

# **Employee Handbook**

**Humboldt County Resource Conservation District**

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# **General Employment Policies**

## **Introductory Statement**

Welcome! As an employee of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (the "District"), you are an important member of a team effort. We hope that you will find your position with the District rewarding, challenging, and productive.

We look to you and the other employees to contribute to the success of the District.

This employee handbook is intended to explain the terms and conditions of employment of all full- and part-time employees and supervisors.

This handbook summarizes the policies and practices in effect at the time of publication.\* This handbook supersedes all previously issued handbooks and any policy or benefit statements or memoranda that are inconsistent with the policies described here.

\*In addition to the policies covered in this handbook, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District also maintains and incorporates by reference, separate policies and procedures addressing COVID-19 in the workplace.

Please take the time to review the policies in this handbook, as well as Humboldt County Resource Conservation District's COVID-19 policies and procedures. Your supervisor or manager will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Again, welcome!

## **Harassment Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is an equal opportunity employer. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is committed to providing a work environment free of harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and disrespectful or other unprofessional conduct based on:

- Race
- Religion (including religious dress and grooming practices)
- Color
- Sex/gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding or related medical conditions), sex stereotype, gender identity/gender expression/transgender (including whether or not you are transitioning or have transitioned) and sexual orientation
- National origin
- Ancestry
- Physical or mental disability
- Medical condition
- Genetic information/characteristics
- Marital status/registered domestic partner status
- Age (40 and over)

- Sexual orientation
- Reproductive health decision making
- Military or veteran status
- Any other basis protected by federal, state or local law or ordinance or regulation

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District also prohibits discrimination, harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics.

In addition, the District prohibits retaliation against individuals who raise complaints of discrimination or harassment or who participate in workplace investigations.

**All such conduct violates District policy.**

### **Harassment Prevention**

The District's policy prohibiting harassment applies to all persons involved in the operation of the District. The District prohibits harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct by any employee of the District, including supervisors, managers and co-workers. The District's anti-harassment policy also applies to vendors, customers, independent contractors, unpaid interns, volunteers, persons providing services pursuant to a contract and other persons with whom you come into contact while working.

Prohibited harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, comments, posts or messages;
- Visual displays such as derogatory and/or sexually-oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures;
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work because of sex, race or any other protected basis;
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests or sexual advances as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors;
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment; and
- Communication via electronic media of any type that includes any conduct that is prohibited by state and/or federal law or by District policy.

Sexual harassment does not need to be motivated by sexual desire to be unlawful or to violate this policy. For example, hostile acts toward an employee because of their gender can amount to sexual harassment, regardless of whether the treatment is motivated by sexual desire.

Prohibited harassment is not just sexual harassment but harassment based on any protected



category.

## **Non-Discrimination**

The District is committed to compliance with all applicable laws providing equal employment opportunities. This commitment applies to all persons involved in District operations. The District prohibits unlawful discrimination against any job applicant, employee or unpaid intern by any employee of the District, including supervisors and coworkers.

Pay discrimination between employees of the opposite sex or between employees of another race or ethnicity performing substantially similar work, as defined by the California Fair Pay Act and federal law, is prohibited. Pay differentials may be valid in certain situations defined by law. Employees will not be retaliated against for inquiring about or discussing wages. However, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is not obligated to disclose the wages of other employees.

## **Anti-Retaliation**

The District will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint or participating in any workplace investigation or complaint process, and will not tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees or co-workers.

## **Reasonable Accommodation**

Discrimination can also include failing to reasonably accommodate religious practices or qualified individuals with disabilities where the accommodation does not pose an undue hardship.

To comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, the District will make reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or an employee unless undue hardship would result.

Any job applicant or employee who requires an accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of the job should contact an Executive Director and discuss the need for an accommodation. The District will engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify possible accommodations, if any, that will help the applicant or employee perform the job. An applicant, employee or unpaid intern who requires an accommodation of a religious belief or practice (including religious dress and grooming practices, such as religious clothing or hairstyles) should also contact an Executive Director and discuss the need for an accommodation. If the accommodation is reasonable and will not impose an undue hardship, the District will make the accommodation.

The District will not retaliate against you for requesting a reasonable accommodation and will not knowingly tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees or co-workers.

## **Complaint Process**

If you believe that you have been the subject of harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct, bring your complaint to your supervisor or to the Executive Director or Board Chair as soon as possible after the incident. You can bring your complaint to any of these individuals. If you need assistance with your complaint, or if you prefer to make a complaint in person, contact the Executive Director. Please provide all known details of the incident or incidents, names of individuals involved and names of any witnesses. It would be best to communicate your complaint in writing, using our *Employee Complaint Form*, but it is not mandatory.

The District encourages all individuals to report any incidents of harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct forbidden by this policy immediately so that complaints can be quickly and fairly resolved.

You also should be aware that the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing investigate and prosecute complaints of prohibited harassment, discrimination and retaliation in employment. If you think you have been harassed or discriminated against or that you have been retaliated against for resisting, complaining or participating in an investigation, you may file a complaint with the appropriate agency. The nearest office can be found by visiting the agency websites at [www.dfeh.ca.gov](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov) and [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

Supervisors must refer all complaints involving harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct to the Executive Director of the District so the District can try to resolve the complaint.

When the District receives allegations of misconduct, it will immediately undertake a fair, timely, thorough and objective investigation of the allegations in accordance with all legal requirements. The District will reach reasonable conclusions based on the evidence collected.

The District will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. However, the District cannot promise complete confidentiality. The employer's duty to investigate and take corrective action may require the disclosure of information to individuals with a need to know.

Complaints will be:

- Responded to in a timely manner
- Kept confidential to the extent possible
- Investigated impartially by qualified personnel in a timely manner
- Documented and tracked for reasonable progress
- Given appropriate options for remedial action and resolution
- Closed in a timely manner

If the District determines that harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct has occurred; appropriate and effective corrective and remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances involved. The District will also take appropriate action to deter future misconduct.

Any employee determined by the District to have engaged in harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to,

and including termination. Employees should also know that if they engage in unlawful harassment, they can be held personally liable for the misconduct.

## **At-Will Employment Status**

Employees at Humboldt County Resource Conservation District personnel are employed on an at-will basis. This means that the employment relationship may be terminated at any time with or without reason or advance notice by either the employee or the District. Nothing in this handbook limits the right to terminate at-will employment.

No employee or representative of the District has any authority to enter into an agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to make an agreement for employment on other than at-will terms. Only the Executive Director of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District has the authority to make any such agreement, which is binding only if it is in writing.

Nothing in this at-will statement is intended to interfere with an employee's rights to communicate or work with others toward altering the terms and conditions of their employment, such as communications regarding wages, scheduling or other terms of employment.

## **Right to Revise**

This employee handbook contains the employment policies and practices of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District in effect at the time of publication. All previously issued handbooks and any inconsistent policy statements or memoranda are superseded.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right to revise, modify, delete, or add to any and all policies, procedures, work rules, or benefits stated in this handbook at any time, except for the policy of at-will employment.

Any written changes to this handbook will be distributed to all employees so that you will be aware of any new policies or procedures. No oral statements or representations can in any way alter the provisions of this handbook.

This handbook contains the entire agreement between you and Humboldt County Resource Conservation District as to the duration of employment and the circumstances under which employment may be terminated. Nothing in this employee handbook or any other personnel document, including benefit plan descriptions, creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment for any employee.

Nothing in this statement is intended to interfere with your right to communicate or work with others toward altering the terms and conditions of your employment, such as communications regarding wages, scheduling or other terms or conditions of employment.

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is committed to fostering a diverse workforce, and maintaining a workplace that is equitable, inclusive and safe for all employees. From

recruiting practices, to pay and benefits, promotions, and all other aspects of employment with us, an environment of equity is of the utmost importance.

We not only recognize that you, our employees, comprise a wide range of backgrounds and characteristics, but we believe those differences should be celebrated and valued. Whether it's race, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, color, language, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information/characteristics, veteran status, political affiliation or any other characteristic, these are parts of each of you that contribute to your experiences as humans, and ultimately to the knowledge and expertise that make you a valuable asset to the District.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is committed and determined that there is access, opportunity and advancement for all individuals. We are always looking for ways in which we can cultivate an inclusive work environment, strengthen our cultural competency, and train our managers and employees to provide opportunities for growth and development.

It is our intention that all our employees, regardless of any particular background or characteristic, are always treated with respect and dignity. Likewise, we expect that as our employees, you treat your coworkers, supervisors and other team members with the same dignity and respect at all times.

Disrespect, inappropriate behavior or conduct toward others will not be tolerated and may subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

If you feel you have been mistreated, harassed, or discriminated or retaliated against in violation of the District's *Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention* policy, please contact your supervisor or Executive Director.

# **Hiring**

## **Service Credit**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will give service credit to employees previously employed by the District, provided the break in service does not exceed 365 days. Generally, the break in service time will be deducted from the employee's original service date.

Executive Director will discuss reinstatement of benefits and other length of service issues with rehired employees. Special rules apply to reinstatement of paid sick leave benefits under the California Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act.

## **Full-Time Employees**

Full-time employees are those who are scheduled for and do work 32 hours or more per week. Full-time employees benefit eligibility may depend on length of continuous service. Benefit eligibility requirements may also be imposed by the plans themselves or by law.

## **Part-Time Employees**

Part-time employees are those who are scheduled for and do work fewer than 32 hours per week, but at least 20 hours per week. Part-time employees are eligible to participate in most benefit programs. See each benefit section in this handbook and the current Benefit Summary Guide for details.

## **Temporary and On-Call Employees**

Temporary employees are those employed for short-term assignments. Short-term assignments generally are periods of three months or fewer; however, such assignments may be extended. Temporary and on-call employees are not eligible for employee benefits except those mandated by applicable law.

## **Inactive Status**

Employees who are on any type of leave of absence, work-related or non-work-related, that exceeds any protected state, federal or local leave of absence will be placed on inactive status.

## **Job Duties**

During the introductory period, your supervisor will explain your job responsibilities and the performance standards expected of you. Please keep in mind that your job responsibilities may change at any time during your employment. From time to time, you may be asked to work on

special projects, or to assist with other work necessary or important to the operation of your department or Humboldt County Resource Conservation District. Your cooperation and assistance in performing such additional work is expected.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right, at any time, with or without notice, to alter or change job responsibilities, reassign or transfer job positions, or assign additional job responsibilities.

## **New Hires**

The first 90 days of continuous employment at Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is considered an introductory period. During this time, you will learn your responsibilities, get acquainted with co-workers and determine whether or not you are satisfied with your job. Your supervisor will closely monitor your performance.

Completion of the introductory period does not entitle you to remain employed by Humboldt County Resource Conservation District for any definite period of time. Your status as an at-will employee does not change. The employment relationship may be terminated with or without cause and with or without advance notice, at any time by you or the District.

# Time Off and Leaves of Absence

## **Paid Time Off**

Full-time and part-time employees are entitled to paid time off (PTO) based upon your years of active service. Leave accrual commences with your first day of work and continues thereafter unless broken by an absence without pay, a leave of absence or termination of employment. You become eligible to take PTO beginning on the 90th day of employment.

PTO is a flexible bank of time that you can use for any reason, including personal vacation, holidays, illness, care for family members or other personal matters. You will need to schedule time off with your supervisors giving reasonable notice.

PTO can accrue to a cap. Once this cap is reached no further PTO will accrue until some is used. PTO will accrue on the following basis:

Years of Service	Vacation		Holiday		Total Hours Accrued	Cap	Accrual Rate/Hour
	Weeks	Hours	Days	Hours			
0 - 2	2	80	11	88	168	252	0.0808
3 - 7	3	120	11	88	208	312	0.1000
8 - 11	4	160	11	88	248	372	0.1192
12 - 15	5	200	11	88	288	432	0.1385
15+	6	240	11	88	328	492	0.1577

With prior approval, you may use up to 16 hours of unaccrued PTO. Your use of PTO may run concurrently with other leaves pursuant to local, state or federal laws. When your employment relationship with the District ends, you will be paid for accrued and unused PTO.

## **PTO Leave Donation Program**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District has a leave donation program that is meant to provide assistance to employees who are suffering from a crisis event that has resulted in a need for additional time off in excess of their available PTO leave. The program allows eligible employees to voluntarily donate time from their PTO to their co-workers in accordance with the policy.

Donations made under this policy shall be deemed to be equivalent one hour increments and are not based on the job classification or salary of the donating employee or the recipient employee.

### **Eligibility to Donate**

In order for you to donate PTO to another employee you must:

- Be employed by Humboldt County Resource Conservation District for one year;
- Donate leave in 1 hour increments;
- Donate no more than 50 percent of your current balance;
- Maintain a minimum of 40 hours in your current PTO balance after the donation; and
- Not be on an approved leave of absence, currently.

### **Guidelines for Receipt of Leave Donation**

Employees who would like to receive donated PTO from co-workers, Employees experiencing a crisis event are eligible to receive donated PTO from co-workers. A crisis event includes circumstances such as the following:

- A catastrophic injury or illness of an employee or immediate family member.
- Death of an immediate family member.
- A crisis of a severe nature that directly impacts the employee, such as a catastrophic casualty loss due to a natural disaster.

Donated time can only be used for time off related to the approved crisis event. Recipient employees must use their own available paid leave time prior to using any donated time. Employees who receive donated PTO time may receive no more than 480 hours (12 weeks) within a 12 month-period from the time of event.

The leave donation program does not guarantee the recipient employee the right to extended leave beyond the District's stated policy and its legal obligations. The decision as to whether a personal leave should be granted, whether there is a crisis event, or whether the employee can receive donated sick time is within the discretion of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District.

Any donated sick time that exceeds the time used by the recipient for the approved crisis event will be returned to the donor. There is no "cash" value to the recipient of the donated PTO.

### **Procedure**

If you want to donate PTO to a co-worker, please make a written request to Executive Director who will confirm eligibility. The request must be approved by Executive Director.

The identity of donors will remain confidential.

This donation program is strictly voluntary. No employee will be subject to intimidation or disparate treatment for participating in or declining to participate in the leave donation program. Misrepresenting or falsifying the need to receive donated leave under this program is grounds for discipline, up to and including termination.



## Sick Leave

California provides for mandatory paid sick leave under the Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act (the "Act"). This paid sick leave policy is intended to comply with the requirements of the Act. You cannot be discriminated or retaliated against for requesting or using accrued paid sick time. *This sick leave is in addition to the leave you may accrue as PTO in our separate PTO policy.*

### Sick Pay Amount

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will place paid sick leave into your leave bank each year on January 1st according to your employment status as defined in the table below.

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Annual Benefit</b>	<b>Cap</b>
Full-Time	40 Hours	80 Hours
Part-Time	30 Hours	60 Hours
Temporary or On-Call	24 Hours	24 Hours

*Unused paid sick time will carry over from year to the next.* However, there is a cap or maximum associated with our sick leave program. For example, if Jane is a full-time employee and has 53 hours of sick leave in her bank on the eve of her work anniversary, the District will put 27 hours of sick leave in her bank bringing her bank to the full-time status cap of 80 hours.

A new employee will receive sick leave as follows:

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>If Hired in Q1 - Q2</b>	<b>If Hired in Q3 - Q4</b>
Full-Time	40 Hours	24 Hours
Part-Time	30 Hours	24 Hours
Temporary and On-Call	24 Hours	24 Hours

The District does not pay employees for unused paid sick time. At no time may an employee take sick leave that is unavailable in their sick leave bank.

### Qualifying Reasons for Paid Sick Leave

Paid sick time can be used for the following reasons:

- Diagnosis, care or treatment of an existing health condition for an employee or covered

family member, as defined below.

- Preventive care for an employee or an employee's covered family member. Preventive care may include self-quarantine as a result of potential exposure to COVID-19 if quarantine is recommended by civil authorities, or other situations, such as where there has been exposure to COVID-19 or where an employee has traveled to a high risk area.
- For certain, specified purposes when the employee is a victim of crime or abuse.

For purposes of paid sick leave, a covered "family member" includes:

- A "child" defined as a biological, foster or adopted child; a stepchild; or a legal ward, regardless of the age or dependency status of the child. A "child" also may be someone for whom you have accepted the duties and responsibilities of raising, even if they are not your legal child;
- A "parent," defined as a biological, foster or adoptive parent; a stepparent; or a legal guardian of an employee or the employee's spouse or registered domestic partner. A parent may also be someone who accepted the duties and responsibilities of raising you when you were a minor child, even if they are not your legal parent;
- A spouse, a registered domestic partner, a grandparent, a grandchild, a sibling;
- A "designated person." A designated person any individual you identify at the time you request paid sick leave. You are limited to one designated person per 12-month period for purposes of paid sick leave.

## **Use of Paid Sick Leave**

If the need for paid sick leave is foreseeable, you must provide *written notification* to your supervisor. If the need for paid sick leave is not foreseeable, provide notice to your supervisor as soon as practical.

Use of paid sick time may run concurrently with other leaves under local, state or federal law. Paid sick leave can be used in one hour increments.

Paid sick leave is a benefit that also covers absences for work-related illness or injury. Employees who have a work-related illness or injury are covered by workers' compensation insurance. However, workers' compensation benefits usually do not cover absences for medical treatment. When you report a work-related illness or injury, you will be sent for medical treatment, if treatment is necessary. You will be paid your regular wages for the time you spend seeking initial medical treatment.

Any further medical treatment will be under the direction of the health care provider. Any absences from work for follow-up treatment, physical therapy or other prescribed appointments will not be paid as time worked. If you have accrued and unused paid sick leave, you may use paid sick leave to receive pay for these absences.

If you do not have accrued, paid sick leave, or if you have used all of your sick leave, you may choose to substitute PTO for further absences from work, related to your illness or injury.

## Holidays

Eleven (11) days of holiday leave are accounted for within the District's PTO program. The District will publish at the beginning of each calendar year days when our offices will be closed to employees and the public in observance of certain holidays. Employees may choose to work remotely on any observed holiday, if approved by their Supervisor.

## Bereavement Leave

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District grants time off to eligible employees in the event of the death of a "family member." To be eligible for bereavement leave, you must be employed for at least 30 days prior to starting leave. If you are eligible and experience the death of a family member, you may take up to five days of bereavement leave.

For purposes of this policy, a family member is a: Spouse, Domestic Partner, Child, Parent, Parent-in-law, Sibling, Grandparent, Grandchild.

The days of bereavement leave do not need to be taken consecutively, however, you must complete your bereavement leave within three months of your family member's death, at which time any remaining unused bereavement leave will expire. Bereavement leave is unpaid; however, you may choose to use previously accrued paid leave time available to you.

## Crime or Abuse Victims' Leave and Accommodation

If you are the victim of crime or abuse, you are eligible for unpaid leave. While the leave is generally unpaid, employees can use their paid sick time under California's Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act for the purposes described below.

You are considered a victim of crime or abuse who is eligible for unpaid leave if you are:

- A victim of stalking, domestic violence, or sexual assault;
- A victim of a crime that caused physical injury or that caused mental injury and a threat of physical injury;
- A person whose immediate family member is deceased as a result of a crime.  
"Immediate family member" includes:
  - Regardless of age, your biological, adoptive, or foster child, stepchild, or legal ward, a child of a registered domestic partner, a child to whom you stand in loco parentis, or a person to whom you stood in loco parentis when the person was a minor;
  - Your biological, adoptive, or foster parent, stepparent, or legal guardian or that of your spouse or registered domestic partner, or a person who stood in loco parentis when you or your spouse or registered domestic partner was a minor child;
  - Your legal spouse or registered domestic partner;
  - Your biological, foster, or adoptive sibling, a stepsibling, or half-sibling; or

- Any other individual whose close association with you is the equivalent of a family relationship described in any of the bullets above.

You may request leave if you are involved in a legal action, such as obtaining restraining orders, or appearing in court to obtain relief to ensure your or your child's health, safety, or welfare. Please provide reasonable advance notice of the need for leave unless advance notice is not feasible. Contact Executive Director.

If you need a reasonable accommodation for your safety at work, contact Executive Director. If you are requesting a reasonable accommodation, you will need to submit a written statement signed by you, or by an individual acting on your behalf, certifying that the accommodation is for the purpose of your safety at work.

For reasonable accommodation requests, the District will also require certification demonstrating that you are the victim of crime or abuse. The District may request recertification every six months. Please notify the District if an approved accommodation is no longer needed.

The District will engage in an interactive process with you to identify possible accommodations, if any, that are effective and will make reasonable accommodations unless an undue hardship will result.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will, to the extent allowed by law, maintain the confidentiality of an employee requesting leave or accommodation under these provisions.

## **Crime or Abuse Victims' Leave for Treatment**

If you are the victim of crime or abuse, you are eligible for unpaid leave. While the leave is generally unpaid, employees can use their paid sick time under California's Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act for the purposes described below.

You are considered a victim of crime or abuse who is eligible for unpaid leave if you are:

- A victim of stalking, domestic violence, or sexual assault;
- A victim of a crime that caused physical injury or that caused mental injury and a threat of physical injury; or
- A person whose immediate family member is deceased as a result of a crime.  
"Immediate family member" includes:
  - Regardless of age, your biological, adoptive, or foster child, stepchild, or legal ward, a child of a registered domestic partner, a child to whom you stand in loco parentis, or a person to whom you stood in loco parentis when the person was a minor;
  - Your biological, adoptive, or foster parent, stepparent, or legal guardian or that of your spouse or registered domestic partner, or a person who stood in loco parentis when you or your spouse or registered domestic partner was a minor child;
  - Your legal spouse or registered domestic partner;
  - Your biological, foster, or adoptive sibling, a stepsibling, or half-sibling; or

- Any other individual whose close association with you is the equivalent of a family relationship described in any of the bullets above.

You may request leave for any of the following purposes:

- To seek medical attention for injuries caused by crime or abuse;
- To obtain services from a domestic violence shelter, program, rape crisis center, or victim services organization or agency as a result of the crime or abuse;
- To obtain psychological counseling or mental health services related to experiencing crime or abuse;
- To participate in safety planning and take other actions to increase safety from future crime or abuse, including temporary or permanent relocation.

Please provide reasonable advance notice of the need for leave unless advance notice is not feasible. Contact Executive Director.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will, to the extent allowed by law, maintain the confidentiality of an employee requesting leave under this provision.

The length of unpaid leave an employee may take is limited to 12 weeks provided for in the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for eligible employees.

## **Extended Medical Leave**

On occasion, an employee may need a medical leave of absence that extends beyond limits under any state or federal mandatory leave law. In addition, there may be circumstances when an employee needs a medical leave allowed under disability laws and in accordance with this policy.

In these situations, an extended medical leave of absence may be granted for medical disabilities (other than pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions) with a doctor's written certificate of disability. Extended disability leaves will also be considered on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the District's obligations under federal and state disability laws.

Employees should request any leave in writing and as far in advance as possible.

A medical leave begins on the first day your doctor certifies that you are unable to work and ends when your doctor certifies that you are able to return to work. Your supervisor will provide you with a form for your doctor to complete, showing the date you were disabled and the estimated date you will be able to return to work. When returning from a medical disability leave, you must present a doctor's certificate declaring fitness to return to work.

Upon return from medical leave, you will be offered the same position you held at the time your leave began, if available. If your former position is not available, a comparable position will be offered. If neither the same nor a comparable position is available, your return to work will depend on job openings existing at the time of your scheduled return. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District makes no guarantees of reinstatement, and your return will depend on your qualifications for existing openings. Humboldt County Resource Conservation

District will comply with any reinstatement obligations under state or federal law.

California workers' compensation laws govern work-related injuries and illnesses. California pregnancy disability laws govern leaves taken because of pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions. An employee that needs reasonable accommodations should contact Executive Director and discuss the need for an accommodation.

## **California Family Rights Act (CFRA)**

California's California Family Rights Act (CFRA) provides up to 12 workweeks of unpaid family/medical leave within a 12-month period, under the following conditions:

- You have been employed with the District for a total of at least 12 months prior to the commencement of leave. The 12 months of employment must have accumulated within the previous seven years (certain exceptions apply); and
- You have worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12-month period before the need for leave\*.

\*Special hours of service eligibility requirements apply to airline flight crew employees.

Leave may be taken for one or more of the following reasons:

- Your serious health condition that makes you unable to perform your job;
- To care for your family member who has a serious health condition. For purposes of CFRA leave, a "family member" includes your:
  - Spouse; Parent; Child of any age; Registered domestic partner; Grandparent; Grandchild; Sibling; Parent-in-law; and
  - "Designated person." This is someone else with a blood or family-like relationship with you. You may identify this individual at the time you request leave. You are limited to one designated person per 12-month period for purposes of CFRA leave.
- The birth of your child, or placement of a child with you for adoption or foster care;
- Because of a qualifying exigency related to covered active duty or a call to covered active duty of your spouse, registered domestic partner, child, or parent in the Armed Forces of the United States.

The District's full CFRA policy is available upon request. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility or the terms of this family/medical leave, please contact the Executive Director.

## **Jury Duty and Witness Leave**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District encourages employees to serve on jury duty when called. Nonexempt employees who have completed their introductory period will receive full pay while serving up to 3 days (24 hours) of jury duty. Exempt employees will receive full salary unless they are absent for a full week and perform no work. You should notify your

supervisor of the need for time off for jury duty as soon as a notice or summons from the court is received. You may be requested to provide written verification from the court clerk of performance of jury service. If work time remains after any day of jury selection or jury duty, you will be expected to return to work for the remainder of your work schedule. You may retain any mileage allowance or other fee paid by the court for jury services.

## **Military Leave**

Employees who wish to serve in the military and take military leave should contact Executive Director for information about their rights before and after such leave. You are entitled to reinstatement upon completion of military service, provided you return or apply for reinstatement within the time allowed by law.

## **Personal Leave**

A personal leave of absence without pay may be granted at the discretion of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District. Requests for personal leave should be limited to unusual circumstances requiring an absence of longer than six weeks. Approved personal absences of shorter duration are not normally treated as leaves, but rather as excused absences without pay.

## **Pregnancy Disability Leave**

If you are pregnant, have a related medical condition, or are recovering from childbirth, please review this policy. Any employee planning to take pregnancy disability leave (PDL) should advise the personnel department as early as possible. Please make an appointment with the Executive Director to discuss the following conditions:

- The length of pregnancy disability leave will be determined by the advice of your physician, but employees disabled by pregnancy may take up to four months of leave per pregnancy (the working days you normally would work in one-third of a year or 17 1/3 weeks). Part-time employees are entitled to leave on a pro rata basis. The four months of leave includes any period of time for actual disability caused by your pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition. This includes leave for severe morning sickness and for prenatal care, doctor-ordered bed rest, as well as other reasons. Your healthcare provider determines how much time you need for your disability;
- Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will also reasonably accommodate medical needs related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions or temporarily transfer you to a less strenuous or hazardous position (where one is available) or duties if medically needed because of your pregnancy;
- If you need to take PDL, you must inform Humboldt County Resource Conservation District when a leave is expected to begin and how long it will likely last. If the need for a leave, reasonable accommodation, or transfer is foreseeable (such as the expected birth of a child or a planned medical treatment for yourself), you must provide at least 30 days advance notice before the PDL or transfer is to begin. Consult with the Executive

Director regarding the scheduling of any planned medical treatment or supervision in order to minimize disruption to the operations of the District. Any such scheduling is subject to the approval of your health care provider;

- For emergencies or events that are unforeseeable, we need you to notify the District, at least verbally, as soon as practical after you learn of the need for the leave;
- Failure to comply with these notice requirements may result in delay of PDL, reasonable accommodation, or transfer;
- Pregnancy leave usually begins when ordered by your health care provider. You must provide Humboldt County Resource Conservation District with a written certification from a health care provider for need of PDL, reasonable accommodation or transfer. The certification must be returned no later than 15 calendar days after it is requested by the District. Failure to do so may, in some circumstances, delay PDL, reasonable accommodation or transfer. Please see the personnel department for a medical certification form to give to your health care provider;
- Leave returns will be allowed only when your health care provider sends a release;
- You are allowed to use accrued sick time (if otherwise eligible to take the time) during PDL. You are allowed to use accrued PTO (if otherwise eligible to take the time) during PDL; and
- Leave does not need to be taken in one continuous period of time and may be taken intermittently, as needed. Leave may be taken in increments of 15 minutes.

If intermittent leave or leave on a reduced work schedule is medically advisable you may, in some instances, be required to transfer temporarily to an available alternative position that meets your needs. The alternative position does not need to have equivalent job duties, but must have the equivalent rate of pay and benefits, and you must be qualified for the position. The position must better accommodate your leave requirements than your regular job. Transfer to an alternative position can include altering an existing job to better accommodate your need for intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule.

When your health care provider releases you to return to work, from PDL, you will be reinstated to your same position held at the time the leave began or, in certain instances, to a comparable position, if available. There are limited exceptions to this policy. An employee returning from a pregnancy disability leave has no greater right to reinstatement than if the employee had been continuously employed.

If you are on PDL, you will be allowed to continue to participate in group health insurance coverage for up to a maximum of four months of disability leave (if such insurance was provided before the leave was taken) at the level and under the conditions that coverage would have been provided if you had continued in employment continuously for the duration of the leave. In some instances, the District can recover premiums paid to maintain your health coverage if you fail to return from PDL. PDL may impact other benefits or a seniority date. Please contact the personnel department for more information.

## **School Appearances Involving Suspension**

If you are the parent or guardian of a child facing suspension from school is summoned to the school to discuss the matter, you should alert your supervisor as soon as possible before



leaving work. In agreement with California Labor Code Section 230.7, no discriminatory action will be taken against an employee who takes time off for this purpose.

## **Time Off for Voting**

If you do not have sufficient time outside of working hours to vote in an official statewide election, you may take off enough working time to vote, including up to two hours off without loss of pay. This time should be taken at the beginning or the end of the regular working shift, whichever allows for more free time for voting and the least time off work. If you know or have reason to believe that time off will be necessary to be able to vote on election day, you must give your supervisor at least two working days' notice.

## **Criminal Judicial Proceedings and Victims' Rights Leave**

If you are the victim, or the family member of a victim of certain serious crimes, you may take time off from work to attend judicial proceedings related to the crime or to attend proceedings involving rights of the victim.

If you are the family member of a crime victim, you may be eligible to take this leave if you are the crime victim's spouse, parent, child or sibling. Other family members may also be covered, depending on the purpose of the leave.

The absence from work must be in order to attend judicial proceedings or proceedings involving rights of the victim. Only certain crimes are covered. You must provide reasonable advance notice of your need for leave and documentation related to the proceeding may be required. If advance notice is not possible, you must provide appropriate documentation within a reasonable time after the absence.

Any absences from work to attend judicial proceedings or proceedings involving victim rights are unpaid, unless you choose to use accrued and unused paid time off.

For more information regarding this leave (including whether you are covered, when and what type of documentation is required and which type of paid time off can be used), please contact a District representative with day-to-day personnel responsibilities.

## **Volunteer Civil Service Personnel**

No employee shall be disciplined for taking time off to perform emergency duty as a volunteer firefighter, peace officer, or emergency rescue personnel. Employees who perform emergency duty as a volunteer firefighter, reserve peace officer, or emergency rescue personnel may also take up to a total of fourteen days unpaid leave time per calendar year to engage in required fire, law enforcement or emergency rescue training. Please alert your supervisor that you may have to take time off for emergency duty or emergency duty training. When taking time off for emergency duty, please alert your supervisor before doing so when possible.

# **Benefits**

## **Benefits Overview**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is committed to providing the following benefits for eligible employees. Benefit eligibility may be dependent upon your employee classification (full-time versus part-time, for example) and on length of continuous employment at Humboldt County Resource Conservation District. Benefit eligibility requirements may also be imposed by the plans themselves.

Upon becoming eligible for certain employee benefit plans and annual thereafter during open enrollment, you will receive a Benefits Summary Guide and Benefit Plan descriptions, which describe the benefits in greater detail. For information regarding employee benefits and to answer any questions you may have, contact Executive Director.

The District reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate benefits and to modify or amend benefit eligibility requirements at any time and for any reason, subject to any legal restrictions.

The District offers the following employee benefits:

### **Health Insurance**

The District provides group Medical, Dental, and Vision insurance to full-time employees and their eligible dependents. Eligible employees can join our plans on the first of the month following 30 days of employment. The District's health insurance premium contributions for employees and their dependents are determined annually, and the information is annually distributed to the employees in the Benefit Summary Guide.

Employees may elect health insurance coverage for each calendar year during open enrollment which typically starts in November.

If an employee experiences a qualifying event mid calendar year, such as the birth or adoption of a child, a marriage or divorce, or the loss of other health coverage, they may be able to join the District's plans outside of open enrollment. Ask the Executive Director for details.

### **Retirement Program**

At time of publication, the District was evaluating retirement program options.

## **Lactation Accommodation**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District recognizes lactating employees' rights to request lactation accommodation, and accommodates lactating employees by providing a reasonable amount of break time and a suitable lactation location to any employee who desires to express breast milk for their infant child, subject to any exemption allowed under applicable law.

If possible, the break time should run concurrently with your normally scheduled break time. Any

break time to express breast milk that does not run concurrently with your normally scheduled break time is unpaid.

The lactation location will be private (shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and the public) and located close to your work area. The location will be safe, clean and free of toxic or hazardous materials; have a surface to place a breast pump and other personal items; have a place to sit; and have access to electricity or alternative devices (including, but not limited to extension cords or charging stations) needed to operate an electric or battery-powered breast pump. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will also provide access to a sink with running water and a refrigerator suitable for storing milk in close proximity to your workspace. If a refrigerator cannot be provided, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will provide another cooling device suitable for storing milk, such as an employer-provided cooler. The lactation location will not be a bathroom or restroom. The room or location may include an employee's private office if it otherwise meets the requirements of the lactation space. Multi-purpose rooms may be used as lactation space if they satisfy the requirements for space; however, use of the room for lactation takes priority over other uses for the time it is in use for lactation purposes.

Employees who desire lactation accommodations should contact Executive Director to request accommodations. An employee's request may be provided orally, by email, or in writing, and need not be submitted on a specific form. We will engage in an interactive process with you to determine when and where lactation breaks will occur. If we cannot provide break time or a location that complies with this policy, we will provide a written response to your request.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will not tolerate discrimination or retaliation against employees who exercise their rights to lactation accommodation, including those who request time to express milk at work and/or who lodge a complaint related to the right to lactation accommodation. If you believe you have been denied reasonable break time or adequate space to express milk, or have been otherwise denied your rights related to lactation accommodation, you have the right to file a complaint with the Labor Commissioner.

## **Short Term Disability**

Employees may be eligible to receive State Disability Income (SDI), funded through payroll deductions and coordinated through the Employment Development Department (EDD). It provides partial wage replacement benefits to eligible California workers who are unable to work due to a non-work-related illness, injury, or pregnancy. See [www.edd.ca.gov](http://www.edd.ca.gov) for more details.

## **Paid Family Leave**

Employees may be eligible for Paid Family Leave (PFL) wage replacement benefits, which are funded through payroll deductions and coordinated through the Employment Development Department (EDD). PFL provides partial pay for up to eight weeks when you need to take leave from work to:

- To care for a parent, parent-in-law, child, spouse, registered domestic partner, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling who is seriously ill;
- To bond with your newborn, foster child or newly adopted child: or
- For a qualifying exigency related to the covered active duty or call to covered active duty

of your spouse, registered domestic partner, parent, or child in the Armed Forces of the United States.

The PFL program does not provide employees with a right to a leave of absence; it is limited to a state-mandated wage replacement benefit.

## Workers' Compensation

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, in accordance with state law, provides insurance coverage for employees in case of work-related injury. The workers' compensation benefits provided to injured employees may include:

- Medical care;
- Cash benefits, tax free, to replace lost wages; and
- Assistance to help qualified injured employees return to suitable employment.

To ensure that you receive any workers' compensation benefits to which you may be entitled, you need to **immediately report any work-related injury to your supervisor**. A *Incident Report and Follow Up* form will be completed.

If you wish to seek medical treatment and follow-up care:

- Request a written *Employee's Claim for Workers' Compensation Benefits* (DWC Form 1) and return it to Executive Director; and
- Provide the District with a certification from your health care provider regarding the potential need for workers' compensation disability leave, as well as your eventual ability to return to work from the leave.

Upon submission of a medical certification that an employee is able to return to work after a workers' compensation leave, the employee under most circumstances will be reinstated to their same position held at the time the leave began, or to an equivalent position, if available. An employee returning from a workers' compensation leave has no greater right to reinstatement than if the employee had been continuously employed rather than on leave.

An employee's return depends on their qualifications for any existing openings. If, after returning from a workers' compensation disability leave, an employee is unable to perform the essential functions of their job because of a physical or mental disability, the District's obligations to the employee may include reasonable accommodation, as governed by the Americans with Disabilities Act or the California Fair Employment and Housing Act.

The law requires Humboldt County Resource Conservation District to notify the workers' compensation insurance District of any concerns of false or fraudulent claims.

## COVID-19

COVID-19 may be a work-related injury. If you test positive for COVID-19, please notify the District immediately so we may notify our workers' compensation carrier as required by law.

## **Workers' Compensation and CFRA/FMLA**

Employees who are ill or injured as a result of a work-related incident, and who are eligible for family and medical leave under state and/or federal law California Family Rights Act (CFRA) and/or Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), will be placed on CFRA and/or FMLA during the time they are disabled and not released to return to work. The leave under these laws will generally run concurrently.

## **Paid Sick Leave and Workers' Compensation Benefits**

Paid sick leave is a benefit that also covers absences for work-related illness or injury. Employees who have a work-related illness or injury are covered by workers' compensation insurance. However, workers' compensation benefits usually do not cover absences for medical treatment. When you report a work-related illness or injury, you will be sent for medical treatment, if treatment is necessary. You will be paid your regular wages for the time you spend seeking initial medical treatment.

Any further medical treatment will be under the direction of the health care provider. Any absences from work for follow-up treatment, physical therapy or other prescribed appointments will not be paid as time worked. If you have accrued and unused sick leave, you may choose to substitute paid sick leave for any time that would otherwise be unpaid.

If you have used all of your sick leave, you may choose to substitute PTO for further absences from worked, related to your illness or injury.

# **Management**

## **Employee Property**

An employee's personal property, including but not limited to desks, packages, briefcases, purses, messenger bags, and backpacks, may be inspected upon reasonable suspicion of unauthorized possession of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District property, possession of dangerous weapons or firearms, or abuse of the District's Drug-Free Workplace Policy.

## **Employment of Relatives**

Relatives of employees may be eligible for employment with Humboldt County Resource Conservation District only if individuals involved do not work in a direct supervisory relationship, or in job positions in which there is a conflict of interest. The District defines "relatives" as spouses, registered domestic partners, children, siblings, parents, in-laws, and step-relatives. Present employees who marry or become registered domestic partners will be permitted to continue working in the job position held only if they do not work in a direct supervisory relationship with one another or in job positions involving conflict of interest.

## **Names and Addresses Policy**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is required by law to keep current all employees' names and addresses. You are responsible for notifying the District in the event of a name or address change.

## **Open-Door Policy**

Suggestions for improving Humboldt County Resource Conservation District are always welcome. At some time, you may have a complaint, suggestion, or question about your job, your working conditions, or the treatment you are receiving. Your complaints, questions, and suggestions are important to us.

If you have a complaint, suggestion or question, speak with your immediate supervisors as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable speaking to your immediate supervisor, please bring the issue to the Executive Director. If you have raised the issue and if the problem persists, you may present it to the Chairman of the Board who may attempt to provide a solution or explanation. While a written complaint will assist us with your suggestion or concerns, it is not required that you put your complaint in writing using the District's *Problem Resolution* form.

This procedure, which we believe is important for both you and the District, cannot guarantee that every problem will be resolved to your satisfaction. However, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District values your observations and you should feel free to raise issues of concern without the fear of retaliation.

## Performance Evaluations

Each employee will receive performance reviews conducted by their supervisor. The frequency of performance evaluations may vary depending upon length of service, job position, past performance, changes in job duties, or recurring performance issues. However, the following evaluations are typical:

**Introductory Check-In** Your first performance evaluation will take place at the end of your Introductory Period (after 90 days of employment).

**Annual Evaluation.** These evaluations are typically initiated in May and completed in June, to align with the District's fiscal calendar year which is July – June.

Performance evaluations may review factors such as the quality and quantity of the work you perform, your knowledge of the job, your initiative, your work attitude, and your attitude toward others. The performance evaluations are intended to make you aware of your progress, areas for improvement, and objectives or goals for future work performance.

Favorable performance evaluations do not guarantee increases in salary or promotions. Salary increases and promotions are solely within the discretion of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District and depend upon many factors in addition to performance. After annual review, you will be required to sign the document simply to acknowledge that it has been presented to you, that you have discussed it with your supervisor, and that you are aware of its contents.

## Personnel Records

You have a right to inspect or receive a copy of the personnel records that Humboldt County Resource Conservation District maintains relating to your performance or to any grievance concerning you. Certain documents may be excluded or redacted from your personnel file by law, and there are legal limitations on the number of requests that can be made.

Any request to inspect or copy personnel records must be made in writing to the Executive Director. You may use the District's *Personnel Records Request Form*.

You may designate a representative to conduct the inspection of the records or receive a copy of the records. However, any designated representative must be authorized by you in writing to inspect or receive a copy of the records. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District may take reasonable steps to verify the identity of any representative you have designated in writing to inspect or receive a copy of your personnel records.

The personnel records may be made available to you either at the place where you work or at a mutually agreeable location (with no loss of compensation for going to that location to inspect or copy the records). The records will be made available no later than 30 calendar days from the date Humboldt County Resource Conservation District receives your written request to inspect or copy your personnel records (unless you/your representative and Humboldt County Resource Conservation District mutually agree in writing to a date beyond 30 calendar days but no later than 35 calendar days from receipt of the written request).

If you request a copy of the contents of your file, you will be charged the actual cost of copying.

Disclosure of personnel information to outside sources, other than your designated representative, will be limited. However, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will cooperate with request from authorized law enforcement or local, state, or federal agencies conducting official investigations and as otherwise legally required.

## Telecommuting

Working remotely, also referred to as "telecommuting," provides employees with an opportunity to work from an alternative work environment on a routine basis rather than the physical location of the District. Telecommuting must be pre-approved by your supervisor and cannot be initiated without a *Telecommuting Agreement*.

Working remotely periodically, for a few hours here or there to accommodate a family matter or appointment, does not require a *Telecommuting Agreement*, but it is your responsibility to ensure your supervisor always knows how to reach you.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District retains the right in its sole discretion to designate positions that are appropriate for remote work and approve employees for working remotely.

Working remotely does not change the conditions of employment or required compliance with all District policies and procedures. **The District reserves the right to change or terminate the *Telecommuting Agreement* at any time, without cause or advance notice. Your ability to work under a telecommuting agreement rests in the sole discretion of the District.**

Working remotely needs to benefit both the employee and the District. It may not be appropriate for all employees. If you wish to request to work remotely, please contact your supervisor and ask for a *Telecommuting Request* form.

### Work Schedule

Unless otherwise agreed in the *Telecommuting Agreement*, your hours and days of work will not change. Employees must apply themselves during work hours and remain available for remote team meetings or conferences as needed.

Nonexempt employees must not work outside of scheduled hours without advance approval; this includes such activities as checking and responding to emails. Any work outside of a scheduled shift must be reported to a supervisor. Generally speaking, working remotely is not intended as a substitute for childcare or to care for another adult. If you need to make special arrangements or changes to your work schedule due to the need to care for a child or another adult, please contact your supervisor.

### Work Standards and Performance



As a telecommuting employee, you must remain accessible during your telecommute schedule.

It is critical that telecommuting employees comply with all District rules, policies, practices and instructions that would apply if they were working at the District's physical work location(s), including but not limited to, policies governing telecommuting/remote work, use of technology, confidentiality, harassment and discrimination, and workplace safety.

Your *Telecommuting Agreement* will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that your work quality, efficiency and productivity are not compromised by the telecommuting arrangements.

### **Equipment and Information Security**

Your *Telecommuting Agreement* will specify the equipment provided to you for purposes of telecommuting.

As a telecommuting employee, you will be subject to the following requirements:

- Your equipment must not be used by anyone other than yourself, and only for business-related work.
- You are responsible for immediately reporting any problems with District equipment.
- You must protect District-owned equipment, records and materials from unauthorized or accidental access, use, modification, destruction, disclosure or theft. You must follow all policies, practices and instructions regarding the safety and security of any confidential and/or proprietary information.
- You must report to your supervisor any incidents of loss, damage or unauthorized access at your earliest reasonable opportunity.
- All equipment, records and materials provided by the District will remain property of the District.
- At the termination of the *Telecommuting Agreement*, or upon the District's request, you agree to immediately return any and/or all District equipment.

### **Telecommuting Safety**

Telecommuting employees are solely responsible for ensuring the safety of their alternative work environment. Telecommuting employees should ensure their workspace is safe and free from hazards and provides adequate protection and security of District property. Telecommuting employees who need assistance in maintaining a safe workspace should contact Executive Director.

Telecommuting employees are protected by the District's workers' compensation insurance. As such, telecommuting employees are required to immediately report any injuries that occur while working.

A telecommuting employee is liable for any injuries that occur to third parties at or around the telecommuting employee's alternative work environment.

Telecommuting employees must maintain a safe, secure and ergonomic work environment;

comply with all applicable workplace safety rules, policies and instructions; and report work-related injuries to the District immediately. Please let Executive Director know if you require specific equipment. Telecommuting employees should also complete the District's *Telecommuting Safety Checklist* to certify the work area is safe in accordance with all workplace safety rules and policies.

### **Telecommuting Agreement and Plan**

All telecommuting employees are required to sign a *Telecommuting Agreement* with their supervisor that outlines the telecommuting employee's workdays and work hours (as applicable); equipment the telecommuting employee will need; how the telecommuting employee will communicate with the District; use of support or secretarial staff; and other appropriate information. Your *Telecommuting Agreement* will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that your work quality, efficiency and productivity are not compromised by the telecommuting arrangements.

**The District may, at its sole discretion, change any of the conditions under which the employee is permitted to telecommute under the *Telecommuting Agreement* at any time, and may require the employee to report to the employee's physical workplace at any time and for any reason.**

### **Expense Reimbursement**

The District will cover all necessary expenditures related to telecommuting, which will be specified in the *Telecommuting Agreement*. Employees should submit any expense reimbursement requests in accordance with the District's policy and practice.

# **District Property**

## **Electronics and Social Media**

This policy is intended to protect the District's computer systems and electronic information. For purposes of these policies, the following definitions apply: "Computers" are defined as desktop computers, laptops, handheld devices (including but not limited to iPhones, smart phones, iPads, and other electronic tablets and cell phones), computer software/hardware and servers.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District also uses various forms of "electronic communication." "Electronic communications" includes e-mail, text messages, telephones, cell phones and other handheld devices (such as cell phones, smart phones, writing tablets or iPads), fax machines, and online services including the Internet.

"Electronic information" is any information created by an employee using computers or any means of electronic communication, including but not limited to, data, messages, multimedia data, and files.

The following general policies apply:

- Computers and all data transmitted through Humboldt County Resource Conservation District servers are District property owned by the District for the purpose of conducting District business. These items must be maintained according to Humboldt County Resource Conservation District rules and regulations. Computers must be kept clean and employees must exercise care to prevent loss and damage. Prior authorization must be obtained before any District property may be removed from the premises.
- All electronic communications also remain the sole property of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District and are to be used for District business. For example, email messages are considered District records.
- Electronic information created by an employee using any computer or any means of electronic communication is also the property of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District and remains the property of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District.
- Information stored in Humboldt County Resource Conservation District computers and file servers, including without limitation is the property of the District and may not be distributed outside the District in any form whatsoever without the written permission of the Executive Director.
- Violation of any of the provisions of this policy, whether intentional or not, will subject Humboldt County Resource Conservation District employees to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Monitoring of District Property**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right to inspect all District property to ensure compliance with its rules and regulations, without notice to the employee and at any time, not necessarily in the employee's presence. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District computers and all electronic communications and electronic information

are subject to monitoring and no one should expect privacy regarding such use. The District reserves the right to access, review and monitor electronic files, information, messages, text messages, e-mail, Internet history, browser-based webmail systems and other digital archives and to access, review and monitor the use of computers, software, and electronic communications to ensure that no misuse or violation of District policy or any law occurs. E-mail may be monitored by the District and there is no expectation of privacy. Assume that e-mail may be accessed, forwarded, read or heard by someone other than the intended recipient, even if marked as "private."

Employee passwords may be used for purposes of security but the use of a password does not affect the District's ownership of the electronic information or ability to monitor the information. The District may override an employee's password for any reason.

Employees are not permitted to access the electronic communications of other employees or third parties unless directed to do so by Humboldt County Resource Conservation District management.

### **Prohibited Use**

All existing District policies apply to employee use of computers, electronic communications, electronic information, and the Internet. This includes policies that deal with misuse of District assets or resources. It is a violation of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District policy to use computers, electronic communications, electronic information, or the Internet, in a manner that: is discriminatory harassing or obscene; constitutes copyright or trademark infringement; violates software licensing rules; is illegal; or is against Humboldt County Resource Conservation District policy. It is also a violation of policy to use computers, electronic communications, electronic information, or the Internet to communicate confidential or sensitive information or trade secrets.

The display of any kind of sexually explicit multimedia content, message, or document on any District computer is a violation of the District's policy against sexual harassment. This description of prohibited usage is not exhaustive and it is within the discretion of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District to determine if there has been a violation of this policy. Employees that engage in prohibited use will be subject to discipline and/or immediate termination.

This policy is not intended to limit the ability of employees to discuss with other employees the terms and conditions of their employment, including such topics as wages, job performance, workload, supervisors, or staffing.

### **Computer and Internet Use**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District provides computers, electronic communications, electronic information, and information technology resources, including the Internet, to its employees to help them do their job. Generally, these District resources should be used for business related purposes. However, the District recognizes that occasional personal use of these District resources and property may occur during working time. The District allows such occasional personal use as long as the usage does not interfere with the employee's work performance, take away from work time, consume supplies, slow other users,

slow the servers or computer systems, or tie up printers or other shared resources, or violate any District policy, including policies against harassment, discrimination and disclosure of confidential or trade secret information.

This policy is not intended to limit the ability of employees to use District email systems to communicate with other employees regarding the terms and conditions of their employment, including such topics as wages, job performance, workload, supervisors or staffing.

All policies relating to monitoring usage of District property apply. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right to adjust this policy on a case by case basis as it deems appropriate.

## **Social Media**

Social media is a set of Internet tools that aid in the facilitation of interaction between people online. If you have specific questions about which programs the District deems to be social media, consult with the Executive Director. The District recognizes that occasional personal use of social media using District resources may occur during working hours. The District allows such occasional personal use as long as the usage does not interfere with the employee's work performance, take away from work time, consume supplies, slow other users, slow the servers or computer systems, or tie up printers or other shared resources, or violate any District policy, including policies against harassment, discrimination and disclosure of confidential or trade secret information. All policies relating to monitoring usage of District property apply. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right to adjust this policy on a case by case basis as it deems appropriate.

Employees can use their own personal devices to engage in social media during breaks and meal periods; however, all other District policies against inappropriate usage, including the District's no tolerance for discrimination, harassment or retaliation in the workplace, and protection of confidential or trade secret information, apply.

Nothing in the District's social media policy is designed to interfere with, restrain or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours or other terms and conditions of employment.

## **Employee-owned Devices**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District recognizes that occasional use of the employee's own computers (including handheld devices) and electronic communications may occur during working time. The District allows such occasional personal use as long as the usage does not interfere with the employee's work performance, take away from work time or violate any District policy. All other District policies, including the District's no tolerance for discrimination, harassment or retaliation in the workplace apply. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right to adjust this policy on a case by case basis as it deems appropriate.

## **Employer Property**

Furniture, desks, computers, cell phones, data processing equipment/software, vehicles, field gear and boats are Humboldt County Resource Conservation District property and must be maintained according to District rules and regulations. They must be kept clean and are to be used only for work-related purposes. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right to inspect all District property including computer or phone data or messages to ensure compliance with its rules and regulations, without notice to the employee and at any time, not necessarily in the employee's presence. Prior authorization must be obtained before any District property may be removed from the premises.

District voice mail and/or electronic mail (e-mail) including texting, pagers and mobile email are to be used for business purposes. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right to monitor voice mail messages, and e-mail messages, and texts to ensure compliance with this rule, without notice to the employee and at any time, not necessarily in the employee's presence.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District may periodically need to assign and/or change "passwords" and personal codes for email, voice mail, cell phones, computers, applicable software. These communication technologies and related storage media and databases are to be used only for District business and they remain the property of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right to keep a record of all passwords and codes used and/or may be able to override any such password system. Messages on the District voice-mail and email systems are subject to the same District policies against discrimination and harassment as are any workplace communications. Offensive, harassing or discriminatory content in such messages will not be tolerated.

For security reasons, employees should not leave personal belongings of value in the workplace. Terminated employees should remove any personal items at the time they leave Humboldt County Resource Conservation District. Personal items left in the workplace are subject to disposal if not claimed at the time of an employee's termination.

## Visitors

**Guests, Friends and Family:** Visits from guests, friends and family should be kept to a minimum, in order to preserve an appropriate work environment. Prior notice for these types of visitors is not necessary.

**Children:** Occasions in which children must be in the office for an extended length of time should be kept to a minimum. The District may not be used as a substitute for regular childcare of employees' children. When children are present, they should not be allowed to disrupt others in the office.

Your child is your responsibility and must be under your direct supervision at all times. If a child is ill, you must present a doctor's note to your immediate supervisor indicating the child is not contagious. Under no circumstances may children provide work for the District, unless the child is hired as an employee pursuant to District policies.

**Pets:** If you need to bring a pet to work and prior notice is possible, make a request in writing to the Executive Director including why they need to be in the office and details regarding their

length of stay(s) and how you will ensure they do not disrupt your co-workers.

The District reserves its right in its sole discretion to deny such a request for reasons including but not limited to, the requested guest or visitor has been disruptive in the past, there is a special event scheduled on the date(s) requested, or the work environment is not appropriate for the visitor or guest due to safety or other reasons.

## **Housekeeping**

All employees are expected to keep their work areas clean and organized. People using common areas such as lunchrooms, meeting rooms and restrooms are expected to keep them sanitary. Please clean up after meals and dispose of trash properly.

## **Off-Duty Use of Facilities**

Employees are prohibited from remaining on Humboldt County Resource Conservation District premises or making use of District facilities while not on duty. Employees are expressly prohibited from using District facilities, District property, or District equipment for personal use. This policy is not intended to limit the ability of employees to use the District's email systems to communicate with other employees regarding the terms and conditions of their employment during non-working times, including such topics as wages, job performance, workload, supervisors or staffing.

## **Parking**

Employees may park their vehicles in designated areas, if space permits. If space is unavailable, employees must park in permissible public areas in the vicinity of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District offices. Employees may not use parking areas specifically designated for customers, vendors, District vehicles, or otherwise reserved. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is not responsible for any loss or damage to employee vehicles or contents while parked on District premises.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited at this workplace. The smoking prohibition applies to all smoking devices, including, but not limited to, the use of electronic smoking devices, such as electronic cigarettes, pipes, hookahs, and vaping devices.

# **Employee Conduct**

## **Business Conduct and Ethics**

You may not accept a gift or gratuity from any customer, vendor, supplier, or other person doing business with Humboldt County Resource Conservation District because doing so may give the appearance of influencing business decisions, transactions or service. Please discuss expenses paid by such persons for business meals or trips with the District in advance.

## **Conducting Personal Business**

Employees are to conduct only Humboldt County Resource Conservation District business while at work. Employees may not conduct personal business or business for another employer during their scheduled working hours.

## **Confidential Information**

**Each employee is responsible for safeguarding the confidential information obtained during employment.**

In the course of your work, you may have access to confidential information regarding Humboldt County Resource Conservation District's business such as personnel, client or financial data. You have a responsibility to prevent revealing or divulging any such information unless it is necessary for you to do so in the performance of your duties or as required by law.

Access to, or disclosure of, confidential information should be on a "need-to-know" basis and must be authorized by your supervisor. Any breach of this policy will not be tolerated and legal action may be taken by the District.

This policy does not prohibit employees from confidentially disclosing trade secret, proprietary or confidential information to federal, state and local government officials, or to an attorney, when done to report or investigate a suspected violation of the law. Employees may also disclose the information in certain court proceedings if specific procedures to protect the information are followed. Nothing in this policy is intended to conflict with 18 U.S.C. sec. 1833(b) or create liability for disclosures of trade secrets that are expressly allowed by 18 U.S.C. sec. 1833(b).

Nothing in this policy prevents you from discussing or disclosing information about unlawful acts in the workplace, such as harassment or discrimination or any other conduct that you have reason to believe is unlawful.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

All employees must avoid situations involving actual conflict of interest. Personal or romantic involvement with a competitor, vendor, or subordinate employee of Humboldt County Resource



Conservation District, which impairs an employee's ability to exercise good judgment on behalf of the District, can create an actual conflict of interest. Supervisor-subordinate romantic or personal relationships also can lead to supervisory problems, possible claims of sexual harassment, and morale problems.

An employee involved in any of the types of relationships or situations described in this policy should immediately and fully disclose the relevant circumstances to their immediate supervisor, or any other appropriate supervisor, for a determination about whether an actual conflict exists. If an actual conflict is determined, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District may take whatever corrective action appears appropriate according to the circumstances. Failure to disclose facts may constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

## **Public Relations**

The District, as a public agency, serves the public. Employees are expected to be polite, courteous, prompt, and attentive to every member of the public. When an employee encounters an uncomfortable situation that they do not feel capable of handling, the Executive Director or direct supervisor should be called immediately.

A member of the public may request information concerning the District's business. Employees should direct all requests for information to the Executive Director to determine the appropriate course of action in alignment with the California Public Records Act.

## **Dress Codes and Other Personal Standards**

Employees are expected to wear clothing appropriate for the nature of our business and the type of work performed and to avoid clothing that can create a safety hazard.

Because each employee is a representative of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District in the eyes of the public, each employee must report to work wearing appropriate clothing. All clothing should be clean and without rips or holes. Employees who report to work inappropriately dressed may be asked to leave and return in acceptable attire. The Executive Director of the District may issue more specific guidelines.

This dress code policy will not be enforced in a manner that discriminates against anyone based on a protected class, such as race, sex, gender identity or gender expression, religion, national origin or any other class protected by federal, state or local law. For more information, see the *Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention* policy. Employees who need a reasonable accommodation because of religious beliefs, observances or practices should contact a District representative with day-to-day personnel responsibility and discuss the need for accommodation.

## **Drug-Free Workplace Policy**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is concerned about the use of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs or controlled substances as it affects the workplace. Use of these substances, whether on or off the job can detract from an employee's work performance,

efficiency, safety, and health, and seriously impair District operations. In addition, the manufacture, use, possession, or distribution of these substances on the job constitutes a potential danger to the welfare and safety of other employees and exposes the District to the risks of property loss or damage, or injury to other persons.

The following rules and standards of conduct apply to all employees while on District property, at work, or working on District business. The following are strictly prohibited by the District's Drug-Free Workplace policy:

- Being under the influence of, or impaired by, an illegal or controlled substance, alcohol or marijuana while on the job.
- Using or possessing illegal or controlled substances, alcohol or marijuana while on the job (including the illegal use of prescription drugs and possessing drug paraphernalia)
- Distributing, selling, or purchasing of an illegal or controlled substance, alcohol or marijuana while on the job.

Violation of these rules and standards of conduct will not be tolerated and will include disciplinary action up to and including termination. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District also may bring the matter to the attention of appropriate law enforcement authorities.

In order to enforce this policy, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right to conduct searches of District property or employees and/or their personal property, and to implement other measures necessary to deter and detect abuse of this policy.

An employee's conviction on a charge of illegal sale or possession of any controlled substance while off District property will not be tolerated because such conduct, even though off duty, reflects adversely on Humboldt County Resource Conservation District and impacts the District's federal contracts and grants. Employees must notify the District within five calendar days if he or she is convicted of a criminal drug violation.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will encourage and reasonably accommodate employees with alcohol, marijuana or drug dependencies to seek treatment and/or rehabilitation. Employees desiring such assistance should request a treatment or rehabilitation leave. The District is not obligated, however, to continue to employ any person whose performance of essential job duties is impaired because of drug, alcohol or marijuana use. Additionally, employees who are given the opportunity to seek treatment and/or rehabilitation, but fail to successfully overcome their dependency or problem, will not automatically be reemployed or be given a second opportunity to seek treatment and/or rehabilitation. This policy on treatment and rehabilitation is not intended to affect the District's treatment of employees who violate the regulations described previously. Rather, rehabilitation is an option for an employee who acknowledges a chemical dependency and voluntarily seeks treatment to end that dependency.

## **News Media Contacts**

Employees may be approached for interviews or comments by the news media. Only contact people designated by the Executive Director may comment to news reporters on Humboldt County Resource Conservation District policy or events relevant to Humboldt County Resource

Conservation District. This policy does not limit your right to discuss the terms and conditions of his or her employment, or to try and improve these conditions.

## **Off-Duty Conduct**

While Humboldt County Resource Conservation District does not seek to interfere with the off-duty and personal conduct of its employees, certain types of off-duty conduct may interfere with the District's legitimate business interests.

Off-duty conduct by an employee that directly conflicts with the District's essential business interests and disrupts business operations will not be tolerated.

## **Other Employment**

While employed by Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, employees are expected to devote their energies to their jobs with the District. Employment that directly conflicts with the District's essential business interests and disrupts business operations is strictly prohibited.

If you wish to engage in additional employment that may create a real conflict of interest, you must submit a written request to Humboldt County Resource Conservation District explaining the details of the additional employment. If the additional employment is authorized, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District assumes no responsibility for it. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District shall not provide workers' compensation coverage or any other benefit for injuries occurring from or arising out of additional employment. Authorization to engage in additional employment can be revoked at any time.

## **Political Activity**

Many employees participate in political activities on their own time. District time, facilities, property or equipment (including all computers, networks, and electronic equipment) must not be used for your outside political activities. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will not reimburse any employee for political contributions, and you should not attempt to receive or facilitate such reimbursements.

Absent a formal statement by Humboldt County Resource Conservation District announcing any political endorsements, you must not, through your own actions, speech, contributions, or written communication, mislead others to believe that Humboldt County Resource Conservation District officially endorses or opposes any candidates for political office that Humboldt County Resource Conservation District itself has not publicly announced. District employees are entitled to their own personal position. The District will not discriminate against employees based on their lawful political activity engaged in outside of work.

## **Prohibited Conduct**

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner to further the District's objectives.

The following conduct is prohibited and will not be tolerated by Humboldt County Resource Conservation District. This list of prohibited conduct is illustrative only; other types of conduct that threaten security, personal safety, employee welfare and District operations also may be prohibited and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

- Failing to promptly report work-related injury or illness;
- Falsifying employment records, employment information, or other District records;
- Inefficient or careless performance of job responsibilities or inability to perform job duties satisfactorily;
- Recording the work time of another employee or allowing any other employee to record your work time, or falsifying any time card, either your own or another employee's;
- Theft and deliberate or careless damage or destruction of any District property, or the property of any employee or customer;
- Removing or borrowing District property without prior authorization;
- Unauthorized use or misuse of District equipment, time, materials, or facilities;
- Provoking a fight or fighting during working hours or on District property;
- Participating in horseplay or practical jokes on District time or on District premises;
- Carrying firearms or any other dangerous weapons on District premises at any time;
- Causing, creating or participating in a disruption of any kind during working hours on District property;
- Insubordination, including but not limited to failure or refusal to obey the orders or instructions of a supervisor or member of management, or the use of abusive or threatening language toward a supervisor or member of management;
- Using abusive, threatening or intimidating language at any time on District premises;
- Violation of District punctuality and attendance policies. Absences protected by state or federal law do not count as violations of this policy. Protected paid sick time under California law does not count as a violation of this policy;
- Failing to obtain permission to leave work for any reason during normal working hours, not including meal periods;
- Failing to observe working schedules, including rest and meal periods;
- Sleeping or malingering on the job;
- Making or accepting personal telephone calls, including cell phone calls, of more than three minutes in duration during working hours, except in cases of emergency or extreme circumstances;
- Working overtime without authorization or refusing to work assigned overtime;
- Violation of dress standards;
- Violation of any safety, health, security or District policy, rule or procedure;
- Violation of the District's Drug-Free Workplace policy;
- Committing a fraudulent act or a breach of trust under any circumstances; and
- Violating the District's anti-harassment or equal employment opportunity policies.

This statement of prohibited conduct does not alter the District's policy of at-will employment. Either you or Humboldt County Resource Conservation District remain free to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason or advance notice.

## **Prohibited Use of District Cell Phone While Driving**

In the interest of the safety of our employees and other drivers and pedestrians on the road, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District employees are prohibited from using cell phones (including all smart phones) or other wireless communication devices (including laptops and tablets) while driving on District business and/or District time. This prohibition includes any use of the cell phone or other wireless communications device, such as answering or placing calls, engaging in conversations, texting, Web browsing or using any smart phone application while driving.

If your job requires that you keep your cell phone or other wireless communication device turned on while you are driving, you must use a hands-free, voice-operated device at all times. Under no circumstances should employees place phone calls while operating a motor vehicle while driving on District business and/or District time. Violating this policy is a violation of law and a violation of District rules.

## **Punctuality and Attendance**

As an employee of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, you are expected to be punctual and regular in attendance. Tardiness or absences can cause problems for your co-workers and your supervisor. When you are absent, your assigned work must be performed by others.

You are expected to report to work as scheduled, on time, and prepared to start work. Employees also are expected to remain at work for their entire work schedule, except for meal periods, rest periods or when required to leave on authorized District business. Late arrivals, early departures or other unanticipated and unapproved absences from scheduled hours are disruptive and must be avoided.

If you are unable to report for work on any particular day, you must provide reasonable advance notice to your supervisor by phone before the time you are scheduled to begin working for that day. You must inform your supervisor of the expected duration of any absence. If the circumstances for your tardiness or absence were unforeseen, inform your supervisor as soon as practical of the reason for the tardiness or absence. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness, providing false information or abuse of leave laws will not be tolerated.

### **Job Abandonment**

Generally, if you fail to report for work without any notification to your supervisor and your absence continues for a period of three days, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will consider that you have voluntarily abandoned or quit your employment.

Absences protected by local, state and federal law do not count as a violation of the punctuality and attendance policy. Paid sick time protected under California law does not count as a violation of this policy.

# **Wages**

## **Advances**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District does not permit advances against paychecks.

## **Alternate Workweek**

Alternative workweek scheduling allows nonexempt employees to work more than eight hours per day without requiring the payment of daily overtime. While setting up an alternative workweek schedule can be complicated, the District recognizes that the nature of the work at the District may be conducive to implementing such a schedule. Accordingly, the District is amenable to affording all District employees the opportunity to request the Executive Director consider implementing an alternative workweek schedule according to the procedural and disclosure requirements as set forth in law.

Employees should recognize that alternative workweek scheduling eliminates most aspects of scheduling flexibility as all employees utilizing the alternative workweek must follow a regular work schedule and any hours worked outside that regularly scheduled workweek are considered overtime and subject to advance written approval by the employee's immediate supervisor or the Executive Director of the District.

In the event the District implements an alternative workweek schedule for nonexempt employees, the following information will be detailed and included in an addendum to this handbook, incorporated by reference:

- Employee classifications subject to the alternate workweek schedule;
- Any accommodation for employees who cannot or will not work the alternate work week;
- Any alterations to the schedule because of holidays, vacations, or other circumstances;
- The rate at which overtime will be paid; and
- The alternate workweek schedule(s), including:
  - Hours per day (limited to no more than 10 hours per day, unless overtime is paid);
  - Number of days to be worked and/or specific days to be worked;
  - Presentation of a single or menu of schedules;
  - Meal and break periods; and
  - Time the shift begins and ends.

## **Reporting-Time Pay**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will comply with all applicable regulations regarding reporting-time pay for nonexempt employees.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will pay a minimum of two hours of pay to employees who are required to report to work on a day other than their normally scheduled workday.

If an employee reports to work as scheduled but is unable to work because no work assignments are available, or other circumstances under your District's control prevent the employee from working, the employee must be paid for at least half of the scheduled hours with a minimum of two hour and a maximum of four hours pay required.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will not pay employees for reporting under the following circumstances:

- Interruption of work because of the failure of any or all public utilities;
- Operations cannot begin due to threats to employees or the District's property, or when recommended by civil authorities; or
- Interruption of work because of natural causes or other circumstances beyond the District's power to control.

Reporting time pay does not apply to employees on paid standby status, who are called to work at times other than their usual shift.

## Expense Reimbursements

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reimburses employees for business expenses on the 2nd Thursday of the month (Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors) of each month. Employees who have credit cards or who have incurred business expenses must submit required receipts and the Office Manager no later than the 1st Thursday of the month for the previous month's expenses of each month. If you have any questions about the District's expense reimbursement policy, contact Executive Director.

Personal travel may be combined with business travel provided there is no additional cost to Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, and it meets with the approval of Executive Director. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District credit cards are not to be used for personal expenses.

## Makeup Time

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District allows the use of makeup time when nonexempt employees need time off to tend to personal obligations. Makeup time worked will not be paid at an overtime rate. Employees may take time off and then make up the time later in the same workweek or may work extra hours earlier in the workweek to make up for time that will be taken off later in the workweek.

**A makeup time request must be submitted to your supervisor in writing and approved in writing before you take the requested time off or work makeup time, whichever is first.**

Requests will be considered for approval based on the legitimate business needs of the District at the time the request is submitted. A separate written request is required for each occasion the employee requests makeup time.

If you request time off that you will make up later in the week, you must submit your request at

least 24 hours in advance of the desired time off. If you request to work makeup time first in order to take time off later in the week, you must submit your request at least 24 hours before working the makeup time.

All makeup time must be worked in the same workweek as the time taken off. The District's seven-day workweek is Sunday through Saturday. Employees may not work more than 11 hours in a day or 40 hours in a workweek as a result of making up time that was or would be lost due to a personal obligation.

If you take time off and are unable to work the scheduled makeup time for any reason, the hours missed will normally be unpaid. However, your supervisor may arrange with you another day to make up the time if possible, based on scheduling needs. If you work makeup time in advance of time you plan to take off, you must take that time off, even if you no longer need the time off for any reason.

An employee's use of makeup time is completely voluntary. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District does not encourage, discourage, or solicit the use of makeup time.

## **Meal and Rest Periods**

### **Rest Breaks**

All nonexempt employees are entitled to uninterrupted rest break periods during their workday. If you are a nonexempt employee, you will be paid for all such break periods.

You will be authorized and permitted one (1) 10-minute net rest break for every four (4) hours you work (or major fraction thereof, which is defined as any amount of time over two [2] hours). A rest break need not be authorized for employees whose total daily work time is less than three and one half (3.5) hours.

You will be relieved of all duty during your rest break periods.

If you work a shift from three and one-half (3.5) to six (6) hours in length you will be entitled to one (1) ten-minute rest break. If you work more than six (6) hours and up to 10 hours, you will be entitled to two (2) ten-minute rest breaks. If you work more than 10 hours and up to 14 hours, you will be entitled to three (3) ten-minute rest breaks.

You are authorized and permitted to take a rest break in the middle of each four (4) hour work period.

### **Meal Period**

All nonexempt employees will be provided an uninterrupted unpaid meal period of at least 30 minutes if you work more than five (5) hours in a workday. You must clock out for your meal period. You will be permitted a reasonable opportunity to take this meal period, and you will be relieved of all duty. During your meal period, you are free to come and go as you please and are



free to leave the premises. You are expected to return to work promptly at the end of any meal period.

If your total work period for the day is more than five hours per day but no more than six hours, you may waive the meal period. This cannot be done without the mutual consent of you and your supervisor. You must discuss any such waiver with your supervisor in advance.

The waiver must be in writing, using the District's *Meal Waiver Form*.

**Timing of Meal Period** Your meal period will be provided no later than the end of your fifth hour of work. For example, if you begin work at 8:00 a.m., you must start your meal period by 12:59 p.m. (which is before the end of your fifth hour of work).

**Recording Your Meal Period** You must record the start and end of each meal period. Employees are not allowed to work "off the clock." All work time must be accurately reported on your timesheet.

**On-Duty Meal Agreement** An on-duty meal break is permitted only when the nature of the work prevents a nonexempt employee from being relieved of all duty and must be agreed to in writing by you and your supervisor using the District's *On-Duty Meal Agreement Form*. The *On-Duty Meal Agreement* can be revoked at any time in writing by the employee. Employees electing to take an on-duty meal period will be compensated at their normal rate of pay. On days when the employee is working more than 6 hours and the nature of the work does not prevent the employee from doing so, the employee will clock out for an off-duty meal period of not less than 30 minutes.

If for any reason you are not provided a meal period in accordance with our policy, or if you are in any way discouraged or impeded from taking your meal period or from taking the full amount of time allotted to you, please immediately notify Executive Director. Please also refer to the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District *Timekeeping Requirements Policy*.

## Overtime for Nonexempt Employees

Employees may be required to work overtime as necessary. Only actual hours worked in a given workday or workweek can apply in calculating overtime. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will attempt to distribute overtime evenly and accommodate individual schedules. All overtime work must be previously authorized by a supervisor. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District provides compensation for all overtime hours worked by nonexempt employees in accordance with state and federal law as follows:

- All hours worked in excess of eight hours in one workday or 40 hours in one workweek will be treated as overtime. A workday begins at 12:01 a.m. and ends at midnight 24 hours later. Workweeks begin each Sunday at 12:01 a.m.;
- Compensation for hours in excess of 40 for the workweek, or in excess of eight and not more than 12 for the workday, and for the first eight hours on the seventh consecutive day of work in one workweek, shall be paid at a rate one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay;
- Compensation for hours in excess of 12 in one workday and in excess of eight on the

seventh consecutive workday in a workweek shall be paid at double the regular rate of pay; and

- Exempt employees may have to work hours beyond their normal schedules as work demands require. No overtime compensation will be paid to exempt employees.

## Pay for Mandatory Meetings/Training

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will pay nonexempt employees for their attendance at meetings, lectures, and training programs under the following conditions:

- Attendance is mandatory;
- The meeting, course, or lecture is directly related to the employee's job;
- The employee who is required to attend such meetings, lectures, or training programs will be notified of the necessity for such attendance by their supervisor; and
- Any hours in excess of eight in a day or 40 in a week will be paid at the appropriate overtime rate, at the hourly rate in effect at the time the overtime work is being performed.

## Payment of Wages

Paychecks are normally available at the 5630 South Broadway, Eureka, CA 95503 office. If you observe an error on your check, please report it immediately to the Executive Director

Paydays are scheduled as follows:

Pay Period	Pay Date
1 <sup>st</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> of the month	20 <sup>th</sup> *
16 <sup>th</sup> through end of month	5 <sup>th</sup> *

\*If a regular payday falls on a weekend or holiday, you will be paid on following business day.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District offers automatic payroll deposit. You may begin and stop automatic payroll deposit at any time. To begin automatic payroll deposit, you must complete a form (available from the payroll department) and return it to payroll at least 10 days before the pay period for which you would like the service to begin. You should carefully monitor your payroll deposit statements for the first two pay periods after the service begins.

To stop automatic payroll deposit, you must request this in writing by notifying the Executive Director at least 10 days before the pay period for which you would like the service to end. You will receive a regular payroll check on the first pay period after the receipt of the form, provided it is received no later than 10 days before the end of the pay period.

## Timekeeping Requirements

All nonexempt employees are required to use a time sheet to record time worked for payroll purposes. All time worked must be accurately reported on your time record.

You must record your own time at the start and at the end of each work period. You must record the start and end of the meal period.

You are not allowed to work "off the clock." Not reporting time worked violates District policy. Please report all time worked on your timecard. If you have any questions about this, direct them to your supervisor.

You will be required to certify that your time record is accurate. Any errors on your timecard should be reported immediately to your supervisor.

Any handwritten marks or changes on the timecard must be initialed by a supervisor. Manipulating another employee's timecard, allowing another employee to manipulate your timecard, or altering a timecard is not permissible and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Please also refer to Humboldt County Resource Conservation District's *Meal and Rest Break Policy*.

## **Work Schedules**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is normally open for business between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday. Your supervisor will assign your individual work schedule. All employees are expected to be at their desks or workstations at the start of their scheduled shifts, ready to work, unless prior arrangements have been requested and approved by your immediate supervisor or Executive Director.

The workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday and ends at midnight on Saturday.

# **Safety and Health**

## **Employees Who Are Required to Drive**

Employees whose job duties require them to drive a District, personal, or USDA vehicle for District business will be required to show proof of current valid driving licenses and proof of insurability under the District's policy or current effective insurance coverage before the first day of employment.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District participates in a system that regularly checks state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) records of all employees who are required to drive as part of their job.

If an employee is required to drive as part of their job, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District retains the right to transfer to an alternative position, suspend, or terminate an employee whose license is suspended or revoked, or who fails to maintain personal automobile insurance coverage or who is uninsurable under the District's policy.

It is the policy of the District to encourage use of USDA vehicles whenever appropriate, feasible and approved. Under no circumstance may an employee operate a USDA vehicle without written authorization. Authorization to drive USDA vehicles is a privilege that can be revoked at any time.

Employees who drive their own vehicles on District business will be reimbursed at the rate of IRS standard mileage rate per mile.

## **Ergonomics**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is subject to Cal/OSHA ergonomics standards for minimizing workplace repetitive motion injuries. The District will make necessary adjustments to reduce exposure to ergonomic hazards through modifications to equipment and processes and employee training. The District encourages safe and proper work procedures and requires all employees to follow safety instructions and guidelines.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District believes that reduction of ergonomic risk is instrumental in maintaining an environment of personal safety and well-being and is essential to our business. We intend to provide appropriate resources to create a risk-free environment. If you have any questions about ergonomics, please contact Executive Director.

## **Fragrance Policy**

We strive to maintain a fragrance-free workplace. Employees may not wear any of the following in the workplace or when on the job, regardless of location, if they may come in contact with customers or coworkers: cologne, after shave lotion, perfume, perfumed hand lotion, fragranced hair products, fragranced deodorants and/or similar products.

## **Health and Safety**

All employees are responsible for their own safety, as well as that of others in the workplace. To help us maintain a safe workplace, everyone must be safety-conscious at all times. Report all work-related injuries or illnesses immediately to your supervisor or to the human resources department. In compliance with California law, and to promote the concept of a safe workplace, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District maintains an Injury and Illness Prevention Program. The Injury and Illness Prevention Program is available for review by employees and/or employee representatives in the District's main office.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District also maintains a written COVID-19 prevention program in compliance with California law, which is available for review by employees and/or authorized representatives.

In compliance with Proposition 65, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will inform employees of any known exposure to a chemical known to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity.

## **Heat Illness**

The District is concerned with employee health and safety. Employees who work outside may be exposed to extreme temperatures or adverse working conditions, particularly in the summer months. All supervisors are trained in the recognition and prevention of heat illness. Employees who work outside are encouraged to frequently drink water. Employees who work outside are also allowed and encouraged to take a cool-down rest in the shade of at least five minutes (in addition to the time needed to access the shade) when needed to protect themselves from overheating. These preventative cool-down rests are paid time.

Please refer to the District's Injury Illness and Prevention Program or talk to your supervisor for details on how to ensure you are protected from heat illness dangers.

## **Inclement Weather/Natural Disasters**

In the event of severe weather or a natural disaster that prevents employees from safely traveling to and from work, the following leave policies will apply:

- Inclement weather: Conditions that excuse absence from work include: wildfire, heavy rain and wind, road closure, earthquake. If weather conditions prevent you from safely traveling to work, you must notify Executive Director by phone, if telephone service is functional, or by any other available means. Absences due to inclement weather will be deducted from accumulated PTO.
- In the event of a natural disaster, offices will be closed if the buildings are damaged or highways leading to the offices are damaged. For instructions on reporting to another location, contact the Executive Director immediately, if possible.

## **Recreational Activities and Programs**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District or its insurer will not be liable for payment of workers' compensation benefits for any injury that arises out of an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity that is not part of the employee's work-related duties.

## **Security**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District has developed guidelines to help maintain a secure workplace. Be aware of persons loitering for no apparent reason in parking areas, walkways, entrances and exits, and service areas. Report any suspicious persons or activities to security personnel. Secure your desk or office at the end of the day. When called away from your work area for an extended length of time, do not leave valuable and/or personal articles in or around your workstation that may be accessible. The security of facilities as well as the welfare of our employees depends upon the alertness and sensitivity of every individual to potential security risks. You should immediately notify your supervisor when unknown persons are acting in a suspicious manner in or around the facilities, or when keys, security passes, or identification badges are missing.

The District's workplace security program is described in detail in the District's Illness and Injury Prevention Program (IIPP).

## **Workplace Violence**

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District has adopted the following workplace violence policy to ensure a safe working environment for all employees.

The District has zero tolerance for acts of violence and threats of violence. Without exception, acts and threats of violence are not permitted. All such acts and threats, even those made in apparent jest, will be taken seriously, and will lead to discipline up to and including termination.

Possession of non-work related weapons on District premises and at District-sponsored events shall constitute a threat of violence.

It is every employee's responsibility to assist in establishing and maintaining a violence-free work environment. Therefore, you are expected and encouraged to report any incident which may be threatening to you or your co-workers or any event which you reasonably believe is threatening or violent.

You may report an incident to any supervisor or manager.

A threat includes, but is not limited to, any indication of intent to harm a person or damage District property. Threats may be direct or indirect, and they may be communicated verbally or nonverbally. The following are examples of threats and acts that shall be considered violent - this list is in no way all-inclusive:

<b>Example</b>	<b>Type of Threat</b>
Saying, "Do you want to see your next birthday?"	Indirect
Writing, "Employees who kill their supervisors have the right idea."	Indirect
Saying, "I'm going to punch your lights out."	Direct
Making a hitting motion or obscene gesture	Nonverbal
Displaying weapons	Extreme
Stalking or otherwise forcing undue attention on someone, whether romantic or hostile	Extreme
Taking actions likely to cause bodily harm or property damage	Acts of violence

# **Termination**

## **Employee References**

All requests for references must be directed to the Executive Director. No other manager, supervisor, or employee is authorized to release references for current or former employees.

By policy, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District discloses only the dates of employment and the title of the last position held of former employees.

## **Involuntary Termination and Progressive Discipline**

Violation of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District policies and rules may warrant disciplinary action. The District has a system of progressive discipline that may include verbal warnings, written warnings, and suspension. The system is not formal, and Humboldt County Resource Conservation District may, in its sole discretion, utilize whatever form of discipline is deemed appropriate under the circumstances, up to, and including, immediate termination of employment. The District's policy of progressive discipline in no way limits or alters the at-will employment relationship.

## **Reductions in Force**

Under some circumstances, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District may need to restructure or reduce its workforce. If restructuring our operations or reducing the number of employees becomes necessary, the District will attempt to provide advance notice, if possible, to help prepare affected individuals. If possible, employees subject to layoff will be informed of the nature of the layoff and the foreseeable duration of the layoff, whether short-term or indefinite.

In determining which employees will be subject to layoff, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District will take into account, among other things, operation and requirements, the skill, productivity, ability, and past performance of those involved, and also, when feasible, the employee's length of service.

## **Voluntary Resignation**

Voluntary resignation results when an employee voluntarily quits their employment at Humboldt County Resource Conservation District or fails to report to work for three consecutively scheduled workdays without notice to, or approval by, their supervisor (unless the absence is protected by law). All District-owned property, including vehicles, keys, uniforms, identification badges, and credit cards, must be returned immediately upon termination of employment.



# **Confirmation of Handbook Receipt**

## **Confirmation of Receipt**

I have received my copy of the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District employee handbook. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the policies and procedures contained in the handbook.

I understand and agree that nothing in the employee handbook creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment and that employment at Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is employment at-will; employment may be terminated at the will of either the District or myself. My signature certifies that I understand that the foregoing agreement on at-will status is the sole and entire agreement between Humboldt County Resource Conservation District and myself concerning the duration of my employment and the circumstances under which my employment may be terminated. It supersedes all prior agreements, understandings, and representations concerning my employment with Humboldt County Resource Conservation District.

I understand that except for employment at-will status, any and all policies or practices can be changed at any time by the District. Humboldt County Resource Conservation District reserves the right to change my hours, wages, and working conditions at any time. I understand and agree that other than the president of Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, no manager, supervisor, or representative of the District has authority to enter into any agreement, express or implied, for employment for any specific period of time, or to make any agreement for employment other than at-will; only the president has the authority to make any such agreement and then only in writing, signed by the president.

Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Confirmation of Harassment Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention Policy**

I have received my copy of the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District's Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention policy. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with this policy.

I understand that the District is committed to providing a work environment that is free from harassment, discrimination and retaliation. My signature certifies that I understand that I must conform to and abide by the rules and requirements described in this policy.

Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Confirmation of Drug-Free Workplace Policy

I have received my copy of the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District's Drug-Free Workplace policy. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with this policy.

I understand that the District is committed to providing a work environment that is drug and alcohol free. My signature certifies that I understand that I must conform to and abide by the rules and requirements described in this policy.

Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_