

Klickitat County

CLERK'S
OFFICE

EMPLOYEE
HANDBOOK

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FOREWORD

This Employee Handbook is provided by the Klickitat County Clerk to replace the Klickitat County Board of County Commissioner's Employee Handbook's Article 5, Workplace Expectations. The remaining Articles of the Board of County Commissioner's Employee Handbook is also applicable to the Clerk's Office's employees.

This Employee Handbook:

1. Is not a contract and the information contained herein is not to be considered contractual promises. This handbook is designed to familiarize you with the policies and procedures of the Klickitat County Clerk's Office. The manual does not supersede any Federal or State Law, the Klickitat County Employee Handbook but is to be used in conjunction with them.
2. Is applicable for all Clerks' Office staff. For purposes of this handbook, "employee" refers to such employees.
3. Is effective on the date of the Klickitat County Board of County Commissioner formal adopt and supersedes all previous Clerks' Office employee personnel policies versions. This handbook can also be found in the Clerk's shared drive "M" and the County shared drive "J".
4. May provide information that conflicts with provisions for employees hired by special appointment, or as at-will employees. In such cases, these employees may be exempt from certain provisions of this Handbook. In cases of conflict between the terms contained in this handbook and the special appointment, the terms of the special appointment will prevail.
5. Contains summaries and general overviews; it is not all-inclusive. For more information, please refer to the Klickitat County BOCC Employee Handbook, Personnel and/or the appropriate insurance policies, retirement plan regulations, contracts, or documents for exact rules and regulations.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Klickitat County Clerk's Office Employees will efficiently maintain and protect the integrity and accuracy of the judicial records of the Klickitat County Superior Court while serving the public in a courteous, professional and timely manner.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Purpose: The objective of this document is to facilitate efficient service to the public and to provide a personnel management system within the Clerk's Office that deals with all employees in an equitable and uniform manner; and to inform all personnel of their rights and responsibilities.

Moreover, the intent of this handbook is to recognize that the Clerk's Office shall employ the most qualified persons, willing and capable of performing effectively, and conducting themselves and approaching their work in a professional manner. It is the further intent that each employee shall be prepared and expected to perform at the best possible level; that equality of opportunity, consideration and treatment shall be provided in all phases of employment; and that no appointment to, promotion to, removal from or discipline in any position shall be influenced because of race, religion, sex, creed, national origin, age, marital status, color, veteran status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability or religious opinion or affiliation.

Scope: These policies and procedures apply to all employees in the Clerk's Office, but in the case of any conflicting provision, the following shall have precedent over these policies and procedures: The Klickitat County BOCC Employee Handbook and any applicable federal, state or local law.

Employee Responsibility: All Clerks' Office employees are responsible for representing the County in an appropriate, courteous, efficient and helpful manner. All employees are responsible for following established rules and regulations and for meeting established standards of performance for their position.

SECTION A – CONFIDENTIALITY

Our citizens and other parties with whom we do business entrust the Clerk's Office with important information. It is our policy to protect confidential information from wrongful disclosure. If an employee questions whether certain information is considered confidential, he/she should first check with the Clerk or Chief Deputy Clerk.

This policy is intended to alert employees of the need for discretion at all times and is not intended to inhibit normal business communications.

All inquiries from the media must be referred to the Clerk.

In the course of their work, staff has access to confidential information about Clerk's Office operations. Klickitat County Clerk's Office is a public entity and as such welcomes public accountability. However, some information is legally, medically, or personally privileged and/or confidential. Discretion and the maintenance of confidentiality are expected of all employees.

Confidentiality is necessary and applies not only to records but to what you see and hear. No confidential information acquired from JIS or Liberty will be disclosed to the public (written or oral), nor shall JIS, Liberty, or SCOMIS information be acquired for personal use or shared or discussed with anyone other than employees of the Klickitat County Clerk's Office or the Klickitat County Superior Court. Employees violating this rule shall be subject to discipline, which may include immediate termination.

It is your duty to protect the integrity and accessibility of the legal record, maintain the confidentiality of sealed file information and operate within the prescribed policies of the Clerk's Office.

Employees shall abstain at all times from public comment about pending court proceedings, except for strictly procedural matters.

Employees shall not disclose confidential information to any unauthorized person. Information retained in electronic files will be treated the same as other court documents.

SECTION B – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Employees must avoid any relationship or activity that might impair, or appear to impair, their ability to make objective and fair decisions when performing their jobs. At times, an employee may be faced with situations in which business actions taken on behalf of Klickitat County Clerk's Office may conflict with the employee's own personal interests. County property, information or business opportunities may not be used for personal gain.

Conflict of Interest Could Arise in the Following Circumstances:

- Using their official positions to secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions for themselves or any other person. Employees are prohibited from abusing the power that special knowledge affords.
- Accept, agree to accept, dispense or solicit any gift or favor which would influence or appear to influence the conduct of official duties.
- Using the resources, property, and funds under their control for personal reasons or gain.
- Court time, equipment, supplies, and facilities shall not be used for personal business.
- When an employee knows that a conflict of interest may be presented, the employee is required to promptly inform the Clerk or Deputy Chief Clerk.
- Request or accept any compensation or fee beyond that received from their employer for the performance of their official duties. However, employees may engage in outside employment as long as it does not conflict with the performance of their duties or violate this Section.
- Being employed by, or acting as a consultant to a County supplier or contractor, regardless of the nature of the employment, while employed with Klickitat County.
- Hiring or supervising family members or closely related persons.
- Owning or having a substantial interest in a supplier or contractor.

Disqualify yourself in assisting in a proceeding or assisting a customer in which your impartiality might reasonably be questioned, including but not limited to instances in which you:

- Are a party to the action;
- Personally, or as an employee, have a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party; or
- Personally know the customer and a conflict may be present.
- It is the employee's responsibility to self-identify either relationship(s) or potential conflict of interest(s) which involve customers of the Clerk's Office or the court and ask for a determination by management to either proceed or be recused from that matter.
- Refrain from conducting yourself in a manner that could create the appearance of a disadvantage for the opposing party.

The exceptions to this policy permit employees to: 1) purchase goods or services from the County which are generally offered to the public for sale, for example, through an auction of excess property; 2) offer goods or services for sale to the County where the County solicits sealed bids and accepts the low bid; and 3) receive goods and services available to the general public such as permits, water testing, copies, fax machine and other.

Employees with a conflict-of-interest question should seek advice from the Clerk or Deputy Chief Clerk. Before engaging in any activity, transaction or relationship that might give rise to a conflict of interest, employees must seek review from the Clerk, Deputy Chief Clerk or the Personnel Division.

SECTION C – OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees are permitted to engage in outside work or to hold other jobs, subject to certain restrictions as outlined below.

Activities and conduct away from the job must not compete with, conflict with, interfere with, or compromise the County interests or adversely affect job performance and the ability to fulfill all job responsibilities. Employees are prohibited from the unauthorized use of any County tools, vehicles or equipment and the unauthorized use or application of any confidential information. In addition, employees are not to solicit or conduct any outside business during paid County working time.

Employees are cautioned to carefully consider the demands that additional work activity will create before accepting outside employment. Outside employment will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel or refusal to work overtime or different hours. If Klickitat County determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment.

Employees who have accepted outside employment may not use paid sick leave to work on the outside job. Fraudulent use of sick leave will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

SECTION D – HOURS OF WORK, ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Office Hours: The Clerk's Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., door opens at 8:30 a.m. Monday through Friday. Any alternative work schedule shall be approved by the Clerk and BOCC in advance.

Attendance and Punctuality:

- Vacation, floating holidays and compensatory time must be scheduled with the Clerk in advance. Sick leave may be used in case of medical emergency or sudden illness without prior scheduling.

- Any employee who will be unable to arrive for work due to illness, or who is requesting vacation/alternative leave without an approved advance leave slip, shall call the Clerk before the start of their scheduled work hours and inform the reason for said request and the expected day of return to the office.
- Any employee who will be late for work shall call and speak to the Clerk before the start of their scheduled work hours and report the time he/she may be expected at the office.
- You must speak with a Clerk to discuss said request. Voice mail messages are not acceptable.
- In the absence of the Clerk, the Chief Deputy shall be notified.
- Failing to speak directly with the Clerk or the Chief Deputy may result in disciplinary action.
- Each employee has been provided with home and cell numbers for the Clerk and Chief Deputy Clerk so that necessary approval, notification and/or information is are accessible.
- Patterns of absenteeism or tardiness may result in discipline, even if employee has not yet exhausted available paid time off. Absences due to illness or injuries that qualify for Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will not be counted against an employee's attendance record. Medical documentation within the guidelines of FMLA may be required in these instances.
- To ensure accurate time keeping the Clerk expects employees to be prepared to work at the designated starting time and will work until the end of their scheduled workday. All time worked must be reflected on the employee's timesheet.
- Employees who are authorized to conduct Clerk duties outside their normal work schedule must reflect this as time worked on the employee's timesheet.

Not reporting to work and not calling to report the absence is a no-call/no-show and is a serious matter. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may result from a no-call/no show. Steps outlined in the Board of County Commissioner's Employee Handbook, Article 4, Employment, Section G – Separation of Employment and Subsection titled Job Abandonment of this handbook will apply.

Break Schedule: All employees are entitled to two 15-minute rest periods – one for each four-hour period worked in a given day. Leave time shall not be considered as part of a four-hour work period. Breaks shall be taken between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. and between 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. Breaks shall not disrupt the normal services provided by this office.

Missed rest breaks are not compensated as overtime. No employee shall accumulate breaks past the workday or be allowed to add breaks together to leave work early. As for court clerks and other special situations, employees may, upon advance approval of the Clerk, be allowed to add one break to their scheduled lunch hour if he/she misses a rest period. It is up to the court clerk to take his/her

break whenever the court is in recess, or to contact the court clerk team for a relief clerk. If a court clerk requests break coverage and no one is available, or if the clerk has been at MI hearings, the Clerk may use her discretion and allow a late break.

Lunch Schedule: Each employee shall be allowed one hour for lunch. The lunch schedule is staggered to accommodate the Court schedule.

An employee may request to not take a lunch/meal break, in order to leave early for a scheduled appointment upon prior approval from the County Clerk.

Food or Drinks at Desk: Notwithstanding the following paragraph, food shall be eaten in the break room during break times and is otherwise not allowed at an employee's workstation. Coffee, tea, and/or water in a closed, spill-proof container are permissible. This is to maintain a neat, clean and professional office, and to protect our computers and keyboards.

Please refer to the Board of County Commissioner's Employee Handbook, Article 6, Section I – Time Reporting, and Section L – Meal/Rest Periods, for important additional requirements or policies.

SECTION E – ATTIRE & GROOMING

Purpose: The objectives of this policy are to achieve and maintain the highest standard of professional excellence in staff appearance and to promote a professional and appropriate business image for the Clerk's Office. One of the qualities that mark a professional organization is the exemplary appearance of its employees. Klickitat County Clerk's Office is often judged by the appearance of a single employee; therefore, the dress and grooming of our employees shall be such as to gain appreciation and respect for the public, Clerk's Office and the Court.

Appearance, Hygiene and Grooming: It is important that the public have confidence in the staff and the staff members have confidence/pride in themselves when transacting business. To help present this image and foster public confidence, staff members must dress appropriately for their work assignment. Staff will wear clean and well-maintained attire appropriate to the type of work they do. For court clerks, staff working at the front counter or required to work with the public - the level of professional appearance is at a higher level than other positions within the office.

Employees are expected to dress with a pride and a respect consistent with being a professional employee of Klickitat County Clerk's Office. Employees shall dress in good taste and exhibit a neat clean PROFESSIONAL appearance.

Employees are expected to come to work clean and well groomed. Attention to personal hygiene shall be such that it is not offensive to your co-workers and the public.

Employees need to be considerate of fellow workers because of close working quarters. Employees shall be aware of items that leave lingering odors that may have

an effect on other employees. Employees shall not use perfume/scented lotions that have a strong scent.

No written specifications will address every situation; therefore, if there is a doubt whether a particular item or style is acceptable, staff shall discuss any questions with the Clerk. The Clerk will make the determination of appropriate dress. Any employee sent home for inappropriate dress will have the missed time deducted from their vacation or alternative leave balance.

Acceptable Attire for Women:

- Dressy trousers with coordinating shirt/blouse, sweater, blazer or cardigan, dresses, skirts, business suits, pantsuits
- Blouses, sweaters
- Blazers or Jackets
- Dress shoes, dress boots (includes cowboy boots), flats, heels, dress sandals
- Nylons, stockings, tights and trouser socks are not mandatory **but are preferred**, however; bare legs and feet SHALL have a well groomed appearance
- Corduroy pants are allowed except for days when you are required to go into clerk for scheduled court proceedings
- Jeans will be allowed on the 4th Friday of every month provided there is not a trial scheduled

Acceptable Attire for Men:

- Dress trousers with coordinating shirts
- Dress shirts with ties are required for those going into Court
- Sport coats, sweaters or blazers
- Business suits
- Dress shoes with socks, cowboy boots
- Jeans will be allowed on the 4th Friday of every month provided there is not a trial scheduled

Unacceptable Attire:

In compliance with the dress standards policy, the following are examples of unacceptable attire.

- Cargo/carpenter pants denim/jean-look pants
- Torn, patched, or faded clothing of any nature
- T-shirts, shirts, sweat shirts with slogans or large-letter advertising
- Dresses, skirts, jumpers shorter than two inches above the kneecap
- Halter, tube, or midriff baring tops
- Attire shall not be provocative or suggestive
 1. See-through blouses (unless worn with a camisole and bra)
 2. Low necklines that display cleavage
 3. Bare midriff blouses
 4. Clothing that is scant or revealing
 5. Exposed undergarments
- Spaghetti straps, tank tops or camisoles unless worn with shirt, sweater or jacket

- Sleeveless tops or dresses when in court unless covered with jacket or sweater
- Muscle shirts
- Pants shorter than mid-calf
- Gauchos shorter than bottom of the kneecap.
- Athletic, leisure, tennis shoes, Birkenstock type sandals or thongs style/flip flop or beach sandals. *(If a medical issue is present a doctor's note specific to the medical issue must be given to Admin and every effort should be made by employee to seek professional looking footwear that will meet their need.)* All footwear must be kept in good condition
- Exercise attire, leisure wear, pajama style clothing, beach attire, spandex, banded ankle, or sweatshirts (hooded/zippered)
- No visible piercing with exception of the ears unless approved by the County Clerk

Definitions:

1. Casual - clothes comfortable and suitable for wearing on informal occasions. Informal, relaxed, laid-back, sporty, untailed, unfussy
2. Dressy - Smart, elegant, chic, stylish, classy
3. Shorts- If they are classified as "shorts" they do not have a place in the office. Some of the more tailored styles that have a fuller leg and are longer in length, often referred to as city shorts, walking shorts, etc. have also been deemed inappropriate
4. Gauchos – Cross between a skirt and a pant and usually flared out at the bottom
5. T-Shirts – Defining them is not easy, with the variety of designs and styles available. The general rule should be if it looks tailored and business-like it is probably okay. A plain, cotton knit top worn with a vest or jumper can look very appropriate, these types of tops must be in good repair, and not faded, stained or wrinkled. The more casual looking t-shirts should be reserved for a wear outside of the workday and are deemed inappropriate in the office.
6. Jeans – Jean-style pants, regardless of color or material, are not appropriate
7. On Friday jean day – Jeans will be clean, not faded and not have any holes or stains

SECTION F - MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff shall refer all media requests to the Clerk or Deputy Clerk immediately upon receipt. All requests from the media for information about a case or a request for any other information are to be directed to the Clerk or Deputy Clerk. Staff shall not have the authority to speak to the media regarding any information concerning the Clerk's Office or employees. Employees are not permitted to represent the Clerk's Office when speaking with the media unless directed to do so by the Clerk or Deputy Clerk. Employees shall not contact the media while at work regarding any situation or incident that has occurred in the Clerk's Office without prior approval by the Clerk.

Social Media:

Below are guidelines for social media use, which includes, but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, My Space, and YouTube. The policy covers all online and publicly printed communications about the County and County-related matters.

Employees shall not post confidential or proprietary information about the County's clients, employees, applicants, vendors or citizens.

Only the Clerk or her/his designee may speak on behalf of the Clerk's Office. Employees contacted by the media, should direct them to the Clerk.

This policy does not restrict any employee's ability to speak on their own behalf with the media or on social networks. Nor from exercising the employee's rights under the National Labor Relations Act, Section 7, concerning concerted activities.

Employees are encouraged to note that online postings are often public, permanent, and easily printed or forwarded to the public.

Klickitat County may monitor content out on the Internet. The County will honor password protection and not ask another employee to monitor posts on its behalf. Violations of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Section G - Solicitations, Distributions and Posting of Materials

The Clerk's Office prohibits the solicitation, distribution and posting of materials on or at County property by any employee or non-employee, except as may be permitted by this policy. The sole exceptions to this policy are charitable and community activities supported by Klickitat County Clerk's Office and County-sponsored programs related to Klickitat County's services.

The Clerk's Office allows the delivery of merchandise (i.e., newspaper, cookie sales, etc.) as long as the service to the public is not disrupted.

Provisions:

- Non-employees may not solicit employees or distribute literature of any kind on County premises at any time.
- Employees may only admit non-employees to work areas with management approval or as part of a County-sponsored program. These visits should not disrupt workflow. An employee must accompany the non-employee at all times.
- Employees may not solicit other employees during work times, except in connection with a County-approved or sponsored event.

- Employees may not distribute literature of any kind during work times or in any work area at any time, except in connection with a County-sponsored event.

Each County facility shall have an employee bulletin board to keep employees informed of various items of interest such as job openings and other information pertaining to County policies and procedures and office work rules/policies and announcements required by law and official postings such as safety information and other notices as approved by the Clerk. New employees shall be notified of the location of the Clerk's Office bulletin board.

Violations of this policy should be reported to the Clerk.

Section H – Employee Personnel Files

Certain portions of the personnel records of the County are public documents and are subject to disclosure under federal and state law. The County will attempt to maintain the confidentiality of personnel files to the extent permissible and subject to the needs of County staff to use the personnel file in matters directly relating to employment matters affecting the employee.

Employee files will be located and maintained by Personnel Division and are considered confidential. The Clerk will have access to personnel files of the Clerk's Office employees.

A manager or supervisor considering the hire of a former employee or transfer of a current employee may be granted access to the file, or limited parts of it, in accordance with antidiscrimination laws.

Current employees and former employees will generally be permitted access to inspect their personnel file at any reasonable time during working hours.

Personnel files are to be reviewed in the Personnel Division. Personnel files may not be taken outside the department.

Representatives of government or law enforcement agencies, in the course of their duties, may be allowed access to file information.

The Personnel Division shall ensure that an official employment record is maintained for each employee. The personnel file shall show the employee's name, position title, department to which assigned, documents indicating employment status, performance evaluations, training documentation, disciplinary documentation, written commendations, compensation information and other pertinent information. Personnel files will not contain information regarding employee disabilities or other confidential medical information; such information will be maintained in the employee's medical file in locked separate file cabinets within the Personnel office.

The Clerk may maintain confidential supplementary personnel files for the conduct of day-to-day business, including performance evaluations, disciplinary action and training and development records. Such supplementary files shall be turned over to the

Personnel Division upon termination of the employee. The official personnel file of an employee shall be comprised of the records maintained by the Personnel Division and the departmental supplementary records.

An employee may place any pertinent information in his/her individual personnel file for purposes of explaining or refuting official records therein. Only employment-related information will be in the personnel files.

The Personnel Manager shall have access to all employee information. All personnel files are a part of the ordinary business records of the County and are the property of the County.

Please be advised that County policy regarding personnel files are subject to federal and state requirements, Public Records Act, including potential legal requirements to provide copies of personnel files.

Section I – Employee Parking

Except for reserved spaces, parking is on a first-come, first-served basis around County buildings. When parking, employees should take care not to occupy more than one parking space per vehicle. Employees are requested to be courteous, watch vehicle doors, and drive safely in County parking lots. The County assumes no responsibility for vehicles or their contents in these parking areas.

Employees shall not park in front of the Courthouse so as to ensure ample visitor and handicap parking. This does not apply to handicapped employees.

Section J – Use of Telephone

Prompt and courteous telephone manners are an essential part of each employee's job in the Clerk's Office. Identify the County Clerk's Office and then yourself.

- If the employee is not available, give the caller the option of leaving a voice message or inquire if you can be of assistance.
- If the caller wants to leave a message, inform them that you will direct their call to the employee's voice mail.
- If you are at the counter assisting a customer, excuse yourself and explain you need to answer the telephone and will be right with them.

Personal Calls: shall be limited to lunch and break times.

Cell Phones: Cell phones shall be in your purse, pocket or a desk drawer during work hours. All employees are required to put their cell phones on silent/vibrate to eliminate the ringing of phones. Responding to text messages during work hours is not allowed. If you need to respond to text messages, it must be done during a break time or during lunch.

Employees and volunteers on County business are prohibited from operation of a moving vehicle while holding a wireless communications device to the ear. This prohibition does not apply to those: (1) operating an authorized emergency vehicle; (2) reporting illegal activity, summoning emergency help or in prevention of injury to persons or property; (3) using a hearing aid.

Scan Line or Long Distance Authorization Process: Each employee is assigned an individual SCAN line or a new long distance authorization process and shall be required to use it when returning or making long distance calls related to office matters. No personal, long distance calls shall be charged on county lines.

Section K – Political Activities

Employees are free to participate in political campaigns/ organizations during non-working hours if such activity does not use, or appear to use, the employees' official position or court in connection with those activities. See also RCW 41.06.250.

Employees shall refrain from using public funds, personnel, facilities or equipment at any time for political activities.

Section L – Suggestions

All employees are encouraged to make suggestions which will improve the efficiency of Clerk's Office operations or employee job satisfaction. Even ideas for other departments of the County are helpful. Suggestions may be written or verbally given to the Clerk or Chief Deputy Clerk at any time. The Clerk or Chief Deputy Clerk will then discuss the idea with the appropriate person or group.

At the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners, or their designee, County-wide surveys may be conducted to solicit suggestions or assessment of County services, benefits, job satisfaction or other County functions.

SECTION M – CODE OF ETHICS

*Your personal commitment to excellence is important
to the Klickitat County Clerk's Office*

The work of employees in the Clerk's Office has many facets. Because the legal documents you handle deal with human beings and their problems, your attitude and behavior can have a profound effect upon the way that you're related to these persons; in turn, this can directly affect the image they develop of the office of the County Clerk and Superior Court.

- Loyalty to the Court and the County Clerk's Office is necessary. Except as provided for by law or code of ethics, the conduct of the judges, County Clerk, Chief Deputy or any other deputy clerk shall never be discussed or commented upon in a way that has an adverse impact on the credibility of the court or the Clerk's Office. Since you will not always agree or

understand why decisions or policies are made, use caution when speaking of these.

- Your attitude and behavior while on duty to the internal (co-workers) and external customers will directly affect the County Clerk, the court and the deputy clerks. Always remember that public confidence in the judiciary and the Clerk's Office will be eroded by irresponsible or improper remarks made about the Clerk, court or a deputy clerk.

It is the duty of all court personnel to observe high standards of conduct, fidelity and diligence in carrying out their duties to the Court and the Office of County Clerk.

In addition, it is your individual duty to do the following:

- Respect and comply with the laws of the State of Washington.
- To be punctual in attending court and expeditious in carrying out the requests of the court.
- To abstain from public comment about a pending or impending court proceeding, never commenting on a case to the media, public, or any participant of litigation (defendant/plaintiff), an attorney, witness, or juror, etc.
- To assist the judge in maintaining order and decorum in all proceedings before the court.
- To be patient, dignified, courteous and tactful to judges, court reporters, bailiffs, law enforcement, litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers, coworkers and others with whom you will deal with when carrying out your duties.
- Not to say anything which could be considered an attempt to influence a judgment of the court or create any impression that you are in a special position of influence with the court.
- To be honest and forthright and act with integrity while performing all duties.
- Court employees shall not accept, agree to accept, dispense or solicit any gift or favor which would influence or appear to influence the conduct of official duties.
- Court employees shall use the resources, property, and funds under their control appropriately and solely in accordance with the law. Court time, equipment, supplies, and facilities shall not be used for personal business.
- Employees are permitted to engage in outside work or to hold other jobs, subject to certain restrictions as outlined below.
- Activities and conduct away from the job must not compete with, conflict with, interfere with, or compromise the County interests or adversely affect job performance and the ability to fulfill all job responsibilities. Employees are prohibited from the unauthorized use of any County tools, vehicles or equipment and the unauthorized use or application of any confidential

information. In addition, employees are not to solicit or conduct any outside business during paid County working time.

SECTION N – ADVISING THE PUBLIC¹

The following are principles and guidelines you shall keep in mind when providing advice and information to customers:

Principles/Guidelines:

- Court staff has an obligation to explain court processes and procedures to litigants and other interested customers. Court proceedings are more effective when everyone operates with the same expectations concerning the ground rules, including pro se litigants.
- Court staff have an obligation to inform litigants, and potential litigants, how to bring their problems before the court for resolution. (For example: How do I file a lawsuit? How do I request a hearing?)
- Court staff cannot advise litigants whether to bring their problems before the court, or what remedies to seek. Court staff cannot advise court users whether to avail themselves of a particular procedural alternative. This is the lawyer's role. (For example: Shall I file this motion?)
- Court staff shall remain absolutely neutral and impartial. You shall never give advice or information for the purpose of giving one party an advantage over another. You shall never give advice or information to one party that you would not give to an opponent. Advising a party what to do (rather than how a party might do it) crosses the line from impartiality to partiality.
- Court staff shall never reveal confidential information unless authorized by statute, rule or court order. Also, court staff shall never reveal the contents or outcome of a court opinion to a party before it is made public. Inquiries from the media will be directed to the Clerk or her/his designee.
- Court staff shall be mindful of the basic principle that counsel may not communicate with the judge *ex parte*. Court staff shall not let themselves be used to circumvent that principle, or fail to respect it, in acting on matters delegated to them for decision. Clerks also need to avoid becoming messengers to the judge of communication that would be improper for the judge to receive indirectly.

¹ John M. Greacen, *Clerk's Office Staff Cannot Give Legal Advice*, *The Court Manager* (NACM, Winter 1995, pp.35-39.)

SECTION O – YOUR ROLE AS A CLERK’S OFFICE EMPLOYEE

Safeguarding Clerk's Office Information and Property

Clerk's Office employees are asked to be careful to turn out lights and lock doors when leaving. Equipment breakdowns shall be reported to the Clerk. Employees are not to remove equipment, office supplies, or other Clerk's Office property from the office without proper authorization. All lost, stolen, or missing items shall be reported to your Clerk.

Please refer to Section D, Subsection "Food or Drinks at Desk", to be aware of additional safety precautions to protect County Property

SECTION P – GENERAL PROCEDURES

Public Contact: The Clerk's Office is an office of public service. Employees of the Clerk's Office are so employed to serve the public; to provide clear, consistent, timely and fair service.

- Employees of the Clerk's Office shall establish a positive and supportive atmosphere and shall respond to the public with respect and with a problem-solving focus.
- Personal relationships, conversations, and other non-work-related topics shall be kept to a minimum so as not to interfere with your job responsibilities and efficient service to the public.
- When as a Clerk's Office Employee you are a party to an action, it is your responsibility to conduct yourself as a customer and you are thereby prohibited from handling your paperwork or completing any functions that are the responsibility of the employee of the Clerk's Office.
- Endeavor at all times to perform official duties properly and with diligence, applying full-time energy to the business of the court during work hours.

SECTION Q – RESIGNATION NOTICE

Employees are expected to notify the Clerk in writing if they intend to resign.

- Pay and Classification Plan employees are expected to provide a minimum of two weeks' notice.

Please provide your manager more than the minimum amount of notice whenever possible to ease the replacement process.

SECTION R – CODE OF CONDUCT

(Established by the National Center for State Courts)

Public employment in the court system is a public trust justified by the confidence that the citizens place in the integrity of judges, county clerks and employees of the judicial and executive branches. Therefore, an employee, faithful to that trust, shall observe high standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of the courts may be preserved.

Employees are required to carry out all duties professionally and abide by the standards set out in this Code. An employee will uphold the Constitution of the United States and the State of Washington, Washington Code of Judicial Conduct and Rules of Professional Conduct as outlined below.

Impartiality

- Employees shall provide fair and evenhanded treatment to all persons requesting assistance or doing business with the court.
- Employees are prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or other groups protected by law in the conduct of service to the court and the public. See also Article 2 – Diversity.

Personal Integrity

- Employees are required to demonstrate the highest standards of honesty and truthfulness in all professional and personal dealings.

Professional Performance of Duties

- Employees shall endeavor at all times to perform official duties properly and with diligence. Employees are required to apply full time energy to the business of the court during work hours.
- Employees shall carry out their responsibilities as public servants in as courteous a manner as possible. Employees shall treat all persons with respect and responsiveness, acting always to promote public esteem in the court system.
- As professionals, employees are required to always seek to preserve the dignity of the individual, thereby preserving the dignity of the court.
- Employees shall never criticize a co-worker in public or degrade a customer.
- Employees shall endeavor to know every aspect of his or her job.
- Employees will provide accurate and timely information to those requesting it. Employees are employed to serve and will strive to do everything possible to make things easier for customers rather than for themselves or the court organization.
- Employees shall avoid any appearance of impropriety that might diminish the honor and dignity of the court.

Use of Information and Communication Systems

- The Data Dissemination Policy adopted by the Judicial Information System (JIS) Committee on June 18, 1995 controls dissemination of court data located at Inside Courts - Judicial Info System (JIS), Policies then select Data Dissemination Policy.

SECTION S – CLERK’S OFFICE TEAM BEHAVIORS

I Will:

Actively participate in the communications process, by:

- Giving others all the information I can to enable them to do their job
- Asking for the information I need
- Giving others the right information at the right time so they can make the best use of it
- Being specific, to the point, and giving the correct data/information
- Conveying my goals and expectations
- Giving voluntary input
- Trying to understand others' expectations

I Will:

Treat others as unique individuals with respect, understanding and genuineness, by:

- Accepting people's differences as being valuable
- Trying to understand their problems from their point of view without negative judgment
- Seeking, being open to and considering others' input and ideas
- Refraining from talking negatively about others
- Confronting others without putting them down, to include
 - Making a specific behavior request
 - As soon as possible
 - One-on-one in private

I Will:

Consider the effects of my actions on others, by:

- Using and maintaining physical resources such as tools, files, equipment, books and documents so they are readily usable by others
- Using good personal safety practices
- Following through on my commitments

I Will:

Be proud of and responsible for my actions, by:

- Following through with my responsibilities

- Giving forethought to the consequences of my actions
- Following visions, goals and policies
- Being helpful

I Will:

Openly and constructively solve problems, by:

- Confronting problems (people and issues) at the moment (as soon as possible)
- Clearly identifying the real problem, then focusing on possible solutions
- Not devaluing others
- Trying to provide the opportunity for input to all others affected by the problems and/or solution
- Carrying out agreed-upon solutions to problems without externalizing

I Will:

Always establish a positive, supportive atmosphere for the public, by:

- Demonstrating good attending behavior in both telephone and face-to-face interactions
- Always acknowledging the public upon arrival and assuring that someone will assist them shortly
- Focusing on the public with a clear and open mind, suspending my frame of reference
- Making every attempt to return telephone calls the same day, and almost always within 24 hours
- Always demonstrating behavior and appearance that reflects positively on the Clerk's Office

I Will:

Respond to the public with respect and with a problem-solving focus, by:

- Listening carefully to the public so that I can fully understand their concern/problem from their perspective
- Helping the public get clear on what their objective is
- Responding knowledgeably, giving people information and looking for alternative solutions
- Maintaining my composure when dealing with the public in difficult situations and not taking their demeanor personally (i.e., I'll suspend my frame of reference)

I Will:

Follow through with my commitments, by:

- Responding to peoples' problems and/or emergency calls as soon as possible and making courtesy calls to relay action taken
- Doing what I committed to do within the time frame. If I can't comply, I will call the person to explain and renegotiate (courtesy call)
- Always establishing a time frame with the person that I will respond and striving to make this time frame as short as possible.

DATED this 15th day of April, 2014

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Klickitat County, Washington



Jim Sizemore, Chairman

~~Absent~~

David M. Sauter, Commissioner



Rex F. Johnston, Commissioner



Renea Campbell
Klickitat County Clerk


ATTEST:

Clerk of the Board



in and for the County of Klickitat,
State of Washington

Approved to Form:



Lori L. Hctor
Klickitat County Prosecuting Attorney

4/29/2014
Date

Reviewed by:



Randi Post, Personnel Manager

4/15/14
Date

I have read, and acknowledge receipt of the Clerk's Office Employee's Handbook.

CLERK'S OFFICE:

Renea J. Campbell Date 4/20/14
Renea J. Campbell, County Clerk

Laura L. Bradley Date 4/18/2014
Laura L. Bradley, Chief Deputy Clerk

Cristi L. Koffler Date 4-21-2014
Cristi L. Koffler, Chief Criminal Deputy

Connie J. McEwen Date 4-18-2014
Connie J. McEwen, Legal Admin. Assistant I

RoyAnna L. Hughes Date 4-18-2014
RoyAnna L. Hughes, Legal Admin. Assistant I