

**WILLIAMSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
WILLIAMSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**



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### **1.1.1 Welcome Statement**

It is with great pleasure that Williamson County Government introduces this employee handbook to you.

Our employees are Williamson County's greatest assets and every employee plays an important part.

Like any great team, we are comprised of different people from different backgrounds fulfilling different roles.

The messages that are part of this employee handbook are also part of our winning formula. One important message embodied in this employee handbook is that to succeed, we must respect the laws, regulations, and policies that govern our personal actions, our business and Williamson County.

Williamson County Government has its foundation based on ethics including the ethical principles of integrity and respecting the rights of others.

To be *ethical* means making the ethical choice as well as asking for advice when the ethical choice is not clear.

We require that when you act on our behalf you do so for the betterment of Williamson County Government and all employees and not for personal gain or influence. We demand honesty, integrity, respect for others and adherence to the law.

This employee handbook contains many of Williamson County's internal policies. It is impossible for us to have a policy to address every conceivable issue that may occur at work. If an issue is not addressed in this employee handbook, please bring this issue to the attention of your supervisor, elected official or appointed official or to the Human Resource Director. We want to help.

Finally, all great teams are built on respect for the organization they represent and their teammates. Williamson County Government is built on that same respect. By respecting what each person brings to Williamson County Government, we can achieve great things together.

### **1.2.1 About This Handbook**

This employee handbook is meant to accomplish several goals.

It describes your relationship with us, your employer.

It lists our benefits, your eligibility for those benefits, and the procedures for accessing those benefits.

It tells you whom to contact if you have questions or concerns.

It contains our policies and procedures regarding your responsibilities as an employee.

It replaces any previous employee handbook or policies previously adopted. However, it does not supersede any collective bargaining contracts negotiated or policies and procedures implemented within an elected official's office.

Finally, we hope it can answer many of the questions you may have as an employee.

### **Employee Handbook Limitations**

Please note there are also some things that this employee handbook does not do.

First, this employee handbook does not create a contract of employment between you and Williamson County Government. You are an at-will employee. That means that you are free to end your employment at your will at any time and Williamson County Government is free to do the same. Nothing in this employee handbook is meant to alter that relationship in any manner. Additionally, this handbook unless specifically adopted by the Union(s) does not in any way supersede the Collective Bargaining Agreements negotiated and in effect with the County.

Also, this employee handbook cannot address every circumstance that may occur while you are performing your duties. It cannot list every act you are permitted or not permitted to do while employed or answer every question you may have.

Consequently, we ask that you inquire with your supervisor, elected official or appointed official before acting on matters that are in question or that this employee handbook does not address. If something is not addressed in this employee handbook, Williamson County Government will act in its discretion as the law permits.

Williamson County Government also reserves the right to modify, supplement, or rescind any provision of this employee handbook without notice.

Please note that only Williamson County Government can make changes to this employee handbook and that those changes must be in writing and signed by the County Board of Commissioners. No person, no matter his or her title or position, can change the substantive term or conditions of your employment, including what is written in this employee handbook unless such changes are performed as described in this paragraph.

#### **1.3.1 How to Use This Handbook**

You should use this employee handbook as a source of reference regarding Williamson County's policies, guidelines, rules e.g.

This employee handbook has several sections. Each section contains policies, guidelines, rules, e.g.

Please note that this employee handbook is not written to address every issue that may occur in the workplace or answer all of your questions.

## **Questions About This Policy**

If you have questions, suggestions or concerns about notice, you should direct them to your supervisor, elected official or appointed official or to the Human Resource Director

If you feel uncomfortable discussing your questions, suggestions or concerns about this notice with the persons listed above, you can direct them to the County Board of Commissioners.

### **2.1.1 At-Will Employment Notice**

**You are an at-will employee, and nothing in this employee handbook shall constitute a contract guaranteeing employment or compensation for any specific period of time.**

#### **At-Will Employment Notice**

As an at-will employee, you or Williamson County Government can terminate your employment at any time with or without cause, reason, and/or notice. Nothing contained in any employee handbook, or any workplace policy or rule of Williamson County Government and no verbal statements or promises made by employees or agents of Williamson County Government shall alter the at-will employment relationship between you and Williamson County Government or restrict the option of you or Williamson County Government to terminate the employment relationship.

#### **Other Agreements Restricted**

Furthermore, no manager, supervisor, or other organization representative or agent, including any representative or agent with hiring authority, other than the County Board of Commissioners, has the authority to enter into any agreement or contract for employment for any specified duration, or to make any agreement, promise, guarantee or commitment that contradicts the above.

Any agreement that contradicts your at-will status must be entered into by the County Board of Commissioners and will not be enforceable unless it is in writing and signed by you and by County Board of Commissioners. The agreement must specifically state that the at-will relationship between you and Williamson County Government has changed and a new standard is to be applied.

#### **Questions About This Notice**

If you have questions, suggestions or concerns about notice, you should direct them to your supervisor, elected official or appointed official or to the Human Resource Director.

If you feel uncomfortable discussing your questions, suggestions or concerns about this notice with the persons listed above, you can direct them to the County Board of Commissioners.

### **3.1.1 Worker Classifications**

Williamson County Government respects the value each worker brings to the team. Our workers make us better because of their remarkable attributes, skills and experiences.

#### **Williamson County Government Worker Classifications**

It is important that our employees understand how other workplace participants contribute to Williamson County Government. For that reason, Williamson County Government has listed and provided a limited definition regarding all participants in our workplace.

There are some points we would like you to remember when reviewing these classifications:

All participants to our workplace contribute differently. We have different job duties, skills, experiences, and even the amount of time we spend at Williamson County Government is different.

Despite our differences, our workplace will provide equal opportunity to each employee, no matter his or her classification.

Today's workplace is dynamic. Williamson County Government must address changes and circumstances to keep us operating properly. Therefore, Williamson County Government reserves the right to change this employee handbook, including the employee classifications listed below, as it sees fit and without notice.

Please also note that none of the classifications alter or diminish the at-will relationship Williamson County Government has with its employees.

#### **Classifications**

There are several employee classifications at Williamson County Government.

The classifications are:

Full-Time Employees - full-time employees work a minimum of 40 or 35 hours a week.

Part-Time Employees - part-time employees work no more than 30 hours per week.

Temporary/Seasonal/Project Employees – Temporary/Seasonal/Project employees vary depending upon department but should not work more than 999 hours per year.

### **4.1.1 Equal Employment Opportunity**

Teamwork and success are built on a foundation of equality. For these and other reasons, Williamson County Government strives to provide equal opportunity for all employees and is committed to providing a work environment free of discrimination.

## **Discrimination Prohibited**

Preventing discrimination begins with respect for and adherence to the law. Therefore, discrimination against individuals on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, pregnancy, national origin, disability, veteran or family status, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal, state or local laws, except where a bona fide occupational qualification applies, is strictly prohibited.

## **Harassment Prohibited**

Verbal, physical, sexual or any other form of harassment that belittles or demeans any individual on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, pregnancy, national origin, disability, veteran or family status, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal, state or local laws is also strictly prohibited.

Prohibited harassment includes conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or experience or creating an environment that is hostile, intimidating or offensive.

Sexual advances; requests or demands for sexual favors; physical conduct of a sexual or harassing nature; sexual, racial, ethnic, national origin, disability or religious jokes; sexual, racial, ethnic, national origin, disability or religious slurs; and other harassing language or conduct that is meant to intimidate or that negatively impacts an employee's work environment is strictly prohibited.

## **Workplace Equality**

To promote equality, Williamson County Government will administer and conduct all personnel practices and procedures including employment, compensation, benefits, evaluations, promotions, demotions, assignments, transfers, recruitment, layoffs and terminations, training, education, recreational and social activities, and safety and health programs, without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, pregnancy, national origin, disability, veteran or family status, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal, state or local laws, except where a bona fide occupational qualification applies.

This policy applies to every employee that interacts with the workplace or who participates in work-sponsored activities no matter his or her authority, position or classification. Violators of this policy are subject to investigation and discipline including, but not limited to, termination.

## **Reporting Discrimination**

If you believe you are discriminated against or if you know or suspect discrimination to another employee or workplace participant, you must report it immediately to your supervisor or Human Resource Director.

Please note that you are not required to confront the person or persons that have given you reason to report. However, if you experience wrongdoing, like discrimination or harassment, you must make a reasonable effort to make the wrongdoing known as soon as or soon after

you experience or discover it. Discussing or reporting acts of discrimination or harassment to any person not listed above does not constitute a report.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

If you believe you are being subjected to retaliation for reporting a violation of this policy, or participating in an investigation of a violation of this policy, you should report the retaliation immediately in the manner provided above. Please note that you do not have to confront the person that is the source of the retaliation before reporting it, but to help prevent retaliation from continuing, you must report it.

Any employee or workplace participant that retaliates against another employee or workplace participant for making a good faith complaint of a violation of this policy, or for assisting in an investigation of a complaint of a violation of this policy, is subject to discipline or termination. Retaliation can include, but is not limited to harassment, discrimination, bullying or any other unfair treatment or abuse of power.

### **Workplace Investigations**

If warranted, Williamson County Government will investigate credible allegations of discrimination, including harassment. Williamson County Government may use third parties to investigate allegations of discrimination. All employees have a responsibility to cooperate fully with any investigation. Unreasonable refusal to participate in an investigation of a complaint of discrimination may lead to discipline.

### **False Claims Prohibited**

Any employee or workplace participant that makes a knowingly false claim of workplace wrongdoing, like a knowingly false claim of discrimination or harassment, will be subject to discipline or termination.

## **4.2.1 Harassment Free Workplace**

Williamson County Government is committed to providing a work environment based on mutual respect and teamwork. That means a work environment free of harassment.

### **Harassment Prohibited**

Williamson County Government defines *harassment* as behavior or comments that create a hostile work environment for another person because of race, religion, color, sex, age, pregnancy, national origin, disability, veteran or family status, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal, state or local laws.

Verbal, physical, sexual or any other form of harassment that belittles or demeans any individual on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, pregnancy, national origin, disability, veteran or family status, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal, state or local laws is also strictly prohibited.

Prohibited harassment includes conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or experience or creating an environment that is hostile, intimidating or offensive.

Sexual advances; requests or demands for sexual favors; threats; physical conduct of a harassing nature; jokes; slurs; and other harassing language or conduct that is meant to intimidate or that negatively impacts an employee's work environment is strictly prohibited.

### **Harassment Free Workplace**

Williamson County Government does not tolerate and expressly prohibits harassment or any acts (physical, verbal or otherwise) that create a hostile or intolerable working environment for any employee, volunteer, applicant, agent, contractor, customer, client or vendor because of race, religion, color, sex, age, pregnancy, national origin, veteran or family status, or other status or condition protected by applicable federal, state or local laws.

This policy applies to every person in the workplace and everyone who participates in work-sponsored activities no matter his or her authority, position or classification.

### **Reporting Harassment**

If you believe you are harassed or if you know or suspect harassment to another employee or workplace participant, you must report it immediately to your supervisor or Human Resources or to the Human Resource Director.

If you do not feel comfortable reporting as listed above or if you did report and are not satisfied with the response, then you should direct your report or dissatisfaction to County Board of Commissioners.

Please note that you are not required to confront the person or persons that have given you reason to report. However, if you experience wrongdoing, like harassment, you must make a reasonable effort to make the wrongdoing known as soon as or soon after you experience or discover it. Discussing or reporting acts of harassment to any person not listed above does not constitute a report.

### **4.2.2 Sexual Harassment Free Workplace**

The best work environments are built on a foundation of respect for all those that contribute. For that and many other reasons, Williamson County Government is committed to providing a work environment free of sexual harassment.

### **Sexual Harassment Prohibited**

Williamson County Government defines *sexual harassment* as behavior or comments that create a hostile work environment for another person because of his or her gender. This includes male-to-female, female-to-male, male-to-male, and female-to-female harassment. Verbal, physical, sexual or any other form of harassment that belittles or demeans any individual on the basis of sex, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal,

state or local laws is also strictly prohibited.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or experience or creating an environment that is hostile, intimidating or offensive.

Sexual advances; requests or demands for sexual favors; physical conduct of a sexual nature; sexual jokes; sexual slurs; and other harassing language or conduct that is meant to intimidate or that negatively impacts an employee's work environment is strictly prohibited.

### **Sexual Harassment Free Workplace**

Williamson County Government does not tolerate and expressly prohibits harassment or any acts (physical, verbal or otherwise) that create a hostile or intolerable working environment for any employee, volunteer, applicant, agent, contractor, customer, client or vendor because his or her gender or other protected status under law.

### **Reporting Sexual Harassment**

If you believe you are sexually harassed or if you know or suspect sexual harassment to another employee or workplace participant, you must report it immediately to your supervisor or to the Human Resource Director.

Please note that you are not required to confront the person or persons that have given you reason to report. However, if you experience wrongdoing, like sexual harassment, you must make a reasonable effort to make the wrongdoing known as soon as or soon after you experience or discover it. Discussing or reporting acts of sexual harassment to any person not listed above does not constitute a report.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

If you believe you are being subjected to retaliation for reporting a violation of this policy, or participating in an investigation of this policy, you should report the retaliation immediately in the manner provided above. Please note that you do not have to confront the person that is the source of the retaliation before reporting it, but to help prevent retaliation from continuing, you must report it.

Any employee or workplace participant that retaliates against another employee or workplace participant for making a good faith complaint of a violation of this policy, or for assisting in an investigation of a complaint of a violation of this policy, is subject to discipline or termination. Retaliation can include, but is not limited to harassment, discrimination, bullying or any other unfair treatment or abuse of power.

### **Workplace Investigations**

If warranted, Williamson County Government will investigate credible allegations of sexual harassment. Williamson County Government may use third parties to assist in such investigations. All employees have a responsibility to cooperate fully in any such investigation.

Unreasonable refusal to participate in an investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment may lead to discipline.

### **4.3.1 Equal Employment Opportunities for People With Disabilities**

Williamson County Government strives to provide equal opportunity for its disabled employees and visitors and is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination.

#### **Disability Discrimination Prohibited**

Williamson County Government prohibits all unlawful discrimination against persons with disabilities that work for, visit or interact with Williamson County Government.

Disabled employees and applicants are qualified individuals with a disability. A *qualified individual* with a disability is any person who can perform the essential functions of a job or position with or without reasonable accommodation. Disability means, with respect to an individual: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment including pregnancy. Major life activities can include caring for one's self, walking, seeing, speaking, working, breathing, learning, concentrating, standing, lifting, bending. Major life activities also include major bodily functions such as functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

#### **Workplace Equality**

Williamson County Government will administer and conduct all personnel practices and procedures including employment, compensation, benefits, evaluations, promotions, demotions, assignments, transfers, recruitment, layoffs and terminations, training, education, recreational and social activities, and safety and health programs without regard to an employee or applicant's disability, except when a bona fide occupational qualification applies or when an accommodation of a disability will create an undue hardship.

This policy applies to every employee that interacts with the workplace or who participates in work-sponsored activities no matter his or her authority, position or classification. Violators of this policy are subject to investigation and discipline including, but not limited to, termination.

#### **Harassment Prohibited**

Verbal, physical or any other form of harassment that belittles or demeans any individual on the basis of disability is also strictly prohibited.

Prohibited harassment includes conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a disabled employee's work performance or experience or creating an environment that is hostile, intimidating or offensive.

## **Accommodations**

Williamson County Government will provide reasonable accommodation to any qualified individual with a disability as required under federal, state or local law. Direct your accommodation request in person or in writing to the Human Resource Director or ADA Compliance Officer or your supervisor.

What is considered a reasonable accommodation varies and is determined by a number of factors, including safety. All requests for accommodation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration all known circumstances.

### **4.4.1 Requests for Accommodation**

It is the intent of Williamson County Government to make its workplace equal for its applicants and employees. Circumstances may arise where reasonable accommodation for an applicant or employee is necessary to meet this objective.

## **Accommodations**

Williamson County Government will make reasonable accommodations (changes or exceptions to job routines, requirements, policies, and procedures for example) when necessary or appropriate. What is considered a reasonable accommodation varies and is determined by a number of factors, including safety. All requests for accommodation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration all known circumstances.

## **Accommodations for Disability**

Williamson County Government will provide reasonable accommodation to any qualified individual with a disability as required under federal, state or local law. A “qualified individual” with a disability is any person who can perform the essential functions of a job or position with or without reasonable accommodation. Disability means, with respect to an individual a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, having a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities can include caring for one’s self, walking, seeing, speaking, working, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, standing, lifting, or bending. Major life activities also include major bodily functions, such as functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

## **Other Accommodations**

In addition to providing reasonable accommodation to persons with a disability, Williamson County Government will also make a reasonable accommodation for pregnant employees and the needs of employees to practice their religion. If another reason exists for asking for an accommodation, Williamson County Government will consider it in the manner addressed in this policy.

## **To Make an Accommodations Request**

Direct your accommodation request in person or in writing to the Human Resource Director and ADA Compliance Officer or your supervisor.

What is considered a reasonable accommodation varies and is determined by a number of factors, including safety. All requests for accommodation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration all known circumstances.

## **Retaliation Prohibited**

If you believe you are being subjected to retaliation for reporting a violation of this policy, or participating in an investigation of this policy, you should report the retaliation immediately in the manner provided above. Please note that you do not have to confront the person that is the source of the retaliation before reporting it, but to help prevent retaliation from continuing, you must report it.

Any employee or workplace participant that retaliates against another employee or workplace participant for making a good faith complaint of a violation of this policy, or for assisting in an investigation of a complaint of a violation of this policy, is subject to discipline or termination. Retaliation can include, but is not limited to harassment, discrimination, bullying or any other unfair treatment or abuse of power.

### **5.1.1 Sick Leave**

When the unexpected occurs like an illness or injury, Williamson County Government wants all employees to take the time reasonably necessary to recover. Williamson County Government also understands that there are times when employees may need time away from work to recover from elective medical procedures and other health conditions.

For this and other reasons, Williamson County Government provides paid sick leave to eligible employees.

#### **Eligibility**

All nonunion full-time employees will accumulate 1 sick day per month. This will be credited on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month for the previous month.

**NOTE:** Please refer to your collective bargaining agreement if you are a union employee.

#### **Requesting Leave**

Knowing when illness or injury may strike is difficult. Even so, employees who are ill or injured, whether eligible for leave or not, are required to provide notice your supervisor, elected official or appointed official as soon as possible, preferably before your scheduled shift on the first day you are absent.

## **Extended Sick Leave**

If your illness or injury will require you to miss more than three (3) consecutive days of employment, you will need to have your physician provide proof of your disability.

## **Sick Leave Not Used**

Sick leave not used during the year can be carried forward. Williamson County Government permits eligible employees to accumulate up to a total of 240 days.

At the time of termination, resignation or retirement all accumulated sick time will go towards your IMRF. If under ten years of service at the time of termination or leave of employment you will receive pay for 50% of all accumulated sick time.

## **5.2.1 IMRF Disability Leave**

For those eligible employees that become temporarily disabled because of illness, injury or a condition, like pregnancy, Williamson County Government through IMRF provides disability leave.

### **Eligibility**

All active IMRF members are eligible to apply for disability.

Please consult with your IMRF Representative or the Human Resource Director to obtain further information about IMRF Disability.

### **Family Medical Leave**

IMRF Disability leave runs concurrent with family medical leave if an employee selects family medical leave and is also eligible for IMRF disability.

## **5.3.1 Vacation Leave**

Williamson County Government provides paid vacation days to eligible employees in recognition of their employment.

### **Eligibility for Vacation Leave**

Vacation leave is available to only full-time employees.

After one year of employment, you will receive your earned vacation time. After the first year, vacation time is given on December 1<sup>st</sup> each year thereafter. Vacation time after an employee's one year anniversary through December 1<sup>st</sup> of that same year shall be prorated and credited to the employee on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Amount of Vacation Available**

The number of vacation days available to eligible employees is determined by the following:

<u>Years of Employment</u>	<u>Eligible Days of Vacation</u>
1-5 years	10 days
6-10 years	15 days
10+ years	20 days

## **Requesting Vacation**

To request vacation, you will need to complete a Vacation Request Form and provide notice to your supervisor in a timely manner.

Williamson County Government wants eligible employees to take their vacation, and an effort will be made to accommodate vacation requests. Requests for accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis. Williamson County Government reserves the right to deny specific vacation dates or times requested for business purposes, scheduling conflicts or burden on the organization.

## **Vacation Leave Not Used**

Vacation leave not used during the year does not carry forward to the next year. Employees must take their vacation within twelve months of being credited the time.

## **5.4.1 Personal Leave**

Williamson County Government understands that you have a life away from work or that situations outside your control, like illness or injury, may require you to miss work. For this and other reasons, Williamson County Government provides paid personal leave to eligible employees in recognition of their service.

### **Eligibility**

Personal leave is only available to all full-time employees. Three (3) Personal leave days are given to employees on December 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

### **Requesting Leave**

To request leave, you should provide a minimum of 24 hour notice to your supervisor. Failure to provide proper notice may result in denial of personal leave requests.

### **Personal Leave Not Used**

Personal leave not used during the time period provided does not carry forward to the next twelve months.

## **5.5.1 Voting Leave**

One of the great gifts of democracy is the right to vote. Williamson County Government encourages every employee that can vote to do so.

Employees are encouraged to vote before or after work if polling hours permit. However, if polls are open only during work hours or you are unable to vote before or after work, Registered voters may take time to vote during work so long as the time taken does not exceed one hour or the maximum time permitted by statute.

## **5.6.1 Jury and Witness Leave**

Williamson County Government encourages all employees to perform their civic duty and participate when called to jury duty or summoned as a witness for a judicial proceeding.

### **Eligibility**

All employees are granted leave to perform jury duty or if summoned as a witness by a recognized court for County affairs. Being summoned as a witness for non-county affairs will be permitted but not as paid leave unless the employee is using accrued time off.

### **Fees**

Any fee provided to an employee for serving on a jury or providing testimony should be given to the Williamson County Treasurer's office to be deposited into the General Fund or whichever fund the employee's wages were paid from.

### **Requesting Leave**

To request jury or witness leave, eligible employees must present their official court summons notifying them of their duty to serve as a juror or provide testimony to their supervisor within 48 hours prior to the court date.

### **Reporting to Work**

While serving on jury duty, all employees are required to report to their supervisor about their availability for work each day. Importantly, all employees are required to report immediately to work or contact their supervisor, if the court releases them from their duty during a workday.

## **5.7.1 Military Leave**

Williamson County Government understands the sacrifice that the men and women of our armed forces make to preserve our freedoms. Williamson County Government strongly supports the laws that support these brave and committed men and women.

### **Notice**

Williamson County Government requests that any employee going on active military duty

provide as much notice as possible of his or her activation to his or her your supervisor or the Human Resource Director.

### **Reinstatement**

Upon returning from military duty, employees that are members of the United States Armed Forces, including volunteers, reservists, and the National Guard, will be restored pursuant to USSERA.

### **Reporting a Violation of This Policy**

If you suspect a violation of this policy to yourself or to another employee or workplace participant, you must report it immediately to the Human Resource Director.

Please note that you are not required to confront the person or persons that have given you reason to report. Discussing or reporting violations of this policy to any person not listed above does not constitute a report.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

If you believe you are being subjected to retaliation for reporting a violation of this policy, or participating in an investigation of a violation of this policy, you should report the retaliation immediately in the manner provided above. Please note that you do not have to confront the person that is the source of the retaliation before reporting it, but to help prevent retaliation from continuing, you must report it.

Any employee or workplace participant that retaliates against another employee or workplace participant for making a good faith complaint of a violation of this policy, or for assisting in an investigation of a complaint of a violation of this policy, is subject to discipline or termination.

Retaliation can include, but is not limited to harassment, discrimination, bullying or any other unfair treatment or abuse of power.

### **Workplace Investigations**

If warranted, Williamson County Government will investigate credible allegations of violations of this policy. Williamson County Government may use third parties to investigate suspected violations. All employees have a responsibility to cooperate fully with any investigation. Unreasonable refusal to participate in an investigation may lead to discipline.

## **5.8.1 Military Training and Emergency Duty Leave**

Williamson County Government provides members of the armed services reserve or National Guard leave to attend military training or to attend to state or national emergencies.

### **Eligible Employees**

Eligible employees are current members of the armed services, reserve or National Guard.

## **Wages**

Eligible employees of the armed services, reserve or National Guard will receive the difference between their wages at Williamson County Government at the average weekly wage and wages received from the armed services reserve or National Guard to attend training or to respond to an emergency for up to 20 days in a calendar year.

## **Notice**

Eligible employees must provide a copy of the military order to your supervisor or the Human Resource Director within 24 hours of receiving the order to attend training or when called to duty.

## **5.9.1 Holiday Leave**

Holidays are special times. For that reason, Williamson County Government provides holiday leave for eligible employees.

### **Eligibility for Paid Holiday Leave**

Paid holiday leave is available only to all full-time employees.

## **Holidays**

Williamson County Government will be closed and paid holiday leave permitted as adopted and passed by the County Board of Commissioners by resolution. This resolution does not supersede any collective bargaining unit contracts or any days not permitted by the Circuit Court holiday schedule. The days may vary from year to year, so please be sure to refer to the current resolution.

<b>New Years Day</b>	<b>Labor Day</b>
<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b>	<b>Columbus Day</b>
<b>Lincoln's Birthday</b>	<b>Election Day</b>
<b>Washington's Birthday</b>	<b>Veterans'</b>
<b>Good Friday</b>	<b>Thanksgiving</b>
<b>Memorial Day</b>	<b>Day Following Thanksgiving Day</b>
<b>Independence Day</b>	<b>Christmas</b>

If you would like to take a day for a religious or special observance not listed above, please submit your request in writing to your supervisor or the Human Resource Director.

All requests will be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval is at the discretion of your supervisor in consultation with the Human Resource Director.

## **Working During the Holiday**

Eligible employees that work on a recognized holiday will be paid an overtime rate of time and half including their regularly scheduled hours.

### **5.10.1 Health Care Benefits**

Your health and the health of your family are important. Toward that end, Williamson County Government offers the following types of insurance coverage to eligible employees:

Group health care coverage;  
Group dental; and  
Group vision

#### **Eligibility for Health Care Benefits**

Under the plan, health benefits are available only to all full-time employees.

If eligible, you will receive information from the Human Resource Director. If you choose to select from the above benefits, the premiums will be deducted from your wages.

#### **Discrimination Prohibited**

Williamson County Government prohibits all forms of illegal discrimination, including discrimination in regard to benefits. If you suspect discrimination regarding your benefits, you must report it immediately to your supervisor or to the Human Resource Director.

Please note that you are not required to confront the person or persons that have given you reason to report. However, if you experience wrongdoing, like discrimination or harassment, you must make a reasonable effort to make the wrongdoing known as soon as or soon after you experience or discover it. Discussing or reporting acts of discrimination or harassment to any person not listed above does not constitute a report.

### **5.10.2 IMRF Benefits**

IMRF is mandated for county employees. IMRF requires the employer to deduct **4.50% or 7.50%** of your gross wages depending upon which plan you fall under. This is then reported on a monthly basis to IMRF.

You will receive a packet from IMRF giving you details once you are enrolled.

#### **Eligibility for Financial Benefits**

Under the plan, benefits are available to the following employees:

An employee who works in a position not excluded from IMRF coverage and whose position meets the annual hourly standard (1000) for IMRF coverage is eligible.

If eligible, you will receive information from the Human Resource Director.

### **5.11.1 Family Medical Leave**

Williamson County Government recognizes the importance of personal and family responsibilities and provides time away from work to eligible employees in accordance with the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (“FMLA”). Accordingly, this policy entitles eligible employees a maximum of 12 weeks of unpaid leave during a calendar year or 26 weeks during a calendar year for leave to care for a covered service member.

### **5.11.2 Health Care Insurance Continuation (COBRA)**

Williamson County Government supports laws that provide for your health and the health of your loved ones. The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (“COBRA”) is one of those laws.

#### **Eligibility**

COBRA allows eligible employees and their dependents to continue their group health coverage for a limited period of time after:

Termination of employment for reasons other than gross misconduct;  
Divorce or legal separation;  
A spouse becomes eligible for Medicare;  
Dependent children lose their dependent status under their health care coverage; and  
Death of a spouse covered under health care coverage.

#### **Requesting COBRA**

If one of the above events occurs, or if you or one of your eligible dependents loses health care coverage, please contact the Human Resource Director immediately.

Please note that when electing COBRA coverage an employee is required to pay full monthly premium plus an administration fee, if applicable.

COBRA coverage ends when an eligible employee becomes covered under another group plan due to employment, marriage, or other reasons or because the employee fails to make monthly payments in a timely manner.

### **5.11.3 Workers’ Compensation**

Safety and health are a priority to Williamson County Government. Nevertheless, accidents can occur in even the safest workplace environments.

When an accident happens and an employee is injured in his or her scope of employment, Williamson County Government has insurance benefits to assist eligible employees with their recovery.

## **Reporting Injuries**

To prevent aggravating an injury, you must report any and all injuries that occur or may have occurred while performing your job duties as soon as the injury is known to your supervisor or the Human Resource Director.

## **Retaliation Prohibited**

If you believe you are being subjected to retaliation for submitting a workers' compensation claim, you should report the retaliation immediately in the manner provided above. Please note that you do not have to confront the person that is the source of the retaliation before reporting it, but to help prevent retaliation from continuing, you must report it.

Any employee or workplace participant that retaliates against another employee or workplace participant for making a good faith request for workers' compensation, is subject to discipline or termination. Retaliation can include, but is not limited to harassment, discrimination, bullying or any other unfair treatment or abuse of power.

## **Fraud**

When employees fraudulently invoke their benefits, they hurt everyone. For this reason, benefits fraud is prohibited.

If you suspect that someone is committing workers' compensation fraud, please report your suspicions to the Human Resource Director.

## **6.1.1 Conflict of Interest**

Williamson County Government requires that employees make decisions on what is in the best interest of Williamson County Government and in compliance with Federal, State and Local laws.

Therefore, you shall avoid situations that create; potentially create; or give the appearance of creating a conflict with the mission or objectives of Williamson County Government; or could cast doubt upon your objectivity between your personal interests and the interests of Williamson County Government.

## **Financial Conflicts of Interest**

Williamson County Government prohibits you or your immediate family from having any financial or other interest (directly or indirectly) in any of Williamson County's suppliers or other organizations with whom Williamson County Government has significant business dealings. [This requirement applies regardless of whether you have any direct business dealing with the supplier or vendor in question].

Ownership of stock in a publicly owned company whose shares are traded through normal markets is permissible in most cases.

## **Acceptance of Gifts**

Acceptance of certain types or forms of gifts is viewed as a conflict of interest.

Employees and their immediate family shall not request, accept, or direct others to request or accept gifts, gift certificates, discounts, gratuities or any other item of significant value (including services of any nature) from any vendor, supplier or resource with whom Williamson County Government has an existing or potential business relationship.

Significant value is any gift with a market value of \$50 or more.

### **Disclosure**

You are required to disclose any financial holdings that may create a conflict of interest to your supervisor once known.

### **6.2.1 Acceptance of Gifts**

Williamson County Government expects to receive the best value from its vendors, suppliers, customers, etc. and avoid any perception that your decisions are made for personal gain.

Consequently, Williamson County Government prohibits the acceptance of gifts pursuant to the gift ban laws and ordinances.

Employees and their immediate family shall not request, accept, or direct others to request or accept gifts, gift certificates, discounts, gratuities or any other item of significant value (including services of any nature) from any vendor, supplier or resource with whom Williamson County Government has an existing or potential business relationship.

Significant value is any gift with a market value of \$50 or more. Any knowing acceptance of a gift of significant value is viewed as an impermissible conflict of interest.

### **Disclosure**

Any unsolicited gifts or gratuities received, including those not of significant value, should be reported immediately to the supervisor once known.

### **6.3.1 Employment of Relatives**

Williamson County Government allows the employment of relatives under limited circumstances. Please refer to the County Anti-Nepotism policy.

### **Disclosure**

Employees are required to disclose to the supervisor if Williamson County Government employs a relative. Employees should also disclose if a known applicant for employment is a relative under this policy.

## **6.4.1 Personal Relationships With Other Employees**

Williamson County Government understands that working relationships can turn into personal relationships. Williamson County Government also understands that personal relationships can create a conflict of interest as well as undermine the confidence of other employees.

*Personal relationship* includes dating; engagement to be married; cohabitation within the same household and living in a romantic partnership (does not include roommates sharing living expenses); having a romantic or sexual relationship; or once having a romantic or sexual relationship.

Employees may not supervise, hire, or promote any employee with whom he or she is having or have had a personal relationship.

Under no circumstance are employees engaged in a personal relationship allowed to work in the same department.

### **Disclosure**

Employees that are having or have had a personal relationship are under no obligation to report the relationship unless the employees involved:

Supervise, hire, promote, or have any influence as to the other employee's job or career with Williamson County Government; or  
Work in the same department.

If the listed circumstances exist, employees that are having or have had a personal relationship are required to report the relationship immediately.

## **6.5.1 Business with Relatives**

Williamson County Government does not permit an employee to engage in business with relatives on its behalf.

*Relatives* under this policy include:

Spouse/Partner, including common law spouse or civil union partner;  
Parent;  
Sibling;  
Child;  
Grandchild;  
In-laws, including parent, brother and sister in-laws;  
Uncle/Aunt;  
Nephews/Nieces;  
First cousins;  
Fiancé.

## **Disclosure**

Employees are required to immediately report any business relationship that may exist with relatives or organizations that employ or are owned by relatives. At the discretion of Williamson County Government and if employees have complied with this policy, an effort will be made to come to a workable solution.

### **6.6.1 Outside Employment or Work**

A conflict of interest may arise if an employee works for another employer or volunteers to work or serve one of its competitors, customers, vendors, suppliers or clients.

## **Disclosure**

Employees are required to disclose if they receive a wage or any compensation from another employer or act as a director, officer, consultant or volunteer for anyone outside of Williamson County Government. At the discretion of Williamson County Government and if employees have complied with this policy, an effort will be made to come to a workable solution.

### **6.7.1 Disclosure of Confidential Information**

Williamson County Government requires that you not disclose to anyone outside of Williamson County Government, or use in any manner outside of your job duties or functions, confidential information relating to the Williamson County Government unless such disclosure is specifically authorized in advance by Williamson County Government.

Moreover, you are admonished not to disclose non-public information for your or another person's financial advantage, including friends, acquaintances or relatives.

### **7.1.1 Williamson County Government and Safety**

Safety is a priority at Williamson County Government and Williamson County Government is committed to providing a safe workplace for employees as well as anyone who enters our property.

Employees are required to do their part including wearing safety equipment, following the safety guidelines of Williamson County Government and the equipment they are using, applying safety training and relying on common sense.

## **Reporting Safety Incidents and Concerns**

Employees should report safety incidents and concerns, including any injury or near injury or any potentially dangerous situation, to the Human Resource Director as soon as possible.

## 7.2.1 Preventing and Reporting Workplace Violence

Preventing workplace violence begins with the awareness that violence can occur anywhere and at any time. Consequently, every person that interacts with Williamson County's workplace is responsible for helping prevent violence.

### What Is Workplace Violence?

Workplace violence can include:

Verbal, written or physical threats of violence;

Assault and battery;

Attempted murder or murder;

Plots to damage a facility or to intimidate, hurt or kill employees or others that interact with the workplace; and

Other violent actions or crimes at work or during work-related events or directed toward an employee or workplace participant while performing his or her job duties.

Williamson County Government prohibits all forms of violence.

### Reporting Threats, Suspicions, Concerns and Acts of Violence

Should life-threatening violence occur in the workplace or at a work event or anywhere you are performing your job duties, you should call 911 and take yourself away from the threat immediately.

If you have witnessed an act of violence using deadly or potentially deadly force, then you should call 911 and, if possible, inform your supervisor or the Human Resource Director at once so long as you can do so without placing yourself or other workplace participants at risk.

If you have a reasonable suspicion that an act of violence is about to occur, you should call 911 and, if possible, your supervisor or the Human Resource Director.

If you have concerns that an employee or other workplace participant may commit an act of violence or if you have heard rumors of potential violence from employees or others that interact with your workplace, you should contact your supervisor, the Human Resource Director or 911.

## 7.3.1 Weapons

Williamson County Government prohibits weapons in its buildings, Williamson County Government vehicles, job sites or on County parking lots and on Employer's parking lots while performing a job function.

### Weapons Prohibited

Prohibited weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms of any sort; air guns; stun guns, like TASERS<sup>®</sup>, or other stun devices; knives with blades longer than three inches; explosive

material, including fireworks; brass knuckles or other fighting instruments; martial arts weapons such as nun chucks or throwing stars; and all other dangerous weaponry.

This ban includes concealed weapons even if the employee or participant has a license to carry a concealed weapon.

Employees or workplace participants that are found to have violated this policy will be subject to removal from Williamson County's property.

### **Reporting Weapons**

If you know of a violation this policy or reasonably suspect a violation of this policy and you have reasonable suspicion that potential imminent violence could occur, you should call 911 immediately, if possible, and inform your supervisor the Human Resource Director at once.

If you have known of or heard of a violation of this policy, but you do not reasonably believe that violence could occur or is imminent, you should contact your supervisor or the Human Resource Director.

### **7.4.1 Substance Abuse**

Williamson County Government is committed to safety. Therefore, the abuse of drugs or alcohol by employees, volunteers and others that interact with Williamson County's workplace is prohibited.

Williamson County Government prohibits:

The use, possession or sale of illegal drugs on Williamson County's premises, in Williamson County Government vehicles or while performing one's job duties or functions;

The use, possession, sale of alcohol on Williamson County's premises, in Williamson County Government vehicles or while performing one's job duties;

The improper use, possession or sale of any drug, including prescription or over-the-counter medication, on the Williamson County's premises, in Williamson County's vehicles or while performing one's job duties or functions; and

Being under the negative influence of drugs (illegal or otherwise) or alcohol on Williamson County's premises, in Williamson County Government vehicles or while performing a job function.

### **Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications**

Employees are permitted proper use of prescription or over-the-counter medications so long as their use does not impair their work or create a safety risk to the employee and others that interact with the employee. Employees must make their supervisor or the Human Resource Director aware if they are taking medication that will impair their ability to work productively or safely.

## **7.4.2 Cannabis**

The possession, sale, purchase, use, distribution, delivery or transfer of cannabis while on Williamson County Government's premises, while on Williamson County Government's time or while driving a vehicle owned, operated, rented, leased or under the control of Williamson County Government is expressly prohibited. This includes cannabis used for medical purposes in accordance with the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program Act. In addition, employees may not report to work, be Williamson County Government's premises or on Williamson County Government time under the influence of cannabis or with any traceable illegal drug or substance in their system.

Under the law, Williamson County Government has the right to implement a reasonable zero tolerance or drug-free workplace policy that is applied in a non-discriminatory manner. With the enactment of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act and the amendment to the Right to Privacy in the Workplace Act, Williamson County Government is limited in its ability to prohibit or limit the use of cannabis and other Substances considered legal under Illinois law by Williamson County Government employees while off duty and not on-call unless those employees perform safety sensitive functions. For employees in safety sensitive positions, such as those employees who drive commercial motor vehicles, operate or repair heavy or large mobile equipment, police officers, correctional officers, firefighters, EMTs and health care providers with direct patient care, it is reasonable for Williamson County Government to implement and consistently apply a zero tolerance or drug-free workplace policy that includes a prohibition on off duty use and to terminate any safety sensitive employee who violates this policy. Such a restrictive policy is reasonable because if these employees used cannabis or other Substances while off duty, they could cause great human loss while at work before any signs of impairment become noticeable to supervisors or others. For those employees who work in non-safety sensitive positions Williamson County Government can test the employee for cannabis or other Substances if first Williamson County Government's representative can articulate after observing the employee at work that a reasonable suspicion of impairment exists.

Any employee who possesses, sells, purchases, uses, distributes, delivers or transfers alcohol, cannabis or any illegal substance on Williamson County Government's premises will be removed from the work area, and may be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

### **7.5.1 Substance Abuse Testing**

Please refer to the County Drug Testing Policy.

### **7.6.1 Smoking (Tobacco)**

Research proves that smoking and secondhand smoke are dangerous to the health of the smoker and those that intake his or her smoke.

In order to protect all employees, Williamson County Government prohibits smoking of tobacco or the use of Vapor-like devices in Williamson County's buildings. The use of tobacco in Williamson County's vehicles or while performing job duties on behalf of Williamson County

Government is prohibited.

## **Smoking Areas**

Employees are not permitted to smoke on Williamson County's property except in designated smoking areas. Employees that do smoke in designated areas are encouraged to be respectful of others including extinguishing and not lighting cigarettes or other lawful smoking material, before leaving or entering the designated smoking area. Employees must not smoke in areas next to exits and entrances of Williamson County's buildings.

## **Smoking Safety**

To lower the risk of fires and to keep Williamson County Government property clean, employees that smoke must extinguish their smoking waste properly in designated waste receptacles.

### **7.7.1 Safe Driving**

Safe driving of Williamson County Government vehicles or your own vehicle while conducting Williamson County Government business is important for safety and preserving life.

To prevent vehicular accidents, Williamson County Government prohibits the following acts while driving Williamson County Government vehicles or while driving a vehicle while performing your job duties:

**Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs; Operating any vehicle without proper license; Speeding; Operating a vehicle carelessly, negligently, improperly, illegally or outside recommended safety protocols; Driving a vehicle without using a seat belt, shoulder belt or other safety harness; Operating a vehicle while holding or physically operating a cellular phone or other device unnecessary to the operation of the vehicle; and Turning off or dismantling vehicle safety devices, like airbags.**

Any decision requiring whether or not a vehicle is driven carelessly is at the sole discretion of the Williamson County Government.

### **8.1.1 Work Hours**

Work hours vary by department.

Williamson County Government's hours open to the public are:  
8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday

### **8.2.1 Attendance**

Attending work when scheduled is an essential job function of every job and an essential requirement of every position.

### **Notice of Tardiness or Being Absent**

If you are unable to meet the start time to begin work or if you are going to miss your scheduled work period, it is your responsibility to provide notice to your supervisor as soon as you know that you will be tardy or absent. You should provide a reason for why you will be tardy or absent, and, if tardy, the time you expect to arrive at work.

### **8.3.1 Overtime**

*Overtime* is any time worked over 35 hours or 40 hours a week depending upon your normal work hours. For all overtime worked, Williamson County Government pays eligible employees one and one-half (1.5) their regular pay rate.

#### **Notice to Work Overtime**

Overtime hours are provided “as needed” by the employer and are not guaranteed.

#### **Approval to Work Overtime**

Williamson County Government pays for all overtime that is worked. Working overtime without prior approval or knowledge from your supervisor may lead to an investigation as to why overtime was worked. No matter whether approval is sought or not, overtime worked will be compensated at the overtime rate regardless of the circumstances.

### **8.4.1 Termination of At-Will Employment**

Williamson County Government hopes that its relationship with its employees is mutually beneficial for both parties. When circumstances occur that make the relationship less than mutually beneficial, Williamson County Government or you have the option to terminate the employment relationship.

Whether or not to terminate an employment relationship is at the sole discretion of Williamson County Government or you and can be made at any time with or without warning or notice. No reason is necessary for terminating the employment relationship, and if reason is given, it can be for any reason so long as the reason is lawful.

Williamson County Government may classify terminations as they occur. The following are the different termination classifications:

#### **Resignation**

A resignation is when an employee terminates his or her employment on his or her own accord and provides reasonable notice to Williamson County Government of his or her intent to resign. Reasonable notice is defined as a written notice of intent to resign as an employee 15 days prior to the date of departure.

Employees that provide 15 day written notice of their resignation may be considered for reemployment with Williamson County Government so long as their employment record with Williamson County Government is satisfactory. Whether or not an employee’s record with Williamson County Government is satisfactory is at the discretion of management.

## **Layoff**

Situations or conditions, economic or otherwise, may require Williamson County Government to layoff employees. Employees that are laid off are eligible for rehire at the discretion of management. Rehiring after a layoff is not guaranteed.

Who is rehired and the priority of rehiring is at the discretion of the supervisor and the County Board.

## **Voluntary Termination**

A voluntary termination is when an employee terminates his or her employment without notice.

For example, employees that do not work when scheduled for two work days and do not provide reasonable cause for their absenteeism are considered to have voluntarily terminated their employment.

At its discretion, Williamson County Government may rescind any voluntary termination so long as it is determined that the employee acted in good faith and has reasonable cause for not providing notice.

Employees that voluntarily terminate their employment are not eligible for rehire.

## **Involuntary Termination**

An involuntary termination is when management terminates the employment relationship. Management may terminate employment at any time for any legal reason with or without warning or notice.

Employees that are involuntarily terminated are not eligible for reemployment.

At its discretion, management may rescind an involuntary termination if reasonable cause exists to do so.

## **At-Will**

Please note, you are an at-will employee, and nothing in this employee handbook or this particular policy shall constitute a contract requiring certain actions be taken before termination, including any step-by-step or progressive disciplinary procedure or any requirement to classify your termination. Williamson County Government has the right to terminate your employment at any time and for any lawful reason with or without rendering counseling, warnings, reprimands or other forms of discipline. Likewise, you may terminate your employment with Williamson County Government at any time and for any reason.

### **8.5.1 Employee Files**

Williamson County Government maintains files on present and past employees. These files

are the property of Williamson County Government and are confidential.

It is strictly prohibited to review the file of a present or past employee without first receiving approval. Reviewing the file of an employee without permission is strictly prohibited.

### **Reviewing Your File**

Employees wanting to review their own file may do so by requesting to their supervisor. Williamson County Government may accept or reject a request at its sole discretion.

At no time shall any document in an employee's file leave the department in which it is kept.

### **Copying Your File**

Employees may request a copy of their file or information within the file. Whether or not documents within an employee file can or cannot be copied is in the sole discretion of Williamson County Government.

## **8.6.1 Dress**

Every employee is an ambassador of Williamson County Government. It is important that employees convey to the public and to each other a positive appearance.

### **General Dress Appearance**

Employees should wear clothes that are clean, neat and appropriate for their position. Clothes worn should not smell, tears, holes, stains or be overly wrinkled. "Flip flops," or any sandal without a strap across the rear of the heel are prohibited.

### **Permitted Dress for Men**

Men are permitted to wear dress shirts, dress, tailored slacks, ties, shirts with collars, suits, sport coats,

### **Permitted Dress for Women**

Women are permitted to wear skirts or dresses that are no shorter than three inches above the knee, dress or tailored slacks or pant suits, dress shoes with heels that are low to medium height.

## **8.7.1 Computer, Internet and Network Usage**

Williamson County Government considers computers, computer hardware, software and any and all information received or transmitted utilizing Williamson County's computer equipment, systems or accounts, including, but not limited to, email, as its property and information.

Like other Williamson County Government property, these items and information are to be used for the benefit of Williamson County Government.

## **About E-Mail and E-Mail Attachments**

*Email* is any message created or received on an electronic mail system, including, but not limited to, attached text or word processing documents, spreadsheets, or other data compilations transmitted through a computer or computer system. Any email stored on, transferred through or utilizing Williamson County Government property is considered property of Williamson County Government, including email transmitted from or to a non-Williamson County Government computer.

## **Monitoring**

Williamson County Government reserves the right to monitor, review, inspect and access all employee Internet and email activities to determine that the usage is related to the organization's purposes and complies with all policies, practices, and procedures, including policies prohibiting harassment and discrimination.

Employees and persons that interact with Williamson County Government employees should not expect information stored, saved, deleted or transmitted through Williamson County's computers to be private, including, but not limited to, email messages. Employees should expect that Williamson County Government is monitoring or auditing all such communications.

Importantly, Williamson County Government may keep copies of Internet and email passwords. Please note that the use of a password does not ensure confidentiality of any communication.

## **Harassment and Other Wrongful Behavior**

Williamson County Government does not tolerate the transmission of discriminatory, offensive or unprofessional messages or accessing any Internet sites that are discriminatory, offensive or explicit in nature, including, but not limited to, pornography sites, sites that encourage violence, [promote hate] or other forms of improper or illegal activities. Employees and users of the Williamson County's computers and Internet system are encouraged to notify your supervisor should you need to access questionable sites for organizational purposes.

## **Security**

Keeping Williamson County's network secure is a priority. As part of its security, Williamson County Government will audit its system including reviewing emails, email attachments, and websites visited. In addition, Williamson County Government requires that its employees play their part and that every employee adhere to the following:

Use his or her computer and the Williamson County's network for business purposes only;  
Not download software or add attachments onto a Williamson County Government computer or database without the consent of your supervisor;  
Not register their business email address with other organizations unless it furthers a business purpose;  
Not provide email addresses of fellow employees to persons outside the organization unless for a legitimate business purpose;

Not disclose or share usernames or passwords except to authorize Williamson County Government personnel;  
Not open or forward attachments from unknown senders; and  
Not respond to email requests for sensitive information of Williamson County Government, such as credit card numbers, financial information, social security numbers, plans, or client lists without first seeking approval from your supervisor, even if the request appears to come from a known outside source.

### **8.7.2 Cell Phones**

Williamson County Government does not discourage cell phone use. However, situations exist in the workplace that require their prohibition or limitation.

For safety, Williamson County Government prohibits or limits the use of cell phones, including text messaging, during the following work-related activities:

While operating a moving vehicle unless a hands free device is used;  
While operating or being in close proximity of heavy, dangerous, moving machinery; or  
Where use of a cell phone may place yourself or your coworkers at risk of injury.

Except in the cases of emergencies or when prior approval by your supervisor is provided, Williamson County Government prohibits the use of cell phones or text messaging:

During work related meetings;  
During work related conference calls;  
During employer training or demonstrations;  
During times when others are speaking or using the telephone for work-related purposes; and  
While performing any customer service duty.

When using your cell phone, please be courteous and speak quietly in an area away from other coworkers and other persons interacting within the workplace. Mute or lower the volume of your cell phone rings, and do not leave your cell phone unattended unless the ring is mute and the buzzer is deactivated.

### **8.8.1 Equipment and Supplies**

Williamson County Government provides equipment and supplies to assist employees and other workplace participants to perform their job duties. The equipment and supplies to which you are given access are the property of Williamson County Government and may only be used for work related activities, to further the mission of Williamson County Government.

Employees are encouraged to use all equipment safely and in the manner for which the equipment was designed, and only for fulfilling their specific job duties. Similarly, employees are asked to use only those supplies necessary to perform their job.

Williamson County Government prohibits the use of equipment or supplies for personal use unless your supervisor, elected official or appointed official has approved such use.

Moreover, Williamson County Government prohibits the taking of equipment or supplies outside the workplace [unless your supervisor, elected official or appointed official has approved such use.

### **8.9.1 Social Media/Open Forums**

Williamson County Government supports self-expression, including the right to express oneself to others via letters to the editor, Internet blogs, social webpages, posting on open forums, or speaking during public events. However, there are some points that Williamson County Government wants you to consider when writing or expressing yourself publicly:

Unless Williamson County Government, in writing, officially designates you to speak or write for Williamson County Government, you should never state that you write or speak on behalf of the Williamson County Government or that your viewpoints are the same as Williamson County Government, and you should make this clear to those reading or listening to your points of view. You may consider a disclaimer to this effect, but note that it may not excuse improper or illegal conduct;

Do not disclose private or confidential information about Williamson County Government or employees, volunteers, contractors, vendors or any other person that associates with Williamson County Government. You should use common sense and courtesy, and you should follow strictly Williamson County's policy on preserving confidential information; In addition to our rules on confidentiality, Williamson County Government requests that you follow all other applicable guidelines in this employee handbook when commenting in an open forum.

**Certificate of Receipt**

This is to certify that I have received, read, and understand the Williamson County Government Employee Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Hire

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\* \* \* \* \*

**This form is to be signed and returned to the Williamson County Benefits Coordinator within 10 days of the employee's hire date.**