

Nepotism and Conflicting Relationships

120.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure equal opportunity and effective employment practices by avoiding actual or perceived favoritism, discrimination or actual or potential conflicts of interest by or between members of this Office. These employment practices include: recruiting, testing, hiring, compensation, assignment, use of facilities, access to training opportunities, supervision, performance appraisal, discipline and workplace safety and security.

This policy is in addition to the Nevada County Personnel Code and any pertinent Memoranda of Understanding between the County of Nevada and the bargaining units.

120.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Business relationship - Serving as an employee, independent contractor, compensated consultant, owner, board member, shareholder, or investor in an outside business, company, partnership, corporation, venture or other transaction, where the Office employee's annual interest, compensation, investment or obligation is greater than \$250.

Conflict of interest - Any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest in which it reasonably appears that an office employee's action, inaction or decisions are or may be influenced by the employee's personal or business relationship.

Nepotism - The practice of showing favoritism to relatives over others in appointment, employment, promotion or advancement by any public official in a position to influence these personnel decisions.

Personal relationship - Includes marriage, cohabitation, dating or any other intimate relationship beyond mere friendship.

Public official - A supervisor, officer or employee vested with authority by law, rule or regulation or to whom authority has been delegated.

Relative - An employee's parent, step-parent, spouse, domestic partner, significant other, child (natural, adopted or step), sibling or grandparent.

Subordinate - An employee who is subject to the temporary or ongoing direct or indirect authority of a supervisor.

Supervisor - An employee who has temporary or ongoing direct or indirect authority over the actions, decisions, evaluation and/or performance of a subordinate employee.

120.2 RESTRICTED DUTIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

The Office will not prohibit all personal or business relationships between employees. However, in order to avoid nepotism or other inappropriate conflicts, the following reasonable restrictions shall apply (Government Code § 12940):

Nevada County Sheriff's Office
Custody Manual

Nepotism and Conflicting Relationships

- (a) Employees are prohibited from directly supervising, occupying a position in the line of supervision or being directly supervised by any other employee who is a relative or with whom they are involved in a personal or business relationship.
 - 1. If circumstances require that such a supervisor/subordinate relationship exist temporarily, the supervisor shall make every reasonable effort to defer matters pertaining to the involved employee to an uninvolved supervisor.
 - 2. When personnel and circumstances permit, the Office will attempt to make every reasonable effort to avoid placing employees in such supervisor/subordinate situations. The Office, however, reserves the right to transfer or reassign any employee to another position within the same classification in order to avoid conflicts with any provision of this policy.
- (b) Employees are prohibited from participating in, contributing to or recommending promotions, assignments, performance evaluations, transfers or other personnel decisions affecting an employee who is a relative or with whom they are involved in a personal or business relationship.
- (c) Whenever possible, JTOs and other trainers will not be assigned to train relatives. JTOs and other trainers are prohibited from entering into or maintaining personal or business relationships with any employee they are assigned to train until such time as the training has been successfully completed and the employee is off probation.
- (d) To avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest, members of this Office shall refrain from developing or maintaining personal or financial relationships with victims, witnesses or other individuals during the course of or as a direct result of any official contact.
- (e) Except as required in the performance of official duties or, in the case of immediate relatives, employees shall not develop or maintain personal or financial relationships with any individual they know or reasonably should know is under criminal investigation, is a convicted felon, parolee, fugitive or registered sex offender or who engages in serious violations of state or federal laws.

120.2.1 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

Prior to entering into any personal or business relationship or other circumstance which the employee knows or reasonably should know could create a conflict of interest or other violation of this policy, the employee shall promptly notify their uninvolved, next highest level supervisor.

Whenever any employee is placed in circumstances that would require the employee to take enforcement action the employee shall promptly notify their uninvolved, immediate supervisor. In the event that no uninvolved supervisor is immediately available, the employee shall promptly notify central control to have another uninvolved employee either relieve the involved employee or minimally remain present to witness the action.

120.2.2 SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

Upon being notified of, or otherwise becoming aware of any circumstance that could result in or constitute an actual or potential violation of this policy, a supervisor shall take all reasonable steps

Nevada County Sheriff's Office
Custody Manual

Nepotism and Conflicting Relationships

to promptly mitigate or avoid such violations whenever possible. Supervisors shall also promptly notify the Sheriff of such actual or potential violations through the chain of command.