



## Separation Policy

### PURPOSE

Consistent with Grand Traverse County commitment to its employees, the County aims to ensure that situations when employees leave employment with the County, including for voluntary and involuntary reasons, are handled in a professional and respectful manner with minimal disruption to the workplace.

### POLICY & PROCEDURE

#### At-Will Employment

Employment with the County is voluntary and subject to separation by the employee or the County for lawful reasons at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice. Nothing in this policy, or other policies, shall be construed to modify in any way the employment-at-will status of Grand Traverse County employees.

#### Resignation

Any employee resigning from County service shall submit their resignation in writing to his/her department head, with a copy to the Human Resources Department at the same time, stating the effective date and the reason for leaving. Employees are expected to give at least a two-week notice prior to the effective date. Failure to comply may be cause for denying the person future employment with the County. Unauthorized absence from work for a period of three consecutive days may be considered as an automatic resignation.

#### Involuntary Separation

Involuntary separation from employment typically occurs when the County makes the decision to end the employment relationship with an employee. This can occur for a number of reasons, including for job performance, misconduct, reorganization, and/or business reasons. The County takes all involuntary separation decisions seriously and they require the involvement of Human Resources and the County Administrator before any decisions are made.

#### Layoff

Whenever, because of lack of work or insufficient funds, it becomes necessary to reduce the work force, employees shall be laid off in an order determined by the quality and length of their service. Employees concerned shall be given notice of the layoff at least seven days prior to the effective date. The names of any regular employees laid off for any of the above reasons shall be placed on a reemployment list for a period of one year.

## **Retirement**

In order to assure timely receipt of retirement benefits, employees who wish to retire under the Municipal Employees' Retirement System should notify their department head in writing, with a copy to the Human Resources Department, approximately ninety (90) calendar days prior to their final day of work. The employee should also contact the Human Resources Department so that proper forms can be completed.

## **Death of an Employee**

Upon receiving information of the death of an employee, the employee's manager should immediately notify Human Resources.

## **Demotion**

Any employee may be demoted by the department head.

## **Exit Interview**

Every employee being separated from county employment for any reason may participate in an exit interview. With the exit interview the County hopes to get suggestions to make employment conditions more enjoyable and productive for other employees. The exit interview will be reviewed only by the County Administrator and the Director of Human Resources. It will not be placed in the personnel file, nor will it be considered if the employee should apply for reemployment.

## **Final Paycheck**

The final paycheck will be paid on the normal pay date, and shall contain all earnings owed to the employee, including time worked in the final pay period, accumulated vacation leave, personal leave, prorated longevity bonus if eligible, and 50% of sick leave bank if eligible. For FLSA Exempt employees, the annual salary shall be pro-rated based on the final day at work, and any balance owing the employee shall be paid on the final salary check. See the Salary Basis for Exempt Employees Policy for more information regarding payouts.

## **Return of County Property**

Employees must return all County property at or before the time of separation, including uniforms, cellphones, keys, laptops, identification cards, etc. Failure to return some items may result in deductions from the employee's final paycheck, where State law allows.

## **Date of Termination**

The last day actually worked will be considered the last day employed. In cases of a leave of absence where the employee decides not to return to work, the last day employed shall be considered to be the date of resignation, not to be later than the approved date of return to work, unless the leave of absence is terminated earlier by the County. For medical leaves, this would be no later than the date of medical release to return to work, including light duty.

## **Health Insurance**

Medical, dental, and vision insurance coverage terminates on the last day of the month in which the separation from employment occurs. Information about options to continue health coverage via

consolidated omnibus budget reconciliation act (COBRA) is provided to the employee following separation and consistent with legal requirements.

### **Eligibility for Rehire**

Employees who leave the County in good standing may be considered for rehire. Former employees must still follow the normal application and hiring processes and must meet all minimum qualifications and requirements of a position. Rehired employees will not retain previous status when calculating longevity, leave accruals, or any other benefits, unless required by law.

Note: This policy may differ for those employees who are members of recognized unions, organizations, or associations. Any questions related to the content of this policy, or its interpretation, should be directed to Human Resources.

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