

# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Revised October 3, 2016



CITY OF PROVIDENCE



**The City of Providence  
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

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## **FOREWORD**

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Whether you have just joined our staff or have been employed by the City for a while, we are confident that you will find the City a dynamic and rewarding place in which to work. We look forward to a productive and successful association. The employees of the City are one of its most valuable resources. This handbook has been written to serve as a guide for the employer/employee relationship.

The intention of this handbook is to provide employees with a central source of accurate information to understand policies and provide information from the Human Resources Department. It is a general overview of the rights, responsibilities and benefits of City employees and intended to highlight policies, practices and guidelines of the City. It is not intended to modify or supersede existing federal, state or local laws, terms of collective bargaining agreements or City regulations. It is neither a contract of employment nor a guarantee of any fixed terms.

The information provided in this document is accurate at the time of publication. It may occur that the policies and procedures contained within are revised. Efforts will be made to update this publication but please note that the latest policy will prevail. If you have specific questions not answered within this document, please see your supervisor or the Human Resources Department for more information.

For the most recent version, please visit <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies>.

October 3, 2016

## **DIVERSITY**

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## **Equal Employment Opportunity Statement**

The City provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws. The City complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment including but not limited to hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

### **Definition of Discrimination**

Discrimination occurs when an adverse employment action is taken and is based upon a protected status. Disparate treatment occurs when an employee suffers less favorable treatment than others because of their protected status. Disparate impact occurs when an employment policy, although neutral on its face, adversely impacts persons in a protected status.

### **Definition of Harassment**

Harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic is strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that a) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or c) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace, on City time or using City equipment via e-mail, phone (including voice messages), text messages, tweets, blogs, social networking sites or other means.

Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when for example: a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies;

leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

### **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy**

The City is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, the City expects that all relationships among persons in the office will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice and harassment.

The City encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of the City to promptly and thoroughly investigate such reports. The City prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation of such reports.

These policies apply to all applicants and employees, whether related to conduct engaged in by fellow employees or someone not directly connected to the City (e.g. an outside vendor, consultant or customer).

Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

### **Complaint Process**

Individuals who believe they have been the victims of conduct prohibited by this policy statement or who believe they have witnessed such conduct should discuss their concerns with their immediate supervisor, the Human Resources Department or any member of management.

When possible, the City encourages individuals who believe they are being subjected to such conduct to promptly advise the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and request that it be discontinued. Often this action alone will resolve the problem. The City recognizes, however, that an individual may prefer to pursue the matter through complaint procedures. Complaints should be reported to the EEO Office at 401-421-7740 x 5250.

The City encourages the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken before relationships become irreparably strained. Therefore, although no fixed reporting period has been established, early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment.

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated promptly. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and where necessary with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout an investigation and information will only be communicated to individuals on a need-to-know basis.

Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed. Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with appropriately.

False and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.

Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act, known as the ADAAA, are federal laws that prohibit employers with 15 or more employees from discriminating against applicants and individuals with disabilities and that when needed provide reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees who are qualified for a job, with or without reasonable accommodations, so that they may perform the essential job duties of the position.

It is the policy of the City to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities and to act in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Furthermore, the City will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

The City will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that they can perform the essential functions of a job unless doing so causes a direct threat to these individuals or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation and/or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to the City. Contact the Law Department at 401-680-5333 with any questions or requests for accommodation.

## **WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS**

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### **Professional Conduct**

The City expects its employees to adhere to a standard of professional conduct and integrity. This ensures that the work environment is safe, comfortable and productive. Employees must be respectful and courteous of others. General cooperation between coworkers and supervisors is expected. Individuals who act in an unprofessional manner may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Open Door Policy**

The City has an open door policy and takes employee concerns and problems seriously. The City values each employee and strives to provide a positive work environment. Employees are encouraged to bring workplace concerns they might have or know about to a supervisor or some member of the Department of Human Resources.

## **Dress Code**

It is important for all employees to be appropriately attired and project a professional image. City employees are expected to be neat, clean and well-groomed. Clothing must be consistent with the standards for a professional environment and must be appropriate to the type of work being performed.

Any employee who is improperly dressed may be sent home to change clothes. Continued disregard of this policy may be cause for disciplinary action, which may result in termination.

Employees who are issued a uniform by the City are required to wear the uniform at all times while on duty in the manner prescribed by the department where they work. Employees who are required to wear personal protective equipment such as hard hats, reflective vests, safety goggles, etc. are required to wear them when on site. Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

## **Electronic Communication and Internet Use**

Information technologies, electronic communication, software (such as cell phones, laptop and desktop computers) provided by the City are to be used exclusively for City business.

The following guidelines apply to your use of the Internet, City-provided cell phones and e-mail in an appropriate, ethical and professional manner:

- Internet, City-provided equipment (e.g., cell phone, laptops, computers) and services may not be used for transmitting, retrieving or storing any communications of a defamatory, discriminatory, harassing or pornographic nature.
- The following actions are forbidden: using disparaging, abusive, profane or offensive language; creating, viewing or displaying materials that might adversely or negatively reflect upon the City or be contrary to the City's best interests; and engaging in any illegal activities.
- Employees must not use the system in a way that disrupts its use by others. Employees are prohibited from sending or receiving files that are not related to work.
- Employees should not open suspicious e-mails, pop-ups or downloads. Contact IT with any questions or concerns to reduce the release of viruses or to contain viruses immediately.
- Internal and external e-mails are considered business records and may be subject to discovery in the event of litigation. Employees should be mindful of this possibility when sending e-mail within and outside the City.

Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

## **Social Media Use**

The City respects the right of employees to use social media during their personal time. Employees must understand that material posted on these media may be read by persons other than those for whom it is intended. Employees are cautioned that they are responsible for the contents of social media posts they make. Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

## **Media Requests**

All inquiries from the media must be referred to the Communications Director in the Mayor's Office at 401-421-7740 x 5221.



## **Code of Ethics**

Employees must avoid any relationship or activity that might impair, or even 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 actions taken on behalf of the City may conflict with the employee's own personal interests. Per the City's Code of Ethics, City property, information or opportunities may not be used for personal gain.

Prohibited conduct related to employment includes:

- Being employed by, or acting as a consultant to, a supplier or contractor, regardless of the nature of the employment, while employed with the City
- Serving as a board member for an outside commercial City or organization
- Owning or having a substantial interest in a vendor business, supplier or contractor
- Accepting gifts, discounts, favors or services from a customer/potential customer, unless equally available to all City employees.

Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

## **Nepotism, Employment of Relatives and Personal Relationships**

The City wants to ensure that employment practices do not create conflicts of interest or favoritism. This includes practices that involve employee hiring, promotion, supervision, evaluation, assignment of duties and transfer. Close relatives, partners, those in a dating relationship or members of the same household are not permitted to be in positions that have a reporting responsibility to each other. Close relatives are defined as husband, wife, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step relatives, cousins and domestic partner's relatives.

Employees who begin a dating relationship or become relatives, partners or members of the same household while employed with the City, in which one employee is in a supervisory position over the other, are required to inform their department director and the Human Resources Department of the relationship.

The City will apply this policy to situations where there is a conflict or the potential for conflict resulting from a relationship between employees, even if there is no direct-reporting relationship or authority involved. City employees are subject to the Rhode Island Code of Ethics. Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

## **Solicitations, Distributions and Posting of Materials**

The City prohibits the solicitation, distribution and posting of materials on or at City property by any employee or nonemployee, except as may be permitted by this policy. The sole exceptions to this policy are charitable and community activities supported by the City and City-sponsored programs.

Provisions:

- Non-employees may not solicit employees or distribute literature of any kind on City premises at any time.
- Employees may only admit non-employees to work areas with management approval or as part of a City-sponsored program. These visits should not disrupt workflow. An employee must accompany non-employees at all times. Former employees are not permitted onto City property except for official City business. Non-employees and former employees are not permitted to use City property, including but not limited to phones, fax machines, computers, etc.
- Employees may not solicit other employees during work times, except in connection with a City-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 City-sponsored event

Violations of this policy should be reported to the Human Resources Department.

Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

### **Confidentiality**

It is unlawful for an official or employee of the City to willfully or knowingly disclose any confidential or privileged information acquired by reason of the employee's position, unless authorized or required by law to do so. This policy is intended to alert employees to the need for discretion at all times and is not intended to inhibit normal business communications.

### **Employee Personnel Files**

Employee files are maintained by the Human Resources Department and are confidential. Managers and supervisors may have access to personnel file information on a need-to-know basis.

Pursuant to Rhode Island law, employees may request the review of personnel files. The City will comply within seven (7) days of the request. Personnel files are to be reviewed in the Human Resources Department and may not be taken outside the Department.

### **Safety**

The health and safety of employees and others on City property or worksites are of critical concern. We strive to achieve and maintain the highest possible level of safety in all activities and operations. The City also strives to and intends to comply with all appropriate health and safety laws.

The primary responsibility of City employees is to perform their duties in a safe manner in order to prevent injury to themselves or others. Before beginning special work or new assignments, employees should review applicable and appropriate safety rules and discuss with their supervisor any questions about the proper procedure.

Employees who, because of their job tasks, are at risk of occupational exposure to blood and/or body fluids or rabies, shall be offered preventative vaccinations within 10 working days of assignment. Vaccinations shall be at no cost to the employee and available at a local healthcare facility. Employees must sign a declination form if they choose not to be vaccinated upon assignment, but may later opt to

receive the vaccine at no cost. At-risk employees will be provided information about the vaccination program at the time of onboarding.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) includes all clothing and work accessories designed to protect employees from workplace hazards by creating a barrier against workplace hazards. It can include items such as safety helmets, eye and hearing protection, high visibility clothing and safety harnesses. Employees must wear protective equipment as required and when instructed by a supervisor.

Failure to follow City safety and health guidelines or engaging in conduct that places the employee, vendor, public citizens or City property at risk can lead to employee disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Any workplace injury, accident or illness must be reported to your supervisor as soon as possible, regardless of its severity. If medical attention is required immediately, supervisors will assist employees in receiving care, after which the details of the injury or accident must be reported. Employees and supervisors will complete an Employee Incident Report, which will be forwarded to the Human Resources Department. Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/efile/5157>. Employees of the Providence Water Supply Board should follow their own procedures relating to the reporting of workplace injuries or illnesses.

### **Violence in the Workplace**

Employees cannot engage in conduct that may be dangerous to others. Conduct that threatens, intimidates or coerces another employee, customer, vendor or business associate will not be tolerated. City resources may not be used to threaten, stalk or harass anyone at the workplace or outside the workplace. The City treats threats coming from an abusive personal relationship as it does other forms of violence.

Indirect or direct threats of violence, incidents of actual violence and/or suspicious activities should be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor, security personnel if applicable, and/or the Director of Human Resources. When reporting a threat or incident of violence, the employee should be as specific and detailed as possible. Employees should not place themselves in peril, nor should they attempt to intercede during an incident.

Employees should promptly inform the Human Resources Department of any protective or restraining order that they have obtained that lists the workplace as a protected area. Employees are encouraged to report safety concerns with regard to intimate partner violence. The City will not retaliate against employees making good-faith reports. We are committed to supporting victims of intimate partner violence by providing referrals to a qualified employee assistance program (EAP) and community resources for reasons related to intimate partner violence.

The City will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of violence or incidents of actual violence and suspicious activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as possible. The City will not retaliate against employees making good-faith reports of violence, threats or suspicious activities. Anyone found to be responsible for threats, actual violence or other

conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

The City encourages employees to bring their disputes to the attention of their supervisors or the Human Resources Department before the situation escalates.

### **Workplace Bullying**

The City defines bullying as repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise conducted by one or more persons against another or others at the place of work and/or in the course of employment or through social media. Such behavior violates the City's Code of Ethics, which clearly states that all employees will be treated with dignity and respect. Employees found in violation of this policy will be disciplined up to and including termination.

Bullying may be intentional or unintentional. However, it must be noted that where an allegation of bullying is made, the intention of the alleged bully is irrelevant and will not be given consideration when meting out discipline. As in sexual harassment, it is the effect of the behavior upon the individual that is important. Some examples of bullying are:

- **Verbal bullying:** Slandering, ridiculing or maligning a person or his/her family; persistent name calling that is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; using a person as the target of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks.
- **Physical bullying:** Pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping, assault or threat of physical assault; damage to a person's work area or property.
- **Gesture bullying:** Nonverbal, threatening gestures that convey threatening messages.

### **Drug-Free Workplace**

Employees should report to work fit-for-duty and free of any adverse effects of illegal drugs or alcohol.

The following work rules apply to all employees:

- Whenever employees are working, are operating any City vehicle, are present on City premises or are conducting related work off-site, they are prohibited from:
  - Using, possessing, buying, selling, manufacturing or dispensing an illegal drug (to include possession of drug paraphernalia).
  - Being under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug as defined in this policy.
- The presence of any detectable amount of any illegal drug or illegal controlled substance in an employee's body while performing City business or while in a City facility is prohibited.
- The City will not allow any employee to perform his/her duties while taking prescribed drugs that are adversely affecting the employee's ability to safely and effectively perform their job duties. Employees taking a prescribed medication must carry it in the container labeled by a licensed pharmacist or be prepared to produce it if asked.
- Any illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia will be turned over to an appropriate law enforcement agency and may result in criminal prosecution.

This policy does not prohibit employees from the lawful use and possession of prescribed medications. Employees must, however, consult with their doctors about the medications' effect on their fitness-for-

duty and ability to work safely. Employees should promptly disclose any work restrictions to their supervisor. Employees should not, however, disclose underlying medical conditions. Job descriptions can be obtained through the Human Resources Department.

Anyone violating this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Medical Marijuana in the Workplace**

The City does not accommodate the medical use of marijuana in any of its workplaces. Employees coming into the workplace are not to be under the influence of medical marijuana smoked or otherwise ingested outside of the workplace.

Although Rhode Island law affords certain persons the right to use marijuana for certain medical purposes, Rhode Island law does not permit:

- Any person to undertake any task under the influence of marijuana, when doing so would constitute negligence or professional malpractice;
- The smoking of marijuana:
  - (a) In a school bus or other form of public transportation;
  - (b) On any school grounds;
  - (c) In any correctional facility;
  - (d) In any public place;
  - (e) In any licensed drug treatment facility in this state; or
  - (f) Where exposure to the marijuana smoke significantly adversely affects the health, safety or welfare of children.
- Any person to operate, navigate or be in actual physical control of any motor vehicle or motorboat while under the influence of marijuana.

*Federal law still prohibits any use of marijuana.*

### **Alcohol and Controlled Substance Testing for Commercial Driver's License Holders**

Employees who are hired into or seek a promotion to a position with the City that requires a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) must submit to alcohol and controlled substance testing as determined by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Copies of the CDL testing policies are available on the City's website and are distributed to CDL drivers at the time of their initial employer training.

### **Smoke-Free Workplace**

The City prohibits smoking on all City premises. This policy also applies to electronic cigarettes, candles or any other items that smolder or have open flames.

This policy applies to:

- All visitors (customers and vendors) to the City premises
- All contractors and consultants and/or their employees working on the City premises
- All employees, temporary employees and student interns

Smoking is prohibited in the following locations:

- Inside any City owned/leased building
- Inside any City owned and/or leased indoor workplace
- Any area outdoors in which smoke can migrate into the above locations
- Inside any City owned/leased parking garage or parking lot
- Inside any City owned/leased vehicles
- Within 50 feet of any entrance

Smoking is permitted only where applicable by relevant state law.

Employees who violate the smoking policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Emergency Notification System**

Employees are encouraged to sign up for CODE RED, the City's emergency notification system. This system will notify you via text, phone and/or email in the event of an emergency including but not limited to severe weather, evacuations boil water alerts, missing persons and other important information that may affect public safety. If you don't reside in the City, just use your work address to sign up (for example, 25 Dorrance Street.) During the sign-up process, you can choose what notifications you wish to receive and how you want to be notified. This is not a requirement, but is a very helpful tool. To learn more and to sign up, go to [www.providenceri.com/PEMA/codered](http://www.providenceri.com/PEMA/codered). Also, if you know someone in the City who may benefit from signing up, please pass this information along.

### **Employee Assistance**

The City will assist and support employees who voluntarily seek help for substance abuse. Employees may be allowed to use accrued paid time-off, placed on leaves of absence, referred to treatment providers and otherwise accommodated as needed.

Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

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### **Employee Categories/Classification**

All employees are designated as either non-exempt or exempt under state and federal wage and hour laws. The following is intended to help you understand these two categories and how they affect you.

- **Non-exempt employees** are paid on an hourly basis and are eligible for overtime pay in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). In addition, rules regarding hours of work, overtime and compensatory time may be governed by collective bargaining agreements.
- **Exempt employees** are executives, directors, administrative, managerial and professional staff who are considered exempt from the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the FLSA. Exempt employees are paid on a salary basis and are not eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time off for work performed in excess of the standard workweek.

The City has established the following categories for both non-exempt and exempt employees.

- **Regular, full-time employees** are not in a temporary status and who are regularly scheduled to work on a full-time schedule of 35, 37.5 or 40 hours per week. Generally, these employees are eligible for the full benefits package, subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of each benefit program.
- **Regular, part-time employees** are not in a temporary status and are regularly scheduled to work less than the full-time schedule but at least 25 hours each week. Regular, part-time employees are eligible for some of the benefits offered by the City subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of each benefits program.
- **Temporary, full-time employees** are hired to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project and who are temporarily scheduled to work on a full-time basis for a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Temporary, full-time employees may not be eligible for City benefits.
- **Temporary, part-time employees** are hired to work on a part-time basis during a particular season, for a limited duration, typically during the summer months. Temporary, part-time employees supplement the workforce to assist in the completion of a specific project and are temporarily scheduled to work less than the City's full-time schedule for a limited duration. Temporary, part-time employees are not eligible for City benefits.

### **Background Checks and Arrest Notification**

It is our policy to conduct pre-employment background checks on all applicants who accept an offer of employment. Background checks may include verification of any information on the applicant's resume or application form.

All offers of employment are conditioned on receipt of a criminal background report (BCI) that is acceptable to the City. All background checks are conducted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Reports are kept confidential and are only viewed by individuals involved in the hiring process.

If information obtained in the BCI would lead the City to deny employment, the applicant will have the opportunity to dispute the report's accuracy. A criminal conviction does not automatically bar an applicant from employment.

Any employee who is arrested for a misdemeanor or felony must notify his or her supervisor of such arrest no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the arrest. The arrest of an employee, whether on or off duty, may result in corrective action. Corrective action depends upon a review of all factors involved including whether or not the employee's action was work-related, the nature and severity of the act, or any resultant circumstances that adversely affect the employee's attendance and/or eroding of public confidence. Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

### **Probationary Period**

Pursuant to Section 903 of the City Home Rule Charter and applicable collective bargaining agreements, newly hired or promoted employees shall serve a probationary period of six (6) months. Certain collective bargaining agreements modify this rule for regular, full-time employees who are promoted

within the bargaining unit. Employees on probation should be evaluated at least twice within the six-month period.

### **Progressive Discipline**

Every employee has the duty and the responsibility to be aware of and abide by existing rules and policies. An employee also has the responsibility to perform his/her duties to the best of his/her ability.

The City supports the use of progressive discipline to address issues such as poor work performance or misconduct. Our progressive discipline policy is designed to provide a corrective action and improve employee performance.

The City reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of discipline for any inappropriate conduct, including oral and written warnings, suspension with or without pay, demotion and discharge. Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

### **Separation of Employment**

Separation of employment within the City can occur for several different reasons.

- **Resignation:** Employees who choose to resign from their position with the City should provide two weeks' written notice.
- **Retirement:** Employees wishing to retire should notify their department director and the Human Resources Department of their intent to retire in writing at least one month before the planned retirement date.
- **Job Abandonment:** Employees who fail to report to work or contact their supervisor for three consecutive workdays shall be considered to have abandoned the job without notice, effective at the end of their normal shift on the third day. The supervisor shall notify the Human Resources Department at the expiration of the third workday and initiate the paperwork to terminate the employee.
- **Discharge:** A discharge is an involuntary termination for just cause.
- **Non-Disciplinary Termination:** Employees listed in Section 905 of the Providence Home Rule Charter, employees who are serving a probationary period and employees in temporary positions may be separated from employment at the discretion of the appointing authority. Employees whose positions are funded by grants or other limited funding sources may be separated from employment when funding ceases.

Any accrued vacation leave will be paid in the last regular paycheck. Health insurance terminates the last day of the month of employment. Information for Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation (COBRA) continued health coverage will be provided. Employees will be required to pay their share of the dependent health and dental premiums through the end of the month. The separating employee must return all City property at the time of separation, including uniforms, cell phones, keys, computer equipment if applicable and identification cards.



## COMPENSATION

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### **Payment of Wages**

Salary payment is made either weekly or biweekly. Employees may be paid by check or through direct deposit of funds to the financial institution of their choice. In the event of a lost paycheck, the Treasury Department must be notified as soon as possible and a replacement check can be issued according to their procedures. If an employee's marital status changes or the number of exemptions previously claimed increases or decreases, a new Form W-4 must be submitted to the Payroll Department.

The City does not provide salary advances.

Notify a supervisor if the paycheck appears to be inaccurate.

Any change in name, address, telephone number must be reported to a supervisor and the Department of Human Resources.

### **Time Reporting**

A work hour is any hour of the day that is worked and should be recorded to the nearest quarter of an hour. The workday is defined as the 24-hour period starting at 12:00 a.m. and ending at 11:59 p.m. The workweek covers seven consecutive days. The usual workweek is 35 or 40 hours depending on job and assignment.

Employees will submit their time record weekly as directed by their manager. Each employee is to maintain an accurate daily record of his/her hours worked. All absences from work schedules should be appropriately recorded.

In departments with electronic timekeeping, employees are not required to keep separate records. However, where electronic timekeeping is used, it is never permissible for an employee to “clock-in” or “clock-out” for another employee. In addition, employees are required to clock-out and -in during unpaid meal breaks.

### **Meal Period and/or Rest Breaks**

Employees receive an unpaid meal break and two paid rest breaks in accordance with City policy or collective bargaining agreements. Neither the lunch period nor the rest break(s) may be used to account for an employee's late arrival or early departure or to cover time-off for other purposes. For example, rest breaks may not be accumulated to extend a meal period and rest breaks may not be combined to allow one half-hour long break.

### **Overtime Pay**

All overtime must be pre-approved by the department director or his/her designee. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay in the following circumstances:

- Employees who are represented by Local Union 1033 are eligible for overtime pay after 40 hours or 35 hours, depending on their regular workweek, as defined by the collective bargaining agreement.

- Temporary employees and non-exempt, non-represented employees are eligible for overtime pay after 40 hours in the workweek.

### **Employee Travel and Reimbursement**

Employees of the City may be eligible for travel reimbursement when traveling on behalf of the City. Employees should confer with their department director for details.

### **Automobile Allowance**

Employees who are required to use their own automobile in connection with services rendered shall receive \$0.54 per mile. Employees who use their own automobile in connection with services rendered three or more times per week shall receive \$376.44 per month as a monthly allowance. Rates are subject to change and based upon the Federal Travel Regulations for government use of privately owned vehicles.

### **Vehicle Policy**

City vehicles are those cars, trucks and other motorized equipment, owned or leased by the City. City vehicles are to be used for conducting official City business only. City vehicles must be used, parked, and maintained properly. Only authorized persons shall operate or ride inside a City vehicle.

Drivers and passengers in City vehicles, as well as employees who drive their personal vehicles for City business, must wear seat belts and shoulder harnesses at all times in compliance with Rhode Island motor vehicle laws

Any accident, involving a City vehicle or personal vehicle being used for City business, regardless of the extent of the damage, is to be reported to a police officer with jurisdiction in the area.

Following an accident, employees must complete and submit to their supervisor a Vehicle Incident Report. For City vehicles, blank forms must be kept at all times in the glovebox of the vehicle. A copy of the Vehicle Incident Report Form is also available at <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies>. Employees of the Providence Water Supply Board should follow their own procedures relating to the reporting of accidents.

Each employee who: (1) drives a City vehicle, (2) receives a car allowance, (3) provided paid parking or (4) utilizes a parking permit must provide a copy of a valid driver's license upon employment. Driver's licenses will be subject to periodic validation. Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

Any employee meeting any of the above criteria must notify the Human Resources Department immediately in the event of suspension or loss of a license or CDL status, if applicable. Each driver must immediately report **any** work-related accident or traffic violation to his/her supervisor. Employees with a CDL shall follow the City's specific policy on accidents. Failure to provide such notification may subject an employee to disciplinary action.

Some City employees may be authorized to use City vehicles for transportation to and from their place of residence and their workplace. Otherwise, only minimal personal use of City vehicles is permitted and is

limited to transportation to and from the employee's residence and work place. Employees must obtain **prior written authorization** to utilize vehicle for personal use.

**Employees should be mindful that their driving and parking habits are under constant observation and should strive to be exemplary in the operation and use of a City vehicle. Each employee shall avoid use, operation and parking of a City vehicle which would reflect unfavorably upon the City or violate the public trust.**

**Vehicle Navigation**

The City has installed Global Positioning System (GPS) in its vehicles to help better deploy and utilize its vehicles, improve safety and reduce maintenance and fuel costs. The City will not tolerate any tampering or destruction of GPS devices by any employee or others.

**Vehicle "No Idle" Policy**

The City has implemented a "no idle" policy for all vehicles. In addition to being better for the environment, reducing idling time can save significant expenses for fuel and maintenance.

**TIME OFF/LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

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**Holiday Pay**

The City treats the following as paid holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Victory Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Election Day (even years)
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

The following ½ days may be provided:

- Christmas Eve
- New Year's Eve

A holiday that falls on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. A holiday that falls on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.

Time-off may be granted to employees who desire to observe a religious holiday that is not recognized by the City. Employees should contact the Human Resources Department for information.

Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/holidays> for more information.

**Time Off**

Employees are required to notify their supervisor in advance if they are unable to report to work. Failure to call or report for duty is considered a no-call/no-show and will place an employee’s job in jeopardy.

**Vacation**

All full-time, permanent employees are entitled to paid vacation leave. The rate that vacation leave accrues is dependent upon the number of years of total service for the City as a permanent employee. The vacation days may be discharged in half day increments. Employees can carry over no more than 30 days’ vacation from one calendar year to the next.

Employees Hired on or After July 1, 1987	
Over 6 months	5 days
1 year	10 days
5 years	15 days
10 years	20 days
15 years	25 days

Employees Hired Before July 1, 1987	
Over 6 months	5 days
1 year	15 days
10 years	20 days
15 years	25 days

Employees must submit a request in writing at least two weeks prior to the anticipated vacation. Requests will be approved based on a number of factors, including department operating and staffing requirements.

**Sick Leave**

Effective July 1, 2015, all full-time, permanent employees who are members of the Local Union 1033 hired before July 1, 2015 accrue 1.17 days per month sick leave from the date of hire, for a total of 14 days per year. Effective July 1, 2016, all full-time, permanent employees hired before July 1, 2015 accrue 1.08 days per month sick leave from the date of hire, for a total of 13 days per year. Effective July 1, 2017 all full-time, permanent employees hired before July 1, 2015 accrue 1 day per month sick leave from the date of hire, for a total of 12 days per year. Effective July 1, 2015, all full-time, permanent employees hired on or after July 1, 2015 accrue 1 day per month sick leave from the date of hire, for a total of 12 days per year.

Full-time, permanent employs who are not members of the bargaining unit have a different rate of sick leave accrual. Please contact the Human Resources Office for details.

Sick leave may be used for an employee's personal illness and medical and dental appointments. Employees who are members of the Local 1033 bargaining unit may use entire allotment of sick time for the care of family members within the household of the employee whose illness requires it. Employees are entitled to two personal days per fiscal year, which shall be deducted from accrued sick leave. Personal days that are not discharged shall accrue as sick leave and not personal use.

Sick leave may be accrued to a maximum of 135 days. Sick leave may not be used before accrual. If an employee is absent due to illness, he/she must use accrued sick time. Sick leave cannot be discharged in periods of less than one-half workday. An employee who has a sick leave absence in excess of three consecutive workdays must present medical documentation for the absence. Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

Employees are not paid for unused sick leave upon termination of employment. However, it is the City's policy under the Employee Retirement System that an employee who retires is entitled to a lump sum payment, generally a percentage of the total value. Any sick time accrued AFTER July 26, 2013 is available for use, but does not qualify for payout upon retirement.

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

The City offers leave consistent with the required federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Rhode Island Parental and Medical Leave Act allowing eligible employees to take job-protected leave in the event of an employee's serious health condition, birth of a child or care of a newborn, placement for adoption or foster care child, or to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition.

In order to be eligible for 13 weeks of FMLA, the employee must be employed for at least 12 months and for at least 1,250 hours in the 12-month period before the leave begins.

If an employee finds that they are in need of FMLA, they are required to contact the Human Resources Department to obtain Department of Labor Notice of Eligibility and Rights as well as certification forms, which will need to be filled out and returned. The Human Resources Department will provide the employee with a written response to the request for FMLA in approximately five business days.

Depending upon the information provided to the Human Resources Department by the employee's physician, he/she may be granted Full-time or Intermittent FMLA. Full-time FMLA allows an employee to take 13 consecutive weeks of leave. Intermittent FMLA allows the employees to use the leave intermittently (take a day periodically when needed over a year period).

While on approved FMLA the employee is required to exhaust all of his/her available sick time. Once exhausted, the employee has the option to either go unpaid or utilize their accrued vacation pay and floating holiday.

Employees granted FMLA will be returned to the same job or an equivalent job with equivalent benefits, pay, security and other employment terms and conditions as provided by the Family Medical Leave Act, provided that all leave taken within a rolling 12-month period does not exceed 13 weeks.

Please contact the Human Resources Department at 401-421-7740 x 5244 or visit [www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/](http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/) or <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

### **Leave of Absence**

It is agreed that upon written application an employee with permanent status may be granted a leave without pay, not to exceed one year, for reason of personal illness, disability, or other purpose deemed proper and approved by the Human Resources Director. Except for employees on leave due to medical reasons, employees on unpaid leave of any nature shall cease to accrue sick leave and vacation after 26 weeks of unpaid leave. Please contact the Human Resources Department or visit <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

### **Sick Leave Extension**

Any employee with at least five years of continuous service, who contracts a serious illness, may be granted, with the approval of the Human Resources Director and the department director, a further leave with pay, not to exceed 90 days after discharge of all accumulated paid time-off for full term of employment. Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Full-time employees are entitled to leave without loss of pay, when death occurs in his/her immediate family. The following are considered immediate family for the sake of this policy: legal spouse, domestic partner living with employee for at least six months, mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister or other members of the immediate household. Leave is not to exceed beyond one day after burial. For employees of the Jewish faith, said leave shall not exceed seven days from the day of burial.

All full-time employees are granted one-day leave to attend the funeral services of grandparents, mother-in-law, father-in-law, aunts or uncles. In the event there is a death in the employee's family but not in the immediate household as defined above, the employee shall be granted sufficient time to attend the funeral without loss of pay.

### **Jury Duty**

A full-time employee who is called for jury service is excused from work for the hours in which the employee serves and will receive the straight time rate of pay for each hour of absence, less the amount received for jury duty. The employee must present proof of service and the amount received.

### **Military Leave of Absence**

Full-time employees who have been continuously employed for at least six months and who are ordered to full-time active duty or full-time active training activities are entitled to a paid leave of absence. The City shall pay the employee the difference between their base military wages and the pay of their full-time position for as long as the employee is required to remain on full-time military leave. The employee will be required to provide a copy of their military orders and military pay information. Please contact Human Resources or visit <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies> for more information.

## **BENEFITS**

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### **Medical and Dental Insurance**

The City offers regular full-time employees medical, prescription and dental insurance on the first day of the month following hire. Employees have up to 30 days from their date of hire to make health insurance elections and add dependents. Once made, elections are fixed for the remainder of the plan year. Dental coverage for Local 1033 Employees is covered by Local Union 1033.

### **Open Enrollment**

Employees may make changes to their health insurance and life insurance from June 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup> with an effective date of change to be July 1<sup>st</sup>. When making changes to your health insurance coverage during open enrollment, applicable applications and supporting documentation (i.e., birth certificates for children, marriage certificate for spouse, final divorce decree for ex-spouses, etc.) need to be submitted timely.

### **Qualifying Events**

Employees and/or dependents may enroll in your Plan as a special enrollee under the following circumstances within 30 days of the qualifying event:

<b>Status Change</b>	<b>Qualifying Event</b>	<b>Required Documentation</b>
Marital Status Change	Marriage Divorce/Legal Separation Remarriage	Marriage Certificate Divorce Decree
Dependent Status Change:	Birth Legal Adoption Judgment or decree requiring coverage	Birth Certificate Legal Adoption Papers Court judgment/decree
Loss of Coverage:	Loss of prior coverage	Letter from employer/carrier stating loss of coverage & the effective date.

### **Coordination of Benefits**

The City of Providence requires that your spouse (including common law spouse and domestic partner where applicable), or ex-spouse who remain on your coverage due to a requirement in your divorce decree ("qualified ex-spouse") obtain individual healthcare coverage through his or her employer, if such coverage is available, subject to the applicable health insurance plan's co-pays and deductibles. Please contact the Benefits Office for additional information. The City of Providence will allow your spouse or qualifying ex-spouse to remain on your City of Providence plan, but will provide secondary coverage only. The City of Providence will reimburse you for the cost of the individual co-share via payroll.

Coordination of Benefits (COB) applies to all active and retiree city groups.

### **Health Insurance Buy-Back**

Local Union 1033 and non-union Employees may choose not to be covered under City of Providence health coverage upon presentation of proof of alternative coverage. Eligible employees enrolled in a family plan making this choice shall receive \$1,500.00 for each full contract year in which they are not

covered for family coverage. Eligible employees enrolled in an individual plan making this choice shall receive \$750.00 for each full contract year of non-coverage by a City plan. Eligible employees need to complete an opt-out form during open enrollment each year in order to receive the buy-back. Payments to eligible employees shall be made in June for the previous plan year (July to June) in which they were not covered under the City's health insurance plan.

### **Flexible Spending Account**

The City offers a voluntary employee-funded Flexible Spending Account (FSA) plan to all regular full-time employees. Plan participants may elect to enroll in either the medical out of pocket FSA or Dependent Care FSA. Medical out-of-pocket FSA has a maximum contribution limit of \$2,500 per plan year as established by the IRS. Dependent Care FSA has a maximum contribution limit of \$5,000 per plan year as established by the IRS.

If eligible medical or dental expenses are less than the elected annual amount of flex dollars for that year, the balance will be forfeited.

### **Group Life Insurance**

The City offers regular full-time non-union employees who have been employed by the City for 30 days an employer-paid basic group term life policy along with an accidental death and dismemberment policy. Each policy generally pays a death benefit equal to the lesser of their "Life Salary" (as defined in the Plan document) or \$15,000.

Local Union 1033 offers regular full-time 1033 employees who have been employed by the City for 30 days a life insurance policy. Union employees should contact Local Union 1033 at 401-331-1033 for details regarding enrollment and coverage levels.

### **Supplemental Life Insurance**

The City offers non-union employees the option to purchase supplemental life insurance in addition to the life insurance paid for by the City. Supplemental life insurance is employee-paid and can be purchased in the amount of 1x, 2x, 3x, 4x, or 5x of the employee's annual salary, not to exceed \$500,000 in coverage. 1033 employees are offered Supplemental Life Insurance by Local Union 1033. Union employees should contact Local Union 1033 at 401-331-1033.

For more information regarding all of the benefits listed above, please contact the Benefits Department at 401-421-7740 x 5279 or visit our website at [www.providenceri.com/hr/benefits](http://www.providenceri.com/hr/benefits).

### **Deferred Compensation**

The City offers voluntary 457b Deferred Compensation Plans that employees may enroll in and have the premium deducted from their paycheck on a pre-tax basis. For questions regarding vendors and enrollment, employees should contact the Controller's Office at (401) 456-9100.

### **Pension**

The City requires a mandatory 8% contribution to the City pension, which is made through payroll deduction. Under limited circumstances, employees with a minimum of three (3) consecutive years of full-time employment may borrow money from their pension account. Further details about the Retirement



Plan including disability retirement options may be obtained from the Retirement Office and the Plan document.

An employee applying for Accidental Disability Retirement must file his/her application within eighteen (18) months from the date of the accident.

### **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

As required by law, the City provides Workers' Compensation benefits for the protection of employees with work-related injuries and illness. Employees who sustain work-related injuries must immediately notify their department supervisor and complete an Employee Incident Report. Please see <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/employee-information/policies>. Failure to report a work-related illness or injury promptly could result in the denial of some benefits. The City is self-insured and self-administered for its workers' compensation program. Claims are handled by staff in the Human Resources Department. The City has an active modified duty program for employees able to transition back into the workforce in some productive manner while not yet ready to return to their regular assignment. Employees receiving statutory workers' compensation benefits are required to contribute to their health insurance coverage at the applicable rate in order to continue receiving health insurance coverage. Employees of the Providence Water Supply Board should follow their own procedures relating to reporting workplace injuries or illnesses and its workers' compensation program.

### **Lactation/Breastfeeding**

Any employee who is breastfeeding will be provided reasonable break times to express breast milk. The City will designate a room for this purpose. Any employee wishing to express and preserve breast milk should contact the Human Resources Department at 401-421-7740 x5250 for assistance in making arrangements.

### **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

The City provides confidential access to professional counseling services available to all employees and eligible dependents through your healthcare benefits. Most services are covered by your City provided health insurance plan. If you or a covered family member is experiencing difficulty, you can find qualified, licensed clinicians by:

- Using the BCBSRI Find a Doctor Tool on [www.BCBSRI.com](http://www.BCBSRI.com)
- Calling a ValueOptions behavioral health clinician. They are available 24/7 to assist you with a referral or to consult and discuss your needs at 800-274-2958. (ValueOptions manages BCBSRI's behavioral health services).

It is important that you have support in coping so you are better able to help yourself or a loved one. Self Help Support Groups for you:

- Find and attend an Nar Anon Meeting <http://www.nar-anon.org/find-a-group>
- Find and attend an AI Anon Meeting <http://riafg.org/>
- Find and attend an AA Meeting [rhodeisland-aa.org/meetings](http://rhodeisland-aa.org/meetings)
- Find and attend a Smart Recovery Meeting <http://smartre.org/meetings.html>

Please contact the Human Resources Department or visit <http://www.providenceri.com/hr/benefits> for more information.