

POLICY FOR STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1: Purpose.....Page 2

Section 2: Administration of Policy.....Page 2

Section 3: General Policy Application.....Page 2

Section 3A: Personal and Professional Behavior.....Page 2

Section 3B: Performance of Duties.....Page 4

Section 3C: InsubordinationPage 4

Section 3D: Workplace Violence.....Page 4

Section 3E: AppearancePage 5

Section 3F: Fiscal/Financial Responsibility.....Page 6

Section 3G: Use of Computer/Network ResourcesPage 6

Section 3H: Assets and Resources Management.....Page 7

Section 3I: Media and Public Relations.....Page 7

Section 3J: Public Speaking Engagements and Public CommentPage 8

Section 3K: Confidentiality of DataPage 9

Section 3L: Political Activity.....Page 9

Section 3M: Conflict of InterestPage 9

Section 4: Management of StaffPage 10

Section 5: Reporting Unethical BehaviorPage 10

Section 6: Right to Search Property.....Page 11

Section 7: CompliancePage 11

Section 8: Amendments.....Page 11

POLICY FOR STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Section 1. Purpose

To set forth the policy for Standards of Professional Conduct (the "Policy") of the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners, (the "County"), to establish professional guidelines for employees of Rockdale County to maintain a working environment that encourages mutual respect, promotes civil and pleasant relationships among employees and citizens, and is free from all forms of harassment and violence. The intent of this Policy is to ensure that County employees will maintain the highest ethical standards in the conduct of County affairs, will conduct the County's business with integrity and comply with all applicable laws, ordinances and policies in a manner that excludes considerations of personal advantage or gain.

Section 2. Administration of Policy

1. The Department Head will administer the Policy for his/her department and will issue instructions necessary for implementation of the Policy.
2. The Department Head may issue supplementary departmental instructions, which modify but do not detract from matters dealt with in the Policy, provided that the supplemental instructions are not more permissive than this Policy.
3. The Department Head will promote the Policy and any supplemental policies on a regular basis to ensure that employees are aware of their obligations.
4. Any questions regarding the interpretation or application of this Policy are to be directed to the Director of Human Resources.

Section 3. General Policy Application

This Policy applies to all employees of the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners and extends to all workplaces and facilities, all incidents, all trainings and meetings and all other activities where business of the County is conducted. This Policy is in addition to any policy or statute pertaining to the actions of employees and to any instructions issued by the County or Department Head. Conflicts between the private interests of employees and their duty to the public not specifically addressed in this Policy must be dealt with according to the principles and the intent of this Policy.

A. Personal and Professional Behavior

1. Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the County, applicable laws and ethical principles above personal gain or the interests of any particular group. Acting in the public interest means considering the views and needs of all sectors of the community, having a long-term planning perspective and ensuring the equitable delivery of public goods and services.
2. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner as judged by a reasonable person.

3. Employees are required to treat all people, with whom they have contact in the course of their work, fairly and with courtesy and sensitivity and with the highest respect.
4. Employees shall avoid any appearance of disrespect for the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners' policies, ordinances and laws.
5. Employees shall not engage in private business activities prohibited by law or of an unethical nature for profit, either during normal working hours or during non-working hours.
6. Employees shall follow relevant occupational health and departmental safety rules. Employees are required to report any health and/or safety hazards to their supervisor.
7. Employees are required to work cooperatively with colleagues and citizens, support and learn from each other and accept differences in personal, cultural and religious styles.
8. Employees are required to respect, and seek when necessary, the professional opinions of colleagues in their area of competence and acknowledge their contribution.
9. Employees shall comply with their department's established dress code.
10. Employees shall not consume or purchase alcoholic beverages while operating or occupying a County owned vehicle or while dressed in clothing that displays Rockdale County insignia.
11. Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
12. The County encourages a pleasant work environment of respect and professionalism. Therefore, the County prohibits employees from conducting themselves in a manner that will not reflect favorably on themselves or the public officials of Rockdale County. Employees shall avoid any action that could discredit themselves or the public officials of Rockdale County. This prohibition includes but is not limited to intentional acts such as:
 - a. Immoral or indecent conduct, which tends to violate commonly accepted standards of decency or morality.
 - b. Fighting or use of fighting words to instigate a fight or disturbance while on duty, and/or while on County property or wearing County insignia clothing, as cited in Section 3-D.
 - c. Fraud, falsehood, perjury or misconduct involving any willful, intentional or deliberate misstatement or concealment of material fact in connection with employment, employment application, work records, responsibilities, reports, investigations or proceedings, or intentional misuse of paid work time or assets.
 - d. Mistreatment of other employees by verbal abuse.
 - e. Using intimidation tactics and making threats.
 - f. Stalking others.
 - g. Actions or interruptions that are not work related and prevent employees from completing their job responsibilities or assigned tasks.

- h. Direct or indirect comments, gestures or actions of a sexual or inappropriate nature.
 - i. Repeated requests for dating or socializing after receiving notice that the request is unwelcome or undesired.
 - j. Harassment of any nature, as set forth in the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy # 2006-4-17.
13. Employees who have been arrested for violation of an ordinance, misdemeanor or felony, excluding minor traffic offenses, shall notify their supervisor no later than five (5) days after such arrest.
- a. If employee's job requires driving for the county and has their CDL or other driver's license is revoked or suspended, that employee is to notify their supervisor immediately.

B. Performance of Duties

1. Employees shall perform their duties diligently, impartially and responsively, to the best of their ability.
2. Willful idleness, wasting time or deliberate failure to work on the task(s) assigned is prohibited.
3. Employees shall not sleep while on duty. This does not apply to the firefighters that are on a 24-hour shift or employees that are on call.
4. Employees shall not fail to or refuse to cooperate in the reasonable care and use of equipment, sanitary facilities and related housekeeping tasks on the job.
5. Continued inefficiency or incompetence in the performance of assigned work, as described in the job description for the position held by an employee will not be tolerated.

C. Insubordination

Employee insubordination shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Intentional disobedience; assaulting or resisting authority.
2. Disrespect or use of insulting or abusive language to a supervisor.
3. Refusing to carry out a reasonable order from a supervisor.
4. Failure to carry out work orders or specific instructions of supervisors.
5. Excessive delay in carrying out work orders or specific instructions of supervisors.

D. Workplace Violence

The County is committed to providing a safe and secure workplace free from violence and has a "zero tolerance" towards workplace violence or threats of violence against employees, the general public, and/or anyone who conducts business with the County.

All County employees are strictly prohibited from threatening or committing any act of violence in the workplace, while on duty, while on County related business, or while operating any County vehicle or equipment, against co-workers, the general public and

anyone who conducts business with the County. County employees who commit any act or threat of violence against another employee or citizen in the course of work will be subjected to disciplinary action, including termination and possible criminal charges.

In cases of external attacks against County employees or external disturbances (i.e. individuals outside the County involved in an argument or fight on County property), employees should summon assistance immediately. The County will work with law enforcement to aid in the prosecution of anyone within or outside of the County who commits violent acts against County employees.

Full cooperation by all employees is necessary to minimize the possibility of workplace violence. Employees are required to report any workplace incidents of threats, harassment and other aggressive behavior to their Supervisor, Department Head or Director of Human Resources immediately. Employees who are involved in personal disputes should also notify their Supervisor, Department Head or Director of Human Resources and include their work location as well as their place of residence in any court restraining order.

E. Appearance

Employees shall maintain an appearance that makes a positive statement about their professionalism and business standards and maintains an atmosphere suited for business.

Inappropriate Clothing

The following provisions are in addition to the established dress code of the employee's department of employment. Inappropriate attire or clothing is defined, but not limited to the following:

1. Halter tops, tank tops, tube tops and/or midriff shirts;
2. Shorts (does not apply to employees that work outside and have been given permission by their Department Head to wear shorts);
3. Mini skirts or skirts that are more than 4 inches above the knee;
4. Spaghetti strap or strapless dresses worn without a jacket or sweater;
5. Clothing or garments with offensive pictures, large letter advertising, logos or slogans, beach wear, see-through, mesh or revealing clothing;
6. Clothing or County issued uniforms that are ragged, torn or dirty;
7. Flip-flops;
8. Overalls;
9. Sleeveless shirts worn without a collar, mock or turtle neck, or without a dress jacket, blazer or sweater;
10. Visible body piercing other than pierced ears;
11. Sweat suits, warm-up suits or exercise clothing.

Formal Business Attire

Employees are required to dress in formal business attire when the employee is presenting information to the Board of Commissioners in a public meeting*, appearing in any court hearing or County hearing to provide testimony, or at any time when advised by the employee's supervisor. Appropriate formal business attire is as follows:

1. Business suit.
2. Dress slacks with a blazer or dress coat and dress shirt, mock turtleneck or turtleneck.
3. Dress slacks with a dress shirt and necktie.
4. Dress slacks or skirt, not more than 2" above the knee, with sweater or blouse. Sleeveless must be worn with a blazer, sweater or dress jacket.
5. Dresses not more than 2" above the knee. Sleeveless must be worn with a blazer, sweater or dress jacket.
6. County issued uniforms.

*Formal business attire is not required for Board of Commissioners Work Session.

F. Fiscal/Financial Responsibility

When making purchases for County business, all employees shall achieve value for money and avoid waste and extravagance in the use of public resources. Employees shall seek lower costs, better quality and purchase terms for acquisition of goods and services for the County. Employees are encouraged to identify improvements to systems and procedures to achieve optimal effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness. Employees shall consider the economic, environmental and social impacts of major programs when making decisions or providing advice.

All purchases for County business shall be made in accordance with the Purchasing Procedures Policy, the Procurement for Professional Services Policy and Rockdale County Code Section 2-211, et seq.

When using a County issued Purchasing Card (P-Card) to make purchases for County business, all employees shall adhere to the guidelines as set forth in the Purchasing Card Program User's Manual published by the Department of Finance.

G. Use of Computer/Network Resources

Intentional misuse or failure to carry out policies and procedures governing the official use of County owned or leased computer or network equipment and/or systems, is prohibited.

Use and access to information technology resources, such as the County local area network, computer hardware and software, shall be in accordance with the employee Use of Rockdale County Information Technology Resources Policy.

H. Assets and Resources Management

Intentional misuse of or failure to carry out policies and procedures governing the official use of County owned or leased property, equipment and/or systems, is prohibited.

Actual or attempted theft of County property, tools or equipment or the property of other employees, whether acting alone or in collusion with others, is prohibited.

I. Media and Public Relations

It is the responsibility of the Department of Public Affairs to establish and maintain open channels of communication with the public and to facilitate citizen involvement in government as informed individuals.

Employees should adhere to the following guidelines before providing information, in any form, to the public or the media:

1. The Director of Public Affairs (or, in the director's absence, the deputy director) must be notified of all media inquiries made to any department regarding any matters relating to Rockdale County. Prior notification is not necessary if it prevents directors and/or their designees from responding in a timely manner to media requests for copies of public documents or for general information.
2. At no time shall any director or employee initiate, "pitch" or suggest a news article to the media without prior discussion with the Director of Public Affairs and Media Relations. Public Affairs is the only department reporting to the Chairman that is authorized by the Chairman to issue news releases to the media.
3. Any written correspondence from the media formally requesting information under Georgia Open Records Law must immediately be forwarded to Public Affairs for a written response. (Requests made by private citizens or attorneys that cite the Open Records Law must be forwarded to the Director of Legal Affairs.)
4. Department Heads are encouraged to accommodate media requests for interviews on subjects relating to their areas of expertise. When an in-depth interview is expected, directors should coordinate with Public Affairs beforehand.
5. No employee shall grant media interviews without prior written approval from their respective department head and notification to Public Affairs.
6. No information will be printed for dissemination to the general public without prior review and final approval of Public Affairs. This includes fliers, brochures, mass mailings, citizen surveys and web site postings. This is not intended to discourage individual departments from creating publications deemed necessary and appropriate by directors. Rather, it is intended that Public Affairs provide editing assistance and overview to ensure accuracy and consistency in all County publications.
7. Any special event to which the public will be invited must be coordinated through Public Affairs.

These constraints are completely separate from the employee's individual right to free speech. Employees have the right to articulate their personal opinions on any topic to any

person, media or otherwise, verbally or in writing. Speaking *for the County on matters concerning the County* without adhering to these procedures is not permitted.

J. Public Speaking Engagements and Public Comment

Employees shall obtain the prior approval of the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners before addressing or chairing professional conferences or other public events in their official capacity. Public Affairs shall be notified of any public speaking engagements in which a director or an employee will be addressing County-related topics, among other things.

Public comment includes public speaking engagements, comments made on radio and television and expressing views in letters to the newspapers or in books, journals, internet or other notices where it might be expected that the publication or circulation of the comment would spread to the community at large.

As members of the community, employees have the right to make public comment and enter into public debate on political and social issues. However, employees are discouraged from making public comment on the administration of any County department. Unless specifically authorized by the County, public comment is inappropriate when:

1. The implication that the public comment, although made in a private capacity, is in some way an official comment on government policy or programs; and
2. The employee is directly involved in advising or directing the implementation or administration of government policy, and the public comment would compromise their ability to do so, or otherwise compromise their ability to perform their duties for the County.

In such cases employees' comments should be confined to factual information and should not express personal opinion on official County policy or practice.

Employees shall act and advise with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their official duties. If an employee believes an aspect of government policy or administration may have unforeseen consequences or otherwise requires review, then the employee shall bring it to the attention of their supervisor.

Public sector employees implement and administer the policies and programs of the elected government. Employees may hold views on particular matters that differ from those of the County, but such views must not influence the performance of their duties. Employees shall perform duties to the County regardless of which political party or parties are in office. Always act in the public interest rather than for the benefit of any personal or sectional interests.

K. Confidentiality of Data

The disclosure of or use of any confidential information or any other information, which might be contrary to the interest of the County, without prior authorization, is prohibited. The misuse, unauthorized access to, or mishandling of confidential information is strictly prohibited and will subject an employee to disciplinary action as set forth in Section 7 of this Policy. Employees are responsible for assuring the security of the County's confidential or proprietary material in their possession and similarly maintaining the security of equipment provided by the County. Employees concerned for the security of their work area or equipment must inform their supervisor of such concerns.

L. Political Activity

Employees shall not use or seek to use, directly or indirectly, their official authority or influence or use County property or resources for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of a political election, nomination or referendum, provided, however, that the foregoing shall not be interpreted or construed so as to abrogate or abridge the right of any such employee to express their political opinions, vote, seek elective office or otherwise participate in political undertakings in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Such political activity, however, must be performed on the employee's personal time.

Employees shall not be required, coerced, expected, persuaded or encouraged as a condition of employment in any form whatsoever to make any contribution, loan, subscription or assessment for any political campaign, candidate or organization or for any political campaign, candidate or organization or for any other political purpose, and employees shall not use, seek or promise to use their official authority or influence, directly or indirectly, in connection with the solicitation or receipt of any such contribution, loan, subscription or assessment.

M. Conflict of Interest

Employees shall avoid any situation, which involves or may involve a conflict between their personal interest and the interest of the County. When a conflict of interest occurs it shall always be resolved in favor of the public interest rather than the employees' personal interest.

Employees shall disclose potential conflicts of interest to their immediate supervisor when dealing in the course of official duties with relatives, spouse or close friends. Employees are required to declare to their immediate supervisor or Department Head any conflict of interest that arises or is likely to arise. Employees shall not be involved in any decision-making processes where an employee may be under a conflict of interest.

Employees are in conflict of interest with actions such as, but not limited to:

1. Taking part in a decision in the course of carrying out their duties, knowing that the decision might further a private interest of the employee, their spouse, relatives or close friends.
2. Using their public role to influence or seek to influence a decision of the County which could further a private interest of the employee, their spouse, relatives or close friends.
3. Using or communicating information not available to the general public that was gained by the employee in the course of carrying out their duties, to further or seek to further a private interest of the employee, their spouse, relatives or close friends.
4. Engaging in any employment additional to employment with Rockdale County, which interferes with efficient performance of the employee's duties without prior written approval from the employee's Department Head or Elected Official.
5. An employee shall not accept gifts, gratuities or loans from organizations, business concerns, or individuals with which they have official relationships on business of the County government. These limitations are not intended to prohibit the acceptance of any articles which are distributed free of charge to the general public, nor to prohibit the acceptance of token gifts given during the holiday seasons, provided that no employee accepts any gift over twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) in value in any one year from any single individual, corporation, business or interest group.

Section 4. Management of Staff

Department Heads and Supervisors shall manage employees according to the following guidelines to maintain a working environment that encourages mutual respect and promotes civil and pleasant relationships among employees:

1. Provide a safe, encouraging and supportive work environment that recognizes and values employee diversity, abilities and contributions. Give employees a clear sense of direction and purpose, and model the behaviors you expect of them.
2. Set realistic goals, timelines and workloads, and provide employees with adequate resources to complete the duties assigned. Trust employees to perform their assigned duties on their own but also provide them with support when needed. Address any performance issues directly and confidentially with the employee concerned.
3. Understand and respond to employees' legitimate needs and concerns.

Section 5. Reporting Unethical Behavior

Employees shall report any unethical behavior or wrongdoing by any other employee to an appropriate Supervisor, Department Head or the Director of Human Resources. This may include behavior that the employee believes violates any law, rule or regulation or represents corrupt conduct, substantial mismanagement of public resources, or is a danger to public health or safety or to the environment.

Employees will be protected against reprisals for reporting unethical behavior or wrongdoing providing that their claim is based on a reasonable belief and the employee has reported the matter to the appropriate person.

Section 6. Right to Search Property

The County reserves the right to search unlocked and/or publicly used County owned property at any time without consent. The County may request a search of personal property at the worksite or locked County property assigned to an individual if there is reasonable suspicion that evidence of illegal or prohibited activities resides therein. Refusal of such a request may result in disciplinary action as set forth in Section 7 of this Policy.

Section 7. Compliance

Any Employee who violates any provision of this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, as set forth in the Disciplinary Policy # 2006-4-29. Supervisors should consult their Department Head and/or the Director of Human Resources on such matters prior to administering or taking disciplinary action.

Section 8. Amendments

This Policy may be amended from time to time. Future additions, rescissions and amendments to this Policy shall also have the fore and effect of law, upon approval by the Board of Commissioners. This Policy does not establish a contract between the County and any employee.

Approved this 25 day of July, 2006.

Board of Commissioners
Rockdale County, Georgia

By: Roy J. Middlebrooks
Roy J. Middlebrooks, Chairman

Attest:

By: Jennifer Rutledge
Jennifer Rutledge, County Clerk