

Wasco County SWCD Employee Handbook

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Wasco County SWCD Employee Handbook

Oregon Government Employers

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO WASCO COUNTY SWCD!

Welcome to Wasco County SWCD. Whether you're joining us for the first time or have been part of the team for a while, we're glad you're here. Our employees are the heart of what we do.

Our mission is, *"To work cooperatively with others to promote and encourage conservation and wise use of natural resources."* Every day, we focus on protecting, conserving, and enhancing the soil, water, and natural resources of Wasco County. We do this through education, outreach, technical assistance, and strong partnerships that support our community and future generations.

We hope your time here is both productive and meaningful. We've worked to create a supportive environment, a solid benefits package, and a collaborative culture where people can do their best work. You're part of the team effort that moves our mission forward, and your contributions support the shared objectives we work toward together.

This Handbook is here to help you get oriented. It outlines how we operate and what you can expect in your role. Take some time to look through it and reach out if you have any questions or suggestions. We value open communication, mutual respect, and practical ideas that help us improve our services and use our resources wisely.

Welcome to the team. We appreciate the work you do and look forward to what we'll accomplish together.

Shilah Olson
District Manager

OUR HISTORY

Who We Are

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are local units of government led by elected boards of directors. There are nearly 3,000 districts nationwide and 45 in Oregon. All SWCDs share a common purpose: to support locally led conservation and help communities address natural resource concerns.

Wasco County SWCD is one of those districts. We have a small staff team that works directly with landowners, agricultural producers, and community partners to address conservation needs throughout the county. Workshops, tours, and community outreach are central to how we share information and support conservation practices.

We work closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Wasco County watershed councils, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), along with many other state, federal, and local partners.

Our History

Conservation districts were created in response to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. After severe dust storms devastated the Great Plains, Congress established the Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) and encouraged states to form local conservation districts. These districts were led by farmers and ranchers who understood the land and the challenges facing agriculture.

That model continues today. Most districts, including ours, are still guided by people who work the land and are committed to natural resource stewardship.

Conservation Legacy in Wasco County

Conservation work in Wasco County began with three districts: Southern Wasco (1942), Northern Wasco (1947), and Central Wasco (1947). Early efforts focused on land leveling and irrigation system development.

In 1973, the three districts consolidated to form the Wasco Soil and Water Conservation District, with boundaries aligned to the county. The district later adopted its current name.

The district will celebrate its 85th year in 2027. While conservation practices have changed significantly, our mission remains the same: to work cooperatively with others to promote and encourage conservation and the wise use of natural resources.

What We Do

We are local people helping local people. Wasco County SWCD is a special district that supports landowners and agricultural producers in meeting conservation goals and complying with state and federal environmental requirements.

ODA provides technical support and limited administrative oversight to Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, helping ensure consistent standards and reducing risk statewide.

Who We Aren't

We are not a regulatory agency. We do not enforce laws or create regulations.

Funding

In 2004, Wasco County voters approved a permanent tax rate of 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, giving the district stable base funding.

Additional funding comes from state, federal, and private grants. Much of our project funding is provided by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). ODA provides administrative funding to support basic conservation services and implementation of Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Program.

Programs

Each year, the district develops an Annual Plan of Work to guide staff and board priorities.

In addition to administrative and statutory responsibilities, we support federal Farm Bill programs in partnership with NRCS and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). District planners help implement conservation projects across the county, including soil conservation, water quality and quantity improvements, wildlife habitat enhancement, riparian restoration, invasive species control, and farming efficiency.

Public information, education, and outreach remain central to our mission.

Watershed Councils

Our work covers the entire county, and watershed councils help ensure local voices guide local solutions. These councils include residents representing a balance of interests within each watershed and support education, outreach, assessments, monitoring, and project implementation.

Five councils are currently active: Bakeoven/Buck Hollow, White River, Fifteenmile, The Dalles, and Mosier. Each is formally recognized by the Wasco County Board of Commissioners, and Wasco County SWCD serves as their fiscal sponsor. Together, we share a commitment to improving watershed health and land stewardship.

Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to our mission. We work closely with core partners such as NRCS and FSA, as well as many other state and federal agencies, irrigation districts, nonprofits, and community organizations. Our partner network has changed over time as projects and needs evolved and includes long-standing relationships with watershed councils and other conservation-focused groups.

These partnerships help us provide technical assistance, funding opportunities, and educational services to landowners and communities throughout Wasco County.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This Employee Handbook is a guide to help you understand our employment provisions and expectations. The Handbook applies to all our employees. It is intended to be a positive document that begins to establish the relationship between us.

Please remember this Handbook contains general information and guidelines. It is not intended to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, general policies and procedures. Our policies are based on the belief that common sense, good judgment, and consideration for the rights of others are paramount to our ability to serve our customers and ourselves. While we have tried to answer many of your questions, keep in mind that this document will not provide every answer. If you have any questions concerning eligibility for a particular benefit or how a policy or practice applies to you, please ask the Office Administrator or District Manager.

We know employees have varied skills, goals, perceptions, and values, and that such diversity may create situations not fully addressed within this Handbook. In that event, we will try to make fair and equitable decisions while making sure that the best interests of the organization are served.

Neither this Handbook nor any other organizational document confers any express or implied contractual right to remain in Wasco County SWCD's employ, nor does it guarantee any fixed terms or conditions of your employment. Your employment is not for any specific period and may be terminated at will, with or without reason, and without prior notice by Wasco County SWCD or you for any reason, at any time.

This handbook is not intended to undermine or remove your rights as outlined by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). We fully acknowledge and respect your rights to engage in protected concerted activities, which include the right to discuss wages, working conditions, and other terms of employment with your fellow employees, as well as the right to form, join, or assist labor organizations. If you have any concerns or questions regarding your rights or any content in this handbook, please seek clarification from your HR representative or legal counsel.

The procedures, practices, policies, and benefits described here may be modified or discontinued from time-to-time. We recognize our responsibility to keep employees informed of changes that may affect them and will provide replacement pages so you can keep your Handbook current.

Some subjects described in this Handbook, such as benefit plan information, are covered in detail in official policy documents. You should refer to these documents for specific information since this Handbook provides summaries only. Please note that when discrepancies occur between benefit language in this Handbook and in the official policy documents, the terms of the written insurance policies are controlling. We encourage you to use caution when making decisions with long-term impact based on our current benefit offerings, given that we may find it necessary to make changes to these programs.

You are encouraged to offer suggestions for improvement to these policies, employment practices, or working conditions. Please read the Handbook carefully and share it with your family members so they will also understand your work environment. If you have additional questions or need further details, please talk with your supervisor, who can advise you or refer you to the appropriate resource.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

You and Wasco County SWCD are engaged in an “at-will” employment relationship. Therefore, employment at Wasco County SWCD is for no definite period and may, regardless of the time and manner of payment of wages and salary, be terminated at will. This means that either you or the organization may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason or advance notice.

No one in the organization has the authority to change this at-will relationship except through a written agreement signed by the District Manager or the Board of Directors and the employee. The District will not make, and will not be bound by, any oral promises regarding the length or terms of employment.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Wasco County SWCD is an equal opportunity employer and, as such, considers individuals for employment according to their abilities and performance. Employment decisions are made without regard to race, age, religion, color, sex, national origin, physical or mental disability, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, protective hairstyle, or any other classification protected by law. All employment requirements mandated by local, state, and federal regulations will be observed.

The District is committed to providing equal employment opportunities in all aspects of employment and the work environment. Our nondiscrimination policies apply to every part of the employment relationship, including recruitment, selection, compensation, promotion, transfer, layoff and recall, termination, training, and dispute resolution.

In keeping with our philosophy and applicable laws, our advertising and recruiting materials will contain the following statement to encourage qualified applicants to apply: “Equal Opportunity Employer.” Our policy as an equal opportunity employer is to employ those legally entitled to work in the United States without regard to citizenship status, ethnic background, or national origin. However, in conformity with the relevant immigration statutes and regulations, our policy is to hire only those who are eligible to work in the United States. Verification documentation is required of all new hires.

All employees in the organization are responsible for following and carrying out this policy according to the spirit and intent of our equal employment commitment. Management provides and supports a dispute resolution procedure for complaints alleging discrimination. Employees are expected to bring any questions, issues, or complaints to Management’s attention. If you believe you have been harassed, or if you witness or suspect any violation of this policy, you should report the matter immediately to the District Manager. We also encourage you to document your concerns. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint or cooperating in an investigation and we will not tolerate or permit retaliation by Management or co-workers.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, is a comprehensive federal civil rights law that specifically protects individuals with physical and mental disabilities from discrimination in the workplace.

Individuals are protected under the ADA if any of the following conditions exist:

- They currently have a physical or mental condition that significantly restricts their ability to normally conduct a major life function (walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, bodily functions, etc.);
- They have a history of such impairment; or,
- They are regarded as having such impairment.

The ADA also prohibits discrimination based on an individual's relationship to someone (parent, sibling, child, spouse, friend, etc.) with a disability.

Wasco County SWCD offers equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals who may have a physical or mental disability but are still able to perform essential job functions with reasonable accommodations. Essential functions are defined as the fundamental non-marginal duties of the position being held or sought. A job function is essential if the position exists for the performance of the function, there are only a limited number of employees available to perform it, or it is so highly specialized that an expert is required to perform it.

Reasonable accommodation is available to employees and applicants, if the requested accommodations do not cause undue hardship for the organization. Individuals protected by the ADA/ADAAA should discuss their needs for accommodation with the District Manager.

Pregnancy Accommodation Policy

Wasco County SWCD will make reasonable accommodations for employees that are experiencing known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition, to the extent the accommodation can be made without imposing an undue hardship on the organization. Wasco County SWCD seeks to comply with both the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) and any state provisions and rules it is subject to regarding pregnancy related conditions as well. Accommodations may include:

- Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices;
- More frequent or longer break periods or periodic rest;
- Assistance with manual labor; or
- Modification of work schedules or job assignments.

Wasco County SWCD will not take adverse action against an employee for inquiring about, requesting, or using a reasonable accommodation.

HARASSMENT

Wasco County SWCD will not tolerate conduct by any employee, elected official, board or commission member, volunteer or intern, customer or member of the public that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with an employee's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment. All forms of harassment are prohibited. We want to maintain a working environment free from all forms of harassment, whether based upon race, age, religion, color, sex, national origin, physical or mental disability, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, on-the-job injury, genetic information, protective hairstyle, or any other legally protected characteristic or status. Retaliation associated with a complaint of harassment is also prohibited.

Behavior such as telling ethnic jokes; using religious slurs or offensive slang, or other derogatory terms regarding a person's race, sexual orientation, age, sex, national origin, or disability; or mimicking one's speech, accent, or disability are examples of prohibited conduct. Harassing individuals by making derogatory comments regarding protected status or characteristics is prohibited, as well as using any other words or conduct that might create a hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment or assault is also a form of harassment. The following conduct is sexual harassment;

- Submission to conduct is in any way deemed to be a term or condition of employment;
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for employment-related decisions; or,
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment can also consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Conduct such as sexual or sexist language, jokes, or innuendoes; nude, profane, or obscene cartoons, drawings, or photographs; whistling; staring; and inappropriate touching are not tolerated at Wasco County SWCD. Electronic communications, including texts and similar messages, may be considered harassment when the content is inappropriate or unwelcome.

Sexual Assault is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that is inflicted upon a person or compelled using physical force, manipulation, threat, or intimidation.

Each manager/supervisor has a responsibility to maintain a workplace free of any form of sexual harassment. No person shall threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the employee's employment, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts, or any other condition of employment or career development. Sexual harassment in the workplace, whether by managers/supervisors, non-managerial employees, or outside individuals (vendors, customers, etc.) is prohibited.

This policy explicitly applies to conduct in the workplace, at social functions sponsored by the organization, and at business functions (meetings, conferences, tours, conventions, trade shows, etc.). This policy applies to any conduct, however, as described above, which impacts the organization or work environment, regardless of where it occurs.

Management provides and supports a dispute resolution procedure for receiving and resolving complaints alleging discriminatory practices in employment relations. As an employee of Wasco County SWCD, you have the responsibility to immediately report any actions or words, which you find to be harassing. The organization will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint or cooperating in an investigation and will not tolerate or permit retaliation from anyone.

Reporting Incidents of Harassment

If you believe you have been harassed, have witnessed harassment, or suspect a violation of this policy, you must report it immediately to the District Manager. If the District Manager is unavailable, you may report the concern to the Office Administrator. If the concern involves the District Manager, you may report the matter to the Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors. These individuals are responsible for ensuring that all complaints are promptly and thoroughly reviewed without prejudice or retaliation. Investigations will begin as quickly as possible, and while timelines may vary based on the situation, the District will make every effort to complete the review within two weeks. You will be informed of the outcome, and the District will follow up with you to ensure the matter remains resolved and consistent with organizational standards.

All complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly and impartially. Discretion will be used during the investigation to maintain as much confidentiality as possible while effectively completing the investigation, however, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If you are not satisfied with the handling of a complaint or the action taken by management, you should bring the complaint to the next higher level of authority, such as the District Board Vice-Chair. In all cases, you will be advised of the outcome.

Any employee or manager who is found, after appropriate investigation, to have engaged in harassment or to have retaliated against an individual for reporting harassment will be subject to appropriate corrective action, depending on the circumstances, up to and including termination.

External Complaint Procedure

We encourage employees to bring their concerns and complaints to the organization, and understand that, at times, this may not be the choice of the employee. Below is a list of the external complaint options. Please reach out to the preferred choice to determine the appropriate timelines for their processes.

- Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries at the following web address:
<https://www.oregon.gov/boli/civil-rights/pages/default.aspx>
- Civil or Criminal Action. In these circumstances, a Notice of Claim must be provided to us in accordance with ORS 30.275.

Employment Agreements

No employee will be required or invited to sign an agreement requiring the non-disclosure of information related to discrimination or sexual assault as a condition of employment, continued employment, promotion, compensation, or the receipt of benefits. An employee may request this

type of agreement and, upon request, will be provided at least seven (7) days to change their mind.

Additional Employee Support Services

Employees may choose to seek outside support during or after a concern or complaint. Examples of resources employees may access on their own include:

- Legal counsel. Community legal resources include:
 - Oregon State Bar Lawyer Referral Service: 503-684-3763
 - Legal Aid Services of Oregon: 503-224-4086
 - Oregon Law Help: www.oregonlawhelp.org
- Counseling or other professional support services.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services available through the District's health insurance plan, if applicable.
- Mid-Columbia Center for Living (MCCFL), the designated behavioral health agency for Hood River, Sherman, and Wasco counties. MCCFL offers mental health services, counseling, and a 24-hour crisis line at 1-888-877-9147.

Mid-Columbia Center for Living
1060 Webber Street, The Dalles, OR 97058
Phone: 541-296-5452
www.mccfl.org

- The David Romprey Oregon Warmline at 1-800-698-2392, a free statewide peer-support line available 24/7.
- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, available 24/7 for immediate mental health or substance-use crisis support.

These resources are not limited to harassment concerns; employees may access them for any work-related or personal issue where outside support may be helpful.

WORKPLACE PROFESSIONALISM

Harassment based on a protected class is prohibited, and unprofessional conduct such as incivility or disrespect is not acceptable. We want to maintain a workplace where employees can do their best work, which means treating coworkers and the public with courtesy and respect. Employees are expected to work together and address issues constructively.

Wasco County SWCD defines unprofessionalism as repeated or one-time behavior, which is inappropriate and which may be verbal, non-verbal, or physical; either direct or indirect, which generally occurs at work and in the course of employment but may also apply to off-site behavior exhibited by employees that negatively impacts the working relationship. Such behavior, whether exhibited between co-workers, management and staff, vendors/customers, another outside party, or a member of the public, violates our policy on how others should be treated while at the workplace or engaged in organizational operations.

Where an allegation of unprofessionalism is made, consideration of the intention will be given. The purpose of this policy is to communicate to all employees, including supervisors and managers, that Wasco County SWCD will not, in any instance, tolerate unprofessional behavior. Employees found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

We consider the following examples as unprofessional; however, this is not considered a comprehensive list. Any actions that create the same or similar result will also be considered.

- Making derogatory comments about your co-workers or the organization on social media.
- Public humiliation in any form.
- Constant criticism on matters unrelated or minimally related to the person's performance or job description.
- Spreading rumors and gossip regarding individuals.
- Interfering with the ability of someone to perform job duties or consistently assigning menial tasks that are not central to the job.
- Taking credit for another person's ideas.

Any Wasco County SWCD employee who has experienced unprofessionalism should immediately report the behavior according to the reporting process outlined in our anti-harassment policy (please refer to the section on harassment above). All reports will be investigated and addressed. Making false/baseless or malicious complaints of unprofessionalism will be regarded as a serious offense, which may also lead to corrective action, up to and including termination.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

We believe that undisclosed problems will remain unresolved and will lead to impaired work relationships, dissatisfaction with working conditions, and a decline in operational efficiency. Therefore, the organization has established this dispute resolution procedure to solve problems as quickly, fairly, and thoroughly as possible. This procedure is a method for impartially hearing the complaint and is intended to resolve problems and provide a fair and objective review. All issues will be managed without prejudice or retaliation.

Reporting Issues Other than Harassment/Discrimination

Any other questions or concerns you may have should be discussed with your immediate manager/supervisor, absent special circumstances, as soon as you are aware there is a problem or have a question. Your manager will follow up with your concern.

We realize there may be valid reasons to forgo this initial step; in those circumstances *i.e.*, a concern involves an immediate manager/supervisor, you may go directly to the next level of management such as the Vice-Chair of the Board, or to the Office Administrator for assistance.

EMPLOYMENT

It is our goal to fill employment vacancies with qualified applicants, whether recruiting internally, externally, or utilizing both options. Job applicants will be considered on an equal basis for all positions without regard to sex, age, race, color, religion, national origin, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, a physical or mental disability, or any other characteristic protected under applicable law, including Veterans' Preference.

We aim to select candidates who best meet the requirements of the position and the needs of the District.

Former employees and relatives of current employees will be considered for employment in the same manner as other applicants. We may refuse to place a spouse, domestic partner, or immediate family member under the direct supervision of a spouse, domestic partner, or family member, if such placement adversely affects supervision, safety, security, or morale.

You may, from time to time, be temporarily transferred or assigned to perform work outside of your regular job duties, schedule, or location. Depending upon the circumstances, you may be subject to a wage adjustment while performing such work. We may also reassign employees on a long-term basis whose placements are determined to be unsuited to their individual skills and transfer any employee who has an illness or disability that requires modified duty without posting the position.

RECRUITMENT

For each vacant position to be filled, the organization will review the duties and responsibilities, and the FLSA designation, prior to posting notice inviting applications.

Job Postings

Job postings will contain the job title, the salary range offered, the general duties and responsibilities, summary of benefits offered, qualifications required, veterans' preference statements, and how to apply.

Veterans Preference

Oregon law requires all public employers provide employment and promotion preference to veterans, including national guard members [Effective January 1, 2026], and disabled veterans who qualify for civil service positions. [Reference: ORS 408.225–408.237 and related administrative rules]

- Eligibility - Preference is afforded only to veterans and disabled veterans who:
 - Successfully complete the initial screening, application examination, or civil service test;
 - Meet all minimum qualifications and any special qualifications for the position;
 - Provide required documentation to confirm eligibility:
 - Veterans (non-disabled): +5 percentage points
 - Applicants must provide:
 - Copy of Form DD-214 or 215 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty)
 - Must show honorable discharge or general discharge under honorable conditions.
 - Disabled veterans: +10 percentage points
 - Applicants must provide:
 - A copy of Form DD-214 or 215, and
 - Official documentation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), or military branch, certifying service-connected disability.
 - Examples: A VA disability rating letter or summary of benefits.
- Eligible veterans and disabled veterans receive additional preference points as follows:
 - **Scored Examinations:** Add the applicable points to the total applicant score, regardless of how the score is composed.
 - **Unscored Evaluations** (e.g., ranking, or qualitative review): Use a structured method to give special consideration. For example, elevate qualified veterans by one level and disabled veterans by two levels in the ranking.
 - **Interviews:** If an interview is part of the hiring process, the agency must interview every veteran or disabled veteran who:
 - Meets minimum and special qualifications, **and**
 - Demonstrates transferable skills relevant to the position

When final scores are equal or the ranking places veteran and non-veteran candidates at the same level after applying preference, the veteran (or disabled veteran, if applicable) will be selected.

Documentation is required throughout the recruitment process to ensure compliance. Hiring managers must document all evaluation steps, including how veterans' preference was applied and, if applicable, reasons for not advancing or hiring a veteran

Upon a written request by a veteran not appointed to a position, Wasco County SWCD will provide a written explanation. The decision may not be based solely on veteran status; it must relate to qualifications.

If the applicant feels this policy has been violated they may contact the District Manager or may file a verified written complaint with the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI).

Application Process

An individual will follow the job posting instructions and submit application materials within the designated time-period. We have the right to exclude or disqualify applicants for failing to follow job posting instructions and timelines.

Application materials may include an application form, resume, and/or cover letter, veterans' preference supporting documents, or work examples. Any materials containing the applicant age, date of birth, when the applicant attended school or graduated, all dates must be redacted prior to submittal. If dates are not redacted from the submitted materials this will be done by the Office Administrator prior to being reviewed for qualification or shared with decision makers. Confirmation of dates, as needed, may be requested following a conditional job offer. Employers shall not require an applicant to provide a valid driver license unless the ability to legally drive is an essential function of the job or is related to a legitimate business purpose.

Internal Job Posting

The District may post a vacancy internally for a minimum of five working days to provide current employees an opportunity to apply. All internal applicants will be evaluated for minimum qualifications, veterans' preference (as applicable), and relevant experience and ability to perform the job. Hiring decisions will be based on qualifications, relevant experience, and the District's operational needs.

External Job Posting

The District may post a vacancy externally at the same time as the internal posting or after the internal posting period closes. External applicants will be required to submit the same application materials to ensure a consistent and fair process.

Interviews or Screening Process

All questions, practical exercises or interviews will be performed in a fair, equal opportunity manner to all job applicants' race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, and genetic information. Discrimination in hiring is prohibited.

Reference Checks

We may require verification of statements contained in an application or statements made in an interview and secure further information concerning the applicant's qualifications and suitability prior to making an offer of employment. This information is gained from previous employers or personal references provided. Applicant consent will be gained at time of interview.

Conditional Job Offer

We will provide a conditional job offer letter to the successful candidate outlining additional conditions to be satisfied before a final job offer is extended.

- Information requiring confirmation related to age may be confirmed with the applicant only after the conditional job offer is extended. If we are unable to verify the additional information, the conditional job offer may be rescinded.
- Background checks, drug screening, and other requirements may not be conducted prior to the interview and will proceed after the conditional job offer is extended. If all conditions are not satisfied, the job offer may be rescinded.
 - District employees are often required to use USDA networked computers and software during their employment. Employees will also have physical and electronic access to USDA program participant records covered by the Federal Privacy Act. These are essential functions of a District employees' job. It is a requirement of the USDA NRCS that all employees who will be accessing computers networked to USDA servers and access to program participant information must complete a Public Trust background investigation. This process entails providing USDA with fingerprints, personal and confidential information. There are no exceptions to this requirement.
- For candidates who meet all verifications and conditions, employers may extend a final job offer letter.

Final Job Offer

The final job offer letter affirms the satisfactory completion of all conditions and official job offer is extended. The job offer letter contains the following information:

- Title of position
- Start date
- Location to report on first day
- Expected work hours or schedule
- Employment relationship – "at will"
- Introductory period – if applicable
- Information about performance feedback during and after the introductory period
- Pay and pay periods
- Summary of benefits

New Employee Orientation

New employees are expected to participate in orientation within the first week of employment. This helps to ensure positive integration into our operations and helps new employees start a productive and satisfying employment relationship. At the orientation, you will receive detailed information about general policies, procedures, benefits, and basic information on pay and leave policies.

Introductory Period

As a new employee, you are hired on a 90 -day introductory period. The introductory period is an extension of the employee selection process. During this period, you are in training and under observation and evaluation by supervisors. Evaluation of your adjustment to work tasks, conduct and other work rules, attendance, and job responsibilities will be conducted during the introductory period. This period gives you an opportunity to demonstrate satisfactory performance for the position and provides an opportunity for us to see if your abilities and the requirements of the position match. It is also a chance to see if we meet your expectations as an employer.

Your performance will be evaluated at the end of the introductory period, and a decision about your employment status will be made and shared with you in writing. If you have successfully completed the introductory period, you will be moved to regular status. Movement to regular status does not alter the at-will condition of your employment. If your skills border on satisfactory, but fall a little short, the introductory period may be extended if there is reason to believe that your skills will improve within 30 days. This period may be extended only by approval of the District Manager. The request for an extension will not be approved if it is submitted after the normal conclusion of your introductory period. If expectations are not met or if your skills are not satisfactory, it is unlikely that your employment will continue.

Promotions and Transfer Training Period

If you are promoted or transferred to a new position, you must also complete an introductory period of 90 days to determine the suitability of the placement and your ability to satisfactorily perform the required work. If it is determined that the job change is not working during this period, you will be returned to your original job if a vacancy exists. Otherwise, you will be assigned to any other vacant job we deem suitable. If no such job is vacant, your employment may be terminated. If you are placed in a job other than your original job, the pay and benefits may be adjusted.

Re-employment

Employees who resign from the organization in good standing may be eligible for re-employment consideration. Applications received from former employees will be considered and processed using the same procedures and standards that govern all other applicants. Previous performance with the organization will be evaluated if the reference check phase is reached. We are not obligated to rehire former employees. If an employee returns within 180 calendar days their previous unused Sick Leave balance will be restored in full.

Credit for Prior Seniority

Rehired employees will generally be treated as new employees for purposes of seniority, benefits, and eligibility periods, except where federal or state law requires otherwise. This includes requirements related to retirement benefits under the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and any applicable health insurance continuation or reinstatement rules.

The District will follow all legal requirements regarding reinstatement of benefits, waiting periods, or service credit when an employee is rehired after a separation. Any credit for prior service beyond what is required by law will be granted only if consistent with the District's benefit plan documents and approved by management.

Employment Classifications

Employee status is categorized to make distinctions in employment-related conditions and to aid in a better understanding of employment relationships within the organization. Employees may be considered introductory, full-time, or part-time, temporary, or on-call as described below:

Introductory*: Newly hired or newly promoted employees within their introductory period. Introductory employees earn benefits as applicable but may not be eligible to use certain benefits until the introductory period is completed, unless otherwise required by law. If an employee's probationary status exceeds 90 days, Oregon Sick Leave will be available for use beginning on the 91st day of employment, regardless of introductory status.

Regular Full-time: An employee who is regularly scheduled to work 40 hours per week. Regular full-time employees are eligible for the District's full benefits package, including health insurance, beginning the first of the month following 60 days of employment, consistent with plan documents.

Regular Part-time: An employee who is regularly scheduled to work at least 30 but fewer than 40 hours per week. Regular part-time employees are eligible for certain benefits on a pro-rated basis, consistent with benefit plan documents and applicable law.

Hourly Part-Time: An employee who is regularly scheduled to work fewer than 30 hours per week. Hourly part-time employees are not eligible for District benefits except those required by law (e.g., Oregon Sick Leave, workers' compensation, PERS if applicable).

Temporary*: An employee hired for a defined, short-term period, typically not more than six (6) months, to meet project-specific or grant-specific needs. Temporary employees are not eligible for District benefits except those required by law (e.g., Oregon Sick Leave, workers' compensation, PERS if applicable).

Seasonal*: An employee hired for a very limited duration, typically less than three (3) months, to meet short-term or seasonal workload needs. Seasonal employees are not eligible for District benefits except those required by law.

On-Call*: An employee who does not have a set schedule and works only when called upon. On-call employees are not eligible for District benefits except those required by law.

****NOTE: Under the Affordable Care Act, employees averaging 30 hours per week may become eligible for health insurance regardless of classification. Eligibility is determined by actual hours worked and the District's health insurance plan documents.***

Employees are further classified according to federal and state wage and hour laws as exempt or non-exempt, as defined below. Management will make the appropriate designation regarding the

status for each new position or when a position changes substantially. If you are uncertain as to your status, ask your supervisor/manager.

Exempt: An employee who is *not* eligible for overtime under federal and state wage-and-hour laws because their position meets all of the following requirements:

- the employee is paid on a salary basis,
- the employee meets the minimum salary threshold, and
- the employee's primary duties meet one of the exemption tests under federal or state law (such as executive, administrative, professional, or certain computer-related positions).

Exempt status is based on the actual duties performed, not job titles or salary alone.

Non-exempt: An employee who is eligible for minimum wage, overtime pay, and all wage-and-hour protections under federal and state law. Non-exempt employees may be paid hourly or salaried, but their job duties do not meet the legal tests required for exempt status.

EMPLOYMENT RECORD KEEPING

Access to Personnel Files

The District maintains a personnel record for each employee. These records may include employment applications, job descriptions, performance evaluations, training records, disciplinary documentation, payroll and benefits information, and other materials related to the employment relationship. Personnel records are maintained by the Office Administrator in accordance with Oregon Records Law and District policy.

Access to personnel files is restricted to authorized individuals, including the District Manager, the Office Administrator, and others with a legitimate business need such as involvement in a pending personnel action.

Employees may review their personnel file, except for confidential references or other materials exempt from disclosure under Oregon law. To review a file, employees must make advance arrangements with the Office Administrator. Review will occur in the presence of authorized staff, and employees may request copies of documents in their file. The District may charge a reasonable fee for copies as permitted by law.

Employees may not remove documents from their personnel file but may submit a written request for correction or removal of specific materials. The District Manager or Office Administrator will determine whether the requested change is appropriate.

Requests for personnel information from outside the District will be handled only by the District Manager or Office Administrator. Unless otherwise required by law, the District will release only dates of employment and job title without written authorization from the employee. Requests for salary information, performance information, or other confidential data must be accompanied by the employee's written consent.

Medical records are maintained in a separate, confidential file and are not part of the personnel file. Access to medical information is limited to those with a legitimate need to know, such as for accommodation or safety purposes.

Change in Personal Data

Keeping your personnel records current can be important to you regarding pay, payroll deductions, benefits, and other matters. If you have changes in any of the following items of information, please notify the Office Administrator:

- Name
- Marital status
- Address
- Telephone number
- Dependents
- Beneficiaries
- Person to be notified in case of emergency
- Job-related physical or other limitations that impact employment
- Other information having a bearing on your employment

A Change in Personal Data form is available for your use in reporting any changes in your personal information.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS AND CONDUCT

ETHICS

We believe in treating people with respect and adhering to ethical and fair practices. All Public Officials are held accountable to the states Ethics laws found in ORS 244.

Public Officials

A public official includes anyone serving the State of Oregon or any of its political subdivisions or any other public body in any of the listed capacities, including as an “agent.” An “agent” means any individual performing governmental functions. Governmental functions are services provided on behalf of the government as distinguished from services provided to the government. This may include private contractors and volunteers, depending on the circumstances.

Upon employment with our organization, you became a Public Official.

Gifts

During a calendar year, a public official, a candidate or a relative or member of the household of the public official or candidate may not solicit or receive, directly or indirectly, any gift or gifts with an aggregate value in excess of \$50 from any single source that could reasonably be known to have a legislative or administrative interest.

During a calendar year, a person who has a legislative or administrative interest may not offer to the public official or a relative or member of the household of the public official any gift or gifts with an aggregate value of more than \$50.

During a calendar year, a person who has a legislative or administrative interest may not offer to the candidate or a relative or member of the household of the candidate any gift or gifts with an aggregate value more than \$50.

Use of Official Position or Office

A public official may not use or attempt to use official position or office to obtain financial gain or avoidance of financial detriment for the public official, a relative or member of the household of the public official, or any business with which the public official or a relative or member of the household of the public official is associated, if the financial gain or avoidance of financial detriment would not otherwise be available but for the public official’s holding of the official position or office.

Except:

- Any part of an official compensation package as determined by the public body that the public official serves.
- The receipt by a public official or a relative or member of the household of the public official of an honorarium or any other item allowed under ORS 244.042 (Honoraria).
- Reimbursement of expenses.
- An unsolicited award for professional achievement.

- Gifts that do not exceed the limits specified in ORS 244.025 (Gift limit) received by a public official or a relative or member of the household of the public official from a source that could be known to have a legislative or administrative interest.
- Gifts received by a public official or a relative or member of the household of the public official from a source that could not be known to have a legislative or administrative interest.
- The receipt by a public official or a relative or member of the household of the public official of any item, regardless of value, which is expressly excluded from the definition of “gift” in ORS 244.020 (Definitions).
- Contributions made to a legal expense trust fund established under ORS 244.209 (Application to establish fund) for the benefit of the public official.

A public official may not solicit or receive, either directly or indirectly, and a person may not offer or give to any public official any pledge or promise of future employment, based on any understanding that the vote, official action or judgment of the public official would be influenced by the pledge or promise.

A public official may not attempt to further, or further, the personal gain of the public official using confidential information gained during or by reason of holding position as a public official or activities of the public official.

A person who has ceased to be a public official may not attempt to further or further the personal gain of any person through the use of confidential information gained in the course of or by reason of holding position as a public official or the activities of the person as a public official.

A person may not attempt to represent or represent a client for a fee before the governing body of a public body of which the person is a member. This subsection does not apply to the person’s employer, business partner, or other associate.

The provisions of this section apply regardless of whether actual conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest are announced or disclosed under ORS 244.120

Honoraria

A public official may not solicit or receive, whether directly or indirectly, honoraria for the public official or any member of the household of the public official if the honoraria are solicited or received in connection with the official duties of the public official.

A public official may receive an honorarium or a certificate, plaque, commemorative token, or other item with a value of \$50 or less; or receive an honorarium for services performed in relation to the private profession, occupation, vocation or expertise of the public official or candidate.

Financial Interest in Public Contracts

A person who ceases to hold a position as a public official may not have a direct beneficial financial interest in a public contract for two years after the date the contract was authorized.

You are required to inform us of any activity that is ongoing or planned that may be or is against these laws. We will work with the State Ethics commission to determine the appropriate steps for resolution.

Failure to meet these standards will result in investigation and, depending on the outcome, result in discipline up to and including separation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

District Information

Employees may have access to confidential or sensitive information related to District operations, partners, programs, financial matters, or internal planning. This information must be used only for legitimate District business and may not be disclosed to unauthorized individuals. Confidential documents, files, and electronic records may not be removed from District premises except as required in the normal course of performing assigned duties.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential District information may result in corrective action, up to and including termination.

Landowner and Client Information

The District works directly with private landowners and agricultural producers who may provide personal, financial, or property-specific information as part of conservation planning, program applications, or grant-funded projects. This information may include, but is not limited to:

- Names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses
- Tax identification numbers or W-9 forms
- Property ownership information
- Maps, photos, and site-specific resource data
- Water rights, irrigation system details, or operational information
- Financial eligibility information required by grant programs
- Conservation plans, program participation, and project documentation

This information is confidential and may be used only for legitimate District business, program administration, reporting requirements, or as required by law. Employees must not disclose landowner information to outside parties without authorization from the District Manager or as required by statute, grant agreement, or interagency partnership.

Employee Information

The District collects and maintains personal information necessary for employment, payroll, benefits administration, and compliance with state and federal requirements. This may include:

- Contact information
- Emergency contacts
- Social Security numbers
- Date of birth
- Employment eligibility documentation
- Benefit enrollment information, including dependent data
- Payroll and tax information
- Training and certification records

Personal employee information is confidential. Access is limited to individuals with a legitimate business need, such as the District Manager, the Office Administrator, or others involved in authorized personnel actions. This section works in conjunction with the “Access to Personnel Files” and “Change in Personal Data” sections of this handbook.

Security of Records

Hard-copy records containing confidential information are stored in secure locations with access restricted to authorized staff. Electronic records are protected in accordance with District information-security practices, USDA requirements, and applicable state and federal laws.

Employees must take reasonable steps to protect confidential information from unauthorized access, disclosure, loss, or misuse.

Reporting a Potential Breach

Employees who become aware of a potential breach of confidentiality involving District information, employee information, or landowner/client information must report it promptly to the District Manager or Office Administrator. The District will review the incident and take appropriate action.

If a security breach involving personal information occurs, affected individuals will be notified as required by Oregon law.

WORKPLACE RULES

Wasco County SWCD believes policies and procedures are essential for the orderly operation of our business and for the protection and fair treatment of all employees. As a result, we have clearly identified performance expectations so that each employee behaves according to our workplace standards. Courtesy and common sense should always prevail. The following work rules are not all-inclusive and serve as guidelines to demonstrate the work behaviors considered important to Wasco County SWCD.

1. You are expected to be at work on time, to stay until your workday ends, and to do the work assigned or requested of you. If you are unable to be at work on time, you are expected to contact your immediate supervisor promptly.
2. You are expected to regard your workplace with respect and attention. Wasco County SWCD records, equipment, and property are to be treated carefully and appropriately. You are responsible for those items in your custody and will be held accountable for their maintenance, appropriate use, and accuracy.
3. You are expected to act in accordance with all appropriate codes, laws, regulations, and policies, regardless of whether they are set by Wasco County SWCD or by outside regulatory bodies.
4. You are expected to conduct yourself on the job and whenever representing Wasco County SWCD in a professional manner, exhibiting high regard for our customers, landowners, partners, vendors, business associates, and co-workers. No breach of professional behavior (such as abusive language, harassment, disruptive conduct, or conducting personal business during work time) will be condoned. This expectation also applies at conferences, trainings, community events, and District-hosted functions where alcohol may be served. Moderate and responsible alcohol consumption is permitted at such events; however, employees must remain professional, exercise good judgment, and ensure their behavior reflects positively on the District. Employees must not become impaired, engage in unsafe or inappropriate behavior, or consume alcohol if they are driving a District vehicle, performing safety-sensitive duties, or participating in field activities. Nothing in this rule alters the District's Drug-Free Workplace Policy, which prohibits reporting to work or performing duties while impaired by alcohol or any other substance.
5. Employees are also expected to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity and reputation of Wasco County SWCD, outside of working hours. When off-duty conduct comes to management's attention as a concern or complaint filed, it will be evaluated through a 'nexus test' to determine whether the off-duty behavior has a direct impact or connection to the employee's job duties, performance, or the interests of Wasco County SWCD. If it is determined that the off-duty conduct has a nexus to the workplace, the applicable policies and standards of this handbook will be applied.
6. You are expected to maintain confidentiality of organization information or customer information in your possession (i.e., personnel information, confidential or protected information, or other information covered under District policy or law).

7. You are expected to wear clothing that is neat in appearance and consistent with a professional atmosphere, keeping in mind the impression it has on customers, visitors, and other employees as well as the need to promote organization and employee safety. Good individual judgment is the best guideline, but management retains the right to decide what dress is appropriate.

This information regarding our behavioral expectations should help guide employee actions. You are urged to use reasonable judgment and to seek advice in doubtful or unclear situations. If all employees do their best to meet both the spirit and intent of these guidelines, disciplinary issues will be minimal. It is our policy to resolve conduct and performance problems in the most informal and positive manner possible; however, conduct which falls outside of the above guidelines will result in corrective action, up to and including termination.

We also believe that all our employees should have an opportunity to be heard on matters involving discipline; therefore, we have adopted a formal Dispute Resolution Procedure, which can be found in this Handbook.

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS

Wasco County SWCD encourages any employee with knowledge of an illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activity to report it promptly. Reports may be made to a direct supervisor or to the District Manager. Examples of illegal or dishonest activities include violations of federal, state, or local laws; misuse of public funds; billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered; and other fraudulent financial reporting. Employees may request additional information about this process from the District Manager.

If an employee has knowledge of, or a concern regarding, illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activity, the employee should immediately contact their direct supervisor or the District Manager. If the concern involves the District Manager, the employee may report the matter to the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors. Employees must exercise sound judgment and avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

Whistleblower protections are provided to maintain confidentiality and to prevent retaliation. Although an employee's identity may need to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, or to provide accused individuals with due process, the privacy of the individual making the report will be protected to the extent possible. Wasco County SWCD will not retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from adverse employment actions such as termination, compensation decreases, poor work assignments, or threats of physical harm. Any whistleblower who believes retaliation has occurred must contact the District Manager or, if the concern involves the District Manager, the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors. The right to protection from retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

Employees may also report concerns to appropriate state or federal regulatory agencies, law enforcement, or an attorney licensed to practice law in Oregon, as permitted under ORS 659A.200–224.

All reports of illegal or dishonest activities will be promptly submitted to the District Manager for review and coordination of any appropriate action. If the concern involves the District Manager or if internal reporting is not appropriate, the report will be submitted directly to the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors.

DRESS CODE AND GROOMING

Employees represent Wasco County SWCD in many different settings — in the office, out in the field, at partner meetings, and while working directly with agricultural producers and community members. Because our work spans both professional and outdoor environments, the District does not require a strict, business-style dress code. Instead, employees are expected to use good judgment and dress in a way that is safe, practical, and appropriate for the work they are performing that day.

General Expectations

- Clothing should be clean, neat, and in good condition.
- Jeans, work pants, T-shirts, and other casual clothing are acceptable as long as they are not overly revealing or inappropriate for a professional public setting.
- Clothing, jewelry, or accessories that could create a safety hazard should not be worn.
- Employees should be mindful of the impression they make when interacting with landowners, agricultural producers, agency partners, and the public.

Field Work

Field conditions require durable, protective clothing. Employees should wear:

- Long pants suitable for brush, uneven terrain, and weather
- Closed-toe shoes or boots appropriate for field conditions
- Any required personal protective equipment (PPE)

Employees may be asked to change into safer attire before participating in field activities.

Office and Meeting Settings

Casual attire is acceptable in the office. When attending meetings with partners, landowners, or community groups, employees should dress in a way that reflects professionalism and the nature of the meeting. Business attire is not required unless specifically requested for a particular event.

Appropriateness and Safety

The following are not appropriate in any work setting:

- Clothing that is overly revealing
- Clothing with offensive, discriminatory, or inappropriate graphics or language
- Items that interfere with safe movement or operation of equipment
- Excessively strong fragrances that may impact others

Hair, Grooming, and Personal Expression

The District values a diverse and inclusive workplace. Natural hair textures, protective hairstyles, cultural hairstyles, and personal grooming choices are respected. Discrimination based on hair or hairstyle is not permitted.

Questions and Clarification

Employees who are unsure whether certain clothing is appropriate for a specific activity or meeting should check with the District Manager or Office Administrator. Employees may be asked to change if clothing presents a safety issue or is clearly inappropriate for the work setting.

COMMUNICATION AND SOFTWARE SYSTEMS

Communications and Software Systems

Wasco County SWCD uses a variety of communication tools to support daily work, coordination with partners, and service to the public. These systems include computers, software, email, phones, mobile devices, messaging platforms, and USDA-managed networks. Employees are expected to use these tools responsibly, professionally, and in a way that supports District operations.

Because we work closely with NRCS and other agency partners, employees should follow the same general expectations for professionalism and security that apply within USDA offices.

Use of District and USDA Systems

District-provided communication systems are primarily for business use. Limited personal use is acceptable as long as it:

- does not interfere with work duties,
- does not disrupt others, and
- does not violate District or USDA policies.

Employees should not expect privacy when using District or USDA systems. Email, files, and electronic communications may be accessed as needed for business, security, or public-records purposes.

Professionalism and Appropriate Content

All electronic communications should reflect the same professionalism expected in written or in-person interactions. This includes:

- using respectful and appropriate language,
- avoiding content that could be harassing, discriminatory, or unprofessional,
- being mindful that emails and messages may be forwarded or become part of the public record.

Employees must not share confidential, sensitive, or proprietary information outside the District unless authorized.

Software and Device Security

To protect District and USDA systems:

- Only approved software may be installed on District or USDA computers.
- Employees must follow IT and security guidance provided by NRCS or the District.
- Laptops, tablets, and mobile devices must be secured when not in use, especially during travel or field work.
- Lost or stolen devices must be reported immediately.

Mobile Devices

Employees may use mobile devices, including District-issued phones and tablets, as well as personal phones, to support their work. Because our work often occurs in the field and across multiple partner locations, personal devices are sometimes used for convenience. When doing so, employees are expected to take reasonable steps to protect District information.

District-Issued Mobile Devices

The District is implementing mobile-device-management (MDM) software on District-owned phones and tablets. This allows the District to:

- enforce security settings,
- remotely disable or wipe a District-owned device if it is lost, stolen, or compromised, and
- manage District applications and data stored on the device.

Employees should avoid storing personal information on District-issued devices, as a remote wipe may be required to protect District data.

District-issued phones are provided for business use. Limited personal use is acceptable if it does not interfere with work duties and does not incur additional charges. Any personal charges incurred on a District-issued phone are the responsibility of the employee.

Lost or stolen District-owned devices must be reported immediately to the District Manager or Office Administrator.

Personal Mobile Devices

Employees may use personal phones for work-related communication as a matter of convenience. When doing so, employees are responsible for:

- maintaining a passcode or biometric lock,
- keeping operating systems updated,
- using secure apps and platforms to access District information, and
- avoiding the storage of confidential or sensitive District information on the device.

If a personal device used for District business is lost or stolen, employees must notify the District Manager so that District accounts can be secured and passwords changed.

Accessing District Information on Personal Devices

To protect District and USDA systems:

- District information should be accessed through secure platforms (email, Teams, shared drives) rather than downloaded or stored locally.
- Screenshots, photos, or temporary files containing District information should be deleted once no longer needed.
- Employees should avoid using personal devices for long-term storage of District documents or data.

Safety, Security and Productivity Expectations

Whether using a District-issued or personal device for work:

- Devices must be protected with a PIN, password, or biometric lock.
- Devices should be kept secure during travel and field work.
- Any suspected compromise of District information must be reported immediately.
- Personal calls, texting, and scrolling during the workday should be limited, as they can distract from work and disrupt others.

Cell Phone Use While Driving

To ensure the safety of employees and the public:

- Employees must follow all federal, state, and local laws regarding cell phone use while driving.
- The District strongly discourages the use of handheld devices while driving.
- If a call is necessary, employees should use hands-free options or safely pull over to a designated area before placing or answering a call.
- Cell phone use while driving should be kept to a minimum and avoided in hazardous conditions (e.g., heavy traffic, bad weather, unfamiliar areas).
- Employees are responsible for any fines, fees, or costs resulting from cell phone use while driving.

Public Records

Electronic communications related to District business, regardless of the device used, may be subject to Oregon public-records laws. Employees should keep this in mind when texting, emailing, or storing information on any device.

Internet and Online Tools

Internet use should support District business. Employees should avoid:

- accessing inappropriate or unsafe websites,
- downloading unapproved software,
- posting District information online without authorization.

Social Media

Employees may use social media for District business only when authorized. When representing the District:

- communications must be accurate, professional, and aligned with District messaging,
- employees must follow branding and confidentiality expectations,
- personal opinions must not be presented as District positions.

Personal social media use should not interfere with work duties or reflect poorly on the District.

In the case that a social media account is set up for business purposes, the organization has the right to review, edit, and delete content associated with the account. The organization will have access to information associated with the account such as the username and password, and any content associated with the account will be considered the property of the organization. If an employee separates from Wasco County SWCD, the organization has the right to assume control of this account.

Monitoring

While the organization does not routinely monitor social networking sites, other employers, organizations, and individuals do monitor and share information found on social networking websites. Again, posted information is public information.

Protection

Social networking sites collect profile information for advertising opportunities and criminal reasons. Phishing (e-mail messages asking for usernames and passwords, etc.) and spamming are two downsides. Never click on links asking for personal or confidential information. Heed security warnings and pop-ups. Use of these sites may mean more SPAM sent to your e-mail account. If possible, disable the ability of others to post HTML comments to your home page. When accessing these sites, use caution when you see a posting or link that looks suspicious; when in doubt, delete it. Viruses and spyware may damage the organization's operating system, compromise data, or expose your privacy and that of others you communicate with via e-mail and social media sites.

Be aware that others may piece together personal information for identity theft purposes. Be prudent in making comments or posts which reveal your or others' travel plans or divulge other safety-sensitive and private information.

Prohibited Conduct

Behavior and judgment in an electronic environment should mimic behavior in a physical setting. Employees are expressly prohibited from posting content that is malicious, abusive, threatening, intimidating, coercing, profane, disruptive, discriminatory, or harassing. Defamatory statements are prohibited, and employees should be aware they are personally responsible for the legal consequences of such statements.

Nothing in this policy should be interpreted as limiting an employee's right to engage in legally protected speech or other activity. Failure to adhere to these standards and to use appropriate protocols will lead to further corrective action, up to and including termination.

Telephone and Voicemail

District phones and voicemail systems are provided for business use. Limited personal calls are acceptable if they do not interfere with work. Employees should not access voicemail messages that are not intended for them. Unauthorized use of the telephone, including charging long-distance calls to the organization, will result in corrective action, up to and including termination.

Regardless of the media or device used, typically information generated or exchanged for the purpose of government work is subject to Public Records laws. While not all information is accessible by the public, our organization is required to maintain these records.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW

Wasco County SWCD uses a performance management system designed to support employee success, strengthen communication, and ensure the District is meeting its goals. All employees may receive a formal performance evaluation at least annually, and supervisors may provide additional informal feedback throughout the year.

The objectives of our performance management and formal appraisal process are to:

- Ensure employees understand expectations and how their performance aligns with established standards;
- Clarify how individual work supports District goals and the Annual Work Plan;
- Strengthen communication and provide meaningful feedback;
- Support consistent, objective, and fair decisions related to compensation, training, and development;
- Identify opportunities for growth, advancement, and skill-building; and
Maintain a permanent record of performance and contributions to the organization.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for supporting employee development and ensuring performance expectations are clear. This includes:

- Providing reasonable training and resources needed to perform assigned duties;
- Assigning, directing, and reviewing employee work;
- Offering coaching and assistance to help employees correct performance deficiencies; and
- Objectively evaluating employee performance during the evaluation period.

Our performance appraisal program is participatory and encourages employees to take an active role in their development. Employees are encouraged to:

- Ask for feedback periodically;
- Take initiative and accept additional responsibilities when appropriate;
- Explore opportunities for advancement or skill development;
- Request support in creating a purposeful development path; and
- Seek training that enhances skills or prepares them for future opportunities.

Performance evaluations serve as one factor in decisions related to employment such as training, merit pay increases, job assignments, employee development, promotions, and retention. Evaluations identify specific performance levels as compared to established standards, acknowledge the merit of outstanding performance, and prescribe the means and methods of improving performance deficiencies.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

Everyone benefits when we work together and conduct ourselves in a manner that reflects the best interests of both the organization and its employees. It is the philosophy of Wasco County SWCD to correct performance deficiencies and address violations of policies and work rules to correct situations and avoid repetition.

Employees will be informed if corrective action is necessary as soon as possible after any performance or conduct concern has been identified. Supervisors will discuss the situation with the employee, explain expectations and the need for corrective action to avoid additional disciplinary measures.

Although one or more corrective action measures may be taken in connection with a particular situation, no formal order will be followed. Corrective action may include any of a variety of actions depending on the circumstances and severity of the situation.

Corrective actions taken at the discretion of management may include **any** of the following:

- Verbal counseling with you, which may be confirmed in writing and placed in the personnel file as appropriate.
- Written warning, which will be placed in the personnel file.
- Suspension, with or without pay, which will be confirmed in writing and placed in the personnel file. Suspension may be used during an investigation or as a disciplinary action.
- Demotion or reassignment, which will be documented in the personnel file.
- Termination, which will be documented in the personnel file.

The corrective action process will not always commence with verbal counseling or include every step listed above. The above options are not to be seen as a process in which one step always follows another. Some acts, particularly those that are intentional or serious, unlawful, or pose a risk to the District, its employees, or the public, may warrant more severe action on the first or a subsequent offense. Consideration will be given to the seriousness of the offense, any change in behavior, and the circumstances surrounding the offense.

Counseling, verbal warning and written warnings may be undertaken by the District Manager without prior approval from the Board Chair. However, the Vice Chair must be informed by the District Manager of any such action taken. Suspension with or without pay, demotion and discharge require prior approval from the Board Chair before the action is taken.

COMPENSATION

PAY ADMINISTRATION

Wasco County SWCD values high quality work from its employees and is committed to compensating employees for their efforts and results. It is our intent to provide a competitive compensation package that will attract, retain, and motivate employees. It is also our intent that policies and pay practices be administered consistently throughout the organization to ensure internal equity is achieved.

Employees have the right to discuss their wages amongst themselves if they choose. As pay information can be personal for some individuals, the District expects these conversations to be conducted with courtesy and respect.

Salary Placement Upon Hire

Your pay as a new employee is established based on the pay level of current employees performing work of comparable character and based upon factors such as your previous experience, and education. Salary placement will be administered and interpreted in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, including the Oregon Equal Pay Act (ORS 652.210–652.235; ORS 659A.357; OAR 839-008).

Salary upon Promotion

A promotion is defined as movement from one position to another with higher-level duties and a higher salary range. Upon promotion, Wasco County SWCD normally places the employee at the next higher step in the new salary range. Promotional increases are generally up to five percent (5%), subject to budget approval and available funding. The District ensures that a promotional placement does not result in a reduction in the employee's current rate of pay.

Promotional placements must consider internal equity and comply with the Oregon Equal Pay Act. The District will retain documentation on the established rate of the promotional pay amount.

Salary upon Demotion

Upon demotion, Wasco County SWCD normally reduces the employee's pay to the top step of the new classification if the employee's current pay is above that range. If the employee's current pay falls within the new range, the District may maintain the current rate of pay unless an internal equity assessment supports a different placement. The District will retain documentation on the established rate of upon demotion.

Pay while Temporarily Working at Higher Level

When the District Manager formally assigns an employee to temporarily perform higher-level duties for a full pay period or more, the employee may receive a temporary increase in pay for the duration of the assignment. Temporary increases are generally up to five percent (5%) or may be set within the salary range of the higher-level classification, as appropriate to the additional responsibilities.

Temporary higher-level assignments are made by the District Manager based on organizational need and must be authorized in advance, in writing, and included in the employee's personnel and payroll files. Temporary higher-level pay applies only to duties that the District Manager assigns as part of an operational need and will conclude when the assignment ends or when

funding is no longer available. The District will retain documentation supporting the temporary pay decision.

Merit Pay Increases

It is Wasco County SWCD's policy to reward employees with increases in pay for dedication in their work, extra effort, and contributory performance. Management does not award increases on an automatic basis. Recommended increases become effective upon approval of the District Manager and through the annual budget process approved by the Board (or designated authority).

Employees may provide a summary of accomplishments to support the performance review process.

Cost of Living Increase

These are considered annually but are not guaranteed and subject to board approval.

Pay Differentials

Pay differentials may be provided by Wasco County SWCD when certain certifications are required to perform the duties and responsibilities of the job. The following differential is offered:

Differential Title: Conservation Planner Certification (Proficiency-Pay)

- Eligibility criteria: Possession and maintenance of USDA NRCS Conservation Planner Certification
- Differential Amount: \$30 per pay period (\$60 per month)
- Accountability: Annual certification must be provided to the District Manager and Office Administration within five (5) business days of recertification or certificate gained. If certification lapses, an employee must notify management immediately.

In the event certification is not maintained, or the employee's job primary job duties no longer require certification, proficiency pay will cease the next pay period following decertification.

PAY ADMINISTRATION

Pay Orientation

At the time of hire, Wasco County SWCD provides employees with a written explanation of the earnings and deductions that appear on their itemized pay statement. This information is reviewed and updated annually to ensure accuracy. Employees will have access to information describing:

- a) All pay rates that employees may be eligible for include, hourly or salary rates, and any differentials, as applicable.
- b) All benefit deductions and contributions with corresponding payroll code and definition of each.
- c) All other deductions with definitions of each.
- d) Any allowances, if any, claimed as part of minimum wage.

Paydays

Employees are paid semi-monthly, on the 15th and the last day of each month. If payday falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or banking holiday, wages will be paid on the preceding Friday. If payday falls on a District holiday, wages will be paid on the last workday prior to the holiday.

Hourly employees are paid for hours worked through the District's established payroll cutoff date for each pay period. Salaried employees receive their regular salary on each payday.

Pay Statements

Each pay statement shall include the following information to provide transparency for an employee:

- a) The date of payment
- b) Dates of work covered by the payment
- c) The name of the employee
- d) The name and business registry number or business identification number
- e) The address and telephone number of the employer
- f) The rate or rates of pay for each type of work: regular and overtime.
- g) The salary basis – hourly or salaried
- h) Gross wages
- i) Net wages
- j) The amount and purpose of each deduction – full definitions of deductions are available from the payroll office
- k) Allowance, if any, claim as part of minimum wage
- l) Accrual balances for applicable leave categories

Payroll Deductions

Certain mandatory and elective deductions which are made from employee pay are noted on the paycheck stub. The only deductions made are those mandated by law or authorized by the employee in writing.

Pay Advances

Wasco County SWCD does not provide pay advances. Employees experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to seek appropriate community or financial resources for assistance.

Delivery of Paychecks

Employees are normally paid by direct deposit. A statement showing gross earnings, deductions, and net salary will accompany each deposit notification. Employees who do not use direct deposit will receive a paper paycheck delivered at the workplace on payday. Paychecks will not be delivered to anyone else without a written request from the employee.

Method of Payment

Employees will receive an itemized pay statement each payday, either electronically or in paper form, showing gross earnings, deductions, and net pay. Direct deposit is the District's standard method of payment.

Employee Withholding Allowance Certificates (Form W-4)

You are required to furnish the organization with an Employee Withholding Exemption Certificate (W-4) at the time of hire. You may file a new W-4 form any time. When you submit an updated Form W-4, the organization will implement the desired changes by the start of the first payroll period ending on or after the 30th day from the submission date. We encourage employees to seek tax advice if they have questions about withholding amounts.

Time Records for Non-Exempt Employees

Non-exempt employees must complete the District's electronic timekeeping workbook daily to record hours worked, leave used, and compliance with required rest and meal periods. Accurate daily timekeeping is required by wage and hour laws and is used to calculate overtime and compensatory time.

Time records must be complete and submitted electronically at the end of each pay period. Time records are reviewed electronically by the District Manager or supervisor. Any corrections must be made, reviewed, and approved electronically. Willfully falsifying a time record is grounds for corrective action, up to and including termination.

Time Records for Exempt Employees

Exempt employees also complete the District's electronic timekeeping workbook to track hours worked, leave used, and hours billable to grants and funding sources. Timekeeping for exempt employees is used for project tracking, grant compliance, and leave reporting, not for payroll calculation.

Exempt employees submit their time records electronically at the end of each pay period. Time records are reviewed electronically by the District Manager or supervisor. Any corrections must be made, reviewed, and approved electronically.

Overpayments

When a public employee is overpaid and receives funds not due to them, the employer may deduct the amount of the overpayment from the employee wages in accordance with the following:

- a) If the over payment occurred during the 364-day period immediately preceding the discovery, employer shall provide the employee with a written notice, at least ten calendar days before making a deduction.
- b) The total amount of the deduction may not exceed five percent of the employee's gross pay each pay period, unless the employee requests that a greater percentage or amount is deducted.

- c) If an employee is terminated or separates from employment, the District can recoup the balance owed from the employee's final paycheck.

The written notice of overpayment shall include the following information:

- a) the reason the overpayment occurred,
- b) the total amount of the overpayment,
- c) the purpose of each deduction in the deduction transaction,
- d) the amount of deduction (lump sum or repayment schedule including amount and dates of deduction transactions)
- e) the date the deduction to occur
- f) space for the employee's signature authorizing deduction

Dispute Resolution Process for Paycheck Errors

Employees who have questions about their pay or believe an error has occurred should promptly contact the Office Administrator or District Manager for review and correction.

Final Paycheck

Employees who resign or retire are asked to provide at least ten working days' notice. If an employee provides at least 48 hours' notice (excluding weekends and holidays), the final paycheck will be issued on the last day worked. If less notice is provided, the final paycheck will be issued within five business days (excluding weekends and holidays) or on the next regularly scheduled payday, whichever occurs first.

Final paychecks include all wages earned through the last workday and payment for any accrued and vested benefits due at separation, consistent with District policy.

HOURS OF WORK AND WORK SCHEDULES

Organization Hours

The general office hours at Wasco County SWCD are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Specific workday and workweek schedules for each employee may be adjusted by the District Manager based on the organization's needs. The District will attempt to provide two weeks' notice of schedule changes when possible; however, management reserves the right to modify schedules as needed.

The normal workday is 8 hours. The total hours in a normal workweek are 40. The official work week is Sunday from 12:01am through Saturday at midnight. If you are a non-exempt employee, you should not begin work before your normal starting time or continue working beyond the normal quitting time without explicit advance approval from your supervisor. Employees are expected to work their full schedule unless using approved leave.

Work Expectations

All full-time regular staff (exempt and non-exempt) are scheduled and expected to work 40 hours per week.

Flex Schedules

FLSA non-exempt employees may request a flexible schedule within the same work week. Flex requests allow employees to preserve accrued leave without creating overtime liability, subject to prior management approval.

Overtime

You may occasionally be required to work overtime. Overtime hours will be paid to non-exempt employees at one and one-half times (1.5x) the regular rate of pay for all hours worked more than forty in a regular workweek, or as otherwise required by state and federal laws. Paid time off will not be considered when computing overtime. All overtime must be approved in advance by the supervisor (verbal, written, or email) with consideration of workload, comp-time balances, and budget before approving overtime. Supervisors must document overtime approval in a brief note, email, or timesheet comment so payroll and management can verify authorization. Unauthorized overtime will be compensated as required by law but may result in corrective action, up to termination.

Compensatory Time

The District provides compensatory time off in lieu of paid overtime.

Non-exempt employees earn 1.5 hours of compensatory time for every hour worked beyond forty (40) in a workweek.

Exempt employees may earn compensatory time at a 1:1 rate for hours worked beyond forty (40) in a workweek. Compensatory time is not earned for working more than eight (8) hours in a day unless total weekly hours exceed forty (40). Exempt management staff may exceed the standard comp-time cap under documented special circumstances.

Compensatory time can accrue up to 80 hours.

Upon separation, employees are paid for all unused compensatory time at their current hourly rate.

Meal and Rest Periods

Meal and rest periods are provided in accordance with Oregon law. Non-exempt employees are not permitted to work through a meal period unless approval from their supervisor, in an emergency, is obtained before the scheduled meal break. In these situations, the meal period will be paid time.

- **Non-exempt employees** must take a 30-minute unpaid meal period for each work shift over six hours and two paid 15-minute rest breaks per full workday.
- **Exempt employees** are encouraged to take appropriate meal and rest breaks to support wellbeing and productivity.

Meal and rest break schedules may be adjusted by supervisors to meet operational needs.

Heat Illness Prevention Breaks

Oregon OSHA requires employers to provide breaks and other appropriate measures for employees whose work environment, heat index equals or exceeds 80 degrees Fahrenheit. The heat illness prevention rest breaks and other appropriate measures may at the same time as required meal or rest periods if the timing of the break coincides with the required meal or rest period. (Reference Oregon Administrative Rule 437-002-0156)

Wildfire Smoke Exposure

Oregon OSHA requires employers to take protective measures when employees may be exposed to wildfire smoke. When the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches 101 or higher, the District will implement required protections, which may include relocating work to an indoor or enclosed space with filtered air, providing NIOSH-approved respirators for voluntary use, adjusting work tasks or schedules, or monitoring employees for symptoms of smoke exposure. (Reference Oregon Administrative Rule 437-002-1081)

When the AQI reaches 201 or higher, additional mandatory protections apply, including required respirator use unless an exemption applies.

Lactation Breaks

Wasco County SWCD supports employees who need to express breast milk at work. Until their babies are 18 months old, employees may take reasonable rest periods to express breast milk. Nursing/lactation breaks may be taken concurrently with regular meal and rest breaks, although additional reasonable break time will be made available, as needed. Management and employees will work together to find mutually agreeable hours of work and breaks which support the continuation of expressing breast milk.

If an employee perceives or observes adverse treatment with respect to the expression of breast milk, a supervisor/manager should be informed immediately.

Wasco County SWCD will provide a private space with an electrical outlet, within the office building, to express breast milk. This space may vary according to available empty rooms. Check

with the District Manager. Hand-washing facilities and a refrigerator will also be available at all sites and appropriate signage for privacy will be supplied.

Employees will be responsible for the storage of expressed milk. The milk, if stored in the refrigerator provided, must be clearly labeled with the employee's name. To ensure the safety of stored breast milk, it is recommended that the container used to store the milk be sealed in a plastic bag to prevent contamination.

Social and Recreational Activities

Participation in off-duty social or recreational activities such as organization picnics and holiday parties is entirely voluntary. Participation or nonparticipation will not affect your wages, hours, working conditions, or present or future employment opportunities.

Inclement Weather and Emergency Closures

Emergencies such as severe weather, fires, power failures, earthquakes, and other natural disasters can disrupt organizational operations. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require the closing of our office.

If Wasco County SWCD makes the decision to close the office prior to the start of the business day, the closure will be announced via an organization-wide email from the District Manager. It is the responsibility of each employee to check e-mail and call the District Manager for an update, if there is any doubt regarding office operations. If a decision is made to close the office after the business day has already begun, the closure message will also be announced via e-mail.

The District strives to treat all employees fairly during emergency closures while complying with federal and state wage laws.

Exempt employees will be paid for absences related to emergency closures. Under federal law, exempt employees must receive their full salary for any week in which they perform work, and the District cannot reduce pay when the closure is initiated by the employer. Exempt employees are still expected to work their full weekly schedule when operations resume or when remote work is available.

Non-exempt employees will not be paid for time away from work due to office closure; however, with supervisory approval, available vacation time may be used. Non-exempt employees who have reported to work before the decision to close is made will be paid for time worked, or a minimum of two (2) hours, whichever is greater.

TELEWORK / TELECOMMUTE

Telework (alternatively telecommute) is a flexibility that may be available to some positions within the organization. Telework may be regular, occasional, or intermittent, depending on job duties and operational needs.

All telework and telecommute arrangements require prior approval of the District Manager and may be changed at the discretion of the District Manager. Telework and telecommute may be permissible for some jobs and not all jobs.

Employees are responsible for ensuring a safe work environment when teleworking. Employees are also responsible to meet the expectations of their job regardless of where the job is done. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring compliance with these types of agreements, relevant policies, performance standards, expectations for work product and productivity, and time accountability.

Any employee who is teleworking must be available during established work hours and provide timely responses to email, phone calls etc. Absences, including unavailability during work hours, must be pre-approved. Employees must account for all time worked. Supervisors may consider an employee's request to alter regular work hours in the same way they would evaluate these requests for a person working at an organization address or regular worksite.

An employee's salary, benefits and insurance coverage do not change because of teleworking.

Employees are responsible for using Wasco County SWCD networks and systems in a safe and secure manner as directed by the District Manager and consistent with District and USDA data security requirements.

Telework arrangements are planned arrangements. Employees and supervisors must work together to determine whether telework is appropriate and to document the details of the arrangement in a Telework or Flex Schedule Agreement.

Information Technology

Teleworking employees are expected to set up a remote office and use both organization and/or their own equipment without direct physical help from organization. While any equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by or at the direction of organization, employees are responsible for the safe and secure transportation of equipment to and from the office.

Employees are expected to have sufficient telephone access and internet connection to perform their work and to participate in telephone or online conferences during agreed-upon work hours.

The District will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, what equipment will be supplied for each teleworking situation. The employee must sign an inventory of District property and agree in writing to take appropriate action to protect the inventoried items from loss, damage or theft.

All equipment supplied by the District will be maintained by or at the direction of the District. Equipment supplied by the employee will be maintained by the employee. The District accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment.

All equipment and software supplied by the District are only for District business and must comply with the District's security and maintenance policies and practices. Portable equipment must always have District-authorized security measures installed and running.

If the teleworking employee provides equipment, the employee-provided equipment must comply with the District's security and maintenance policies and practices, and any additional safeguards required by the District.

Employees will notify the District immediately in the event of a breakdown or other issue with supplied equipment, software, or other materials. Employees will follow the District's direction regarding any necessary repair, update, replacement, etc.

Upon separation of employment, or discontinuation of a planned arrangement, whichever comes first, all District property issued to the teleworking employee must be returned.

District information stored on any employee's personal electronic equipment is subject to public records requests and discovery, and to review by the District at any time.

Security

Employees are expected to ensure the protection of District and USDA information accessible from their home office.

Steps include making sure that:

- All devices have anti-virus software.
- All Wi-Fi, cellular or similar access points are protected with strong passwords or passphrases.
- All Wi-Fi, cellular or similar access point passwords or passphrases are changed on a regular and scheduled basis.
- Login and password information is secure and protected, even from family members.
- Basic network practices are being applied (e.g., firewalls, secure connections).
- Ensuring web-based systems are accessed via secure ("https") sites.
- Two factor authentication is enabled and being used when available.
- All data is saved to organization authorized shared network drives or cloud locations (e.g., OneDrive. Similarly, no data is saved or stored on portable machines (e.g., C-Drive or Desktop).
- VPN access is only via District issued devices. No personal devices are connected via VPN.

Physical Security

Employees must ensure physical security of District information and equipment at the remote worksite. This includes:

- Storing confidential or sensitive materials securely
- Securing doors and windows
- Keeping equipment out of sight when not in use

- Preventing unauthorized individuals from accessing District information or systems

Employees must follow all District policies related to information and data security. When accessing District systems from a personal device, employees are responsible for preventing unauthorized access and ensuring the device is not simultaneously connected to other networks except personal networks under the employee's full control.

Illegal activity through District networks or on District time is prohibited. Employees are responsible for any misuse of their access. The District may review or remove District information from personal devices as required by law or policy.

Technology Support

The District will provide support only for District-issued devices and District-managed connections.

Workers' Compensation

If the employee is approved for teleworking or telecommuting from a location outside Oregon, the District will confirm reciprocal workers compensation coverage applies while on the approved assignment or work agreement.

EMPLOYEE-INCURRED EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENT

Wasco County SWCD will pay all actual and reasonable business-related expenses you incur while performing your job responsibilities. All such expenses must be pre-approved by the District Manager before payment is made. All travel must also be pre-approved in writing by the District Manager prior to registration or travel, consistent with District travel policy.

Expense Reimbursement Procedure and Reports

Requests for expense and mileage reimbursement must be submitted timely. It is preferred that they be submitted no less frequently than quarterly, and all requests should be submitted by the end of the fiscal year. Supporting documentation and/or itemized receipts must be provided for each request.

Expense reimbursements will not be paid unless and/or until all itemized receipts are provided or, if lost, a note with a description of the business activity and expense. Travel reimbursement forms must be submitted within one week of returning from travel, consistent with District travel procedures.

Mileage Reimbursement

While in the course and scope of duties on behalf of Wasco County SWCD, employees, with their supervisor's approval, may use their vehicle for business purposes. While driving on behalf of Wasco County SWCD and in the course and scope of duties assigned, liability would accrue to Wasco County SWCD for negligent actions. As such, employees are encouraged to follow all rules of the road and drive courteously. Coverage provided by Wasco County SWCD for damages to the employee's own vehicle is secondary to any other collectible coverage. Employees are encouraged to have comprehensive and collision coverage on vehicles used for Wasco County SWCD business.

When you use your own vehicle for organization business, you will be reimbursed for organization-related business travel at the current IRS determined rate per mile.

To recover these costs, an expense report must be signed by you and dated, initialed by the District Manager, and submitted to the Office Administrator for processing according to policy. If you have questions about expense reports and mileage allowances, please ask.

Credit Card Payment

If a credit card is provided to you, the employee, all receipts must be provided monthly to the Office Administrator for the credit card reconciliation process. You must follow the protocol for reconciliation of your statement and submission of documentation as required by the Office Administrator. This may include the utilization of an electronic system provided by the financial institution that the credit card is tied to.

Employees may expense and/or use a company provided credit card, for business related activities or incidental supplies following IRS guidelines.

Overnight Travel Reimbursements

When an employee is traveling overnight for District business, the District will reimburse lodging, mileage, and necessary incidental expenses in accordance with the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Statewide Travel Policy. Reimbursement is limited to actual, reasonable, and necessary business expenses and must comply with current DAS rates and rules.

Meals / Per Diem

Wasco County SWCD follows the Oregon DAS meal per diem rates, including first-day and last-day travel percentages and non-overnight meal rules. Employees may not claim more than the applicable DAS per diem amount for any meal unless prior approval is obtained from the District Manager. Meal per diem amounts are inclusive of gratuity and are based on the travel location and dates as published in the current DAS per diem schedule. Per diem is paid to the employee following authorized travel.

Exceeding DAS per diem limits

Wasco County SWCD recognizes that there may be certain group meal functions at locations where a conference/training is held where exceeding the meal per diem limits may be acceptable. Such situations should be known in advance and prior approval obtained in writing from the District Manager.

Lodging

Lodging will be reimbursed at actual cost up to the maximum DAS lodging rate for the travel location, plus applicable room taxes. Employees should request government rates when available.

Documentation

Employees must submit itemized receipts for lodging and any reimbursable incidental expenses. Meal receipts are not required when claiming DAS per diem rates. All travel reimbursement requests must be submitted on the District's Travel Expense Detail Sheet.

Alcoholic Beverages

Wasco County SWCD will not pay for alcoholic beverages, and such costs should not be submitted for reimbursement.

Transportation Expense Reimbursement

Transportation costs may only be expensed upon prior written approval from the District Manager. Transportation costs include such items as airfare, airport parking, hotel shuttles, automobile rental, and fuel for such rental.

Spouse/Guest Expense Reimbursement

Wasco County SWCD will not pay for meals or entertainment of spouses/guest/significant others.

Wasco County SWCD expects its employees to use good judgment and reserves the right to deny an expense if, in management's belief, it is unreasonable.

PAY EQUITY

Wasco County SWCD strives to ensure all employees receive an equitable total compensation package based on a variety of factors relating to their position, job performance, education, and experience. From time-to-time, employees performing work of comparable character may have different compensation levels. Any such differences will be based on Wasco County SWCD's objective processes for evaluating an employee's work and one or more of the following factors: seniority, merit, quantity or quality of work, workplace location, regular and necessary travel, education, training, experience, or any combination of those factors. Employees who believe they are not being compensated fairly are encouraged to discuss the matter with the District Manager to obtain clarification.

BENEFITS

PURPOSE AND POLICY

Wasco County SWCD strives to provide equitable and cost-effective benefits for employees in recognition of the influence benefits have on employees' economic and personal welfare. Our benefits program is a significant supplement to your pay and should be viewed as additional compensation.

Policies, provisions, and procedures that govern the organization's benefit program apply to all regular full-time and part-time employees, whether exempt or non-exempt, unless otherwise stated in a particular benefit plan. Benefits do not apply to hourly part-time, seasonal, temporary, or on-call employees.

Some benefits may accrue during your new-hire introductory period, but in most cases eligibility to use these benefits will not occur until you obtain regular employee status or meet other conditions of employment specified in the Handbook or contained in the benefit policy/plan booklets.

Benefit Pro-ration and Employee Cost Sharing

If you are a regular part-time employee, your benefits are prorated based upon the number of hours you work. You accrue vacation and sick leave benefits at a lower rate than a full-time employee because your accrual rate is based on fewer hours.

Discretionary employee benefits not mandated by state or federal law are selected and controlled by Wasco County SWCD. Decisions to provide these benefits are based on such considerations as cost, composition of our workforce, operational efficiency, and desirability of benefit provisions. When costs of discretionary insurance benefit plans exceed the organization's interest in or ability to pay the full premium, we will require you to share in the cost of your coverage.

Benefit Design and Modification

Wasco County SWCD reserves the right to design plan provisions and to add, eliminate, or otherwise modify the benefits described in this Handbook or elsewhere in plan documents when it is in the organization's best interest. Consider that changes to benefits may occur at management's discretion prior to making a serious, long-term decision based solely on current benefit offerings.

Benefit Plan Documents

You will receive summary plan descriptions upon eligibility and enrollment. The benefit programs are explicitly defined in legal documents, including insurance contracts, official plan texts, and trust agreements. In the event of a conflict between these documents and this policy, the plan documents govern. These official documents are available from the Office Administrator for your review. We ask that you refer any questions about this information to the Office Administrator.

Individual benefits may be modified, become more expensive, or may even be eliminated in the future because of cost increases or because of changes in our business situation or economic conditions. We encourage you to be thoughtful about relying solely on these benefits, given that they are subject to change. Upon separation from employment, employees may be eligible for the continuation of benefits consistent with state and federal law. Any benefits described in this Handbook apply only so long as the Handbook is current; employees do not have vested rights.

HEALTH INSURANCE & VISION BENEFIT

Wasco County SWCD currently provides health insurance coverage for all employees and their dependents if they are otherwise eligible to participate in the plan. You will be provided with information about the plan at the time you become eligible to participate. You are asked to review the summary plan description for answers to questions you may have. Any need for further information should be referred to the Office Administrator.

Eligibility

This benefit is provided for all regular full time and regular part-time employees. If otherwise eligible, you may begin to participate in the plan after you have completed 60 days of continuous employment. Insurance plan coverage begins on the first day of the month following completion of 60 days of employment. Hourly part-time, temporary, seasonal, and on-call employees are not eligible to participate in the health insurance plan.

Plan Enrollment

Once you are eligible, enrollment forms are required and are available through the Office Administrator. If you do not want to enroll at the time of eligibility and later decide to request enrollment, you will only be allowed to enroll if you can demonstrate that a qualifying event has occurred which qualifies you for a special enrollment period.

The organization pays 100% of the full monthly premium for enrolled regular full-time employees. If you are a regular part-time employee, you will receive a proportionately smaller (pro-rated) organizational contribution to your insurance premium.

Insurance coverage for your dependents is also available. The District aids with the cost by contributing 75% of the monthly premium and the employee is responsible for the remaining 25% of premiums through pre-tax payroll deduction, each pay period.

An eligible employee who chooses not to enroll in the insurance plan may submit a written waiver request to opt-out of participation in plans offered. With wavier approval, regular full-time employees receive \$375/month (\$187.50 per pay period). Regular part-time workers receive a prorated share proportional to the number of hours they are regularly scheduled to work.

Medical information is covered by HIPAA regulations. Wasco County SWCD realizes the responsibility we must treat your private health information with great care and discretion. We have implemented safeguards to protect this information.

Premium Cost

Specific types of coverage and benefit payment schedules are described in the organization's health care plan booklet that is available to all eligible employees. At the time of eligibility and during open enrollment each year, you will be informed of how much the District will contribute toward your monthly premiums if you are eligible to participate in the plan. Premium rates are established by the insurance carrier and are subject to change, usually based on increased costs to provide medical services and the number of services our employees require.

Any premium co-payment and dependent coverage you are required to pay is funded through a semi-monthly payroll deduction. Wasco County SWCD determines the payroll deduction schedule.

Termination of Coverage

In the event that you or your dependents lose eligibility to participate in the health plan, you may have the health plan coverage extended for a period of time. Eligibility can be lost due to a prolonged absence from work or if certain “qualifying events” occur that would otherwise cause your or a dependent’s group health coverage to terminate. Examples of qualifying events are termination of employment, a reduction in hours, divorce or legal separation, entitlement to benefits under Medicare, a dependent child reaching the age of 26, or a leave of absence. You must notify us or the plan when a dependent child loses eligibility or in the event of divorce or legal separation.

You, your spouse, and dependents may continue group health insurance for a certain period of time at your own expense under COBRA. However, continuation does not occur automatically. You and any dependents have 60 days to enroll in the plan, which starts on the later of a) the date the election notice is received or b) the date you and any dependent would otherwise lose coverage; you have 45 days to pay the initial premium. Coverage will be retroactive to the date of the qualifying event. You and any covered dependent will receive information about the provisions of the law when you first enroll in benefits and again if a qualifying event occurs.

You, your spouse, and dependents may continue group health insurance in accordance with COBRA those eligible for up to 18, 29, 36 months, plus retiree eligibility at your own expense if you were enrolled in the plan for at least one month. However, continuation does not occur automatically. You must elect coverage. You and any dependents have 60 days to enroll in the plan, which starts on the later of a) the date the election notice is received or b) the date you and any dependent would otherwise lose coverage, or you and any dependent will lose the right to state continuation coverage. Payment of the premium must then occur within 45 days for coverage to continue. You and any covered dependent(s) will receive information about the provisions of the law when you first enroll in benefits and again if a qualifying event occurs.

DENTAL INSURANCE BENEFIT

Wasco County SWCD provides a Dental Insurance plan for employees.

Eligibility

Regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible for dental insurance coverage following 90 days of employment. Hourly part-time, temporary, seasonal and on-call employees are not eligible to participate in dental insurance.

Cost

The organization pays 100% of dental insurance premiums for regular full-time employees and a pro rata portion for regular part time employees.

Dental insurance coverage for your dependents is also available. The District aids with the cost by contributing 75% of the monthly premium and the employee is responsible for the remaining 25% of premiums through pre-tax payroll deduction, each pay period.

Plan Enrollment

Once you become eligible, enrollment forms can be obtained from the Office Administrator. If you decline enrollment at that time and later wish to enroll, you will need to demonstrate a qualifying event that permits a special enrollment period, or you may enroll during the next open enrollment period.

OTHER INSURANCE BENEFITS

Group Life Insurance

Regular full-time employees are eligible for 100% employer paid life insurance premiums. The amount of insurance coverage is equal to your base annual salary, up to a \$50,000 maximum.

Regular part-time, hourly part-time, seasonal, temporary, and on-call employees are not eligible for this insurance.

Eligibility

Employees become eligible for this coverage after 90 days of employment with the District.

Plan Enrollment

Once you become eligible, enrollment forms can be obtained from the Office Administrator. If you decline enrollment at that time and later wish to enroll, you will need to demonstrate a qualifying event that permits a special enrollment period, or you may enroll during the next open enrollment period.

Premium Only 125 Plan

Wasco County SWCD provides a Premium Only 125 Plan that allows employees to have any group medical, dental, or vision premium contributions deducted from their checks on a pre-tax basis. Details will be provided to employees at the time of eligibility, which is the first day after 60 days of employment.

OPTIONAL BENEFITS

The District also allows enrollment in Aflac at the employee's discretion. Types of plans available are Short Term Disability, Hospital Indemnity, Accident, Critical Illness, Cancer Coverage, Supplemental Dental and Vision as well as whole or term life. If interested in learning more about any of the AFLAC plans, the Office Administrator can provide contact information for the AFLAC plan representative.

ANNUAL LEAVE / VACATION BENEFIT

We provide vacation and personal time so you can enjoy periods of time away from work. Vacation is intended for rest and recreation, and vacation pay may not be taken instead of time off.

All regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible for vacation based on the schedule below. Accrual for regular part-time employees is on a pro-rated basis calculated on the established work schedule. Hourly part-time, seasonal, temporary, and on-call employees are not eligible for this benefit.

All accruals begin upon hiring, although paid vacation leave may not be used until the employee successfully completed 90 days of employment. At the end of the specified initial employment period, credit is given from the first day of employment. No vacation time may be taken or paid during the introductory period, unless specific arrangements have been made at the time of hire and documented in writing. The District Manager may grant leave during the probationary period in extenuating circumstance.

You will earn vacation benefits according to the following schedule:

<i>Years of Continuous District Service</i>	<i>Annual Vacation Accrual</i>	<i>Monthly Accrual</i>	<i>Bi-Monthly Accrual</i>
0–5 years	12 days / 96 hours	8 hours	4 hours
5–10 years	15 days / 120 hours	10 hours	5 hours
10–15 years	18 days / 144 hours	12 hours	6 hours
15–20 years	21 days / 168 hours	14 hours	7 hours
20+ years	24 days / 192 hours	16 hours	8 hours

New accrual rates are effective and pro-rated in the pay period in which the anniversary date falls. Example: If the anniversary falls within the 1st week of a pay period, leave is accrued at the full bi-monthly accrual for the new Years of Service category. If it falls within the 2nd week of a pay period leave is accrued at ½ of the Bi-monthly accrual for the new Years of Service category.

Employees who want to use vacation time should request time off as early as possible so that arrangements for coverage can be made. Requests for vacation time are to be made in writing and submitted to your supervisor. We will try to grant each request, but we cannot guarantee your request will be approved. In the event of competing requests for times submitted concurrently, approval will be given to the employee with the longest tenure.

Time is not to be banked and never used; therefore, accrual cannot exceed 240 hours. Vacation benefits will stop accruing when the maximum allowed has been reached. The benefit will begin accruing again when you reduce the total to less than the allowed maximum.

Vacation accrual will be paid out at separation in accordance with this policy and any applicable law.

SICK LEAVE

Wasco County SWCD provides paid sick leave to all employees in accordance with state law. For any questions about sick leave, please contact the Office Administrator.

Sick leave begins accruing on the first day of employment.

- Regular Full-Time Employees: Accrue 8 hours of sick leave per month, up to a maximum accrual of 160 hours.
- All other employees, including Regular Part-Time, Hourly, Temporary, and Seasonal Employees: Accrue 1 hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked, up to a maximum accrual of 160 hours.

Employees may begin using accrued sick leave on the 91st calendar day of employment. Sick leave may be used as it is accrued thereafter.

Employees may carry over any unused sick time from one year to the next, up to a maximum accrual of 160 hours.

Under Oregon law, up to 40 hours of accrued sick leave per year are considered “protected leave.” Protected leave may be used for any qualifying purpose under Oregon Sick Time statutes. Sick leave accrued and used beyond the 40 protected hours is allowed by the District as an additional benefit and is not considered protected leave under state law.

Sick time may be used for an employee’s own serious or non-serious illness, for preventative care appointments, donating blood, to care for an immediate family member with an illness. Wasco County SWCD does not allow employees to donate sick time to other employees. Unused sick time is not paid out upon separation from employment.

PAID HOLIDAY BENEFIT

Wasco County SWCD observes all federal holidays each year and our offices are officially closed on these days:

- **New Year's Day** (January 1)
- **Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.** (Third Monday in January)
- **Washington's Birthday** (Third Monday in February)
- **Memorial Day** (Last Monday in May)
- **Juneteenth National Independence Day** (June 19)
- **Independence Day** (July 4)
- **Labor Day** (First Monday in September)
- **Columbus Day** (Second Monday in October)
- **Veterans Day** (November 11)
- **Thanksgiving Day** (Fourth Thursday in November)
- **Christmas Day** (December 25)

These holidays or any additional time observed, such as the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve, will be determined each year at management's discretion.

When a scheduled holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed on the Friday before. If a scheduled holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed the Monday after.

Eligibility

- Regular full-time employees are eligible for holiday pay.
- Regular part-time employees are eligible and receive holiday pay on a prorated basis. The proration is based on an employee's regular work schedule. For instance, a part-time employee working 30 hours per week would receive six (6) hours of holiday pay because 75% of a full-time schedule is worked.
- Hourly part time, seasonal, temporary, and on-call employees are not eligible for holiday pay.

Pay for Holiday

In all cases, holiday pay shall be for no more than the employee's normal work schedule.

Working on a Holiday

No work is performed on a Paid Holiday unless specifically assigned to the employee by their supervisor in advance.

If work is required on a holiday, employees are paid for hours worked at their regular hourly wage, and any overtime, if applicable. In addition, employees receive time off in lieu (TOIL) of the paid holiday on an hour-for-hour basis. The time off is based on the employee's normal work schedule.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

Overview

Administrative leave is a discretionary, employer-provided benefit that may be granted by the District Manager. It is not guaranteed and may vary from year to year based on operational needs and budget capacity.

Eligibility

Administrative leave may be granted to regular full-time and regular part-time employees. The District Manager may also extend administrative leave to hourly, seasonal, temporary, or on-call employees at the Manager's discretion, such as providing a limited number of hours around holidays or during office closures. The amount and timing of administrative leave, if granted, may differ by employee group.

Purpose and Use

Administrative leave is typically granted in connection with major holidays or District office closures. The District Manager may designate when administrative leave applies or may allow employees to use the leave on another date within the fiscal year.

Employees may request to use administrative leave at another time during the fiscal year under extenuating circumstances. Approval or denial is solely at the discretion of the District Manager.

Annual Availability

There is no guarantee that administrative leave will be granted each fiscal year. When granted, administrative leave must be used within the fiscal year in which it is provided. It does not carry over and cannot be cashed out or donated.

Interaction With Other Leave

Administrative leave is separate from sick leave, annual leave, and other leave categories.

OTHER BENEFITS

Retirement

The District participates in the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System (PERS).

Employees who have completed six full calendar months of qualifying service with the district in a PERS-covered position are automatically eligible and are enrolled in PERS. This includes both a pension program and the Individual Account Program (IAP).

By statute, employees contribute 6% of their salary to the IAP; however, the District “picks up” this required contribution on the employee’s behalf.

Benefit amounts are based on factors such as years of service, final average salary, and retirement age. Employees can review plan details, account balances, and retirement estimates by visiting the Oregon PERS website or accessing their Online Member Services (OMS) account, and may also contact the Office Administrator or PERS directly for additional information.

Deferred Compensation

District employees are eligible to participate in the Oregon Savings Growth Plan (OSGP) 457(b) deferred compensation plan. This is a voluntary retirement savings program designed to supplement PERS benefits.

District employees are likewise eligible to participate in a 457(b) plan through Nationwide Retirement.

Employees may enroll in either or both plans at any time after hire, and contributions are made through convenient payroll deductions on a pre-tax or Roth (after-tax) basis, subject to IRS annual limits.

Enrollment is not automatic; employees must elect to participate and choose their contribution amount and investment options. Both plans offer a range of investment choices and tools to help employees plan for retirement.

The district does not make any matching contributions to these plans.

More information, including enrollment details, contribution limits, and account access, is available on the OSGP website, Nationwide website, or by contacting the plan administrator or the Office Administrator.

Employees are encouraged to speak with a tax professional about their individual situations, tax implications, and retirement planning.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

DISTRICT BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

The District recognizes that the death of a family member or other close individual can be a significant personal loss. To support employees during these times, the District provides up to five (5) days of paid bereavement leave per qualifying loss.

Eligibility

All regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible for paid bereavement leave. Part-time employees receive leave on a pro-rated basis according to their regular work schedule.

Covered Relationships

Bereavement leave may be used for the death of a “family member,” defined consistently with Oregon’s expanded definition under SB 999 (2023):

- Spouse or domestic partner of a covered individual
- child of a covered individual or the child’s spouse or domestic partner
- parent of a covered individual or the parent’s spouse or domestic partner
- sibling or stepsibling of a covered individual or the sibling’s or stepsibling’s spouse or domestic partner
- grandparent of a covered individual or the grandparent’s spouse or domestic partner
- grandchild of a covered individual or the grandchild’s spouse or domestic partner
- Any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with a covered individual is the equivalent of a family relationship

Use of Leave

Bereavement leave may be used to:

- Attend a funeral, memorial service, or alternative ceremony
- Make arrangements necessitated by the death
- Manage family or estate responsibilities
- Grieve the loss of the family member

Bereavement leave should be taken within 60 days of receiving notice of the death unless circumstances require otherwise and the District Manager approves an extension.

Additional Time Off

If additional time is needed, employees may request to use:

- Accrued annual leave
- Sick leave (as permitted by Oregon Sick Time law)
- Compensatory time
- Leave Without Pay

Approval of additional leave is at the discretion of the District Manager.

Notice Requirements

Employees should notify the District Manager of the need for bereavement leave as soon as practicable. If the employee is unable to provide notice personally, a family member or

representative may do so on their behalf. You may be asked to verify your family relationship to and the death of your family member.

Pay and Benefits While on Leave

Employees will receive their regular rate of pay for approved bereavement leave. Bereavement leave:

- Does not reduce annual leave or sick leave balances
- Does not affect benefit eligibility or accruals
- Is not paid out upon separation

CIVIC DUTY LEAVE

Jury or Witness Duty Leave

Employees subpoenaed to serve as witnesses or for jury duty may obtain a protected leave of absence. If we feel that your absence would cause undue hardship for you or the District, we may instead request, with your agreement, that jury duty be postponed. You may choose to use your accrued paid vacation time available for voluntary service as a witness or for court appearances you must make as part of your own legal proceedings or lawsuit.

Length of Leave

Jury or witness duty leave is available for the period covered by the initial subpoena or court order and any involuntary extensions.

Request Procedure

You must notify your manager or supervisor as soon as is practicable after you receive notice asking you to serve as a witness or as a juror so that arrangements can be made to cover your position. You are expected to provide us with a copy of the subpoena or notice within five (5) business days after you received it.

Pay While on Leave

You will receive your regular rate of pay for up to two weeks; after that period, you may utilize paid time off if desired.

Status of Benefits

Benefits are not affected by jury or witness duty leaves.

Voting Leave

We encourage all employees to vote and to take advantage of polling hours before or after work. However, if you are unable to vote outside of business hours, we will work to accommodate you in arranging a time for you to vote.

Request Procedure

You must notify your manager or supervisor before Election Day if you are unable to vote before or after work and provide a valid reason voting during those hours is not possible.

Pay While on Leave

Time off to vote will be without pay for non-exempt employees, unless you have earned hours of vacation or personal time that you can use for that purpose.

CRIME VICTIMS' LEAVE

If you or a member of your immediate family suffers financial, social, psychological, or physical harm as a result of a personal felony or an employee is a victim of harassment, under the public offenses statutes, you may be entitled to take protected leave from work to attend criminal proceedings.

Safety Measures

The company will provide reasonable safety measures, if you are the victim of harassment or a threat of harm that would be expected to cause concern.

Eligibility

You will be eligible to take crime victims' leave if you have worked an average of more than 25 hours per week for the organization for at least 180 days immediately before the leave would begin.

Length of Leave

The amount and length of leave time you may take is limited to that which does not create significant difficulty and expense (undue hardship) to the District. If the District must limit your leave due to undue hardship, we will notify the prosecuting attorney in the criminal proceeding, who is required by law to notify the court. The court will then take your work schedule into consideration when scheduling the criminal proceedings.

Request Procedure

You must provide your manager or supervisor with reasonable notice of your intention to take crime victims' leave and provide copies of any notices of scheduled criminal proceedings that you receive from a law enforcement agency. We will treat such documentation as confidential information.

Pay While on Leave

Crime victims' leave is unpaid; however, eligible employees who take this type of leave may use any accrued paid such as vacation or sick time available to them. Exempt employees working partial days or a partial week will be paid in full for the entire week, although accrued time must be used first. An employee may also choose to apply for the Paid Leave Oregon Insurance program, see Paid Leave Oregon section of this handbook.

Status of Benefits

Benefits are not affected by crime victims' leave.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE

An employee who is a victim of domestic violence, harassment under the public offenses' statutes, sexual assault, bias crimes, or stalking or whose minor child or dependent is a victim may be entitled to take unpaid protected leave from work.

Eligibility

All Wasco County SWCD employees are eligible to take domestic violence leave.

Types of Services/Treatment

An employee may take leave to seek legal or law enforcement assistance, to secure medical treatment, to obtain counseling or victim services, to relocate, or to take other reasonable steps to ensure one's own health and well-being or that of a child or legal dependent.

Length of Leave

The amount of leave taken will be reasonable and that does not create significant difficulty and expense (undue hardship) for the District.

Request Procedure

An employee accessing this leave provision needs to request time off from a manager or supervisor as much in advance as possible to aid in scheduling. We understand that instances of violence are usually not predictable, and these requests may be made with little forewarning. We will treat any information you share as confidentially as possible.

Safety Measures

The District will provide reasonable safety measures, if you are the victim of domestic violence, harassment, sexual assault, bias crimes, or stalking.

Pay While on Leave

Domestic violence leave is unpaid; however, eligible employees who take this type of leave may use any accrued paid time available to them, such as vacation or sick leave. Exempt employees working partial days or a partial week will be paid in full for the entire week, although accrued time must be used first. An employee may also choose to apply for wage replacement through the Paid Leave Oregon Insurance program, see Paid Leave Oregon section of this handbook.

Status of Benefits

Benefits are not affected by domestic violence leave.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) applies to all public employers, regardless of size. Employees must meet all of the following to qualify as an eligible employee:

- Worked for the employer for at least 12 months.
- Worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months prior to the leave.
- Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles.

However, due to the size of our organization, employing less than 50 employees, employees would not meet the eligibility criteria for this protected leave type. Notice will be provided to employees should our eligibility change.

OREGON FAMILY LEAVE ACT (OFLA)

The Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA) applies to all employers who employ twenty-five or more employees. However, due to the size of our organization, employing less than 25 employees, we are not considered a covered employer. Subsequently, employees are not eligible for this protected leave type. Notice will be provided to employees should our eligibility changes.

LEAVE TO DONATE BONE MARROW

Eligibility

Employees working 20 or more hours per week are eligible for this leave.

Length of Leave

Eligible employees who require time off to donate bone marrow are permitted to use any accrued paid leave for this purpose, including vacation, sick leave, and personal leave. Employees may access their available accrued paid leave, up to the applicable maximum, based on their current balances at the time of the leave.

An employee may determine how much of their accrued paid leave is to use in connection with a bone marrow donation, up to a maximum of forty (40) hours per donation event, unless a greater amount is approved by the District.

Request Procedure

You must notify your manager or supervisor as soon as is practicable after you become aware that you will be donating bone marrow. You are expected to provide a copy of the doctor's verification for bone marrow donation. If there is a medical determination that you do not qualify as a bone marrow donor, the paid leave of absence used before that determination was made will not be affected.

Status of Benefits

Benefits are not affected by this leave.

PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A personal leave of absence is an approved period away from work for personal reasons that don't fit any other leave category. Personal leave is discretionary and may be approved when the District Manager determines that the leave is appropriate and operationally feasible.

Eligibility

Only regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible for unpaid personal leave of absence. Temporary, seasonal, on-call, and non-regular hourly employees are not eligible for personal leave. You become eligible for a personal leave of absence after 6 months of service; all accrued paid leave must be exhausted first. If you want to take a personal leave of absence, you must make arrangements with the District Manager.

Length of Leave

The leave may be requested for any time over 5 consecutive days. A personal leave of absence starts on the first regular workday following the last day worked. The maximum leave allowed under this policy is 60 days.

Request Procedure

A written request, using the Leave of Absence Request Form, should be submitted at least five (5) working days before time off that will exceed 5 days, except in emergencies. Leave requests must include an expected date of return. If you do not return after three (3) days of that date and no extension has been requested, we will assume you have resigned.

Pay While on Leave

Personal leaves of absence are without pay.

Status of Benefits

Insurance coverage will **not** be maintained for you while on a personal leave of absence of more than 30 days. For personal leave extending beyond thirty days, employees may continue coverage by paying the full premium amount in accordance with the District's benefit administration procedures. Leave accruals do not continue during unpaid personal leave of absence.

Reinstatement

Wasco County SWCD will attempt to arrange employment for individuals returning from a personal leave of absence, but no guarantees are made. While you are on a personal leave of absence, you are required to check in with your supervisor on a regular basis as agreed upon (typically weekly) to inform us of your status and to notify us of any change in personal data. You may be required to present a doctor's release before being reinstated if the leave was medically related.

PAID LEAVE OREGON – INSURANCE

Wasco County SWCD provides a Paid Leave Oregon Insurance plan through the Oregon Employment Department. This insurance is required by Oregon state law and provides paid time off to eligible employees. This is a protected leave. All health-related information gathered by the insurer and organization during this process will be maintained as confidential. Employees will not be discriminated against or retaliated against for using or trying to use this insurance benefit. We encourage each employee to use the combination of time off and benefits that meet their personal needs.

Cost

Employee deduction would typically be 0.6 of 1% of gross wages, but the district pays on employee behalf. Therefore there is not cost or deduction to employee. This is not guaranteed and if this arrangement is changed, employees will be notified in advance in writing.

The employee and employer minimum and maximum, as well as overall costs, of this coverage will be assessed annually by the Oregon Employment Department and may change. Employees will receive notice in advance of any change.

Eligibility

Most employees who work in Oregon are eligible to submit a claim. The determination of eligibility will be made by the Oregon Employment Department. If an employee disagrees with an eligibility determination, the employee may use the appeal process outlined in the determination notice.

Length of leave

The length of leave is part of the determination process.

An employee may qualify for up to twelve (12) weeks of leave annually. The annual benefit year begins the Sunday prior to the first use of leave for any reason. The coverage may be approved in intermittent single day use up to a continual twelve (12) week period.

Reasons for leave

Benefits may apply to a variety of situations, including:

- Family leave
 - During the birth of a child
 - Bonding with a child in the first year:
 - After birth
 - When the child is placed in the employee’s home through foster care or adoption
 - To care for a family member with a serious health condition*.
- Medical leave - The employee caring for themselves when the employee has a serious health condition*.
- Safe leave - For survivors of:
 - Sexual assault

- Domestic violence
- Harassment
- Bias Crimes
- Stalking
- Pregnancy Disability Leave (Additional 2 weeks)

* A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that: requires inpatient care, poses an imminent danger of death or possibility of death in the near future, requires constant or continuing care, involves a period of incapacity, involves multiple treatments, or involves a period of disability due to pregnancy.

Insurance benefit while on leave

The amount of benefit the employee will receive will be calculated based upon the employee’s earnings for the prior year. This will also be part of the determination of coverage process. The Oregon Employment Department may adjust the minimum and maximum benefit amounts annually, and the employee will receive notification before a change occurs. Visit the Paid Leave Oregon website at <https://paidleave.oregon.gov/>

Use of accrued leaves when on PLO

Employees may choose to use accrued leaves while on PLO. The District may not require employees to use accrued leave. If an employee elects to use accrued leave while on PLO, leave will be used in the following order unless the employee requests otherwise:

1. Comp Time (if available)
2. Sick Leave (as allowable under Oregon law)
3. Administrative Leave (if granted)
4. Annual Leave

Employees may request to use sick leave before compensatory time. Employees may use accrued leave only up to the number of hours they are regularly scheduled to work.

Notification of the need for leave

An employee is required to provide the employer notice of the intention to take leave. For planned events, the employee is required to provide thirty (30) days’ written notice. For unplanned events, the employee is required to notify the employer within twenty-four (24) hours of the leave and provide written notice within three (3) days. If an employee is incapacitated due to the unplanned event and is unable to meet these obligations, we ask the employee to notify the employer as soon as possible.

Please complete the Notice Form available from the Office Administrator to notify the employer of the intention to take leave.

Filing a Claim for coverage

Employees will need to establish an account at Frances Online and file claims electronically. This is the electronic system of records for the Oregon Employment Department. Employees are

responsible for submitting the required paperwork and any updates or changes to their claim. The employer will be unable to complete the application process on the employee's behalf.

Job and Benefit Protection while on leave

If an employee has been employed with the employer for at least ninety (90) days prior to the leave, the employee will be restored to the same position upon their return, if the same position exists. If the same position does not exist, the employee will be restored to a different position with similar job duties and the same employment benefits and pay. This position may or may not have the same terms and conditions. The employer may require a release to return to work on or before the day of restoration.

If, at the time of leave, the employee is receiving health benefits these will be maintained. The employee will be required to pay their portion of all elected benefits premiums if taking unpaid leave.

Complaints Procedure

Our goal is to solve all concerns at the lowest possible level. We encourage all employees to bring complaints to the District Manager promptly and in writing.

We understand employees may choose to seek outside assistance to resolve complaints regarding this coverage.

Employees may contact the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries to file a complaint or may contact an attorney of their choice to determine if a civil action may be appropriate.

UNIFORMED SERVICES LEAVE AND RE-EMPLOYMENT

Regular employees requiring a leave of absence for service in the uniformed services are provided leave and will be re-employed at the end of the leave. Policies governing this leave are designed according to the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act and applicable state regulations. The policy covers employees who enter active military duty voluntarily and extends to Reservists or National Guard members who are called to limited active duty or extended training duty, including regularly scheduled annual training and military summer camp training. These military members, and those with previous or current military service, are protected from discrimination and harassment.

Eligibility

All employees of the organization except those hired on a brief, non-recurrent basis are eligible for leave.

Length of Leave

Given that the requirements regarding this type of leave are subject to change, the length of this leave will be administered under the current provisions of all applicable laws at the time of occurrence.

Request Procedure

You must provide oral or written notice, using the Leave of Absence Request Form, of your obligation or intention to perform service in the uniformed services, unless notice is precluded by military necessity or is otherwise unreasonable or impossible. Failure to do so may result in loss of re-employment rights.

Pay While on Leave

Military leaves are without pay unless you elect to utilize vacation benefits earned before the commencement of the leave.

Status of Benefits

Reservists, National Guard members, and veterans returning from military service in the Armed Forces have and retain rights with respect to seniority, vacation, compensation, and length of service pay increases, as may be provided by applicable statutes of the United States and the State of Oregon. For any leave extending beyond 30 days, you may maintain health care insurance benefits for up to 24 months while on leave by paying the full insurance premiums.

Reinstatement

If you are returning from a USERRA leave, you must report to work or request re-employment within prescribed time limits, which are based on the length of the leave as follows:

1 to 30 days: You are expected to report to work on the first regularly scheduled workday following the completion of your service and an eight-hour rest period. You will be reinstated to a position you would have held had you not taken leave or to the same position you held prior to the leave.

31 to 180 days: You should apply for reemployment no later than 14 days after an honorable release from service unless it is impossible or unreasonable through no fault of your own. You will generally be reinstated to the

position you would have attained if continuously employed, so long as you are qualified for the job or can become qualified after reasonable efforts by Wasco County SWCD, or to the same position you held prior to leave. In some cases, reinstatement may be made to a position of like seniority, status, and pay to either of the positions or to their nearest approximation.

181 days or
longer:

You must apply for re-employment no later than 90 days after the completion of satisfactory service, absent extenuating circumstances. You will be reinstated to the position you would have attained if continuously employed, so long as you are qualified for the job or can become qualified after reasonable efforts by Wasco County SWCD, or to the same position you held prior to leave. In some cases, reinstatement may be made to a position of like seniority, status, and pay to either of the positions or to their nearest approximation.

For service of 31 days or more, Wasco County SWCD will request that you provide documentation to verify your rights to re-employment, including your separation papers.

Time limits for applications for re-employment are extended for up to two years for disabled veterans, unless extenuating circumstances beyond a veteran's control may warrant another minimal extension beyond that period. Failure to file an application within the required time periods may otherwise result in a loss of the right to re-employment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Wasco County SWCD is committed and legally responsible to provide our employees with a safe and healthy work environment while on-site, in the field, and working at an approved alternative location (such as an employee's home). To accomplish this goal, both management and employees must make diligent efforts to promote safety within applicable laws and standards.

We develop and implement safety rules and regulations through our managers and supervisors. This process is ongoing and requires periodic safety audits. Safety audits are undertaken to determine the necessity and feasibility of providing devices or safeguards to make the workplace safe and healthy. We also educate employees about workplace hazards and the proper and safe methods to use in performing tasks.

You are expected to give your full skill and attention to the performance of your duties, using the highest standard of care and good judgment. You are also expected to always follow safety rules and regulations, including using appropriate protective clothing, shoes, and equipment, attending all training sessions offered, and following directions of warning signs, signals, and supervisory personnel.

All job-related injuries or illnesses are to be reported to your supervisor immediately, regardless of severity. In the case of serious injury, your reporting obligation will be deferred until circumstances permit a report to be made. Failure to report an injury or illness may preclude or delay the payment of any benefits to you and could subject Wasco County SWCD to fines and penalties. No one will be retaliated against for filing a workers' compensation claim in good faith.

Safety rules and regulations will be issued or modified from time-to-time and will be effective immediately upon communication. Rules and regulations are available in Safety's Officer's binder located in the Safety office. -

If an injury or illness occurs you are required to:

1. Take remedial first aid actions; seeking emergency care if necessary.
2. Report the injury or illness as soon as possible.
3. Fill out the report form and workers' compensation form.
4. Provide your supervisor with a medical release from a doctor.
5. Review the incident with our Safety Manager.

Early Return to Work Program

Our Return-to-Work program provides guidelines for returning you to work as early as possible after you have suffered an on-the-job injury or job related illness. The program is not intended to be a substitute for reasonable accommodation when an injured or ill employee also qualifies as an individual with a disability.

The Return to Work program consists of a team effort by supervisors, employees and their treating physicians, management, and our workers' compensation insurance carrier. All team members will take an active role in returning an employee to productive work. Through this team

effort, we hope to help our employees recover and return to full employment as soon as their medical condition permits.

If you are injured on the job and your doctor determines that you are able to perform modified work, the organization will attempt to provide such a job until you are able to resume your regular duties, except where provided as an accommodation for a permanent disability. All modified work is temporary and may be offered at any location or on any shift. If you are offered a modified position that has been medically approved, failure to report at the designated time and place may affect time loss compensation.

A return to work from non-work-related injuries or illness may be covered in the Leave section.

Smoking in the Workplace

Wasco County SWCD is a non-smoking facility. This includes the use of electronic cigarettes and vaping devices. Places outside the office may be designated as smoking areas; smoking is limited to these areas. Please do not smoke or vape within ten feet of any entrance, exit, window, or air intake device. If any employee has a concern about the areas designated, that individual should speak with the appropriate supervisor.

Employee Right to Know/Hazard Communication Program

Wasco County SWCD provides a Hazard Communication Program so that all employees are aware of chemical hazards in the workplace via the Safety Manager's binder located in the Safety Office. By becoming familiar with this information, you can help prevent injuries and illnesses from chemical exposure. If you have any questions regarding chemical hazards, do not delay in asking your supervisor or the Safety Manager.

The following safety precautions have been taken to prevent injuries and illnesses from chemical exposure:

Container Labeling

The Safety Manager will verify that all containers received for use will:

- Be clearly labeled as to the contents with a product identifier.
- Note the appropriate hazard warning with a precautionary statement, pictogram, hazard statement, and supplemental information.
- List the manufacturer/supplier's name, address, and emergency phone number.

It is our policy that no container will be released for use until the above data is verified.

The supervisor in each section will ensure that all secondary containers have either an extra copy of the original manufacturer's label or a generic label that has identification and hazard warning blocks. For help with labeling, see the Safety Manager.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

Copies of safety data sheets for all hazardous chemicals that employees of this organization may be exposed to will be kept in the District Safety Binder. Safety data sheets will be available to all employees in their work areas for review during each work shift. Never use a chemical or associated machinery if its safety data sheet is not available; you should immediately contact the Safety Manager before using the chemical or the machine containing it. The District's Weed

Program has a separate binder for the chemicals that are used for weed control. These binders are located in both the chemical storage structure and vehicles.

Employee Information and Training

Before starting work, you will attend a health and safety orientation and receive information and training about the following:

- An overview of the hazards contained in the Wasco County SWCD Job Hazard Analysis.
- Location and availability of our printed hazard communication program.

Emergency contact information will be collected by the employee in case an injury occurs and Wasco SWCD needs to contact family / friend of the situation.

Employees will be trained in identifying workplace hazards and work activity hazards in order to make corrections. Safety equipment will be provided for use to minimize injuries.

Safety meetings are held during weekly staff meetings. Safety refresher topics are discussed as well as new information is available, or a hazard has been identified that needs to be corrected.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Wasco County SWCD will provide or reimburse employees for all required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary to safely perform assigned duties, including fieldwork, herbicide application, equipment operation, and other tasks identified in the District's Job Hazard Analysis. Required PPE may include, but is not limited to, safety footwear, gloves, eye and ear protection, high-visibility apparel, respirators, chemical-resistant clothing, and other protective gear specified by OSHA standards or pesticide label requirements.

Employees are expected to use District-provided PPE as instructed, maintain it in good condition, and report any damaged or missing equipment to their supervisor. Failure to use required PPE may result in corrective action.

PPE provided by the District is considered a working condition fringe benefit under IRS guidelines and is not taxable income to employees because it is required for the safe performance of job duties and is not suitable for everyday personal use.

The District will periodically review PPE needs as part of its safety audits and will update required equipment lists as hazards, tasks, or regulatory requirements change.

SUBSTANCE AND ALCOHOL

The objective of this policy is to provide a workplace and environment that are free from the effects of substance abuse. Furthermore, Wasco County SWCD has a responsibility to our employees, to those who use or encounter our services, and to the public to ensure safe operating and working conditions. To satisfy our drug free workplace objective and meet these responsibilities, we have established a work environment where employees are free from the effects of drugs, alcohol, or other impairing substances. Accordingly, we have adopted this substance and alcohol policy.

The following conditions and activities are expressly prohibited on our premises or property or during work time or while representing us in any work-related fashion and will lead to corrective action, up to and including termination:

- Manufacturing, selling, attempting to sell, using, distributing, or possessing alcohol or other controlled or substances that impair job performance or pose a hazard when use or possession occurs (as a government employer this includes marijuana);
- Reporting for or being at work while impaired using alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances.

If your doctor prescribes over the counter or pharmaceutical drugs, you are responsible for determining if you can maintain work performance standards, including safety. If you are not, you are to contact the District Manager before returning to work.

If you have a problem with substance or alcohol use and wish to undertake rehabilitation, you may be granted a leave of absence for this purpose. It is your responsibility to seek help before the problem adversely affects your work performance or results in a violation of this policy. If you need assistance in seeking this help, you may talk to the District Manager. No one will be discriminated against for undertaking rehabilitation.

Where we have a reasonable basis to believe that an employee is in violation of this policy, the employee will be required to submit to testing to determine presence of, use of, or involvement with alcohol or drugs. We reserve the right to determine whether reasonable basis exists.

The following definitions apply:

- Reasonable suspicion is defined as specific, describable observations concerning such circumstances as the work performance, appearance including, for example, noticeable odor of an alcohol, behavior, or speech of the employee, or as being involved in an accident on organization premises that results in physical injury or property damage.
- Presence of is defined as any noticeable or perceptible impairment of the employee's mental or physical faculties.
- Controlled Substances are defined as any product causing potential impairment of an employees' mental or physical faculties.

- Over-the-counter drugs are defined as those that are available without a prescription from a medical doctor.
- Prescription drugs are defined as those drugs that are used during medical treatment and have been prescribed and authorized for use by a licensed practitioner/physician or dentist.

Any employee who is found to be in violation of this policy and who refuses to submit to testing, or refuses to cooperate, or attempts to subvert the testing process will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

Testing

If you voluntarily request assistance in dealing with a personal drug or alcohol problem, you may do so through the District Manager. The request for assistance will not jeopardize your employment if this assistance is sought before work performance has deteriorated or disciplinary problems have begun. Other treatment programs for drug and alcohol problems may be available through our health insurance coverage.

As a result of corrective action arising from a drug or alcohol problem, you may be required to participate in a drug or alcohol treatment program. If so required, you will regularly be evaluated for drug and alcohol use by a professional. When such an evaluation is scheduled, we will pay the cost. You may also be required to participate in follow-up care as part of a comprehensive alcohol and drug treatment program. Depending upon the nature of the conduct that led to your mandated participation in an alcohol and drug treatment program, you may be required to submit to random or unannounced screening for alcohol or drugs for a specified period. You may also be required to meet various performance standards that are imposed as a condition of continuing employment.

If you are involved in a job-related accident resulting in property damage, or physical injury requiring off-site medical attention, you will be required to submit to testing to determine the presence or absence of a controlled substance. We may waive the requirement if we do not have a reasonable basis to conduct drug or alcohol testing or, if we determine, at our discretion, that the accident could not have been caused by using a controlled substance.

We will also conduct testing as required or recommended under the provisions of any state or federal government regulations. If you are within a regulated group requiring testing, you will be required to abide by policy as well as any government programs.

When being tested, you may request that any sample be split into two parts, with one part tested and the other retained by the testing laboratory for future re-testing in the event of a positive test result. If you request a re-test, it will be at your expense and must be conducted by a laboratory that is acceptable to us. A list of approved laboratories will be provided upon request.

If you believe that your specimen was not collected in accordance with established procedures, you must report any deficiencies within 24 hours of the collection. Deficiencies reported after 24 hours have expired and will not be considered.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Wasco County SWCD recognizes the importance of a safe workplace for employees. A work environment that is safe and comfortable enhances employee satisfaction with work as well as employee productivity.

To foster a safe workplace, this organization specifically prohibits any employee, customer, or vendor from bringing any kind of weapon, knife (other than folding pocket-knife), or firearm on premises. If you have a question whether something may be considered a weapon in violation of this policy, you must ask your supervisor prior to bringing the item onto our premises.

Situations may occur, despite our best efforts to prevent them, which present a risk of harm to employees and others. All employees have an obligation to report any incidents that pose a risk of harm to employees or others associated with the organization or that threaten the safety, security, or financial interests of the organization. Employees should make such reports directly to the District Manager.

All information related to the reports, including the name of the reporting employees, will be kept as confidential as possible under the circumstances. We will notify the reporting employee of action taken in response to the report.

We may, out of business necessity, investigate a current employee when the employee's behavior raises concerns about work performance, reliability, honesty, or potential threat to the safety of co-workers or others. An employee investigation may include investigation of criminal records and a search of the organization's property such as desks, work areas, lockers, file cabinets, voice mail systems, and computer systems.

If an employee is found to have violated any part of this policy, corrective action up to and including termination may occur.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Wasco County SWCD may be subject to major disruptions because of occurrences beyond the control of the organization. All employees should exercise good judgment in responding to these events as the situation necessitates. Wasco County SWCD will try to provide emergency and limited services during periods of disruption. The District Manager shall make the determination to close the organization, suspend activities, or make the organization available for community support.

In the event of potential or actual disruptions that may be weather-related or a result of a catastrophic event such as an earthquake, fire, explosion, or public health emergency, contact the District Manager.

Compensation for employees will be determined in accordance with all applicable regulations when individual facilities or activities are closed because of emergency conditions. Employees not compensated during an emergency-related closure may be able to use available paid leave, such as vacation or sick leave.

Should a threat to company property or an employee be received, it should be reported immediately to the District Manager.

EMPLOYMENT SEPARATION

SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

Separation from employment with Wasco County SWCD occurs when you voluntarily resign, are laid off, or are discharged by the organization.

Resignation

Employment with us is “at-will,” which means you are free to resign at any time, with or without cause or notice. However, to achieve an orderly transition, we would appreciate receiving notification of your resignation at least 10 working days before the intended date of departure. For supervisors and management-level personnel, at least thirty (30) days’ notice of a resignation is required.

Job Abandonment

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, employees are expected to be dependable in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on the organization; poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Either may lead to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee fails to call in or show up for work for three (3) consecutive shifts or days, job abandonment and voluntary resignation will be assumed.

Job Elimination, Reduction in Work Hours

Our desire is to avoid circumstances that require a reduction in hours or staff, but we also recognize that situations may arise where such reductions are necessary. Depending upon the circumstances, we may respond in a variety of ways, including offering a voluntary reduction in hours or days of work, reducing your work hours or days of work, reducing the workforce, or reducing expenses by other means. Among the factors we will consider in selecting employees for any reduced hours or reduction in force are:

- Your department, location, or job;
- Your job knowledge, skills, and ability to do the required work;
- Your performance, attendance, safety and corrective action history and records;
- Your possession of licenses, registrations, and certifications required by the job;
- Your creativity and teamwork skills, if required for the job;
- Your demonstrated willingness to go the extra mile for the organization, co-workers, and customers; and,
- The efficiency of our operation.

Evaluation of these factors is at our discretion. When we conclude that all the factors are substantially equal, we will reduce the hours of or lay off the employee with the shortest term of service. An immediate supervisor/manager will personally notify employees of a layoff. After explaining the layoff procedure, you will be given a letter describing the conditions of the layoff, such as the effects on benefits, the possibility of reemployment, procedures, and any outplacement services.

If practicable at the time of layoff or upon an employee being placed in an inactive status, we may provide limited re-employment rights for a period of six (6) months. The order of recall will be determined using the above factors. An offer of re-employment may be made orally or in writing to the last address reflected in your personnel records. It is your obligation to keep us informed

of any changes to your telephone number, email address, and physical address. The offer will identify the job available and the date you are to report to work. If you are not rehired during the period specified, your re-employment rights end; if you decline re-employment or fail to report on the date specified in the offer, you waive any re-employment privileges.

Discharge

Our philosophy and general practice are to provide employees who have completed the initial introductory period of employment with an opportunity to correct minor performance and conduct problems before discharge is implemented.

The organization has a corrective action policy found in this Handbook that describes action management may take, at its discretion, to correct performance infractions prior to discharging employees. The decision to discharge employees is based not only on the seriousness of the current performance infraction, but also on the individual's overall performance record and length of service.

We also believe that our employees should be given an opportunity to be heard in matters involving corrective action, including discharge, and we have provided a formal dispute resolution procedure found in this Handbook for that purpose. You are encouraged to use this procedure to resolve any issues you may have that cannot be resolved by consulting with your supervisor.

Exit Interview

An exit interview may be arranged to give you an opportunity to address unresolved issues before leaving the organization. It also allows us to solicit your opinions about our organization and any suggestions you may have for its improvement. We encourage all employees invited to participate in an exit interview when they separate from employment to do so, and we value all opinions and suggestions we receive in the process.

At the exit interview session, you will be given information regarding your benefit continuation rights and responsibilities and how you will receive your final paycheck.

Return of Organization Property

Upon separation from employment, either voluntarily or otherwise, you must return all organizational property in your possession. Such property may include credit cards, organization vehicles, keys, ID cards, tools, software, electronic devices, this Handbook, and any other items in your possession that belong to the organization.

Employee Notes

Wasco County SWCD
HANDBOOK RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

NOTE: This signed form should be inserted into each employee's personnel file.

As an employee of Wasco County SWCD, I acknowledge the following:

I have been provided a copy of and given access to the District's copy of the Employee Handbook. I understand that the Handbook contains important information about Wasco County SWCD's policies, work rules, and my benefits. I have both read and understood the information in the Handbook and have asked the District Manager and/or other Designated Positions (such as the Office Administrator or Safety Manager) for the clarification of any information I did not understand.

I acknowledge the Handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a guarantee of specific treatment in any situation; that the District has the right to change, modify, add to, substitute, eliminate, interpret, and apply, in its sole judgment, the policies, rules, and benefits described in this Handbook; and that the current Handbook supersedes all prior handbooks, policies, and understandings related to the subjects it contains.

The District Manager is the only person authorized to make changes to the Handbook, and all such changes must be in writing to be valid. Any changes to the content will be communicated to employees via official notices.

I understand that, unless stated otherwise in an employment contract, my employment relationship with the District is "at-will" and either the District or I can end the relationship at any time, with or without reason or notice. The District Manager is the only person who has the authority to enter an employment contract, which must be in writing and signed by both parties to be valid.

Lastly, I am aware that I may be given confidential information during my employment, including customer lists, proprietary organization plans, and other information. I understand this information is critical to the success of Wasco County SWCD and I agree not to disseminate or use it outside of the District, even in the event of my separation, either voluntary or involuntary.

I also acknowledge that before signing this form, I asked for and received clarification on any of the items discussed above that I did not understand.

Employee Signature

Date

Print Employee's Name