



# **Cannon County Tennessee**

## **Employee Handbook**

**January 1, 2022**

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# Core Policies

## 1.0 Welcome

### 1.1 Welcome Policy

Welcome! We trust that your employment with Cannon County will be rewarding and challenging. We take pride in our employees as well as the services we provide to the people of Cannon County.

Cannon County complies with all federal and state employment laws, and this handbook reflects those laws. Cannon County also complies with all applicable local laws, although there may not be an express written policy regarding those laws contained in the handbook.

The employment policies and/or benefits summaries in this handbook are written for all employees.

Please take the time now to read this handbook carefully. Sign the acknowledgment at the end to show that you have read, understood, and agree to the contents of this handbook, which sets out the basic rules and guidelines concerning your employment. This handbook supersedes any previously issued handbooks or policy statements dealing with the subjects discussed herein. Cannon County reserves the right to interpret, modify, or supplement the provisions of this handbook at any time. Neither this handbook nor any other communication by a management representative or other, whether oral or written, is intended in any way to create a contract of employment. Please understand that no employee handbook can address every situation in the workplace.

If you have questions about your employment or any provisions in this handbook, contact the Human Resources representative at [HR@cannoncountyttn.gov](mailto:HR@cannoncountyttn.gov).

We wish you success in your employment here at Cannon County!

All the best,

Greg Mitchell, County Executive Cannon County

### 1.2 At-Will Employment

Your employment with Cannon County is on an "at-will" basis. This means your employment may be terminated at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause. Likewise, we respect your right to leave the county at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause.

Nothing in this handbook or any other county document should be understood as creating a contract, guaranteed or continued employment, a right to termination only "for cause," or any other guarantee of continued benefits or employment. Only the County Executive has the authority to make promises or negotiate with regard to guaranteed or continued employment, and any such promises are only effective if placed in writing and signed by the County Executive.

If a written contract between you and the county is inconsistent with this handbook, the written contract is controlling.

### **1.3 Effective Date**

This handbook is effective as of January 1, 2022, and supersedes all prior personnel policies, verbal communication, and management memorandums which may have been previously issued on subjects herein.

## **2.0 Introductory Language and Policies**

### **2.1 Revisions to Handbook**

This handbook is the county's attempt to keep employees informed of the terms and conditions of employment, including Cannon County policies and procedures. The handbook is not a contract. Cannon County reserves the right to revise, add, or delete from this handbook as it determines to be in the county's best interest, except the policy concerning "at-will" employment. When changes are made to the policies and guidelines contained herein, we will endeavor to communicate them in a timely fashion, typically in a written supplement to the handbook or in other appropriate communication methods.

## **3.0 Hiring and Orientation Policies**

### **3.1 Conflicts of Interest**

Cannon County is concerned with conflicts of interest that create actual or potential job-related concerns, especially in the areas of confidentiality, safety, security, use of county equipment and morale. If there is any actual or potential conflict of interest between you and a competitor, supplier, or contractor to the county, you must disclose it to your supervisor. If an actual or potential conflict of interest is determined to exist, the county will take such steps as it deems necessary to reduce or eliminate this conflict.

### **3.2 Job Descriptions**

Cannon County attempts to maintain a job description for each position. If you do not have a current copy of your job description, you should request one from your supervisor.

Job descriptions prepared by the county serve as an outline only. Due to operational needs, you may be required to perform job duties that are not within your written job description. Furthermore, the county may have to revise, add to, or delete from your job duties per operational needs. On occasion, the county may need to revise job descriptions with or without advance notice to employees.

If you have any questions regarding your job description or the scope of your duties, please speak with your supervisor.

### **3.3 New Hires and Introductory Periods**

The first 90 days of your employment is considered an introductory period. During this period, you will become familiar with Cannon County and your job responsibilities, and we will have the opportunity to monitor the quality and value of your performance and make any necessary adjustments in your job description or responsibilities. Your introductory period with the county can be shortened or lengthened as deemed appropriate by management. Completion of this introductory period does not imply guaranteed or continued employment. Nothing that occurs during or after this period should be construed to change the nature of the "at-will" employment relationship.

### **3.4 Training Program**

In most cases, and for most departments, employee training is done on an individual basis by the department manager or supervisor. Even if you have had previous experience in the specified functions of your job duties, it is necessary for you to learn our specific practices, as well as the responsibilities of the specific position. If you ever feel you require additional training, consult your supervisor.

### **3.5 Employment Authorization Verification**

New hires will be required to complete Section 1 of federal Form I-9 on the first day of paid employment and must present acceptable documents authorized by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services proving identity and employment authorization no later than the third business day following the start of employment with Cannon County. If you are currently employed and have not complied with this requirement or if your status has changed, inform your supervisor.

If you are authorized to work in this country for a limited period of time, you will be required to submit proof of renewed employment eligibility prior to expiration of that period to remain employed by the county.

### **3.6 Disability Accommodation**

Cannon County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Tennessee Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, and all applicable state and local fair employment practices laws and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities, including disabilities related to pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions. Consistent with this commitment, the county will provide reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified individuals where appropriate to allow the individual to perform the essential functions of the job, unless doing so would create an undue hardship on the business.

If you require an accommodation because of your disability, it is your responsibility to notify your supervisor. You may be asked to include relevant information such as:

- A description of the proposed accommodation.
- The reason you need accommodation.
- How the accommodation will help you perform the essential functions of your job.

After receiving your request, the county will engage in an interactive dialogue with you to determine the precise limitations of your disability and explore potential reasonable accommodations that could overcome those limitations. Where appropriate, we may need your permission to obtain additional information from your medical provider. All medical information received by the county in connection with a request for accommodation will be treated as confidential.

Cannon County encourages you to suggest specific reasonable accommodations that you believe would allow you to perform your job. However, the county is not required to make the specific accommodation requested by you and may provide an alternative accommodation, to the extent any reasonable accommodation can be made without imposing an undue hardship on the county.

If leave is provided as a reasonable accommodation, such leave may run concurrently with leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and/or any other leave where permitted by state and federal law.

Cannon County will not discriminate or retaliate against employees for requesting an accommodation.

### **3.7 EEO Statement and Non-Harassment Policy**

#### *Equal Opportunity Statement*

Cannon County is committed to the principles of equal employment. We are committed to complying with all federal, state, and local laws providing equal employment opportunities, and all other employment laws and regulations. It is our intent to maintain a work environment that is free of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation because of age (40 and older), race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation (including transgender status, gender identity or expression), pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), physical or mental disability, genetic information (including testing and characteristics), veteran status, uniformed servicemember status, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local laws. Cannon County is dedicated to the fulfillment of this policy in regard to all aspects of employment, including but not limited to recruiting, hiring, placement, transfer, training, promotion, rates of pay, and other compensation, termination, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

Cannon County will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, or any violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy in a confidential manner. The county will take appropriate corrective action, if and where warranted. Cannon County prohibits retaliation against employees who provide information about, complain about, or assist in the investigation of any complaint of discrimination or violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

We are all responsible for upholding this policy. You may discuss questions regarding equal employment opportunities with your supervisor or any other designated member of management.

#### *Policy Against Workplace Harassment*

Cannon County has a strict policy against all types of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment and other forms of workplace harassment based upon an individual's age (40 and older), race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation (including transgender status, gender identity or expression), pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), physical or mental disability, genetic information (including testing and characteristics), veteran status, uniformed servicemember status, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local laws. All forms of harassment of, or by, employees, contractors, vendors, visitors, customers, and clients are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

#### *Sexual Harassment*

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2) submission to, or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

While it is not possible to identify every act that constitutes or may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of sexual harassment:

- Unwelcome requests for sexual favors;
- Lewd or derogatory comments or jokes;
- Comments regarding sexual behavior or the body of another;
- Sexual innuendo and other vocal activity such as catcalls or whistles;
- Obscene letters, notes, emails, invitations, photographs, cartoons, articles, or other written or pictorial materials of a sexual nature;

- Repeated requests for dates after being informed that interest is unwelcome;
- Retaliating against another for refusing a sexual advance or reporting an incident of possible sexual harassment to the county or any government agency;
- Offering or providing favors or employment benefits such as promotions, favorable evaluations, favorable assigned duties, or shifts, etc., in exchange for sexual favors; and
- Any unwanted physical touching or assaults or blocking or impeding movements.

### Other Harassment

Other workplace harassment is verbal or physical conduct that insults or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of the individual's age (40 and older), race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation (including transgender status, gender identity or expression), pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), physical or mental disability, genetic information (including testing and characteristics), veteran status, uniformed servicemember status, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local laws.

Again, while it is not possible to list all the circumstances that may constitute other forms of workplace harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that may constitute workplace harassment:

- The use of disparaging or abusive words or phrases, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to the above protected categories;
- Written or graphic material that insults, stereotypes, or shows aversion or hostility toward an individual or group because of one of the above protected categories and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, email, voicemail, or elsewhere on our premises, or circulated in the workplace; and
- A display of symbols, slogans, or items that are associated with hate or intolerance toward any select group.

### Reporting Discrimination and Harassment

If you feel that you have witnessed or have been subjected to any form of discrimination or harassment, immediately notify the County Executive at (615) 563-2320 or [greg.mitchell@cannoncountyttn.gov](mailto:greg.mitchell@cannoncountyttn.gov) or any member of management.

Cannon County prohibits retaliation against employees who, based on a reasonable belief, provide information about, complain, or assist in the investigation of any complaint of harassment or discrimination.

We will promptly and thoroughly investigate any claim and take appropriate action where we find a claim has merit. To the extent possible, we will retain the confidentiality of those who report suspected or alleged violations of the harassment policy.

Discipline for violation of this policy may include, but is not limited to, reprimand, suspension, demotion, transfer, and discharge. If the county determines that harassment or discrimination occurred, corrective action will be taken to effectively end the harassment. As necessary, the county may monitor any incident of harassment or discrimination to assure the inappropriate behavior has stopped. In all cases, the county will follow up as necessary to ensure that no individual is retaliated against for making a complaint or cooperating with an investigation.



### 3.8 Healthy Workplace Policy

Cannon County is committed to a workplace free from abusive conduct. We strive to provide high quality products and services in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness, safety, and equality. All employees and contractors have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. All complaints of negative and inappropriate workplace behaviors will be taken seriously and followed through to resolution. Any individual who files a complaint will not suffer negative consequences for reporting others for inappropriate behavior.

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time employees, interns, and all contractors. This policy applies to any sponsored program, event, or activity including, but not limited to, sponsored recreation programs and activities and the performance by officers and employees of their employment-related duties. The policy also applies to electronic communications by employees.

#### Abusive Conduct

**Abusive conduct** includes acts or omissions that would cause a reasonable person, based on the severity, nature, and frequency of the conduct, to believe that an individual was subject to an abusive work environment, which can include but is not limited to:

- Repeated verbal abuse in the workplace, including derogatory remarks, insults, and epithets;
- Verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a threatening, intimidating, or humiliating nature in the workplace; or
- The sabotage or undermining of an individual's work performance in the workplace.

A single act generally will not constitute abusive conduct unless such conduct is determined to be severe and egregious.

Abusive conduct does **not** include:

- Disciplinary procedures in accordance with County policies.
- Routine coaching and counseling, including feedback about and correction of work performance.
- Reasonable work assignments, including shift, post, and overtime assignments.
- Individual differences in styles of personal expression.
- Enthusiastic, loud expression with no intent to harm others.
- Differences of opinion on work-related concerns.
- The non-abusive exercise of managerial prerogative.

#### Responsibilities

Those in positions of authority have a particular responsibility to ensure that healthy and appropriate behaviors are exhibited at all times and that complaints to the contrary are addressed in a timely manner. Managers, supervisors, and others in positions of authority will:

- Provide a working environment as safe as possible by having preventative measures in place and by dealing immediately with threatening or potentially violent situations;
- Provide good examples by treating all with courtesy and respect;
- Ensure that all employees have access to and are aware of the abusive conduct prevention policy and explain the procedures to be followed if a complaint of inappropriate behavior at work is made;
- Be vigilant for signs of inappropriate behaviors at work through observation and information seeking, and take action to resolve the behavior before it escalates;
- Respond promptly, sensitively, and confidentially to all situations where abusive behavior is observed or alleged to have occurred.

You are expected to:

- Treat all employees with dignity and respect.
- Refrain from engaging in threatening, violent, intimidating, or other abusive conduct or behaviors.
- Assume personal responsibility to promote fairness and equity in the workplace and report any incidents of abusive conduct in accordance with this policy.
- Co-operate with preventative measures introduced by your supervisor and recognize that a finding of unacceptable behaviors at work will be dealt with through appropriate disciplinary procedures.

### Complaint Process

#### **Reporting**

If you feel that you have been subjected to abusive conduct or have witnessed such conduct, report the matter verbally or in writing to your supervisor or the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov. Your complaint should include details of each incident of abusive conduct, such as dates, times, locations, and any witnesses.

Those in positions of authority must timely report known incidents involving workplace abuse, intimidation, or violence to the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov. All managers and supervisors are required to take reasonable steps to protect the complainant, including, but not limited to, separation of those involved. The person complained against will be notified that an allegation has been made against him or her and will be informed of the investigative procedure.

#### **Investigation**

Investigations of abusive conduct will be conducted as soon as practicable and in accordance with County policies and practices. The objective of the investigation is to determine whether the behaviors complained of occurred, and therefore will include interviewing the complainant, accused, and any witnesses with direct knowledge of the alleged behaviors. All interviews will be appropriately documented. The investigation will be conducted thoroughly, objectively, with sensitivity, and with due respect for all parties. The investigator will provide a copy of the investigative report to the appointing authority for further action. All affected parties will be informed of the investigation's outcome.

#### **Corrective Action**

If abusive conduct is found, the county will take immediate and appropriate corrective action. Remedies may be determined by weighing the severity and frequency of the incidences of abusive conduct and in accordance with existing disciplinary policies.

Any individual who engages in conduct that violates this policy or who encourages such conduct by others will be subject to corrective action. Such corrective action may include, but is not limited to, participation in counseling, training, and disciplinary action up to and including termination, or changes in job duties or location.

Any supervisor or other person in a position of authority who allows abusive conduct to continue or fails to take appropriate action upon learning of such conduct will be subject to corrective action. Such corrective action may include, but is not limited to, participation in counseling, training, disciplinary action up to and including termination, or changes in job duties or location.

While the county encourages all employees to raise any concern(s) under this policy and procedure, the county recognizes that intentional or malicious false allegations can have a serious effect on innocent people. Individuals falsely accusing others of violations of this policy will be disciplined in accordance with the county disciplinary policy.

Any individual exhibiting continuing emotional or physical effects from a reported incident will be directed toward established assistance programs or other available resources.

When abusive conduct has been confirmed, the county will continue to review the situation and may take additional corrective actions if necessary. Preventative measures may also be taken to reduce the reoccurrence of similar behaviors or actions.

#### Confidentiality

To the extent permitted by law, the county will maintain the confidentiality of each party involved in an abusive conduct investigation, complaint, or charge, provided it does not interfere with the ability to investigate the allegations or to take corrective action. However, state law may prevent the county from maintaining confidentiality of public records. Therefore, the county cannot guarantee confidentiality.

#### Retaliation

Retaliation is any act of reprisal, interference, restraint, penalty, discrimination, intimidation, or harassment against an individual or individuals exercising rights under this policy. Cannon County will not retaliate or otherwise discriminate against employees who exercise their rights under this policy.

### **3.9 Religious Accommodation**

Cannon County is dedicated to treating its employees equally and with respect and recognizes the diversity of their religious beliefs. All employees may request accommodation when their religious beliefs cause a deviation from the county dress code or the individual's schedule, basic job duties, or other aspects of employment. Cannon County will consider the request but reserves the right to offer its own accommodation to the extent permitted by law. Some, but not all, of the factors that will be considered are cost, the effect that accommodation will have on current established policies, and the burden on operations — including other employees — when determining a reasonable accommodation. At no time will the county question the validity of a person's belief.

If you require a religious accommodation, speak with your supervisor or the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov.

### **3.10 Veteran Preference**

Cannon County observes veterans' preference for those who served full-time in the United States Armed Forces. Any person claiming preference under this section shall submit satisfactory proof of service and honorable discharge with the employment application. The preferences established by this section shall be applicable to recruitment, hiring for employment, or advancement in employment classifications managed and maintained by the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov. Candidates who have the minimum qualifications will be invited to an interview.

### **3.11 Political Activities**

Employees may join or affiliate with civic organizations of a partisan or a political nature, may attend political meetings, and may advocate and support the principles or policies of civic or political organizations in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the State of Tennessee and in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America. However, you may not:

- Engage in any political activity while on duty;
- Use official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or a nomination for office;
- Be required as a duty of employment or as a condition of employment, promotion, or tenure of office to contribute funds for political or partisan purposes;
- Coerce or compel contributions for political or partisan purposes from another employee of the county; or
- Use any supplies or equipment of the county for political or partisan purposes.

### **3.12 HIPAA and Protected Health Information**

Cannon County complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), including the Privacy Rule enacted in 2000 and as amended in 2002, which follows guidelines involving the protected health information (PHI) of employees, dependents, and patients.

The HIPAA Privacy Rule establishes national standards to protect individuals' medical records and other personal health information and applies to health plans, health care clearinghouses, and those health care providers that conduct certain health care transactions electronically. The Rule requires appropriate safeguards to protect the privacy of personal health information and sets limits and conditions on the uses and disclosures that may be made of such information without patient authorization.

The Rule also gives patients' rights over their health information, including rights to examine and obtain a copy of their health records, and to request corrections. If you have questions, want additional information, or need to report a problem regarding your protected health information, please contact the Human Resources representative at [HR@cannoncountyttn.gov](mailto:HR@cannoncountyttn.gov).

### **3.13 Pregnant Workers Fairness Act**

Cannon County will provide reasonable accommodation to pregnant employees for known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or other related medical conditions in accordance with the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) and the Tennessee Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (TPWFA). Examples of potential reasonable accommodations include:

- Seating
- Closer parking
- Flexible hours
- Appropriately sized uniforms and safety apparel
- Additional break time to use the bathroom, eat, and rest.
- Leave or time off to recover from childbirth
- Limitations on strenuous activities
- Limitations on strenuous activities or those that involve exposure to compounds not safe for pregnancy
- Provide a private place, other than a bathroom stall, for expressing milk
- Assistance with manual labor and lifting limits
- Modifying equipment
- Adjusting work schedules
- Time for parental visits

If you require accommodation, notify your supervisor. If the need for a particular accommodation is not obvious, you may be asked to include relevant information such as:

- The reason you need accommodation.

- A description of the proposed accommodation.
- How the accommodation will address limitations caused by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

Cannon County will not require you to accept any accommodation without engaging in the interactive process to accurately understand your limitations and explore potential accommodations. The county is not required to make your specific requested accommodation and is not required to provide any accommodation that would constitute an undue hardship on your department or the county. If leave is provided as a reasonable accommodation, it may run concurrently with leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and/or any other leave where permitted by law.

Cannon County will comply with state or local laws that provide additional protections beyond the PWFA, and it will not retaliate against employees who request or receive accommodation under this policy.

## **4.0 Wage and Hour Policies**

### **4.1 Attendance Policy**

If you know ahead of time that you will be absent or late, provide reasonable advance notice to your supervisor. You may be required to provide documentation of any medical or other excuse for being absent or late where permitted by applicable law.

Cannon County reserves the right to apply unused vacation, sick time, or other paid time off to unauthorized absences where permitted by applicable law. Absences resulting from approved leave, vacation, or legal requirements are exceptions to the policy.

If you fail to show up for work or fail to call in with an acceptable reason for the absence for a period of three consecutive days, you will be considered to have abandoned your job and voluntarily resigned from Cannon County.

### **4.2 Direct Deposit**

Cannon County requires all employees to enroll in direct deposit. A direct deposit enrollment form will be provided as part of the new hire process. If you wish to change your direct deposit, contact the Finance Department for an application form. Typically, your bank will begin the direct deposit of your payroll within thirty calendar days after you submit your completed application.

### **4.3 Introduction to Wage and Hour Policies**

At Cannon County, pay depends on a wide range of factors, including individual effort, tenure, and market forces. If you have any questions about your compensation, including matters such as paid time off, overtime, benefits, or paycheck deductions, speak with your supervisor.

### **4.4 Paycheck Deductions**

Cannon County is required by law to make certain deductions from your pay each pay period, including deductions for federal income tax, Social Security and Medicare (FICA) taxes, and any other deductions required under law or by court order for wage garnishments. The amount of your tax deductions will depend on your earnings and the information you list on your federal Form W-4. You

may also authorize voluntary deductions from your paycheck, including contributions for insurance premiums, etcetera. Your deductions will be reflected in your wage statement.

Cannon County will not make deductions to your pay that are prohibited by federal, state, or local law. If you have any questions about deductions from your pay, contact your supervisor. You will be reimbursed in full for any isolated, inadvertent, or improper deductions, as defined by law. If an error is found, you will receive an immediate adjustment, which will be paid no later than your next regular payday.

To update your W-4 or make other tax or withholding changes, contact the Finance Department.

#### **4.5 Recording Time**

Cannon County is required by applicable federal, state, and local laws to keep accurate records of hours worked by certain employees. To ensure that the county has complete and accurate time records and that employees are paid for all hours worked, nonexempt employees are required to record all working time using county approved time sheets. Exempt employees may also be required to track days or time worked. Speak with your supervisor for specific instructions.

You must accurately record all of your time to ensure you are paid for all hours worked and must follow established county procedures for recording your hours worked.

Time sheets are to be turned in to the Finance Department on the Tuesday prior to the Friday payroll. All time sheets must be signed by the employee and their supervisor.

#### **4.6 Working “Off-the-Clock”**

Nonexempt employees may not work without pay or off-the-clock at any time, even if a manager asks the employee to do so. No person is authorized to instruct any county employee to work off-the-clock. Examples of prohibited off-the-clock work include but are not limited to:

- Performing work before an employee has clocked in or after an employee has clocked out
- Employees booting up or powering down computers while the employee is not clocked in
- Performing work during the employee’s meal period and not reporting the missed or interrupted meal period
- Performing work at home and not reporting the time worked
- Sending or responding to work-related e-mails at home
- Pre-shift work where the employee is asked to set up before shift, load or warm up trucks, transfer equipment, or prepare a worksite
- Post-shift work, including clean-up of workspace, equipment, or clothing, finishing tasks that “should have” been completed during the shift, or returning to another site to drop off equipment
- Administrative work, such as completing paperwork, attending meetings, reviewing work documents, or undergoing training. This can also include work emails or calls done on an employee’s own time
- Rework, such as when an employee is asked to redo a project or correct errors without pay

Nonexempt employees who perform work while not clocked in, must keep track of all time worked and immediately report that time to the employee’s supervisor. Cannon County pays employees for all working time, even if the work performed was not initially reported on their timesheets.

#### **4.7 Accommodations for Nursing Mothers**

Cannon County will provide nursing mothers reasonable unpaid break time to express milk for their infant child(ren).

If you are nursing, the county will make reasonable efforts to provide you a private room, other than a restroom, in close proximity to the work area, to express milk. The room will be clearly designated and either have a lock or a sign on the door to indicate when the room is in use.

Expressed milk can be stored in county refrigerators or in a personal cooler. Sufficiently mark or label your milk to avoid confusion for other employees who may share the refrigerator.

The break time must, if possible, run concurrently with any break time already provided. You are encouraged to discuss the length and frequency of these breaks with your supervisor.

#### **4.8 Meal Breaks**

Cannon County strives to provide a safe and healthy work environment and complies with all federal and state regulations regarding meal and rest periods. Check with your supervisor regarding procedures and schedules for meal breaks.

Cannon County requests that employees accurately observe and record meal and rest periods. If you know in advance that you may not be able to take your scheduled break or meal period, let your supervisor know; in addition, notify your supervisor as soon as possible if you were unable to or prohibited from taking a meal or rest period.

#### **4.9 Overtime**

If you are nonexempt, you may qualify for overtime pay. All overtime must be approved in advance, in writing, by your supervisor.

At certain times Cannon County may require you to work overtime. We will attempt to give as much notice as possible in this instance. However, advance notice may not always be possible. Failure to work overtime when requested or working unauthorized overtime may result in discipline, up to and including discharge.

Unless otherwise required or exempted by law, overtime pay of one and one-half times your regular rate of pay is paid for any hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek. Holidays, vacation days, and sick leave days do not count as time worked for computing overtime.

#### **4.10 Pay Period**

At Cannon County, the standard pay period is biweekly for all employees. Pay day is every other Friday. If a pay date falls on a holiday, you will be paid on the preceding workday.

Review your paycheck for accuracy. If you find an issue, report it to your supervisor immediately.

#### **4.11 Compensatory Time**

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, nonexempt Cannon County employees earn compensatory time off instead of payment for time worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week. Compensatory time will be granted at time-and-a-half for all time worked in excess of 40 hours. You

may use accrued compensatory time within a reasonable period after making the request if your absence does not unduly disrupt the operations of the department.

Full time public safety employees, emergency response employees, and seasonal employees may accrue up to 480 hours of compensatory time. All other full-time nonexempt employees may accrue up to 40 hours of compensatory time. If an employee works additional hours after reaching their respective compensation time limits, they will be paid at the appropriate pay rate for the pay period the additional hours are worked.

Nonexempt Cannon County employees will be paid for unused compensatory time upon separation from the county or if promoted to an exempt position.

Exempt Cannon County employees may be rewarded with compensatory time for time worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week. Compensatory time may be granted on a straight time basis. All accrued compensatory time for exempt employees must be used by June 30th of each year. At no time will exempt employees be compensated for unused compensatory time.

## **5.0 Performance, Discipline, Layoff, and Termination**

### **5.1 Criminal Activity/Arrests**

Cannon County will report all criminal activity in accordance with applicable law. Involvement in criminal activity while employed by the county, whether on or off county property, may result in disciplinary action including suspension or termination of employment.

### **5.2 Open Door/Conflict Resolution Policy**

Cannon County strives to provide a comfortable, productive, legal, and ethical work environment. To this end, we want you to bring any problems, concerns, or grievances you have about the workplace to the attention of your supervisor and, if necessary, to the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov. To help manage conflict resolution we have instituted the following problem-solving procedure:

If you believe there is inappropriate conduct or activity on the part of the county, management, its employees, vendors, or any other persons or entities related to the county, bring your concerns to the attention of your supervisor at a time and place that will allow the person to properly listen to your concern. Most problems can be resolved informally through dialogue between you and your immediate supervisor. If you have already brought this matter to the attention of your supervisor before and do not believe you have received a sufficient response, or if you believe that person is the source of the problem, present your concerns to the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov. Describe the problem, those persons involved in the problem, efforts you have made to resolve the problem, and any suggested solution you may have.

### **5.3 Outside Employment**

Outside employment that creates a conflict of interest or that affects the quality or value of your work performance or availability at Cannon County is prohibited. Cannon County recognizes that you may seek additional employment during off hours, but in all cases expects that any outside employment will not affect your attendance, job performance, productivity, work hours, or scheduling, or would otherwise adversely affect your ability to effectively perform your duties or in any way create a conflict of interest. Any outside employment that will conflict with your duties and obligations to the county should be reported to your supervisor. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination.



## **5.4 Resignation Policy**

Cannon County hopes that your employment with the county will be a mutually rewarding experience; however, the county acknowledges that varying circumstances can cause you to resign from employment. Cannon County intends to manage any resignation in a professional manner with minimal disruption to the workplace.

### Notice

Cannon County requests that you provide a minimum of two weeks' notice of your resignation. If you are a supervisor, you are requested to provide a minimum of four weeks' notice. Provide a written resignation letter to your supervisor.

Cannon County reserves the right to provide you with pay in lieu of notice in situations where job or business needs warrant.

### Final Pay

Cannon County will pay separated employees in accordance with applicable laws and other sections of this handbook. Final timesheets must be submitted to the Finance Department as soon as practical after your final workday shift.

Notify the county if your address changes during the calendar year in which resignation occurs to ensure tax information is sent to the correct address.

### Return of Property

Return all county property at the time of separation, including, but not limited to, uniforms, cell phones, keys, tool computers and tablets, and identification cards. You must provide all passwords and PIN numbers to any county property that is password protected. Failure to return county property items may result in deductions from your final paycheck where state law allows or may result in a criminal complaint.

## **5.5 Standards of Conduct**

Cannon County wishes to create a work environment that promotes job satisfaction, respect, responsibility, integrity, and value for all our employees, citizens, and other stakeholders. We all share the responsibility of improving the quality of our work environment. By deciding to work here, you agree to follow our rules.

While it is impossible to list everything that could be considered misconduct in the workplace, what is outlined here is a list of common-sense infractions that could result in discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment. This policy is not intended to limit our right to discipline or discharge employees for any reason permitted by law.

Examples of inappropriate conduct include:

- Violation of the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook.
- Possessing, using, distributing, selling, or negotiating the sale of illegal drugs or other controlled substances.
- Being under the influence of alcohol during working hours on county property (including in county vehicles), or on county business.
- Inaccurate reporting of the hours worked by you or any other employees.
- Providing knowingly inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading information when speaking on behalf of the county or in the preparation of any employment-related documents including,

but not limited to, job applications, personnel files, employment review documents, internal communications, or expense records.

- Taking or destroying county property.
- Possession of potentially hazardous or dangerous property (where not permitted) such as firearms, weapons, chemicals, etc., without prior authorization.
- Fighting with, or harassment of (as defined in our EEO policy), any fellow employee, vendor, or customer.
- Disclosure of county confidential or protected information.
- Refusal or failure to follow directions or to perform a requested or required job task.
- Refusal or failure to follow safety rules and procedures.
- Excessive tardiness or absences.
- Smoking in non-designated areas.
- Working unauthorized overtime.
- Solicitation of fellow employees on county premises during working hours.
- Failure to dress according to county policy.
- Use of obscene or harassing (as defined by our EEO policy) language in the workplace.
- Engaging in outside employment that interferes with your ability to perform your job with the county.
- Gambling on county premises.
- Lending keys or keycards of county property to unauthorized persons.

Nothing in this policy is intended to modify the “at-will” employment status.

## **5.6 Disciplinary Process**

You are expected to be on the job, ready to work, when scheduled. Inability to report to work as scheduled may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for violation of an attendance policy or job abandonment.

Violation of Cannon County policies or procedures may result in disciplinary action including demotion, transfer, leave without pay, or termination of employment. Cannon County encourages a system of progressive discipline depending on the type of prohibited conduct. However, the county is not required to engage in progressive discipline and may discipline or terminate employees who violate the rules of conduct, or where the quality or value of their work fails to meet expectations at any time. Again, any attempt at progressive discipline does not imply that your employment is anything other than on an "at-will" basis.

In appropriate circumstances, management will first provide you with a verbal warning, then with one or more written warnings, and if the conduct is not sufficiently altered, eventual demotion, transfer, forced leave, or termination of employment. Your supervisor will make every effort possible to allow you to respond to any disciplinary action taken. Understand that while the county is concerned with consistent enforcement of our policies, we are not obligated to follow any disciplinary or grievance procedure and that depending on the circumstances, you may be disciplined or terminated without any prior warning or procedure.

## **6.0 General Policies**

### **6.1 Computer Security and Copying of Software**

Software programs purchased and provided by Cannon County are to be used only for creating, researching, and processing materials for county use. By using county hardware, software, and networking systems you assume personal responsibility for their use and agree to comply with this

policy and other applicable county policies, as well as city, state, and federal laws and regulations.

All software acquired for or on behalf of the county or developed on behalf of the county, is and will be deemed county property. It is the policy of the county to respect all computer software rights and to adhere to the terms of all software licenses to which the county is a party.

You may not illegally duplicate any licensed software or related documentation. Unauthorized duplication of software may subject you and/or the county to both civil and criminal penalties under the United States Copyright Act. To purchase software, obtain your manager's approval.

You may not duplicate, copy, or give software to any outsiders including contractors, citizens, or others. You may use software on local area networks or on multiple machines only in accordance with applicable license agreements entered into by the county.

## **6.2 Employer-Provided Cell Phone/Mobile Device Policy**

Cannon County may issue certain employees a county cell phone/mobile device for work-related communications and/or operations. If you drive a vehicle during your employment, you may not use any cell phone/mobile device or other communication device while driving unless the device is equipped or configured with a "hands-free" listening/speaking option, and you in fact utilize the hands-free device.

Cannon County owns and remains entitled to all cell phone/mobile devices issued to employees, including all passwords controlling access to them. You may not change those passwords except with permission. At the time of employment termination, all such equipment and passwords must be returned to the county in operable condition.

Violation of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

## **6.3 Non-Solicitation/Non-Distribution Policy**

To avoid disruption of business operations or disturbance of employees, visitors, and others, Cannon County does not allow solicitation by employees during work hours. For purposes of this policy, "solicitation" includes, but is not limited to, selling items or services, requesting contributions, and soliciting or seeking to obtain membership in or support for any organization. Solicitation performed through verbal, written, or electronic means is covered by the Non-solicitation/Non-distribution Policy.

You are prohibited from soliciting other employees during your assigned working time. For this purpose, working time means time during which either you or the employees who are the object of the solicitation are expected to be actively engaged with assigned work. You may conduct solicitations during your lunch period, coffee breaks, or other authorized nonworking time, so long as you do so when the other employees are also on nonworking time.

To avoid inappropriate litter, clutter, and safety risks, you may not distribute literature or other items that are not work related in working areas at any time. Working areas do not include break/rest areas, lunchrooms, or parking lots. Electronic distribution of materials is prohibited during work time. Literature that violates the county's equal employment opportunity (EEO) and non-harassment policies (including threats of violence), or is knowingly and recklessly false, is never permitted. Non-employees are not permitted to distribute materials on county property at any time.

This policy is not intended to restrict the statutory rights of employees.

Violations of this policy should be reported to your supervisor.

#### **6.4 Off-Duty Use of Employer Property or Premises**

You may not use Cannon County property for personal use.

#### **6.5 Personal Appearance**

Your personal appearance reflects on the reputation, integrity, and public image of Cannon County. All employees are required to report to work neatly groomed and dressed in uniform (if one is required by your job description). You may not display any messages of a political, obscene, or profane on your person or your personal belongings while you are working. You are expected to maintain personal hygiene habits that are generally accepted in the community, including clean clothing, good grooming and personal hygiene, and appropriate attire for the workplace and the work being performed. This may include wearing uniforms or protective safety clothing and equipment, depending upon the job. Use common sense and good judgment in determining what to wear to work.

Fragrant products, including but not limited to perfumes, colognes, and scented body lotions or hair products, should be used in moderation out of concern for others with sensitivities or allergies.

Cannon County, in accordance with applicable law, will reasonably accommodate employees with disabilities or religious beliefs that make it difficult for them to comply fully with the personal appearance policy unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the county. Contact your supervisor to request a reasonable accommodation.

Failure to comply with the personal appearance standards may result in being sent home to groom or change clothes. Frequent violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

#### **6.6 Personal Cell Phone/Mobile Device Use**

While Cannon County permits employees to bring personal cell phones and other mobile devices (i.e., smart phones, tablets, laptops) into the workplace, you must not allow the use of such devices to interfere with your job duties or impact workplace safety and health.

Use of personal cell phones and mobile devices at work can be distracting and disruptive and cause a loss of productivity. Thus, you should primarily use such personal devices during nonworking time, such as breaks and meal periods. During this time, use devices in a manner that is courteous to those around you. Outside of nonworking time, use of such devices should be minimal and limited to emergency use only. If you have a device that has a camera and/or audio/video recording capability, you are restricted from using those functions on county property unless authorized in advance by management.

You are expected to comply with county policies regarding the protection of confidential and proprietary information when using personal devices.

While operating a vehicle on work time, employees must comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding mobile device usage.

## **6.7 Personal Data Changes**

It is your obligation to provide Cannon County with your current contact information, including current mailing address and telephone number. Inform the county of any changes to your marital or tax withholding status. Failure to do so may result in loss of benefits or delayed receipt of W-2 and other mailings. To update this information, contact Payroll.

## **6.8 Security**

All employees are responsible for helping to make Cannon County a secure work environment. Upon leaving work, lock all desks, lockers, and doors protecting valuable or sensitive material in your work area and report any lost or stolen keys, passes, or similar devices to your supervisor immediately. Refrain from discussing specifics regarding county security systems, alarms, passwords, etc. with those outside of the county.

Immediately advise your supervisor of any known or potential security risks and/or suspicious conduct of employees, or guests of the county. Safety and security are the responsibility of all employees, and we rely on you to help us keep the county offices and property secure.

## **6.9 Social Media Policy**

Employees are subject to the current Social Media Policy as published and amended by the county. It is the employee's responsibility to review the policy and abide by its terms.

## **6.10 Use of County Technology**

Employees are subject to the current Information Technology Policy as published and amended by the county. It is the employee's responsibility to review the policy and abide by its terms.

If you violate this policy, you will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **6.11 Third Party Disclosures**

From time to time, Cannon County may become involved in news stories or potential or actual legal proceedings of various kinds. When that happens, lawyers, former employees, newspapers, law enforcement agencies, and other outside persons may contact our employees to obtain information about the incident or the actual or potential lawsuit.

If you receive such a contact, you should not speak on behalf of the county and should refer any call requesting the position of the county to the County Executive.

## **6.12 Use of County Vehicles**

County vehicles are to be used for Cannon County business only. Unless the use of the vehicle has been approved for personal use, personal or outside business use is strictly prohibited.

If you drive a county vehicle, all infractions or violations while driving the vehicle and all restrictions, suspensions, or revocations against your driver's license must be immediately reported to your supervisor.

When a county vehicle cannot be operated, is unsafe for use, or has been damaged, notify your

supervisor immediately.

As the driver of a county vehicle, you are responsible for the vehicle while in your charge and must not permit unauthorized persons to drive it. You are also responsible for the daily housekeeping of the vehicle; it is to remain clean and uncluttered.

You may not operate a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or a chemical substance or other substance that can impair judgment. You may not operate a motor vehicle while texting, emailing, or otherwise using a cell phone or other handheld device without utilizing a hands-free device.

The department head for each department shall conduct an annual review of the driving records for the employees in their respective department who are authorized to drive county vehicles. The results of these reports must be submitted to the finance office no later than June 30 of each year.

Multiple moving violations that appear on the annual state department of motor vehicle check will result in suspension of rights to drive a county vehicle or drive a personal vehicle on county business. Suspension of rights will continue until one year has passed with no infractions. If there are persistent and ongoing problems with driving infractions, and driving a vehicle is a part of successful execution of job responsibilities, you may be terminated.

### **6.13 Access to Personnel and Medical Records Files**

Cannon County maintains separate medical records files and personnel files for all employees if required. Files containing medical records (if any) are stored separate and apart from any business-related records in a safe, locked, inaccessible location. The medical file is the repository for sensitive and confidential information related to an individual's health, health benefits, health-related leave and/or accommodations, and benefits selections and coverage. Medical records are kept confidential in compliance with applicable laws and access is on a "need-to-know" basis only.

Supervisors and others in management may have access to your personnel file for possible employment-related decisions. If you wish to review your personnel or medical records file, you must give the county reasonable notice. Inspection must occur in the presence of a county representative.

All requests by an outside party for information contained in your personnel file will be directed to the Human Resources representative at [HR@cannoncountyttn.gov](mailto:HR@cannoncountyttn.gov), which is the only department authorized to give out such information. Cannon County will only provide information to third parties from your personnel or medical records file if you provide written consent or by a court order.

### **6.14 Travel Expense Policy**

#### Overview

It is the policy of Cannon County to reimburse staff for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred during approved work-related travel.

Employees seeking reimbursement should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Reimbursement is allowed only when reimbursement has not been, and will not be, received from other sources. If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this travel policy, then the most conservative course of action should be taken.

Business travel policies are aligned with county reimbursement rules. All business-related travel paid with county funds must comply with county expenditure policies.

### Authorization and Responsibility

All travel must be authorized. Employees should verify that planned travel is eligible for reimbursement before making travel arrangements. Within 30 days of completion of a trip, the employee must submit a travel reimbursement form and supporting documentation to obtain reimbursement of expenses.

An individual may not approve his or her own travel or reimbursement. The travel reimbursement form must be signed by the employee's supervisor.

Designated approval authorities are required to review expenditures and withhold reimbursement if there is reason to believe that the expenditures are inappropriate or extravagant.

### Personal Funds

Employees should review reimbursement guidelines before spending personal funds for business travel to determine if such expenses are reimbursable. The county reserves the right to deny reimbursement of travel-related expenses for failure to comply with policies and procedures.

Employees who use personal funds to facilitate travel arrangements will not be reimbursed until after the trip occurs and proper documentation is submitted.

### Travel Expenses/Procedures

**Airfare.** Employees are expected to obtain the lowest available airfare that reasonably meets business travel needs. Airfare may be prepaid by the county.

Employees are encouraged to book flights at least 30 days in advance to avoid premium airfare pricing.

Coach class or economy tickets must be purchased for all flights.

**Hotel.** Employees must obtain the Tennessee state rate for hotel stays. If the employee stays at a hotel that does not recognize the approved state rate, the employee will personally bear the cost difference between the state rate and actual expense incurred.

### Reimbursements

Requests for reimbursements of travel-related expenses are submitted on a Travel Reimbursement form. This form must be accompanied by supporting documentation. If the requested reimbursement exceeds 20 percent of the total pre-trip estimate, the Travel Reimbursement form must be signed by the Finance Director.

**Automobile (personally owned).** A valid driver's license issued within the United States and personal automobile insurance are required for expenses to be reimbursed. Drivers should be aware of the extent of coverage (if any) provided by the employee's automobile insurance county for travel that is business or not personal in nature.

Reimbursement for use of a personal automobile is based on the Tennessee State Travel Policy mileage rate.

**Meals (per diem).** Per diem allowances are allowed for all overnight travel that is forty-five miles or more from the employee's home or primary worksite.

County per diem rates are based on the travel rates at [www.tennessee.gov/finance](http://www.tennessee.gov/finance) (search for “State Travel Regulations”). Incidental expenses, unless specifically cited in this policy, will not be reimbursed.

Per diem allowances are limited to 75% of the daily rate on travel days.

Receipts are not required for per diem allowances. Per diem allowances are reimbursed after the trip is completed.

**Business meals.** Employees are required to submit original itemized receipts when requesting reimbursement for business meals. Receipts must state the names of all people present at the meal, their position, and reason for the business meal.

**Miscellaneous transportation.** Original receipts are required for taxi, bus, subway, metro, ferry, and other modes of transportation if costs are \$25 or more for each occurrence.

#### Non-Reimbursable Travel Expenses

The following items that may be associated with business travel will not be reimbursed by the county:

- Childcare, babysitting, house-sitting, or pet-sitting/kennel charges.
- Commuting between home and the primary work location.
- Costs incurred by employee's failure to cancel travel or hotel reservations in a timely fashion.
- Haircuts and personal grooming.
- Laundry and dry cleaning.
- Personal entertainment expenses, including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theater movies, social activities, and related incidental costs.
- Travel accident insurance premiums or purchase of additional travel insurance.
- Other expenses not directly related to the business travel.

#### Travel for Non-Employees

Additional costs for travel, lodging, meal or other travel expenses for spouses or other family members will not be reimbursed unless the individual has a bona fide county purpose for engaging in the travel or attending the event. Such travel is generally limited to senior management and should occur infrequently.

#### Tennessee State Travel Policy

For additional information and rates, please see

[https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/finance/documents/fa\\_policies/policy8.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/finance/documents/fa_policies/policy8.pdf).

### **6.15 Nepotism**

Employees hired after the implementation date of this handbook are not permitted to directly supervise a relative. Direct or immediate supervision includes, but is not limited to, any participation in the hiring decision, promotional decision, work assignment decision, shift assignment decision, disciplinary decisions, or the evaluation process of another employee.

Violations occurring as a result of marriage, living arrangement, promotion, or reorganization shall be resolved by transfer to another department or resignation/termination to eliminate the violation. For the purpose of this policy, “relative” means parent, stepparent, foster parent, parent-in-law, child, spouse, brother, brother-in-law, foster brother, stepbrother, sister, sister-in-law, foster sister, stepsister, grandparent, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandchild, or another person who resides in the same household. A court-appointed legal guardian or an individual who has functioned as a parent substitute is also included within this definition.



## 6.16 Gifts

Employees may not solicit or accept, either directly or indirectly, for yourself or for any member of your household, any gift, gratuity, service, favor, entertainment, lodging, transportation, loan, loan guarantee or anything of monetary value from any person who:

- Has, or is seeking to obtain, contractual or other business or financial relations with the department or agency of Cannon County by which you are employed;
- Conducts operations or activities that are regulated by the department of Cannon County by which you are employed; or
- Has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance or your official duties.

### Exceptions

The prohibitions on accepting gifts, entertainment, and favors do not apply to:

- **Meals and entertainment:** Food, beverage and entertainment provided as part of a meal or other event if the value of such items does not exceed \$50 per occasion, with the limit of two meals per day.
- **Family members or friends of long standing:** There is no prohibition if the circumstances make it clear that it is the relationship, rather than the business or the persons concerned, which is the motivating factor and where the value of the gift, entertainment or favor is appropriate to the circumstance and consistent with the long-standing relationship. If such a gift, entertainment, or favor exceeds \$100 in value, the employee must disclose the nature and value of the gift, entertainment, or favor in writing to the County Executive.
- **Ordinary loans:** There is no prohibition if the loan is from an established financial institution made in the course of business on usual and customary terms. However, there can be no guarantees or collateral provided by any person described in the first paragraph of this section on Gifts.
- **Unsolicited advertising material:** Employees may keep and use gift items with advertising (calendars, pens, key chains, etc.) as long as the employee did not request the items and they are of nominal value.

## 6.17 Inclement Weather

### Inclement Weather without Official Closing

Inclement weather usually does not warrant closing of county offices. Absence due to inclement weather requires employees to make personal judgments pertaining to their safety in traveling to and from work.

### Official Closings Due to Inclement Weather

The County Executive/Office Holders/Department Heads will determine if Cannon County offices will be closed on normal workdays during inclement weather.

### Other considerations:

- If the employee is not required to work during an inclement weather closing, they will receive administrative pay for regularly scheduled working hours during the period of closing.
- If the employee is not scheduled to work during an inclement weather closing, they will not be paid for the closing.
- If the employee is sick or on any other leave with pay during the declared times of closing, they will receive administrative leave with pay and will not have to charge that time to leave.

## 7.0 Benefits

### 7.1 Bereavement Leave

Cannon County recognizes the importance of taking leave when there is a death in the family. Where bereavement leave is not required by law, the county will provide bereavement leave as follows:

Relationship	Time Off
Spouse/registered domestic partner or child/child of domestic partner (including stepchildren)	4 weeks with 1 week paid
Parent or sibling (including in-law, step, or half); daughter-in-law or son-in-law	3 days
Grandparent or grandchild (including in-law, step, or great)	3 days
Aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, first cousin (including in-law, step, or great)	1 day

Note: All relationships listed above include registered domestic partners.

You may use accrued but unused vacation or compensatory leave if additional time is needed and is approved by your supervisor. You must provide notice of your need for bereavement leave as far in advance as possible. Cannon County may require documentation supporting your need for bereavement leave. All time off must be taken consecutively and coincide with the death and/or funeral or other remembrance event.

Paid bereavement leave only applies to regularly scheduled workdays.

### 7.2 Exempt Personnel

If you are classified as exempt at the time of your hiring, you are not eligible for overtime pay as otherwise required by federal, state, or local laws. If you have a question regarding whether you are exempt or nonexempt, contact your supervisor for clarification.

Exempt Definition: An individual who is exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) because he or she is classified as an executive, professional, administrative, or outside sales employee, and meets the specific criteria for the exemption. Certain computer professionals may also be exempt. With some limited exceptions, exempt employees must be paid on a salary basis.

For general guidance, an individual who is exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) because they are classified as an executive, professional, administrative, or outside sales employee, and meets the specific criteria for the exemption. Certain computer professionals may also be exempt. With some limited exceptions, exempt employees must be paid on a salary basis.

### **7.3 Nonexempt Personnel**

If you are classified as nonexempt at the time of your hiring, you will be eligible for minimum wage and overtime pay in accordance with federal and state law.

**Nonexempt Definition:** An individual who is not exempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA and is therefore entitled to overtime pay for all hours worked beyond forty in a workweek (as well as any state overtime provisions). Nonexempt employees may be paid on a salary, hourly or other basis.

For general guidance, most employees who do not fall into one of the specific provisions listed above for exempt classification are classified as nonexempt. An individual who is not exempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA is entitled to overtime pay for all hours worked beyond forty in a workweek. If you have a question regarding whether you are exempt or nonexempt, contact your supervisor for clarification.

### **7.4 Regular Full-Time Personnel**

Regular full-time employees are those who have completed their introductory period and are regularly scheduled to work 30 hours or more per week. Unless stated otherwise or specifically permitted by law, all the benefits provided to employees at Cannon County are for regular full-time employees only. This includes vacation, holiday pay, health insurance, and other benefits coverage.

### **7.5 Regular Part-Time Personnel**

All employees who work fewer than 30 hours per week are considered part time. Part-time employees are not eligible for Cannon County benefits unless specified otherwise in this handbook, in the benefit plan summaries, or specifically permitted by law.

### **7.6 Health Insurance Policy**

Cannon County offers group health insurance benefits to all eligible full-time employees who have completed 30 days of employment. Health plan benefits are described in detail in the Summary Plan Description (SPD), which may be obtained from the Finance Department. Upon termination of employment, health insurance benefits terminate at the end of the calendar month.

Benefits may be canceled or changed at the discretion of county, unless otherwise prohibited by law.

Cannon County employees must complete initial enrollment within 30 days of employment, through annual open enrollment, or in when a qualifying life event occurs. If you or a dependent become ineligible for benefits due to a change in work hours or through a life event, or you leave employment with Cannon County, you may have the right to continue your health benefits under federal or state law. In such an event, we will provide you with information about your rights to continue your benefits coverage.

### **7.7 Vision Care and Dental Insurance**

All regular full-time employees who have completed 30 days of employment at Cannon County are eligible for the county vision care plan and dental care plan. All plan benefits are described in detail in the Summary Plan Description (SPD).

## **7.8 Pension Plan**

All regular full-time employees must participate in the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) as a condition of employment. All employees are enrolled in the TCRS as of their hire date. Part-time employees are eligible to participate in the TCRS at their discretion. Membership forms are included in your new employee packet.

Questions regarding the pension plan should be addressed to TCRS at (800) 770-8277 or [treasury.tn.gov](http://treasury.tn.gov).

## **7.9 Holidays**

Cannon County offers the following paid holidays to full-time employees:

### January

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King Day

### February

President's Day

### March/April

Good Friday

### May

Memorial Day

### June

Juneteenth

### July

Independence Day

### September

Labor Day

### October

Columbus Day

### November

Veteran's Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Day after Thanksgiving

### December

Christmas (24, 25, and 26)

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed the preceding Friday. Holidays falling on a Sunday will be observed the following Monday.

If a holiday falls on your regular day off, ask your supervisor how it affects you.

You will be compensated for holidays in accordance with federal and state law.

Veterans

Cannon County will allow employees who are veterans to take Veterans Day (November 11) as an unpaid holiday, provided their absence, either alone or in combination with other veteran employee absences, on that day does not impact public health or safety, or cause significant economic or operational disruption.

Veteran means a former member of the U.S. Armed Forces, or a former or current member of a reserve or Tennessee National Guard unit who was called into active military service of the United States.

To be eligible for this holiday:

You must provide Cannon County with one month’s written notice of your intent to take the Veterans Day holiday. Cannon County will not retaliate against an employee who requests or takes leave in accordance with this policy.

**7.10 Time Off (Vacation)**

Beginning on July 1, 2022, regular full-time employees accrue vacation leave according to the following schedule:

- Employees with zero to five years tenure: **10 days per year**
- Employees with six to 10 years tenure: **15 Days per year**
- Employees with 11 years tenure or more: **20 Days per year**

Full-time employees are those who work 30 hours or more per week on average. Temporary employees and employees who work less than 30 hours per week on average do not earn paid vacation.

Employees are not eligible to take vacation during the first 90 days of employment. Employees must accrue vacation before requesting time off. Employees will only be allowed to carry over 80 hours of vacation at the end of the fiscal year.

Vacation must be taken in a minimum of one-hour increments. The Finance Department maintains the employee’s total accrued vacation and available balance.

Vacation leave may be used only at times approved in advance by the supervisor. Vacation requests will be honored to the fullest extent possible. If two or more employees in the same work area request vacation time for the same period of time, the supervisor will determine if this situation creates a hardship upon the department.

Upon the termination of employment, employees will receive payment for the unused portion of accrued vacation time for the year. Employees that have used more than the amount of vacation accrued may have their final pay reduced by the amount of vacation taken but not accrued. Upon the termination of employment, the employee will receive payment for any accrued but unused vacation time. This payment will be made in the final pay for the employee.

## **7.11 Sick Pay**

Cannon County allows its regular full-time employees who have completed their introductory period to utilize sick days. All eligible employees will accrue four (4) hours of sick leave for every calendar month worked.

Notify your supervisor as far in advance as possible if you are going to take sick time off. There may be occasions, such as sudden illness, when you cannot notify your supervisor in advance. In those situations, provide notification of your circumstances as soon as possible. For purposes of this provision, a requirement for quarantine shall be eligible for sick pay. You may also be requested to provide a certificate of illness or notice of quarantine to your supervisor.

You may use sick leave benefits for dental or doctor visits or to care for immediate family members who are sick. There may also be state mandated use of sick time. Unused sick days may not be converted to a cash payment. You will be required to use available sick leave during Family Medical Leave Act leave, disability leave, employee injuries requiring time off from work that are not otherwise paid, or other any leave.

Sick leave may be used for calculation of retirement eligibility. You will not be paid for earned but unused sick leave upon separation of employment.

## **7.12 Personal Leave of Absence**

Cannon County recognizes that you may need time off from work in extraordinary circumstances that other leave policies may not address. In such cases, you may request a personal leave of absence.

### Eligibility

All full-time employees employed for at least 12 months are eligible to apply for an unpaid personal leave of absence. Requests must be submitted to your supervisor as soon as practical.

### Requesting Leave

Requests for unpaid personal leave must be submitted to your supervisor in writing at least fourteen in advance where practical. In emergency situations, written notice must be provided as soon as possible. The request should include the reason for the leave as well as the dates you expect to begin and end the leave.

You will be required to use all available paid leave balances prior to taking an unpaid personal leave of absence.

No leave of any type will accrue during an unpaid personal leave of absence. Holidays that occur during an unpaid personal leave of absence will not be paid.

If you are granted a personal leave of absence, reinstatement to your position or any position is not guaranteed.

### Extension of Leave

You are required to return from unpaid personal leave on the originally scheduled return date. If you are unable to return, you must request an extension of the leave in writing at least fourteen in advance of the return date. Leave extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If the county denies the extension request, you must return to work on the originally scheduled return date or be considered to have voluntarily resigned from your employment.

### Return to Work

In advance of your scheduled return date, your supervisor will arrange for you to resume your previous position, if available. However, the county's need to fill a position may override the ability to hold a position open until your return. Therefore, we cannot assure you of our ability to reinstate you to any position after your leave. Cannon County retains the discretion to determine the similarity of any vacant positions and your qualifications. If we are unable to reinstate you or you refuse the offer of reinstatement to a different position, your leave status will be changed to a voluntary termination.

### Failure to Return from Leave

If you fail to return to work after an unpaid leave of absence, you will be considered to have resigned your employment.

### Alternative Employment

While on an unpaid leave of absence, you may not work or be gainfully employed either for yourself or others unless express, written permission to perform such outside work has been granted by the county. If you are on a leave of absence and are found to be working elsewhere without permission, you will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **7.13 Temporary Personnel**

Temporary employees are hired for a specific period or specific work project, not to exceed three (3) months in duration. Cannon County reserves the right to extend the duration of temporary employment where necessary. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits unless specified otherwise in this handbook or in the benefit plan summaries, or specifically permitted by law.

## **7.14 Workers' Compensation Insurance Policy**

Workers' compensation is a no-fault system designed to provide benefits to all employees for work-related injuries. Workers' compensation insurance coverage is paid for by employers and governed by state law. The workers' compensation system provides for coverage of medical treatment and expenses, occupational disability leave, and rehabilitation services, as well as payment for lost wages due to work related injuries. If you are injured on the job while working at Cannon County, no matter how slightly, you are to report the incident immediately to your supervisor. Consistent with applicable state law, failure to report an injury within a reasonable period of time could jeopardize your claim for benefits.

To receive workers' compensation benefits, notify your supervisor immediately of your claim. If your injury is the result of an on-the-job accident, you must fill out an accident report. You will be required to submit a medical release before you can return to work.

## **7.15 COBRA**

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) provides the opportunity for eligible Cannon County employees and their beneficiaries to continue health insurance coverage under the county health plan when a "qualifying event" could result in the loss of eligibility. Qualifying events include resignation, termination of employment, death of an employee, reduction in hours, a leave of absence, divorce or legal separation, entitlement to Medicare, or where a dependent child no longer meets eligibility requirements. All COBRA premiums must be paid by employees directly to the insurance carrier.

Contact the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov to learn more about your COBRA rights.

## 7.16 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) Policy

In accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), Cannon County provides up to 12 or 26 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period to covered employees in certain circumstances.

### Eligibility

To qualify for FMLA leave, you must:

1. Have worked for the county for at least 12 months, although it need not be consecutive;
2. Worked at least 1,250 hours in the last 12 months; and
3. Be employed at a worksite that has fifty or more employees within seventy-five miles.

### Leave Entitlement

You may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave in a 12-month period for any of the following reasons:

- The birth of a child and in order to care for that child (leave must be completed within one year of the child's birth);
- The placement of a child with you for adoption or foster care and in order to care for the newly placed child (leave must be completed within one year of the child's placement);
- To care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition;
- To care for your own serious health condition, which makes you unable to perform any of the essential functions of your position; or
- A qualifying exigency of a spouse, child, or parent who is a military member on covered active duty or called to covered active-duty status (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty).

The 12-month period is a rolling 12-month period.

You may take up to 26 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave in a single 12-month period, beginning on the first day that you take FMLA leave to care for a spouse, child, or next of kin who is a covered service member and who has a serious injury or illness related to active-duty service.

As used in the policy:

- **Spouse** means a husband or wife as recognized under state law for the purposes of marriage in the state or other territory or country where the marriage took place.
- **Child** means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis, who is either under age 18 or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time FMLA leave is to commence. A child for the purposes of military exigency or military care leave can be of any age.
- **Parent** means a biological, adoptive, step, or foster parent or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to you when you were a child.
- **Next of kin** for the purposes of military care leave is a blood relative other than a spouse, parent, or child in the following order: siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, and first cousins. If a military service member designates in writing another blood relative as his or her caregiver, that individual will be the only next of kin. In appropriate circumstances, you may be required to provide documentation of next of kin status.



- ***Serious health condition*** means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider. Ordinarily, unless complications arise, cosmetic treatments and minor conditions such as the cold, flu, earaches, upset stomach, minor ulcers, headaches (other than migraines), and routine dental problems are examples of conditions that are not serious health conditions under this policy. If you have any questions about the types of conditions that may qualify, contact the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov.
- ***Health care provider*** means a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy, physician assistant, podiatrist, dentist, clinical psychologist, optometrist, nurse practitioner, nurse-midwife, clinical social worker, or Christian Science practitioner licensed by the First Church of Christ. Under limited circumstances, a chiropractor or other provider recognized by our group health plan for the purposes of certifying a claim for benefits may also be considered a health care provider.
- ***Qualifying exigencies*** for military exigency leave include:
  - Short-notice call-ups/deployments of seven days or less (**Note:** Leave for this exigency is available for up to seven days beginning the date of call-up notice);
  - Attending official ceremonies, programs, or military events;
  - Special childcare needs created by a military call-up including making alternative childcare arrangements, managing urgent and nonroutine childcare situations, arranging for school transfers, or attending school or daycare meetings;
  - Making financial and legal arrangements;
  - Attending counseling sessions for yourself, the military service member, or the military service members' son or daughter who is under 18 years of age or is 18 or older but incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability;
  - Rest and recuperation (**Note:** Fifteen days of leave is available for this exigency per event);
  - Post-deployment activities such as arrival ceremonies, re-integration briefings, and other official ceremonies sponsored by the military (**Note:** Leave for these events are available for 90 days following the termination of active-duty status). This type of leave may also be taken to address circumstances arising from the death of a covered military member while on active duty;
  - Parental care when the military family member is needed to care for a parent who is incapable of self-care (such as arranging for alternative care or transfer to a care facility); and
  - Other exigencies that arise that are agreed to by both the county and you.
- A ***serious injury or illness*** incurred by a service member in the line of active duty or that is exacerbated by active duty is any injury or illness that renders the service member unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank, or rating.

#### *Notice and Leave Request Process*

If the need for leave is foreseeable because of an expected birth/adoption or planned medical treatment, you must give at least 30 days' notice. If 30 days' notice is not possible, give notice as soon as practicable (within one or two business days of learning of your need for leave). Failure to provide appropriate notice may result in the delay or denial of leave.

In addition, if you are seeking intermittent or reduced schedule leave that is foreseeable due to planned medical treatment or a series of treatments for yourself, a family member, or covered service member, you must consult with the county first regarding the dates of this treatment to work out a schedule that best suits your needs or the needs of the covered military member, if applicable, and the county.

If the need for leave is unforeseeable, provide notice as soon as possible. Normal call-in procedures

apply to all absences from work, including those for which leave under this policy may be requested. Failure to provide appropriate notice may result in the delay or denial of leave.

In the event an employee is absent five days or longer while using sick leave, the County may designate the leave as FMLA.

#### Certification of Need for Leave

If you are requesting leave because of your own or a covered relative's serious health condition, you and the relevant health care provider must supply appropriate medical certification. You may obtain Medical Certification forms from the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov. When you request leave, the county will notify you of the requirement for medical certification and when it is due (at least 15 days after you request leave). If you provide at least 30 days' notice of medical leave, you should also provide the medical certification before leave begins. Failure to provide requested medical certification in a timely manner may result in denial of FMLA-covered leave until it is provided.

At our expense, the county may require an examination by a second health care provider designated by us. If the second health care provider's opinion conflicts with the original medical certification, we, at our expense, may require a third, mutually agreeable, health care provider to conduct an examination and provide a final and binding opinion. Subsequent medical recertification may also be required. Failure to provide requested certification within 15 days, when practicable, may result in delay of further leave until it is provided.

Cannon County also reserves the right to require certification from a covered military member's health care provider if you are requesting military caregiver leave and certification in connection with military exigency leave.

#### Call-In Procedures

In all instances of absence, the call-in procedures and standards established for giving notice of absence from work must be followed.

#### Leave Increments

##### Intermittent Leave

If medically necessary, FMLA leave for a serious health condition may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to a serious health condition) or on a reduced leave schedule (reducing the usual number of hours you work per workweek or workday). FMLA leave may also be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule for a qualifying exigency relating to covered military service. Use of intermittent leave is measured in increments of one hour.

As FMLA leave is unpaid, the county will reduce your salary based on the amount of time actually worked. In addition, while you are on an intermittent or reduced schedule leave that is foreseeable due to planned medical treatments, the county may temporarily transfer you to an available alternative position that better accommodates your leave schedule and has equivalent pay and benefits.

##### Parental Leave

Leave for the birth or placement of a child must be taken in a single block and cannot be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis. Parental leave must be completed within 12 months of the birth or placement of the child; however, you may use parental leave before the placement of an adopted or foster child to consult with attorneys, appear in court, attend counseling sessions, etc.

### Family Care, Personal Medical, Military Exigency, and Military Care Leave

Leave taken for these reasons may be taken in a block or blocks of time. In addition, if a health care provider deems it necessary or if the nature of a qualifying exigency requires, leave for these reasons can be taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis.

### Paid Leave Utilization During FMLA Leave

FMLA leave is unpaid. If you are taking parental, family care, military exigency, and/or military care leave, you may utilize available vacation days during this leave. If you are taking personal medical leave, you may utilize available sick and vacation days during this leave. If you are receiving short- or long-term disability or workers' compensation benefits during a personal medical leave, you will not be required to utilize these benefits. However, you may elect to utilize accrued benefits to supplement these benefits. No additional leave of any type will accrue while on this leave. Holidays that occur during the leave will not be paid.

### Fitness for Duty Requirements

If you take leave because of your own serious health condition (except if you are taking intermittent leave), you are required, as are all employees returning from other types of medical leave, to provide medical certification that you are fit to resume work. You will not be permitted to resume work until it is provided.

### Health Insurance

You must continue to make timely payments of your share of the premiums for such coverage. Your health insurance coverage will be maintained by the county during leave on the same basis as if you were still working. Failure to pay premiums within 30 days of when they are due may result in a lapse of coverage. If this occurs, you will be notified 15 days before the date coverage will lapse, and that coverage will terminate unless payments are promptly made. Once you exhaust your leave under FMLA, you will be responsible for the full cost of your premiums until you return to work.

It is your responsibility to inquire about open enrollment dates and how to participate.

You may not utilize accrued leave as a payment method for continued insurance coverage.

### Reinstatement

Upon returning to work at the end of your leave, you will generally be placed in your original job or an equivalent job with equivalent pay and benefits. You will not lose any benefits that accrued before leave was taken.

### Spouse Aggregation

If you and your spouse are both employed by the county, the total number of weeks to which you are both entitled in the aggregate because of the birth or placement of a child or to care for a parent with a serious health condition will be limited to 12 weeks per leave year. Similarly, spouses employed by the county will be limited to a combined total of 26 weeks of leave to care for a military service member. This 26-week leave period will be reduced, however, by the amount of leave taken for other qualifying FMLA events. This type of leave aggregation does not apply to leave needed for your own serious health condition, to care for a spouse or child with a serious health condition, or because of a qualifying exigency.

### Failure to Return

If you fail to return to work or fail to make a request for an extension of leave prior to the expiration of the leave, you will be deemed to have voluntarily terminated your employment. Cannon County is

not required to grant requests for open-ended leaves with no reasonable return date under these policies or as disability accommodations.

#### Alternative Employment

While on leave of absence, you may not work or be gainfully employed either for yourself or others unless express, written permission to perform such outside work has been granted by the county. If you are on a leave of absence and are found to be working elsewhere without permission, you will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

#### Interaction with State and Local Laws

Where state or local family and medical leave laws offer more protections or benefits to employees, the protections or benefits that are more favorable to the employee, as provided by these laws, will apply.

#### Abuse of Leave

If you are found to have provided a false reason for a leave, you will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

#### Designation of Leave

If the county becomes aware of any qualifying reason for FMLA leave, the county will designate it as such. An employee may not refuse FMLA designation under this policy.

#### Retaliation

Cannon County will not retaliate against employees who request or take leave in accordance with this policy.

### **7.17 Maternity/Paternity Leave**

Under the laws of the State of Tennessee, an employee who has been employed full-time for at least twelve consecutive months is entitled to up to 16 weeks of parental leave. The first 12 weeks of leave falls under the Family Medical Leave Act and the remaining four weeks as maternity leave under the Tennessee Maternity and Adoption Care Leave Law.

If all applicable paid leave has been exhausted, the remainder of the leave may be taken in an unpaid leave status. During the additional fourth month of unpaid parental leave (after exhaustion of Family and Medical Leave), the employee must pay any health care contributions to retain coverage.

The purpose of this leave is to provide time off for pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, and/or bonding with the infant.

An employee needing parental leave must report such need to his/her supervisor as soon as he/she has knowledge of the leave by submitting an FMLA application along with the appropriate medical certification. Under the provisions of the FMLA, an employee may take his/her parental leave at any time during the first 12 months of the birth, adoption, or placement of the child. However, the leave must be taken in a continuous period. Intermittent parental leave is at the discretion of the county and should be discussed with the supervisor to determine whether or not intermittent parental leave is a reasonable option based upon departmental needs and staffing.

### **7.18 Military Leave (USERRA)**

Cannon County complies with applicable federal and state law regarding military leave and re-employment rights. Unpaid military leave of absence will be granted to members of the uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA; with amendments) and all applicable state law. You must submit documentation of the need for leave to the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov. When returning from military leave of absence, you will be reinstated to your previous position or a similar position, in accordance with state and federal law. You must notify your supervisor of your intent to return to employment based on requirements of the law. For more information regarding status, compensation, benefits, and reinstatement upon return from military leave, contact the Human Resources representative at HR@cannoncountyttn.gov.

### **7.19 Jury Duty Leave**

Cannon County encourages employees to fulfill their civic duties related to jury duty. If you are summoned for jury duty, notify your supervisor as soon as possible to make scheduling arrangements. You will receive your regular compensation for time spent on jury duty.

Cannon County reserves the right to require employees to provide proof of jury duty service to the extent authorized by law.

Cannon County will not retaliate against employees who request or take leave in accordance with this policy.

### **7.20 Volunteer Firefighter Leave**

If you are a volunteer firefighter, Cannon County will grant you paid leave from work to respond to a fire call during your regular hours of employment.

You must make reasonable efforts to notify the county that you may be absent from or late to work due to your volunteer response.

If you leave work to during your regular hours to respond to a fire call and assist in firefighting for more than four hours, you may take off the next scheduled work period within 12 hours after that response as a vacation day or sick leave day without loss of pay. If you are not entitled to a vacation day or sick leave day, you may take unpaid leave. You are entitled to the same leave if you are an active volunteer firefighter and you worked for more than four hours as a volunteer firefighter in an emergency in the last day.

Cannon County may require you to provide a written statement from the supervisor or acting supervisor of the volunteer fire department stating that you responded to an emergency and including the date, time, and duration of the emergency response.

### **7.21 Voting Leave**

If your work schedule prevents you from voting on Election Day, Cannon County will allow you up to three (3) hours off to vote if you apply for time off before noon on the day before Election Day. The time when you can go to vote will be at the discretion of your supervisor, consistent with applicable legal requirements.

## **8.0 Safety and Loss Prevention**

### **8.1 Drug and Alcohol Policy**

Cannon County is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive work environment. Consistent with this commitment, it is the intent of the county to maintain a drug and alcohol-free workplace. Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs (as classified under federal, state, or local laws), or other impairing substances while on the job may pose a serious health and safety risk to others and will not be tolerated.

#### *Prohibited Conduct*

Cannon County expressly prohibits employees from engaging in the following activities when they are on duty, conducting county business, or on county premises (whether or not they are working):

- The use, abuse, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or other impairing substances.
- The possession, sale, purchase, transfer, or transit of any illegal or unauthorized drug, including prescription medication that is not prescribed to the individual, or drug-related paraphernalia.
- The illegal use or abuse of prescription drugs.

Nothing in this policy is meant to prohibit the appropriate use of over-the-counter medication or other medication that has been legally prescribed to you under both federal and state law, so long as it does not impair your job performance or safety or the safety of others. If you take over-the-counter medication or other medication that has been legally prescribed to you under both federal and state law to treat a disability or other health condition, inform your supervisor if the medication may impair your job performance, safety, or the safety of others. Notify your supervisor if you need reasonable accommodation before reporting to work while under the influence of a medication that has been legally prescribed to you under both federal and state law.

#### *Prescription Drug Use*

Employees must not use or take prescription drugs above the level recommended by a prescribing physician and must not use prescribed drugs for purposes other than those for which they are intended.

If the employee is authorized to drive a Cannon County vehicle or if an employee uses their personal vehicle for county purposes, they must notify their supervisor or director of any illness, physical condition or use of medication that may impair or affect their ability to safely drive a vehicle. Failure to notify the supervisor that they are taking medication that may affect driving may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

#### *Drug Convictions*

If an employee is convicted of any criminal drug law offenses (including alcohol, prescription drugs, or over-the-counter drugs), they must notify their supervisor no later than five days after the conviction. Employees will be suspended with pay immediately upon notification to allow the county to conduct an investigation of the incident. The county will take appropriate action based on the type of offense and other key factors. Failure to report a conviction within the time prescribed will lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### Reasonable Suspicion

Employees are subject to testing based on (but not limited to) observations by at least two members of management of apparent workplace use, possession, or impairment. The County Executive and/or Finance Director should be consulted before sending an employee for testing. Examples of observations and behaviors that create a reasonable suspicion that an employee is under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol include, but are not limited to:

- Odors (smell of alcohol, body odor or urine).
- Movements (unsteady, fidgety, dizzy).
- Eyes (dilated, constricted or watery eyes, or involuntary eye movements).
- Face (flushed, sweating, confused or blank look).
- Speech (slurred, slow, distracted mid-thought, inability to verbalize thoughts).
- Emotions (argumentative, agitated, irritable, drowsy).
- Actions (yawning, twitching).
- Inactions (sleeping, unconscious, no reaction to questions).

When reasonable suspicion testing is warranted, both the supervisor and the County Executive and/or Finance Director will meet with the employee to explain the observations and the requirement to undergo a drug and/or alcohol test within two hours. Refusal by an employee will be treated as a positive drug test result.

Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to drive themselves to the testing facility. A member of management must transport the employee or arrange for a cab and arrange for the employee to be transported home.

### **Post-accident**

Employees will be drug screen when they cause or contribute to accidents that seriously damage a county vehicle, machinery, equipment, or property, or that result in an injury to themselves or another employee requiring offsite medical attention. A circumstance that constitutes probable belief will be presumed to arise in any instance involving a work-related accident or injury in which an employee who was operating a motorized vehicle (including a forklift, pickup truck, lifts, or other mobile equipment) is found to be responsible for causing the accident. In any of these instances, the investigation and subsequent testing must take place within two hours following the accident, if not sooner. Refusal by an employee will be treated as a positive drug test result.

Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to drive themselves to the testing facility. A member of management must transport the employee or arrange for a cab and arrange for the employee to be transported home.

### Violations

Violation of this policy (including refusal to submit for reasonable suspicion testing) will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **8.2 General Safety Policy**

It is the responsibility of all Cannon County employees to maintain a healthy and safe work environment. Report all safety hazards and occupational illnesses or injuries to your supervisor as soon as reasonably possible and complete an occupational illness or injury form as needed. Failure to follow the county health and safety rules may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **8.3 Policy Against Workplace Violence**

As the safety and security of our employees, vendors, contractors, and the general public is in the best interests of Cannon County, we are committed to working with our employees to provide a work environment free from violence, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior.

#### Zero Tolerance Policy

Cannon County has a zero-tolerance policy regarding workplace violence and will not tolerate acts or threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior, either physical or verbal, which occurs in the workplace or other areas. This applies to management, co-workers, employees, and non-employees such as contractors, customers, and visitors.

Workplace violence can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm, damage to property, or any intentional behavior that may cause a person to feel threatened.

#### Prohibited Conduct

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Physically injuring another person.
- Threatening to injure a person or damage property by any means, including verbal, written, direct, indirect, or electronic means.
- Taking any action to place a person in reasonable fear of imminent harm or offensive contact.
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a firearm on county property or while performing county business except as permitted by state law.
- Violating a restraining order, order of protection, injunction against harassment, or other court order.

#### Reporting Incidents of Violence

Report to your supervisor, in accordance with this policy, any behavior that compromises our ability to maintain a safe work environment. All reports will be investigated immediately and kept confidential, except where there is a legitimate need to know. You are expected to cooperate in any investigation of workplace violence.

#### Violations

Violating this policy may subject you to criminal charges as well as discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

#### Retaliation

Victims and witnesses of workplace violence will not be retaliated against in any manner. In addition, you will not be subject to discipline for, based on a reasonable belief, reporting a threat or for cooperating in an investigation.

If you initiate, participate, are involved in retaliation, or obstruct an investigation into conduct prohibited by this policy, you will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

If you believe you have been wrongfully retaliated against, immediately report the matter to the Human Resources representative at [HR@cannoncountyttn.gov](mailto:HR@cannoncountyttn.gov).



#### **8.4 Nonsmoking Policy**

Cannon County is concerned about the effect that smoking and secondhand smoke inhalation can have on its employees and clients. Smoking in the office, client areas, and restrooms is prohibited.

## **Closing Statement**

Thank you for reading our handbook. We hope it has provided you with an understanding of our mission, history, and structure as well as our current policies and guidelines. We look forward to collaborating with you to create a successful experience and a safe, productive, and pleasant workplace.

Greg Mitchell, County Executive

Cannon County

## Acknowledgment of Receipt and Review

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Cannon County Employee Handbook (handbook) and that I have read it, understand it, and agree to comply with it. I understand that the county has the maximum discretion permitted by law to interpret, administer, change, modify, or delete the rules, regulations, procedures, and benefits contained in the handbook at any time with or without notice. No statement or representation by a supervisor, manager, or any other employee, whether oral or written, can supplement or modify this handbook. Changes can only be made if approved in writing by the County Executive. I also understand that any delay or failure by the county to enforce any rule, regulation, or procedure contained in the handbook does not constitute a waiver on behalf of the county or affect the right of the county to enforce such rule, regulation, or procedure in the future.

I understand that neither this handbook nor any other communication by a management representative or other, whether oral or written, is intended in any way to create a contract of employment. I further understand that, unless I have a written employment agreement signed by an authorized county representative, I am employed "at-will" (to the extent permitted by law) and this handbook does not modify my "at-will" employment status.

If I am covered by a written employment agreement (signed by an authorized county representative) or a collective-bargaining agreement that conflicts with the terms of this handbook, I understand that the terms of the employment agreement or collective-bargaining agreement will control.

This handbook is not intended to preclude or dissuade employees from engaging in legally protected activities under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

This handbook supersedes any previous handbook or policy statements, whether written or oral, issued by Cannon County.

If I have any questions about the content or interpretation of this handbook, I will contact [hr@cannoncountyttn.gov](mailto:hr@cannoncountyttn.gov).

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Signature

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Date

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Print Name