

COUNTY OF TULARE

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



HUMAN RESOURCES
& DEVELOPMENT
TULARE COUNTY

TULARE COUNTY'S

MISSION

To provide the residents of Tulare County with quality service in order to improve and sustain the region's safety, economic well-being and quality of life.

VISION

To earn the trust, respect and support of the residents of Tulare County through collaboration and fair and effective service.

VALUES

Respect, Innovation, Responsiveness, Fairness, Commitment, Accountability,
Can-do Attitude, Compassion, Respect for Diversity, Professionalism

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO COUNTY EMPLOYMENT	1
PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK	2
ABOUT THE COUNTY	3
EMPLOYMENT POLICY	4
Recruitment and Selection.....	4
Open list.....	4
Promotional list	4
Reemployment list	4
Reinstatement list	4
Transfer list.....	4
Employment Status, Appointments and Designations	4
Extra Help	4
Non-competitive Service.....	4
Probationary	4
Project Service.....	5
Promotional.....	5
Provisional.....	5
Reemployment.....	5
Reinstatement	5
Regular.....	5
Temporary	5
Transfer	5
COMPENSATION AND WORKING HOURS.....	6
Pay Check.....	6
Required deductions.....	6
Voluntary deductions.....	6
Normal Hours.....	6
Overtime	6
Rest Periods	6
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	7
Holiday Leave.....	7
Personal Holiday.....	7
Sick Leave	7
Vacation Leave	8
Court Leave	8
Family Care Leave.....	9
Leave of Absence	9
Military Leave.....	9
School Leave	9
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS.....	9
Credit Union	9

Deferred Compensation	9
Disability Insurance	9
Employee Assistance Program	10
Flexible Benefit Plan	10
Fun Packs	10
Group Health Insurance	10
Life Insurance	10
Retirement	10
Service Awards	11
State Unemployment Insurance	11
Workers' Compensation	11
PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	12
POLICIES	12
Authorized County Drivers/Operation of County Vehicles	12
Drug-Free Workplace Policy	12
Non-Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policies	12
Safety in the Workplace Policy	13
Violence in the Workplace Policy	13
PROCEDURES	13
Attendance	13
County Property	13
Dress	13
E-mail and Internet	14
Layoff	14
Outside Employment	14
Performance	14
Personal Data	15
Personal Mail	15
Personnel File	15
Political Activity	15
Private Business Activities	15
Public Relations	15
Resignation	15
Volunteering	15
CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE	16
Progressive Discipline	16
Conduct Subject to Discipline	16
Discipline Appeal Procedure	17
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE	18
EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS	20
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	21

WELCOME TO COUNTY EMPLOYMENT

We welcome you as a new member of our county government team. We hope that your employment with us will provide many enjoyable, productive years to you and to the County of Tulare. We are confident that your efforts in your County position will be motivated by a sincere desire to provide the best service possible to your fellow citizens. This is the goal of Tulare County, the yardstick by which we measure our achievements.

To reach this high standard, it is important that each employee understand his or her responsibilities, rights and benefits. This handbook has been prepared to promote that understanding and we suggest that you keep it handy as a reference for questions which may arise.

On behalf of the entire County staff, please accept our best wishes for a rewarding and successful career with Tulare County.

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is intended to serve as a guide to County policies and procedures and the benefits the County offers you as an employee.¹ If, after reading this handbook, you have any questions concerning the County's employment policies or procedures, please contact your immediate supervisor, your Department Head, or the Human Resources and Development Department.²

¹Rights and responsibilities of extra-help, temporary, and provisional employees not hired through the competitive process are not covered by this handbook.

²This handbook is not a contract and does not create contractual or legal rights on behalf of any employees. This handbook is subject to being supplemented, modified, withdrawn or otherwise changed at the discretion of the Human Resource Director as circumstances dictate and as the County Administrative Officer or the Board of Supervisors deem necessary.

Information in this handbook has been compiled from the Tulare County Personnel Rules and County policy. It is not intended that this handout cover all County rules and regulations affecting you as a County employee. In the event of a conflict between this handout and any County ordinance, rule, resolution or policy, these official documents are the final authority.

ABOUT THE COUNTY

The name Tulare (Too-lair'-ee) reflects some of the Spanish influence in California history. It is taken from Valle de los Tules, the name used by Spanish Explorers in the 1770's to describe the area "around a great lake surrounded by marshes and tules."

The California State Legislature created Tulare County in April of 1852. The original boundaries extended north to Mariposa County, south to Los Angeles County, and from the present State of Nevada on the east to the Coast Ranges on the west.

Today the County has an approximate area of 3,122,320 acres, or about 4,863 square miles. The Fresno and Kern County lines form the northern and southern boundaries; Kings County marks the western boundary; and the eastern boundary by Inyo County, runs along the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.

Centrally located, Tulare County is second only to neighboring Fresno County in agricultural productivity. The magnificent scenery of the National Forests is widely known. Visalia, the county seat, is within easy access of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and National Parks as well as the central California coastal region. Pursuit of outdoor recreational activity is one of the area highlights. In addition to Visalia, Tulare County includes the incorporated cities of Dinuba, Exeter, Farmersville, Lindsay, Porterville, Tulare and Woodlake.

Tulare is a "general law" county which is a basic form of county government established by the State Legislature. The County is governed by a Board of Supervisors elected by its citizens. Each Supervisor represents one of the five supervisorial districts which comprise Tulare County. The Board has legislative, executive, and judicial powers and responsibilities. The members meet nearly every Tuesday and at other times as deemed necessary for the administration of County business. Each County Department Head is responsible to the Board of Supervisors through the County Administrative Officer for efficient operation of the department to which they are elected or appointed to manage.

The County service has more than 4,800 positions providing essential public services to the citizens of Tulare County. Up-to-date information on Tulare County is maintained on the County website at www.co.tulare.ca.us.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The Human Resources and Development Department administers the Personnel Rules, Human Resources Information Systems, Training and Employee Benefits programs. The Department operates within the general framework established by policies of the Board of Supervisors. The County Merit System, a personnel administration system based on merit principles and methods, was established by ordinance in 1967. An Employment Relations Policy, which provides the rules and regulations for orderly employee representation, was first adopted in 1968.

Recruitment and Selection - Appointments and promotions to positions are made in accord with the Personnel Rules and Administrative Regulations. Vacancies are advertised, competitive examinations are given, and appointments are made from employment lists established by the Human Resources and Development Department. An appointing authority (usually the department head) may select anyone from the top five ranks on the list for the job, using the following employment lists as appropriate.

- ◆ Open list - A list established through a recruitment and examination process open to County employees and the general public.
- ◆ Promotional list - A list established through a recruitment and examination process open only to County employees.
- ◆ Reemployment list - A list containing employees who, within the last two years, were laid off.
- ◆ Reinstatement list - A list containing the names of persons who have resigned in good standing and whose request for reinstatement has been approved by the Human Resources and Development Department.
- ◆ Transfer list - A list of employees whose request to transfer to a similar position within the County has been approved by the Human Resources and Development Department.

Employment Status, Appointments and Designations

- ◆ Extra Help - Employment in the non-competitive service required because of temporary, intermittent or seasonal needs. An extra help employee may not work more than 1,559 hours in a fiscal year (1,560 hours equals 3/4 time).
- ◆ Non-competitive Service - Positions that are "at-will" including but not limited to all elected officials, members of County boards and commissions, all persons serving without compensation, certain part-time positions, project service positions, provisional, and extra help positions, department heads and assistant department heads, and other management positions designated by resolution of the Board of Supervisors.
- ◆ Probationary - All employees entering the competitive and project service must serve a probationary period. This is the final phase of the selection process. For most employees, the probationary period is 13 full pay periods; however, employees in some positions must serve a probationary period of 26 full pay periods. A pay period is a defined two week period. An employee must also serve a probationary period following promotion. If you have questions regarding your probationary period, contact your supervisor or the Human Resources and Development Department.

- ◆ Project Service - Positions in the County service that are funded for specific duration or funded for special purposes through non-County sources and are designated as project service positions by resolutions of the Board of Supervisors.
- ◆ Promotional - Advancement to another position or class with a higher maximum salary rate. Promotions in the competitive service are normally based on competitive examinations. Promotional examinations are open to all County employees who hold regular or probationary status and meet the requirements for the class.
- ◆ Provisional - An appointment in the absence of an appropriate employment list or when less than five ranks of eligibles remain on the list for certification, for a period not to exceed six months, or thirty calendar days after certification of eligibles to the appointing authority. If no employment list can be established, a provisional appointment may be extended one six-month period.
- ◆ Reemployment - Rehiring of a laid-off employee into the same or lower class in the class series from which the employee was laid off.
- ◆ Reinstatement - The return of a current County employee to the same or similar class previously held by the employee or the return of a former County employee to County employment in the same or similar class previously held providing the employee resigned in good standing. Good standing is defined as having a satisfactory rating on the most recent performance evaluation on file and giving at least a two week notice of resignation.
- ◆ Regular - An employee attains regular status in the class upon completion of a satisfactory probationary period.
- ◆ Temporary - An appointment of a current employee with probationary or regular status to fill a vacancy created when a probationary or regular employee is on an authorized leave of absence without pay.
- ◆ Transfer - An employee may request transfer from one department to another department within the County. The first two names on the transfer list will be referred to departments with vacancies. Names will be considered active on the transfer list for a maximum of one year or three referrals. If you still wish to be considered for transfer after one year or three referrals, you must file a new transfer application.

COMPENSATION AND WORKING HOURS

The salary schedule has a series of numbered salary grades. Most grades have five pay increments or steps. As a new employee, you start at the first step ("1") of the salary grade for your class. After 13 full pay periods (approximately six months) of satisfactory service and upon written recommendation of your Department Head, your salary can be increased approximately 5% to the second step ("2") of your salary grade. With continued satisfactory performance similar increases may be granted annually thereafter until the top of the grade (Step "5") is reached. Salary step increases are not automatic; they must be earned through satisfactory performance.

The pay plan depends on a properly maintained classification plan which recognizes the difference in duties performed, responsibilities exercised, and qualifications required. The County Labor Negotiator, in accordance with the County Employment Relations Policy and the State Government Code, meets and confers with the certified employee organizations concerning wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment.

Pay Check - You will receive your pay check every other Tuesday. Each pay check stub shows an itemized list of deductions as follows:

- ◆ Required deductions - Required deductions depend on your employment status and current law. These deductions typically include withholding tax (state and federal), retirement contributions, Social Security and Medicare contributions.
- ◆ Voluntary deductions - May include employee contributions to insurance premiums, employee organization dues, credit union savings and payments, savings bonds, charitable contributions, deferred compensation, pre-tax benefits and post-tax benefits.

You may have your pay check deposited directly into your bank account. Most banks provide this service. You will still receive a detailed pay stub each pay day. You may contact your department's payroll clerk to obtain the necessary forms.

Normal Hours - The County has established a five day, 40-hour work week for most operations. Most of the County's employees work Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM with one hour for lunch. Extended hours, split shifts, and weekend work may be required in special circumstances (e.g., Sheriff's Department must provide 24-hour, 7-day work week coverage and road crews may work four 10-hour shifts each week during the summer). Some departments have flexible schedules available to meet special employee needs.

Overtime - Overtime work is avoided whenever possible. However, you may be required by your supervisor to work overtime and will then be compensated in accordance with the Personnel Rules, Federal law, and current agreements with employee associations. State overtime law does not apply. All overtime work by employees covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requires supervisory approval. Federal law prohibits employees covered by the FLSA from working time that is not recorded on their time card.

Rest Periods - Normally two 15-minute rest periods are granted each day, one for every four-hour period worked. Rest periods must be taken at such time that normal departmental operation will not be disturbed. Rest periods must not be taken during the first or last hour of the work period, nor can the time be accumulated or delayed for later use.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The Benefits Described Below Apply to Most County Employees. Benefits Vary by Bargaining Unit.

Holiday Leave - The County observes the following holidays:

1. January 1 (New Year's Day)
2. Third Monday in January (Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday)
3. 3rd Monday in February (President's Day)
4. Last Monday in May (Memorial Day)
5. July 4 (Independence Day)
6. 1st Monday of September (Labor Day)
7. November 11 (Veterans Day)
8. 4th Thursday of November (Thanksgiving Day)
9. Friday following Thanksgiving Day
10. December 24 (Christmas Eve)
11. December 25 (Christmas Day)

When a holiday occurs on a Sunday it is observed on the following Monday. When a holiday occurs on a Saturday, credit for that holiday is added to your vacation balance during the following pay period. If you are required to work on a designated holiday, you will receive regular pay for that day and you will be credited one hour of vacation for each hour worked up to eight hours. If you are working on an extended schedule (such as four 10-hour days each week) you will need to use vacation time in addition to the 8 hours of holiday to take a full day off with pay.

Personal Holiday – One Personal Holiday is available to Regular and Probationary employees who are eligible to earn paid leave. As a new employee, you may use your Personal Holiday, as appropriate, any time after completing thirteen full pay periods of service. The Personal Holiday may only be taken upon request of the employee with the approval of his/her supervisor. As with all leaves, the supervisor and/or department may require reasonable advance notice of the request.

The Personal Holiday is eight hours and must be taken as a single block of eight hours. Employees with workdays longer than 8 hours must work or use other paid leave to make up a full workday. The Personal Holiday is credited July 1 and, unless otherwise provided in an Memoranda of Understanding, must be used by the following June 30 or it is forfeited.

Sick Leave - Full-time employees accumulate sick leave at the rate of 12 days per year. Part-time employees who occupy positions in the competitive service accumulate sick leave time in the same proportion as the assigned hours in each pay period to the number of hours in a full pay period. The accumulation of sick leave credits is unlimited.

Sick leave is provided to allow you to recover from illness and take care of medical needs of family members without loss of pay. As a new employee, you may use your accumulated sick leave, as appropriate, any time after completing thirteen full pay periods of service. You may use sick leave for illnesses and for dental and medical appointments. You may also use sick leave in the event of illness or death of a member of your immediate family. Immediate family includes spouse, parent, stepparent, brother, sister, child (i.e., natural child, adopted child, stepchild, or legal ward), grandparent, or grandchild. (NOTE: There are limits on the amount of family sick leave time you may use. Check with your payroll clerk regarding the limitations for your particular bargaining unit.)

An employee may substitute sick leave for vacation leave when the employee undergoes hospitalization or receives equivalent outpatient medical care for an injury or serious illness while on scheduled, pre-authorized vacation.

To provide recognition for the judicious use of sick leave, an employee taking retirement or resigning with 10 or more years of County service may be eligible to receive payment for a portion of unused sick leave credits and/or may convert the unused sick leave to service credit for retirement.

Vacation Leave – For each one (1) hour of service other than overtime, employees earn and accumulate vacation leave with pay in accordance with the following schedule:

Years of Continuous Service	Pay Periods of Continuous Service	Earning Rate Per Hour	Earning Rate Hours Per Pay Period	Earning Rate Weeks Per Year
0 - 3	1 - 78	.03846	3.077	2
3 - 7	79 - 182	.05769	4.615	3
7 - 11	183-286	.07692	6.154	4
Over 11	More than 286	.09615	7.692	5

* On the first day of the 4th year, the employee begins to accrue 3 weeks of vacation. On the first day of the 8th year, the employee begins to accrue 4 weeks of vacation. On the first day of the twelfth year, the employee begins to accrue 5 weeks of vacation.

As a new employee, you will be eligible to take vacation after you have completed thirteen full pay periods of service. Advance approval of vacation is required. Give your department as much notice as possible. Arrangements must be made with your supervisor and in cooperation with other department employees when scheduling vacations so that each County function may operate efficiently. Departments must, of course, place staffing needs first.

Part-time employees who occupy positions in the competitive service accumulate vacation leave in the same proportion as the number of hours assigned.

Employees may accumulate up to 300 hours of vacation leave credit. Once you have accrued 300 hours of vacation, you will receive no additional accruals until your balance is below 300 hours. When you leave County employment, accumulated vacation time is paid at your regular hourly rate.

Employees who came directly to Tulare County from prior public service in which they were eligible to earn and use vacation leave may accrue vacation as if all their most recent years of continuous public service were with Tulare County. The Human Resources Director whose decision is final will determine eligible service.

Court Leave - While on trial or inquest jury duty, or while appearing as a legally required witness, you will receive full pay from the County. If you receive witness fees, or trial or inquest jury service fees while on Court Leave you must endorse such payments, except those for travel expenses, to the County. If you wish, you may use accrued vacation credits or compensating time off during the time spent serving as a juror or witness, and retain the fees for jury service or serving as a witness.

Family Care Leave - The County provides for family care leave in accordance with State and Federal laws. If eligible, Family Care Leave is available for the following: birth and care of a newborn child; placement of child with an employee for adoption or foster care; to care for employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent who has a serious health condition; and the employee's own serious health condition which makes the employee unable to perform the job.

For more information regarding your eligibility for a leave and/or the impact of the leave on your seniority and benefits, please contact your supervisor or the Human Resources and Development Department.

Leave of Absence - After thirteen full pay periods of continuous employment, you may request a leave of absence without pay for personal or medical reasons. Your department head may authorize a leave of absence which does not exceed forty (40) consecutive work hours. In most cases, leaves of absence may not exceed one year.

If you are on an approved leave of absence without pay, you may not be covered by health, dental, vision, or life insurance unless you pay your own premiums. For further information, contact the Employee Benefits Unit of the Human Resources and Development Department.

Military Leave - The County complies fully with current law. Since this area is highly technical, contact the Human Resources and Development Department for current information.

School Leave - The County allows up to forty hours each school year, not to exceed eight hours, in any calendar month of the school year, for employees to participate in school activities of their children in grades kindergarten through twelfth. Employees may be required to use vacation or compensatory time off to cover the absence. Employees must provide reasonable advance notice of the planned absence.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Credit Union - County employees are eligible for membership in the TUCOEMAS Federal Credit Union³. TUCOEMAS offers a full range of financial services. Further information can be obtained from TUCOEMAS at their Visalia offices (732-8892 or 732-4151), the Porterville Office (784-8528), and the Tulare Office (687-1925).

Deferred Compensation - A deferred compensation plan permits an employee to defer receipt of a portion of current income, electing instead to receive it at a later date, usually after retirement. The deferred funds are not taxable until they are paid to you, at which time they may be taxed at a lower rate. Several deferred compensation plans are available. Contact the Auditor's Department for additional information.

Disability Insurance - Most County employees are covered by State Disability Insurance (SDI) or the County Long Term Disability (LTD) program. Coverage is determined by bargaining unit. These disability programs provide benefits when you are unable to work due to illness or injury. Should you need either benefit, contact your payroll clerk for an SDI application or the Employee Benefits Unit for an LTD application.

³TUCOEMAS is not directly affiliated with or managed by the County.

Employee Assistance Program - This program provides limited free, confidential, professional assistance to County employees and their families to help resolve problems that affect their personal lives and/or job performance. The Employee Assistance Program is administered by The Holman Group. For further information, contact The Holman Group at (800) 321-2843.

Flexible Benefit Plan - The County is currently participating in the IRS 125 Program which allows employees upon their hire into County Service or during open enrollment periods to participate in a variety of benefit plans which may be paid for by the employee with pre-tax dollars thereby reducing Federal taxes. For more information on the IRS 125 Program, contact the Employee Benefit Unit of the Human Resources and Development Department.

Fun Packs - Fun packs containing discount coupons and general information for amusement parks and other recreational attractions are available through the Human Resources and Development Department.

Group Health Insurance - Health, dental and vision plans are available for all regular and probationary employees working half-time (40 hours per pay period) or more. The plans offer coverage for you and your dependents. The Employee Benefits Unit can answer questions you may have regarding the available plans.

Life Insurance - Regular and probationary employees working 40 hours or more per pay period are covered by a \$10,000 group life insurance policy. Department Heads, Assistant Department Heads and Elected Officials may be eligible for additional benefits. The premium for this insurance is paid through the flexible benefit plan. If you are on an approved leave of absence, you may maintain your coverage by assuming full premium cost of the coverage and making payments to the Employee Benefit Unit of the Human Resources and Development Department.

Retirement - The Tulare County Employees Retirement System is a group plan administered by a local Board of Directors pursuant to State law, "The County Employees' Retirement Act of 1937". If you are working 40 hours or more per pay period, you automatically become a member of the Retirement System at the time of employment. Both you and the County will contribute to your retirement each pay period. If you leave County employment, the amount of your own contributions, with interest, may be withdrawn, transferred, or deferred.

Your contribution to the Retirement System is determined by your salary and age at entry into the system. Benefits are graduated to increase in proportion to age and years of service at retirement. Minimum County retirement benefits may be received at age 50 with 10 years of service. If you terminate County employment after completing five years of service, you may defer retirement. Individuals participating in the Tulare County Employees Retirement system may, if the need arises, transfer their credits to the State of California and most California counties and incorporated California cities.

For specific information, refer to the Retirement Handbook or call the Tulare County Employees Retirement Association.

Service Awards - In recognition of career public service, the County presents service awards to employees upon completion of ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five and forty years of continuous full-time service.

State Unemployment Insurance - Tulare County participates in the State Unemployment Insurance program. A State brochure containing more specific information is available through the local State of California Employment Development Department.

Workers' Compensation – Tulare County employees are covered in accordance with the Workers' Compensation Insurance Laws of the State of California. An injury or illness is covered if arising out of, and in the course of employment. Coverage begins from the time the employee is on the job and continues anytime the employee is working. Employees must report injuries to their supervisor immediately. Benefits may include medical care, temporary disability benefits, permanent disability benefits, supplemental job displacement voucher, and death benefits. If you wish to be treated by your personal physician for an on-the-job injury, you are required to have first completed a Pre-Designation of Personal Physical form. Details regarding Workers compensation are available through Risk Management in the County Counsel Department.

PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICIES

Authorized County Drivers and Operation of County Vehicles - When normal performance of your duties requires the use of an automobile, your Department will determine the following:

1. You may be required to use a County car. County automobiles are furnished through the central Motor Pool. Some departments request vehicles on an as-needed basis, others will have vehicles assigned on a permanent basis when their use of a vehicle meets established criteria.
2. You may be required to furnish your own transportation. Your mileage will be reimbursed at the current rate per mile. Mileage is not paid on use of a bicycle or motorcycle.

Employees driving on County business must possess a valid California driver's license. Employees driving private vehicles on County business are required to provide certification of minimum auto liability insurance coverage. Employees must also have collision coverage or provide the County with a waiver stating that in case of an accident, the County will not be liable for damages to the employee's vehicle.

Employees must provide a printout of their driving record obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles and must meet County standards. Employees must certify annually that their driving record continues to meet County standards. For specific information pertaining to driving record standards, contact your supervisor or the Human Resources and Development Department.

The County requires that any accident and/or damage to a County vehicle be reported. Standard reporting procedures will be provided by your supervisor.

Drug-Free Workplace Policy - In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Policy, employees shall not be under the influence of, or in possession of controlled substances; shall not sell or provide drugs to any other employee or any other person; shall not engage in the unlawful manufacture of drugs; and shall not utilize or otherwise have his or her ability to work impaired as a result of the use of drugs or alcohol, including prescription drugs taken in excess of the prescribed amount.

Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) qualified drivers are required to submit to random drug and alcohol testing. All employees are subject to reasonable suspicion and post accident drug and alcohol testing. Law enforcement positions and DOT positions require pre-employment testing.

Non-Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policies - Tulare County as part of its continuing equal employment opportunity efforts prohibits discrimination and harassment of employees on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disability, marital status, sex, age, or any other criteria prohibited by law. Employees who feel they have been denied their rights under these policies should contact their supervisor, department head, the County Human Resources Officer in the County Administrative Office, or the Human Resources and Development Department.

Safety in the Workplace Policy - Safety and health in the conduct of County business is a top priority. It is the intention of Tulare County to comply with all safety regulations.

Employee Responsibility - The Tulare County safety program is based on the concept that no task is so important and no service so urgent that we cannot take the time to do it safely. Each employee is required to read and comply with the County Safety Rules and Regulations which are available in each department. See your Supervisor, department Safety Representative, or the County Safety Officer for a copy to review.

Safety Training - Safety education is an active program in Tulare County. An individual is appointed in each department to work with the County Safety Officer in encouraging and coordinating training in good safety practices. Employee training and attitude development are necessary ingredients for a successful safety program. Periodically, you will be expected to attend on-the-job safety training sessions during which specific safety instruction will be given relating to your job.

Violence in the Workplace Policy - It is the policy of Tulare County to provide a safe, secure and healthful working environment free from the fear of violence, aggression, intimidation, harassment or retaliation for all employees. Acts or threats of violence against the life, health, well-being of employees or members of their family or their property either in the workplace or in connection with that employee's conduct of County business will not be tolerated.

Any such acts or threats by employees of the County toward others constitute grounds for dismissal from County employment and may result in criminal prosecution. The act or threat will, in and of itself, constitute grounds for dismissal regardless of whether or not the perpetrator intended to carry out the threat.

It is the responsibility of any employee who feels that she/he has been a target of actual or threatened violence in the workplace, or who has observed or otherwise learned of such conduct, to immediately contact her/his supervisor or the Human Resources and Development Department. In cases where there is an imminent potential for violence, security or the appropriate law enforcement agency should be contacted immediately.

PROCEDURES

Attendance - You are expected to be on time at the beginning of each assigned work period. Your department and work group depends on each person being in the work place regularly, ready to begin work at your assigned work time and to continue with assigned duties until your shift ends. You should familiarize your household with the importance of reporting your absence from work when an emergency or illness occurs. It is your responsibility to notify your immediate supervisor promptly if you will be late or absent.

County Property - Every job requires the use of equipment and materials furnished by the County. You must use and maintain County property in a safe, economical, and proper manner. Whenever equipment needs repair or maintenance to ensure safe operation, be sure to notify your supervisor immediately. You are expected to help keep equipment repair costs down by exercising reasonable care in your work.

Dress - All employees are required to maintain reasonable grooming standards and dress appropriately for work each day based upon their position and assignment. The requirements set

forth herein are minimum recommendations. Individual department heads may establish alternate standards for all or part of their staff which may require a higher standard. The following are general County-wide guidelines:

Clothes shall be neat, clean, tidy, and fit appropriately.

Clothes shall not contain any political statements or symbols, pornography, offensive language, advertising or promotion of alcohol or drugs.

Clothes shall not be ripped, torn, or frayed.

No clothes shall be worn which exposes undergarments or midriffs.

Employees shall not be permitted to work barefoot.

No hats shall be worn. (Exceptions may pertain for outside work or for religious, medical, or safety reasons).

In addition to the above, the following are specifically not permitted: flip flops or thongs, tank tops, T-shirts (Henley style shirts are permitted), sweat pants/jogging suits/workout clothes, sheer or risque blouses, leggings, tube tops, biking shorts, and body piercing except for the ears.

E-Mail and Internet - County e-mail is for business use only. You are not authorized to use Internet e-mail or other online services until you obtain approval from your Department Head. Your e-mail is not private. It may be read at any time by your supervisor. Notwithstanding the County's right to retrieve and read any communication sent via the County's e-mail system, such communication should be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient.

You may not use the County's e-mail system for: personal profit or gain; solicitation of funds; sending political messages; sending of harassing messages. Communication on the Internet is not considered secure or private. Confidential, restricted, and proprietary data may not be sent via the Internet. Personal Internet e-mail accounts should not be forwarded to County e-mail systems and vice versa. Misuse of e-mail may result in revocation of access and may also subject the employee to disciplinary action.

Layoff - In the event of reorganization, lack of work, lack of funds, or as the needs of the County require, employees may be laid off by classification within a department in inverse order of County seniority. Since this is a very complex issue, you will be provided detailed information on your options and rights if your position is directly impacted by a layoff.

Outside Employment - You may engage in other employment activity or enterprise which does not interfere in any way with your regular County employment. Prior to actually working in such outside employment, you must submit an Outside Employment Request Form through your supervisor to your Department Head, and the Human Resources and Development Director for approval. The Outside Employment Request Form may be obtained from your New Employee Orientation packet. The form helps the County ensure that your employment does not conflict with federal and state requirements. Most requests are approved without a problem. However, any possible conflict of interest is to be resolved through discussion with officials of your department and the Human Resources and Development Director, before engaging in the proposed outside activity. Except as approved by the Human Resources and Development Director, full-time employees may not be employed by other public agencies.

Performance - Standards of performance have been established throughout the County service. As a new employee, you must demonstrate your ability to attain and consistently maintain fully satisfactory performance during the probationary period. You will, of course, be expected to continue to provide satisfactory performance throughout your career. You are also expected to comply with County rules and regulations and follow your supervisor's directives and instructions.

The performance evaluation program is a systematic method whereby you and your immediate supervisor discuss your success in handling your duty assignments during the probationary period

and annually thereafter. Suggestions for improvement are a vital part of these evaluations and discussions. Each of us can benefit from these discussions no matter how long we have been in our jobs.

Personal Data - If you change your name, address or phone number, be sure to immediately report this change to your department payroll clerk, who will then update the personnel payroll system. Maintaining your current address in the central system is important as any official mailing is made to that address. It is your responsibility to keep this information current.

Personal Mail - By Federal law, County mail facilities can handle official County mail only. Please do not place your outbound mail in the County mail system. You must arrange to have all personal incoming mail sent to your home.

Personnel File - Your official personnel file is maintained in the Human Resources and Development Department. You may inspect your personnel file during the normal working hours of the Human Resources and Development Department. Call ahead to arrange a time.

Political Activity - You are encouraged to be politically informed and to exercise your right to vote. Political activity by employees must in no way interfere with their normal duty assignments or with the duty assignments of other employees.

Private Business Activities - You must conduct your personal business activities, if any, outside of regular working time.

Public Relations - Efficient and impartial service to the public is vital to our government operation. You are expected to be courteous to the public and cooperate with your fellow employees. Dependable performance of work at high standards is one of our most important public relations factors. Your appearance and service to the citizenry establishes the County's reputation.

Honest, sincere, and efficient workmanship must characterize every employee who becomes a member of the County service. Activity apart from regular working hours is always a private matter, however, these activities could reflect upon the County service. Generally the public expects their employees to be individuals they can respect without reservation and County employees are such individuals.

Resignation - Should you decide to leave County service, a written notice of resignation, submitted at least two weeks in advance, is necessary in order to leave in good standing. This is important if you later decide to return to County employment and wish to be considered for reinstatement. It is also a standard business courtesy.

Volunteering - You may not volunteer any time for any County Department without the prior written approval of the Human Resources and Development Director.

CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Progressive Discipline - The purpose of disciplinary action is to correct deficiencies in employee performance, to assure improvement to meet appropriate standards, to correct for violation of these Rules, and/or when deemed necessary to remove an employee from the County service.

Tulare County's progressive discipline system is based on the premise that disciplinary actions are to be corrective rather than punitive; the actions are progressively more severe and fit the nature of the problem. Progressive disciplinary actions may range from informal conversations to formal discharge. However, management is not bound by a progressive discipline formula in cases of serious offenses which may warrant immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination without following all of the steps.

Conduct Subject to Discipline - Personnel Rule 12 states: "Any employee may be disciplined for cause, and such cause shall be based upon employee conduct during or outside of duty hours which reflects discredit upon the public service, the employee, the effective performance of the duty assignments of other County employees, or the effective performance of the department in which employed.

Conduct which shall be deemed to constitute cause for discipline as described above, shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- a) Conviction of any felony, or conviction of a misdemeanor committed while engaged in the performance of duties. A plea or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, to a charge of a felony or a misdemeanor as described in this section 12.2(a) is deemed to be a conviction within the meaning of this section.
- b) Being under the influence of intoxicating beverages or unprescribed narcotics or drugs, or prescribed narcotics or drugs in excess of the prescribed amount, while on duty.
- c) Insubordination.
- d) Inefficiency
- e) Incompetence.
- f) Inattention to duty, carelessness, damage to, or negligence in the care and handling of County property.
- g) Improper or unauthorized use of County vehicles or equipment, or misappropriation of supplies.
- h) Excessive and/or unexcused absences/tardiness, or the claim of sick leave under false pretenses.
- i) Misrepresentation of facts in securing or maintaining appointment.
- j) Absence from duty without leave, failure to report after leave of absence has expired, or after such leave of absence has been disapproved, revoked, or canceled.

- k) Dishonesty.
- l) Discourteous treatment of the public or other employees.
- m) Unlawful discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, marital status, sex, or age, against the public or other employees while acting in the capacity of a County employee.
- n) Violation of these Rules, Department policies, or any written policies which may be prescribed by the County.
- o) Acceptance by an employee of any bribe, gratuity, kickback, or other form of remuneration in addition to regular compensation with an attempt to influence the action or opinion of an employee in the performance of the employee's duties."

Discipline Appeal Procedure - Appeal procedures through the grievance procedure for milder disciplinary actions and formal appeal processes for stronger discipline are provided by the Personnel Rules and Administrative Regulations.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The grievance procedure plan established by Administrative Regulation 17 provides for discussion and review of concerns regarding a claimed violation, misinterpretation, inequitable application or non-compliance with provisions of a County collective bargaining agreement, ordinance, resolution, rule, regulation, existing practice affecting the status or working conditions of County employees, or law against discrimination. It seeks to solve the problem at the earliest time with the fewest number of people involved. Employee grievances may be processed through a series of three steps, each of which provides hearing of and decision on the problem by different persons. A satisfactory solution may be achieved at any point in this series of steps. The grievance is considered settled when the grievant ceases to carry it forward according to the time limits placed on each step.

Informal Step

Within five work days of the event giving rise to the grievance, the grievant shall present the grievance informally for disposition by the immediate supervisor or at any appropriate level of authority within the department. The immediate supervisor (or other appropriate level of authority) will respond informally within five (5) work days.

Formal Steps

If the grievant believes that the issue(s) of the grievance have not been resolved within five (5) work days of the informal presentation he/she may initiate a formal grievance within five (5) work days thereafter. A formal grievance can be initiated by completing and filing a Grievance Procedure Form with the Human Resources and Development Department.

Step 1 Within ten working days after a formal grievance is filed, the department head shall investigate the grievance, confer with the grievant in an attempt to resolve the grievance, and make a decision in writing.

Step 2 If the grievance is not resolved in Step 1 to the satisfaction of the grievant, he/she may, within not more than five (5) work days from receipt of the Department Head decision, request consideration of the grievance by the County Administrative Officer, by notifying the Human Resources and Development Department in writing.

Within ten (10) work days after such notification, the County Administrative Officer shall commence investigation of the grievance, confer with persons affected and their representatives (if any) to the extent deemed necessary, and render a decision in writing. In the case of a complaint alleging discrimination, as defined by applicable law, the Human Resources Officer shall be present in any hearing process as a formal participant at this step. He/she may question witnesses and render an opinion to the County Administrative Officer.

If the written decision of the Administrator resolves the grievance to the satisfaction of the grievant, it shall bind the Department Head and the County.

Step 3 A final appeal may be filed by the grievant, in writing, with the Human Resources and Development Department not more than five (5) work days from receipt of the Administrative Officer's decision.

The grievance will be reviewed by the Grievance Panel consisting of one County employee selected by the grievant, one person selected by the

department and one member of the Board of Supervisors selected by the Board Chairman. The Board member shall chair the committee.

Failure on the part of the County or the grievant to appear before the Grievance Panel, without good cause as determined by the Panel Chairman, shall result in forfeiture of the case.

The decision of the Grievance Panel shall be made in writing within thirty (30) calendar days after the filing of the appeal at Step 3. The decision of the Grievance Panel shall be final and binding on all parties, subject to ratification by the Board of Supervisors if the decision requires an unbudgeted expenditure.

The complete grievance procedure and a grievance form can be obtained from the Human Resources and Development Department.

A grievance that alleges discrimination based on race, sex, color, age, ancestry, national origin, religion, marital status, or physical or mental disability will be handled as outlined above, except that you may counsel with the Human Resources Officer who is located in the County Administrative Office.

EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS

Your right to organize, join, or not join any group to represent the common interest is recognized in accordance with the California Government Code. The Board of Supervisors has adopted an Employment Relations Policy establishing guidelines and regulations for the orderly representation of County employees by their chosen organization. In addition to the provisions outlined in the Handbook, new employees in represented Bargaining Units should become familiar with the provisions contained in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the organization which represents their bargaining unit.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have additional questions, please consult with your immediate supervisor, Department Head, or the Human Resources and Development Department. We also suggest you consult these additional helpful County publications:

- Administrative Regulations
- County Safety Rules and Regulations
- Drug Free Workplace Policy
- Employment Relations Policy
- Memoranda of Understanding
- Non-harassment/Discrimination Policy
- Personnel Administration Rules
- Violence in the Workplace Policy

Each department has a Personnel Manual that contains these documents.

PHONE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER:

Tulare County Human Resources and Development Department.....	636-4900
Employee Benefits Unit	636-4911
email: OEHealth@co.tulare.ca.us	
Human Resources Information System	636-4900
Training.....	636-4909
Job Information Hotline (Recording)	636-4900 Selection 2

Website: www.co.tulare.ca.us/hrd

Auditor's Office (Payroll).....	636-5238
Retirement Office.....	713-2900
Risk Management Division	713-5075
County Safety Officer.....	713-5076
Worker's Compensation	713-5075