

**WABASH COUNTY INDIANA**  
**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**Effective:**

**July 1, 1996**

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## **40 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

Welcome the Wabash County Government team. This handbook is your personal reference to general operating policies and practices followed by Wabash County Government. It is designed to help you understand your responsibilities and benefits as an employee. Your job satisfaction, progress, and welfare are important to us. This handbook is the first step toward reaching that goal.

You also need to be aware that this handbook is not a contract guaranteeing employment for any specific duration. Although we hope that your employment relationship with us will be long-term, either you or the County may terminate this relationship at any time unless a specific statute or law imposes other obligations.

Like all dynamic organizations, the County may need to modify policies and procedures from time to time. Wabash County Government reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portion of the handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. You will be informed of any changes as they occur and be provided with updates for your handbook as necessary.

We wish you the best of luck and success in your position and hope that your employment with the County will be a rewarding experience. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding our policies and practices, please see your supervisor.

The policies contained in this employee handbook pertain to all Wabash County Government employees in the departments listed below excluding the Sheriff's Department merit employees.

### **Buildings or Departments Covered by the Employee Handbook**

Courthouse  
Judicial Center  
Highway  
Memorial Hall  
Jail and Sheriff (non-merit)  
Old State Highway Building  
Animal Shelter

**EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

The employee handbook describes important information about Wabash County Government, and I understand that I should consult the Wabash County Coordinator or Board of County Commissioners regarding any questions not answered in the handbook I understand that the policies contained in the employee handbook cover **all** Wabash County employees excluding merit employees of the Sheriff's Department.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. Only the Board of County Commissioners of Wabash County has the ability to adopt any revisions to the policies in this handbook.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand, and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

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EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

DATE

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EMPLOYEE'S NAME  
(PRINTED)

## ETHICS STATEMENT

An effective County government requires the services of men and women of integrity, high ideals, and human understanding. To maintain and promote these essentials, the Board of Commissioners expects all staff members to maintain high standards in the working relationships.

County employees in the performance of their duties will:

- A. Recognize basic dignities of all individuals with whom they interact in the performance of duties;
- B. Represent accurately their qualifications;
- C. Exercise due care to protect the mental and physical safety of colleagues, and subordinates;
- D. Seek and apply the knowledge and skills appropriate to assigned responsibilities;
- E. Keep in confidence such information as they may secure, unless disclosure is required by law, authorized by the Board of Commissioners, or is necessary to protect the health and welfare of others;
- F. Ensure that their actions or those of another on their behalf are not made with specific intent of advancing private economic interests;
- G. Refrain from using position or public property, or permitting another person to use an employee's position or public property for partisan political purposes. This will in no way limit constitutional or legal protected rights as a citizen.
- H. Avoid accepting anything of value offered by another for the purpose of influencing judgment.

## **EMPLOYERS INFORMATION**

We, the Wabash County Board of Commissioners, wish to have our county government operate as effectively and efficiently as possible, knowing that our friends, neighbors, fellow residents, and taxpayers feel the same.

With that goal in mind, the Board of Commissioners feel strongly that elected officials, Department Heads, and all other county employees should understand the following:

1. Elected officials and Department Heads shall comply with the provisions of the personnel manual or face the possibility they might personally be held responsible for any future problems or lawsuits, which might develop.
2. The building's placement of utilities, and real property of Wabash County are the sole responsibility of the Board of County Commissioners. Decisions relating to these properties are the exclusive right of the Board of Commissioners.
3. Individual offices and buildings shall remain open to the public during all hours of normal operation. The closing of individual offices and/or buildings must be with the consent of the Board of County Commissioners. Lunch hours shall be scheduled and if necessary, staggered so the office is not closed. Offices may not close for "social events" and offices should not be closed because employees were allowed to leave the building prior to the normal closing time. No other individual has the authority to close County buildings. The Sheriff may order buildings closed due to adverse conditions. The Auditor, if proper permission has been granted by the Board of Commissioners, may also close the building.

## **101 NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT**

This handbook is intended to provide employees with a general understanding of our personnel policies. Employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the contents of this handbook; it will answer many common questions concerning employment with Wabash County Government.

However, this handbook cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question about employment. It is not an employment contract and is not intended to create contractual obligations of any kind. Neither the employee nor Wabash County is bound to continue the employment relationship if either chooses, at its will, to end the relationship at any time.

In order to retain necessary flexibility in the administration of policies and procedures, Wabash County Government reserves the rights to change, revise, or eliminate any of the policies and/or benefits described in this handbook, except for its policy of employment-at-will. The only recognized deviations from the stated policies are those authorized and signed by the Board of Commissioners of Wabash County.



## **102 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

Wabash County believes that when employees deal openly and directly with supervisors, the work environment can be excellent, communications can be clear, and attitudes can be positive. We believe that Wabash County amply demonstrates its commitment to employees by responding directly to employee concerns.

In an effort to protect and maintain direct employer/employee communications, we will resist organization, within applicable legal limits, and protect the right of employees to speak for themselves.

If and when employees examine the option of representation by individuals outside Wabash County Government, however, we strongly encourage careful consideration of such related issues as regular deductions from paychecks for representation fees, the potential for outside interference with supervisory relationships and the commitment to comply with directions from third parties.

## **103 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at the Wabash County Government will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. Wabash County Government does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religions, sex, political affiliation, national origin, age, disability, or other characteristics protected by law.

Wabash County Government will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

In addition to a commitment to provide equal employment opportunities to all qualified individuals, Wabash County Government has established an affirmative action program to promote opportunities for individuals in certain protected classes throughout the organization.

Reference: (<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/hiring/affirmativeact.htm>)

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

## **104 RESIDENCY**

Recruitment of personnel shall not be limited only to those applicants who reside within Wabash County. However, upon hiring, Wabash County Government may recommend that the employee establish residence within the County. All other qualifications being equal, County residents will receive first consideration.

The law requires that many positions within Wabash County Government be filled by employees who reside within the County. Elected Officials or Department Heads shall investigate this issue prior to making a job offer.

## **105 HIRING OF RELATIVES**

The employment of relatives in the same area of an organization may cause serious conflicts and problems with favoritism and employee morale. In addition to claims of partiality in treatment at work, personal conflicts from outside the work environment can be carried into day-to-day working relationships.

Although Wabash County Government has no prohibition against hiring relatives, the hiring of relatives in direct line of supervision is prohibited. In case of actual problems involving relatives, Wabash County Government will take prompt action, which may include reassignment, or, if necessary, termination of employment for one or both of the individuals involved.

All Department Heads, appointed by the County Commissioners, shall have their selection of employees reviewed by the County Commissioners before the employees are officially hired.

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.

## **106 EMPLOYEE MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

To help ensure that employees are able to perform their duties safely, medical examinations may be required.

After an offer has been made to an applicant entering a designated job category, a medical examination may be performed at the employee's expense. The offer of employment and assignment to duties is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the examination.

Information on an employee's medical condition or history will be kept separate from other employee information and maintained confidentially. Access to this information will be limited to those who have a legitimate need to know.

## **107 IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE**

Wabash County Government is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are re-hired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 form with Wabash County Government within the past three years, or if their previous I-9 form is no longer retained or valid. The I-9 form must be completed and returned within three days after the date of hire. I-9 forms will be kept in personnel files in the Auditor's Office. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

## **108 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Employees have an obligation to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. This policy establishes only the framework within which Wabash County Government wishes the business to operate. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide general direction so that employees can seek further clarification on issues related to the subject of acceptable standards of operation.

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative as a result of Wabash County Government's business dealings. For the purpose 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.

No "presumption of guilt" is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, if employees have any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases, it is imperative that they disclose to the Board of County Commissioners of Wabash County as soon as possible the existence of any actual or potential conflict of interest so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties.

Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which Wabash County Government does business, but also when an employee or relative receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving Wabash County Government.

**109 NOTICE OF EMPLOYMENT**

Wabash County Government shall make every effort to make known employment opportunities. Based on federal regulations, job openings may be communicated by posting notices at various county buildings or advertising the position in the newspaper(s).

**110 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Any employee may hold a job with another organization as long as he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities with Wabash County Government. All employees will be judged by the same performance standard and will be subject to Wabash County Government's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

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

Outside employment will present a conflict of interest if it has an adverse impact on Wabash County Government.

**112 NON-DISCLOSURE**

The protection of confidential information is vital to the interests and the success of Wabash County Government. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Employee medical conditions
- Employee disciplinary records
- Drug and alcohol screenings

Employees who improperly use or disclose confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and legal action, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

## 201 EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES

It is the intent of Wabash County Government to clarify the definitions of employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility.

These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Accordingly, the right to terminate the employment relationship at will at any time is retained by both the employee and the county.

Each employee is designated as either **NONEXEMPT** or **EXEMPT** from federal and state wage and hour laws. **NONEXEMPT** employees are entitled to overtime or compensation pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws. **EXEMPT** employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. Exempt employees are usually paid a salary for all hours worked in a workweek, however few or many. There are generally employees who qualify as executive, administrative, or professional employees. Furthermore, exempt employees are generally those employees who may be expected to work extra hours without additional compensation.

In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one other employment category:

**REGULAR FULL-TIME** employees are those who are not in a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work Wabash County Government's full-time schedule. Generally, they are eligible for Wabash County Government's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program. The regular full-time schedules for employees covered by this handbook are as follows:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Courthouse	35 to 40
Memorial Hall	35 to 40
Judicial Center	35 to 40
Highway	40
Sheriff, non-merit	35 to 40

**PART-TIME** employees are those who are not assigned to a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 35 or 40 hours per week. While they do receive all legally mandated benefits (such as Social Security and workers' compensation insurance), they are ineligible for all of the Wabash County Government's other benefit programs.

**INTRODUCTORY** employees are those whose performance is being evaluated to determine whether further employment in a specific position or with Wabash County Government is appropriate.

**TEMPORARY** employees are those who are hired as interim replacements, to temporarily supplement the workforce, or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Temporary employees retain that status unless and until notified of a change. While temporary employees receive all legally mandated benefits (such as workers' compensation insurance, and Social Security), they are ineligible for all of Wabash County Government's other benefit programs.

## **202 ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILES**

Wabash County Government maintains a personnel file on each employee. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's job application, resume, service records, records of training, license or certification documentation of performance appraisals, resignations, form I-9, salary increases, and other employment records.

Personnel files are the property of Wabash County Government, and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only supervisors and management personnel of Wabash County Government who have a legitimate reason to review information in a file are allowed to do so.

Employees who wish to review their own file should contact their Department Head. With reasonable advance notice, employees may review their own personnel files in Wabash County Government's offices and in the presence of an individual appointed by Wabash County to maintain the files.

## **203 EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE CHECKS**

To ensure that individuals who join Wabash County Government are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of Wabash County Government to check the employment references of all applicants.

The Department Heads will respond in writing only to those reference check inquiries that are submitted in writing. Responses to such inquiries will confirm only dates of employment, wage rates, and position(s) held. No employment data will be released without a written authorization and release signed by the individual who is the subject of the inquiry.

## **204 PERSONNEL DATA CHANGES**

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify Wabash County Government of any changes in personnel data. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail or electronic addresses, names, names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. If any personnel data has changed notify the Department Head who shall send all changes to the Auditor's Office after department records have been updated.

## 205 INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

The introductory period is intended to give new and re-hired employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations. Wabash County Government uses this period to evaluate employee capabilities, work habits, and overall performance. Either the employee or Wabash County Government may end the employment relationship at any time during or after the introductory period.

With the exception of Wabash County Highway employees, all new and re-hired employees work in an introductory basis for the first 180 calendar days after their date of hire. Any significant absence will automatically extend an introductory period by the length of the absence. If Wabash County Government determines that the designated introductory period does not allow sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate the employee's performance, the introductory period may be extended for a specified period.

All new and re-hired employees will be compensated at 85% of the same base salary as the regular fulltime employee for the first 90 calendar days of employment. Upon satisfactory completion of the introductory period, employees enter the "regular" employment classification.

During the introductory period, new and re-hired employees are eligible for those benefits that are required by law, such as workers' compensation insurance and Social Security. They may also be eligible for other Wabash County Government-provided benefits, subject to the terms and conditions of each benefits program. Employees should read the information for each specific benefits program for the details on eligibility requirements.

- A re-hired employee is one who left county employment for employment elsewhere and then returned. The Wabash County Commissioners will determine special exception of employee benefits.
- Wabash County Highway employee probation period and salary are addressed separately due to the extended skill level needed to perform the job.

## 208 EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

Wabash County Government relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in Wabash County Government's exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

## **209 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS**

Supervisors and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal day-to-day basis. A formal written performance evaluation will be conducted at the end of an employee's initial period of hire, known as the introductory period. Additional formal written performance evaluations are conducted to provide both supervisors and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals.

The performance of all employees is generally evaluated annually according to a budget-year cycle. Supervisors may from time to time place into an employee's personnel file written statements regarding positive or negative job performance.

Subject to available funding the county may award merit-based pay adjustments in an effort to recognize truly superior employee performance.

The decision to award such an adjustment is dependent upon numerous factors, including, but not limited to, the information documented by this formal performance review process.

## **301 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

Eligible employees at Wabash County Government are provided a wide range of benefits. A number of the programs (such as Social Security, worker's compensation, state disability, and unemployment insurance) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law.

Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. Your supervisor can identify the programs for which you are eligible. Details of many of these programs can be found elsewhere in the employee handbook.

The following benefit programs are available to eligible employees:

- Auto-Employer Owned Vehicle
- Benefit Conversion at Termination
- Bereavement Leave
- Cobra Insurance Benefit at Termination
- Deferred Compensation Plan
- Educational Assistance
- Employee Assistance/Counseling Program
- Employee Health Program
- Family Leave
- Flexible Work Schedules
- Holidays
- Jury Duty
- Life Insurance
- Longevity Pay (Suspended 12-31-06)



Long-Term Disability  
 Major Medical Insurance  
 Meal Allowances/Reimbursements  
 Medical Insurance  
 Medical Leave  
 Membership Dues  
 Mileage Reimbursement  
 Military Leave  
 Pension Plan-PERF Retirement Plan  
 ([http://www.in.gov/perf/pdf/public/member\\_handbook\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://www.in.gov/perf/pdf/public/member_handbook_for_web.pdf))  
 Personal Time  
 Sick Leave Benefits  
 Business Travel Allowances  
 Uniforms and Uniform Maintenance  
 Vacation Benefits  
 Witness Duty  
 Workers' Compensation Insurance

Some benefit programs require contributions from the employee, but most are fully paid by Wabash County Government.

<b>303 VACATION BENEFITS</b>
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Vacation time off with pay is available to eligible employees and the County strongly encourages those employees to use vacation time to provide opportunities for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. Employees in the following employment classification(s) are eligible to earn and use vacation time as described in this policy:

Regular full-time employees

The amount of paid vacation time employees receive each year increases with the length of their employment as shown in the following schedule.

**VACATION EARNING SCHEDULE**

<u>YEARS OF ELIGIBLE SERVICE</u>	<u>VACATION DAYS EACH YEAR</u>
Upon initial eligibility	5 days
After 3 years	10 days
After 10 years	15 days

The length of eligible service is calculated on the basis of a "benefit year". This is the 12-month period that begins when the employee starts to earn vacation time; i.e. the employee's anniversary date. An employee's benefit year may be extended for any significant leave of absence except military leave of absence. Military leave has no effect on this calculation.

Once employees enter an eligible employment classification, they begin to earn paid vacation time according to the schedule. However, before vacation time can be used, a waiting period of 365 calendar days must be completed. After that time, employees can request use of earned vacation time including that accrued during the waiting period.

Paid vacation time can be used in minimum increments of one-half day. To take vacation, employees shall request advance approval from their supervisors. Requests will be reviewed based on a number of factors, including business needs and staffing requirements.

Vacation time off is paid at the employee's base pay rate at the time of vacation.

As stated above, employees are encouraged to use available paid vacation time for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits but vacation leave may be used for illness, if necessary. In the event that available vacation is not used by the end of the benefit year, employees may carry unused time forward to the next benefit year. An employee cannot carry over more than one (1) week of vacation per year with a maximum total of 30 days. After 30 days, further vacation accrual will stop. When the employee uses paid vacation time and brings the available amount below 30 days, vacation accrual will begin again. When absent from work for one or more normal workdays in order to pursue activities for personal convenience or at one's personal discretion, an employee must utilize available vacation time, personal or sick time.

When an employee leaves Wabash County Government employment, employees who are in good standing, will be paid for unused vacation time that has been earned through the last day of work.

<b>305 HOLIDAYS</b>
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Wabash County Government will grant holiday time off to all employees on the holidays listed below in accordance with Indiana Code 1-1-9-1. The Wabash County Commissioners prior to January 1 of each year will review and post holidays for the coming year.

Because of the necessity to electronically link county offices with the State of Indiana offices, the county will observe the official Indiana State Holiday schedule established by the Governor of Indiana prior to January 1 of each year.

New Year's Day, January 1  
Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, (the third Monday in January)  
Abraham Lincoln Birthday, February 12th  
Geo. Washington Birthday (third Monday in February)  
Primary Election Day (first Tuesday after the first Monday in May, if primary is being held)  
Good Friday, (Friday before Easter)  
Memorial Day, (the last Monday in May)  
Independence Day, (July 4)  
Labor Day, (first Monday in September)  
Columbus Day, (second Monday in October)

General Election Day, (first Tuesday after first Monday in November, if election is being held)  
Veterans Day, (November 11)  
Thanksgiving Day, (fourth Thursday in November)  
Christmas Day, (December 25)

Wabash County Government will grant paid holiday time off to all eligible employees who have completed 180 calendar days of service in an eligible employment classification. Holiday pay will be calculated based on the employee's straight-time pay rate (as of the date of the holiday) times the number of hours the employee would otherwise have worked on that day. Eligible employee classification(s):

Regular full-time employees

A recognized holiday falls during an eligible employee's paid absence (such as vacation or sick leave) holiday pay will be provided instead of the paid time off benefit that would otherwise have applied.

If eligible hourly employees work on a recognized holiday, they will receive holiday pay plus wages at one and one-half times their straight-time rate for the hours worked in the holiday.

Paid time off for holidays will not be counted as hours worked for the purpose of determining overtime.

### **306 WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE**

Wabash County Government provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if the employee is hospitalized, immediately.

Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses should inform their supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it be reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible. Employee would receive exclusively worker's compensation insurance pay.

An employee who willfully disobeys safety rules or laws, is involved in horseplay, self-inflicts an injury, or is injured as a result of being intoxicated may have benefits denied.

If you are required to miss work due to a compensatable work related injury or illness, the time missed from work will be applied against any leave for which you are qualified under the county's Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") policy, section # 602.

### 307 SICK LEAVE BENEFITS

Wabash County Government provides paid sick leave benefits to all eligible employees for periods of temporary absence due to illnesses or injuries. Eligible employee's classification(s):

Regular full-time employees  
Introductory employees

Eligible employees will accrue sick leave benefits at the rate of 6 days per year (.50 of a day for every full month of service). Sick leave benefits are calculated on the basis of a "benefit year," the 12-month period that begins when the employee starts to earn sick leave benefits.

Paid sick leave can be used in minimum increments of one-half day. Eligible employees may only use sick leave benefits for an absence due to their own illness or injury.

Employees who are unable to report to work due to illness or injury shall notify their direct supervisor one hour before the scheduled start of their workday if possible. The direct supervisor must also be contacted on each additional day of absence.

If an employee is absent for two or more consecutive days due to illness or injury, a physician's statement at the discretion of the supervisor, must be provided verifying the disability and its beginning and expected ending dates. Such verification may be requested for other sick leave absences as well and may be required as a condition to receiving sick leave benefits and will be required for periods of unpaid leaves of absence under the FMLA leave Policy (see section # 602).

Before returning to work for a sick leave absence of five calendar days or more, an employee must provide a physician's verification that he or she may safely return to work.

Unused sick leave benefits will be allowed to accumulate until the employee has accrued a total of 66 calendar days worth of sick leave benefits. If the employee's benefits reach this maximum, further accrual of sick leave benefits will be suspended until the employee has reduced the balance below the limit.

Sick leave benefits are intended solely to provide income protection in the event of illness or injury, and may not be used for any other absence. When absent from work for one or more normal workdays in order to pursue activities for personal convenience or at one's personal discretion, an employee must utilize available vacation time, personal or sick time.

Terminated employees, other than those employees terminated for cause or those employees who do not provide Wabash County Government with at least two weeks advance notice of their termination, shall be eligible to receive compensation at their regular rate of pay for all of their accumulated sick leave at termination, not to exceed 66 calendar days. (Suspended 12/31/2006)

Starting 01/01/2007 additional accumulated sick leave will not be paid at the time of termination of employment for eligible employees. Paid accumulated sick leave will be frozen 12/31/2006 for each employee. Accumulated sick leave time will be paid at the end of their employment based on their regular rate of pay. Employee sick leave will continue to accumulate to a maximum of 66 days; however, the amount of sick leave paid will be only for time accumulated before 01/01/2007.

*(Example: An employee has accumulated 10 sick days before 01/01/2007 and 56 days after. At time of termination the eligible employee will be paid for only 10 days. If the employee becomes sick and must use the 10 days or any part thereof, they will lose payment for those used days.)*

The employee must leave in good standing and provide two weeks notice to be eligible to receive compensation.

An employee on an extended absence must apply for any other available compensation and benefits, such as workers compensation. Sick leave benefits will be used to supplement any payments that an employee is eligible to receive from state disability insurance, worker's compensation, or employer provided disability insurance programs. The combination of any such disability payments and sick leave benefits cannot exceed the employee's normal weekly earnings.

If an employee has accrued paid sick leave benefits under this Policy at the time he or she requests a leave, and if the absence qualifies under the county's FMLA policy, then the absence will count toward any FMLA entitlement. The employee's sick leave as well as the employee's FMLA entitlement will be reduced by the period of the leave. A county employee is not permitted to work for any other employer or the employee's own business while receiving sick leave benefits without prior authorization from the county. Failure to obtain prior authorization from the county may be grounds for termination of the employee's sick leave benefits and/or employment.

### **308 SHORT TERM DISABILITY**

If a regular full-time county employee becomes disabled and cannot work due to extended illness or a non-intentional self-inflicted disabling accident, the employee may be eligible for short-term disability benefits. An employee's eligibility for these benefits will be determined by the county, based in part, on a written opinion of the employee's physician and/or an outside professional medical source chosen by the County Commissioners, which must designate when the illness commenced or the accident occurred.

Eligible employees will receive short-term disability benefits of \$250.00 per week up to a maximum of (12) twelve weeks ("disability period") until they can return to work. The Wabash County Commissioners will determine when the employee is capable of returning to work. The disability period will begin on the date the illness commenced or the accident occurred, as determined by the county. An eligible employee will be required to use all accumulated sick days and vacation days during the disability period. Accordingly, an eligible employee with accumulated sick days or vacation days will receive their regular pay (not \$250.00 per week), and

the disability period will not be extended. The time granted for short-term disability leave will also apply against any FMLA entitlement. The short-term disability leave will apply only to the county employee and not to any other family member.

In order to apply for short-term disability benefits, an employee needs to contact their supervisor and their supervisor needs to notify the County Coordinator so that the County Commissioners and Wabash County Council can be advised of the application and a determination can be made. Consideration of eligibility and/or approval of benefits will then be determined by the County Commissioners funded by the County Council and the applicant will be advised of the determination.

Accrual for benefits calculations, such as vacation, sick leave, or holiday benefits, will be suspended during short-term disability leave.

**309 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Employees who wish to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify their supervisor immediately.

Up to three days of paid bereavement leave will be provided to eligible employees in the following classification(s).

Regular full-time employees

Wabash County Government defines “immediate family” as the employee’s spouse, parent, child, sibling; the employee’s spouse’s parent, child, or sibling; the employee’s child’s spouse; grandparents, or grandchildren. Special consideration will also be given to any other person whose association with the employee was similar to any of the above relationships.

One day paid leave will be provided to regular full-time employees upon the death of an aunt, uncle, nephew, niece, or cousin.

Approval of bereavement leave will occur in the absence of unusual operating requirements. Employees may, with their supervisors’ approval, use any available paid leave for additional time off as necessary.

**310 COMPENSATORY TIME**

1. In accordance with 29 U.S.C & 207 (o), compensatory time off shall be awarded in lieu of cash overtime payments as follows:
2. Regular compensatory time off is earned at a rate of one (1) hour for every hour worked up to 40 hours in one week. Premium compensatory time off is earned at a rate of one and one half (1½) hours for each hour worked over 40 hours in one week.

3. Paid workers compensation leave, leaves of absence and time spent in stand-by or on-call status, shall not constitute “hours worked” for determination of accrued compensatory time off.
4. The Wabash County Commissioners approve schedules for each department, which identify “Regular full-time employees” positions that are eligible for the accrual and use of compensatory time. “Part-Time and Temporary Employee” positions do not accrue compensatory time.
5. Accrued and used compensatory time shall be reported on each department’s bi-weekly payroll register.
6. The County Commissioners and or Supervisor must approve compensatory time in advance and all attempts must be made to use any compensatory time by the end of the next pay period. **Any exceptions to this Policy shall be reviewed and approved by the County Commissioners.**

<b>311 JURY DUTY</b>
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Wabash County Government encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving on jury duty when required.

Jury duty pay will be calculated on the employee’s base pay rate times the number of hours the employee would otherwise have worked on the day of absence. All employees may request up to four weeks of paid jury duty leave over any two-year period.

If an employee is required to serve jury duty beyond the period of paid jury duty leave, he or she may use any available paid time off (for example, vacation benefits) or may request unpaid jury duty leave of absence.

In order to be eligible for jury duty pay, employees must turn in any money received, except mileage, by the court for jury duty. Employee classifications that qualify for paid jury duty leave are:

- Regular full-time employees
- Introductory full-time employees

Employees must show the jury duty summons to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate their absence. Of course, employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.

Either Wabash County Government or the employee may request an excuse from jury duty if, in Wabash County Government’s judgment, the employee’s absence would create serious operational difficulties.

Wabash County Government will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full term of the jury duty absence. Accrual for benefits calculations, such as vacation, sick leave, or holiday benefits, will not be affected during paid or unpaid jury duty leave.

### 312 WITNESS DUTY

Wabash County Government encourages employees to appear in court for witness duty when subpoenaed to do so.

If employees have been subpoenaed or otherwise requested to testify as witness by Wabash County, they will receive paid time off for the entire period of witness duty.

Employees will be granted unpaid time off to appear in court as a witness when requested by a party other than Wabash County Government. Employees are free to use any available paid leave benefit (such as vacation leave and or personal days) to receive compensation for the period of this absence.

The subpoena should be shown to the employee's supervisor immediately after it is received so that operating requirements can be adjusted, where necessary, to accommodate the employee's absence. The employee is expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.

### 313 BENEFITS CONTINUATION (COBRA)

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives qualified employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under Wabash County Government's health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation (an employee who is planning to leave Wabash County Government employment should notify the Auditor's office at least 30 days in advance), termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours or a leave of absence; an employee's divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.

**Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at Wabash County Government's group rates plus an administration fee.**

An employee planning to leave Wabash County Government employment should notify the County Auditor's office at least 30 days prior to leaving employment.

COBRA must be applied for within 60 days of leaving employment.

### 401 TIMEKEEPING

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every employee. Federal and state laws require Wabash County Government to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Hourly (overtime eligible) employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work, as well as the beginning and ending time of each meal period. They should also record the beginning and ending time of any split shift or departure from work for personal reasons. Overtime work must always be approved before it is performed.



Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Hourly (overtime eligible) employees should (shall) report to work no more than 15 minutes prior to their scheduled starting time nor stay more than 15 minutes after their scheduled stop time without expressed prior authorization from their supervisor.

It is the employee's responsibility to sign his or her time record to certify the accuracy of all time recorded. The supervisor will review and then initial the time record before submitting it for payroll processing. In addition, if corrections or modifications are made to the time record, both the employee and the supervisor must verify the accuracy of the changes by initialing and dating the time record.

#### **403 PAYDAYS**

All employees are paid on Wednesdays, biweekly. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period.

\* In 2007 Wabash County Government may be implementing a direct deposit program for payroll. The regularly scheduled payday will be on Wednesdays, biweekly. Paychecks will be directly deposited in the employee's bank account available after midnight. The employee will receive a nonnegotiable "check sub" indicating employee information. There may be changes to this program with notices going to all employees.

#### **404 LONGEVITY (Revised 11-25-96) (Suspended 12-31-06 due to lack of funding by County Council)**

Each full-time county employee is eligible to receive longevity pay as follows:

1. Longevity pay is  $\frac{1}{4}$  of one percent of base salary per total years of employment with Wabash County Government.
2. An employee begins to earn longevity on the first January 1 after two full years of employment with the county.
3. Longevity is considered to be earned throughout the year and is to be paid with the first paycheck in December of the year in which it was earned. If any employee retires or is terminated during the year, the earned longevity payment will be included in the person's final paycheck.
4. Longevity is to be calculated on total years of service up to twenty years. Thereafter each person's longevity is based on twenty years.
5. Longevity pay program is based on availability of funds provided by the county council on a year-to-year basis.

## 405 EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated:

**RESIGNATION** – voluntary employment termination initiated by an employee.

**DISCHARGE** – involuntary employment termination initiated by Wabash County Government.

**LAYOFF** – involuntary employment termination initiated Wabash County Government for non-disciplinary reasons.

**RETIREMENT** – voluntary employment termination initiated by the employee meeting age, length of service, and any other criteria for retirement from the county.

To assist the department and County Council in preparing a budget for the following year it will be necessary for any retiring employee to notify their supervisor in writing of their retirement date before budget time, allowing the necessary additional costs to be included in the following year's budget. We recognize at times there are extenuating circumstances that will not allow advanced notice.

As an important part of the processing of an employee's separation from employment, Wabash County Government would appreciate a chance to review honest and objective opinions regarding the employee's work here. Feedback from our employees plays an important role in establishing and improving the conditions in our workplace and in evaluating our personnel.

Upon notice by the departing employee, a department supervisor must notify the Wabash County Coordinator and complete a "TERMINATION REPORT" form. The supervisor must also request that the departing employee complete an "EXIT INTERVIEW" form. The supervisor will then schedule an exit interview that will include the supervisor, the County Coordinator or County Auditor, and the departing employee. This interview will afford an opportunity to discuss how the employee's departure will affect employee benefits such as; continued health insurance coverage, retirement benefits, deferred compensation, remaining sick day compensation, the return of county-owned property, and repayment of any debt to the county.

Suggestions, complaints, and questions can be voiced at this interview and a request for an exit interview with the Wabash County Commissioners can also be made. Both of these forms should be returned to the County Coordinator or County Auditor.

Employee benefits will be affected by employment termination in the following manner. All accrued, vested benefits that are due and payable at termination will be paid. Some benefits may be continued at the employee's expense if the employee so chooses. See #313 Benefits COBRA.

#### **407 SEVERANCE PAY**

The county does not grant severance pay to employees whose employment is terminated. However, the County Commissioners reserve the right to make exceptions to this Policy in their sole and absolute discretion.

#### **408 PAY ADVANCES**

Wabash County Government does not provide pay advances on unearned wages to employees.

#### **409 ADMINISTRATIVE PAY CORRECTIONS**

Wabash County Government takes all reasonable steps to ensure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday.

In the unlikely event that there is an error in the amount of pay, the employee should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of the department payroll deputy or to the Wabash County Auditor if there is no payroll deputy in the office, so that corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

Once underpayments are identified, they will be corrected in the next regular paycheck. Overpayments will also be corrected in the next regular paycheck. If there is a sizeable error, corrections will be made immediately.

#### **410 PAY DEDUCTIONS**

The law requires that Wabash County Government make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes. Wabash county Government also must deduct Social Security taxes on each employee's earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security "wage base." Wabash County Government matches the amount of Social Security taxes paid by each employee.

Other deductions may be made where Wabash County Government is required by court order to pay monies from wages to a third party under garnishment, wage attachment, or bankruptcy proceedings.

If you have questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, your supervisor can assist in having your questions answered.

## **501 SAFETY**

To assist in providing a safe and healthful work environment for employees and visitors, Wabash County Government has established a workplace safety program. This program is a top priority for Wabash County Government. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

Wabash County Government provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, memos, e-mail messages, or other written communications.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report or, when appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should immediately notify the appropriate supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefits procedure.

## **502 WORK SCHEDULES**

The normal work schedule for all Courthouse, Judicial Center, and Memorial Hall employees is seven hours a day, five days a week.

The normal work schedule for all Highway employees is eight hours a day, five days a week.

The normal work schedule for Sheriff Non-merit employees is either seven or eight hours a day.

Supervisors will advise employees of the times their schedules will normally begin and end. Staffing needs and operational demands may necessitate variations in starting and ending times, as well as variations in the total hours that may be scheduled each day and week.

Flextime scheduling is available in some cases to allow employees to vary their starting and ending times each day within established limits. Employees' should consult their supervisor for the details of this program.

## **503 USE OF THE INTERNET**

The County has established a policy with regard to access to the Internet using the County's Internet system. It allows employees to connect to information resources around the state and other governmental agencies. Every employee with access has a responsibility to use the Internet in a productive manner. To ensure that all employees are responsible and productive Internet users, the following guidelines have been established for using the Internet.

### **Access to the Internet**

Any employees desiring access to the Internet must get authorization from the County Commissioners and will be required to sign an acknowledgement form stating they understand the county's Internet and electronic mail policy.

### **Acceptable Uses of the Internet**

Employees accessing the Internet are representing the county. All communications should be for professional reasons. Employees are responsible for seeing that the Internet is used in an effective, ethical, and lawful manner. Internet Relay Chat channels may be used to conduct official county business, or to gain technical or analytical advice only. Databases may be accessed for information as needed. E-mail may be used for business contacts.

### **Unacceptable Use of the Internet**

The Internet should not be used for personal gain or advancement of individual views. Solicitation of non-county business, or any use of the Internet for personal gain, is strictly prohibited. County employees may not make purchases over the Internet without prior authorization from the County Commissioners or the County Auditor. Use of the Internet must not disrupt the operation of the county network or the networks of other users. It must not interfere with your productivity.

### **Communications**

Each employee is responsible for the content of all text, audio or images that they place or send over the Internet. Fraudulent, harassing or obscene messages are prohibited. All messages communicated on the Internet should have your name attached. No messages will be transmitted under an assumed name. Users may not attempt to obscure the origin of any message. Information published on the Internet should not violate or infringe upon the rights of others. No abusive, profane or offensive language is transmitted through the system. Employees who wish to express personal opinions on the Internet are encouraged to obtain their own usernames on other Internet systems.

### **Software**

To prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the system there will be no unauthorized downloading of any software. All software downloads must be authorized by the County Coordinator or County Commissioners.

### **Copyright Issues**

Copyrighted materials belonging to entities other than Wabash County Government may not be transmitted by employees on the Internet. One copy of copyrighted material may be downloaded for your own personal use in research. Users are not permitted to copy, transfer, rename, add or delete information or programs belonging to other users unless given express permission to do so by the owner. Failure to observe copyright or license agreements may result in disciplinary action from the county or legal action by the copyright owner.

### **Security**

All messages created, sent or retrieved over the Internet are the property of Wabash County Government, and should be considered public information. The county reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system as deemed necessary and appropriate. Internet messages are public communication and are not private. All communications including text and images can be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver.

### **Harassment**

Harassment of any kind is prohibited. No messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual or group's race, religion, national origin, physical attributes, or sexual preference will be transmitted.

### **Violations**

Violations of any guidelines listed above may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. If necessary the county will advise appropriate legal officials of any illegal violations.

## **USE OF ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Wabash County Government has established a policy with regard to access and disclosure of electronic mail messages created, sent, or received by county employees using the county's electronic mail system.

### **Access to Electronic Mail**

Any employees desiring access use of electronic mail must get authorization from the County Commissioners and will be required to sign an acknowledgement form stating they understand the county's electronic mail policy. The county intends to honor the policies set forth below, but must reserve the right to change them at any time as may be required under the circumstances.

1. The county maintains an electronic mail system. This system is provided by the county to assist in the conduct of business within county government.
2. The electronic mail system hardware is county property. Additionally, all messages composed, sent, or received on the electronic mail system are and remain the property of the county. They are not the private property of any employee.
3. The use of the electronic mail system is reserved solely for the conduct of Wabash County business. It may not be used for personal business.
4. The electronic mail system may not be used to solicit or proselytize for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-job-related solicitations.

5. The electronic mail system is not to be used to create any offensive or disruptive messages. Among those which are considered offensive, are any messages which contain sexual implications, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comment that offensively addresses someone's age, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability.
6. The electronic mail system shall not be used to send (upload) or receive (download) copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary financial information, or similar materials without prior authorization.
7. Wabash County reserves and intends to exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all messages created, received or sent over the electronic mail system for any purpose. The contents of electronic mail properly obtained for legitimate business purposes, may be disclosed within the county without the permission of the employee.
8. The confidentiality of any message should not be assumed. Even when a message is erased, it is still possible to retrieve and read that message. Further, the use of passwords for security does not guarantee confidentiality. All passwords must be disclosed to the county or they are invalid and cannot be used. See Wabash County Computer Policy Handbook.
9. Notwithstanding the county's right to retrieve and read any electronic mail messages, such messages should be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees are not authorized to retrieve or read any e-mail messages that are not sent to them. Any exception to this policy must receive prior approval by the employer.
10. Employees shall not use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored information, unless authorized to do so. Employees should not attempt to gain access to another employee's messages without the latter's permission. All computer pass codes must be provided to supervisors. No pass code may be used that is unknown to the county. See Wabash County Computer Policy Handbook.
11. Any employees who discover a violation of this policy shall notify the County Coordinator or County Commissioners.
12. Any employee who violates this policy or uses the electronic mail system for improper purposes shall be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

#### **504 USE OF PHONE, CELL PHONE, US MAIL, AND COMPUTER SYSTEMS**

Personal use of Wabash County Government telephones or cell (mobile) phones for long-distance and toll calls is not permitted. Employees should practice discretion in using county telephones when making local personal calls and should be required to reimburse Wabash County Government for any charges resulting from their personal use of the telephone. Continued misuse of telephone privileges could result in dismissal.

Because the taxpayers are listening and watching, misuse of county communication systems to play electronic, radio or television games is not permitted. Playing such games while working is not permitted. Misuse of county equipment could result in disciplinary action.

To assure effective telephone communications, employees should always use the approved greeting and speak in a courteous and professional manner. Please confirm information received from the caller, and hang up only after the caller has done so.

The use of Wabash County Government paid postage for personal correspondence is not permitted.

Misuse of the Wabash County Government computer systems is defined in section # 503.

#### **505 SMOKING**

In keeping with Wabash County Government's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoking is prohibited throughout the workplace including all county buildings. See Wabash County Ordinances # 1989-V and 2002-III.

#### **506 REST AND MEAL PERIODS**

Each workday, full-time nonexempt employees are provided with two rest periods of 15 minutes in length. To the extent possible, rest periods will be provided in the middle of work periods. Since this time is counted and paid as time worked, employees must not be absent from their workstations beyond the allotted rest period time.

All full-time employees are provided with one meal period of 60 minutes in length each workday. All full-time Highway employees will have one meal period of 30 minutes in length each workday. Supervisors will schedule meal periods to accommodate operating requirements. Employees will be relieved of all active responsibilities and restrictions during meal periods and will not be compensated for that time.



## **507 OVERTIME**

When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours, employees will be given the opportunity for overtime work assignments. All overtime work must receive the supervisor's prior authorization. Overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as practical to all employees qualified to perform the required work.

Overtime compensation is paid to all non-exempt employees in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. Overtime pay is based on actual hours worked in excess of forty hours in a workweek. Time off for sick leave, vacation leave, or any leave of absence will not be considered hours worked for purposes of figuring overtime calculations.

Failure to work scheduled overtime or overtime worked without prior authorization from the supervisor may result in disciplinary action, up to and including possible discharge.

See Section # 310 for Compensatory Time.

## **508 USE OF EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES**

Equipment and vehicles essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Employees shall notify the supervisor if any equipment, machines, tools, or vehicles appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others. The supervisor can answer any questions about an employee's responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment or vehicles used on the job.

Wabash County Government owned property is not for personal use. Employees who operate Wabash County Government owned vehicles may use the vehicles for Wabash County business only.

The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment or vehicles will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The use of tools, equipment, etc., for personal or other non-county purpose without prior approval by a department head or the County Commissioners is strictly prohibited and can result in disciplinary action, including discharge.

## 510 WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, power failures, tornadoes or earthquakes can disrupt Wabash County Government operations. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require the closing of a work facility. In the event that such an emergency occurs during non-working hours, local radio and/or television stations will be asked to broadcast notification of the closing.

Employees are encouraged to make contact with their immediate supervisor, County Coordinator or the Auditor in the event the news media fails to broadcast notification of the closing in a timely manner.

When the decision to close is made after the workday has begun, employees will receive official notification from their immediate supervisor. The Wabash County Commissioners will determine if and when the Wabash County Government offices will be closed. At that time, the Wabash County Coordinator or Auditor will be contacted and the Coordinator or Auditor will make notification to local news media and department supervisors. Employees will be compensated, at regular hourly or daily rate of pay, as a result of the closure.

Employees in essential operations may be asked to work on a day when operations are officially closed.

It is the option of the department supervisor and the County Commissioners to decide how an employee will make-up lost time when weather is a factor.

## 512 BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPENSES

Employees who are involved in an accident while traveling on business must promptly report the incident to their immediate supervisor. Vehicles owned, leased, or rented by Wabash County Government may not be used for personal use.

I. The County will pay or reimburse you for travel related costs under the following conditions:

1. Your department supervisor and/or the Wabash County Commissioners must approve all travel arrangements.
2. The travel arrangements must be county business related, the costs to be paid or reimbursed (up to the currently approved per diem) while traveling must be related to county business, and original itemized, dated receipt must accompany all claims.
3. If the conditions in 1 & 2 are satisfied, only the following costs will be paid for or reimbursed:
  - a. **Registration Conference Fees**

b. **Hotel room costs** for a single room at the governmental rate, if offered. The county encourages its employees to share rooms. If a room has been rented for more than one person and that person is an employee, the county will pay the additional room costs over and above the single rate. If the additional room charge is due to a non-employee spouse, the employee will be responsible for any additional charges and taxes incurred. Overnight expenses will be reimbursed only for meetings that are 50 or more miles from the courthouse.

c. **Innkeepers and Sales Tax** relating to reimbursable costs will be paid for by the county.

d. **Parking fees** incurred for county related business will be paid for or reimbursed by the county.

e. **Long distance calls** will only be paid or reimbursed for county business only; these calls should be logged and the purpose of the call noted.

f. **Food** costs, excluding alcohol, will be reimbursed by the county while on government business, up to 15% gratuity on food will also be reimbursed. The total costs will not exceed established per diem limits set by Commissioners.

g. **Mileage** for your personal vehicle will be reimbursed as follows:

1. For each mile necessarily traveled in going to and returning from the conference or meeting by the most expeditious route at a rate determined by the county council.
2. Regardless of the duration of the conference, only one (1) mileage reimbursement will be allowed to the official or employee furnishing the vehicle although the official or employee may transport more than one (1) person. The county encourages car-pooling.

h. **Airline travel and rental car** cost must be approved in advance by the department supervisor and one of the County Commissioners. If approved, the employee or official traveling will not be reimbursed for any cost over and above a coach class seat and the taxes incurred for that seat.

- i. **Taxi transportation** costs when deemed absolutely necessary by the department supervisor will be reimbursed.
- j. **Toll charges**, if county business related, will be reimbursed.
- k. When travel is extended for any reason other than county business, the employee or official will be responsible for any additional costs incurred.

II. The county will **NOT** pay for any of the following travel related costs:

- a. Additional costs incurred due to persons in room that are not employees of the county.
- b. Non-business related long distance calls or phone charges.
- c. In room dry/wet bars.
- d. In room movies/entertainment.
- e. Room Service
- f. Valet Services
- g. Dry Cleaning or Laundry Services.
- h. Travel that is not approved by the employee's department supervisor.
- i. More than 3 meals per day.
- j. Alcoholic Beverages.
- k. Personal services, including charges for use of a health club or similar amenities.
- l. Internet connections for non-county related business.
- m. Facsimile, mail or packaging services for non-county related business.

Please Note: The County reserves the right to evaluate all charges submitted and make any appropriate reductions.

III. The following are *state-mandated exceptions* to our Policy and will apply to those specific conferences and meetings:

- 1. **State Board of Accounts State Called Conference (IC 5-11-14-1):**
  - a. **Mileage** – For each mile, necessarily traveled, going to and returning from the conference by the most expeditious route at a rate determined by the county fiscal body. (Note: Regardless of the duration of the conference, only one (1) mileage reimbursement shall be allowed to the official or

employee furnishing the conveyance although the official or employee may transport more than one (1) person.)

b. **Lodging** – For each night preceding conference attendance equal to the single room rate.

2. **State Board of Tax Commissioners Conferences (IC 6-1.1-35-3 – Instructional Sessions for Assessing Officials):**

Applies to instructional sessions held by the board or held by others but approved by the board. May require the attendance of township assessors, county assessors, or members of the county property tax assessment board of appeals, county auditors, and their employees.

a. **Lodging** – Allowance for each night preceding session attendance not less than the lodging allowance equal to the lesser of: (A) the cost of a standard room rate at the hotel where the session is held; or (B) the actual cost of lodging paid.

b. **Subsistence** – Allowance for meals for each day in attendance not less than the subsistence allowance for meals paid to state employees in travel status, but not more than the maximum subsistence allowance permitted under the regulations of the General Services Administration for federal employees in travel status, as reported in the Federal Register. The amount to be reimbursed shall be established by the county fiscal body.

c. **Mileage** – Allowance equal to that sum per mile paid to state officers and employees. The rate per mile shall change each time the state governmental changes its rate per mile.

d. **Parking** – Allowance equal to the cost of parking at the convention site.

**Note:** For one (1) day instructional sessions, a lodging allowance may be paid only to persons who reside more than fifty miles from the session location. Regardless of the duration of the conference, only one (1) mileage reimbursement shall be allowed to the official or employee furnishing the vehicle although the official or employee may transport more than one (1) person.

2. **Indiana Election Commission – Election Division Instructional Meeting (IC 3-6-4.2-14):**

Each year the election division calls a meeting of all the members of the county election boards and the boards of registration to instruct them as to their duties. Each circuit court clerk must attend the meetings.

a. **Subsistence** – Allowance of twenty-four dollars (\$24) for attending the instructional meeting.

b. **Mileage** – Allowance at the state rate for the distance necessarily traveled, going to and returning from the place of the instructional meeting.

c. **Registration Fee** – Allowance for the registration fee.

d. **Lodging** – For each night preceding conference attendance equal to the lodging allowance provided to state employees in travel status.

## **514 VISITORS IN THE WORKPLACE**

To provide for the safety and security of employees and the facilities at Wabash County Government, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps maintain safety standards, protects against theft, ensures security of equipment, protects confidential information, safeguards employee welfare, and avoids potential distractions and disturbances.

Because of safety and security reasons, family and friends of employees are discouraged from visiting.

Employees are responsible for the conduct and safety of their visitors.

Visitors to the workplace for the sole purpose of soliciting personal business from employees or providing personal goods or services (i.e. cosmetic, food, and clothing) are discouraged because it disrupts the workplace.

See # 712 Solicitations

## **601 MEDICAL LEAVE**

Wabash County Government provides medical leaves of absence without pay to eligible employees who are temporarily unable to work due to a serious health condition or disability. For purposes of this policy, serious health conditions or disabilities include inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; continuing treatment by a health provider; and temporary disabilities associated with pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions.

Employees in the following employment classifications are eligible to request medial leave as described in this policy:

Regular full-time employees

A health care provider's statement must be submitted verifying the need for medical leave and its beginning and expected ending dates. Any changes in this information should be promptly reported to Wabash County Government. Employees returning from medical leave must submit a health care provider's verification of their fitness to return to work.

Eligible employees are normally granted leave for the period of the disability. If the initial period of approved absence proves insufficient, consideration will be given to a request for an extension. Employees will be required to first use any accrued paid leave time before taking unpaid medical leave.

Employees who sustain work-related injuries are eligible for a medical leave of absence for the period of disability in accordance with all applicable laws covering occupational disabilities.

Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans, Wabash County Government will continue to provide health insurance benefits on the same basis as was provided to the employee when he/she was actively working.

Benefit accruals, such as vacation, sick leave, and holiday benefits, will continue during the approved medical leave period. When absent from work for one or more normal workdays in order to pursue activities for personal convenience or at one's personal discretion, an employee must utilize available vacation time, personal or sick time.

So that an employee's return to work can be properly scheduled, an employee on medical leave is requested to provide Wabash County Government with at least two weeks advance notice of the date the employee intends to return to work. When a medical leave ends, the employee will be reinstated to the same position, if it is available, or to an equivalent position for which the employee is qualified.

If an employee fails to report to work promptly at the end of the medical leave, Wabash County Government will assume that the employee has resigned.

<b>602 FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT OF 1993</b>
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Wabash County Government provides, under the above named act, family leaves of absence without pay to eligible employees who wish to take time off from work duties to fulfill family obligations relating directly to childbirth, adoption, or placement of a foster child; or to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition. A serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; or continuing treatment by a health care provider.

Eligible employees must have worked 1,250 hours over the previous twelve months. Eligible employees may request family leave only after having completed 365 calendar days of service. Eligible employees should make requests for family leave to their supervisors at least 30 days in advance of foreseeable events and as soon as possible for unforeseeable events.

Employees requesting family leave related to the serious health condition of a child, spouse, or parent may be required to submit a health care provider's statement verifying the need for a family leave to provide care, its beginning and expected ending dates, and the estimated time required.

Eligible employees may request up to a maximum of 12 weeks of family leave within any 12-month period. Any combination of family leave and medical leave may not exceed this maximum limit. Employees will be required to first use any accrued paid leave time before taking unpaid family leave. Married employee couples may be restricted to a combined total of 12 weeks leave within any 12-month period for childbirth, adoption, or placement of a foster child; or the care for a parent with a serious health condition.

Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans, Wabash County Government will continue to provide health insurance benefits on the same basis as was provided to the employee when he/she was actively working.

Benefit accruals, such as vacation, sick leave, and holiday benefits will continue during the approved family leave period.

So that an employee's return to work can be properly scheduled, an employee on family leave is requested to provide Wabash County Government with at least two weeks advance notice of the date the employee intends to return to work. When a family leave ends, the employee will be reinstated to the same position, if it is available, or to an equivalent position for which the employee is qualified.

If an employee fails to report to work promptly at the end of the approved leave, Wabash County Government will assume that the employee has resigned.

Reference: (<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/benefits-leave/fmla.htm>)

**603 PERSONAL TIME**

Employees in the following employment classification(s) are eligible to request personal time as described in this policy:                      Regular full-time employees

Requests for personal time shall be submitted, in writing, to the employee's supervisor, as far in advance as possible.

Personal time shall be used for medical, dental, or eye examinations or treatments where appointments must be during normal working hours. Personal time may be used for legal appointments where appointments must be during normal working hours. Personal time also may be used for witness duty.

Regular full-time employees are entitled to a maximum of one (1) days pay after six (6) months of service and a maximum of two (2) days pay after one (1) year of service for personal time.

Pay for personal time is subject to the judgment of the employee's supervisor following receipt of the written request. Requests for personal time will be evaluated based on a number of factors, including anticipated workload requirements and staffing considerations during the proposed period of absence.

Unused personal days will not be paid at termination of Wabash County Government employment or carried over to the following year. When absent from work for one or more normal workdays in order to pursue activities for personal convenience or at one's personal discretion, an employee must utilize available vacation time, personal or sick time.

**605 MILITARY LEAVE**

A military leave of absence will be granted to employees, except those occupying temporary positions, to attend scheduled drills or training or if called to active duty with the U.S. armed services.

Employees will receive partial pay for two-week training assignments and shorter absences. Upon presentation of satisfactory military pay verification data, employees will be paid the



difference between their normal base compensation and the pay (excluding expense pay) received while on military duty. The portion of any leaves of absence in excess of two weeks will be unpaid. However, employees may use any available paid time off for the absence.

Subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of the applicable plans for which the employee is otherwise eligible, the county will continue to provide health insurance benefits until 30 calendar days after military leave begins. At that time, employees who want to continue their coverage will become responsible for the full cost of such benefits. The county will resume payment of these costs when the employee returns to active employment.

The accrual of benefits such as vacation, holidays, or sick leave will be suspended during the leave and will resume upon the employee's return to active employment.

Employees on two-week active duty training assignments or inactive duty training drills are required to return to work for the first regularly scheduled shift after the end of training, allowing reasonable travel time. Employees on longer military leave will be re-employed in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws.

Every reasonable effort will be made to return eligible employees to their previous position or a comparable one. They will be treated as though they were continuously employed for purpose of determining benefits based on length of service, such as the rate of vacation accrual and job seniority rights.

#### **607 PREGNANCY-RELATED ABSENCES**

Wabash County Government will not discriminate against any employee who requests an excused absence for medical disabilities associated with a pregnancy. Such leave requests will be made and evaluated in accordance with the medical leave policy provisions outlined in this handbook and in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws.

Requests for time off associated with pregnancy and/or childbirth (apart from medical disabilities associated with these conditions) will be considered in the same manner as any other request for an unpaid personal pregnancy-related family leave.

#### **608 MEDICAL INSURANCE**

Wabash County Government makes available health insurance coverage for its employees and their families.

The Wabash County Auditors office must be notified of any employee status change (i. e. medical leave, sick leave), in writing, promptly to allow the county time to notify the insurance underwriter of that

status change. Failure to do so may cause coverage to be interrupted even with the employee and employer paying the premiums.

Cancer and other insurances are available to those employees who wish to participate in this coverage but Wabash County Government does not pay any of the coverage costs of these insurances.

### **609 LIFE INSURANCE**

Wabash County Government makes available a life insurance policy on their employees.

### **610 UNIFORMS AND UNIFORM MAINTENANCE**

Wabash County Government provides uniforms for the Wabash County Highway employees and the custodian staff.

Uniforms for Wabash County Sheriff's department employees and jail staff personnel are provided within the Wabash County Sheriff's budget.

### **700 EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WORK RULES**

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, Wabash County Government expects employees to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all employees and the organization.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property of the County or others
- Falsification of employment application
- Falsification of time-keeping records
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty or on county property, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of county-owned or private property
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Smoking in prohibited areas
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice or explanation
- Unauthorized abuse from workstation during the workday
- Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, or other employer-owned equipment
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information

- Failure to follow instructions or guidelines
- Discourtesy to the public
- Possession or Display of pornographic or obscene materials on county property
- Violation of personnel policies
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
- Conviction of a felony

<b>701 DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE</b>
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It is Wabash County Government's desire to provide a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. To promote this goal, employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner.

On August 31, 1992, the Commissioners of Wabash County enacted a County Facilities Drug Free Resolution. All employees are expected to comply with the provisions of that resolution. See appendix.

While on Wabash County Government premises and while conducting business-related activities off Wabash County Government premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.

To inform employees about important provisions of this policy, the county has established a drug-free awareness program. The program provides information on the dangers and effects of substance abuse in the workplace, resources available to employees, and consequences for violations of this policy.

Employees with questions or concerns about substance dependency or abuse are encouraged to discuss these matters with their supervisor or the Wabash County Commissioners to receive assistance or referrals to appropriate resources in the community.

Employees with drug or alcohol problems that have not resulted in, and are not the immediate subject of, disciplinary action may request approval to take unpaid time off to participate in a rehabilitation or treatment program. Leave may be granted so long as the employee agrees to abstain from use of the problem substance; abides by all county policies, rules, and prohibitions relating to conduct in the workplace; actually participates in and completes a bona fide rehabilitation or treatment program; and if granting the leave will not cause the county any undue hardship.

In certain cases, Wabash County Government may require testing for drug abuse before and after returning to work.

Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment, and /or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

**702 DRUG TESTING**

Wabash County Government is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive work environment for all employees. In keeping with this commitment, employees and job applicants may be asked to provide body substance samples (e.g., blood, urine) to determine the illicit use of marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, alcohol, barbiturates, and phencyclidine (PCP) or any other prohibited drug. The county will take every reasonable effort to protect the confidentiality of all drug test results. Drug tests may be conducted in any of the following situations:

**PRE-EMPLOYMENT** - As a qualification to assuming any position, prospective employees may be required to provide a body substance sample for drug testing. This occurs in connection with the pre-employment medical examination.

**REASONABLE CAUSE** - Testing of this kind occurs when workplace behavior indicates that an employee is under the influence of drugs. Such behavior must be witnessed by at least one supervisor.

**POST ACCIDENT** - Any current employee who is involved in a serious accident or accident while on duty, whether on or off the employer’s premises, may be asked to provide a body substance sample.

Subject to any limitations imposed by law, a refusal to provide a body substance sample under the conditions described above may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

An individual who is involuntarily relieved of duty solely because of drug testing will be paid for time away from scheduled work if the drug test results are negative.

The Employee Assistance Program provides confidential counseling and referral services to employees. Questions concerning this Policy or its administration should be directed to the County Coordinator and/or Commissioners.

**703 SEXUAL AND OTHER UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT**

Wabash County Government is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual’s sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. As an example, sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of employee misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, and is strictly prohibited.

An employee who feels it necessary to report an incident of sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly report the matter to his or her supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should immediately contact a member of the Board of Commissioners or the Wabash County Coordinator. Employees may be assured they can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Any Department Head who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment shall promptly advise the Board of Commissioners or the Wabash County Coordinator.

Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Any complaints of sexual harassment will be immediately investigated and appropriate action will follow.

Employees who file complaints and witnesses who participate in an investigation may do so without fear of retaliation or adverse employment action and with confidence that the complaint will be thoroughly investigated and kept in confidence to the extent possible. Details and identities, however, may need to be revealed in order to properly investigate complaints. The employee who reports the incident will be advised of the findings and actions taken.

#### **704 ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, Wabash County Government expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work and remaining at work until normal quitting time. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on Wabash County Government. In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor at least one hour in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Either may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

#### **705 PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image Wabash County Government presents to the public.

During business hours, employees are expected to present a clean and neat appearance and to dress according to the requirements of their positions. Employees who appear for work inappropriately

dressed will be sent home and directed to return to work in proper attire. Under such circumstances, employees will not be compensated for the time away from work.

Consult your supervisor or Department Head if you have questions as to what constitutes appropriate attire.

**706 RETURN OF PROPERTY**

Employees are responsible for all property, materials, or written information issued to them or in their possession or control. Employees must return all Wabash County Government property immediately upon request or upon termination of employment. Where permitted by applicable laws, Wabash County Government may withhold from the employee's check or final paycheck the cost of any items that are not returned when required. Wabash County Government may also take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

**707 HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES**

Wabash County Government will pay the cost of alcohol and drug screening for Wabash County Highway employees. In addition, Wabash County Government will pay the cost of renewal of Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL) for those employees whose job requires a CDL. See APPENDIX.

**708 RESIGNATION**

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with Wabash County Government. Although advance notice is not required, Wabash County Government requests at least two (2) weeks' written resignation notice from all employees.

Prior to an employee's departure, an exit interview must be scheduled to discuss the reasons for resignation and the effect of the resignation on benefits (see #405 EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION).

**710 SECURITY INSPECTIONS**

Wabash County Government wishes to maintain a work environment that is free of illegal drugs, alcohol, firearms, explosives, or other improper materials. To this end, Wabash County Government prohibits the possession, transfer, sale, or use of such materials on its premises. Wabash County Government requires the cooperation of all employees in administering this policy.

Desks, lockers, and other storage devices may be provided for the conveniences of employees but remain the sole property of Wabash County Government. Accordingly, they as well as any articles found within them, can be inspected at any time, either with or without prior notice by any agent or representative authorized by the County Commissioners or any department head (Supervisor).

Wabash County Government likewise wishes to discourage theft or unauthorized possession of the property of employees, Wabash County Government, and visitors. To facilitate enforcement of this policy, Wabash County Government or its representative may inspect not only desks and lockers but also persons entering and/or leaving the premises and any packages or other belongings. Any employee who wishes to avoid inspection of any articles or materials should not bring such items onto Wabash County Government's premises.

<b>712 SOLICITATION</b>
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In an effort to assure a productive and harmonious work environment, persons not employed by Wabash County Government may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose.

Wabash County Government recognizes that employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace. However, employees may not solicit or distribute literature concerning these activities during working time. (Working time does not include lunch periods, work breaks, or any other periods in which employees are not on duty.)

Examples of impermissible forms of solicitation include:

- The collection of money, goods, or gifts for political groups
- The sale of goods, services, or subscriptions outside the scope of official organization business
- The distribution of literature not approved by Wabash County Government
- The solicitation of memberships, fees, or dues

In addition, the posting of written solicitations on company bulletin boards is restricted. These bulletin boards display important information, and employees should consult them frequently for:

- Affirmative Action statement
- Employee announcements
- Job openings
- Organization announcements

If employees have a message of interest to the workplace, they may submit it to the County Auditor for approval. The County Auditor will post all approved messages.

## 716 PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

The purpose of this policy is to state Wabash County Government's position on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. The best disciplinary measure is the one that does not have to be enforced and comes from good leadership and fair supervision at all employment levels.

The progressive policy creates no implied contract between Wabash County Government and its employees, which requires the County to follow the progressive disciplinary procedure in every case. The policy is set forth as a guideline and not as a binding procedure. The County may, at its discretion, modify the disciplinary procedure to address employee's individual behavior and circumstances.

Wabash County Government's own best interest lies in ensuring fair treatment of all employees and in making certain that disciplinary actions are prompt, uniform, and impartial. The major purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct that problem, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future.

Disciplinary action may call for any of four steps:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Suspension with or without pay
- Termination of employment

Depending on the severity of the problem and the number of occurrences. There may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed.

Progressive discipline means that, with respect to most disciplinary problems, these steps will normally be followed:

- First offense may call for a verbal warning
- Second offense may be followed by a written warning
- Another offense may lead to a suspension
- Still another offense may then lead to termination of employment

If more than six months have passed since the last disciplinary action, the process will normally start over.

Wabash County Government recognizes that there are certain types of employee problems that are serious enough to justify either a suspension, or, in extreme situations, termination of employment, without going through the usual progressive discipline steps.

While it is impossible to list every type of behavior that may be deemed a serious offense, the **employees conduct and work rules** policy (#701) includes examples of problems that may result in immediate



suspension or termination of employment. However, the problems listed are not all necessarily serious offenses, but may be examples of unsatisfactory conduct that will trigger progressive discipline.

By using progressive discipline, we hope that most employee problems can be corrected at an early stage, benefiting both the employee and Wabash County Government.

## **718 PROBLEM RESOLUTION/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Wabash County Government is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response from Wabash County Government supervisors and management.

Wabash County Government strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. Supervisors, managers, and employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect.

If employees disagree with established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, they can express their concern through the problem resolution/grievance procedure. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with Wabash County Government in a reasonable, business-like manner, or for using the problem resolution/grievance procedure.

If a situation occurs when employees believe that a condition of employment or a decision affecting them is unjust or inequitable, they are encouraged to make use of the following steps. The employee may discontinue the procedure at any step.

1. Employee presents written problem to immediate supervisor within 30 calendar days, after the incident occurs.
2. Supervisor responds to the problem during discussion or orally within 15 calendar days, after consulting with appropriate management, when necessary. Supervisor documents discussion.
3. If after the oral discussion, the employee feels the issue is still not resolved, the employee may request that the matter be reviewed by the Wabash County Commissioners. The issue must be presented, in writing, to the Wabash County Commissioners within 15 calendar days of the oral response from the supervisor.
4. The Wabash County Commissioners will review the issue and respond, in writing within 30 calendar days. The Wabash County Commissioners have full authority to make adjustments deemed appropriate to resolve the problem. The decision of the Wabash County Commissioners will be final and binding in the matter.
5. The aggrieved party in the grievance process has the right to appeal to the courts and/or other pertinent employment relations agencies within 30 days of a final decision by the Wabash County Commissioners, but only after he/she has exhausted all of the aforementioned procedures, and at this point all grievances documentation will be turned over to the Wabash County or Wabash County Commissioners Attorney.

Not every problem can be resolved to everyone's total satisfaction, but only through understanding and discussion of mutual problems can employees and management develop confidence in each other. This confidence is important to the operation of an efficient and harmonious work environment, and helps to ensure everyone's job security.

## **800 LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES IN THE WORKPLACE**

Employees with life-threatening illnesses, such as cancer, heart disease, and AIDS, often wish to continue their normal pursuits, including work, to the extent allowed by their condition. Wabash County Government supports these endeavors as long as employees are able to meet acceptable performance standards. As in the case of other disabilities, Wabash County Government will make reasonable accommodations in accordance with all legal requirements, to allow qualified employees with life-threatening illnesses to perform the essential functions of their jobs.

Medial information on individual employees is treated confidentially. Wabash County Government will take reasonable precautions to protect such information from inappropriate disclosure. Managers and other employees have a responsibility to respect and maintain the confidentiality of employee medical information. Anyone inappropriately disclosing such information is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **802 RECYCLING**

Wabash County Government supports environmental awareness by encouraging recycling and waste management in its business practices and operating procedures. This support includes a commitment to the purchase; use and disposal of products and materials in a manner that will best utilize natural resources and minimize any negative impact on the earth's environment.

Whenever possible, employees of Wabash County Government are encouraged to purchase products for the workplace that contain recycled or easily recyclable materials. Buying recycled products supports recycling and increases the markets for recyclable materials.

# DEFINITIONS

## **Employment at Will**

In most states, including Indiana, individuals have the right to accept a job and quit a job, with or without cause, whenever they choose. Likewise, employers have the right to hire employees and terminate employees, with or without cause, whenever they choose. This is known as the doctrine of employment at will.

## **Merit Employees**

Sheriff's department employees covered by the Sheriff's Merit Board rules and regulations.

## **Non-Merit Employees**

Sheriff's department employees **not** covered by the Sheriff's Merit Board rules and regulations.

## **COBRA**

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA) provides eligible employees and eligible family members of employees, the right to continue their group health insurance coverage when events occur that would normally result in loss of coverage. These events include such things as termination of employment (for any reason), the death of an employee, divorce, reduction of hours, and dependents who exceed the age limitations of the group health insurance policy. Eligible employees and/or eligible family members may continue their group health insurance coverage if:

- The eligible employees and/or eligible family members pay the full cost of the coverage, and
- The eligible employees and/or eligible family members were covered under the group health insurance program at the time the event occurred.

## **Exempt Employees**

Exempt employees are those employees who are exempted from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Wabash County does not have to provide overtime (comp time) to exempt employees.

## **Non-Exempt Employees**

Non-exempt employees are those employees who are not exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Wabash County does provide overtime (comp time) to non-exempt employees when they are eligible to receive it.

# **APPENDIX**