



Weber County Human Resources Policy 3-1000: Personal Relationships

6/30/2020

I. Purpose

Weber County strives to provide a work environment that is collegial, respectful, and productive. To facilitate this, the County strongly believes it is necessary for employees to maintain clear boundaries between personal and business interactions. The County has no desire to govern employees' consensual personal relationships; however, when those relationships involve co-workers, they can, in some cases, lead to an actual or perceived conflict of interest, favoritism, harassment, sexual harassment, workplace conflict, workplace violence, or bias that provides grounds for complaints. Therefore, this policy establishes rules for personal relationships between employees, including supervisory personnel, in an attempt to prevent problems and maintain a collegial, respectful, and productive work environment.

II. Policy

It is the policy of Weber County to require disclosure of personal relationships between employees, to prohibit personal relationships between employees in the same division, and to prohibit situations that create a conflict of interest due to a personal relationship.

III. Procedures

A. Definitions

1. A "personal relationship" is defined as a romantic or physically intimate relationship between individuals.
2. "Employee" includes supervisors, managers, directors, elected officials, and all other individuals employed by Weber County.
3. A "division" is defined as:
 - i. a division within an office or department, if the office or department is separated into divisions; or
 - ii. an office or department, if the office or department is not separated into divisions.
4. An employee has a "conflict of interest due to a personal relationship" when the employee is in, or has been in, a personal relationship with another individual who is currently employed by the County, and either of the following circumstances exists:
 - i. the employee has direct or indirect influence over the other individual's conditions of employment (e.g., salary, assignments, shifts, etc.), whether or not through direct supervision; or

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- ii. the personal relationship may directly or indirectly affect, or have the appearance of affecting, the employee's judgment in exercising any job-related duty or responsibility.

B. Prohibited personal relationships

1. An employee may not occupy a position that creates a conflict of interest due to a personal relationship.
2. An employee who is involved in a personal relationship with another employee may not occupy a position in the same division as the employee with whom he or she is involved.
3. In addition to the other prohibitions in this policy, supervisors and managers are prohibited from being physically intimate with or dating subordinates and may be disciplined for such actions, up to and including termination.
4. If a personal relationship between employees exists or develops, it is the responsibility and obligation of the employees involved to disclose the existence of the relationship immediately to a supervisor, department director, or human resources. Human resources will review the circumstances to determine whether any violation of this policy exists.
5. When an employee's personal relationship with another employee violates the provisions of this policy, the employees' supervisors and department directors (if applicable) and human resources will work with the employees involved to consider options for resolving the violation.
 - i. The initial temporary solution may be to change the employees' responsibilities, so that neither one is able to influence the other or take action that benefits or harms the other. Matters such as hiring, firing, promotions, performance management, compensation decisions and financial transactions are examples of situations that may require reallocation of duties to avoid any actual or perceived reward or disadvantage.
 - ii. In many cases, long-term measures will be necessary, such as transfer of one or both employees to other positions or divisions.
 - iii. If one or both employees cooperate in seeking solutions but refuse to accept a reasonable solution, such refusal will be deemed a voluntary resignation, unless another reasonable solution is available.
 - iv. If there is no reasonable solution, such as no other positions are available, or the field of work does not allow transfer to another division, the employees will have 60 days to resolve the situation on their own. After 60 days, if the employees have not yet resolved the situation on their own by means acceptable to the supervisors and department directors (if applicable) and human resources, the

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employees' supervisors and department directors (if applicable) will work with human resources to determine the most appropriate action for the specific situation. This may include transfer or, if necessary, disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

6. Failure to cooperate in attempts to resolve a violation of this policy in a mutually agreeable fashion may be deemed insubordination and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

C. Other circumstances

1. Pre-Existing Relationships: Personal relationships that pre-date the effective date of this policy are not prohibited by this policy, provided the employees disclose the existence of the relationship by July 15, 2020. In the case of supervisory relationships, transfer of one of the employees to another position will be required. A transfer within the division may be allowed, if the concerns addressed in this policy are eliminated; otherwise, a transfer outside of the division will be required.
2. Employees involved in pre-existing relationships who allow those relationships to adversely affect the work environment will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with existing county policies, including counseling for minor problems. Failure to change behavior and maintain expected work responsibilities could result in more serious disciplinary measures, up to and including termination.

D. Miscellaneous

1. The provisions of this policy apply regardless of the sex, or the sexual orientation, of the employees involved.
2. The procedures listed in this policy are intended as guidelines, but they do not create any enforceable rights for employees who are in violation of the substantive provisions of the policy. Notwithstanding any of the other provisions of this policy, Weber County reserves the right to take whatever action may be necessary, at any time, to prevent problems caused by a violation of this policy.
3. This policy supplements, and is supplemented by, other county policies, including policies addressing nepotism and sexual harassment.

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DATED this 30th day of June, 2020.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF WEBER COUNTY:

Gage
Gage Froerer, Chair

ATTEST:

Ricky Hatch
for Ricky Hatch, CPA
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