

KNOX COUNTY



Knox County Government
Knoxville, TN

intern handbook

KNOX COUNTY



Knox County Government Intern Handbook

A GUIDE TO
PERSONNEL POLICIES

MICHAEL R. RAGSDALE
COUNTY MAYOR

“Making Government Better Every Day”

KNOX COUNTY

THIS HANDBOOK WAS PREPARED BY :

KNOX COUNTY
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
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**YOU MAY CONTACT US IN THE
FOLLOWING WAYS:**

TELEPHONE

865-215-2321

E-MAIL

humanres@knoxcounty.org

WELLNESS E-MAIL

wellness@knoxcounty.org

**YOU MAY FIND ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION AT:**

WEBSITE

www.knoxcounty.org/hr/

JOB LINE

865-215-2313

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A Message from the County Mayor



May 16, 2005

Dear Knox County Intern,

Welcome to your intern assignment with Knox County Government! We are pleased to support your professional development and hope that your time with us is both enjoyable and enriching.

It is important that you have information about policies, procedures, and expectations during your internship. I urge you to read this handbook and to keep it for reference.

Our Human Resources Department is available to assist you with questions you might have about this handbook. Contact information is provided on the inside cover.

I wish you every success in your internship and hope you will join me in "*Making Government Better Every Day!*"

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Ragsdale".

Mike Ragsdale
County Mayor

Policies for Interns

The following policies are excerpted from the Knox County Employee Handbook. Because of the temporary nature of your internship appointment, not all policies in the Employee Handbook apply to you.

This Intern Handbook highlights those policies that are especially relevant to you. The department to which you are assigned may have additional policies or procedures. You should ask your supervisor about these.

Equal Employment Policy

Knox County maintains an equal employment opportunity policy and does not discriminate in hiring practices or terms and conditions of employment. All applicants and employees receive equal employment opportunities and all personnel decisions, actions, and conditions affecting employees, including but not limited to assignment, transfer, promotion, and compensation, will be governed by the principles of equal opportunity.

Discrimination against any person in recruitment, examination, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or discipline because of political or religious opinions or affiliations or because of race, religion, national origin, sex, age (as defined by Federal law), disability, or veteran status shall be prohibited.

The Human Resources Director has been designated as the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer for Knox County. The EEO Officer has overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the County's Equal Employment Policy, as well as authority over the internal procedures employees use to settle EEO and harassment claims.

Employment at-Will

Knox County Government is an at-will employer and as such there is no specific length or guarantee of continued employment. Either you or the County may terminate your employment at-will, without cause or prior notice, at any time.

None of the County's policies may be construed to create a contract of employment or any other legal obligation, express or implied, and any policy may be amended, revised, supplemented, rescinded or otherwise altered, in whole or in part, at any time, at the sole and absolute discretion of Knox County.

Workplace Harassment / Sexual Harassment

Knox County believes that you should be provided with a working environment free from harassment. It is the policy of Knox County Government that verbal or physical conduct by any employee that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment will not be tolerated.

If you believe you are being subjected to sexual, racial, religious, national origin, age, disability, or political harassment, or believe you are being discriminated against, you must bring this to the County's attention. The nature of harassment often makes it impossible to detect unless the person being harassed registers his or her discontent with the appropriate authorities. You have a responsibility to report or complain as soon as possible to the appropriate supervisor, or to your director, or to the Human Resources Director.

All complaints of harassment must be investigated promptly and impartially, with confidentiality maintained to the greatest extent possible. In all cases, you will be advised of the findings following the investigation.

Any employee, supervisor, or director who is found to have engaged in harassment of another employee will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.



If you believe you are the victim of harassment, you must report or complain as soon as possible to your supervisor, or to your director, or to the Human Resources Director. You may decide to which of these three persons the report will be made.

Sexual Harassment: Each director, supervisor, and employee has a responsibility to maintain the workplace free of any form of sexual harassment. Sexually harassing conduct in the workplace, whether committed by supervisors or non-supervisory personnel, is prohibited. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

1. Sexual flirtations, touching, advances, or propositions;
2. verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
3. graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
4. sexually degrading words to describe an individual;
5. display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, including nude photographs.

As with any form of harassment, you have the responsibility to report sexual harassment to an appropriate authority as soon as possible. You may report to either your supervisor, department director, or the Human Resources Director. Your complaint of sexual harassment must be investigated promptly and impartially, with confidentiality maintained to the greatest extent possible. You will be advised of the findings following the investigation.

Any employee, supervisor, or director who is found to have engaged in sexual harassment of another employee will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Code of Ethics

It is the policy of Knox County Government to uphold, promote, and demand the highest standards of ethics from all employees and officials, whether elected or appointed. Accordingly, all county employees should maintain the utmost standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and fairness in carrying out their public duties; avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants; and never use their county position or powers for improper personal gain.

You are required to maintain the highest ethical standards in the conduct of your official duties. This also applies to non-work situations when you identify yourself as a County employee (i.e., wearing a County identification badge, distributing a County business card, wearing a County uniform, riding in a County vehicle, etc.). In order to fulfill this requirement, the following points are made:

- Personal characteristics such as honesty, courtesy, dependability, sobriety, industry, and use of sound judgment are required for all employees in all classes of work in County government.
- There shall be no activity, which is in conflict with the interest of your official duties.
- You cannot use your position with the County for private interest.

County Equipment

County equipment, materials, vehicles, and/or other resources assigned to you shall be used with care and economy, and shall be used only for County purposes. Waste or misuse of County resources may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Temporary and Seasonal Employees

You are considered a temporary employee when hired for a stated or specific term of employment of less than one (1) year. An intern is a temporary employee.

Temporary employees do not receive employee benefits. This means they do not accrue sick or annual (vacation) leave, nor are they paid for holidays.

Pay Periods

You are paid on a bi-weekly basis. Payroll checks are available every other Friday. Some pay dates may occur earlier due to holidays.

Working During Lunch Periods

Lunch period is time set aside for eating. The time is not considered part of the basic workday and no pay is earned during this period.

A workday may not be shortened by “working through” or reducing the lunch period on a voluntary basis. Eliminating or reducing your lunch period requires prior approval from your immediate supervisor. Such approvals must be limited and will typically be for one day due to unusual or special circumstances.



If you need to make a one-time adjustment to your work schedule, you may ask your immediate supervisor, in advance, for permission to reduce or eliminate your lunch period on the day in question. This may not be used on an on-going basis.

Attendance

You are an important member of the Knox County Government team. We are committed to providing the highest level of government services and functions to better serve the community. In order to accomplish this, your prompt and regular attendance is required.

In case of an illness or injury that would prevent you from reporting to work at the scheduled time, you are required to speak directly to your supervisor. If your supervisor is unavailable, you are required to speak directly to the next-level manager or director, or to the person designated by your supervisor.



You must telephone your supervisor (or next-level manager or designee) and speak directly to that person to give notification of absence or tardiness. Leaving a message does not meet this requirement.

Failure to provide notification of absence for three (3) consecutive workdays may result in removal from the payroll as having resigned without notice. Employees who resign under such circumstances are not eligible for rehire.

Work Hours and Time Records

Interns usually work 20 hours per week, but this may vary depending on the project and work location. Core business hours are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Your immediate supervisor will inform you of your work hours.

You will be responsible for completing a Knox County time sheet with your beginning and ending work times, including lunch. This is necessary for payroll calculation of your earnings.

Anyone who willfully falsifies a time record may be subject to immediate dismissal.

Every adjustment to the work schedule requires advance approval from your immediate supervisor.

Dismissal / Termination

Dismissal (termination) may be made for cause including, but not limited to, your action or behavior that constitutes

- insubordination (refusal to follow supervisor's instructions),
- endangering your own health or safety or the health or safety of other employees or citizens,
- making fraudulent statements on employee applications or job records,
- absence from work without authorization or notification,
- theft, vandalism, or willful destruction of County or employee property,
- any violation of the County Alcohol and Drug Policy,
- misconduct,
- willful neglect of duties,
- failure to perform job duties,
- repeated tardiness or absence,
- violation of departmental rules,
- email abuse, and
- Internet abuse, or
- any other infraction when dismissal is determined to be in the best interest of the County.

Safety

Knox County is concerned for your health and safety in the performance of your job. You must observe all safety rules.

Any workplace accidents, incidents, or injuries must be reported immediately to your direct supervisor and the Risk Management Department. You will also have to complete a written form and send it to Risk Management within 48 hours. If you are unable to report immediately, then you should report the incident as soon as possible. Your supervisor will also have to file a report.



You must report workplace accidents, incidents, or injuries to your direct supervisor as soon as possible. You will also have to complete a report and return it to the Risk Management Department.

For additional information about any safety concern, please consult the "Safety Policies and Procedures" manual or the Risk Management Department.

Alcohol and Drugs – Drug Free Workplace Policy

Knox County Government is committed to a safe working environment and to making adequate provisions for the safety and health of its employees at their place of employment. The County regards its personnel as individuals as well as employees and believes that alcoholism and drug addiction are illnesses and should be treated as such.

Substance abuse can be reasonably expected to produce impaired job performance, lost productivity, absenteeism, accidents, wasted materials, lowered morale, rising health care costs, and diminished interpersonal relationship skills. Knox County Government and its employees share a commitment to create and maintain a drug-free workplace.

The full Drug and Alcohol policy is available from the Human Resources Department. Please call 215-2321 if you would like a copy.

This section offers a brief summary of that policy.

Employees on Duty or on County Property: You must not manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia, nor may you be under the influence of such drugs. Furthermore, you must not be under any degree of intoxication or odor from alcohol, or possess open alcoholic beverage containers while on duty, or on County property, or in attendance at County-approved functions.

Use of Prescription Drugs: You must not use or take prescription drugs above the level recommended by your prescribing physician and must not use prescribed drugs for purposes other than those for which they are intended.

Employees Convicted of a Criminal Drug Law: If you are convicted of any criminal drug law (including alcohol, prescription drugs, or over-the-counter drugs), you must notify your supervisor or director no later than five (5) days after the conviction. Within thirty (30) days after receiving notice of a conviction, the County will take appropriate disciplinary action and/or refer the employee to an appropriate substance abuse rehabilitation program. Your failure to report the conviction within the time prescribed will lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.



A consequence of violating Knox County's Alcohol and Drug Policy may include immediate dismissal.

Reasonable Suspicion of Drug or Alcohol Use: Whenever a supervisor, director, or Medical Review Officer (as described in the policy) reasonably suspects that your work performance or on-the-job behavior may have been affected in any way by illegal drugs or alcohol or that you have otherwise violated the Knox County Government Drug-Free Workplace Substance Abuse Policy, you may be required to submit a breath and/or urine sample for drug and alcohol testing.

When a supervisor observes or is notified of behaviors or events that lead the supervisor to believe that an employee is in violation of the Drug-Free Workplace Substance Abuse Policy, the supervisor must notify the hiring authority or director.

Refusal to Submit to Required Testing: If you are required to submit to drug/alcohol testing based upon reasonable suspicion and refuse, you may be charged with insubordination and necessary procedures may be taken to terminate your employment.

Tobacco Use

Tobacco products may only be used outside buildings in a specific area designated by the building manager. Ask your supervisor where this area is located in your building. Additionally, tobacco products may not be used in any vehicle owned or leased by the County.

Computer Use

Computers and related items and software are County property and are provided for the use of County employees for conducting County business. These items include, but are not limited to, hardware, software, and computer files and documents.

The County has the right to monitor any and all of its computers. This includes, but is not limited to:

- monitoring your Internet usage,
- reviewing any downloaded or uploaded material,
- reviewing emails sent or received by you, and/or
- monitoring the content of stored files on your computer.

Passwords: All passwords must be provided to the department director or the Information Technology department upon request. The use of undisclosed passwords is prohibited.

Prohibited Uses: Sending, displaying, circulating, or storing inappropriate, illegal, or sexually explicit material is prohibited.

No software or hardware may be installed or downloaded on County computers without the written permission of the Director of Information Technology.

Playing computer games on County computers is prohibited.

The email system may not be used to solicit or to conduct personal business ventures.

Dress Code

Knox County does not have an official dress code that applies to the entire organization. However, departments have the authority to specify dress standards for their individual work areas. If such standards are in place in your assigned department, you will be expected to comply.

You should ask your supervisor about expectations, prohibitions, or general practices for attire and appearance.