

Preamble - Definitions and Application of Personnel Rules

Preamble.1 Authority

SMC 4.04.050, and subsequent revisions thereto, Rule Making Authority

Preamble.2 Definitions

The following definitions shall be used for the interpretation and administration of all Personnel Rules, except where subchapters to these Rules provide otherwise.

1. “Actual service” shall mean the total straight-time pay hours accumulated in a title. The first 240 hours per year of authorized unpaid time off for non-disciplinary reasons shall not be deducted from actual service.
2. “Administrative reassignment” means paid leave status which an appointing authority may authorize for any City officer or employee in the appointing authority’s department or office, when such employee is the cause of or subject of, or otherwise significantly affected by an active official investigatory process related to alleged violations of personnel rules, policies of the City and/or City Department, City ordinances, or state or federal laws and/or an investigation intended to determine the employee’s fitness for duty. Administrative reassignment shall not be considered discipline.
3. “Alternative Dispute Resolution Program” or “ADR” shall mean a Citywide function located in the Seattle Department of Human Resources to promote the resolution of workplace disputes through training, mediation, conciliation and facilitated discussion.
4. “Appointing authority” shall mean the head of an employing unit authorized by ordinance or City Charter to employ others on behalf of the City. The term includes and can be used interchangeably with department head, department director, superintendent, or chief.
5. “Appointment” shall mean the placement of an employee in a position by initial hire, promotion, transfer, demotion or reduction.
6. "City-sponsored blood drive" shall mean a blood drive for which times and locations are coordinated by the Seattle Human Resources Director and at which employees must register to verify their participation.
7. “Civil Service Commission” shall mean the Civil Service Commission of the City of Seattle, which is charged with hearing appeals regarding the administration of the personnel system.

8. "Classification specification" shall mean a written description of a classification that includes a title, a description of distinguishing characteristics, a statement of duties and responsibilities, and a statement of minimum qualifications.
9. "Classified service" shall mean all employment positions in the City that are not excluded by ordinance, City Charter or State law from the provisions of Seattle Municipal Code 4.04 or Personnel Rules passed pursuant thereto related to the selection, discipline, termination or appeals of personnel actions to the Civil Service Commission.
10. "Code of Ethics" shall mean Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 4.16 as amended.
11. "Continuous out-of-class assignment" shall mean an ongoing assignment to perform and receive compensation for the duties of a higher-paying title. A continuous out-of-class assignment is broken by the employee's return to their regular payroll title for regular work hours (coded as "AA" pay on the employee's timesheet).
12. "Demotion" shall mean the movement of an employee from such employee's current classification to a classification with a lower maximum salary rate, for justifiable cause.
13. "Discharge" shall mean separation from employment, for justifiable cause.
14. "Disciplinary action" shall mean an action taken by the appointing authority or a designated management representative in response to a proven act of employee misconduct or uncorrected poor work performance. Disciplinary actions include verbal warnings, written reprimands, suspension, demotion and discharge.
15. "Discretionary pay program" shall mean a compensation program in which the appointing authority, in accordance with guidelines and procedures established by the Seattle Human Resources Director, is granted discretion to set pay within the authorized pay zone.
16. "Discrimination," shall mean any act, by itself or as part of a practice, which is intended to or results in different treatment or differentiates between or among individuals or groups of individuals by reason of their protected status. Discrimination includes harassment, such as racial and sexual harassment, as well as harassment based on other protected statuses. To the extent that distinct or differential treatment on the basis of citizenship or immigration status is authorized by federal or state law, regulation or government contract, it is not an unfair practice.

17. "Domestic partner" shall mean an individual with whom an employee shares the same regular and permanent residence, has a close personal relationship, and has agreed to be jointly responsible for basic living expenses incurred during the domestic partnership. To qualify to use sick leave to care for a domestic partner, an employee must file an affidavit of domestic partnership with their employing unit attesting that:
- a. The filing employee is not married, and
 - b. The filing employee and the filing employee's domestic partner is 18 years of age or older, and
 - c. The filing employee and the filing employee's domestic partner are not related by blood closer than would bar marriage in Washington, and
 - d. The filing employee and the filing employee's domestic partner were mentally competent to consent to contract when their domestic partnership commenced, and
 - e. The filing employee and the filing employee's domestic partner are each other's sole domestic partner, and
 - f. Any other domestic partnership in which the employee or the employee's domestic partner participated with a third party was terminated not less than 90 days prior to the date such employee files an affidavit of domestic partnership, or by the date of the death of the third party, whichever was earlier.
18. "Elected official" shall mean the Mayor, City Councilmembers, City Attorney, and all Municipal Court Judges whether elected or appointed.
19. "Employing unit" shall mean any department of the City and, within the Executive and Legislative Departments, any office created by ordinance.
20. "Executive leave" shall mean annual paid leave that is granted to an employee assigned on a regular or out-of-class basis to an eligible salaried title.
21. "Exempt employee" shall mean one who serves at the discretion of the appointing authority in a position which is exempted by the City Charter or SMC Chapter 4.13 from compliance with this chapter regarding selection, discipline and discharge of employees, and appeals of personnel actions to the Civil Service Commission.
22. "Exempt position" shall mean a position of employment held by an at-will employee who serves at the discretion of the appointing authority in a position that is excluded by ordinance, City Charter or State law from compliance with the provisions of Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 4.04 or the Personnel Rules adopted pursuant thereto related to selection, discipline, termination or appeals of personnel actions to the Civil Service Commission.
23. "External applicant" shall mean an applicant for employment with the City who is not a regularly appointed employee.

24. "Facilitated conversation" shall mean an informal conversation between parties assisted and coached by a trained neutral person.
25. "Finance Director" shall mean the Director of Finance at the Department of Finance and Administrative Services who is charged with managing the City's financial accounts.
26. "Grandchild" shall mean the employee's grandchild or the grandchild of the employee's spouse or domestic partner
27. "Grandparent" shall mean the parent of an employee's parent, or the parent of the parent of the employee's spouse or domestic partner.
28. "Grievable incident" shall mean an alleged action or event that resulted from the alleged misapplication of the provisions of Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 4.04, or the Personnel Rules and any policies or procedures adopted pursuant thereto which aggrieves the employee who files the grievance. The scope of 'grievable incidents' may be limited further as defined by Personnel Rule 1.4.
29. "Harassment" shall mean unwelcome conduct based on a protected status. Such conduct includes, but isn't limited to, jokes, slurs, name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule, insults, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with work performance. The term includes sexual harassment.
30. "Hourly employee" shall mean an employee who is compensated on an hourly basis for each hour of work performed, including time worked beyond 40 hours in a workweek.
31. "Inappropriate pressure" shall mean any written or verbal suggestion to a City employee the effect of which would preclude open consideration of qualified applicants, or result in the selection of an employee for reasons other than relative ability, knowledge and skills.
32. "Initial appointment" shall mean the first appointment of an individual to a non-temporary position, or the re-appointment of a former City employee after separation from City employment, or after the exhaustion of the reinstatement or reversion/recall period.
33. "Internal applicant" shall mean a regularly appointed City employee or an active temporary worker who applies for another position of City employment who or applies for a regular position of City employment.

34. "Job abandonment" shall mean voluntary separation from an employee's job with no notice or same-day notice, or failure to appear for work as regularly scheduled for 3 consecutive work days absent proper authorization.
35. "Management representative" shall mean any individual working at or above the level of supervisor or crew chief who is responsible for directing the work of employees and who exercises independent judgment with respect to the direction of such work. The term includes human resources representatives, managers, and directors, but excludes individuals employed in the City's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program or the Office of the Employee Ombud.
36. "Mediation" shall mean an informal voluntary meeting between the parties to a dispute and one or more trained neutral mediators who assist them to find a mutually acceptable resolution to their conflict.
37. "Medical certification" shall mean verification by the employee's health care provider that an employee is incapacitated for the performance of such employee's job by an illness or injury that qualifies for sick leave.
38. "Merit leave" shall mean annual paid leave that is awarded to an employee assigned on a regular or out-of-class basis to an eligible salaried title in recognition of such employee's exceptional job performance.
39. Office of the Employee Ombud or OEO" shall mean a City-wide Conflict Management function that offers informal dispute resolution, conflict mitigation training, and leadership coaching to all city departments and employees.
40. "Opportunity for Advancement Bulletin" or "OFA" shall mean the City's official internal communication of job vacancies.
41. "Out-of-class assignment" shall mean the temporary assignment of an eligible employee to perform the normal ongoing duties and responsibilities associated with a higher-paying title.
42. "Overtime threshold" shall mean a combined total of 40 straight-time hours of work and/or paid leave per workweek. Hours worked beyond the overtime threshold must be compensated at the appropriate overtime rate of pay.
43. "Parent" shall mean the mother, father, stepmother, or stepfather of an employee or an employee's spouse or domestic partner, or an individual who stood in loco parentis to an employee or the employee's spouse or domestic partner when the employee or the employee's spouse or domestic partner was a dependent child.

44. "Performance evaluation" shall mean a formal assessment or appraisal by a supervisor of an employee's job performance.
45. "Pre-disciplinary hearing" shall mean an opportunity for an employee to meet with the appointing authority to respond to the charges made against them that may result in the appointing authority's decision to impose a suspension, demotion or discharge.
46. "Primary rate of pay" shall mean the pay rate an employee receives in the employee's primary job title.
47. "Probation" shall mean an extension of the selection process during which period an employee is required to demonstrate the ability to perform the job for which they were hired. Employees shall serve one 12-month probationary period, except that their probation may be extended in accordance with the Seattle Municipal Code and these Rules.
48. "Probationary employee" shall mean an employee who has not yet completed a probationary period of employment.
49. "Progressive discipline" shall mean a process of applying and documenting disciplinary actions progressing from less to more serious depending on the employee's history and the nature of the offense.
50. "Prohibited behavior" shall mean harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and/or workplace misconduct as defined in these Personnel Rules.
51. "Project Hire" shall mean a program administered by the Seattle Human Resources Director that provides job referrals to individuals who are at risk of layoff or who are on a reinstatement list.
52. "Promotion" shall mean an appointment to a class or position with a higher maximum pay rate that occurs subsequent to an employee's initial appointment.
53. "Protected status" shall include an employee's race, color, age (over 40), sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, political ideology, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, honorably discharged veteran or military status, the presence of a disability, or any other legally protected class of people.
54. "Quit" shall mean to voluntarily separate from City employment without proper written notification from the employee at least 2 weeks in advance of their last day of employment.

55. "Race" is inclusive of traits historically associated or perceived to be associated with race including, but not limited to hair texture and protective hairstyles. For purposes of this subsection, "protective hairstyles" includes, but is not limited to such hairstyles as afros, braids, locks and twists.
56. "Reduction" shall mean the non-disciplinary voluntary or involuntary movement of an employee to a position with a lower maximum pay rate at the request of the employee to be reduced, or by the appointing authority or their designated representative for reasons of organizational change, reduction in force, poor job match or poor work performance.
57. "Regular employee" shall mean an employee who has been appointed to a position in the classified service and who has completed a probationary period of employment.
58. "Regular status" shall mean the status an employee holds after completion of a probationary period.
59. "Regularly appointed employee" shall mean an individual with a probationary, trial service, regular or exempt appointment to a position of City employment.
60. "Reinstatement" shall mean the appointment from a reinstatement list of an employee within 12 months of layoff to a position in a class in which such employee previously held probationary, trial service or regular status.
61. "Reinstatement list" shall mean a list maintained by the Seattle Human Resources Director of regular, probationary, and trial service employees who are eligible for reappointment to a position in a class in which they were laid off.
62. "Resign" shall mean to voluntarily separate from City employment with proper written notification from the employee at least 2 weeks in advance of their last day of employment.
63. "Reporter" includes any individual who alleges prohibited behavior pursuant to Personnel Rule 1.1. The reporter can be either the person who is the target or recipient of the alleged prohibited behavior, as well as a bystander who has knowledge of the alleged prohibited behavior.
64. "Retaliation" shall mean a materially adverse action taken because an employee asserted rights protected by Personnel Rule 1.1. Retaliation includes harassment due to participation in a protected activity.
65. "Reversion recall list" shall mean a list maintained by the Seattle Human Resources Director of individuals who did not complete their trial service period

and who could not revert to their former classifications due to lack of appropriate vacancies.

66. "Sabbatical leave" shall mean an unpaid leave of absence not to exceed 12 months duration for which an employee may apply after completion of 7 years of continuous full-time service or the equivalent thereof.
67. "Salaried employee" shall mean an employee who is not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act who regularly receives each pay period a predetermined amount of compensation. In general, this base salary will not be reduced because of variations in the quality or quantity of work performed. However, unpaid suspensions can be issued pursuant to Personnel Rule 1.3.2(B)
68. "Scholarship" shall mean funds used to assist employees with education expenses paid to colleges, universities, and vocational institutions by issuing advance and/or reimbursement payments to the employee or directly to the educational institution.
69. "Seattle Human Resources Director" shall mean the head of the Seattle Department of Human Resources, or their designee.
70. "Service retirement" shall mean separation of a member of the City Employees Retirement System from City employment with the proper combination of age and service credit to qualify for a monthly pension.
71. "Sexual harassment" prohibited by City policy is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Examples include unwelcome sexual flirtations or propositions, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, pressure or unwelcome requests for sexual activities, unnecessary touching, graphic or verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, a display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures in the work place, sexually explicit or offensive jokes or physical assault.
72. "Sibling" shall mean the biological, step-, adopted or foster brother or sister of the employee or the employee's spouse or domestic partner.
73. "Sick leave" shall mean paid time off from work for a reason that qualifies under Rule 7.7.
74. "Single qualifying incident" shall mean an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that qualifies an employee's absence from work for sick leave transfer, as well as any subsequent absences for follow-up treatments, therapies, etc., that are a direct consequence of the original condition. For example, absence(s) for surgery for cancer, a recovery period, chemotherapy, and other

- treatments that are a direct result of the original condition comprise a single qualifying incident. A recurrence of the cancer would constitute a separate incident.
75. "Standby duty" shall mean the formal assignment by the appointing authority or a designated management representative to an employee of the responsibility to respond to emergencies during the employee's non-working hours. The act of carrying a pager or other such communication device does not, in itself, constitute standby duty.
 76. "Standby pay" shall mean the compensation paid to an hourly employee who is assigned to standby duty.
 77. "Standing" shall mean the classification in which an employee accrues service credit for layoff purposes.
 78. "Step Progression Pay Program" shall mean a compensation system that provides for wage progression based on length of service.
 79. "Subject" shall mean a person who is alleged by the reporter to have engaged or be engaging in behavior prohibited under Personnel Rule 1.1.
 80. "Supervisor file" shall mean files maintained by the employee's supervisor which may include, but are not limited to, documents or electronic files reflecting workplace or performance expectations, the employee's performance or conduct, communications between employee and supervisor, and counseling efforts and discipline. A supervisor file shall not contain confidential employee medical information.
 81. "Suspension" shall mean the temporary discontinuation without pay of an employee from employment for a specified period of time, for justifiable cause.
 82. "Transfer" shall mean the movement of an employee from one position to another position in the same class, or with the same maximum pay rate.
 83. "Transplant donor" shall mean an employee who voluntarily donates their bone marrow, tissue or organ to a human recipient. The donation must be determined to be medically matched and uniquely suited or critical to the successful outcome of a medical procedure intended to save the recipient's life. A transplant donor receives no compensation and has no ability to direct compensation to any other person or entity in exchange for the employee's participation as a donor.
 84. "Trial service" shall mean a 12-month trial period of employment for a regular employee who has completed a probation period and who is subsequently appointed via promotion or transfer to a position in another classification, except

that the trial period may be extended in accordance with the Seattle Municipal Code and these Rules.

85. “Trial service employee” shall mean an employee who has not yet completed a period of trial service.
86. “Verbal warning” shall mean a verbal notification from the appointing authority or designated management representative to an employee that specified activities or conduct are inappropriate for the work place, that performance standards have not been met, and/or that a violation of work place rules or policies has occurred; and that continuation thereof will result in more severe discipline, up to and including discharge.
87. “Workplace Misconduct” occurs when someone engages in the adverse treatment of an individual, and that conduct unreasonably interferes with another person’s work performance, damages another person’s employment opportunities, or creates an environment that a reasonable person in a City workplace would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.

Examples of Workplace Misconduct can include, but are not limited to, intimidating or hostile acts or other behavior that a reasonable person would find offensive, such as derogatory name-calling, taunting, shouting or swearing at someone, and other types of verbal abuse (e.g., “idiot”); written or graphic materials that humiliate a City employee, or show aggression or hatred, via electronic or physical bulletin boards, cyberbullying, email, or otherwise; retaliating against someone for reporting Workplace Misconduct; spreading malicious rumors about another; making or circulating a joke or jokes that are humiliating, demeaning, or belittling to another City employee; threatening harm to another or other conduct covered by Personnel Rule 8.1.J(3) or (4); or a pattern of that harms a person or group of people and is not a reasonable action taken by a person or management representative relating to the business needs of the workplace.. Workplace Misconduct generally does not include performance management consistent with Personnel Rule 1.5; a respectful and professional conversation or debate between colleagues about a work-related matter; or discipline consistent with Personnel Rule 1.3.

88. “Workweek” shall mean a designated block of 168 hours within which an employee’s work schedule is contained.
89. “Written reprimand” shall mean a written notification from the appointing authority or designated management representative to an employee that specified activities or conduct are inappropriate for the work place, that performances standards have not been met, and/or that a violation of work place rules or policies, and that continuation thereof will result in more severe discipline, up to and including discharge.

Preamble.3 Application of Personnel Rules

All Personnel Rules shall be applied to City employees as described below, except where subchapters to these Rules provide otherwise.

- A. The Personnel Rules apply to all regularly appointed employees.
- B. For regularly appointed employees who are represented under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, the Personnel Rules shall prevail except where they conflict with the employee's collective bargaining agreement, any memoranda or agreement or understanding signed pursuant to the collective bargaining agreement, or any established and recognized practice relative to the members of the bargaining unit.
- C. The Personnel Rules do not apply to individuals who are hired under the terms of a grant that includes provisions that conflict with this Rule, nor do they apply to individuals hired under contract to the City. These individuals are subject to all applicable federal, state and City laws.
- D. Except for Chapter 11, the Personnel Rules do not apply to individuals hired by the City on a temporary, intermittent, or seasonal basis, or for a work schedule of fewer than 20 hours per week, nor do they apply to individuals hired under contract to the City. These individuals are subject to all applicable federal, state and City laws.
- E. Appointing authorities may establish written policies and procedures for the implementation of the Personnel Rules to facilitate the management of the personnel system within their employing units, provided that such policies and procedures do not conflict with the provisions of the Personnel Rules.

Preamble.4 Commitment to Anti-Racist/Anti-Biased Outcomes in Administration of Personnel Rules

The City is committed to respect, dignity, civility, inclusion and equity in the workplace and the greater community. These Personnel Rules strive to achieve anti-racist/anti-biased outcomes in the administration of its personnel system; and to provide a fair, equitable experience for all city employees.