



Office of the Mayor  
City of Columbus  
Ohio

## CENTRAL WORK RULES

The administration of the City of Columbus establishes the following work rules, which apply to all employees of the City of Columbus, to ensure:

- That its employees conduct themselves in a mature, responsible and professional manner during work hours or while on City premises;
- That employees work in an efficient, conscientious and diligent manner;
- That all employees work in a safe environment, without risk to their health or safety, or the health and safety of others;
- That the rights of all employees are protected and honored.

These rules also serve as notice to all employees as to what conduct is and is not acceptable in the workplace. In addition to following these rules, employees will also be required to follow the Rules of the Columbus Civil Service Commission, if relevant to their circumstances, as well as any policies and procedures established in their respective departments or divisions.

Any employee who violates any of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or termination, depending on the seriousness of the rules violation, the employee's disciplinary history and any other relevant factors. Except for serious infractions of the rules, the City will follow a policy of progressive disciplinary action, imposing increasingly severe penalties on those employees who repeatedly violate these rules.

**RULE 1. DISHONESTY. All employees are expected to be honest at all times in performing all aspects of their jobs for the City of Columbus. Employees shall not lie, deceive, steal, cheat or defraud any City employee or member of the public in any manner. The following acts or omissions are specifically prohibited:**

- (A) Making false statements on applications for City employment or related documents, including but not limited to professional credentials or certifications, references, previous work experience and criminal records.
- (B) Falsifying or tampering with personnel, operating or other work records and reports, including the unauthorized use or alteration of time cards or other records kept for pay purposes.

- (C) Working more than the employee's scheduled hours (for overtime-eligible employees) without the express permission of an appropriate supervisor.
- (D) Stealing or misappropriating the property of the City of Columbus, or any employee of the City of Columbus, or any member of the public.
- (E) Using or attempting to use employment with the City or knowledge acquired while working for the City for personal gain or advantage, in a manner which would violate the ethics laws of the State of Ohio pertaining to public employees, or any other violation of said ethics laws.
- (F) Performing work for another employer/organization or work related to a private business conducted by an employee during City working hours.
- (G) Making false or untrue statements regarding work-related matters to management, fellow employees or a member of the public.
- (H) Making illegal copies of copyrighted software or printed materials.
- (I) Engaging in any other behavior not specifically listed herein with the intent to lie, steal, cheat, defraud or otherwise deceive any City employee or a member of the public.

**RULE 2. RUDE, ABUSIVE OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOR. All employees should at all times conduct themselves in a polite and civil manner toward all City employees and any member of the public with whom they may come in contact in the performance of their duties. Employees shall not abuse, verbally or physically, any City employee or a member of the public under any circumstances. Employees threatened with verbal or physical abuse or violence should report it to their supervisors or law enforcement authorities, rather than responding in a similar manner. All acts of abuse and violence are absolutely prohibited, including but not limited to the following:**

- (A) Disrupting the normal work routine by creating unnecessary noise, by starting or participating in arguments or demonstrations, or by otherwise interfering with the work operations or the work performed by co-workers.
- (B) Threatening, intimidating, coercing, abusing or menacing of a City employee, or a member of the public, when such behavior is connected with or arises out of City employment, or any other situation where there is a nexus to the employee's City employment.
- (C) Discriminating, harassing or insulting any City employee or member of the public because of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation.
- (D) Fighting on City premises or assigned job site, whether the fighting occurs during, before or after working hours.
- (E) Striking a City employee or a member of the public.

- (F) Possessing or using any unauthorized dangerous instrument, weapon or explosive (or reasonable facsimile thereof) while in the employ of the City, or on City premises and/or in City vehicles at any time.
- (G) Being rude, abrasive, or otherwise failing to be civil and courteous to any City employee or a member of the public.
- (H) Engaging in any other uncivil, discourteous, abusive or threatening conduct not specifically listed herein.

**RULE 3. SUBSTANCE ABUSE. All employees are expected to report to work unimpaired by drugs or alcohol, as detailed in the policies of the City of Columbus. All employees in City service shall be subject to drug and alcohol testing as set forth in collective bargaining agreements and/or City policies. City employees shall not engage in the following acts or conduct:**

- (A) Having possession, custody, or control of or consuming any alcoholic beverage, any illegal drugs or any drug paraphernalia on City premises, in City vehicles, or during working hours, or any other situation where there is a nexus to the employee's City employment. (The terms 'illegal drugs' and 'drug paraphernalia' shall include those substances and items of which the possession, custody, consumption or control are prohibited by applicable local, state or federal laws.)
- (B) Reporting for work while under the influence of alcohol or any drugs, or reporting for work while suffering from a drug and/or alcohol induced hangover or in any otherwise unsafe condition.
- (C) Failing or refusing to comply with the federal regulations and the City's policy and procedure regarding drug and alcohol testing of all employees holding commercial driver's licenses and using such licenses to perform safety sensitive functions for the City.
- (D) Failing or refusing to comply with drug and alcohol testing mandated by a collective bargaining contract, and/or any City policy or procedure implementing the contract.
- (E) Failing or refusing to comply when ordered to submit to drug and alcohol testing ordered by City management pursuant to the City's reasonable suspicion policy.
- (F) Failing or refusing to disclose use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs to supervisors or managers, if use of such drugs may impair use of faculties or work performance.
- (G) Engaging in any other conduct related to substance abuse related to City employment not specifically listed herein.

**RULE 4. MISUSE, ABUSE OR DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY.** *All employees shall treat the property of the City of Columbus, including buildings, furnishings, vehicles, equipment, tools and any other items, with care and respect. Employees shall not intentionally or negligently abuse, misuse, damage or destroy City property, or the property of co-workers and members of the public. The following acts are specifically prohibited:*

- (A) Using without authorization, sabotaging, abusing or deliberately damaging City property, including but not limited to, motor vehicles, tools, computer hardware, software and data, equipment or other City property, including damage done through carelessness or inattention.
- (B) Abusing, misusing or destroying, whether willfully, recklessly or negligently, any City property including uniforms, tools, equipment or the property of other City employees or members of the public in any manner.
- (C) Misusing or removing any forms, blue prints, employee lists, City records or confidential information of any nature, including computer programs and records, without proper authorization.
- (D) Unauthorized posting, removal or defacing of notices, signs or writing in any form on City bulletin boards, or on city e-mail systems, including use of e-mail to conduct personal business.
- (E) Loading unauthorized software on City computers or connecting unauthorized hardware to City computers or network.
- (F) Abusing, misusing or destroying City property in any other way not specifically described herein.

**RULE 5. ATTENDANCE.** **All employees shall report to work on time, to clock in or sign in if required to do so, and to call off according to contract or City policy if unable to report for work on time. Employees shall monitor their sick leave and vacation leave balances to ensure they have sufficient time to cover their absences. Employees must ask for and receive approval for FMLA leave prior to taking time off, except in emergency situations. The following conduct is specifically prohibited:**

- (A) Failing to call off according to contract and/or policy and failing to appear for work at the scheduled time, whether a regular workday or overtime.
- (B) Having insufficient leave to cover an absence, and not having an acceptable reason for the absence, even if the employee calls off properly.
- (C) Being absent from work because of incarceration after having been convicted of a crime.
- (D) Being absent without leave (AWOL) for five (5) consecutive working days from duty, which will be considered sufficient grounds for termination of City employment.

- (E) Being absent without leave (AWOL) according to contract and/or policy.
- (F) Abusing sick leave, disability leave, injury leave or unpaid leave, including falsification of a leave request or supporting medical documentation.
- (G) Reporting late or tardy for work.
- (H) Leaving assigned work area during working hours without approval.
- (I) Taking time off, having asked for leave but before the leave is approved.
- (J) Violating any departmental or divisional attendance policies.

**RULE 6. INSUBORDINATION. All employees are expected to follow any work direction given by a supervisor, as long as that direction is not immoral, unethical, unlawful or dangerous to the health and safety of City employees or members of the public. It is not necessary for supervisors to state the work direction as an order, or to threaten disciplinary action if the employee fails to comply. Employees shall not disobey or refuse to follow orders, policies and directives from management, and shall be considered insubordinate if they do so. (Employees who feel that the direction or order is inappropriate or incorrect should do as directed and take the matter up with management later; or file a grievance under the provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement.) The following acts or omissions are specifically prohibited:**

- (A) Refusing to obey work directions or orders, policies and procedures, whether oral or written, including flagrant disregard of the directions or orders of any authorized supervisor or designee.
- (B) Failing to obey work directions or orders, policies and procedures, whether oral or written, including flagrant disregard of the directions or orders of any authorized supervisor or designee.
- (C) Refusing to co-operate in an internal investigation, or impeding an internal investigation, that might result in disciplinary action, whether the employee is a witness or the focus of that investigation.
- (D) Failing to co-operate in an internal investigation, or impeding an internal investigation, that might result in disciplinary action, whether the employee is a witness or the focus of that investigation.
- (E) Violating any policies or procedures, whether citywide, departmental or divisional.
- (F) Engaging in any other acts that are insubordinate and that are not specifically listed herein.

**RULE 7. NEGLECT OF DUTY. All employees are expected to perform their work duties during their work hours, to do a competent job in performing those duties and to work except when they are at lunch or on a rest period as authorized by contract or City policy. Employees shall not neglect their duties, that is, fail to perform their duties, or perform them in an unacceptable manner during their work hours, including any overtime hours. The following acts or omissions are specifically prohibited:**

- (A) Performing job assignment carelessly or negligently.
- (B) Handling City information (including data storage devices) or documents, such as mail, checks, personnel or confidential files, carelessly or negligently.
- (C) Failing to meet work standards or comply with performance improvement plans.
- (D) Failing to maintain any licenses or certifications required to perform the duties of a position.
- (E) Stopping work or making preparation to leave work before specified quitting time without authorization.
- (F) Sleeping or wasting time during prescribed working hours.
- (G) Using or having in the workplace personal items, including but not limited to, cameras, radios, television sets, recording devices, typewriters, personal cellular phones, personal pagers and personal laptop computers, or any other item not work oriented on City premises or in City vehicles, except as authorized by supervision.
- (H) Distributing literature, of any description, in working areas during working hours on City premises or in City vehicles without authorization.
- (I) Engaging in any other conduct that interferes with or prevents the prompt and acceptable completion of assigned job duties.

**RULE 8. FAILURE OF GOOD BEHAVIOR. All employees are expected at all times to exercise common sense and conduct themselves in an appropriate professional manner. Employees should always be polite, courteous, considerate of co-workers and members of the public and helpful to all. They should refrain from any conduct which might be offensive to their co-workers or members of the public with whom they come in contact during the performance of their duties. The following acts and omissions are specifically prohibited:**

- (A) Engaging in horseplay while on City premises or during working hours.
- (B) Providing or discussing confidential information with unauthorized individuals.
- (C) Engaging in conduct that gives the appearance of impropriety.

- (D) Any violation of the City Charter, Columbus City Codes, Ohio Revised Code or Ohio Administrative Code that has a nexus with City employment, including engaging in prohibited political activities.
- (E) Having been convicted of a crime, whether misdemeanor or felony, which has a nexus with City employment.
- (F) Failing to maintain a clean personal and professional appearance, including clean personal clothing or city-issued uniform and good personal hygiene, so as not to offend co-workers or members of the public.
- (G) Wearing clothing that is inappropriate for the workplace, e.g., clothing more appropriate for leisure activities than work.
- (H) Failing to wear the designated uniform required in a particular division or work site.
- (I) Smoking in any City buildings or vehicles.
- (J) Behaving in an immoral or indecent manner, including but not limited to, using obscenities or profanity.
- (K) Engaging in sexually suggestive and/or offensive conduct, including sexually harassing a City employee or member of the public.
- (L) Gambling, including dice, cards or number racketeering if it has a nexus to City employment.
- (M) Littering or contributing to poor housekeeping, unsanitary or unsafe conditions on City premises, job site, or in a City vehicle.
- (N) Behaving or acting in any manner that would constitute misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance, not otherwise listed in these rules.

***RULE 9. SAFETY. The City of Columbus wants to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all of its employees. Employees shall follow all safety rules and regulations under OSHA, as well as City policies and directives regarding safety, and shall use all necessary safety equipment and protective gear as directed. Employees are required to do the following:***

- (A) All employees are required to wear proper safety equipment as instructed by management and in accordance with OSHA standards.
  - (1) Proper eye and hearing protection must be worn when operating specified equipment or in designated work areas.
  - (2) Hard hats must be worn when working in construction areas or as directed by management.

- (3) Proper footwear must be worn in order to provide the greatest amount of protection.
  - (4) Any other prescribed personal protective equipment must be worn as required by any department or division.
- (B) All City employees are required to maintain their respective work areas and City vehicles and all City properties in a clean, neat and orderly fashion to prevent fire and accidents.
- (C) All employees are required to use the proper tools to safely perform jobs. All defective and improper tools must be reported to appropriate supervision as soon as possible.
- (D) All employees shall dress in clothing appropriate to their jobs, which includes but is not limited to the following considerations:
- (1) Clothing should provide the employee with maximum protection from chemicals, sun or any other hazards, in accordance with OSHA standards.
  - (2) Hair should be arranged and secured in a restrained fashion when working around moving machinery.
  - (3) Jewelry, neckties, scarves and any other items that might get caught in moving equipment should be removed when operating moving equipment, unless they are necessary to perform the job.
- (E) Employees are required to operate City vehicles in a safe and courteous manner and in accordance with all the motor vehicle laws of the State of Ohio and the City of Columbus.
- (F) Employees may not use City vehicles to transport unauthorized passengers.
- (G) All employees are required to comply with the safety rules and policies of their respective Divisions. The safety rules of the State of Ohio Bureau of Employment Services and federal OSHA general industry and construction standards will prevail.

**RULE 10. ADDITIONAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS AND ADMINISTRATORS.** Supervisors, managers and administrators shall follow all of the above rules. Because those employees who hold positions of responsibility and trust at the levels of supervisor, manager or administrator must be held to a higher standard than the employees they supervise, they must always conduct themselves with diligence and in a manner above reproach. In addition to complying with the previous nine work rules, supervisors, managers and administrators shall not engage in any of the following acts:

- (A) Aiding or cooperating with subordinate employees in the violation of work rules, policies or directives.
- (B) Failing to discipline subordinates or to initiate formal disciplinary action against subordinates for violation of work rules, policies or directives.
- (C) Failing to treat all subordinates in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.
- (D) Failing to perform supervisory, managerial or administrative duties competently.
- (E) Using the position of supervisor, manager or administrator for inappropriate personal gain.
- (F) Sharing confidential information entrusted to the supervisor, manager or administrator.
- (G) Requiring employees to do personal work unrelated to their City jobs for the supervisor, manager or administrator.
- (H) Failing to administer and support the policies, directives or other requirements of the City, or otherwise engaging in conduct which undermines the mission or the reputation of the City.

### **DEFINITIONS FOR THE WORK RULES**

MISFEASANCE – The performance of a lawful action in an illegal or improper manner

MALFEASANCE – Wrongdoing or misconduct by a public official

NONFEASANCE – Failure to do what should be done