

# COUNTY OF IMPERIAL EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

## CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>NOTICE UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>RELIGIOUS REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>CONFLICT OF INTEREST.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>NEPOTISM .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS, AND COMPLAINTS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>GENERAL PROVISIONS.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>TYPES OF APPOINTMENTS.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PERSONAL APPEARANCE.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>VISITORS AND PERSONAL PHONE CALLS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CARE OF COUNTY PROPERTY .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECURITY POLICY .....</b>	<b>18</b>

<b>ELECTRONIC DEVICES</b>	19
<b>DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS</b>	19
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION</b>	21
<b>PERSONAL DATA CHANGES</b>	21
<b>RELEASE OF INFORMATION/PERSONNEL RECORDS</b>	21
<b>RELEASE OF INFORMATION/PERSONAL DATA: PUBLIC SAFETY</b>	22
<b>PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS</b>	22
<b>PROBATIONARY PERIODS</b>	23
<b>PROMOTIONS</b>	23
<b>TRANSFERS</b>	23
<b>EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>	24
<b>EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SUMMARY</b>	24
<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>	24
<b>INITIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD</b>	24
<b>BENEFIT CHANGES</b>	24
<b>BENEFITS CONTINUATION (COBRA)</b>	25
<b>HIPAA PRIVACY STATEMENT</b>	25
<b>MEDICAL INSURANCE</b>	25
<b>DENTAL INSURANCE</b>	25
<b>VISION INSURANCE</b>	26
<b>FLEXIBLE SPENDING PROGRAM</b>	26
<b>HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNT (HRA)</b>	26
<b>TELEHEALTH SERVICES</b>	26
<b>LIFE INSURANCE</b>	27
<b>VOLUNTARY LIFE INSURANCE</b>	27
<b>EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH</b>	27
<b>DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLANS</b>	27
<b>RETIREMENT</b>	27
<b>RETIREE HEALTH</b>	27
<b>STATE DISABILITY INSURANCE</b>	28
<b>EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM</b>	28

<b>WELLNESS PROGRAM .....</b>	28
<b>WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE .....</b>	28
<b>TUITION REIMBURSEMENT .....</b>	28
<b>TIME OFF AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE.....</b>	29
<b>HOLIDAYS .....</b>	29
<b>VACATION TIME .....</b>	29
<b>VACATION BUYBACK.....</b>	29
<b>SICK TIME .....</b>	30
<b>SICK LEAVE BUYBACK.....</b>	30
<b>BEREAVEMENT LEAVE .....</b>	30
<b>JURY AND WITNESS DUTY .....</b>	30
<b>TIME OFF TO VOTE .....</b>	31
<b>LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY.....</b>	31
<b>JOB ABANDONMENT .....</b>	31
<b>ANNIVERSARY CHANGES .....</b>	31
<b>PARENTAL LEAVE FOR SCHOOL VISITS.....</b>	32
<b>FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA/CFRA) .....</b>	32
<b>PREGNANCY DISABILITY LEAVE .....</b>	32
<b>WORKERS' COMPENSATION LEAVE.....</b>	33
<b>MILITARY LEAVE.....</b>	33
<b>TIME OFF FOR BLOOD DONATIONS.....</b>	33
<b>WORKING HOURS .....</b>	34
<b>WORK SCHEDULES .....</b>	34
<b>FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE.....</b>	34
<b>REST AND MEAL PERIODS .....</b>	34
<b>TIMEKEEPING .....</b>	35
<b>LACTATION BREAKS.....</b>	35
<b>OVERTIME/COMPENSATION TIME .....</b>	35
<b>ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY .....</b>	35
<b>PAY PRACTICES .....</b>	36
<b>DEDUCTIONS.....</b>	36

<b>PAYDAY .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>WORK CONDITIONS.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM AND SAFETY .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>REPORTING ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>EMERGENCY CLOSINGS .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>USING COUNTY AND PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES FOR COUNTY BUSINESS .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>SUPPLEMENTAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR APPLICANTS AND EMPLOYEES IN POSITIONS REQUIRING SPECIAL DMV LICENSING .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF DRIVER RECORD INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>REPORTING CHILD ABUSE .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>SOLICITATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND BULLETIN BOARDS .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>GRIEVANCE, COMPLAINTS, AND APPEALS.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>GENERAL EMPLOYMENT APPEALS .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>POLITICAL ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>PARKING .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>EMPLOYEE RESIDENT BENEFIT PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT SEPARATION .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>RESIGNATIONS .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>REHIRE POLICY.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>REDUCTION IN FORCE.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>RETURN OF COUNTY PROPERTY .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>EXIT INTERVIEW .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>46</b>

## INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The County is pleased to welcome you as a new employee of the County of Imperial. You are now an important and valuable part of the County, and we hope your employment with us will be a rewarding experience. As a member of the County government, you will be fulfilling certain duties and responsibilities that are necessary to the functioning of your department and the County as a whole. Each and every position in the County has been created to fulfill a need. Your personal contribution is essential to a successful working relationship.

This Employee Handbook is provided to you in order to become familiar with the County's policies, procedures, and personnel guidelines. It contains a summary of our personnel structure as well as the benefits provided to each employee. The information in this handbook was derived from various sources, including the County's Codified Ordinances, various policies and procedures, and labor contracts with employee organizations.

We hope that you will take satisfaction in being a member of our team, and that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding.

Again, welcome!

Sincerely,



Rodolfo Aguayo  
Director of Human Resources and Risk Management



## **PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

This employee handbook contains information regarding the employment policies and procedures of the County of Imperial that were in effect at the time of publication. With the exception of the current MOUs between the County and the individual bargaining units, this handbook supersedes all other handbooks, manuals, publications, letters, posters, handouts, or any other communication that may have been issued on subjects covered herein. Specific terms and conditions of employment are set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and each individual bargaining unit. County of Imperial reserves the right to revise, modify, delete, or add to any and all policies, procedures, work rules, or benefits stated in this handbook or in any other document. If there is a conflict between this handbook and the MOU, the MOU is controlling. No oral statements or representations can change or alter the provisions of this handbook. In the event any provision of this handbook needs clarification or in the event of an inadvertent typographical error, please contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

This handbook is to be used as a ready reference and as a summary of the County's personnel policies, work rules, and benefits. It is designed to provide a quick overview for County employees. Please understand that this handbook cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question regarding employment with the County. It is neither an employment contract nor a legal document. If you have any questions about this handbook or any other policy or procedure, please contact your supervisor.

More specific information is contained in Chapter 3 of the Imperial County Codified Ordinances. If your position is included in a bargaining unit for which there is an MOU, you should be familiar with its contents as well. A copy of the ordinances and each of the MOUs is maintained in the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. You may read the appropriate sections of the ordinances and refer to the MOU in the event that you have questions not answered in this handbook. Please read this booklet carefully and keep it for future reference.

## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the County of Imperial Employee Handbook and that I have read the policies and procedures contained therein. I also acknowledge that I am subject to the policies and procedures set forth therein, including but not limited to the following policies: Equal Employment Opportunity, Code of Conduct, Harassment, Conflict of Interest, Confidential Information, Drug and Alcohol, Violence in the Workplace, and Information Technology Security Policy. In addition, I acknowledge that I am responsible for consulting the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management or my manager if I do not understand any of these policies or procedures and/or if I have questions that are not answered in the handbook.

I understand that any and all policies or procedures can be changed, modified, or terminated at any time by the County with or without notice. I also understand that the County will make a reasonable effort to disseminate new policies or procedures; however, I am responsible for checking with my bargaining unit for any updated documents.

I understand that nothing contained in the Employee Handbook creates a contract or is intended to create a contract, promise, or representation of continued employment for any specific period of time. I also understand that with the exception of the current MOUs between the County and the individual bargaining units, this Employee Handbook supersedes all other handbooks, manuals, publications, letters, posters, handouts, or any other communication, which may have been issued on subjects covered herein.

I also understand that if I have any differences, complaints, or job-related problems with the County regarding the terms and conditions of my employment, I will attempt to resolve these problems as outlined in this handbook.

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Signature

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Printed Full Name

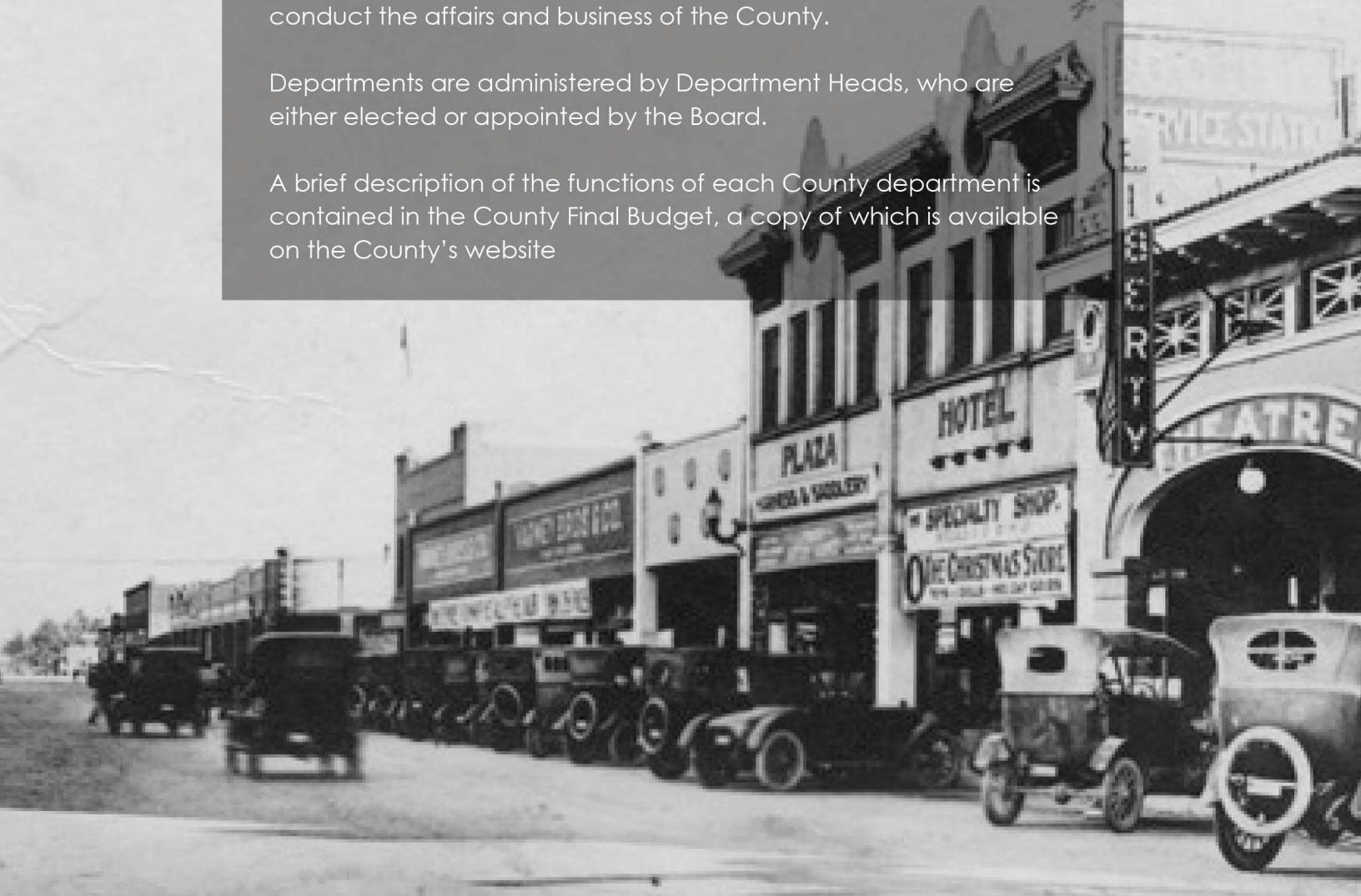
Please sign the form and then return it to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. The executed copy will be maintained in your personnel file.

## OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The governing body of the County is the Board of Supervisors, which is comprised of five (5) members elected by the voters for four (4) year terms in each of the five (5) County districts. Normally, the Board meets every Tuesday, plus other special meeting times, to conduct the affairs and business of the County.

Departments are administered by Department Heads, who are either elected or appointed by the Board.

A brief description of the functions of each County department is contained in the County Final Budget, a copy of which is available on the County's website



St. Brawley, Cal.

## **EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS**

It is the policy of the County to conduct business in a manner that is ethical and in accordance with the law. The conduct of both the County and its employees must satisfy all applicable legal and county requirements. It is your responsibility to read and understand the Code of Conduct and Ethics, which is articulated below.

This Code of Conduct and Ethics sets out six (6) basic principles that you are expected to abide by:

1. Treat all persons with respect, fairness, honesty, and courtesy.
2. Perform your duties with the highest standards of personal integrity, honesty, and truthfulness in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws.
3. Ensure that the County's resources are used in accordance with good business practices, avoiding the misuse of the County's time, equipment, supplies, or facilities for personal business.
4. Safeguard confidential information both written and oral unless it is authorized by the County and refrain from ever using such information for personal gain.
5. Promote a work environment that encourages open and honest communication without the fear of retaliation.
6. Avoid any appearance of impropriety that might diminish the public's confidence and trust in the County.

The Code of Conduct and Ethics is applicable in the performance of County business and will apply to all County employees, including extra help and volunteers. In addition, the Code of Conduct and Ethics will apply to all appointed boards and commissions affiliated with the County of Imperial. This code does not cover every issue that may arise. If you have any questions regarding the proper course of conduct in any situation, you should seek assistance from your supervisor or the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

Violators of this code are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and/or may be subject to criminal or civil sanctions or penalties.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE**

The County of Imperial has adopted a Conflict of Interest Code as required under the Political Reform Act of 1974. Covered employees are those who have been designated by their department to make or participate in making decisions, which may potentially have a material effect on economic interests. Your department will instruct all designated employees subject to this code to file Statements of Economic Interest. Please contact the County's Registrar of Voters for the list of covered positions under your department.

### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

It is the policy of the County of Imperial Board of Supervisors that the County conduct its relations with employees and applicants for employment without discrimination based

on race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, gender, gender identification, age, national origin or ancestry, creed, marital status, political affiliation, medical condition, genetic information, disability, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws. This policy shall be implemented through the Equal-Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office and the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. If you feel you have been subjected to discriminatory treatment on the basis previously stated, you should immediately report the incident to the EEO Officer.

### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE**

To comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, the County will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations for the known or perceived physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or an employee unless: (1) undue hardship to the County would result or (2) that, even with a reasonable accommodation, the employee or applicant would be unable to perform an essential job duty without endangering his or her health or safety or the health or safety of others.

If you require a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of your job, contact your supervisor and the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. Requests for reasonable accommodations must specify the restrictions recommended by a licensed physician or any other medical provider that precludes you from performing your essential job functions.

### **POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT**

It is the Policy of the County of Imperial to ensure that its offices and activities are conducted in an environment free of harassment in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. Illegal harassment or discrimination includes but is not limited to sexual harassment, hostile work environment, and discrimination on the basis of a protected status.

If you believe that you have been the victim of sexual harassment, hostile work environment, and/or any other type of discrimination, you should report the matter immediately to either your supervisor, a member of the Department of Human Resources Department and Risk Management, or the County's EEO.

The County will not tolerate retaliation against any individual who rejects sexual advances, complains of discrimination, files a good-faith harassment complaint, or participates in an investigation as covered under this policy (Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures).

### **NOTICE UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), County of Imperial will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

**Employment:** The County of Imperial does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Title I of the ADA.

**Effective Communication:** The County of Imperial will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication or qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in the County of Imperial's programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign-language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

**Modifications to Policies and Procedures:** The County of Imperial will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in County of Imperial's offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of County of Imperial should contact the office of Rodolfo Aguayo, ADA Coordinator, at (442) 265-1148 TTY: (442) 265-1169 as soon as possible no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the County of Imperial to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a program, service, or activity of the County of Imperial is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to:

Rodolfo Aguayo, ADA Coordinator  
Human Resources and Risk Management  
940 W. Main Street, Suite 101  
El Centro, CA 92243  
Phone: (442) 265-1148  
TTY: (442) 265-1169

The County of Imperial will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

## **VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

The County of Imperial strictly prohibits conduct, whether direct or indirect, that compromises the safety and rights of any employee or member of the public to be free from workplace violence. The County requires all employees and individuals on County premises or while conducting County business to conduct themselves in a professional

and courteous manner at all times in conformity with nonviolence principles and standards.

Workplace violence is defined as "any act or series of acts, in any form, which may constitute assault, battery, bullying (including cyber bullying), harassment, intimidation, stalking, or threats toward any person or group of people on County premises or off County premises but in relation to the workplace. Workplace violence includes but is not limited to destruction of property and possession of weapons at the workplace (unless such possession or use is a requirement of the job).

(Violence in the Workplace Policy 4.14.2015)

### **RELIGIOUS REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

The County of Imperial will reasonably accommodate an employee's religious belief(s) or practices unless doing so would cause an undue hardship.

### **DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE**

The County has established a policy prohibiting, in part, the use, possession, and sale of alcohol, mood-altering substances (e.g., bath salts, spice, etc.), or illegal drugs or having any detectable amount of illegal drugs, mood-altering substances, or alcohol at or above .01% BAC within an employee's bodily system during compensable work time or while in any County workplace as defined in the policy.

Additionally, no employee shall manufacture, sell, distribute, trade, dispense, possess, consume, or be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while on compensable work time or while at any workplace.

Under this policy, an employee is required to notify their supervisor before performing any duty within the scope of employment if the employee is taking any medication or drug, either prescription or nonprescription, that might impair the employee's effectiveness or safe-job performance. The name of the medication or reason for its use need not be reported.

An employee that violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, even for a first violation (Drug and Alcohol Policy).

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

A conflict of interest occurs when an employee's private interest interferes or may appear to interfere with the interests of the County of Imperial. You should avoid any private interest that influences your ability to act in the best interests of the County of Imperial, makes it difficult to perform your work objectively and effectively, or gives the appearance that you have a conflict of interest.

The County of Imperial requires that you disclose to the County any situations that reasonably would be expected to give rise to or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

### **NEPOTISM**

No employee shall participate in the selection process for any member of his/her

immediate family. No person shall be employed in a position where that position will be directly supervised by a member of the person's immediate family or where it is reasonable to believe and can be shown that employment of an immediate family member in the same department, division, or facility involves potential conflicts of interest or other hazards. "Immediate family" is defined by County Ordinance 3.04.020(I) (County Ordinance 3.08.030).

### **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Prior written authorization from the Department Head or his or her designee is required before you may accept outside employment. Such employment must not conflict in any way with your work duties for the County. If you have any questions, you should contact your Department Head or the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management (County Ordinance 3.08.080).

### **CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

During the course of employment, employees may have access to and/or acquire information that the County considers confidential. Employees should not disclose or otherwise exploit for their own benefit or for the benefit of any other person or entity any confidential information.

Confidential Information shall include all information acquired by you in the course of employment in any way relating to the business and affairs of the County. Confidential information may be contained in written manuals, oral communications, unwritten knowledge acquired by employees, and/or any other tangible method of expression, including hard disk drive and electronic-data mechanisms.

Because of the close proximity in which employees work, any information overheard or seen while in the course of performing work should be considered confidential and not revealed or discussed with family, friends, or anyone else without prior written approval from management. Employees are cautioned that it is a violation of this policy to gossip or disclose confidential information to coworkers who do not have a valid need-to-know basis for such information.

An employee who improperly uses or discloses confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, even if he or she does not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

### **SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS, AND COMPLAINTS**

Constructive suggestions from employees regarding how to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and operations, lower costs, or how to better serve the public, are always welcome. You are requested to make your suggestions in writing either to your immediate supervisor or Department Head. All constructive suggestions will be considered, even if made anonymously.

The concerns or complaints should be made in a courteous and professional manner, and you should provide as much factual information as possible. There are specific procedures available for concerns and complaints such as grievances, discrimination claims, sexual harassment, or violations of the Memorandum of Understanding.

It is the County's policy not to discourage employees from speaking out on matters of public concern. You should do so in a way that is constructive. It is also County policy not to discourage you from expressing your private concerns regarding employment matters. These concerns should also be presented in a constructive and professional manner

## GENERAL PROVISIONS

### **EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION**

The authority for classification and salary matters for the County of Imperial rests with the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management and the Board of Supervisors. The County classification plan shall consist of positions defined by class specifications, including title, duties, and qualifications. Minimum education, experience, and physical standards are established for each position.

### **TYPES OF APPOINTMENTS**

The following are brief descriptions of the types of appointments held by the County. These descriptions do not cover all aspects of these categories and are not intended to modify County ordinances, policies, and MOUs (County Ordinance 3.04.020).

**Probationary:** Employees serving a probationary period either as the result of appointment, new hire, promotion, or appointment as the result of an interdepartmental transfer.

**Regular:** Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period, the employment status will be changed to that of a regular employee. Upon receipt of a promotion or an appointment to a different classification, a new probationary period must be served before obtaining regular status in the new classification.

**Limited Term:** Employment that is designated for a special project, program, service, or position in which the duration of employment is limited to a specific termination date or conditioned upon the continuation of special funding. Limited-term employees are eligible for all compensation benefits conferred upon regular employees in the same classification by the County. Employment-at-will status is given to all limited-term employees for the County of Imperial.

**Substitute:** Employees appointed to a position that is occupied by a regular County employee who is off work because of service-related injury or illness for more than thirty (30) calendar days or on sick leave for more than thirty (30) calendar days. Such employees are eligible for all compensation benefits conferred by the County of Imperial upon its regular employees relating to sick leave, vacation, overtime, holidays, mileage and travel expense, and merit pay increases. The employment of such employees shall be automatically terminated when the regular incumbent employee returns to work. Substitute employees have access to the County's retirement system.

**Extra Help:** Employees retained for a temporary period to perform a specific task, job, or assignment. Unless otherwise required by law, extra-help employees do not receive or accrue benefits and are not eligible for membership in retirement, group medical, or dental insurance plans (including retiree health). However, as per federal law, the County requires a contribution to a deferred compensation plan (OBRA). Extra-help employees cannot acquire regular status and any hours worked under extra-help status do not accumulate toward any benefit eligibility.

**Part-Time:** Employees assigned to work less than a normal full-time schedule. Part-time employees are not entitled to County health benefits unless they work twenty (20) hours or more per week. Part-time employees who work fewer than thirty (30) hours per week are not entitled to retirement but are required by federal law to contribute to a deferred compensation plan. Part-time employees shall earn vacation and be eligible for sick leaves and merit increases, which will be based on hours worked by such employee. Merit increases may be granted based on working two thousand eighty (2080) hours. Part-time employees shall not be eligible for advancement to the earned tenure increase designated as Step F. Part-time employees cannot acquire regular status.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

The Personal Appearance Policy is established to assist departments to promote a respectful work environment free of distractions, earn the confidence of the public, and ensure safety and security while working. Implementation of this policy is at the discretion of your Department Head. In addition, your department head may implement guidelines or policies that are more closely tailored to the specific needs of your department.

An employee who does not meet the standards of this policy may be required to correct his or her appearance. Depending on the circumstances, an employee may be required to leave the work premises to correct an issue with his or her appearance. Any work time missed or mileage incurred because of an employee's failure to comply with this policy will not be compensated. Repeated violations of this policy will be a cause for disciplinary action.

### **General Guidelines:**

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to a positive work environment and affect the business image of the County of Imperial. During business hours or when representing the County, employees are expected to present a clean, neat, and professional appearance.

1. Employees should be well groomed and adhere to acceptable standards of personal hygiene.
2. Clothing and grooming will at all times be modest and professional.
3. Hair should be clean, combed, and neatly trimmed or arranged.
4. Clothes should be clean, wrinkle-free, and in good repair.
5. Prescribed uniforms and safety equipment must be worn.
6. Clothing/shoes should not impair the safety of the employee.
7. Shoes should be clean, in good repair, and appropriate for the work environment and functions performed.
8. Jewelry is acceptable except where it constitutes a health or safety hazard.

### **Inappropriate Attire:**

The following items are inappropriate for work: (This list is not all-inclusive and is meant as a general guide for unacceptable attire and grooming practices.)

Clothing in General:

1. Any clothing, including hats or caps containing emblems, printing, lettering, or pictures pertaining to sex, drugs, gangs, profanity, alcohol, tobacco, violence, or illegal behavior.
2. Tight-fitting, clingy, or oversized (baggy) clothing.
3. Clothing that exposes the stomach, midriff, breasts, and/or buttocks.
4. Torn, frayed, or ripped clothing.
5. Clothes generally used for general labor work, recreation, workouts, or exercise unless required by the job.

Shirts, Tops, Blouses, and Jackets:

1. Tops with spaghetti straps or without straps that expose the back or shoulders unless worn with a jacket or sweater.
2. Low-plunging necklines in the front or back.
3. Translucent tops with no camisole, midriff tops, halter tops, strapless tops, or tube tops.
4. Sweatshirts and T-shirts.

Pants:

1. Denim jeans except for approved casual days or as otherwise permitted by Department Head.
2. Spandex pants, cargo pants, shorts, overalls, yoga, aerobic, or sweat pants.
3. Oversized (baggy) or extremely tight pants.
4. Faded, torn, or stained pants of any kind.

Skirts and Dresses:

1. Miniskirts or skirts that stop at midthigh or see-through skirts worn without lining or a slip.
2. Dresses with spaghetti straps or without straps unless worn with a jacket or sweater.

Footwear:

1. Athletic shoes, thongs, flip-flops, slippers, or beach-styled sandals (although athletic shoes may be worn during break time for walking, running, etc.).
2. Heels shall be worn at a reasonable height at all times so as to not impede the safety of the employee.

Hair/Makeup:

1. Unusual hair coloring (e.g., blue, green, purple, etc.).
2. Hairstyle/makeup that distracts others.

Tattoos/Piercings:

1. No tattoos, branding, or intentional scarification are allowed anywhere on the head, face, or neck (this does not include permanent makeup).
2. Visible tattoos, branding, or intentional scarification shall not be obscene, sexually explicit, extremist or gang related, or discriminatory to gender, race, religion, national origin, or any other protected class.
3. Any nonconforming tattoos, branding, or intentional scarification must be covered with clothing or a bandage while at work or removed.

4. Except for reasonably sized earrings on the lobe of the ear, no body piercing shall be visible.

These restrictions also apply to surface piercing, ear gauges, plugs or tunnels, and body modifications, which include but are not limited to transdermal implants, microdermal implants, and subdermal implants.

**Exceptions:**

Department Heads will have the discretion to approve exceptions (including the implementation of casual days) to this policy based on the specific work areas and/or work assignments involved inasmuch as said exceptions at least meet the general guidelines in this policy.

Persons who must wear special shoes or other clothing for medical reasons may be excused from the apparel guidelines if they provide their supervisor/manager with a medical note that sets forth the requirements and the duration of the medical condition. All requests for clothing or special shoes must be reviewed and approved by the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

Additional exceptions may apply based on religious or other protected practices.

**VISITORS AND PERSONAL PHONE CALLS**

As an employee, you are reminded that you were hired to perform an important job function; therefore, personal business is not to be handled during your scheduled work hours. Personal telephone calls (including texts or the use of personal cellular phones) and visits by friends, relatives, or others are discouraged by the County of Imperial and are to be limited except in the event of an emergency or upon prior approval of the Department Head.

Excessive personal or unauthorized use of the telephone, including charging long-distance calls to the County, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

**CARE OF COUNTY PROPERTY**

You are charged with the responsibility of maintaining such property in the best possible condition and making the most economical use of supplies issued to you. You can help keep costs down by exercising reasonable care over County property for which you are responsible. Lost or damaged equipment should be reported immediately to your supervisor. Because of the need for access to information in County property, as well as health and safety considerations, all work space may be subject to search at any time.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECURITY POLICY**

As a member of the County workforce, you are expected to comply with the County's Information Technology Security Policy. Information created or used in support of County business activities is the property of the County. Your assigned information technology resources are meant to help you perform your duties. It is your responsibility to ensure that resources are not misused.

Many County facilities house sensitive or critical information systems. You are expected to comply with all physical access controls designated to restrict unauthorized access. You may not remove County equipment from the workplace unless you have received prior approval.

The use of the network and internet is a privilege, not an entitlement. The e-mail system and network are primarily for County business. Management is entitled to inspect or review electronic mail and data files.

Finally, prohibited activity includes but is not limited to

1. using, transmitting, or seeking vulgar, profane, obscene, abusive, harassing, belligerent, threatening, or defamatory language or materials;
2. sending or soliciting sexually oriented messages, images, videos, or sound files;
3. visiting sites featuring pornography, terrorism, espionage, theft, illegal drugs, or other subjects that violate or encourage violation of the law;
4. gambling or engaging in any other activity in violation of local, state, or federal law;
5. buying or selling anything over the Internet;
6. soliciting or advertising the sale of any goods or services; and
7. unauthorized outside fund-raising activities, participation in any lobbying activity, or engaging in any prohibited partisan political activity.

(Information Technology Security Policy).

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The County of Imperial provides electronic devices (such as cellular phones) to employees as needed so that they may efficiently conduct County business and also to facilitate the appropriate exchange of business-related information and ideas. Excessive or unreasonable personal use and any commercial use not related to County business are prohibited.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

It is the County's intent to ensure that all disciplinary actions are impartial. Employees who do not meet work or County's standards or whose conduct is detrimental to County service are subject to disciplinary action by their supervisor or Department Head.

Depending on the seriousness of the offense, it may result in dismissal without any prior disciplinary action. The causes for such actions are listed in the County of Imperial Ordinance 3.32.030 or for State Merit System employees under LAPS Chapter 2, Article VII. Please check your corresponding MOU for additional information.

Suspension, demotion, or dismissal of a regular employee may be appealed to the Employment Appeals Board (County Ordinance 3.64.040) and, in the case of personnel covered under the State Merit System, to the State Personnel Board (LAPS Article 7 Section 17550). Nothing herein is intended to interfere with the County's right to terminate at-will employees without notice and for any reason without any right to appeal.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION**

### **PERSONAL DATA CHANGES**

If you change your name, address, or telephone number for any reason, you must report such changes to your supervisor and the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. This can be done by completing a Notice of Personal Change form or through an otherwise approved electronic method as determined by the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

You can access this form online at the County website or contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

### **RELEASE OF INFORMATION/PERSONNEL RECORDS**

The Department of Human Resources and Risk Management maintains employment records for current and former employees to document employee-related decisions, evaluate and assess performance, and comply with government record keeping and recording requirements. Personnel files are the property of the County of Imperial and access to the information is restricted to individuals with a specific business on a need-to-know basis. This policy does not apply to current employees who are covered by Government Code section 3306.5 or Government Code section 3256.5.

All requests for personnel records relating to the current or former employee's performance and/or to any grievance should be referred to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. The Department of Human Resources and Risk Management verifies information such as date of hire, title, and date of termination, if applicable. Employees are strongly discouraged from providing information regarding current or former employees to any nonemployee.

In addition, upon written authorization by an employee, or if required by law, the County of Imperial will confirm additional salary information regarding current and former employees for credit validations, reference checks, and legally mandated inquiries.

You may request to inspect and/or receive a copy of the personnel records maintained by the County relating to performance or any grievance that concerns you. Current employees may review and receive a copy of their own personnel file at reasonable times and reasonable intervals, or an authorized representative may request to review.

- You may schedule an appointment, allowing reasonable notice to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.
- Reviews of your file must take place during normal working hours and in the presence of a representative from the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. As an employee, you are entitled to review your personnel file once a year during normal working hours without loss of pay, not to exceed one (1) hour.
- Records exempt from this inspection include documents relating to investigations of possible criminal offenses, letters of reference, or any ratings, reports, or records that were obtained prior to your employment prepared by the

appointing officer and/or obtained in connection with a promotional examination.

- You have the right to correct, ask for a deletion, or write a statement of disagreement with any item in the file, which you are entitled to inspect. You may not, however, remove any item from the file. Only Management and Human Resources may remove an item from an employee's file.

#### **RELEASE OF INFORMATION/PERSONAL DATA: PUBLIC SAFETY**

- The County will maintain an official personnel file for employees who are covered by Government Code section 3306.5 and Government Code section 3253.5.
- If you wish to inspect your personnel file, you may only do so during normal working hours with no loss of compensation.
- You must submit your written request to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.
- Requests to view your personnel file or requests to receive copies of documents found within your personnel file shall occur within seventy-two (72) hours of such request.
- The inspection and/or copying of personnel files shall be done in accordance with applicable laws, including Government Code section 3306.5.
- If you wish to have another person/representative inspect your file, you must provide your written authorization to such person at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance. The Department of Human Resources and Risk Management will then provide you with an appointment date and time for you to notify your representative.
- The Department of Human Resources and Risk Management will monitor the inspection of your personnel file and under no circumstance shall the file or any of its contents be removed from the designated review area.

Additions or removal of any material contained within the personnel file will be in compliance with the corresponding Government Code sections.

#### **PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS**

Managers and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, regular basis. The review of your performance by your supervisor is designed to assist you in establishing goals and determine areas where improvement is needed. It also serves as the opportunity to recognize all areas where you have performed below and/or above expectations.

Written formal employee-performance evaluations are generally conducted once a year whether or not the Department Head recommends, or whether the employee is eligible for, an annual salary step increase (County Ordinance 3.08.350).

If you are a probationary or a promotional-probationary employee, your performance will be evaluated at the end of five (5) months and at the end of ten (10) months during this probationary period. For some employees in law enforcement, your performance will be reviewed a minimum of once during the fifth month, once during the tenth month, and once during the sixteenth month of your probationary period of

employment. You may be advised of any improvements expected from you at this time (County Ordinance 3.08.350).

All employees may be evaluated more often than as described in this section. Upon receiving a copy of your evaluation, you will be given an opportunity to respond in writing within ten (10) working days, and the response will be attached to the evaluation in the personnel file.

It is important that all managers communicate duties, responsibilities, and expectations to employees as well as clarify how acceptable performance is defined and measured. The written formal employee performance evaluation

1. develops a shared understanding of the job's requirements, objectives, and expectations;
2. promotes discussion of the employee's performance and career goals;
3. describes the skills and competencies that lead to success on the job; and
4. provides direction in setting performance and development goals.

After the review, you will be required to sign the appraisal to acknowledge that it has been presented to you and discussed with you by your supervisor and that you are aware of its contents.

### **PROBATIONARY PERIODS**

All new employees shall serve a probationary period of twelve (12) months except for employees hired under the classification of Deputy Sheriff Recruit, who shall serve a probationary period of eighteen (18) months. Employees who are promoted to positions in the same department or to positions in another department shall serve an additional probationary period of twelve (12) months in the new position, including law-enforcement personnel (County Ordinance 3.08.160).

If you are serving an initial probationary period, you may be separated from County employment at any time during the probationary period without the right of appeal or hearing. If you are serving a promotional-probationary period, you may be entitled to be automatically restored to your previous position (County Ordinance 3.08.170).

### **PROMOTIONS**

You are encouraged to seek advancement opportunities during your career with the County. Your eligibility for promotion will be determined by evaluating your qualifications for the job (County Ordinance 3.08.350).

### **TRANSFERS**

To encourage the full utilization of all County employees, interdepartmental and intradepartmental transfers are available pursuant to the procedures established under County Ordinance 3.08.150. Such transfers must be approved by the Director of Human Resources and Risk Management and the department head of the department(s) directly involved in the transfer.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

### **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SUMMARY**

The County offers several plan options for you and your dependents. Our benefit plan year runs from January 1 to December 31 with open enrollment occurring in the fall.

All information related to group benefits is explained on the Plan Document, which is considered the final authority. You may review the Plan Document and Summary of Benefit and Coverage (SBC) at the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management or online at the County of Imperial website. Questions concerning the group benefit plan should be directed to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

All benefits are subject to the terms and conditions of the agreement between County of Imperial and the insurance carrier. Details on the program, benefits, and administrative rules are described in the group benefit package that will be provided to you upon employment. You are urged to read the information carefully.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Except as otherwise required by law, only employees hired into a regular position in the classified service on at least a part-time basis (twenty [20] hours or more per week) are eligible for group health benefits. The provisions set forth in this section only apply to employees entitled to group health benefits.

Your spouse or registered domestic partner and children or children of your spouse/registered domestic partner up to the age of twenty-six (26) are eligible dependents. Some restrictions may apply for coverage up to the age of twenty-six (26) depending on your selected plan.

### **INITIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD**

You have thirty-one (31) days from your date of hire to select in writing from among the available coverage options or waive your benefits. If no selection is made within the initial enrollment period, you will be placed by default in the plan with the highest deductible with employee only coverage. No vision or dental insurance will be available if enrolled by default. Your coverage will be effective the first day of the first month following two payroll deductions after your enrollment is received by our office. No changes will be allowed after this period until open enrollment.

### **BENEFIT CHANGES**

The benefits you select during the initial enrollment period remain in effect for the entire benefit plan year. Your benefit elections cannot be changed until the next open-enrollment period or if you have a qualifying event in your family status. Qualifying events may include:

- Marriage, divorce, legal separation, or registered domestic partnership.
- Birth or adoption of a child.
- Death of a spouse or child.
- Any change in your employment status or your spouse or dependent's employment status that results in a significant change to benefits eligibility, such

as start or end of employment and/or change from full-time to part-time employment.

If you experience a qualifying event, you must submit within thirty-one (31) calendar days a written request and proof of such event to our office for approval and processing. You can find the Benefit Application and Change Form on our website.

Coverage for qualifying events will become effective depending on the type of event. Please contact our office or review the Plan Document for specific information on your type of qualifying event.

### **BENEFITS CONTINUATION (COBRA)**

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) gives you and your qualified dependents the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under the County health plan when a qualifying event would normally result in the loss of coverage.

Qualifying events include resignation, termination of employment, death of employee, reduction in an employee's work hours or a leave of absence, divorce or legal separation, and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements. Under COBRA, you or your qualified dependent pays the full cost of coverage at the County group rate plus an administration fee on a monthly basis.

Under limited circumstances and as allowed by law, the County may deny participation in this program.

### **HIPAA PRIVACY STATEMENT**

Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), County of Imperial health plans are required to protect employees' personal health information. The Health Plans or Plan refer to medical, dental, vision, Employee-Assistance Program, and the Flexible Spending Accounts. The County of Imperial has long understood that health information about employees and their families is personal, and we are committed to continue protecting such information.

Protected health information includes all individually identifiable health information transmitted or maintained by the Plan whether it is oral, written, or electronic information. A Notice of Privacy Practices with full information describing the health information practices and employees' rights under the HIPAA Privacy Statement is given to all new employees upon hire.

### **MEDICAL INSURANCE**

The County's medical insurance provides comprehensive, quality health care for you and your dependents. The County contributes a predetermined amount toward the cost of your medical plan.

### **DENTAL INSURANCE**

The County's dental insurance plan offers a full range of dental services to help you and your eligible dependents maintain good oral health. Coverage is included for

preventive care as well as for treatment of dental disease.

This is a voluntary plan available for yourself and your eligible dependents in either plan. You and your dependents must be enrolled in a County medical plan under the same tier to be eligible for dental coverage.

### **VISION INSURANCE**

The County's vision insurance plan offers vision services to help you and your eligible dependents maintain healthy vision.

This is a voluntary plan available for yourself and your eligible dependents in either plan. You and your dependents must be enrolled in the County's medical plan under the same tier to be eligible for vision coverage.

### **FLEXIBLE SPENDING PROGRAM**

The County of Imperial provides its employees with a benefit program under IRS section 125 called the Flexible Spending Program. Through this benefit, you may set aside money, on a pre-tax basis, for qualified out-of-pocket health, dental, and vision expenses, resulting in significant tax savings for the employee. This plan lets you customize your benefit package by letting you select the specific benefits that meet your needs.

Through this program, you can choose to contribute toward either a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) and/or a Dependent Care Spending Account on a biweekly basis through a payroll deduction. The pretax amount you are contributing toward any or both accounts may be used only for authorized IRS eligible expenses.

You have thirty-one (31) days from the date of hire or during open enrollment to enroll in the County's Flexible Spending Program. You need to reenroll every year during the open-enrollment period for continued participation.

### **HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNT (HRA)**

The County of Imperial provides its managers and Department Heads with a Health Reimbursement Account. Through this benefit, the County contributes a board-approved amount every twenty-four (24) months to be used for FSA eligible expenses by the participant. This benefit renews every two years beginning January 1, 2013.

Managers and Department Heads who are also enrolled in the Flexible Spending Account must exhaust the FSA account before using the HRA.

### **TELEHEALTH SERVICES**

In an effort to expand access to care for you and your family, the County has implemented a telehealth program that offers immediate consultations for most common medical conditions through the internet or phone. This service is convenient, affordable and accessible twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.

## **LIFE INSURANCE**

Life insurance offers you and your family important financial protection. The County provides basic life insurance at no cost to you. Coverage is effective on your date of hire. The amount of coverage is determined based on your bargaining unit.

## **VOLUNTARY LIFE INSURANCE**

In addition to the basic life insurance provided by the County, you may purchase additional life insurance coverage for yourself in units of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$500,000. Combined amount of basic life and additional life cannot exceed five (5) times your annual salary. If you wish to become insured for an amount in excess of \$300,000, the excess will be subject to medical underwriting approval.

Spouse coverage is available in units of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$250,000 but not to exceed 50% of your combined basic and additional life coverage. If you elect an amount for your spouse greater than \$10,000, the excess will be subject to medical underwriting approval.

Children coverage is available in units of \$2,000 to a maximum of \$10,000.

All late applications and requests for coverage increases are also subject to medical underwriting approval.

## **MILESTONE AWARDS**

The County of Imperial recognizes contributions, dedication, loyalty, and extended service of regular full-time employees. All regular employees are eligible for service recognition upon completion of five (5) years of service and every five (5) years thereafter. Service awards may include plaques, gift cards, and other gifts depending on your years of service.

## **EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

The County has established a program to select and honor employees who have made a significant contribution to the County by performing their job duties in an exemplary manner that reflects a positive image of the County. Nominations may be made by persons in a supervisory capacity or higher.

## **DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLANS**

The County provides you the opportunity to participate in various Deferred Compensation Programs through payroll deductions.

## **RETIREMENT**

The County of Imperial has a retirement system based on California law (Retirement Act of 1937). This program is administered by the County Retirement Department (ICERS). For current information regarding eligibility, employee requirements, contributions, and benefits and/or for a copy of the "Retirement Benefits Booklet," contact the Retirement Department. You may also obtain information by visiting their website at [www.icers.info](http://www.icers.info).

## **RETIREE HEALTH**

The County of Imperial offers a package of health benefits for eligible retirees. These

benefits are not vested and are subject to change at any time. Retiree health benefits are based on actual time worked as a regular full-time employee with the County of Imperial. We encourage you to contact our office upon your decision to retire from the County to review your options for retiree health benefits.

### **STATE DISABILITY INSURANCE**

Most County employees are eligible and/or covered by state disability insurance. To find out whether you are covered by this program, refer to the MOU of your specific bargaining unit.

This program is administered by the State of California and is designed to partially replace wages you lost because of a disability that was not caused by your work. For eligibility requirements and to process a claim, please contact the State of California's Employment Development Department.

If you are eligible for coverage, the law requires that a small percentage of your wages, up to the prevailing maximum, be deducted on each pay period for the disability insurance.

### **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The County has established an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to you and all members of your household, including children up to the age of twenty-six (26). Services are confidential and available twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week at no cost. Assistance is available to deal with various life challenges such as social development, stress management, anxiety, and depression.

Eligible members are entitled to five (5) face-to-face counseling sessions with a licensed network professional per incident per benefit period. In addition, there are discounts for legal or financial services.

### **WELLNESS PROGRAM**

The County has developed a Wellness Program in order to promote a culture of wellness and prevention through education and activities that reward healthy behavior, healthy lifestyles, and improve the quality of life of our employees. Activities are scheduled on a monthly basis for your participation.

### **WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE**

County of Imperial provides a workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees for work-related injuries or illnesses as required by law.

### **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

The County encourages you to continue your education by enrolling in courses that will benefit both you and the County. Most regular full-time employees are eligible for the tuition reimbursement program as administered by the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. Reimbursement is limited to textbooks, parking fees, tuition, registration, and laboratory fees up to a maximum reimbursement amount (determined by your MOU) during any fiscal year. Courses must be taken on your own time or on compensatory time or vacation time if approved by your Department Head. You must request approval prior to enrollment and must satisfactorily complete the

course to receive reimbursement.

## **TIME OFF AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

### **HOLIDAYS**

As a regular, probationary, or part-time employee, you are eligible to receive the following paid holidays:

1. January 1.
2. The third Monday of January.
3. The third Monday of February.
4. Spring Holiday (date as determined by the board of supervisors).
5. The last Monday of May.
6. July 4.
7. The first Monday of September.
8. November 11.
9. The Thursday of November appointed as Thanksgiving Day.
10. The Friday after Thanksgiving Day.
11. December 25.

You must be on paid status both the workday preceding the holiday and the first working day subsequent to the holiday to be eligible for holiday pay. Paid status may include any combination of actual time worked, vacation, sick leave, or other paid leave. Leave without pay, whether authorized or not, will not qualify you for holiday pay. If any of the above days falls on Sunday, the following Monday becomes a holiday, and if it falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday is a holiday. If you are a regular employee and you are required by your department to work on a holiday, you will receive equivalent time off (County Ordinance 3.08.250).

In addition, depending on your MOU, you may be eligible for a personal holiday. This holiday must be scheduled within thirty (30) days of your birth anniversary. Such holiday shall not be carried over from year to year and shall be scheduled in cooperation with the Department Head or his or her designee. The holiday shall be taken within a single day according to the regular amount of hours the employee is scheduled to work on a regular basis. Please refer to the MOU of your bargaining unit for additional information.

### **VACATION TIME**

Employees holding a regular position are entitled to an annual paid vacation of up to fifteen (15) working days. Employees who have completed fifteen (15) years of continuous service may earn up to twenty (20) vacation days. Vacation credits may be used after one (1) year of continuous service and are capped at two hundred forty (240) hours for employees with less than fifteen (15) years of service or three hundred twenty (320) hours for employees with fifteen (15) years or more of service. All vacations and leave requests are subject to prior approval and scheduling needs of your Department Head or supervisor.

### **VACATION BUYBACK**

The County of Imperial provides its managers and Department Heads with the option of participating in the Vacation Buyback Program. Among the requirements, you must

have accrued two hundred (200) vacation hours as of the last paycheck in June of the previous fiscal year and have used at least eighty (80) hours of vacation during the current fiscal year. For more information, please contact the Auditor-Controller's office.

### **SICK TIME**

Employees shall earn up to twelve (12) working days of sick leave with pay in a year with unlimited accumulation. Sick leave may be used for the following purpose:

- When you are unable to work because of illness or injury.
- Up to six (6) working days of accumulated sick leave within one (1) calendar year when your child, parent, spouse, or domestic partner is ill.
- Up to three (3) working days of accumulated sick leave within one (1) year to attend to the illness of your grandparent, grandchild, sibling, and/or parent in law.
- If you are a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, you may be eligible to use up to three (3) working days of accumulated sick leave within one (1) year for purposes described in Labor Code section 230(c) and Labor Code section 230.1(a).

Additional usage and/or limitations may be applicable as required by law (County Ordinance 3.08.190).

### **SICK LEAVE BUYBACK**

You may qualify for a buyback of sick-leave benefits. Among the requirements, you must have a minimum of two hundred (200) hours of accumulated sick leave hours at the beginning of any fiscal year. The Auditors Department can provide additional information (County Ordinance 3.08.200).

### **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

You may be entitled to time off for bereavement leave. The amount of leave will depend on your bargaining unit. Time off can range from three to five (3-5) days depending on the location of the services you will be attending. Employees attending a funeral beyond a two hundred fifty (250) mile radius from their residence will be eligible for five (5) days of leave. Bereavement leave applies for each death in your immediate family. Immediate family members includes your spouse, domestic partner, grandfather, grandmother, great-grandfather, great-grandmother, spouse or domestic partner's grandfather or grandmother, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, your grandchild, great-grandchild or that of either your spouse or domestic partner, and any relative living in your immediate household and any of those equivalent step relationships of the listed above. Unused leave under this provision shall not accumulate from year to year. Additional limitations and/or restrictions may apply based on your MOU (County Ordinance 3.08.220).

### **JURY AND WITNESS DUTY**

You may, at some time, be called to serve on a jury or as a witness in a court proceeding. During the time of your service, you will continue to receive your full salary, providing you are not a litigant in the proceedings. You must notify your Department Head in writing that you have been called for such duty as soon as a notice or summons is received from the court. You may be required to provide written verification

of your attendance from the court clerk. If any of your regularly scheduled work time remains after you are released by the court on any day of jury selection or jury duty, you are expected to return to work for the remainder of your shift (County Ordinance 3.08.260).

### **TIME OFF TO VOTE**

The County of Imperial encourages all employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities and vote in all official public elections. Generally, the hours when the polls are open are such that you will have ample time to cast your vote before or after working hours.

However, if you do not have sufficient time outside of your working hours, as assigned by your supervisor, to vote at a statewide or local public elections in which you are eligible and registered to vote, you may, without loss of pay, take off no more than two (2) hours, which, when added to the voting time available outside of working hours, will allow you to vote. The time off for voting shall be only at the beginning or the end of the regular working shift.

To be eligible for this time off, you will be required to provide your immediate supervisor and/or Department Head at least two (2) working days' notice that time off for voting is desired in accordance with the provisions of the policy.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY**

Leaves of absence without pay may be granted by your Department Head if, in his/her opinion, the leave is justifiable, is to the benefit of you and your department, and will not create a hardship to the operations of your department. Requests for a leave of absence must be in writing and must indicate the reasons for your request, the beginning date, and the date of your return. Unpaid leaves of absence may be granted for no more than fifteen (15) calendar days by your Department Head or up to one hundred twenty (120) calendar days upon written authorization by the Director of Human Resources and Risk Management and upon recommendation of your Department Head (County Ordinance 3.08.270).

### **JOB ABANDONMENT**

An employee is deemed to have resigned from County employment if the employee is absent for five (5) consecutive work days without prior authorization and without notification during the period of absence. Regular employees will be provided an opportunity to explain the absence prior to a final action taking place.. An employee who is separated for job abandonment will be reinstated upon proof of justification for such absence, such as severe accident, severe illness, false arrest, or mental or physical impairment that prevented notification. No employee who was separated for job abandonment has the right to a post-separation appeal to the Employee Appeals Board.

### **ANNIVERSARY CHANGES**

The granting of any leave of absence without pay beyond fifteen (15) days may cause your anniversary date to be postponed. Such leaves include but are not limited to FMLA, CFRA, pregnancy disability leave (PDL), and leaves pertaining to an on-the-job injury, regardless of whether you use your accruals (sick, vacation, compensatory time)

or other type of pay (i.e., donation of time). Please refer to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management for further information.

### **PARENTAL LEAVE FOR SCHOOL VISITS**

It is County policy to allow regular employees who are parents or grandparents having legal custody or legal guardians to participate in the school activities of a child K-12. You may take up to forty (40) hours per school year, not to exceed eight (8) hours in a calendar month. This type of leave can be leave without pay, vacation, administrative leave, or compensatory time off. Prior approval must be obtained.

### **FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA/CFRA)**

Pursuant to state and federal law, you may be entitled to family care and medical leave (FMLA leave). The County has adopted a policy that details the specific requirements for such leave. This leave may be taken for a period of no more than twelve (12) workweeks during a rolling twelve-month period counting backward.

Family care and medical leave is granted for the birth or adoption of a child, to care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition, or if you are suffering from a serious health condition that makes you unable to perform your job.

In addition, leave may be granted for a qualifying exigency arising out of a military member (spouse, son, daughter, or parent) on covered active duty and leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness.

You are required to provide written notice of your anticipated need for family care leave within thirty (30) calendar days of learning of the need for the leave. You may also be subject to specific eligibility and certification requirements set forth in the County's Family Care and Medical Leave Policy.

During any period in which you are eligible under the Family Care and Medical Leave Policy, the County will maintain group health benefits coverage if such benefits were provided before the leave was taken and on the same terms as if you had continued to work. If you normally pay a portion of the premiums for your benefits, you will continue to be responsible for making such payments. Payments can be made through payroll deductions or by making payment arrangements with the department of Human Resources and Risk Management prior to the start of your leave. Failure to make payments or arrangements may result in termination of coverage.

FMLA leave is without pay. However, employees may utilize sick, vacation, and any other accrued paid time off during the leave.

### **PREGNANCY DISABILITY LEAVE**

You may be eligible for an unpaid pregnancy disability leave if you are disabled because of pregnancy, childbirth, or any related medical conditions. A written statement from your physician or medical provider must be submitted for such leave to be authorized. Upon your request and as recommended by your physician, the County may consider a reasonable accommodation or transfer you to a less strenuous or hazardous position.

Leave taken under the pregnancy disability policy runs concurrently with federal law (FMLA) but not under California law (CFRA).

Pregnancy disability leaves are without pay. However, employees may utilize sick, vacation, and any other accrued paid time off during the leave (County Ordinance 3.08.290).

As with FMLA, the County will maintain group health benefits coverage during a period covered under pregnancy disability leave if such benefits were provided before the leave was taken and on the same terms as if you had continued to work. If you normally pay a portion of the premiums for your benefits, you will continue to be responsible for making such payments. Payments can be made through payroll deductions or by making payment arrangements with the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management prior to the start of your leave. Failure to make payments or arrangements may result in termination of coverage.

#### **WORKERS' COMPENSATION LEAVE**

If you are temporarily disabled because of a job-related injury or illness, you may be eligible for a leave of absence under the same terms and conditions as those offered for non-job-related injury or illness (County Ordinance 3.08.300).

#### **MILITARY LEAVE**

Requests for a military leave of absence, through the United States Army Reserves, National Guard, or active duty, will be granted in accordance with state and federal laws. In addition, you may be eligible for a stipend when ordered to active military duty as a result of the activation of military reservists or ordered into active federal military duty as a member of the National Guard or naval militia (County Ordinance 3.08.260).

#### **TIME OFF FOR BLOOD DONATIONS**

Upon approval of your supervisor and/or Department Head, you may be eligible to take no more than two (2) hours paid time off to donate blood. Advanced approval is required and verification that you donated blood may be requested. Your supervisor will evaluate based on operational needs whether or not the release time is disruptive to County operations (Minute Order 1.d June 26, 1984).

## **WORKING HOURS**

### **WORK SCHEDULES**

Work schedules are individually defined by each department within the County. Your supervisor will assign your individual work schedule. You are expected to be at your workstation at the start of your scheduled shift, ready to perform your work.

### **FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE**

Your department may offer you the opportunity to participate in a flexible work schedule based on a 9/80 plan. This program is granted at the discretion of your Department Head and can be revoked at any time.

### **REST AND MEAL PERIODS**

You are entitled to take a rest period of fifteen (15) minutes at approximately the middle of every four (4) hours worked. Time spent on rest periods will be compensated as hours worked, except that specific job assignments designated by the Department Head may be assigned a different schedule for taking rest periods. No employee shall leave an office or telephone unattended to take a rest period unless another employee temporarily covers his/her workstation.

This fifteen- (15) minute work period is calculated from the time you leave your workstation until you return. You are expected to be punctual in starting and ending your rest periods. Work breaks cannot be used to extend lunch hours or to shorten your daily work schedule.

A thirty- (30) minute meal period (as a minimum) must be taken within the first five (5) hours worked unless six (6) hours completes your workday. Meal periods are unpaid, and you must account for the meal period so it is reflected within the County's electronic time-tracking system. You are directed not to perform any work for the County during your meal period. If you are unable to take a meal period during which you are completely relieved of all duties, you must notify your supervisor in writing by the end of that same workday that you did not take an uncompensated meal period. You must refrain from performing any work for the benefit of the County during your meal period unless directed to perform such work by a supervisor or manager. Failure to timely notify your supervisor in writing that you were unable to take a meal period may result in discipline.

If you are a nonexempt employee and you are required to work through a meal period, you will be compensated for the time worked at your regular rate of pay. Whether you are required to work through the meal period is within the sole discretion of your Department Head, manager, and supervisor.

If you believe that you are not receiving rest and meal periods in accordance with this policy, you must promptly notify the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

## **TIMEKEEPING**

You are responsible for the accurate completion of your attendance record. This is usually done through an electronic time-tracking system. You must record the starting and ending times for each workday, including the starting and ending times for meal periods.

Falsifying, altering, tampering with time cards, or recording time on another employee's time card may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

For purposes of recording benefit payments due, such as vacation, holiday, or sick leave, you are required to complete a time sheet whether or not you are eligible for overtime.

## **LACTATION BREAKS**

The County will provide reasonable amount of break time for you to express breast milk for your nursing child for up to one (1) year after your child's birth. Breaks for the purpose of expressing milk are not compensable; however, the break time may run concurrently with the paid break time already provided to you in the section above (morning and afternoon fifteen (15) minute breaks).

In addition, the department will provide an appropriate location for you to express breast milk in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.

## **OVERTIME/COMPENSATION TIME**

As a general policy, overtime work is discouraged. However, there may be times when departmental needs cannot be met during a regular working schedule and you may be scheduled to work overtime hours.

Except for elected officers, exempt employees, employees in law enforcement activities, or employees in fire-protection activities, hours actually worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a single workweek are compensated at the rate of one and one half times the regular rate of pay or in compensatory time off at the rate of one and one half (1 ½) times the overtime hours actually worked. If you are engaged in law enforcement and fire-protection activities, overtime hours are hours actually worked in excess of the designated number of hours within the specific work periods established by the Board of Supervisors. All overtime hours worked must be previously approved by your supervisor (County Ordinance 3.08.180).

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Regular and prompt attendance is an essential requirement of your job. If illness or some other emergency causes an unplanned and/or unforeseeable absence, you must notify your immediate supervisor at the beginning of your shift on the first day of your absence and at the beginning of each subsequent day thereafter if additional time is required. In the event that your supervisor is not available, you must speak to the designated person within your department to ensure that your absence is properly documented.

Upon request of the Department Head, you may be required to furnish proof of illness, such as a certificate from a licensed physician.

Improper use of sick leave, excessive absenteeism, tardiness, unauthorized absences, or failure to notify your department when you are unable to report to work may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **PAY PRACTICES**

The salary schedule consists of a series of ranges containing six (6) steps with an approximate 5% increase between each step. Each position in the County is assigned to one of these ranges according to the degree of responsibility and nature of duties required by the position.

As a new employee, you will normally begin at Step A of the range to which your classification is assigned. Most employees are eligible to receive an increase on their anniversary date to Step B and each step thereafter up to Step E after twelve (12) months of continuous satisfactory service in each step, provided that such increase is recommended and approved by your Department Head (County Ordinance 3.12.040).

An employee is eligible for Step F, the sixth step, upon completion of nine (9) years of continuous satisfactory service and at least one (1) year in Step E at your current classification, provided that such increase is recommended by your Department Head and approved by the Director of Human Resources and Risk Management (County Ordinance 3.12.060).

Part-time employees are not eligible for advancement to Step F.

### **DEDUCTIONS**

Accompanying your check will be a statement of earnings, deductions, and accrual of vacation and sick-leave benefits. The following deductions may be indicated:

- Federal Income Tax
- State Income Tax
- Medicare/FICA
- Retirement Contributions
- Group Insurance
- Special Deductions

If you feel there has been an error in any paycheck or if you have any questions concerning the amount of your check, you should see your immediate supervisor or the payroll section of the Auditor-Controller's Office. If you have been underpaid, the County will correct the amount. If you have been overpaid, the County will make the necessary adjustments to recoup the overpayment.

When an employee's wages are garnished by a court order, the County is legally bound to withhold the amount indicated in the garnishment order from the employee's paycheck. The County will honor federal and state guidelines that protect a certain amount of the employee's income from being subject to garnishments.

**PAYDAY**

County employees are paid on a biweekly basis on Friday (every two weeks). Your paycheck represents earnings for the previous pay period, running from Friday of one week through Thursday two weeks later. Five (5) days normally lapse after the end of the pay period before you receive your pay.

You may have pay directly deposited into your bank account. A direct deposit authorization form must be submitted in advance.

## **WORK CONDITIONS**

### **TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT**

The County of Imperial is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and to promoting the health and wellbeing of its employees. As such, smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes and tobacco use, is prohibited in all County-owned or County-leased buildings, vehicles, and equipment.

Employees may smoke in designated areas during their regularly scheduled breaks within the restrictions provided in local, state, or federal laws. State law prohibits smoking within twenty (20) feet of a main entrance, exits, and operable windows of any building owned, leased, and occupied by the County. Employees are not allowed to take additional time than they are legally entitled to for smoking purposes. If an employee abuses this policy and takes excessive breaks, it may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM AND SAFETY**

The County of Imperial has adopted an Injury and Illness Prevention Program, which is a comprehensive health and safety program designed to identify and abate hazards known to be associated with workplace violence, accidents, injuries, and illnesses in order to provide a safe and healthy place to work.

You are responsible for your own safety as well as the safety of others in the workplace. To achieve our goal of maintaining a safe workplace, everyone must be safety conscious at all times. You can help by looking and thinking before acting, by using the safety equipment provided, by reporting all unsafe working conditions or equipment, and by following safety rules and regulations. Be sure to obtain proper instructions before you start a new task or operate a new machine. Remember to keep your work area free of clutter or extraneous items that may create a safety hazard.

### **REPORTING ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES**

If you are injured on the job, you must report the injury to your supervisor and contact **Company Nurse at 877-545-9157**. In no event shall such notification be delayed beyond twenty-four (24) hours.

The County's Workers' Compensation Program will pay for all eligible medical expenses, temporary disability, and/or permanent disability benefits as provided by law.

If a licensed physician restricts you from working during the onset of the job related injury/illness (OJI), you will receive full compensation for the scheduled work days falling within the first three (3) work days of such absence (free OJI). The free OJI days cannot be used to compensate you for time used for doctor's visits unless you have been put off work by the treating physician. Additionally, the free OJI must be used in full-day increments, even if the first day of such absence is partial. Thereafter, you may elect to apply prorated accrued sick leave, earned vacation, or compensatory time credits for such absence to supplement any benefits you may be eligible for under the Workers' Compensation Act.

If you hold an active firefighting and prevention service or active-law-enforcement position, you may elect to receive Labor Code 4850 benefits in lieu of temporary disability benefits not to exceed one year (County Ordinance 3.08.300).

Depending on the amount of time you are off, you may be required to submit to a return-to-work physical before you return to work. Additional information can be obtained from the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management (County Ordinance 3.24.200).

### **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, power failures, or earthquakes can disrupt County operations and make it impossible for employees to report to work. Moreover, in extreme cases, these circumstances may require the closing of a work site. In the event that such an emergency occurs during nonworking hours, the County will attempt to contact local radio and/or television stations to broadcast notification of the closing. Furthermore, when a state of emergency has been declared and operations are officially closed because of emergency conditions (weather or otherwise), the time off will be paid to employees regularly scheduled to work on that date.

However, if no emergency has been declared but an employee is unable to report to work, the employee will not be paid for the time off unless state or federal law otherwise requires.

### **RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES**

In emergencies, the public relies on County services for information and assistance. All County employees, by the nature of their employment, are classified as *disaster service workers*. Employees may be called upon to perform duties other than their regular assignments to aid County emergency efforts.

Please be sure that your Department Head, supervisor, or his/her designee has your current phone number where you can be reached if you are needed during an emergency. Also, make sure you understand your department's procedures during emergency efforts.

### **USING COUNTY AND PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES FOR COUNTY BUSINESS**

You may be assigned a County vehicle if your position so requires. Unless otherwise authorized, assigned County vehicles shall not be kept overnight or taken outside the County. Make sure that maintenance checks are made as scheduled, that appropriate records are maintained, and, when repair is needed, that it is reported promptly to the County garage. County vehicles may be used for no purpose other than County business.

On certain circumstances, you may be authorized by your Department Head to use your privately owned vehicle on County business. Reimbursement is provided on a monthly basis on a mileage basis at such rates as determined by law or resolution of the Board of Supervisors. Any employee operating a vehicle must maintain a valid California Driver's license that authorizes operation of the vehicle and shall meet the financial responsibility requirements of the California Vehicle Code. You must complete

and submit to your supervisor an Authorization to Use Privately Owned Vehicle for Travel on County Business form with the appropriate proof of insurance before being allowed to use your personal vehicle for County business (County Ordinance 3.48.040).

It is your responsibility to obey all safety laws when operating or riding in County vehicles. You will be responsible for paying all fines or penalties levied as a result of a violation of any valid statute, ordinance, rules, or regulations while operating a county vehicle or while operating any other vehicle on county business (County Ordinance 3.44.080).

### **SUPPLEMENTAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR APPLICANTS AND EMPLOYEES IN POSITIONS REQUIRING SPECIAL DMV LICENSING**

It is County policy to ensure that all employees are physically able to perform their duties. All applicants and employees requiring special DMV licensing are required by the State of California DMV to undergo exams every two (2) years. It is County policy that these exams be conducted exclusively by the County Health Office. DMV exams are scheduled by the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management. The exams must be successfully completed with the County Health Officer prior to placing any applicant or prior to continued employment of any County employee in a County position requiring special DMV licensing.

### **AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF DRIVER RECORD INFORMATION**

The Employer Pull Notice (EPN) Program was established to provide employers with a means of promoting driver safety through ongoing review. As an employee of the County of Imperial, you will be requested to complete the authorization for release of driver record information. By completing this form you will be authorizing the County to receive a driver record at least once every twelve months or when any subsequent convictions, failures to appear, accident(s), driver's license suspensions revocations, or any other action is taken against your driving privilege during your employment.

### **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

As an employee of the County, you may be assigned a position that is required under section 11166 of the Penal Code to report any suspected instance of child abuse. Specifically, any child-care custodian, medical practitioner, nonmedical practitioner, or employee of a child-protective agency who has knowledge of or observes a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been a victim of child abuse is required to report the known suspected instance of child abuse to a child-protective agency immediately or as soon possible by telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within thirty six (36) hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

### **SOLICITATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND BULLETIN BOARDS**

In an effort to ensure a productive and harmonious work environment, persons not employed by the County of Imperial may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose. In addition, written solicitations should not be posted on County bulletin boards.

County bulletin boards display important information and employees should consult them frequently. If employees have a message of interest to the workplace, they may

submit it to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management for approval and posting.

Employees may ask other employees to share in supporting favorite charities or nonprofit organizations or events during non-work time and outside work areas. However, employees may not distribute literature of this kind in any manner, including via e-mail.

## **GRIEVANCE, COMPLAINTS, AND APPEALS**

**Definition of Grievance:** a grievance is defined as a dispute over the application of the specific terms or provisions of County of Imperial Ordinance or policies by an employee adversely affected thereby but shall not include the following:

- Disciplinary actions, including those disciplinary actions that are subject to appeal through County ordinance.
- The exercise of any County management rights.
- An impasse or dispute in the meet-and-confer process.

**Rights:** There shall be no restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal against any employee for exercising any rights under the grievance procedure.

**Grievance Procedure Steps:** *(Time frames may vary depending on the employees bargaining unit.)*

### 1. Discussion with Immediate Supervisors

- i. The grievant shall first discuss the grievance informally with his or her immediate supervisor. The discussion shall be held within ten (10) working days following the date of the action causing the grievance. Differences in time frames may apply. Please refer to MOU for your specific bargaining unit.
- ii. Every reasonable effort shall be made to resolve the grievance at this level. The immediate supervisor shall respond verbally to the grievant within ten (10) working days following the date of the informal discussion between the grievant and the supervisor. Differences in time frames may apply. Please refer to MOU for your specific bargaining unit.

### 2. Formal Written Grievance

- i. In the event the employee believes the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, the employee shall submit the grievance in writing on the form prescribed by the County to the next higher authority within ten (10) working days after receipt of the immediate supervisor's verbal response.

- ii. Within ten (10) working days following the date of the receipt of the grievance, the higher authority shall respond in writing to the grievant stating his or her decision, the facts on which the decision is based, and the remedy or correction which has been offered.
- iii. Any grievance resolved at this step shall be subject to the review and approval of the Department Head. If no resolution is reached, the grievant may initiate step 3 of this procedure.

### 3. Department Head Review

- i. If a grievance is not resolved at step 2 of this procedure, the grievance may be appealed to the Department Head in writing within ten (10) working days following the date of the receipt of the decision received at step 2.
- ii. The department head shall confer with the employee and prior levels of supervision involved in an attempt to affect a harmonious solution. The Department Head shall reply in writing within ten (10) working days following receipt of the written grievance unless by mutual agreement that the time limitation is extended. A copy of the Department Head's response shall be filed with the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

### 4. Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

- i. In the event the employee believes his or her grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved at step 3 of this procedure, he/she shall submit the grievance in writing to the director of Human Resources and Risk Management within ten (10) working days following the date of the receipt of the Department Head's written response. A meeting may be held at the discretion of the Director of Human Resources and Risk Management or designee.
- ii. Within ten (10) working days following the date of receipt of the grievance, the Director of Human Resources and Risk Management shall deliver his or her written decision to the grievant and his/her representative. Said decision shall be final and binding, except as provided below.

### 5. Grievance Resolution

- i. Within ten (10) working days following the date of receipt of the written decision resulting from a grievance heard by the director of Human Resources and Risk Management, or his/her designated representative, the grievant may request that the grievance be submitted to the County Employment Appeals Board or its designee for final resolution.

## 6. Basic Rules

- i. Failure of the aggrieved employee to file within the specified time limit for any step of the grievance procedure shall constitute an abandonment of the grievance.

Failure of any designated level of management to respond within the specified time limits shall cause the grievance to move to the next step in the process, if so desired by the employee, effective as of the date by which management is required to respond.

- ii. Upon written consent of both parties to a grievance, the time limitations at any level in the procedure may be extended.

**Special Provisions:** The multilevel steps of the grievance procedure are designed to permit sufficient steps within larger departments having more than one supervisory level. In the case of departments with only one supervisory level between the employee and the Department Head, step 2 is waived. In departments that have more than three (3) levels of supervision, the Department Head may require that the grievance be processed through all supervisory levels. If the Department Head is the immediate supervisor, steps 1 and 2 above are eliminated. A grievance originating in a department that does not have supervisory levels between the employee and the Department Head shall be responded to in writing by the Department Head.

It is the responsibility of the employee to submit their grievance in writing using the County of Imperial Employee Grievance Report Form. If you need a copy of this form, please download it from the County of Imperial website or contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

## GENERAL EMPLOYMENT APPEALS

Under County Ordinance Chapter 3.64, some issues may be appealed to the County of Imperial Employment Appeals Board. For your appeal to be granted, the issue must be an appealable issue, and you must meet all provisions of the ordinances governing employment appeals..

## POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

You are encouraged to vote in local, state, and national elections. Participation in political activities outside of working hours is generally compatible with County service. However, involvement by County employees in county elections may create conflicts that are disruptive of department morale and county government. Specific regulations can be found in County Ordinance Chapter 3.52.

## PARKING

Off-street parking is provided at various locations around the administration center for employees and the public. The lots are marked with County identification. Please note and observe any signs reserving spaces for the disabled or for other purposes. The

County is not responsible for any loss or damages to employee vehicles or property while parked on County premises, nor is the County responsible for fines for employees who park unlawfully.

### **EMPLOYEE RESIDENT BENEFIT PROGRAM**

This policy applies to County employees who are assigned, reassigned, transferred, and/or relocated to certain remote areas of the County and are required to reside in those areas. If you have any questions, please contact your Department Head or the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

Department Heads shall have sole authority to relocate, assign, and/or reassign department personnel to meet work load and to determine where departmental personnel shall be relocated, assigned, and/or reassigned under this policy. If you are entitled to the Resident Benefit, you shall acknowledge that you are financially responsible for any damage to the property, except for reasonable wear and tear, and that upon separation from the County service, you must vacate the property within thirty (30) calendar days of the effective date of separation.

## **EMPLOYMENT SEPARATION**

### **RESIGNATIONS**

County of Imperial requests a two-week notice from employees who voluntarily resign their employment. This helps your department plan the workload so that minimal disruption occurs.

### **REHIRE POLICY**

County of Imperial fills open positions with individuals best qualified for those positions. In some cases, a former employee may be a candidate for a position. Former employees who left the County in good standing are eligible for rehire upon completing the usual recruitment and selection processes.

A former employee who is rehired will be treated as a new hire and will not receive an adjusted service date.

### **REDUCTION IN FORCE**

Layoff of County employees may be necessary because of a change of service(s), lack of work, discontinuance of a program, or for other reasons or circumstances as determined by the Board of Supervisors (County Ordinance 3.40.010).

### **RETURN OF COUNTY PROPERTY**

Any employment-related material(s), keys, ID cards, electronics, or other equipment issued by the County shall be returned to the department in which you are designated to or to the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management before the end of your last working day. Any materials, files, documents, or other items collected or created by you in connection with your employment remain the property of the County. You may not take any such materials or copies of those materials with you when you depart.

### **EXIT INTERVIEW**

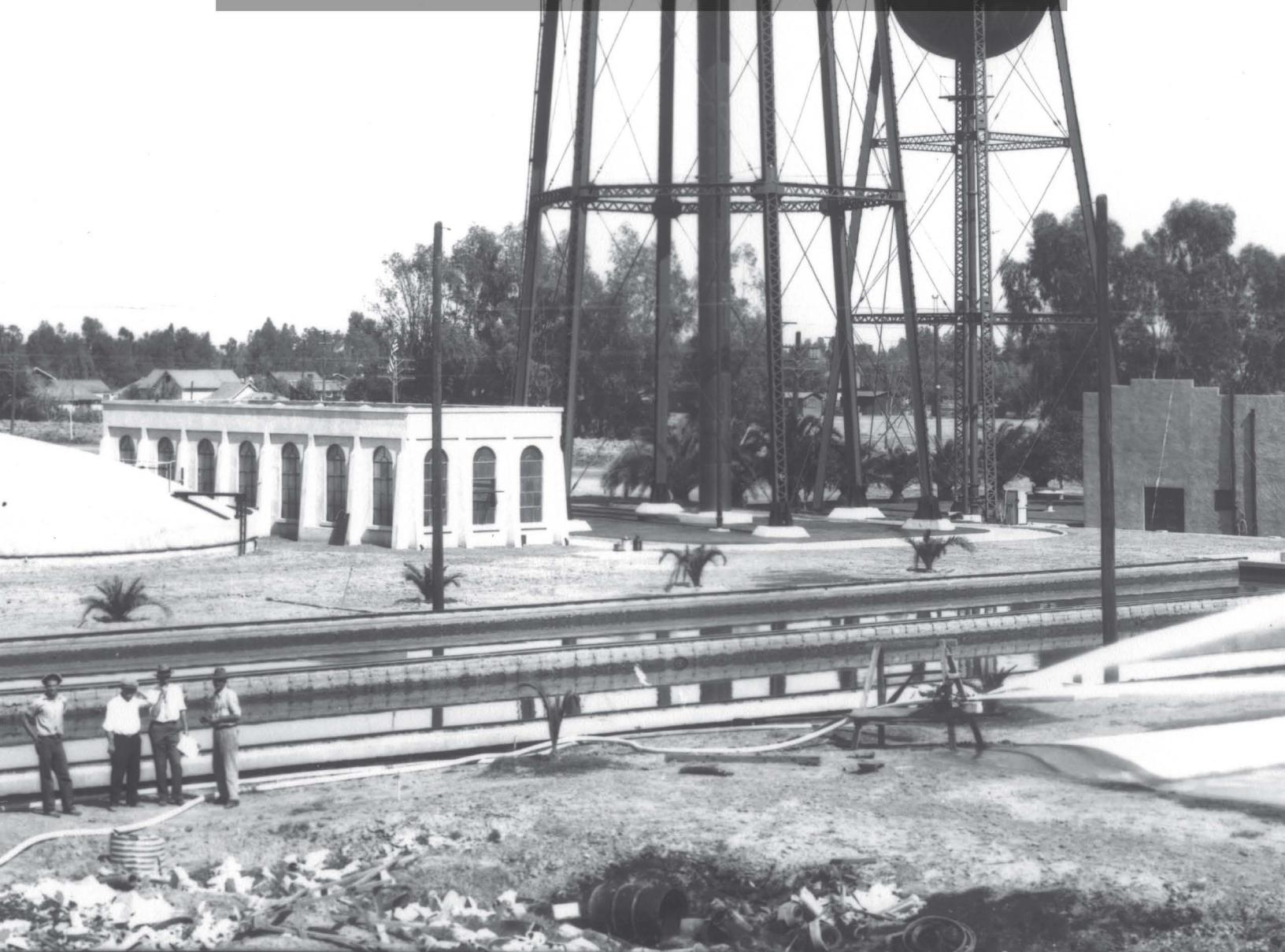
It is important that, before separating from County employment, you have an exit interview with your Department Head or supervisor prior to your date of separation. The purpose of the exit interview is to ensure that you are aware of potential benefits that you may be entitled to and to discuss any other pertinent information relating to your employment with the County.

The exit interview is not mandatory but at the discretion of your Department Head.

## CONCLUSION

Please contact the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management for any questions pertaining to the contents of this employee handbook. Any and all forms referenced in this handbook can be found in our website at [www.co.imperial.ca.us](http://www.co.imperial.ca.us) or by visiting our office located at 940 W. Main Street, Suite 101, El Centro, CA.

Again, welcome.





**Human Resources**  
**& Risk Management**  
COUNTY OF IMPERIAL