Memo from HR

TO: Director, Superintendents and Supervisors
DATE: March 26, 2010
RE: New Employee Guidelines: Time Keeping, Phones/PDA’s and Personal Business

The following information is being distributed by request in advance of the new Employee Handbook. All of the information below will be in the new Handbook and will supersede all previous policies and memos. Please ensure that all employees included in the scope sign and return a copy of this memo to HR no later than April 15th, 2010. Please ensure that absent employees are included as well.

Scope: The scope of this memo includes all employees although the time keeping information will primarily affect non-exempt personnel (hourly employees). Public Safety employees (excluding administrative personnel) are to refer to their departments’ SOP for guidance in the subject matter below.

Time Keeping and Attendance:

Time Keeping
In compliance with Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the City of Pooler requires all hourly employees keep an accurate account of their time worked. Supervisors, Directors and Superintendents are responsible for correcting time entry mistakes or errors and submitting time to HR no later than noon Monday of a payroll week, (you will be notified of exceptions for holidays, emergencies, etc., via email, in advance). All time should be designated in the decimal form, for example, ¼ hour or 15 minutes = .25 hour, ½ hour = .5 hour, ¾ hour or 45 minutes = .75.

Time Entry:
1. All time worked must be accurately recorded.
2. Time cards, time sheets, InCode’s Time Entry are all acceptable methods of recording time as long as the time recorded is actual time worked and not the arrival or departure time if employee is not working.
3. Deviations from regular schedules must be noted and tracked including tardiness, unscheduled absences, leave (PTO, Bereavement, FMLA, etc.) and overtime (in Time Entry include a narratives for deviations from scheduled hours such as “employee was .25 late”, “overtime authorized by supervisor”, etc).
4. The City of Pooler will follow the “7 minute rule” in accordance with the FMLA. The “7 minute rule” refers to the method of rounding time to the nearest quarter hour.

Department of Human Resources
100 Southwest Highway 80, Pooler, Georgia 31322 912-748-7261 Phone 912-748-6703 Fax
a. Regardless of your method of recording time, employees may not
clock in more than 7 minutes before a scheduled shift (unless
otherwise instructed to do so by the supervisor) and they may not
clock out more than 7 minutes after the scheduled end of their shift.
b. “Clock-ins”: Any punches more than 7 minutes after your scheduled
start time will be rounded up to the quarter hour. For example, if an
employee clocks in between 7:38-7:52, they will be credited for
7:45. If an employee clocks in between 7:53-8:07, they will be
credited for 8:00. Anytime after 8:07 will be rounded up to 8:15 am
and the employee will be .25 hours late.
c. “Clock-outs”: The time system calculates the clock-out punch at the
end of a shift according to the 7 minute rule. For example if an
employee clocks out at 4:38-4:52, the time recorded will give credit
for 4:45. Clocking out at 4:53-5:07 will give credit for 5:00.
d. The “7 minute rule” only applies to time keeping. If you are
scheduled to work at 8:00am and arrive at 8:02, your supervisor
can count this as a tardy.

5. You must start work, take your lunch and RETURN to work, and end your
work day when you are instructed to do so by your supervisor. Any
deviations from a normal workday must be approved in advance, by your
supervisor and noted on time “card”.
a. If you come in late, you may NOT leave late to compensate for
your tardy.
b. If you have an errand to run at lunch and you will be gone longer
than your scheduled lunch time, you may NOT stay later to
compensate. You will request PTO for this time.

Attendance

The City of Pooler provides a generous Paid Time Off (PTO) policy for all full-
time, regular employees, scheduled to work 30 or more hours per week. Although
emergencies occur, it is your responsibility, as an employee, to ensure that you
meet the standards of attendance. Your failure to report to work on time, or to
not report at all, affect the City’s ability to serve its citizens and places an undue
burden on those who do report on time. It is, therefore, essential that you report
to work on time and in accordance with your work schedule. Lateness, excessive
absenteeism, and failure to follow call-in procedures, are cause for disciplinary
action up to and including termination. Your lateness and absenteeism record may
be a significant factor in evaluating you for transfers and promotion requests, as
well as for merit pay.

Excessive Absences and Tardiness:

There are two types of PTO absences, scheduled and unscheduled. (For further
clarification, see the PTO Policy). Attendance guidelines are based on the number
of Unscheduled Absence Occurrences incurred during a 12-month rolling period,
(absences are counted from January to January, then February to February, etc.)
and not based on the calendar year.
1. Every Unscheduled Absence will be considered an “Occurrence” and an absence of consecutive multiple work days due to the same illness, injury or other incident, will be counted as one occurrence for the purpose of these guidelines.

2. An unscheduled absence is any time missed which is more than four (4) hours in a workday.
   a. The employee is required to report the absence to their supervisor. Otherwise, it will be considered a “No Report.”
   b. If you are absent and you do not call in for three consecutive scheduled workdays (3 “No Report’s”), you are subject to immediate termination for abandonment of position.

3. A pattern of absences, such as routinely calling off on Mondays and/or Fridays may trigger corrective action notification.

4. Scheduled absences will not be counted as an occurrence for the purpose of these guidelines.

5. Scheduled times away from work or approved leaves using accrued PTO, holiday, FMLA, jury duty, military duty, doctor appointments, medical necessities and bereavement are not considered occurrences for the purpose of these guidelines.
   a. An unscheduled absence (as outlined in #2, will still be counted against an employee regardless of whether or not the employee brings in a “doctor’s note”.

6. The City of Pooler will allow a certain number of unscheduled full day absence occurrences in a rolling 12 month period before instituting corrective action as outlined below:
   a. Up to 4 days - No Action
   b. 5 days – Verbal Reprimand
   c. 6 days – Written Reprimand
   d. 7 days – One (1) day suspension (unpaid) and 60–180 day probation
   e. 8 or more days - Discharge

7. A partial day occurrence will be calculated as outlined below:
   a. A tardy arrival, early departure, early arrival, late departure, missed punch as a result of forgetting to clock in or out, or other shift interruption is considered a partial day occurrence. On occasions, with prior approval by the supervisor, an employee may adjust the schedule to work an equivalent amount of time that will allow for a scheduled late arrival or early departure (leaving a shift before the scheduled end time).
   b. Unscheduled partial day absences alone will carry penalties; however, every 4 partial day occurrences will equal one full day absence occurrence.

8. Arrival and departure times will be determined by each department.

9. The City of Pooler will allow a certain number of unscheduled partial day absences in a rolling 12 month period before instituting corrective action as outlined below:
   a. 4 or less No Action
b. 5 Verbal Warning

c. 6 – 7 One (1) day suspension (unpaid) and 60–180 day probation

d. 8 – Discharge

10. No disciplinary actions will be taken without the direct involvement of the Director of Human Resources. All verbal warnings will be delivered by the direct supervisor, manager, or Human Resources as circumstances require. Verbal warnings shall be signed by the employee or witnessed by another supervisor or HR and placed in the employee’s personnel file.

11. For the purpose of these guidelines, a supervisor is any one that is responsible to direct others work. This would include directors, managers, foreman, supervisors, etc.

**Due to the unique scheduling of Public Safety, they have separate guidelines.**

**Phone Usage:**

Conducting personal business on City time is not allowed. This also includes the time spent on phones whether they are “land lines”, personal cell phones/PDAs or City issued cell phones/PDAs. (Note: Any subsequent uses of the term “phone(s)” will collectively refer to personal and City issued cell phones, PDA’s, Blackberry devices, headsets or Blue Tooth technology, land lines, etc., where applicable.) Because phone and e-mail systems are provided by the City for business use, all messages sent by or received on those systems are considered City documents (see the IT Policy for more information). City documents are public documents and therefore subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and can be requested by the general public for review. Generally speaking, if you would be embarrassed to see it on the front page of the newspaper then don’t email, text, voicemail, instant message, call, print, or send it. The City reserves the right to access and to disclose the messages that you send or receive on phone(s) or via e-mail systems. City issued phones should never replace your personal phone and should not be used for personal accounts and personal information. Additionally, employees should also be aware that “deleted” messages from the computer may not actually be deleted from the e-mail system or from the network. Employees who abuse this policy are subject to disciplinary procedures up to and including discharge.

The following procedures and guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Phones shall be turned off or set to silent or vibrate mode during meetings, conferences and in other locations where incoming calls may disrupt normal workflow.

2. Co-workers, citizens, and other business associates should never be kept waiting while a personal phone call is concluded, regardless of the type of phone(s) being used.

3. Phones should not be used with the speaker function unless the employee has a demonstrated need to do so (e.g. conference call). Using a speakerphone is a disruption to co-workers and a disruption of the normal workflow.
a. Employees requiring reasonable accommodations by using speaker phones to perform their job duties need to contact Human Resources.

4. Phones may be used only for “essential personal calls”. The definition of an Essential Personal Call are those that are of minimal duration and that are required to allow the employee to continue working and cannot be made at another time or from a different phone. Examples of such calls include but are not limited to:
   a. Calls made to arrange for unscheduled or immediate care of a dependent or a family emergency;
   b. Calls made to alert others of an unexpected delay due to a change in work or travel schedule;
   c. Emergency phone calls.

5. Employees may carry and use personal phones while at work for use during breaks and lunch or City phones with permission (long distance calls may not be made on City phones). If employee use of a phone causes disruptions or loss in productivity, the employee may become subject to disciplinary action per company policy.

6. Employees who have an emergency; are waiting for an important call; or have another urgent need to use a phone other than as outlined above, must discuss it with his/her supervisor BEFORE usage.
   a. Department supervisors reserve the right to limit and/or restrict the use of phones by employees.

7. Personal use of City phones shall be limited. Employees shall not be reimbursed for outgoing calls made from their phone(s) unless prior authorization is obtained from their immediate supervisor.

8. The City also expects its employees to use the proper safety measures when using their phone(s) in vehicles.
   a. If an employee is operating a company vehicle and receives a call and DOES NOT have a hands-free system, the employee may answer, but shall ask the caller to hold, put the phone down and pull to the side of the roadway, into a parking lot or other safe location to respond to the call, whenever possible.
   b. Texting while driving is strictly prohibited and employees should use hands-free systems whenever possible while driving to avoid any accidents.
   c. Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of a cell phone/PDA while driving may be solely responsible for the liabilities incurred including the cost of damage to City vehicle up to the cost of the City’s insurance deductible of $5000.00.

9. Downloading a proxy browser for anonymous web surfing or any other type of unauthorized Internet access is strictly forbidden and will result in disciplinary action.

Due to the unique scheduling of Public Safety, they have separate guidelines.

Personal Business on City time:

Department of Human Resources
100 Southwest Highway 80, Pooler, Georgia 31322 912-748-7261 Phone 912-748-6703 Fax
Employees are hired to work, not to conduct their own business on City time. We understand that everyone has a life outside of work and sometimes we have to deal with personal issues at work. These situations should be kept as infrequent as possible. If you have an urgent matter that can’t wait until break time, lunch time or after work, make sure you speak with your supervisor about it AHEAD of time and have his/her permission.

As with any policy, management staff is expected to serve as role models for proper compliance with the provisions above and are encouraged to remind employees of their responsibilities in complying with this policy.

Violations of this policy will be subject to progressive disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

*Note: If you are discharged for cause, you may not be eligible to receive a PTO “buy out” and you may not be eligible for unemployment benefits.*

**Acknowledgement of Receipt of**

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the information above. I further understand the above information supersedes all prior documentation unless referenced.

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