

# BCD Council of Governments Operating Policies



Revised April 13, 2015

**DISCLAIMER**

**ALL EMPLOYEES OF BERKELEY CHARLESTON DORCHESTER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS ARE AT-WILL AND MAY QUIT OR BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME AND FOR ANY OR NO REASON. NOTHING IN ANY OF BERKELEY CHARLESTON DORCHESTER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS RULES, POLICIES, HANDBOOKS, PROCEDURES OR OTHER DOCUMENTS RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT CREATES ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT. NO PAST PRACTICES OR PROCEDURES, WHETHER ORAL OR WRITTEN, FORM ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE SUCH PRACTICES OR PROCEDURES. NO PROMISES OR ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE LIMITATIONS SET FORTH IN THIS PARAGRAPH CREATE ANY CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT UNLESS: 1) THE TERMS ARE PUT IN WRITING, 2) THE DOCUMENT IS LABELED "CONTRACT," 3) THE DOCUMENT STATES THE DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT, AND 4) THE DOCUMENT IS SIGNED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.**

**I ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF BERKELEY CHARLESTON DORCHESTER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS NOT A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.**

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Date

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

This employee handbook contains various rules, policies, and procedures relating to employment. Many of the provisions are summaries of federal, state, and municipal laws. Such laws change from time to time. Furthermore, the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (COG) finds it necessary or advisable to alter its rules, policies, and procedures from time to time. Therefore, the provisions of the COG's handbook and personnel policies are subject to change by the COG at any time with or without notice.

**NOTE: For ease of readability, these policies follow the traditional English practice of referring to unidentified individuals by the use of masculine pronouns. Wherever such a pronoun is used, it is intended to apply to both males and females.**

**Additionally, any reference in this handbook to "days" or "working days" means an eight (8) hour day. Any reference to "two weeks" means 80 hours.**

**Reference to "Executive Director" refers to the Executive Director of the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments.**

**Reference to "Council" or "COG" refers to the organization and its senior management and not the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments' Board of Directors.**

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## SECTION I EMPLOYMENT

### A. Equal Employment Opportunity

The Council provides equal opportunity to all applicants for employment and administers hiring, promotion, discipline discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, age or genetic information. The Council prohibits retaliation against employees who have reported discrimination in good faith. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in violation of the law, you should immediately contact the Executive Director.

### B. Anti-Harassment Policy

Various laws and regulations, generally prohibit employment decisions from being made on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, marital status. In addition, the Council wishes to provide a working environment in which employees are free from discomfort or pressure resulting from jokes, ridicule, slurs, threats, and harassment either relating to such distinctions or simply resulting from a lack of consideration for a fellow human being.

The Council does not tolerate harassment of any kind and forbids retaliation against anyone who has reported harassment in good faith.

Sexual harassment merits special discussion. Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and any other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature where such actions or allowance of such actions are made an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; or submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision, or the conduct has the purpose or effect or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented kidding or teasing, practical jokes, jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene language or gestures, displays of foul or obscene printed or visual material, "put-downs" or condescending or derisive comments or terms based on gender, and physical conduct, such as patting, pinching or brushing against another person. This policy prohibits such conduct regardless of the gender of the perpetrator or victim.

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments prohibits employees, managers or visitors from harassing an employee or from creating a hostile or intolerable working environment.

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments may determine what constitutes harassment based on a review of the facts and circumstances of each situation.

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments reserves the right to use third parties to investigate claims of harassment.

Disputes sometimes arise as to whether conduct was “welcome” or “unwelcome.” Conduct which would violate this policy if it were unwelcome is considered to violate the policy if anyone complains of it. However, not all conduct prohibited by this policy constitutes a violation of the law.

Supervisors and managers who receive complaints of or become aware of harassment must coordinate with the Human Resources department.

If you feel that this policy has been violated by anyone with whom you come in contact on the job, regardless of whether it is by a fellow worker, a supervisor, or a member of the public, you may try to address the matter directly with the offender. However, an employee may prefer to pursue the matter through formal complaint procedures. This can be done by reporting the incident to your supervisor, Human Resources or to the Executive Director. Complaints against the Executive Director should be made to the Chairman of the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments’ Board of Directors.

Reports of harassment are kept as confidential as practical consistent with the efficient investigation of the complaint and the goals of this policy. All employees have a responsibility both to cooperate fully with the investigation and to keep the matter confidential, whether the employee is the accused person, the complaining one or merely a potential witness. Persons who are interviewed should not discuss the matter with co-workers, friends or management. This does not mean, however, that employees may not complain to civil rights agencies.

### **IMPORTANT**

In order to avoid misunderstandings, complaints made to immediate supervisor, Human Resources or any member of management requires completion of a “Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG Harassment Report”. You are given a copy of the completed report. These procedures have been established to enable you to complain if you feel that you are the victim of harassment. The U. S. Supreme Court has said that as a general rule you may not sue the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG for a violation of your rights unless you first give Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG notice and an opportunity to end the harassment. These reporting procedures are intended to establish a clear record of what has been reported.

BERKELEY-CHARLESTON-DORCHESTER COG HARASSMENT REPORT

Correct name of complainant (optional)\_\_\_\_\_

“Code name” of complainant (mandatory if correct name not given)\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report:\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Name or description of person who engaged in harassment:\_\_\_\_\_

What happened?\_\_\_\_\_

Name of witnesses:\_\_\_\_\_

Name of people who say that the same person harassed them at another time:\_\_\_\_\_

If harassment is found to have occurred, what action do you want to have taken?\_\_\_\_\_

If your complaint comes down to your word against that of the person who you say harassed you, would you be willing to take a polygraph exam?\_\_\_\_\_

Copy received by Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments official:

Signature of official and date\_\_\_\_\_

## C. Employment Categories

1. **Full-time Employees:** Individuals employed by the Council on a regular full-time schedule of at least 35 hours are considered full-time employees after they are informed of their successful completion of an initial probationary period of six months. Generally, full-time employees are eligible at the time of employment for all fringe benefits offered by the Council; however, the terms of various benefits plans govern eligibility for coverage by such policies. Any employee whose employment is terminated by discharge or resignation during or at the end of the probationary period are not entitled to severance pay or accrued annual leave.
2. **Part-time Employees:** These normally are individuals employed by the Council for less than a full time schedule. This may include hourly, weekly, or monthly employees. Employees in this category do not receive pay for holidays observed by the Council, and most times are not eligible for any fringe benefits received by full-time employees. In the event a part-time employee becomes employed on a full-time basis, the length of time the person was employed in part-time status may be credited to the individual's eligibility for a particular level of annual leave, sick leave, etc., if there is no break in service from the time of part-time employment to the time of full-time employment.
3. **Temporary Employees:** These normally are individuals employed to perform one particular job or fill a particular need, the length of which may vary from one week to six months or longer. Temporary employees are not eligible for holiday pay or any fringe benefits. In the event a temporary employee working on a full-time schedule becomes employed on a regular full-time basis, the length of temporary employment will be retroactively credited to that individual's eligibility for annual and sick leave if there is no break in service from the time of temporary employment to the time of regular full-time employment.

Upon completion of six (6) months full time employment, temporary employees may become eligible for regular full-time status and benefits as outlined in Section C1 above.

4. **Loaned Personnel:** These normally are individuals employed by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments but on loan to other organizations under which the Council of Governments receives grant funds directly. These employees may be eligible for all benefits offered to other regular or part-time employees of the Council of Governments. Loaned employees are employed at the pleasure of the organization to which they provide services and may be terminated by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments whenever the organization to which they provide services notifies the Council that it no longer desires the services of the loaned employee. In addition, the Council may terminate loaned employees whenever funding for their position is exhausted or for any other reason deemed necessary by the COG.

## **D. Employment**

### **1. Responsibility**

The Executive Director is employed by and is responsible to the Board of Directors and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. All other staff personnel are employed by and serve at the pleasure of the Executive Director.

### **2. Background Checks**

All offers of employment at BCDCOG are contingent upon satisfactory results of a background check which may include but is not limited to verification of prior employment, education and criminal record. Should a criminal conviction be discovered, a determination will be made on a case by case basis on the relativity of the conviction and the position before and employment decision will be made. All screenings are conducted in conformity with the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, the American with Disabilities Act, and state and federal anti-discrimination and privacy laws. All reports are maintained separately from the employee's personnel file and can only be viewed by Human Resources or the Executive Director. BCDCOG may conduct a background screening after employment has begun to determine eligibility for promotion, reassignment, retention, or for any other reason deemed necessary by BCDCOG.

### **3. Resignation**

Any employee wishing to resign in good standing must furnish notice of his intention to resign at least two weeks in advance of the effective date of resignation in writing and must work out the notice in order to receive compensation for any unused annual leave.

Benefits to which an employee is entitled are determined as of the last day of actual work. An employee will not benefit from any holiday(s) occurring after the last day of work nor will annual leave or sick leave be accrued beyond the last day of work. If the effective date of resignation falls on a date that follows one or more holidays observed by the COG, the effective date of resignation shall be the work day preceding the holiday(s).

Prior to departure, the employee must present to the Executive Director in writing the status of all pending projects which have been assigned during his tenure. The employee must return all Council property at the time of separation including but not limited to keys, employee identification card and any equipment assigned to the employee. Failure to provide this information or property may result in denial of compensation for any unused annual leave. The value of any unreturned property may be deducted as an advance of wages from the final paycheck.

Group health insurance benefits, terminate the last day of the month of employment. Information on Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act

(COBRA) continued health coverage will be provided. Employees are required to pay their portion of the group health insurance premiums through the end of the month.

During the two-week notice period the employee must work unless excused by the Executive Director. No annual leave may be used. Should it become necessary for an employee to use sick leave during the two week notice of resignation period, a signed doctor's statement may be required. If a signed doctor's statement cannot be produced, the employee will be on leave of absence without pay for the day(s) taken and must forfeit both annual and sick leave accrued.

4. **Retirement**

Employees who wish to retire are required to notify their immediate supervisor, Human Resources or the Executive Director in writing at least 30 days before the planned retirement date. Failure to provide 30 day notice may result in denial of compensation for any unused annual leave. See Section C.2. for specifics on the exit process.

5. **Discharge**

Employees of the BCDCOG are employed on an at-will basis and the Executive Director may dismiss any employee without reason or notice at any time. If it becomes necessary to relieve an employee of his/her duties, the Executive Director may furnish the employee with either two weeks advance notice of the date of his/her discharge or with immediate severance pay equal to two weeks of the employee's regular compensation. Any employee dismissed for disciplinary reasons is not entitled to severance pay.

6. **Elimination of Position**

A position may be eliminated any time the Council believes such action is in the Council's best interest. Such terminations do not adversely affect the employee's eligibility for further employment by the Council. If it becomes necessary to reduce the number of personnel in any position, the selection of employees to be retained is at the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

Employees who are released due to a position-elimination generally may be given consideration for openings in other departments of the Council for which they qualify (these may be jobs in a lower salary range). A refusal of any offer by the former employee after reasonable notice by the Council ends any further consideration for a position with the Council.

7. **Job Abandonment**

Employees who fail to report to work or contact their immediate supervisor for three consecutive workdays shall be considered to have resigned and are ineligible to receive payment for unused annual leave.

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8. **Employee Evaluation**

Each employee may be periodically evaluated. The evaluations may be used to guide the employee toward a more professional discharge of his responsibilities and may also be used as a basis for salary recommendations or for any other purpose. The evaluation will be discussed with the employee and becomes a part of the permanent personnel file.

9. **Attire and Grooming**

Employees of the Council should always be neat, appropriately dressed, and well groomed while representing the Council, whether it is in the office or away from the office. Clothing must be consistent with a professional business environment. Employees are expected to exhibit common sense and show respect for their co-workers by dressing in a manner that is presentable and appropriate. Maintaining well-kept hair, good personal hygiene and neat grooming is expected. Natural and artificial scents that are perceived as negative by others may become a distraction from a well-functioning work place and are not permitted. Staff members may not wear blue jeans to the office or at any time while representing the Council. Jeans may be considered acceptable dress only on rare occasions such as performing outdoor surveys, and only with prior approval of the Executive Director. The Executive Director will resolve any questions relative to dress and grooming.

10. **Outside Employment**

Outside employment is not permitted without prior written approval of the Executive Director. All outside activities of an employee relating to any private enterprise or business for gain or profit must be disclosed in writing to the Executive Director for his approval.

11. **Nepotism**

Employees in the same immediate family normally will not be employed or continue to be employed if one directly or indirectly supervises another or interacts with another in the handling of money or compensation. This extends to hiring, promotion and transfers. Immediate family is defined as spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, parent-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law. The immediate family will be considered to include stepparents, stepchildren, stepbrothers, and stepsisters when the employee and the step-relative have lived together regularly in the same household.

If employees become related by marriage and create a situation prohibited by this policy, one of the employees must give up his or her position. If the employees cannot choose which of them it will be, the employee having the lower budgeted annual compensation will be removed. The COG will make an effort to find another position for the removed employee.

Unrelated employees residing together in an apparently romantic relationship will be treated as being within the immediate family of each other for the purposes of this nepotism policy.

Situations not specifically addressed in this policy which, in the COG's opinion, create a conflict of interest or give the appearance of a conflict of interest, will be handled in the COG's discretion.

## 12. **Education Assistance**

The Executive Director may, at his discretion, reimburse the cost of tuition for employees who take courses that directly benefit the Council. Such course work may be degree or non-degree work, and the employee must maintain at least a B (or equivalent) average to be eligible for reimbursement. If the course is pass/fail, the employee must pass the course.

Employees desiring to have tuition for course work reimbursed must apply before enrolling in the course. Employees should apply sufficiently in advance to allow enough time for the Executive Director to evaluate the benefit of the course. Once approved, the employee may enroll in the course. The employee should pay for the course with his own funds and seek reimbursement after completion of the course. For certain non-degree courses that do not issue grades (e.g., conferences or seminars), employees may request that the Council pay for the course in advance of the employee attending it. In such cases, employees should request permission to attend and for the costs to be pre-paid sufficiently in advance of the course (and before enrolling) to allow the Executive Director to evaluate the benefit of the course.

Requests for reimbursement should be submitted to Human Resources along with a copy of the transcript or other official report of the educational institution that indicates the grade the employee received. Employees who receive a grade of less than a B (or its equivalent), or who fail in a pass/fail course, will not receive reimbursement. Eligible tuition expenses that may be reimbursed include normal tuition and fees related to the course approved for reimbursement. The Executive Director may, in his discretion, also approve reimbursement of the cost of books or other course materials required to complete the course.

Tuition reimbursement under this policy is considered an advance of wages. Employees who, for whatever reason, separate from the Council's employment within one year of the last reimbursement made under this policy must repay the Council the amount of tuition it has reimbursed. If the tuition is not repaid, it may be deducted from the employee's final pay check(s) or deposit(s). Employees who seek tuition reimbursement under this policy must sign an Education Assistance Agreement. Tuition reimbursement is subject to availability of funds.

### 13. Probationary Period

Each new employee is subject to up to a six-month probationary period. This is not a guarantee of employment for six months. If during or at the end of six months, the Council determines the employee is not well suited to his position, the Executive Director or appropriate Department Head may determine whether the employee would be better suited to a position of differing responsibility (if one exists) or whether the employee should be terminated.

### 14. Discipline

1. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge when the Executive Director or supervisor believes that such action is necessary for the good of the Council.

It is not possible to list all acts and omissions that may result in disciplinary action. The disciplinary action that is appropriate for any particular misconduct is at the sole discretion of the Council. The following are merely examples of some of the more obvious types of misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. **The Council reserves the right to treat each employee individually without regard for the way it has treated other employees and without regard to the way it has handled similar situations.**

- a. conviction of or plea of guilt or no contest to a charge of theft, violation of drug laws, sexual misconduct, offense involving moral turpitude or offense that affects the Council's reputation or that reasonably could create concern on the part of fellow employees or the community. Employees who are arrested may be relieved of duty (with or without pay) pending the Council's determination on continued employment.
- b. incompetence
- c. unauthorized absence or tardiness or a pattern of absenteeism or tardiness
- d. insubordination, including disrespect for authority, or other conduct that tends to undermine authority
- e. failure or refusal to carry out instructions
- f. unauthorized possession or removal, misappropriation, misuse, destruction, theft or conversion of Council property or the property of others

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- g. violation of safety rules; neglect; engaging in unsafe practices
- h. interference with the work of others
- i. threatening, coercing or intimidating fellow employees, including “joking” threats
- j. dishonesty
- k. failure to provide information; falsifying Council records; providing falsified records to the Council for any purpose
- l. failure to report personal injury or property damage
- m. neglect or carelessness
- n. introduction, possession or use of illegal or unauthorized prescription drugs or intoxicating beverages on Council property or while on duty anywhere; working while under the influence of illegal drugs or intoxicating beverages; off-the-job illegal use or possession of drugs. For purposes of this policy, an employee is "under the influence" if he has any detectable amount of any such substance in his system.
- o. unsatisfactory performance
- p. violation of Council policies
- q. lack of good judgment
- r. any other reason that, in the Council’s sole determination, warrants discipline

2. **Employees *must* sign disciplinary notices, counseling memoranda, performance appraisals, and similar documents.** The employee’s signature indicates only that the employee is aware of the action taken and does not indicate that the employee agrees with such action.
3. An employee who refuses to sign such a document may be relieved of all duty until the document is signed. If it has not been signed and returned by the end of the employee’s next scheduled work day, the Council considers the employee to have resigned.

## SECTION II COMPENSATION

### A. Salary

1. Salaries are commensurate with responsibility and compatible with similar positions with state, regional, and local units of governments. Salaries may also be influenced by those offered nationally for similar professional positions.
2. The Executive Director is authorized to classify all Council staff in appointed salary grades.
3. The Executive Director is authorized to approve beginning salaries for new employees up to the middle range for the appropriate pay grade. Any beginning salary above the bottom of the pay grade range would be dependent upon the applicant's work experience above the minimum qualifications for the position.
4. The salary grade ranges may be reviewed periodically to determine if modifications are necessary.

### B. Salary Payment

Employees are paid every two weeks on Friday. Employees must keep accurate time sheets which are due by noon on the first day of the week following the end of the pay period. Time sheets must be submitted for approval first to the employee's immediate supervisor and then to the Executive Director. Time sheets are to reflect any leave time taken by the employee during the pay period. All hours worked must be recorded and all hours recorded must have been worked.

The Council of Governments participates in direct deposit. Funds should be available in employee checking and/or savings accounts (as designated by the employee) on Friday following the end of the pay period subject to the bank's policies on funds availability. In certain circumstances, an employee may receive an actual paycheck when direct deposit may not be available. Employee paychecks are disbursed at the employee work station on payday. If the employee is not at their work station when paychecks are disbursed, then the employee may pick up their paycheck in the Finance Office by 3:00 pm.

Pay periods run from Monday of the first week to Friday of the second week.

If an employee's marital status changes or the number of exemptions claimed increase or decrease a new W-4 form must be submitted to Human Resources.

The Council deducts from employees' gross pay taxes and withholding required by the taxing authorities. The Council may also deduct from employees' pay the employees' share of any premiums or plan contributions for insurance, retirement and similar plans that are elected by the employee. The Council may make other deductions as required by law or court order. The Council does not make unauthorized deductions and will

reimburse employees if such deductions are made inadvertently and reported to payroll. Cash, debts owed the Council, fringe benefits, uniforms, tools, equipment, vehicles, instruction manuals, keys, Council identification cards and other items belonging to the Council that are advanced or issued to an employee but not repaid or returned by him at the time of his termination are considered advances of wages, the value of which may be deducted from the employee's pay.

**C. Attendance for Work**

The administration offices of the Council of Governments are open to the public from 9:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. Appropriate time (which should not exceed one hour) is allowed for lunch. Individuals on Departmental work schedule may vary dependent upon the department/office workload or organizational needs, service to customers and the efficient management of resources.

Due to the nature of the work of the Council, it may be necessary from time to time for employees to work more than the regular office hours. This is normal for this type of professional work. Overtime should be approved in advance and in writing by the immediate supervisor. Overtime is defined as hours worked by an hourly or nonexempt employee in excess of 40 hours in a work week. Paid leave such as annual leave, sick leave and holiday does not apply toward work time. Flexible work schedules may be used at the discretion of the Executive Director.

**SECTION III HOLIDAYS AND LEAVE**

**A. Holidays**

The Council observes the following days as paid holidays:

January 1	New Year's Day
January	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February	Presidents' Holiday
May 11	Confederate Memorial Day
May	Memorial Day
July 4	Independence Day
September	Labor Day
November 11	Veteran's Day
November	Thanksgiving and Day After
December	Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Day After

In the event a holiday occurs on Saturday, Friday may be taken as the holiday. If the holiday occurs on Sunday, Monday may be taken as the holiday. Total holidays consist of thirteen (13) annually. Any days declared a legal holiday by the Governor, in addition to the above, may be observed by the Council upon approval of the Executive Director. Holidays which occur while an employee is on annual leave or paid sick leave are not charged as days of leave taken. Employees are paid up to 8 hours per day for holiday pay.

**B. Holiday Observance Procedure**

1. Holidays are to be taken on the prescribed day, unless it is necessary for the employee to work; prior notice, to the degree possible, may be given to employees who must work on holidays.
2. In the event that an employee is required to work on a holiday, the employee will receive their regular pay, plus compensatory time for the total number of hours actually worked; employees are not entitled to monetary compensatory leave for hours worked on a holiday.
3. The employee receiving compensatory time for hours worked on a holiday must use the credits within ninety (90) calendar days, at a time mutually agreed upon by the employee and the immediate supervisor.
4. In order to be paid for the holiday, medical documentation may be requested if an employee calls out sick the day before or day after a holiday.

**C. Annual Leave**

1. Annual leave is to be requested and approved in advance. Patterns of absenteeism or tardiness may result in disciplinary action even if the employee has not exhausted available time off. Annual leave may be regulated by the Executive Director, and/or immediate supervisor to ensure that the absence of an employee does not affect the work of the Council. Employee is to record the absence for annual leave on the bi-weekly time sheet.
2. Full-time and probationary full-time employees earn and accrue annual leave at various rates, depending on the length of continuous service with the agency. Annual leave for continuous service accrues as follows:

Service	Hours/Month	Days/Month	Days/Year
1-5 years	10	1 ¼	15
6-10 years	12	1 ½	18
11-15 years	14	1 ¾	21
16-20 years	16	2	24
21 or more years	18	2 ¼	27

3. Only 360 hours of annual leave may be carried forward to the next fiscal year. Any annual leave in excess of 360 hours at the end of the calendar year (December 31st) may not be carried forward.
4. Annual leave is to be taken for the actual number of hours absent from the office, and in increments of not less than one hour. Annual leave will be paid at the employee's base rate of pay at the time the leave is taken.

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5. The Executive Director has the authority to grant advance leave in special circumstances.
6. Annual leave must be exhausted before an employee is eligible to request leave without pay (LWOP).
7. Annual leave is accrued the last day of the calendar month based on the hours worked, or on approved paid leave, during the month for use the first day of the following month.
8. Upon termination of employment with the Council, an employee may be paid for any annual leave which has been accrued but not taken which will be paid at the employee's base rate of pay at the time of termination. Provided he has properly given and worked a two-week notice period and has not been terminated for disciplinary reasons. In the event an employee terminates employment and has used more annual leave than has been accrued, that amount is considered an advance of wages and may be deducted from the employee's final check(s). In the event of the employee's death, earned unused vacation time will be paid to the employee's estate or designated beneficiary.

**D. Sick Leave**

1. Sick leave is to be reported to their immediate supervisor at least 30 minutes before expected arrival time the day the employee takes sick leave if possible. Failure to report may result in the employee's leave not being approved by the Executive Director. The employee is to record the absence on the bi-weekly time sheet. Sick leave is to be taken for the actual number of hours absent from the office, and in increments of not less than one hour.
2. Sick leave is accrued at the rate of eight (8) hours per month to a maximum of fourteen hundred forty (1440) hours.
3. Sick leave may only be taken in the event of illness of the employee, or the employee's immediate family (spouse, children, and parent). A doctor's excuse may be required.
4. When sick leave is exhausted annual leave will be used in its place. Annual leave must be exhausted in order for the employee to request leave without pay (LWOP).
5. The Executive Director may grant advance sick leave with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Council. This advance in sick leave is only in the case of a serious or extended illness, and may only be granted after all sick and annual leave has been used.

6. In the event an employee terminates employment and has used more sick leave than has been accrued, that amount may be deducted from the employee's final check(s).
7. Upon termination of employment with the Council, employees are not paid for sick leave which has been accrued but not used.

**E. Leave of Absence Without Pay**

1. An employee who has completed his/her probationary period is eligible to apply for a leave of absence for up to thirty (30) days when unable to work because of sickness, injury, or personal reasons. Granting such leave does not guarantee reinstatement of employee to his/her former position.
  - a. An employee should apply for consideration for a leave of absence as far in advance as possible.
3. Normally, leave of absence without pay will not be granted until all annual leave has been exhausted. In the case of temporary disability, due to illness or injury, all sick leave and annual leave must be exhausted prior to the granting of leave of absence without pay.
4. Employees on leave of absence may not engage in other employment.
5. Employees desiring to return to work from an unpaid leave of absence should notify the immediate supervisor in writing at least ten days prior to their desired return date. If the Council finds that the employee is fit to resume his duties, the employee may be returned to his previous position if it is vacant and is to be filled, or to some other position of equal or lesser compensation for which he is qualified and where there is a vacancy to be filled. If the employee is not returned to active employment, he may be continued on leave of absence status until he is returned to active duty status or his leave of absence expires, whichever occurs sooner.
6. If the Executive Director grants leave of absence without pay to an employee, the following shall apply:
  - a. For leave of absence of up to ten (10) days in a calendar month, the employee shall forfeit one-half (1/2) day of both annual and sick leave accrued that month.
  - b. An employee does not accrue leave for any absence of more than ten work days in any calendar month.

## **F. Bereavement Leave**

1. An employee, upon request may be granted up to two (2) consecutive days of leave with pay in the event of the death of any member of the employee's immediate family.
2. Immediate family is defined as the spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, children, and grandchildren of either the employee or the spouse.
3. Each employee requesting administrative leave due to a death in the immediate family must attach a statement to the Request for Leave form, furnishing the name of the deceased and the relationship of the employee to the deceased. Proof of death and/or attendance at the funeral may be required.

## **G. Jury Duty**

Upon receipt of notification of an obligation to serve on a jury, employees must notify their immediate supervisor and provide a copy of the jury summons to Human Resources. Employees may be granted leave with pay for jury duty not to exceed ten (10) work days per year. Any employee who is released from jury duty prior to 1:00 P.M. is expected to report to work for the remainder of the day. Employees must advise their supervisors of the need for leave as far in advance as possible.

## **H. Military Leave**

Employees are entitled to such leave of absence and reinstatement upon return from leave of absence for military service (including Reserve and National Guard duty) as may be provided by applicable state and federal law. The provisions of such laws change from time to time and for that reason no effort is made to set forth the law in this policy.

## **I. Inclement Weather**

It is recognized that from time to time, inclement weather may prohibit the observance of normal office hours. In the event inclement weather occurs before regular office hours, the Council has an inclement weather line for employees to call for instructions on closings or delayed openings.

Should it become apparent during the time the office is open that weather conditions are deteriorating, a decision may be made by the Executive Director to close the office. Time remaining in that workday is considered paid leave.

Once the threat of inclement weather is over, the Executive Director makes the decision to reopen the office. Employees will call the inclement weather line for instructions on when to return to work. If an employee has a problem getting to the office once notified to report (ice in driveway, etc.), this should be discussed with their immediate supervisor or Executive Director.

At the discretion of the Council, Absences of up to a week due to inclement weather may be paid without charging an employee's annual leave balances. Should the office be closed for more than a week at a time, employees may choose to receive pay from their annual leave balances for the time that exceeds the first week.

## SECTION IV TRAVEL

### A. Travel and Subsistence Expenses

1. Employees are reimbursed for expenses incurred while on authorized trips or while involved in authorized business of the Council at the per diem rate as set forth by the Council for such travel.
2. Per Diem allowance is only extended when a trip makes it necessary for an employee to spend the night out of town.
3. Employees are reimbursed for certain lunch and dinner expenses when the following occurs:
  - a. It is necessary for employees to eat lunch while on Council business, provided the travel is **outside the BCD Region**, or in the case of out-based employees, outside the **assigned work area**. Employees are eligible for reimbursement for lunch up to the rate set by the Executive Director.
  - b. If it is necessary for employees to attend an evening meeting and eat dinner **outside of the BCD Region**. Expenses for dinner are eligible for reimbursement up to the rate set by the Executive Director.

### B. Council Cars

1. Council cars generally are available for use by the entire staff. Cars must be scheduled in advance by recording destination, time of departure and return on the trip board. This activity should take place at least the day before the trip is scheduled. Should a staff member fail to request a car in advance and drive a personal vehicle, no mileage is reimbursed to the staff member.
2. Prior to use of a personal car for Council business, a staff member must receive prior approval from the staff member in charge of scheduling cars or from the Executive Director.
3. Under no circumstances is smoking permitted in Council cars.
4. Staff members who drive a Council car home at night due to late night meetings are responsible for having that car available at the office by 9:00 A.M. the following morning.

5. Persons traveling in Council cars are required to be secured by a seat belt. The staff member driving the vehicle is responsible to see that all passengers are wearing seat belts.
6. Employees using Council cars must return the car with not less than one-quarter tank of gas in the car. Each car has a set of gasoline credit cards to be used for gasoline purchases. Employees are to be sure that the tag number of the Council car appears on all gasoline receipts, along with the date and the employee's initials. In the event an employee purchases gasoline at a station other than one covered by the credit cards, he is to obtain a receipt for the purchase and add it to his regular expense report for reimbursement.
7. Any problems with the Council cars must be reported to the Deputy Director of Administrative & Supportive Services immediately.
8. Staff members are not to conduct phone conversations or use cell phones while driving Council Cars, but should pull their car over to a safe location before using a cell phone.
9. Under no circumstances shall an employee engage in any form of text messaging while driving a Council car. Should the employee need to engage in any form of text messaging the employee must safely pull their car over to a safe location before using/engaging in any form of text messaging.
10. The Council cars are insured by an authorized insurance company. In case of an accident while operating the Council car, the employee is required to immediately notify the Executive Director or staff member assigned responsibility for coordination of the Council cars. The staff member is also required to notify the Finance Manager so that the Council may take the necessary steps in processing accident claims.

**C. Air Transportation**

In all cases, air accommodations are to be made at tourist class fare and only with the prior approval of the Executive Director.

**D. Reimbursement for Use of Privately Owned Vehicles**

1. Employees may be reimbursed for authorized use of private vehicles in carrying out official duties of the Council. Reimbursement is paid on a regular basis and is to be supported by detailed mileage records. In the case of trips exceeding one day or five hundred miles, reimbursement may not exceed posted air fare and ancillary fares for that distance.
2. When no staff vehicle is available, an employee may be reimbursed for use of personal vehicle at the maximum rate the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) allows

as reimbursement for mileage before it must be counted as income. Reimbursement may not be made when a personal car is used if a staff vehicle is available. Reimbursement of use of a personal vehicle is at the discretion of the Executive Director at the current rate.

3. The Council does not assume responsibility for traffic violations occurring during the use of privately owned or staff vehicles on Council business.

#### **E. Maintenance of Travel Records**

1. Employees must submit detailed records for reimbursement of travel expenses. Upon completion of the trip and within 15 days, the traveler must complete a Travel Reimbursement form with supporting documents. Supporting documents include detailed receipts supporting every item, except meals, which are paid on per diem, on the voucher or an explanation of the expense, and are to be approved by the Executive Director before a check can be issued.
2. No reimbursement is made for meal charges if the period is during a time when normal per diem is being charged.
3. Mileage expense is to be supported by complete odometer trip readings.
4. Reimbursement for lunch or dinner must be supported by indication of the meeting, purpose, location, and the amount claimed for reimbursement. Claims for reimbursement cannot exceed the established Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG per meal allowance.

### **SECTION V BENEFITS**

#### **A. Health Insurance**

The Council may offer group health coverage, the terms of which change from time to time. Employees should see Human Resources for details. Should health insurance be offered to retirees, eligibility for such benefits will be based on time worked directly for the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments.

#### **B. Life Insurance**

The Council may offer a life insurance policy, the terms of which change from time to time. Employees should see Human Resources for details.

#### **C. Retirement Program**

The Council of Governments currently participates in the S. C. State Retirement System. Participation in the program is mandatory for some employees. Employees should see Human Resources for details.

**D. Deferred Compensation Plan**

The Council currently participates, as a benefit to its employees, in the S. C. Employees Deferred Compensation Plan. Participation is optional and allows the employee to defer a portion of his/her gross salary on a pre-tax basis. Employees should see Human Resources for details.

**E. Workers Compensation**

The Council is covered by the South Carolina State Accident Fund. Employees who have a work related injury must report it to their immediate supervisor, Human Resources or Executive Director within 24 hours.

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL BENEFIT PLANS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE.**

**SECTION VI PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT**

**A. Professional Dues**

To promote professional advancement of employees and stimulate participation in professional affairs, the Council may pay an employee's membership dues in a professional organization, when in the sole judgment of the Executive Director the memberships involved contributes to the employee's professional growth and relates to the mission of the Council of Governments.

**B. Conferences and Meetings**

The Council encourages attendance at professional conferences and meetings. As permitted by the budget and workload of the staff, each professional staff member may be given an opportunity to attend at least one professional conference during each budget year. An employee is to have completed a six month probationary period to be eligible to attend any such conference.

**SECTION VII OPEN DOOR POLICY**

The Council has an open door policy, and employees are encouraged to speak with their supervisors about issues of concern to them. If, after speaking with his supervisor, an employee still has concerns about the issue(s), he may discuss the matter with the Executive Director.

**SECTION VIII PERSONNEL RECORDS**

Employee personnel files belong exclusively to the Council. Employees may review information in their personnel files. Any employee who wishes to review his file should make an appointment with Human Resources or Executive Director. A member of Human Resources or management must be present when the employee views his file, and the employee may not remove anything from his file. If an employee believes the information in his file is inaccurate or incomplete he may submit any additional information for inclusion in the file. At the

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employee's request, the council may provide him with copies from his file and may charge a reasonable fee for making such copies.

## **SECTION IX PURCHASING OF GOODS OR SERVICES**

### **A. Purchases**

All purchases are to be approved in advance by the Executive Director. Refer to the Procurement Policies and Procedures issued under separate cover.

### **B. Petty Cash**

Petty cash is not to be used for reimbursement for meals, travel, etc. No disbursements may be made from petty cash without prior approval of the Executive Director or except in the case of an emergency purchase of supplies that cannot wait for a purchase requisition.

## **SECTION X POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

The Council is a non-partisan entity that serves several member governments. It is important to our constituent members that the Council avoid the appearance of supporting one political party or another. Therefore, employees of the Council may not participate in the following activities:

1. Use of official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with an election or nomination for office, or affecting the result thereof.
2. Directly or indirectly coercing or attempting to coerce, or instructing any other employee to pay, lend, or contribute any part of his compensation or anything else of value to any party, organization, agency, or person for political purposes.
3. Active participation in political campaigns.
4. Holding office in a partisan political club or party.

## **SECTION XI CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Employees should be constantly aware of a possible "conflict of interest" when becoming involved in public/community activities which may relate to Council participation in the same area. The Executive Director must be advised when any member of the staff has been offered or is considering membership on a public or private committee, office, or association with any organization or activity which may lead to a conflict between such association and his position on the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments Staff.

If, in the sole judgment of the Executive Director, a conflict or the appearance of a conflict exists, the employee may be asked to choose between his employment with the Council and the membership giving rise to the conflict.

## SECTION XII ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

Employees may not request gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors or potential contractors. If an employee receives gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors or potential contractors, he must provide a written report to the Executive Director outlining the item or items received.

## SECTION XIII DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

### A. Drug Free Policy

The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG has adopted the following drug-free policy:

1. The illegal manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substances is strictly prohibited on all BCDCOG premises, including any site for the performance of work done in connection with any federal grant (hereafter “the workplace”). Illegal drug use includes using prescription drugs which are not prescribed for the employee’s use. The prohibitions against illegal drug use apply at any time, both on-the-job and off-the-job.
2. “Controlled substance” means any controlled substance listed in Schedules I through V of Section 202 of the Federal Controlled Substances Act, Title 21, United States Code, Section 812 or other applicable Federal or State acts.
3. Violation of this policy by any employee of BCDCOG may result in his/her immediate discipline up to and including discharge, without regard to how it has treated other employees and without regard to how it has handled similar situations.
4. Each employee is herewith given a copy of this policy and required to sign the attached form acknowledging its receipt (Exhibit A). By continuing to work, the employee agrees that he/she will abide by the policy as a condition of employment. Failure to sign the form or abide by the policy may result in discipline up to and including discharge.
5. Employees are required to notify the Executive Director within five calendar days after any criminal conviction for the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substance at the workplace. Criminal conviction means a finding of guilt, including a plea of no contest (nolo contendere), or imposition of a sentence, or both, by any judicial body charged with the responsibility to determine violations of Federal or State criminal drug statutes.
6. On the form attached hereto as Exhibit B, the Executive Director is required to notify all federal contracting agencies or grantors of such conviction within ten days after receiving notice of the conviction.
7. Law enforcement authorities may be notified whenever illegal drugs are found in the workplace.

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## **B. Drug Free Awareness Program**

1. Drug abuse is dangerous because it leads to physical impairment, loss of judgment, safety violations, and the risk of injury or possible death.
2. In order to prevent these consequences of drug abuse, the BCDCOG has implemented the above policy to ensure that the workplace and employees remain drug free.
3. The following local organizations have drug counseling, rehabilitation, and/or employee assistance programs:
  - MUSC Institute of Psychiatry Center for Drug and Alcohol Program
  - Charleston County Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services
  - Berkeley County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
  - Dorchester County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
  - Employee Group Health Insurance Plans, if applicable
4. Violations of any provision(s) of this policy may result in immediate and appropriate disciplinary action against the employee, up to and including discharge (Exhibit C).
5. In lieu of or in addition to discipline for a drug-related conviction occurring in the workplace, BCDCOG may, in the sole discretion of the Executive Director, consider the employee's agreement to enroll and complete a BCDCOG approved counseling rehabilitation program. When an employee agrees to undergo counseling or rehabilitation, it is at the employee's expense, and any absences necessitated thereby may be handled in accordance with then-existing agency policy regarding sick leave and/or unpaid leave of absence.
6. When an employee agrees to counseling or rehabilitation, he/she cannot be reinstated to full employment until he/she achieves a negative test for controlled substances, as determined by a laboratory approved by the BCDCOG. If an employee is unsuccessful in achieving rehabilitation, termination may follow.
7. In order to ensure that the workplace and employees remain drug free, the BCDCOG reserves the right to test employees for drug use for reasonable suspicion.

**EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ACT**

(Pub. L. 100-690)

I have received a copy of a statement that the unlawful manufacture, use, distribution, or possession of drugs or other controlled substances is absolutely prohibited on BCDCOG premises, and agree to abide by the terms of this statement. I further understand and agree that I must notify the Executive Director if I am convicted in a criminal court violating any drug laws. This notification must be given no more than five days after the conviction. I agree that my compliance with these terms of my employment is required as long as I work for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments. My failure to comply will result in discipline up to and including discharge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

Exhibit A

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NOTIFICATION FORM

**USE OF DRUGS IN THE WORKPLACE**

The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (“BCDCOG”) is a federal grant recipient. Pursuant to the Drug-Free Workplace Act, Pub. L. 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D, Section 5153 (a) (1) (E), the BCDCOG is notifying all federal granting agencies, including yours, that its employee, \_\_\_\_\_ was convicted of the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession or use of a controlled substance in the workplace. The BCDCOG learned of this conviction less than ten days ago.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature

Exhibit B

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**NOTICE OF DISMISSAL FOR VIOLATION OF DRUG FREE WORKPLACE ACT**

You have been convicted of violating drug abuse laws while an employee of the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments. Your use of drugs violates the BCDCOG drug free workplace policy. You received a copy of this policy and were obliged to comply with it. Under the policy, your conviction warrants your immediate dismissal or entry into a drug rehabilitation program. You are hereby (discharged) (required to complete a rehabilitation program).

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature

Exhibit C

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## SECTION XIV WORKPLACE PRIVACY AND COMPUTER USE

The workplace is intended to be a place of work. An important part of work is communications and record keeping. No employee is at work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and there are times when management needs access to communications or records maintained by employees in their individual workplaces. Each employee should understand that personal items and personal communications received or stored on Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG premises are not entitled to a guarantee of privacy.

Management reserves the right to search for Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG property and documents in employee desks, lockers, file cabinets, etc.

Electronic media raises similar issues. The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG provides electronic and telephone communication and, when necessary, computers to employees. Although assigned to the employee, these items still belong to Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG. Similarly, any computer files created on a Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG computer belong to Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG.

Employees are given certain access and computer rights based upon the employee's job description. Employees may not change any of these rights or the rights of anyone else. Software, programs, games, and any other downloads may not be installed on COG computers without the written permission of COG.

Employees are prohibited, unless specifically authorized by the COG, from accessing and/or viewing e-mail which has not been sent by, or addressed to, the employee. Similarly, employees are prohibited, unless specifically authorized by the COG, from accessing and/or viewing databases containing personal employee information. Employees who have received appropriate authorization to access and/or view databases containing personal employee information are prohibited from using or discussing information in those databases except as directed by management.

The COG consents to the reasonable personal use of its communication devices. The definition of "reasonable personal use" is determined in the sole discretion of the COG. The only sure way to avoid violating the COG's policy on personal use is not to use the COG's communication devices, computers, and network for any personal purpose. The following personal computer use is absolutely forbidden:

1. Accessing any material which the COG considers to be pornographic; transmitting or knowingly accepting receipt of any communication which is pornographic, obscene, or in the COG's opinion might contribute to a hostile work environment in that it demeans individuals on the basis of race, sex, age, national origin, disability or some similar distinction;
2. Conducting business for outside employment or a side-business;
3. Purchasing any goods or services, even if charged to the employee's personal credit card.

Although employees may use COG-owned communication devices, computers and network for limited personal use, all files and data created or transmitted using a computer (desktop or laptop), telephone, pager, Blackberry, or any other electronic device provided to the employee by the COG belong to the COG and may be accessed by the COG during transmission of the communication or while in storage on the COG's equipment. This includes, but is not limited to, voicemail, the content of e-mail, text (sms) messages, multi-media messages (mms), instant messages, and the content of internet websites.

**By accepting employment with the COG, you consent to monitoring, including “real time” monitoring, of all communications described in this policy and authorize the COG to access all data stored on communication devices provided by the COG.** The COG also reserves the right to report the finding of such reviews to appropriate agencies. Data stored on a COG communication device includes data, such as personal third-party e-mail accounts (*e.g.*, yahoo, hotmail, gmail, etc.) and websites, that is accessed with a password where the data was accessed using the COG's communication device. **Thus, if you do not want the COG to have access to your personal e-mail account or your social networking site, you should not access your personal e-mail or other password-protected websites using THE COG-owned communication devices.** Even though an item has been “deleted” and the employee cannot retrieve it, this does not mean that the COG cannot do so. It is also possible to generate a report of every Internet connection made by each user and the amount of time spent in each connection.

If you access personal e-mail accounts or other password-protected websites using COG-owned communication devices, you will be subjecting those accounts and websites to any viruses that may have infected the COG-owned communication device. The COG is not liable for any damages you suffer because of such access. The best way for you to protect your personal information is to refrain from accessing it using COG-owned equipment.

COG employees may not use their own *personal* electronic equipment (including, but not limited to, personal laptop computers and cellular phones) on COG property or at COG work sites to engage in conduct which would be prohibited if using COG equipment.

The Council of Governments has adopted a network policy for use of all staff members. Employees should contact the Council's Executive Director for additional information concerning the use of Council computers.

## **SECTION XV SOCIAL NETWORKS; PERSONAL WEB SITES; BLOGS**

Social networking, personal websites, and blogs have become common methods of self-expression. The Council respects the right of employees to use these media during their personal time. The Council consents to reasonable limited access to social media sites during working hours or using Council equipment. What is “reasonable” is determined in the sole discretion of the Council. The only sure way to avoid violating the Council's policy on personal social media site access is to not to access such sites at all during working hours or using Council equipment.

Employees must understand that material posted on these media may be read by persons other than those for whom it is intended. Employees are cautioned that they are responsible for the contents of social media posts they make. Posts that contain obscene or harassing material,

that are unlawful, that contain personal attacks on coworkers, that reasonably call into question the employee's judgment, or that reasonably cause concern among the public may result in discipline, up to and including termination from employment. Similarly, conduct that would violate Council policies if done in person also violates Council policy if done through social media. Employees may not disclose confidential information over social media or similar sites.

Employees who post on media sites and who have identified themselves as a member or employee of the Council on those sites must make it clear that they are expressing their own views and not those of the Council.

## **BERKELEY-CHARLESTON-DORCHESTER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

### **Staff Meetings**

Staff meetings, whether full or departmental, may be called by the Executive Director or his designee.

### **Catering and Reservations**

Meetings that are catered or need reservations made at a location other than Council's office must receive prior approval from the Executive Director. This applies regardless of whether there is a charge for accommodations for a meeting or charges if a meal is to be served. Scheduling of the Council conference rooms is handled by the Deputy Director of Administrative & Supportive Services or her designee. Availability of the conference rooms is on a "first-come/first-served" basis.

### **Responsibility for Personal Items**

The Council of Governments is not responsible for any personal items left in employee work areas. This includes items that are stolen or damaged either by the employee or visitors to the building.

### **Common Areas**

The common areas are for all employees, and employees must maintain the area in a neat and clean manner.

### **Smoking Policies**

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the Council offices or in Council vehicles.

### **Closing of Office**

The last staff member to leave the office at the end of the day is responsible for closing the office. This involves checking to see that all lights and electrical equipment have been turned off and that all doors have been locked. Each individual is responsible for turning off the lights in their work area.

## **Mail**

Incoming mail is distributed to individual mail boxes by the administrative staff each day. Each employee is responsible checking his box daily. Outgoing mail should be deposited in the mail room by 4:30 P.M. each day in order to have the proper postage placed on it and to allow time for it to be delivered to the post office.

## **Supplies and Equipment**

General office supplies are stored in the supply cabinets. The Office Manager reorders office supplies as necessary to maintain an adequate stock for routine operations and should be notified if an unusual quantity is needed by any department.

## **Sign In/out Procedure**

Staff members are expected to sign out when they are going to be away from the office. The sign out sheet should indicate the expected length of stay and time of return along with the destination. This enables the Receptionist to have accurate information available for visitors or other staff members. It is also important to sign-in when returning or if there has been a change in travel plans. A sign-in/out sheet is in the Reception area for this purpose.

Staff members present in the building on weekends or after-hours must sign in and out utilizing the form in the reception area.

## **Telephone Calls**

All agency long distance calls are to be kept to an absolute minimum in number and length. Each staff member is responsible for making their own agency calls. Employees authorized to place long distance business calls while off-site may be issued a telephone card and individual billing number. No personal long distance calls are to be charged to the Council number or Council credit card without permission from the Executive Director. All personal phone calls, whether in-coming or out-going, should be kept to a minimum.

## **Advisory Committee Responsibilities**

Council staff members who are assigned committee responsibilities are expected to:

1. Establish personal contact and rapport with committee members.
2. Prepare and distribute an agenda at least seven days prior to meetings with a copy to their immediate supervisor and the Executive Director. Appropriate follow-up reminders should be dispatched as necessary.
3. Record minutes, including roster of members present and absent, and distribute to committee members and others as appropriate.
4. Maintain information on terms of committee members and take necessary action to have members replaced or reappointed as necessary.

## **Use of Council Facilities and Equipment**

An employee wishing to use Council facilities, books, special documents, maps, slide projectors, cameras, tape recorders, or other office material or equipment is to obtain permission from the Deputy Director of Administrative & Supportive Services or immediate supervisor . Under no circumstances is equipment to be used for furthering an outside business by an employee.

## **Reception Area**

The reception area of the office is the Council's "nerve center". It is here that office visitors form their impressions about the overall nature and efficiency of the Council. For these reasons, the area should be neat and orderly and kept uncluttered. Idle conversations and routine breaks in the reception area are discouraged.