce any rule, regulation, or procedure contained in the handbook does not constitute a waiver on behalf of the City or affect the right of the City to enforce such rule, regulation, or procedure in the future.
- Neither the handbook nor any other communication by a supervisor, manager, or any other person, whether oral or written, is intended in any way to create a contract of employment. I further understand that, unless I have a written employment agreement signed by an authorized City of Niceville representative, I am employed "at-will" and the handbook does not modify my "at-will" employment status.
- If I am covered by a written employment agreement (signed by an authorized City of Niceville representative) or a collective bargaining agreement that conflicts with the terms of this handbook, the terms of the employment agreement or collective bargaining agreement will control.
- The handbook is not intended to violate any local, state, or federal law. No provision or policy applies or will be enforced if it conflicts with or is superseded by laws or regulations applicable to the City.
- This handbook supersedes any previous handbook or policy statements, whether written or oral, issued by the City of Niceville.
- If I have any questions about the content or interpretation of this handbook, I will contact my supervisor or Human Resources.

I have read, understand and agree to the above statements.

Employee Signature

Date

Print Name