

**CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

Policy Memorandum No. 83 (R)

September 18, 2023

TO: All Departments, Boards, Agencies, and Commissions

FROM: Gilbert A. Montaño, Chief Administrative Officer 

SUBJECT: **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR FOR CITY EMPLOYEES**

I. PURPOSE

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is publishing this policy for the City of New Orleans (City) to provide the standards of behavior guidelines for City employees. The policy is revised to incorporate changes made to the Civil Service Rules regarding the use of sick leave to care for immediate family members (see City Council Motion No. M-23-371; Civil Service Rule I, § 1; Civil Service Rule VIII, § 2.5). Our goal is to provide efficient and courteous service to the public and each other in order to enhance the effectiveness of City government while maintaining the high standards of quality and professionalism necessary to project the best image possible. We are all dependent on each other to accomplish this mission. Our behavior should indicate our willingness to work and demonstrate the pride we have in our profession. The standards given below are to help us achieve our goal.

II. GENERAL STANDARDS

- A. An employee shall be courteous, civil, and respectful.
- B. An employee shall be patient with the public and with fellow employees.
- C. An employee shall not discriminate against or show partiality to any person in the course of work duties because of race, sex, orientation, ethnic background, religion, political party, age, handicap, sexual, or personal prejudice. No special treatment, partiality, or favoritism shall be given to anyone because of "connections" or relationships.
- D. An employee shall report for work at the time assigned and remain on duty until the work hours are completed, except for standard, authorized breaks and lunch periods. Work hours shall be spent on productive work without time being wasted.
- E. An employee unable to report to work shall inform the supervisor as early as possible, before or at the beginning of the work shift. An employee unable to complete a shift shall notify the supervisor before leaving the job. Some departments have more specific policies which apply in their respective departments.
- F. Each employee, because of the job assignment, has certain required duties and must assume certain responsibilities. Each employee has a job to do and must do that job. Failure to perform these duties or take these responsibilities is **neglect of duty**.

- G. An employee shall investigate complaints thoroughly, objectively, and fairly to protect the public, the employees, and the government. If a citizen is not satisfied, then the employee shall refer the person to the immediate supervisor or other higher authority. No one should be sent away without a resolution to their issue if another solution can be found. The supervisor may have greater authority to resolve the problem or more knowledge to find a solution. The citizen will be satisfied by realizing that every effort has been made to resolve their concern.
- H. Personal telephone calls shall be kept to a minimum and shall be brief in duration. If possible, personal telephone calls should be made during breaks and lunchtime, and in an area that is not used by the public.
- I. An employee shall not watch television, play games, or read for recreation during work hours.
- J. An employee shall not conduct any personal business which causes neglect or inattention to work duties.
- K. An employee shall not read newspapers or online news feeds during work hours except as a part of a specific assignment received in writing or as part of research in preparing an assignment.
- L. An employee shall not loiter in the hallways or other parts of the workplace.
- M. Employees shall not conduct meetings in the passageways. Meetings shall take place at a workstation or in a meeting room. If an employee meets someone in the hallway and a conversation begins, the people should move quickly to a workstation or office to continue the conversation.
- N. Employees shall be encouraged to leave the workplace or go to an authorized lounge area during the duty periods for lunch and breaks. Employees shall not eat in work areas in sight of the public. Eating should be done in eating areas.
- O. City property shall be used only for the purpose for which it was intended. Employees shall exercise care in the use of any City property and equipment, including vehicles and technology devices, and promptly report to the immediate supervisor any damages, loss, or theft. Use of City property is for work-related purposes and not for personal benefit. Employees shall not use City supplies or office machines for personal business.
- P. An employee shall be financially responsible for City property issued, assigned, loaned or under his/her immediate control if the property is damaged or lost through the employee's negligence. The following are example circumstances in which an employee may be deemed negligent: an employee failing to follow a manufacturer's or department's instructions for the use or care of equipment, using equipment for a purpose for which it was not intended, or failing to return property to its place of safekeeping. Disciplinary action may include a fine or reimbursement paid directly to the department or through payroll deduction. **Please refer to Policy Memorandum**

No. 109 (R) - Regulations Pertaining to Assignment, Usage and Care, and Return of City Property by Employees.

- Q. An employee shall not accept or solicit a valuable gift from any person, business, or organization for personal benefit. If an employee questions what is valuable, a supervisor, Civil Service or the Ethics Review Board should be consulted.
- R. Solicitations by City employees, without permission, in City facilities and on City property are prohibited at all times.
- S. The City of New Orleans will not tolerate retaliation or threat of retaliation against those who make disclosures of actual or perceived misconduct. Acts or threats of retaliation in response to such disclosures may subject the person retaliating to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

III. CUSTOMER SERVICE ETIQUETTE STANDARDS

- A. An employee shall identify himself by name whenever serving anyone, unless the situation prevents such an identification. An employee shall courteously give his name to anyone who asks.
- B. When answering the telephone, an employee should give the name of the office, the employee's name and ask, "May I help you?"
- C. If a telephone caller asks for someone who is not available, the caller should be asked, "Would you like to leave a message, may I get someone else to assist you, or would you like to be transferred to voicemail?"
- D. Any person who is not a member of the immediate workgroup, when entering the workplace shall be greeted by the first available employee and asked, "May I help you?" Fellow workers and the public shall be treated with courtesy at all times.

IV. HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

- A. An employee shall not drink alcoholic beverages while at work or come to work under the influence of intoxicants or with the odor of intoxicants on their breath.
- B. An employee shall not use illegal substances during work hours or come to work under the influence of illegal substances.
- C. The sale, purchase, or possession of illegal substances at the worksite is prohibited. Supervisors should be notified if an employee's work performance could be affected by the use of authorized prescription drugs.
- D. An employee shall adhere to the requirements of the City's Smoke-Free Air Act (Article II of Chapter 66 of the City Code), the Health Department rules and regulations on smoking, and **CAO Policy Memorandum No. 76 (R), Smoking and Vaping Policy**, while on the job.

- E. An employee is expected to be a law-abiding member of the community at all times including while off duty.
- F. An employee shall not bring or carry dangerous weapons while on duty or while on City property. Prohibited weapons include: clubs, explosive weapons, firearms, blades or any other objects regardless of designed purpose used with the intent of causing malicious threat, inflicting bodily injury, or otherwise bearing assault or damage on body or property. **Exception: Employees who are required to carry weapons in the performance of their official duties and those authorized to carry weapons in an off-duty capacity while working other employment shall be exempt from this policy.**
- G. An employee shall use sick leave in compliance with Civil Service Rule I, Section 1 and Rule VIII, Section 2.5. Pursuant to those rules, sick leave can only be used because of:
- the employee's own (a) illness or injury; (b) quarantine by health authorities; or (c) medical, dental, or optical consultation or treatment;
 - the employee's immediate family member's (a) illness or injury which necessitates the absence; or (b) medical, dental, or optical consultation or treatment when it is not possible to arrange such appointments during non-duty hours; or
 - the death in the immediate family of the employee.

If the reason for the leave is not covered by sick leave, annual leave or leave without pay shall be used.

V. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING STANDARDS

This section applies to new media, social media, Web 2.0 technologies (including wikis, blogs, social networking, folksonomies, podcasting & content hosting services), digital media and emerging media such as public and private blogs (BlogSpot) or internet-based comment pages (Nola.com, Reddit), micro-blogs (Twitter), video sharing (YouTube or Vimeo), photo sharing (Flickr, SmugHug, Pinterest, or Webshots), wikis (WikiSpaces, PBwiki, SocialText, or Wetpaint), social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Google+), web syndications (RSS, Atom, weblogs, vlogs, podcasts), internet-based bulletin boards (forums), newsgroups (Usenet), organizational apps (Discord, Slack, and Telegram), content aggregators (mashups or portals), multiplayer online games (WoW, Fannville, Mafia Wars), and other forms of virtual or digital communications. This is not an exhaustive list.

- A. The City respects the rights of City employees to use social media as a medium of self-expression, but as online communications become more of a participatory action, the lines between the public and the private, personal and professional, can be blurred. The way we present ourselves and portray our colleagues affects the public's opinion of the City and City employees. Therefore, with the exception of elected officials, no City employee may use his or her personal social media account to communicate on

behalf of the City. If the subject matter relates to City policies, City business, or other City workplace issues, then City employees are responsible for maintaining compliance with **CAO Memorandum No. 15 (R) regarding Procedures for the Release of Information to the General Public by City Departments and No. 61 (R) regarding Internet Use & Access Authorization.**

B. City employees should use the following to guide online conversations and social media interactions:

- Any political activities of City employees must comply with **CAO Policy Memorandum No. 111, regarding Restrictions on Political Activities by City Employees.**
- Do not knowingly post confidential City information or information obtained in the course of employment as a City employee that could compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems, pursuant to the law.
- Do not knowingly post any information obtained in the course of your employment as a City employee that would infringe on the privacy or legally protected rights of others in your workplace.
- Do not knowingly post any information that would infringe on the privacy or legally protected rights of other City employees.
- Do not use City email addresses (@nola.gov, etc.) to post to message boards, comments sections, or social media sites unless posting is in the course of authorized business duties.
- Do not use City email addresses or City cell phone numbers to register for any online or social media accounts, unless it is for the purpose of authorized business duties.
- Do not create a City account on any online or social platform without explicit approval from the Mayor's Office of Communication.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit constitutionally protected speech, such as "concerted activity" under the National Labor Relations Act, "whistleblowing" activity, or an employee's right to speak as a private citizen on a matter of public concern.

VI. VIOLATIONS OF STANDARDS

Employee violations of a standard of behavior as set forth in this memorandum may subject the employee to disciplinary action and possible termination of employment. The City of New Orleans endorses the use of progressive disciplinary action, for both classified and unclassified employees, where appropriate. Pursuant to civil service rules, the progressive discipline process is a verbal warning, written warning, suspension, demotion, and, where circumstances warrant, termination. The implementation of disciplinary measures shall be consistent with civil service rules where applicable.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

Each employee is to sign a copy of the attached receipt acknowledging their receipt of this policy. The signed receipt is to be kept in the employee's personnel folder located in the department. New employees are to be issued a copy of this policy upon hire. Enforcement of this policy shall begin at the date of hire. These standards may be amended as necessary. Departments are encouraged to develop additional standards tailored to specific department situations.

VIII. INQUIRIES

Questions regarding this memorandum should be directed to Chief Administrative Office, Employee Relations Division at 658-7770.