

**Category:** 300

**Number:** 325

**Policy:** Standards of Conduct

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to define and serve as primary document for standards of conduct.

**Authority:** St. Clair County Board of Commissioners. Administrative policies shall be subject to revision or termination by the Board of Commissioners at its discretion. This policy replaces and supersedes any prior policy on this subject matter.

**Application:** This policy applies to County Officials, Appointed, Elected and Confidential and all County employees. This policy shall not apply to the courts or co-employers recognized under Michigan law. In the event this policy conflicts with any collective bargaining agreement, the collective bargaining agreement shall control.

**Responsibility:** The Human Resources Director or designee shall be responsible for the administration and enforcement of this policy.

The outlined conduct is not all inclusive of proper behavior expected. Each County department head and/or supervisor is entitled to establish work rules for his or her department. Employees are expected to comply and conform to all work rules.

In the event a work rule seems unreasonable, contrary to County policy or is applied sporadically, the employee has the right to grieve in accordance with Policy 348: Grievance Procedure or the applicable collective bargaining agreement. Employees must maintain the highest level of professional conduct at all times

Employees shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, for unprofessional behavior, such as:

- Insubordination
- Dishonesty.
- Gambling while on the job.
- Sabotage or willful negligence to any operation or operational element of the County.
- Abusive, immoral or threatening overtures to any other employee or person.
- Unauthorized use of any information or material whether confidential or otherwise.
- Unsatisfactory work performance.
- Harassing or discriminatory behavior.
- Failure or refusal to carry out a department head and/or supervisor's instructions relevant to the job and workplace.
- Failure to fulfill the responsibilities of the job to an extent that it adversely affects another employee's ability to perform his or her job or render reasonable service to the public.
- Violation of a safety, fire prevention, health or security rule, policy or practice.
- Any intentionally false, fraudulent, misleading or harmful statement, action or omission involving another employee, vendor to the County or member of the public.
- Any intentional and willful false, fraudulent, misleading or harmful statement, action

- of omission related to an employment application or any other information provided to or requested by the County, whether verbal or written.
- Unauthorized use of, removal of, theft of or damage to equipment, resource or property of the County.
  - Threatened or actual violence in the workplace or outside the workplace if proven to be related to the workplace.
  - The use of profane or abusive language.
  - Carrying any weapon on County property unless occupationally required.
  - Impairment from any substance while on the job or violation of any provision of St. Clair County's Policy 373: Drugs, Alcohol and Controlled Substances.
  - Chronic, habitual or excessive lateness or absenteeism from work including discernable patterns of lateness or absenteeism.
  - Behavior that is unprofessional, disrespectful or inappropriate.

**ATTENDANCE STANDARDS:**

An employee is expected to be at his or her workplace ready to begin work at the scheduled commencement of the shift.

In the event of an illness, emergency or unforeseen circumstance, it is the employee's obligation to notify his or her department head and/or supervisor as far in advance of the start of their shift as possible of the tardiness or absence.

A call-in to report an absence or tardiness is excused only when the department head and/or supervisor provides formal approval, verbally or written. An employee who calls in should provide the department head and/or supervisor with a telephone number where he or she can be reached. An employee who calls-in the day before or day after a holiday or vacation day will be required to provide medical documentation supporting the illness.

An employee who exhibits habitual absences or a pattern of absence and/or tardiness is subject to 'proof status required' for 90 days or discipline up to and including employment termination.

An absence from work for two (2) consecutive scheduled workdays without providing notice to his or her department head and/or supervisor shall result in the termination of the employee's employment, unless extenuating circumstances preventing notice can be proven to the satisfaction of the department head and/or supervisor.

An employee absent from work for two (2) or more consecutive work days may be required to provide their department head and/or supervisor with a medical statement that fully explains the nature of the employee's disability and ability to return to work.

An absence of three (3) or more work days, even if intermittent and not consecutive in hours and days but due to the same malady may be subject to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). For further information contact Human Resources or refer to Policy 361: Family and Medical Leave Act, Short Term Disability and Long Term Disability.

An employee in violation is subject to discipline up to and including employment termination.

**PERSONAL APPEARANCE:**

It is important that every County employee conduct themselves in the best possible manner at all times. Each County employee is personally responsible to begin his or her workday by

exhibiting good personal hygiene and wearing clean and neat clothing. An employee's choice in clothing should be appropriate for the job he or she performs.

A department head and/or supervisor are entitled to set the standards for appearance in his or her department. Appearance standards established by a department head and/or supervisor should be in writing and should be consistent with the current accepted cultural standards reflected in other departments throughout the organization.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

St. Clair County is the custodian of an extensive amount of sensitive and confidential information. It is expected that an employee will, when in possession of sensitive and confidential information, protect and respect the privileged nature of the information.

Sensitive and confidential information is to be conveyed to another person only when necessary to the performance of the public's business and then only to those who have a need to know. It shall be considered a breach of security and confidentiality whenever an employee makes available or known to persons without a need or a right to know sensitive or confidential records, reports, data or information.

An employee guilty of a breach of confidentiality shall be subject to discipline, up to and including employment termination.

**COURTESY AND RESPECT:**

Every County employee is expected to treat members of the public and other County employees with courtesy, respect and provide assistance whenever needed. Courtesy and respect are expected whether contact is in person, on the telephone or through the various electronic media such as e-mail.

**WORK ETHIC:**

All employees are expected to put forth their best effort during their scheduled hours of work. Punctuality and reliable attendance are one reflection of an employee's work ethic. Employees are expected to be ready to start work at the scheduled start of their work time and to work until the end of their scheduled working hours. Lunch periods and breaks are scheduled to give an employee respite from their work. Employees are encouraged to take full advantage of their lunch periods and breaks and to be punctual in returning to their assigned duties.

Attention to detail, efficiency and completing work in a timely manner is another indicator of a desirable work ethic. An employee who pays particular attention to minimizing the amount of time socializing and in personal activity will have a greater likelihood of meeting the expectations of his or her supervisor.

An employee's attitude is an important component of his or her work ethic. An employee with a positive attitude, who is cordial, who is respectful and helpful to others will help to engender a pleasant work environment in which employees and members of the public will respond well.

**PERSONAL BUSINESS:**

County employees should do as little personal business on work time as possible. County employees should not use equipment or materials to conduct personal business whether during regularly scheduled work hours or on personal time without approval by his or her department head and/or supervisor.

**PERSONAL PROPERTY:**

Personal items at an employee's workstation or office can make for more pleasant surroundings and otherwise have a positive effect. Personal items that may be found offensive to a reasonable person prohibited and may be asked to remove such items. If not removed, the department head and/or supervisor shall be free to remove and dispose of the items. The County is not responsible for personal items that are lost, damaged or stolen.

**POLITICAL ACTIVISM:**

Employees shall in no manner participate in or contribute to political activities during their regularly scheduled working hours. Nor shall any department head and/or supervisor coerce an employee into providing political support, monetarily or otherwise.

This policy is not intended to deny an employee the right to seek a political, governmental or community board, commission or office, provided all activity is restricted to the hours other than the employee's hours of work. This policy strictly prohibits the use of any County resources to further any campaign effort.

For further information, an employee may contact the Human Resources Department by telephone at (810) 989-6910 or by email at [humanresources@stclaircounty.org](mailto:humanresources@stclaircounty.org).

**Review:** The Administrator/Controller has reviewed and approved this policy as to substance and Corporation Counsel has reviewed and approved as to legal content. The Human Resources Director shall periodically review this policy and make recommendations for changes as needed.

**Adopted:** February 18, 2021