

# TOWN OF LEDYARD



# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Adopted by the Town Council on: April 26, 2023

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Employee Handbook is intended as a general guide to the Town of Ledyard personnel policies, practices, and employee benefits.

The contents of this Employee Handbook are presented as a guide. Neither the Handbook nor any other personnel policies, practices, or benefits are to be understood as a promise or contract between the Town and its employees. However, violations of any of the policies stated herein could lead to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. With respect to insurance and retirement matters, the actual terms of the insurance policy, agreement, or contract will control.

Employees represented by a labor union will be governed by the policies set forth in their collective bargaining agreement to the extent that such policies differ from the policies outlined in this Employee Handbook.

The Town reserves its right to modify, change, or cancel all or any part of the Employee Handbook at any time without written or verbal notice as circumstances may require.

You are urged to read this material carefully and at your earliest convenience.

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## APPENDICES

The following policies were approved separately from the Employee Handbook and are included here for ease of use:

1. DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE POLICY
2. MOBILE DEVICE POLICY
3. NON-VIOLENCE POLICY
4. RETURN TO WORK POLICY
5. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
6. SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE POLICY
7. TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY
8. VEHICLE USE POLICY – MUNICIPAL VEHICLES
9. WORKPLACE HARASSMENT POLICY

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY**

It is the continuing policy of the Town of Ledyard to ensure equal employment opportunity in all personnel actions. Our policy is stated as follows:

1. Recruiting, hiring, training, and promoting of all job classifications will be without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability, except in the case of bona fide occupational qualifications.
2. Employment decisions will be based solely on the individual's experience and qualifications as related to the requirements of the position for which the individual is being considered.
3. All personnel actions such as compensation, benefits, transfers, terminations, and layoffs, return from layoffs, town sponsored training, education, social and recreational programs will be administered without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability unless accommodations cannot be provided under the legal standards presented.

## **EMPLOYMENT-AT-WILL**

Those employees who (i) do not have an individualized written employment contract, (ii) are not members of a bargaining unit covered by a collective bargaining agreement, or (iii) do not hold an office to which statutory termination provisions are applicable, are employed at the will of the Town. At-will employees are subject to termination by the Town at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice. Nothing in this Handbook or any statement, written or oral, shall limit the Town's right to terminate employment at will. Similarly, employees are free to terminate their employment at any time without cause.

## **HOURS OF WORK**

The normal work week is Sunday through Saturday.

Full-time employees are those who are regularly scheduled for thirty (30) or more hours per week. Part-time employees are those who are regularly scheduled for fewer than thirty (30) hours per week.

The schedule of working hours for employees is determined by each department head, including work breaks and meal periods. All employees who work at least eight hours per day are entitled to a meal break after four hours of work. Meal periods are unpaid unless specifically authorized as paid time by the supervisor or department head. You may not work through your meal break without supervisor or department head approval as such time may cause overtime or comp time to

be incurred. Supervisors or department heads may find it necessary to change work schedules to meet the operational needs of the department.

Employees may be requested, on occasion, to work more than their regularly scheduled work hours. Employees are not permitted to work additional hours or overtime without the prior approval of their supervisor or department head.

### **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Employees who are unable to report to work at their regular starting time are required to contact their supervisor as soon as possible to explain the reason for their absence and when they expect to return at work. An absence that is a no-call and no-show is a serious matter and if not excused by an emergency may be regarded as job abandonment.

The major function of Town employees is to serve the citizens of the Town. Absenteeism and tardiness increase the workload of other employees and affect the cost and quality of services provided. It is important that all employees are punctual in starting work in order that this service is assured during working hours.

Employees reporting to work after their scheduled starting times will be considered tardy. Employees are expected to work their entire shifts. Tardiness also includes leaving early without permission.

### **PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

The first six (6) months of employment for new employees shall be a probation period to assess whether the job is a proper fit for both the new employee and the Town. Upon completion of six (6) months of employment, employees will be entitled to applicable fringe benefits as described in this Handbook. Employees are not allowed to schedule time off during the probationary period except for emergencies. Employees will accrue appropriate benefits during the probationary period and will receive pay for any Town designated holidays.

The new employee's supervisor will submit a job performance evaluation to the department head or Director of Human Resources by the end of the probationary period, including a recommendation as to whether the employee should continue in the position.

## **EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS**

Regular Full-Time Employees. Full-time status is given to employees working thirty (30) hours or more per week. Regular status is used to describe those employees whose jobs are ongoing with the Town. Regular full-time employees are eligible for all Town benefits prorated from a forty (40) hour week.

Regular Part-Time Employees. Part-time status is given to non-temporary employees working fewer than thirty (30) hours per week. Regular Part-time employees are eligible for certain Town benefits as defined in this Handbook or in their terms of hire.

Temporary Employees. Temporary employees are hired on an interim or temporary basis to supplement the workforce and are given a limited duration of employment or a specific work-ending date. Employment beyond an initially-stated period will not imply a change in employment status. Temporary employees are not eligible for Town benefits.

Seasonal Employees. Seasonal employees are employees who work less than 120 days in a calendar year. Seasonal employees are not eligible for Town benefits.

Rehired Employees. Eligibility for employee benefits of rehired employees will be based on their rehire date.

Non-exempt Employees. Nonexempt employees are subject to the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Connecticut wage and hour laws.

Exempt Employees. Exempt employees are exempt from the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and Connecticut wage and hour laws and are not entitled to overtime pay. Exempt employees may include personnel employed in executive, administrative, and professional capacities.

Elected Officials. Elected Officials are elected by the citizens of the Town of Ledyard. Certain elected officials are treated as employees for the purposes of salary and benefits and will be guided by the Town's policies, the Resolution Establishing Administrator/Department Head Benefits, or to individual specifications for their positions.

## **EMPLOYEE TERMINATIONS**

Employee terminations may occur for numerous reasons, including the following:

- Employee's Resignation
- Employee's Retirement
- Reduction in the Workforce
- Expiration of an Employment Contract
- Employee's Discharge

Discharge can be for any reason not prohibited by law. In the absence of a specific written agreement, and in conformance with the Town's employment-at-will policy, employees are free to resign at any time and for any reason and the Town reserves the right to terminate employment at any time and for any reason.

Employees are requested to give written notice of their intent to resign and should be guided by the following criteria:

- Supervisory and managerial employees - four weeks' notice.
- All other employees - at least two weeks' notice.

Once notice is given, employees are required to work the entire two or four week notice period and vacation or personal time will not be allowed unless prior approval is granted by the employee's supervisor.

Recommendation by a supervisor for the discharge of an employee must have final approval by the Mayor.

The Director of Human Resources will be responsible for conducting exit interviews of all terminating employees and for securing the return of all Town property such as automobiles, keys, credit cards, tools, phones, and so forth.

Termination and discharge procedures are only guidelines and do not create a binding agreement between the Town and its employees.

### **SALARY ADMINISTRATION**

It is the Town's policy to provide equitable compensation for each employee based on the responsibilities of the individual's position and performance.

Non-union salaries are established by the Mayor with the approval of the Town Council on an annual basis and are based on the education and experience required to perform the duties and the responsibilities of the position and how those responsibilities relate to those responsibilities of other Town positions.

In order to maintain a fair and consistent pay structure, the Town may participate in local salary surveys to compare Town salaries with those of similar positions in other similar municipalities.

It has been the practice of the Town to implement salary increases to non-union employees, as recommended by the Mayor, effective July 1 of each year. This practice is only a guideline and does not create a binding commitment. The percentage of salary increases given is determined during the Town's budget deliberations.



## **PAYDAY**

Employees are paid the following week of each bi-weekly period. Employees enter their time each day into the Town's digital time keeping and attendance system. Department heads review and submit approved time entries to the payroll office by 7:00 a.m. on the Monday following the close of the bi-weekly pay period, reporting all hours worked by all department employees except elected officials. Time should also be recorded for all paid time off.

Deductions are made from paychecks, as required by law, for federal and state withholding for taxes and social security and Medicare, as well as any other payroll deductions employees authorize the Town to make or that the Town is legally required to make, such as retirement plan contributions.

Employees shall have their pay automatically deposited into checking or savings accounts by making a request to the Payroll officer.

## **OVERTIME**

Non-exempt employees shall be paid at the straight time rate for all hours worked more than regularly scheduled hours and up to forty hours in one workweek. In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, all non-exempt employees shall be paid at the rate of time and one-half the straight time rate for all hours worked more than forty hours in one work week. All hours worked on a holiday will be paid at the rate of time and one-half or at the rate determined in collective bargaining units if specified.

Exempt employees do not receive either overtime pay or compensatory time in lieu of overtime pay.

Exempt employees are expected to work beyond the normal workday when necessary, including attendance at Town board or commission meetings in the evenings.

All overtime must be requested and approved by department heads before overtime work will be allowed.

Overtime is computed on the basis of hours actually worked in the payroll week; pay for time not worked, such as vacation or sick leave, will not be counted.

## **PERSONNEL RECORDS**

Employees are responsible for informing the Director of Human Resources of any change in name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, beneficiary designations for any of the Town's benefit plans, and person to be notified in case of emergency.

Employees may inspect their own personnel records, and may receive copies of, but not remove, documents in the file. An appointment for inspection of an employee's own personnel file should be made with the Director of Human Resources. An employee may request removal of what the employee believes to be erroneous information in the personnel file. However, the decision to remove is within the sole discretion of the Town.

If an employee disagrees with a personnel record (e.g., performance evaluation, discipline record) they may submit a rebuttal for inclusion in their personnel file.

### **JOB POSTING**

After approval by the Town's Director of Human Resources and Finance Director, job vacancies will be posted on Town bulletin boards and the Town website for a minimum period of seven (7) days. Employees may apply for any posted position for which they are qualified. Applicants shall be selected based on qualifications including, but not limited to, ability, education, training, seniority, experience, and general background, in accordance with the job description and the equal employment opportunity policy.

### **SOLICITATIONS**

Employees may not engage in solicitations for any purpose during working time, which includes the working time of both the employee who seeks to solicit, and the employee being solicited. Distributions of any type, whether documents or goods, are prohibited in working areas and areas accessible to the public for Town services. Non-employees may not solicit employees or make distributions of any kind on Town premises.

### **EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE**

Whenever an employee's performance, attitude, work habits or personal conduct in the workplace fails to meet the expected level of performance, supervisors shall promptly inform the employee, and specify such lapses and give counsel and assistance. In some instances, the employee's conduct may justify disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. The purpose of discipline is not to punish the employee, but rather to make the employee aware of the consequences of continued substandard performance, and to serve as an inducement for improvement.

The type of disciplinary action taken will be based on the severity of the situation. In general, disciplinary actions will follow a progressive order of severity, including verbal warning, written warning, suspension without pay, demotion, and discharge. The Town has the right in its discretion

to determine the appropriate level of disciplinary action based on the circumstances involved. The use of progressive discipline does not change the at-will nature of the employment relationship, which may be terminated at any time by either party.

### **SAFETY**

The Town will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local safety statutes and regulations and will provide a work environment as free as practicable from safety hazards.

Employees should practice safety awareness by thinking defensively, anticipating risks, and reporting unsafe conditions immediately. Employees should know the location, contents and use of emergency aid and fire-fighting equipment, and the location of emergency exits.

The Town has appointed a Public Safety Committee to oversee the Town's safety policies and procedures. The Safety Committee's responsibilities include:

- Developing safety plans or programs as needed;
- Investigating and correcting unsafe working conditions or potential hazards;
- Conducting periodic safety and health inspections of all work areas;
- Organizing safety-training seminars for employees.

Employees are expected to comply with all safety requirements whether established by the Town or by federal, state, or local law. Accidents, and violations of safety rules and regulations, must be reported immediately to a supervisor or responsible Town official. Failure to comply with safety requirements will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Please see your supervisor for a copy of your department's safety policies and procedures.

## VACATION

Vacation eligibility is based on continuous service with the Town in accordance with the guidelines established below. The established vacation year is the calendar year, January 1 through December 31, each year.

### LENGTH OF SERVICE

### VACATION HOURS

#### **Thirty-five (35) hour work week:**

One (1) year to five (5) years

5.833 hours per month/70 hours per annum

Five (5) years to fifteen (15) years

8.75 hours per month/105 hours per annum

More than fifteen (15) years

12.833 hours per month/154 hours per annum

#### **Forty (40) hour work week:**

One (1) year to five (5) years

6.666 hours per month/80 hours per annum

Five (5) years to fifteen (15) years

10 hours per month/120 hours per annum

More than fifteen (15) years

14.666 hours per month/176 hours per annum

Vacation leave shall not be taken until a new employee has completed six months of service with the Town.

Vacations must be taken within the calendar year, except that employees may carry over no more than a year's worth of vacation days into the next calendar year when department schedules and workload so require. Carry-over vacation time must be approved by the Mayor no later than November 15 for the following calendar year.

Payment in lieu of vacation is not allowed except upon termination of employment. Accrued but unused vacation shall be paid in the event of termination, except in the event of discharge for cause.

Personal days may not be used to extend the vacation. Holidays occurring during a vacation will not be counted as a vacation day.

Vacations must be scheduled at least ten (10) days in advance and are subject to department head approval. Employees must enter their vacation request into the Time and Attendance online portal. Requests will be reviewed by the department head and either granted or denied through the online portal based on several factors, including the operational and staffing requirements of the Town and the employee's length of service.

## HOLIDAYS

Employees are entitled to the following holidays with pay:

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King Day  
Presidents' Day  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Columbus Day  
Veterans' Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Day after Thanksgiving  
Christmas Day  
Two (2) Floating Holidays\*

A holiday that falls on a Saturday shall be observed on the preceding workday. A holiday that falls on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.

Employees who do not actually work their last scheduled workday before or the first scheduled workday after a holiday are ineligible for paid holiday leave unless their absence is excused due to an emergency or illness which must be accompanied by a medical provider's note.

If eligible nonexempt employees are required to work on a recognized holiday, they will receive holiday pay, plus wages at their regular rate, for all hours worked on the holiday. Paid time off for holidays is not treated as hours worked for the purposes of calculating overtime.

Employees requesting to take time off from work for any religious or ethnic holiday not considered a Town paid holiday may utilize personal leave time, accrued vacation time, or a day without pay.

Regular part-time employees will receive holiday pay when the holiday falls on their regularly scheduled workday.

Employees who are required to work on a holiday will receive holiday pay in addition to the employee's regular pay.

\*The Town provides two (2) floating holidays. One may be designated by the Mayor and the other will be the employee's choice. The Mayor may decide not to designate a universal floating holiday in which case the employee chooses both.

### **PERSONAL LEAVE**

Regular full-time employees are eligible for three (3) personal days each fiscal year with approval from the employee's department head. These days are to allow employees time to conduct personal business that can only be accomplished during regular work hours.

Regular part-time employees scheduled for five workdays each week are eligible for three (3) personal days per fiscal year prorated to the number of hours normally worked.

### **FUNERAL LEAVE**

Upon the death of a member of the employee's family, full-time employees will receive time off with pay in accordance with the following schedule or as provided by union contract:

- Up to three (3) days in the event of the death of a spouse, child, stepchild, foster child, mother, father, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother, sister, grandparents, grandparents-in-law, and grandchildren.
- Up to one (1) day in the event of the death of all other relatives.

Regular part-time employees will be eligible for paid funeral leave in the event the funeral leave days occur on regularly scheduled workdays. Such funeral leave pay shall be based upon the number of hours normally worked.

### **JURY DUTY LEAVE**

While serving on jury duty, employees will receive pay equal to the difference between the jury duty pay and their regular salary.

Employees who receive notice of jury duty must present the official court documentation to their supervisor as soon as possible in order that arrangements may be made to cover absences.

Employees called to jury duty will furnish the Director of Human Resources with confirmation of actual hours of jury duty worked and the pay received.

Employees who are released from jury duty with three or more hours remaining in their regular workday are expected to report for work.

Regular part-time employees will be eligible for paid jury duty leave provided that the jury duty occurs on a regularly scheduled workday. Such jury duty leave will be based upon the number of hours normally worked.

## **MILITARY RESERVE LEAVE**

Employees who are members of the National Guard or the reserve corps of any branch of the armed forces of the United States and who are required to attend training, meetings, or drills during regular working hours will be allowed a leave of absence for such purpose. Employees will receive their regular compensation during such leave not to exceed ten (10) paid working days per year.

Employees who are required to participate in military reserve duty will furnish the Director of Human Resources with confirmation of actual hours of military reserve duty worked and the pay received. The amount of compensation from the Town shall be the difference between the employee's military pay and the amount due them as an employee. If the employee's military pay exceeds his compensation as an employee, the military pay shall be the employee's sole compensation.

Employees who enter, or are called to active duty in, the armed forces of the United States, will receive unpaid leave of absence for the duration of the original enlistment and reinstatement rights as provided by state and federal law.

The Town complies with all aspects of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

## **SICK LEAVE**

The Town recognizes that on occasion employees may be physically unable to perform the duties of their positions due to non-job-related illness or accident.

Absence due to non-job-related illness or accident will be paid at regular wages. A physician's letter confirming legitimate sick leave absence and is required for absences of more than three (3) consecutive days and may be required for repetitious absences regardless of number of consecutive days.

Employees are required to call in to their supervisor and request sick leave prior to the beginning of the scheduled workday.

All sick days must be approved by the employee's supervisor and so noted in the payroll time and attendance portal. Where the absence qualifies for federal FMLA leave, the Town may designate the absence as FMLA leave running concurrently with sick leave.

Regular part-time employees who are eligible for sick leave will receive the benefit prorated to the number of hours or days normally worked.

**SHORT TERM DISABILITY**  
**LONG TERM DISABILITY BENEFIT**

Both short term disability benefits and long-term disability benefits are applicable as addressed in union contracts or the Department Head Resolution. Specific details of this benefit and procedures for making a claim may be obtained from the Director of Human Resources.

**WORK RELATED ABSENCE**

Employees who are injured on the job or who develop a work-related illness will be provided compensation for lost wages and medical expenses under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Any injury connected with work (no matter how minor!) must be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor to receive first aid treatment and to complete the appropriate injury report form for Human Resources, to obtain benefits under workers compensation.

If an employee qualifies for workers' compensation benefits, the Town will pay the difference between the workers' compensation payment and the employee's normal weekly salary for up to 12 weeks. At the expiration of this period, the Town's differential payment will cease and the employee, if still disabled, will continue to be eligible for workers' compensation benefits.

In the event that the workers' compensation claim is denied, and the employee remains disabled from work, the employee's absence will be treated under the FMLA, as applicable.

Employees who are totally disabled from work for twelve weeks will be separated from employment. The employee may reapply for employment once they are able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without a reasonable accommodation in accordance with relevant state and federal laws.

**REPORTING PROCEDURE - JOB RELATED INJURY**

In the event an employee is involved in a job-related injury, the following procedure should be followed:

- The injury must be reported to the employee's supervisor immediately;
- The supervisor must complete and forward the Town's First Report of Injury Form to the Director of Human Resources within 24 hours;
- The employee should get immediate medical care from the nearest or nearest hospital emergency department;
- Any medical service or prescription bills should be forwarded to the Director of Human Resources.



## FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

The Town of Ledyard will comply with all requirements of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). The provisions of the Act are complex, and this policy is only intended to provide a summary. Any questions about a specific situation should be addressed to the Director of Human Resources.

Employees who have worked for the Town for at least twelve (12) months and at least 1,250 hours over the previous twelve (12) months may take up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid Family and Medical Leave for the following reasons:

1. Birth and/or care of a child of the employee;
2. Placement of a child into the employee's family by adoption or by a foster care arrangement;
3. Care of the employee's spouse, child or parent who has a serious health condition;
4. Inability of the employee to perform the functions of the employee's position due to a serious health condition;
5. Qualifying exigencies arising from a spouse, child or parent of the employee who is on active military duty or is called to active duty in support of a contingency operation;
6. Care for a spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin who is a military member and who has a serious health condition.

The relevant twelve-month period is measured from the date that an employee first uses any leave. The entitlement for leave for military caregiving is a maximum of 26 weeks in a single twelve-month period.

Spouses who are both employed by the Town are limited to a combined total of twelve weeks in a twelve-month period when the leave is for birth or adoption or foster care placement of a child, or the serious health condition of a parent. Likewise, spouses are limited to a combined total of 26 weeks for military caregiver leave.

Employees may also request leave to serve as an organ donor or bone marrow donor, provided the employee provides sufficient written certification from a physician of the proposed donation and the probable duration of the employee's recovery.

Employees shall be required to use their accrued paid leave time available under the Town's benefit programs (i.e., personal leave and/or vacation time), and available paid sick leave when the leave is taken because of a serious health condition of the employee. Paid leave time will run concurrently with FMLA leave and will not extend the amount of available leave time.

During FMLA leaves the Town will continue to pay its portion of employees' health and dental insurance premiums. Employees shall be required to pay their portion of insurance premiums as they would while actively employed. Employees are required to pay their pension plan contributions. The employees' health, dental, and retirement contributions shall be paid directly to the Town of Ledyard and addressed to the Director of Human Resources.

Any FMLA leave request which is based on a family member's or employee's own serious health condition must be supported by medical certification from a physician. For leave to be taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis, the employee must provide information which establishes the medical necessity for such leave, and an estimate of the dates, duration and frequency of absence for such leave.

When the necessity of FMLA leave is foreseeable, employees are requested to provide the Town at least thirty (30) days' notice of intention to take leave. For unforeseeable situations, employees must give as much notice as is reasonably possible. Employees undergoing planned medical treatment are required to make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment in order to minimize disruptions to Town operations.

An employee returning from FMLA leave should contact the Director of Human Resources [or equivalent Town administrative employee] at least two weeks prior to the date of return. An employee who has taken leave because of the employee's own serious health condition must provide a fitness-for-duty certification from the attending healthcare provider. Employees who return to work from FMLA leave of absence no later than the business day following the expiration of the twelve (12) weeks are entitled to their job or an equivalent position, including equivalent benefits and pay.

Employees may obtain a request form and further information regarding Family and Medical Leave from the Director of Human Resources.

### **MATERNITY LEAVE**

Maternity Leave is administered under the Town's Family and Medical Leave policy.

Employees who are not eligible for family and medical leave will be granted a reasonable leave of absence for disability resulting from pregnancy and will be reinstated to their original job or to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and service credits.

Employees requesting maternity leave must provide a statement from a physician to the Town stating the date on which the birth of the baby is anticipated and the date on which the employee will no longer be physically able to perform the duties of her position.

The Town will make reasonable efforts to transfer a pregnant employee to any suitable temporary position which may be available in any case in which an employee gives written notice of her pregnancy and either the Town or the employee reasonably believe that continued employment in the employee's current position may cause injury to the employee or the fetus. Issues concerning such a transfer may be appealed to the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

An employee on Maternity Leave is required to provide to the Town a written certification from her physician of her physical capability to return to her normal duties and the approved date of her return.

## **LIFE AND ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT INSURANCE**

The Town provides all full-time benefited employees with a life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance policy. The face value of the policy differs depending upon the union contract or Department Head Resolution as applicable. Specific details of this benefit and the procedure for making claims may be obtained from the Director of Human Resources.

## **HEALTH INSURANCE**

The Town provides group medical, dental, and vision insurance to eligible employees. The cost of coverage is shared by the employee and the Town. Employees who elect coverage will be required to contribute their portion of the premium cost through automatic payroll deduction on a bi-weekly basis. Employees who work fewer than full-time hours will pay the same premium share as full-time employees. Premium share percentages are determined by collective bargaining agreements for union employees and by the Department Head Resolution for non-union professional employees.

Employees who opt out of the health insurance may be eligible for an annual waiver stipend. Employees who are covered under a spouse or parent under the town health insurance are not eligible for the waiver stipend.

Specific details on the insurance policies and premiums and the procedure for making claims may be obtained from the Director of Human Resources.

## **COBRA (Continuation of Health Insurance Benefits)**

The Town of Ledyard will comply with all requirements of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA).

This Act provides continuation of health and/or dental insurance coverage for employees and dependents in certain situations where medical and dental coverage would otherwise terminate. The employees or dependents must pay the full required premiums if they elect continuation of coverage.

Continuation coverage goes into effect for employees, surviving spouses, and/or dependents for 18 months if coverage is lost due to:

- Employee's termination (except for gross misconduct);
- Employee layoff;
- Reduction in employee's hours.

Continuation coverage is provided under certain conditions up to 36 months for:

- Surviving spouses and dependents of deceased employees;
- Legally separated and divorced spouses and dependent children of currently covered employees;
- Children whose dependent coverage ceases under the plan;
- Spouses and dependents of employees who are eligible for Medicare but who, themselves, are not eligible for Medicare.

The Director of Human Resources will notify an employee of the right to choose continuation coverage if employment is terminated or a reduction in work hours results in the loss of eligibility for health and dental insurance benefits. The employee will have sixty (60) days from the date of notice of the loss of coverage to inform the Town that the employee or family member wishes continuation coverage. The employee or family member has the responsibility to inform the Director of Human Resources of a divorce, legal separation, or a child losing dependent status.

### **PENSION and RETIREMENT PLANS**

The Town provides a pension plan to employees hired before the Plan was closed to new employees in 2012. Any employee hired on or after July 1, 2012, is entitled to participate in the Town's defined contribution retirement plan.

Participation in the defined contribution plan is directed by union contract or the Department Head Resolution for mandatory contribution levels and the Town matching contribution.

Specific details of these benefits may be obtained from the Director of Human Resources.

## **SPECIAL STORM AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

In the event of a significant storm or other hazardous condition, the Town may decide that specific Town buildings or operations will open late, close early or not open for the entire day. The Mayor will be responsible for the decision to close or delay opening. The Mayor's assistant will create an outgoing voicemail message on the Town office telephone by a reasonable time the day of the closing or late opening.

When operations are officially closed due to emergency conditions, leave from scheduled work will be paid for full-time employees. Part-time employees are eligible for pay when the Town is closed due to emergency conditions for only those hours that they were scheduled to work.

If an employee is unable to work due to inclement weather when the Town is open, the employee will not be paid, but may elect to use vacation or personal time for the time not worked.

Employees in essential operations may be asked to work on a day when the Town is officially closed. In these circumstances, employees who work will receive pay based on their union contract or the Department Head Resolution.

When the Town is closed, all employees designated as essential personnel are to report to work as scheduled, or in the case of an early closing, the Department Head or Supervisor may require essential personnel to stay. Essential personnel are defined as:

- Highway/Public Works/Maintenance
- Police
- Fire

## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Unexpected problems or issues during employment may negatively impact your job performance. These problems may be related to emotional difficulties, marital or family difficulties, alcohol or drug abuse, or financial concerns. Sometimes these problems are of such a serious nature that they require outside professional help. The Town strongly supports the Employee Assistance Program to help employees deal with such issues.

The Town provides professional assessment, counseling, and referral services for employees experiencing personal problems impairing work performance or having the potential to do so. This service is extended to all members of the employee's immediate family because their problems may also adversely affect the employee's ability to perform satisfactorily. The purpose of this policy is to assure employees that if personal problems are the cause of unsatisfactory job performance, they will receive consideration, understanding, and an offer of professional assistance to help resolve the problems in a confidential manner.

Utilization of this program by employees is completely confidential and will in no way jeopardize job security, opportunity for promotion, or reputation. Employee referrals will be handled with the

highest degree of confidentiality. The information and records of this program are maintained in the same confidential manner as health and medical information.

### **TOWN EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**

Employees who incur an authorized and documented expense while conducting Town of Ledyard business will be reimbursed for the expense.

Employees are responsible for payment of expenses when they are incurred and should claim reimbursement from the Town by submitting a report to the Director of Human Resources or directly to the Finance Department, of the expenses incurred with the following information:

- Item, amount, and date of the expense;
- Name and location where the expense was incurred;
- Documentation of the expense, preferably a charge card receipt;
- Authorization from a supervisor designating approval of the expense.

Reimbursement claims must be submitted within 30 days after the expense is incurred.

The Town's mileage allowance will be determined by IRS guidelines.

### **VEHICLES AND OPERATING EQUIPMENT**

All vehicles, and operating equipment, whether police, highway, or other vehicles or equipment in use, are the property of the Town of Ledyard. They are to be operated safely, with proper standard operating procedures and care in use, and in full compliance with motor vehicle and safety laws. Any employee who operates licensed vehicles on roadways must be a listed driver on the Town's auto insurance policy. Any employee using a Town vehicle must complete a Vehicle Use Policy for Municipal Vehicles available through Human Resources or the Mayor's office.

Any mishandling of Town equipment observed must be reported to the Mayor's office.

It is a violation of state law for any vehicle operator to engage in the operation of a motor vehicle while using a hand-held mobile/cell phone unless through "hands-free" operation or any other mobile electronic device while a vehicle is in motion. Employees operating a Town vehicle may not use text or view the hand-held mobile/cell phone while the vehicle is in motion.

Texting while driving a Town vehicle is strictly prohibited.

## **NON SMOKING**

The Town of Ledyard provides a healthy environment for all staff, town residents and visitors. To eliminate the documented health hazards of secondhand smoke and to maintain good air quality in all working environments, smoking is strictly prohibited in all areas of all buildings, grounds, and parking lots owned and managed by the Town of Ledyard.

Smoking includes cigarettes, cigars, pipes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew, e-cigarettes, and vaping products. This prohibition includes all work areas or visitor areas, vehicles, corridors, stairwells, restrooms, meeting rooms, and closed offices. If you smoke off site, please ensure that you dispose of your butts and debris in an appropriate receptacle.

All employees share the responsibility for adhering to this policy and cooperating in its enforcement. Any concerns should be brought to the attention of the employee's supervisor, the Director of Human Resources or Mayor.

## **DRESS GUIDELINES**

Appearance is a basic part of the professionalism that we must project to inspire the confidence and trust of the residents of our community. Employees should dress in an appropriate, professional, and reasonable manner.

Employees whose work takes place predominantly in a Town of Ledyard office must avoid the following: revealing tops, shorts, short skirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, lounge pants, yoga pants, t-shirts, or blue jeans. Shoes should be safe and clean therefore employees shall avoid flip-flops, slippers, or ill-fitting sandals.

Clothing on "casual days" may include clean jeans, t-shirts, and sneakers. Torn or ragged clothing or shoes are inappropriate. Employees who must be sent home to change inappropriate attire will not be paid for time lost. T-shirts, which display offensive language or graphics, are strictly prohibited.

Employees may be required to wear uniforms and safety equipment as designated by their department policy.

## **NEPOTISM POLICY**

The Town may employ two or more persons who are related. However, immediate relatives will not be employed, promoted, or transferred to any position, whether regular or seasonal, where one relative would have the authority to supervise, appoint, remove, discipline, audit or evaluate the performance of the other. The Town will avoid other circumstances that would place relatives in a situation of actual or reasonably foreseeable favoritism, appearance of favoritism, or conflict of interest.

Immediate relatives include spouse, domestic partner, or co-habitant; children; parents, grandparents, and grandchildren; siblings; including step and in-law relationships; and any other permanent member of an employee's household.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Employees hold a position of responsibility and trust to the Town of Ledyard and its residents that may require an employee to have access to confidential and proprietary information, including protected health information. The Town has disclosed such information to employees in reliance on their promise to protect such information from loss or misuse. Employees may not remove from the workplace items containing confidential information such as Town files, computer files/programs, or any other documents or electronically stored information, without permission.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires the disclosure of many public records, and the Town responds promptly to Freedom of Information requests. However, the Act exempts certain types of personal, proprietary, and confidential information from disclosure. Employees should not discuss confidential information with anyone not directly concerned with Town business to which the information applies. If you receive a FOIA request, you must inform the Town Clerk immediately and forward the request(s) for processing.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Employment with the Town of Ledyard imposes a special obligation to conduct all business and personal affairs with the highest standards of integrity. Any concern as to whether a particular action poses an actual or apparent conflict of interest should be discussed with the employee's supervisor or an appropriate Town official.

An employee shall be considered to have a conflict-of-interest if:

- The employee has existing or potential financial or other interests which impair or might reasonably appear to impair an independent, unbiased judgment in the discharge of responsibilities to the Town of Ledyard; or



- The employee is aware that a member of their family (spouse, parent, sibling, children, or other relative living in the same residence), or organization in which the employee (or member of their family) is an officer, director, employee, member, partner, trustee, or controlling stockholder, has such existing potential financial or other interests; or
- The employee is unable to act impartially or without bias in performing their duties.

Employees shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from residents or from contractors or potential contractors.

An employee must disclose any possible conflicts of interest so that the Town may assess and prevent potential conflicts of interest from arising. It is not possible to specify every action that might create a conflict of interest. Employees who have any questions concerning an action or proposed course of conduct should seek guidance from the department head or Director of Human Resources.

### **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Employees may hold outside jobs which do not interfere with the employee's obligations to the Town of Ledyard or performance standards expected by the Town. However, employees must disclose to their supervisor and Director of Human Resources all outside jobs that they hold. Employees will not hold themselves out or otherwise create the impression that they are representing the Town in any such endeavor.

If the Town determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of the Town position as they may be modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment in order to remain a Town employee.

Outside employment that constitutes a conflict of interest is prohibited. To determine the possibility of a conflict of interest or other detrimental effects, employees are required to disclose any such outside employment to their department heads.

### **HARASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Any individual who believes they have been subjected to harassment of any type should immediately report the occurrence to their Supervisor, Director of Human Resources or Mayor. (In the event the harassment complaint is against the Mayor, the complaint should be reported to the Director of Human Resources). Reported allegations of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation shall be investigated promptly. To the extent possible, the Town will honor an employee's request for confidentiality, consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

The investigation may include interviews with the parties involved, witnesses, or others with relevant knowledge. The investigator will, as soon as possible, begin the investigation of the harassment complaint, including the following steps:

- If the investigator has reason to believe the complaint may be justified, the investigator will meet with the person against whom the complaint was filed as well as any witnesses to the incident or incidents;
- The investigator will complete a written report which will include a determination as to whether harassment has occurred.

After reviewing the harassment complaint and investigative report, the Mayor or Director of Human Resources shall take all appropriate corrective or disciplinary action or, when necessary, recommend that such disciplinary action be taken by the Town official or body charged with the authority to discipline the individual.

Retaliation against any employee who has made a harassment complaint or against any witnesses or other persons connected with the investigation of the complaint is prohibited.

Any person faced with the accusation of harassment is entitled to due process. False and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE TOWN OF LEDYARD**

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND NOTICE OF DISCLAIMER**

I acknowledge having received a copy of the Town of Ledyard Employee Handbook. I understand my responsibility to read the Handbook and familiarize myself with its contents.

I understand that this Employee Handbook contains guidelines only. The Town shall have the maximum discretion permitted by law to interpret, administer, change, modify or delete the rules, policies and benefits contained in the Handbook at any time. No statement or representation by a supervisor or other department head, whether oral or written, can supplement or modify this Handbook. Changes can be made only by a written notice issued by the Mayor. I also understand that any failure or delay by the Town to enforce any work policy or rule will not constitute a waiver of the Town's right to do so in the future. To the extent that any of the policies in this Handbook are different from previous policies, those previous policies are null and void and superseded by the policies contained herein.

I understand that neither this Handbook nor any other communication by a representative of the Town administration, whether oral or written, is intended to, in any way, create a contract of employment. Unless governed by a union contract, employment with the Town is voluntarily entered into and on an at-will basis. Similarly, the Town may terminate my employment at any time with or without notice. Any contract of employment must be in writing and signed by the Mayor.

Please sign and date below to verify that you have received the Town's Employee Handbook and accept your obligation to read and understand it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Please Print)

# Appendices