

# **CITY OF WEST MONROE**

## Employee Handbook

### NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

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## **Welcome!**

On behalf of myself, the members of the City Council and your new colleagues, I welcome you to the City of West Monroe and wish you every success during your employment.

We believe each employee contributes directly to the City's success or failure, and to our commitment to public service. I know you will take pride in being a member of our team!

This manual is designed to acquaint employees with the City of West Monroe (COWM) and to provide information about working conditions, employee benefits, and employment policies. It describes many employee responsibilities and outlines the programs developed by COWM to benefit employees. It is designed to provide a general understanding of personnel policies, as well as to describe some of the City's rules, regulations, expectations, programs, and benefits available to eligible employees. The City's objective is to provide a work environment that is conducive to both personal and professional growth. It will answer many of the inevitable questions you will have about employment with the City of West Monroe.

This manual is not an employment contract of any kind and is not intended to create contractual obligations of any kind. Neither the employee nor COWM is bound to continue the employment relationship if either chooses, at its will, to end the relationship at any time.

In order to retain necessary flexibility in the administration of policies and procedures, COWM reserves the right to change, amend, revise, or eliminate any of the policies and/or benefits, or portion thereof, described in this manual, except for the policy of employment-at-will.

No manual can anticipate every situation or answer every question about employment. If you have any questions about a policy or procedure, contact your supervisor for clarification. After having read this manual, sign and remove the Employee Acknowledgement on the next page and return it to the Personnel Office or to your department head to return to the Personnel Office.

We all hope your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable and rewarding.

Staci Albritton Mitchell  
Mayor

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## **EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

By signing below, I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to have read and understood the policies outlined in this employee handbook. I understand that the handbook is intended only as a general reference and not a full statement of policies and procedures or a legal contract.

I agree to keep this book in my possession during my employment and to update it whenever provided with materials to do so.

I also understand the City of West Monroe employment practices operate under the legal doctrine known as "employment at will". Within state and federal employment law, COWM has the right to terminate an employee at any time and for any reason, with or without notice except that COWM will comply with all state and federal legal requirements requiring notice and an opportunity to be heard in the event of discipline or dismissal.

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**Employee Name (print)**

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(Signature)

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(Date)



# Section 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

*This handbook is NOT a contract. No contract of employment with the City of West Monroe will be valid unless it is signed in accordance with proper procedures by an authorized representative of the Mayor's office AND unless it is signed by and contains the name of the employee who would be benefited by the contract.*

The policies and benefit offerings outlined in this handbook are subject to change at any time, without notice. Changes may be made at the sole discretion of the City of West Monroe. Any changes thereto supersede any prior written, verbal or implied policies.

## 1.1 Purpose

These policies and guidelines do not constitute or imply a contract, agreement, promise or guarantee of employment or continued employment.

Except as otherwise specifically required by law, these policies are not intended to and shall not grant any vested right to any employee. These policies are subject to change or modification by the City at any time, and in the sole discretion of the City, without prior notice to any employee. It is the obligation of each City employee to be aware of each City policy that may apply to him or her. Employees are subject to the provisions of all policies and any and all changes or amendments, regardless of lack of formal notice of a change or modification, if the employee knew or should have known of the change or modification.

These policies apply to all employees of the COWM, subject to any limitations of state law and applicable civil service regulations. Any disagreement between the provisions of the handbook and any department's rules and procedures shall be governed by the handbook. This handbook is subject to any policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Aldermen or by the Mayor of the COWM.

These policies are effective August 15, 2018. Except to any extent otherwise inconsistent, these policies shall be considered and interpreted as a continuation and/or clarification of existing City policies, including those adopted as of 07/17/1982, revised 05/1984, clarified 07/01/1990 and 9/15/2018.

## 1.2 Employment-At-Will

COWM's employment practices operate under the legal doctrine known as "employment at will". Within state and federal employment law, COWM has the right to terminate an

employee at any time and for any reason, with or without notice, except that COWM will comply with all state and federal legal requirements requiring notice and an opportunity to be heard in the event of discipline or dismissal and that COWM will comply with all Civil Service rules and regulations for employees so covered. COWM will attempt to ensure that employee terminations are not made in an arbitrary or capricious manner. However, this handbook and the personnel policies referenced do not constitute or imply a contract, agreement, promise or guarantee of employment or continued employment. COWM also reserves the right to change these policies at any time and without prior notice to employees.

### **1.3 Equal Employment Opportunity**

It is the policy of COWM to provide equal employment opportunity to employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, creed, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, military status, or any other classification protected under applicable law.

Equal employment opportunity applies to all terms, conditions and privileges of employment, including hiring, probation, training, promotion, transfer, compensation, benefits and assistance, layoff, recall, employee facilities, discharge, and retirement.

Every employee has an obligation to report any discriminatory conduct which he or she believes has occurred or is occurring, whether such conduct is directed toward that employee or another. If any employee or applicant for employment believes he or she has been discriminated against or believes he or she has observed or is aware of any discrimination, it should be immediately reported to the EEO Coordinator. If the employee or applicant is uncomfortable reporting to the EEO Coordinator or if the allegation involves the EEO Coordinator, then report to the City Clerk or the Mayor's Office. An investigation will be conducted, and remedial action will be taken as appropriate.

Every employee, contractor or subcontractor who does not comply with this policy will be subject to disciplinary action (in the case of an employee), including but not limited to discharge, and penalties (in the case of a contractor or subcontractor), including but not limited to termination of contract.

### **1.4 Workplace Discrimination and Harassment**

The purpose of the policy is to prevent harassing conduct from occurring, and to correct such conduct when it occurs in the workplace. The policy addresses unwelcome verbal or physical conduct based on an employee's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Every Supervisor and/or Department Head to whom a complaint is made is required to actively investigate.

Conduct is regarded as harassment when an employee is subjected to unwelcome

verbal or physical conduct based on the employee's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation that adversely affects the work environment of the employee; or when an employment decision is contingent on an employee accepting or rejecting the unwelcome conduct.

An employee may also file a separate complaint alleging harassment on the basis of reprisal or retaliation when the acts of reprisal are directly related to an employee's complaint of harassment.

An employee is required to report allegations of harassing conduct to the employee's Supervisor; if there is any indication that the allegations will not be promptly investigated, then to a higher-level Supervisor or their Department Head; and if none, then to the Chief of Staff. An employee may report in person, call, fax, or email his or her complaint of harassing conduct.

An employee shall report harassing conduct as soon as he or she becomes aware of its occurrence in the workplace. The City aims to respond promptly, appropriately, and effectively to an employee's notice of harassing conduct in the workplace.

Discrimination and harassment can take many forms including but not limited to:

- Unwelcome hugs, touches or other physical contact
- Inappropriate language, jokes or references
- Suggestive or obscene gestures/sounds
- Intimidating actions (blocking paths, leering, gossip)
- Posting, texting or emailing inappropriate material targeted to an individual
- Unwanted propositions

The policies of the City of West Monroe further prohibit any retaliation toward employees that report or aid in the investigation of discrimination or harassment. Behavior that impedes the investigation of a claim of discrimination or harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action by the City, up to and including termination.

## **1.5 Offensive Behavior**

Every employee must remember that COWM is a tax-supported entity and the citizens of COWM, paying those taxes, should receive the best possible quality and highest standard of service possible. Public employees should act in a professional manner, using good judgment and courtesy at all times, and should avoid any type of behavior that would even appear illegal or unethical. Employees should carry out their work efficiently, honestly and with the intention of keeping good relationships with the public.

Conduct that interferes with operations, discredits COWM, or is offensive or dangerous to others is grounds for discipline, whether such conduct is expressly prohibited by or in violation of any applicable rule, policy or directive. Every employee is required to conduct himself/herself in accordance with that general principle and with all applicable

rules, policies and directives as well as with all other standards of conduct which a reasonable person would know is expected of someone in the work place, whether or not such other standards are expressly set forth in any rule, directive or policy. Any noncompliance or violation is grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

## **1.6 Conflicts of Interest**

Employees may not enter into dealings or financial interests in contracts and services performed by City of West Monroe. This includes deriving any direct or indirect profit resulting from the sale, service, contracting or purchases made on behalf of COWM.

City employees may not accept financial benefits that would reasonably tend to influence decisions or encourage that employee to disclose confidential city business. Any offers of money, services, benefits, favors or other possible conflicts should be discussed with supervisors and/or city legal counsel.

Employees are protected from requirements, whether real or implied, to contribute time or money to any person or party. Soliciting political party campaign contributions, promoting fund-raising drives and even encouraging subordinates and colleagues to contribute to community non-profit organizations are prohibited activities. Violators will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

City employees are not allowed to participate in political activities while working for COWM. No city property such as equipment, buildings or vehicles can be used to display campaign materials and may not be used for any other political activity.

## **1.7 Drugs and Alcohol**

The City of West Monroe has established a Drug & Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy. A full copy of that policy is available at all City offices and on-line.

The policy prohibits the unauthorized possession, use or distribution of any controlled substance (including the misuse of prescription drugs) by any employee, and further prohibits any employee being under the influence of any controlled substance (including the misuse of prescription drugs) or alcoholic beverage during the workday.

To maintain this environment, employees are tested throughout their employment:

- Pre-Employment Testing
- Post-Accident Testing
- Periodic Randomized Testing for Safety-Sensitive Employees
- Reasonable Suspicion Testing

Employees that violate the Drug & Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy will be subject to disciplinary action by the City, up to and including termination.

## **1.8 Criminal Conduct**

Employees will not engage in any criminal conduct or conduct which, even though not criminal, may reflect adversely upon COWM or its officials. Any arrests and/or convictions during employment must be reported immediately to the Department Head. Activity of this nature may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **1.9 Equipment and Property**

Employees are provided adequate tools, equipment, and vehicles to perform their job. It is the responsibility of employees to use them safely and to cooperate in the maintenance of equipment owned by COWM. Any employee operating a City of West Monroe vehicle is required to have a current state driver's license. When using a personal vehicle for conducting City of West Monroe business, the employee must provide proof of personal automobile liability coverage.

Any accident involving a City of West Monroe vehicle or a personal vehicle while conducting City of West Monroe business, must be reported immediately to the appropriate law enforcement agency and to the employee's supervisor. A drug and alcohol test must be performed on the operator of COWM's vehicle.

## **Section 2 RECRUITMENT, HIRING AND EMPLOYMENT**

### **2.1 Applications**

Employment applications will be accepted by the Human Resources Office in City Hall or through the COWM's website. Applications will be kept on file in the Human Resources Office for a period of twelve months. Placement of a completed application in the human resources file will not constitute application for any specifically advertised position and will not require further action by any elected official or City of West Monroe administrative personnel.

### **2.2 Notice of Vacancies**

Most vacancies for COWM will be announced in the following manner:

- i. posting on the COWM website
- ii. posting within each department adjacent to the time clock

The employment application solicitation process will also include a recruiting effort which may extend beyond COWM when deemed necessary to obtain applications from individuals with necessary technical skills or other specialized qualifications.

### **2.3 Ethics in Employment**

No person will be employed by COWM when that employment would result in a violation of the ethics in government provisions of the Louisiana Ethics Code. Any such appointment may be voided by the City Clerk's office or the Mayor, if not done voluntarily by the hiring department.

No hiring authority may appoint or vote for the appointment of his/her father, mother, husband, wife, son, daughter, sister, brother, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law to any position within the same department.

No person will be hired to any position within COWM when that individual's spouse or immediate family member is already serving as an employee of COWM without the approval of City Hall.

No person will be hired if such hiring would result in a direct or indirect supervision conflict due to a relationship between the prospective employee and a supervisor which falls within any relationships described in the two paragraphs above.

## **2.4 Employment Testing**

Tests for job applicants will be limited to skills or performance testing, to determine the level of competence or ability to perform certain tasks associated with the job being sought. An applicant will be disqualified from consideration for employment in a position if he or she does not meet the job qualifications for that position.

For employees required to drive or operate equipment, which requires a driver's license, driving records and license validity will be checked.

## **2.5 Verification of Work Eligibility**

All employment paperwork is handled by HR/Payroll to ensure that confidentiality and compliance is maintained.

By federal law, each new employee must, within the first three days of employment, complete and sign an INS Form I-9, and show proof of identity and eligibility. The new applicant must have also completed a W-4 form, insurance forms, insurance information about dependents, the employee acknowledgement from Employee Handbook and any other necessary employee benefit forms.

If the applicant knowingly makes a false statement on the application form; cannot legally hold the position; offers money, service, or anything of value to win favor during the application process, he or she may be disqualified. Finally, if the prospective employee does not meet the physical requirements when tested; or has not provided proof of citizenship or legal work status within the first three days of employment, they may be disqualified.

## **2.6 Orientation**

HR/Payroll provides general orientation about COWM and the benefits of employment. Each employee will receive a copy of the Employee Handbook and any applicable workplace rules. It is the responsibility of the employee to read and gain an understanding of the handbook and work rules. The employee will acknowledge receipt of the handbook; any periodic updates will also be acknowledged.

In most cases, actual job duty orientation and training will be given within the specific department in which he or she will work.

## **2.7 Employment Classification**

Full-time regular employment consists of at least 35 hours of work each week. This group includes both exempt and non-exempt classifications. Regular full-time employees are eligible for City of West Monroe benefits.

Part-time employees are those whose work schedule is, typically, fewer than 35 hours per week. Hourly employees will not receive the benefits provided to regular employees, except those required by law (e.g. Social Security, workers compensation). Part-time employees are not entitled to sick leave, vacation pay or holiday pay.

Temporary full-time and temporary part-time employees are those hired for a period of less than six months. Full-time or part-time temporary employees may be exempt or non-exempt, but are only eligible to receive benefits mandated by law (e.g. Social Security, workers compensation).

## **2.8 Probation Period**

New employees or those that are promoted or transferred to another work group will serve a minimum three-month probation period. At the end of the period, employees are given a performance review by their supervisor. The probation period can be extended at the request of the Department Head, based upon the performance review.

Any significant time, totaling more than five days, the employee is absent during this period extends the probationary period for the amount of time missed. Accumulated leave will not be paid to employees resigning or terminated during the first six months of employment.

## **Section 3 EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

### **3.1 Work Standards**

Every employee must remember that COWM is a tax-supported entity and the citizens of COWM, paying those taxes, should receive the best possible quality and highest standard of service possible. Public employees should act in a professional manner, using good judgement and courtesy at all times, and should avoid any type of behavior that would even appear illegal or unethical. Employees should carry out their work efficiently, honestly and with the intention of keeping good relationships with the public.

Individual employees must be responsible to their principle supervisor. Work directions and results, measurement of performance and handling grievances are the responsibility of the supervisor.

Occasionally, someone may give employees directions other than their direct supervisor. In these instances, it is the employee's responsibility to inform the supervisor of the situation.

Communication with the public about city issues is the responsibility of the designated official or department head. Any controversial or unusual request or question from the public must be referred to that official.

### **3.2 Timeliness**

Employees are to report for work on time and to be punctual for appointments and meetings. Furthermore, work is to be completed at the time it is due. Frequent tardiness can result in disciplinary action or termination.

### **3.3 Attendance**

If an employee is going to be absent, he/she must report that absence within the first 30 minutes of the scheduled start time. Failure to report, other than in an emergency situation may result in disciplinary action. Unexcused absences can lead to discipline or termination.

### **3.4 Appearance**

Citizens observe employees of COWM often in the course of their work. As City of West Monroe's representatives, employees are asked to meet high standards both in the quality of their work and in presenting a professional image to the public. While dress codes vary between departments, employees are expected to maintain good physical

grooming, have a neat, clean and professional appearance, and display a pleasant disposition to citizens and colleagues.

Uniforms may be required for certain City of West Monroe jobs. Employees will be responsible to keep their uniforms clean and neat.

### **3.5 Gifts and Gratuities**

City of West Monroe employees and officers are not allowed to receive gifts or gratuities in any personal or professional capacity. This would this violate the Louisiana Code of Ethics, the Louisiana Law addressing ethical requirements for all governmental employees. The acceptance of gift or gratuities create the impression that the giver was seeking favor or trying to influence an opinion or a judgement from the employee or official.

### **3.6 Communications and Telecommunications**

Any communication with the public is the responsibility of City of West Monroe management or the person designated for that communication. Any non-routine or controversial questions or those out of the scope of the employee's job duties should be referred to the person designated to communicate on behalf of COWM.

City of West Monroe telephones are to be used for City of West Monroe business. Personal calls should be limited both in frequency and length of the call. Long distance personal calls are not allowed, except in particular situations, which should have approval of the employee's supervisor.

City of West Monroe mobile cell phones are to be used for authorized City of West Monroe business. The user must reimburse COWM for any personal calls which result in a charge to COWM.

### **3.7 Use of Computer Resources**

All use of City of West Monroe provided computer resources must be appropriate and in accordance with policy. Inappropriate use may subject you to discipline, up to and including termination. Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to, for example:

- use of the systems in violation of any City of West Monroe policy, including the Offensive Behavior Policy
- use of the systems to create, send, or receive messages, pictures or computer files which are fraudulent, illegal, pornographic, obscene, sexually suggestive, insulting, sexist, racist, discriminatory or harassing
- use of the resources to conduct illegal activities
- loading software which is not approved in advance by the Information Systems Department

- making illegal copies of licensed software
- using software that is designed to destroy data, provide unauthorized access to COWM's computer or communications equipment, or which would disrupt COWM's computer or communication equipment in any way.
- using COWM's e-mail and voicemail systems for the purpose of operating a private business or for personal gain.

Any message or file created, stored, and/or sent using COWM's computer or communications equipment is City of West Monroe property. Employees should therefore have no expectation of privacy in any message stored, received or sent using City of West Monroe equipment.

## **3.8 Social Media**

This policy applies to all employees who work for the City, and the same principles and guidelines applying to the activities of City of West Monroe employees in general, as outlined in the City's Workplace Conduct Policy and Civil Service Rules and Regulations apply to City of West Monroe employees' activities in social media channels and any other form of online publishing.

### **3.8.1 Employee Social Media**

Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects other employees or members of the public may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

- Always remember that anything you post through social media is public, even if you post to a so-called "private" group or restricted page. Everything on the internet is public, and everything you post is digitally archived and permanently available. Think before you post. Anything you post in violation of this policy could result in disciplinary action, even if you believed the content was "private."
- Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees and members of the public. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our open-door policy than by posting complaints to a social medial outlet. Although you have a right to discuss public issues as a citizen, you do not have a right to air personal individualize workplace grievances on social media and doing so can disrupt the business of the City and its employees.
- Whenever you post on social media, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage employees or other members of the public, or that

might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion, age, or any other status protected by law or by the City.

- Remember that you are a public servant, and anything you post could reflect on the City and the services it provides. The City is committed to treating citizens equally and promoting justice and fairness for each and every citizen, resident, or visitor to the City. Posts that indicate discriminatory or harassing attitudes or conduct may undermine the public trust and adversely affect your ability to do your job effectively. This includes any jokes, memes, or other content displaying discriminatory, harassing, or disrespectful attitudes toward groups or members of the public. Such posts may result in disciplinary action.
- Whenever your social media posts adversely affect your ability to do your job, you may be subject to disciplinary action up and including termination.
- Depending on your job, you may have access to personal information of other employees or members of the public. Certain types of information, including personnel data, are legally protected and confidential. Any disclosure of legally protected, confidential information, whether through social media or otherwise, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. It is your responsibility to be aware of whether information is legally protected, confidential information.
- Ensure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the City, fellow employees, or members of the public.
- Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the City, unless specifically authorized to do so by the Mayor or an authorized representative of the Mayor.
- Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your supervisor. If you do make work-related social media posts, you must abide by the guidelines set by the Office of the Mayor. Official City social media accounts are not an appropriate way for you to express personal opinions. If you wish to express personal opinions, you must do so on your own time and using your own account. Do not use City email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.
- The City prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any

employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- Only those officially designated can use social media to speak on behalf of the City, though employees may use social media to speak for themselves, individually, while not at work for the City. In other words, personal use of social media during working hours with the City is strictly prohibited.
- Employees are responsible for making sure that their online activities do not interfere with properly fulfilling the employee's job requirements and/or their commitments to the City's customers.

### **3.8.2 COWM Social Media**

COWM is committed to open and transparent communication. The City will communicate to its constituents using a variety of accepted tools including social media. City Hall will authorize specific individuals to use social media in an official capacity to ensure that, as with all communications activities, communications through social media channels are accurate, consistent and professional.

- The City's website will remain the City's primary online source for information. Social media will be used to complement the website's information and broaden the reach of City messages through multiple channels.
- Social networking accounts will clearly indicate they are maintained by the City and will contain appropriate contact information.
- The authority to post to official City of West Monroe social media sites will only be granted to employees specifically authorized to do so through this policy by the Chief of Staff or his or her designee.
- Authorized employees will always post to official City of West Monroe social media sites as City of West Monroe employees and, as appropriate, disclose their role at the City of West Monroe.
- Authorized users shall only post within their area of subject matter expertise.
- No confidential information will be posted to any social media under any circumstances.
- Comments containing, including but not limited to, any of the following shall not be allowed on City of West Monroe social media sites and may be removed by the Communications Department:
  - Comments not topically related to the particular site or article being commented on.

- Profane language or content.
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
- Sexual content or links to sexual content.
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
- Content related to non-City related sales, advertising or promotions.
- Comments determined by the City to be a specific attack on groups or individuals or to be inherently political in nature or cause as well as posts endorsing or campaigning for any specific candidate for elected office.
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Content that reveals personal or private information about any particular person or is otherwise protected by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or any other applicable privacy legislation.
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- Content that violates any City policy. Employees are responsible to be aware of all City policies that may impact their posts.

### **3.8.2a Records, forms and attachments**

The City of West Monroe requires that postings addressing official government business must be posted to the City's website with social media platforms serving as a secondary outlet. A post addressing official government business should link back to the official website for additional information.

Documents and records generated as a result of this policy will be maintained in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Louisiana Public Records Act, Title 44.

### **3.9 Smoking and Use of Electronic Cigarettes**

Smoking and use of electronic cigarettes are strictly prohibited in all City facilities and vehicles, regardless to their accessibility by the general public.

Smoking and use of electronic cigarettes may be allowed in a specifically designated area for some facilities, and only where marked.

## **Section 4 COMPENSATION POLICIES**

### **4.1 Establishment of Pay System**

COWM compensates employees in accordance with decisions by the City Administration as budgets are set. Pay for any given position is subject to the annual budgetary process and, as such, may be subject to increase, reduction, or status quo maintenance for any time period. The supervising administrator may make suggestions about salary compensation and other pay system concerns but the final decision regarding compensation levels rests with the Mayor, within budgetary and regulatory constraints.

### **4.2 Compliance with State and Federal Pay Acts**

COWM will comply with all state and Federal pay acts respecting the compensation of employees for services performed.

### **4.3 Right to Change Compensation**

COWM reserves the right to change compensation for any reason deemed appropriate by the Mayor. Compensation may also be adjusted based upon job performance and the availability of funds to maintain a solvent City of West Monroe budget.

### **4.4 Pay Schedule**

Employees are paid on a bi-weekly basis throughout the year. All employees are required to set up direct deposit for pay. Pay stubs are issued by COWM payroll department. Payroll direct deposits compensate employees for work performed in the pay period ending the Wednesday immediately preceding the day that the direct deposit is issued. Pay stubs are sent to the various departments to be distributed prior to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, unless a holiday or other circumstances change the payday.

### **4.5 Payroll Deductions**

No payroll deduction will be made from an employee paycheck unless authorized by the employee or required by law. Employees are required to report changes in family status, address or other information that could affect the amount of deductions withheld. These include Social Security and income taxes, retirement system contributions, court-ordered child support, and any other deductions required by law. Additionally, deductions may be authorized for employee contributions to the West Monroe Credit Union, health and dental insurance, supplemental insurance and/or deferred compensation plans requested by the employee.

## **4.6 Reporting Hours Worked**

All employees are required to maintain an accurate record of the time that he/she has worked during a payroll period. The COWM utilizes a timekeeping system for this purpose. The supervisor shall adjust (as needed) and approve the time reported indicating that the hours claimed and reported were actually worked.

## **4.7 Work Periods**

The work week for all regular employees will begin at 12:00 midnight on Thursday of each week and conclude at 11:59 p.m. of the succeeding Wednesday. For non-exempt employees, if hours actually worked exceed 40 in a workweek, or 80 in the pay period for public safety employees, premium compensation will be paid, or authorized compensatory time will be allowed to accrue. Overtime and/or comp time will be allowed only when authorized by an appropriate supervisor or when absolutely necessary in an emergency.

## **4.8 Overtime Compensation and Compensatory Time Policy**

Overtime work must be pre-approved by the Finance Director or designated supervisor, or when absolutely necessary in emergencies or special conditions. Overtime is the hours worked in excess of the allowable number of hours per work week as written in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FSLA), generally 40 hours per week, except for Public Safety employees. Overtime hours are paid at one and one-half times the usual hourly wage. By arrangement with the supervisor, compensatory time off will be calculated at a rate of one and one-half hours for every hour of overtime worked. Accumulation of compensatory time is strongly discouraged. At no time shall an employee accumulate more than 240 hours of compensatory time, except that public safety employees, (police & fire) shall be allowed to accumulate not more than 480 hours. Compensatory time should be used as soon as practical and **must be used before vacation time**.

Employees classified as Exempt Employees under FSLA are not entitled to overtime or compensatory time.

## **4.9 On-The-Job Injuries**

All on-the-job injuries must be reported to the employee's immediate supervisor and HR/Payroll as soon as practicable to allow filing of worker's compensation claims in the proper manner. If an employee is unable to work temporarily by an on-the-job accident, he/she may be eligible for worker's compensation.

Drug screening after an accident shall be conducted in accordance with the COWM policy on Drugs and Alcohol. Each supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all employees subject to post-accident testing are tested.

## **4.10 Expense Reimbursement**

An employee will be reimbursed for expenses incurred in completing his/her work-related assignment in accordance with the policies established by COWM. Each employee is responsible for providing verified receipts for any expense for which reimbursement is requested.

## **4.11 Promotions, Lateral Job Changes, and Demotions**

Jobs are posted internally, allowing current employees to post for promotions or lateral transfers (changing to another job in the same pay class).

Promotions are those job changes that result in advancement to higher positions with greater responsibility. Salary increases are subject to approval by the department head and Finance Director, in accordance with approved budget limits.

Lateral job moves are changes to positions with the same level of pay. An employee taking a lateral transfer, whether by the employee's request or the manager's requirement, will retain the same amount of accrued leave and seniority. If the employee's current salary is in the approved salary range, they will not receive any reduction in pay as a result of a lateral move.

Demotions require an employee to change to a lower paid position with a lower level of job responsibility. The demotion may be the result of a disciplinary action, a job reclassification or unsatisfactory work performance.

The City of West Monroe reserves the right to make decisions regarding job changes at its discretion.

## **Section 5 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

### **5.1 Health and Life Insurance**

Employees working regular full-time hours (at least 35 hours per week) will be eligible to participate in the health and life plans offered by City of West Monroe. Part-time employees are not eligible for City of West Monroe insurance plans. Details about the available insurance plans can be obtained from the Human Resources Department.

### **5.2 Social Security**

City of West Monroe full-time employees are covered by a State of Louisiana Pension Plan and do not pay into the Social Security system except that employees must pay the Medicare portion. Part-time employees are required to pay into the Social Security system and COWM contributes the employer portion to the Social Security system on behalf of those employees.

### **5.3 Pension**

#### **5.3.1 Municipal Employees Retirement System**

Regular full-time, non-civil service, employees of COWM are required to participate in the Municipal Employees Retirement System. The employee contributes to that fund based on a percentage of gross pay. COWM also contributes to the fund on behalf of the employee, based on a percentage of gross pay.

A retirement pension, which is determined by a formula involving years of age and years of service, is provided for retiring employees. A brochure outlining the program is available in the payroll office.

#### **5.3.2 Municipal Police Retirement System**

Full-time, classified employees of COWM Police Department are required to participate in the Municipal Police Retirement System of Louisiana. The classified employee contributes to the system based on a percentage of gross pay. COWM also contributes to that fund on behalf of the employee, based on a percentage of gross pay.

A retirement pension, which is determined by a formula involving years of age and years of service, is provided for retiring employees. A brochure outlining the program is available in the payroll office.

#### **5.3.3 Municipal Firefighters Retirement System**

Full-time, classified employees of COWM Fire Department are required to participate in the Municipal Firefighters Retirement System of Louisiana. The classified employee

contributes to the system based on a percentage of gross pay. COWM also contributes to that fund on behalf of the employee, based on a percentage of gross pay.

A retirement pension, which is determined by a formula involving years of age and years of service, is provided for retiring employees. A brochure outlining the program is available in the payroll office.

## **5.4 Workers' Compensation**

Employees are covered under the workers' compensation program, and City of West Monroe contributes to a fund for that program. Workers' compensation pays medical benefits and limited wage replacement for employees injured on the job.

## **5.5 Unemployment Compensation**

Employees of COWM, except for elected officials, are paid unemployment compensation benefits under the state program when the employee meets the requirements for unemployment compensation. COWM pays the cost of this benefit.

## **5.6 Education and Training**

When COWM requires employees to participate in training programs, all training costs are paid or reimbursed by COWM. The time an employee spends away from work in training is considered work time, however the time spent after hours out of town to attend training is not considered work time. Authorization to attend professional seminars and certification courses are decided on a case-by-case basis by managers, within the constraints of the training and education budget.

## **Section 6 LEAVE TIME**

Leave time refers to normal working hours not worked by employees. It may be paid time or unpaid. Regular full-time city employees are eligible for paid holidays, vacation, and sick leave, as well as some other types of leave time required by circumstances. Holidays are those designated days that City of West Monroe offices are closed to business except that those employees covered under Civil Service will have the holidays designated by Civil Service.

The employees' supervisor or manager must approve all leave time. Supervisors and managers keep copies of leave slips for time requested. Leave time is entered on each employee's time sheet for that period.

Unauthorized absence time is time away from work not authorized by the appropriate manager. Employees will not be paid for this type of absence; unauthorized absences may result in disciplinary action.

### **6.1 Holiday Leave:**

The City of West Monroe observes the following twelve (12) holidays:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Day	Thanksgiving (Thur & Friday)
Good Friday	Christmas (2 days)
Memorial Day	Employee Floating Holiday
Independence Day	Veteran's Day

In addition to these holidays, the Mayor may grant, from time to time, other holidays as he/she sees fit. When holidays fall on a Saturday, they are observed on the preceding Friday. When holidays fall on a Sunday, they are observed on the following Monday, except that Civil Service employees shall observe the holidays according to the Civil Service Holiday Schedule published each year. Observed holidays falling during an employee's vacation or sick leave are not counted against the employee's accrued vacation or sick leave.

The City Court and City Marshal's office observe the District Court holiday schedule.

The Employee Floating Holiday may be used at anytime during the year by all full-time employees, subject to approval by the employee's supervisor.

Civil service employees scheduled to work on one of the observed holidays will be paid additional compensation of one (1) times the employee's normal rate of pay. Additional compensation is due only when an employee works on an observed holiday. The

department, at its option, may grant the employee time off from work for which such additional compensation would be due.

Non-civil service full-time employees who are required to work on an observed holiday shall be paid additional compensation of one (1) times the employee's normal rate of pay.

## **6.2 Vacation Leave**

### **6.2.1 Non-Civil Service Employees: *Vacation Leave***

All full-time, non-civil service employees accrue vacation leave at the following schedule:

0- up to 6 months	none
At 6 months of service	40 hours
At 1 year of service	40 hours
At 2-10 years of service	80 hours
At 11 years of service	88 hours
At 12 years of service	96 hours
At 13 years of service	104 hours
At 14 years of service	112 hours
At 15 years of service	120 hours
At 16 years of service	128 hours
At 17 years of service	136 hours
At 18 years of service	144 hours
At 19 years of service	152 hours
At 20 years of service or more	160 hours

Vacation leave shall accrue only on the anniversary date of employment (the initial vacation leave granted at 6 months service shall accrue 6 months from the date of employment).

City holidays occurring within an employee's vacation leave will be considered as holidays, and not as vacation leave.

Elected officials of the City of West Monroe do not accrue vacation leave. An employee who is classified as a part time employee by the City is not entitled to vacation leave.

## ***Utilizing Vacation Leave***

Employees must receive prior approval from the appropriate department head to schedule all dates and the use of vacation leave. Upon prior approval, vacation leave may be taken in increments of less than a full day. Employees are encouraged to utilize their vacation leave within the calendar year the leave is provided. **The City may require accrued Comp Time to be utilized prior to Vacation Leave.**

### ***Vacation Leave Carry-Over***

Without prior written approval of their appropriate department head, an employee's accumulated vacation leave cannot exceed the current year's credit plus up to one normal year of credit carried over. Beyond this limit, no new vacation time will be accrued (e.g., "use it or lose it").

Even in the event of express advance written approval, it is intended that authorization to accrue additional vacation leave shall be provided only in extraordinary situations. Carryover shall be limited in duration (generally limited to use within 30 days) and then only provided to afford an opportunity for the employee to utilize the vacation leave. Upon separation of service, accumulated vacation leave (up to the maximum amount allowed to be accumulated as provided above) will be paid to employees at their then current rate of compensation.

**6.2.2 Civil Service Employees:** Civil service employees accrue vacation according to the following schedule:

#### **Fire Department:**

Shift Personnel: Each full-time employee of the classified service, after having served one year up to ten years, shall be entitled to an annual vacation leave of nine (9) shifts with full pay. After 10 years of service the employee is entitled to nine (9) shifts plus one shift for every odd numbered year over 10, up to a maximum of fifteen (15) shifts.

Daytime Personnel (40 hour work week): Each full-time employee of the classified service, after having served one year, shall be entitled to an annual vacation leave of 18 days with full pay. After 10 years of service the leave shall be increased by one (1) day for each year of service over 10, up to a maximum of thirty (30) days leave.

All Civil service employees are required to take vacation leave annually and no accrual from year to year is allowed.

#### **Police Department:**

Each full-time employee of the classified service, after having served one continuous year, shall be entitled to an annual vacation leave of fifteen (15) workdays with full pay.

After an employee has completed seven (7) years of continuous service, the annual vacation leave shall be increased to (21) workdays. After an employee has completed fourteen (14) years of continuous service, the annual vacation is increased to twenty-eight (28) workdays.

An employee may take 7 workdays vacation after completing six months of continuous service, however, doing so will lower the number of days accrued after one year of service to 7 work days.

Police and Fire Department personnel may schedule vacation leave into two separate periods, the total of which shall not exceed the employee's total accrued vacation leave time. No cash payment may be made in lieu of vacation.

All Police and Fire Department employee vacation schedules must be approved by the supervisor at least two weeks before any vacation is to begin. Employees with the greatest departmental seniority will have priority on the scheduling. Each department will post the vacation schedule prior to December 31 for the following year.

All Civil service employees are required to take vacation leave annually and no accrual from year to year is allowed.

## **6.3 Sick Leave**

### **6.3.1 Non-Civil Service Employees:**

COWM provides for the accrual of sick leave at the rate of 8 hours per month for all full-time employees. Sick leave may be used for medical, dental, or optical appointments, as well as other matters involving the health and welfare of the employee and/or their dependents.

Sick Leave is a benefit provided by the City for its employees, and is to be used only to address health needs.

Only the following are a proper use of Sick Leave:

- Personal illness or injury which prevents an employee from performing his or her usual duties, or personal illness or injury of the dependent of an employee
- Medical, dental or optical consultation or treatment of an employee or of the dependent of an employee
- Pregnancy/Maternity leave

Each employee is primarily responsible for verifying all sick leave taken is reported and properly reflected on their payroll records. Each department head shall have the responsibility for verification of reported sick leave.

The City reserves the right to require verification from medical professionals for any use of sick leave. Employees returning to work following a surgical procedure or pregnancy may be required to provide a medical release from the appropriate doctor verifying their ability to safely return to full employment responsibilities.

An employee who has fully utilized all of his or her sick leave is not entitled to further compensation. However, an employee may request the use of accrued vacation or other accrued paid leave time. Employees may also be eligible for non-compensated time off under the rules and regulations of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Disability insurance may be payable after use of a certain number of consecutive days of sick leave. Contact the Payroll department for more information.

Sick leave time may be accumulated from year to year without limitation. Up to a maximum of 288 hours of accumulated Sick Leave will be purchased from employees who have ten (10) years or more of service at the time of their separation from service at their then current rate of compensation. An employee who separates from service prior to ten (10) continuous years of service will not be paid for accrued sick leave.

#### **6.3.2 Civil Service Employees:**

Civil service employees do not accrue sick leave. A civil service employee may take up to 364 days of sick leave within a year, subject to the provisions of the Civil Service Rules and the policy of the employee's department. Sick leave may not be used to attend to employee's personal affairs nor for the care of dependents. Details about the sick leave policy for civil service employees may be obtained from the Personnel Department or either the Fire Chief's office or the Chief of Police office.

### **6.4 Bereavement Leave**

In the event of the death of an immediate family member, an employee is eligible for up to two (2) days of leave with pay while participating in related activities (visitation, services, related travel and similar activities). For purposes of funeral leave, immediate family consists of the following:

- Spouse
- Parent
- Son or daughter, or their spouses
- Brother or sister, or their spouses
- Grandparent
- Grandchild

These relationships include those who are "step-relatives" (for example, step-parents, step-children).

Under circumstances determined appropriate by an employee's department head, including extended travel or other extenuating circumstances, an employee may use up to three (3) days of accumulated sick leave as extended funeral leave with pay.

An employee who is classified as a part time employee by the City is not entitled to be compensated for funeral leave. Unpaid time off must be approved by the employee's department head.

Employees can also request the use of accumulated vacation leave or unpaid time off to attend funeral services and related activities for people not considered "immediate family" with prior approval by the employee's department head.

## **6.5 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

### **6.5.1 Family and Medical Leave**

The City of West Monroe's employees are covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). A full copy of "Employee Rights and Responsibilities under the Family and Medical Leave Act" is available at all City offices.

Under FMLA's Basic Leave Entitlement, eligible employees are provided up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, which has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

FMLA also provides eligible employees with Military Family Leave Entitlements, allowing employees with a spouse, son, daughter or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves use of their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying situations. A complete list of qualifying situations is in the full copy of "Employee Rights and Responsibilities under the Family and Medical Leave Act", available at all City offices and online.

In order to qualify for Basic Leave Entitlement, the City of West Monroe requires:

- One full year of employment with a minimum of 1,250 hours;
- Use of all accrued sick, vacation and compensatory time as a part of any eligible FMLA leave;
- 30 days advance notice, unless not reasonably possible; and
- Complete documentation to support the leave request.

## **6.5.2 Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Leave**

### **6.8.2a Emergency Paid Sick Leave**

Up to two weeks (80 hours, or a part-time employee's two-week equivalent) of paid sick leave based on the higher of your regular rate of pay:

- 100% for qualifying reasons #1-3 below, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total;
- 2/3 for qualifying reasons #4 and 6 below, up to \$200 daily and \$2,000 total

### **6.5.2b Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion**

Up to 10 weeks more of paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave paid at 2/3 for qualifying reason #5 below for up to \$200 daily and \$12,000 total.

A part-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period. Leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion is available only to employees who have been employed for at least 30 days prior to their leave request.

### **6.5.2c Qualifying Reasons**

1. Employee is unable to work because he/she is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.
2. Employee is unable to work because he/she has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19.
3. Employee is unable to work because he/she is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis.
4. Employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2) above.
5. Employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or childcare provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons.
6. Employee is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

### **6.5.3 Covered Employees**

Employees designated as Emergency Responders are excluded from the provisions of this Section 6.8. These include the following departments: Information Technology, Fire, Police and Public Works. All other employees of the City of West Monroe (other than Americorps Volunteers), whether Full-time or Part-time, are included.

#### **6.5.4 Effective Dates**

These provisions apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

#### **6.6 Military Leave**

Full-time employees who are members of the National Guard, Army Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, or Coast Guard Reserve shall be granted up to twenty (20) work days per year paid leave on days during which the employee is ordered to duty with troops, or at field exercises, or for instruction, including Inactive Duty Training (IDT) or any Active Duty Training (ADT). This leave accrues on the first day of the calendar year, but may not be accumulated from year to year, and all such leave not utilized by the end of each calendar year shall lapse. The City may require written verification of proper use of Military Leave.

#### **6.7 Jury Duty**

A full-time employee will receive leave with pay for jury duty as long as the employee is under court order to appear and serve. Any employee who is on jury duty and who is released from attendance prior to 3:30 p.m. shall be required to return to work. An employee may retain compensation received for jury duty.

### **Section 7 EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL RECORDS**

#### **7.1 Personnel Files**

Records regarding position, pay, and other employee status actions will be retained in each employee's file. Other items that may be contained in the file are written notes of explanation, grievances filed, employee forms for taxes and retirement application. The file may also contain disciplinary actions, awards received, training records, and performance reviews. Access to the file is by appointment with HR/Payroll . By written notification an employee may restrict personal information such as phone and address. COWM does not maintain employee medical records.

##### **7.1.2 Leave Records**

Records of leave accrual and leave taken are kept with payroll information in employee records. These records are updated with payroll information.

## **Section 8 EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE**

### **8.1 At-Will Employment**

Since non-civil service employees of COWM are employed "at will", dismissal can take place at any time and for any reason, with or without notice. Discipline or dismissal may result from such policy violations as insubordination, dangerous behavior or horseplay, felony or misdemeanor conviction, neglect of duty, drug or alcohol use, theft or unauthorized use of City of West Monroe resources, falsification of documents, incompetence, or other actions that violate policies or disrupt the workplace.

Discipline is determined by supervisors and managers and may include a progressive discipline process but progressive discipline is not required. The progressive discipline process includes steps such as a verbal warning, written reprimand, suspension from duty, demotion, final warning, and separation by involuntary dismissal.

In the event of dismissal, the employee will be provided with such notice and rights to be heard as are required by law.

### **8.2 Dispute Resolution / Grievances**

The City of West Monroe wishes to prevent circumstances that lead to grievances. When a dispute occurs, it is to be resolved promptly. Employees will not face adverse consequences for filing a grievance. Grievances may be filed alleging unfair treatment, discrimination, improper application of regulations and benefits of employment, and for improper working conditions.

An informal grievance is the first step in the process, attempting to resolve the problem through an informal meeting with the supervisor. If this attempt to resolve the problem fails, a more formal grievance, in writing, should be filed. This formal grievance, signed by the employee, is presented to his/her supervisor within two weeks of the occurrence. The employee should include a statement regarding what action they are requesting be taken as a result of the grievance.

The department head or appointed manager will initiate an appropriate investigation and will take steps to resolve the grievance. All documentation should be held by the department head or appointed manager. The employee may appeal at any time during the process if dissatisfied with the resolution of the grievance. Failure to appeal will imply agreement with the resolution.

## **8.3 Separation from Employment**

Separation usually results from resignation, retirement, layoff, termination, or death. If the reason is resignation, an employee is requested to give notice in writing at least two weeks before the last day of work. For separation due to retirement, more notice is requested. Layoff may occur if a position is eliminated or when there is a lack of funding or work. Termination can occur for any reason; however, COWM intends to work with employees, where possible, to avoid involuntary separation.

Final payment for employees separated because of resignation, retirement, layoff, death or involuntary separation will be made on the next scheduled payday. The final check will include all accrued earned leave and compensatory leave time, as appropriate.

## **8.4 Insurance Continuation After Separation**

The Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) permits employees leaving their employer the option of continuing some of their benefits (health insurance and dental insurance) at their own expense. A person employed by COWM, enrolled in the employee health plan, can choose to continue the insurance coverage if his/her position is lost due to reduction in hours or termination of employment. The spouse of an employee can choose to continue the coverage at his/her expense in the case of the death of the employee, termination of the employee, divorce or legal separation from spouse, or if the spouse qualifies for coverage by Medicare. Similar circumstances would permit the child of a separated employee to continue the coverage. Coverage may be continued for up to eighteen months, and in some circumstances, up to three years. The human resources department will be able to provide more information on the COBRA options for affected employees and dependents.

# **Section 9 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

## **9.1 Accident / Injury / Incident Reporting**

The City of West Monroe requires employees to conduct job tasks safely to protect themselves and others at work. Every accident, near-miss, or injury needs to be reported to a supervisor immediately. The supervisor or manager of the department will file an incident report at that time and notify HR/Payroll.

Employees should seek the nearest medical facility in case of serious injury and in other cases, the injured employee should seek medical attention using COWM's preferred workers compensation health provider list. For complete details on Workers Compensation policy and procedures see section 5.4 in this handbook or contact HR/Payroll.

## **9.2 Fleet Safety Policy**

COWM will maintain a vehicle safety program conforming to the best practices for public entity organizations. The program will include qualification, training and supervision of drivers and employees, establishment of safe practices and rules, planned inspection and maintenance of vehicles, reporting, investigation and review of accidents.

## **9.3 Vehicle Use Policy**

The provisions of this policy apply to all City of West Monroe employees. Employees whose employment is regulated by the municipal fire and police civil service rules are subject only to those provisions of this policy which are not specifically regulated by the rules of that system.

Department heads and supervisors are themselves responsible for verifying that all City of West Monroe vehicles are appropriately identified with the designated City/Departmental logo, if required by R.S. 49:121. Department heads and supervisors are themselves also responsible for enforcing all vehicle use rules of the City of West Monroe, including the "no smoking" rules.

The assignment of City of West Monroe vehicles during work time is based upon job description in a manner consistent with departmental workload and employee function, and the discretion of the Department head or the supervisor to whom that responsibility is delegated.

The assignment of vehicles for 24-hour use will be made in writing by the Mayor of the City of West Monroe, or his designee, and will only be considered for employees who require a vehicle for the ordinary and necessary discharge of their job functions. Criteria

which will be used in the determination of eligibility for 24-hour vehicle use include but may not be limited to:

- Officially designated on-call status;
- Requirement for frequent emergency availability
- No City of West Monroe facility is available for garaging in a safe and convenient location

It is the policy of City of West Monroe that certain positions require employee access to City vehicles, either during the work shift or on a 24-hour on-call basis. However, City of West Monroe vehicles are not personal vehicles and are not for personal use.

Use of a take-home vehicle is limited to travel to and from the residence and place of work. The vehicle should be driven over the most direct route taking into account road and traffic conditions. The vehicle should not be utilized for travel for personal reasons outside a direct commuting route.

Under most circumstances the value of the 24-hour use of a City of West Monroe vehicle may be required to be reported to the IRS as compensation and, if so, shall be added to the employee's W-2.

Employees assigned City of West Monroe vehicles on a 24-hour basis will be given a copy of this policy and will be required to sign a confirmation of receipt.

**Rules Governing Use of City of West Monroe Vehicles**

- City vehicles may only be used for legitimate city business.
- City vehicles will not be used to transport any individual that is not directly or indirectly related to city business. Passengers shall be limited to city employees and/or individuals who are directly associated with city work activity (committee members, consultants, contractors, etc.). No spouses, family members, friends or others who are not city employees or working on city business.
- Vehicles should contain only those items needed to properly conduct city business. The City shall not be liable for the loss or damage of any personal property transported in the vehicle.
- Employees are expected to keep city vehicles clean, and to report any malfunction or damage to their supervisor immediately.
- Employees assigned vehicles for commuting purposes are expected to secure and park City vehicles in safe locations.
- Employees (both driver and passengers) must wear seatbelts in vehicles so equipped during operation of the vehicle.

- All operators of vehicles that require a CDL license must be tested for drugs and alcohol as provided by US DOT regulations and the City drug/alcohol policy.
- Employees may not operate City vehicles under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs or medications or other substances that may interfere with effective and safe operations.
- Employees who operate City vehicles must have a valid motor vehicle license issued by the state of Louisiana and may be required to provide proof of valid motor vehicle license at any time.
- All new drivers must allow for a motor vehicle records check to be performed prior to driving any City owned vehicle. This records check will be conducted on a regular basis thereafter. An adverse driving record, regardless of the vehicle in which it occurred, may result in revocation of an employee's privilege to operate City vehicles. If operating a City vehicle is an essential job function, reclassification or termination could result.
- Employees driving City vehicles shall obey all applicable traffic and parking regulations, ordinances, and laws.
- Employees who incur parking or other fines in City vehicles will generally be personally responsible for payment of such fines unless the payment of such fines is approved by the City.
- Employees who are issued citations for any offense while using a City vehicle must notify their supervisor immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours. Failure to provide such notice will be grounds for disciplinary action.
- An employee who is assigned a city vehicle and who is arrested for or charged with a motor vehicle offense for which the punishment includes suspension or revocation of the motor vehicle license, whether in his or her personal vehicle or in a city vehicle, must notify his or her supervisor immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours. Conviction for such an offense may be grounds for loss of City vehicle privileges and/or further disciplinary action.
- Any accident involving a city vehicle must be reported to the employee's supervisor and to City Hall immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours. Failure to provide such notice will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

- No employee may use a City vehicle for out of parish use without advance approval of the City Clerk or Chief Deputy Clerk.
- Smoking is not allowed in any City vehicle or equipment.
- Under NO circumstances will any person ride in the cargo area of a truck, or in a trailer or bucket of a loader or backhoe.

Failure to comply with any and all provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal of City vehicle privileges, suspension, and/or termination of employment.

## **9.4 Firearms and Weapons**

No employee of the City (including an employee who has been issued a concealed weapons permit) shall bring or possess any firearm at their workplace, or any other City property, including City vehicles. This rule applies at all times, whether during work hours or before/after hours. This rule does not apply to any employee who has been granted specific permission to possess a firearm in the course of their job duties with the City. All City employees may keep a firearm in a locked, privately owned vehicle as long as the firearm is fully hidden from view.

## **9.5 Children in the Workplace**

The City of West Monroe and all extensions thereof have a responsibility to provide a safe, productive and professional workplace for employees, guests and visitors. With consideration to all health and safety liability concerns, the workplace is typically not an appropriate place for children/grandchildren of employees. The City recognizes that employees may want to bring children to the workplace for brief visits, specific events or situational convenience. The Policy for Children in the Workplace defines the standards by which children may be allowed.

It is the policy of the COWM that children are not to be brought to the workplace on a repeated basis in lieu of childcare.

Circumstances in which employees may bring children in the workplace with prior approval by their Department Head would include:

1. **Brief visits.** An example would be an employee that brings a child or grandchild to meet the employee's coworkers.
2. **Specific events** that are City sanctioned and children are expressly encouraged to attend.

The following circumstances are NEVER allowable:

1. Children are not allowed in areas of high risk, which would include work areas where equipment/machinery is regularly operated.
2. Children cannot be brought to the workplace as a result of childcare difficulties. This includes school breaks and/or holidays. Managers should be liberal in granting leave to employees who need to make emergency day care arrangements when unforeseen problems arise.
3. No ill children are permitted to accompany any employee to work.

Full time employees are provided vacation and sick leave, which can be used for most circumstances. Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 provides unpaid leave for qualified medical and family reasons. FMLA can be utilized after other leave is exhausted for the care of a child with medical concerns or those unable to be in a childcare setting. For specific guidance on FMLA, contact HR.

## **9.5 Animals in the Workplace**

Pets create a health and safety risk for other employees as well as the visitors that are served in our facilities.

In accordance with ADA guidelines, The City of West Monroe considers the placement of a service animal in the workplace to be an accommodation to assist an employee's defined disability. Therefore, an employee must request an accommodation to bring a service animal into the workplace. Accommodations are considered on a case-by-case basis. Employees must provide appropriate documentation that an accommodation is needed because of an employee's disability and necessary to perform the duties as defined in the employee's job description.

Requests for accommodations are made through HR and will require approval by the employee's Department Head and City Hall.