

**District 2 Public Health
Policy # 227
Standards of Conduct
Effective September 1, 2015**

1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy governs the day to day conduct of all employees of the County Board of Health (CBOH), as well as those who work for attached agencies with offices located inside CBOH.

2.0 POLICY

2.1 ACCOUNTABILITY

2.1.1 In order for CBOH to operate efficiently, its employees must maintain a professional appearance and act in a professional manner, and must show respect at all times to fellow employees and members of the public.

2.1.2 It is not possible to provide written guidelines that cover every possible aspect of proper employee conduct. However, in general, any conduct that disrupts the CBOH workplace, or interferes with the relationships of its employees and partners in public health, may result in disciplinary action or termination of employment.

2.1.3 All employees are required to sign a CBOH Standards of Conduct Agreement upon employment.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 CBOH – County Board of Health

3.2 HR/DPD Human Resources/District Personnel Department

3.3 DHD – District Health Director

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of each County Board of Health employee to read and adhere to the policy and procedures provided herein.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 CONDUCT AT THE OFFICE

5.1.1 **Respectful and Courteous Manner:** Employees must conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner at all times towards fellow employees, vendors, other public employees, and members of the public. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:

5.1.1.1 Threatening, abusive, or profane language, whether spoken or in writing;

5.1.1.2 Fighting or physical contact intended to harm or intimidate;

5.1.1.3 Sexual innuendo, uninvited touching of another employee (e.g., kissing, hugging, massaging, sitting on laps), or display of sexual images outside a clinical professional context;

5.1.1.4 Racial, ethnic, gender, or sexual orientation jokes and slurs, obscenities, and other expressions of an offensive nature.

5.1.2 **Intimate Relationships:** Intimate relationships between managers or supervisors and their subordinate staff members, through any line of authority, are prohibited. Employees who enter into such relationships shall notify HR/DPD of the need for one or both of the employees in the relationship to be reassigned, so that a line relationship no longer exists between the employees. Intimate relationships between co-workers are prohibited when the relationship has a demonstrated negative effect on the performance of either co-worker or the effective, efficient functioning of the work unit. Displays of affection in the workplace or during work hours shall be only those typically acceptable in a professional business environment.

5.1.3 **Personal Activities:** Employees generally shall not engage in personal or business activities other than official business during working hours. Employees may send and receive personal telephone calls, texts, and emails, and may use the internet during work hours, so long as the time spent is minimal and does not interfere with the work activities of the employee or the work unit, as determined by the employee's supervisor. All district policies on technology and social media use must be adhered to.

- 5.1.4 **Taking Pictures:** Employees shall not take pictures of other employees without the subject's permission. If a picture is taken, the employee must delete the picture if requested to do so by the subject.
- 5.1.5 **Audio or Video Recording:** Employees shall not make any audio or video recordings of other employees, unless the recording is work related and specifically approved by the supervisor of the organizational unit.
- 5.1.5.1 Supervisors may record conversations or meetings if there is a specific work-related reason for doing so.
- 5.1.5.2 HR/DPD may record conversations when necessary and appropriate in the course of investigations.
- 5.1.5.3 A Grievance Hearing may be taped only by the authorized official(s) conducting the hearing.
- 5.1.6 **Falsifying Records:** Employees shall not falsify any records or any other documents prepared during the course of business (e.g., time cards, sign-in/out sheets, case management, facility, patient, client or customer records), nor shall employees destroy any records, emails, or documents except in the ordinary course of business and in accordance with the CBOH's document retention policy.
- 5.1.7 **Weapons:** With the exception of mace or pepper spray, employees shall not bring any form of weapon into the office.
- 5.1.8 **Alcohol or Illegal Drugs:** Employees shall not possess or consume alcohol or illegal drugs in the office, during work hours, or while conducting CBOH business outside of the office. Temporary possession of unopened alcohol containers being given as gifts or transported in personal vehicles is allowed. Reporting to work or being on duty under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol is prohibited and will constitute grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- 5.1.9 **Visitors in the Workplace:** In order to minimize interference with normal operations and to avoid potential hazards and liability for the CBOH, visitors (e.g., children, other relatives, friends or acquaintances of employees, and former employees) in the work place during work hours (to include offsite work, see 5.2.1) are discouraged in situations or for durations where the visitor's presence interferes with the employee's or their coworkers' performance of their normal work duties.

5.1.10 **Personal Items:** Offices, work stations, and office furniture are CBOH and/or State property and are reserved for work-related activities. Employees may have personal items in the office or workstation, if suitable for the work area and reasonable. Examples include family photographs; certificates, diplomas; and small, discreet, decorative or inspirational items intended for the comfort and enjoyment of the employee. Such items must not be offensive or inflammatory, or otherwise inconsistent with the CBOH's work setting. Employees may be required to remove items determined to be inappropriate from work areas at any time.

5.1.11 **Open Records:** CBOH employees are reminded that all emails and attachments sent or received on a CBOH or state computer are subject to disclosure under the Open Records Act.

5.2 CONDUCT OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

5.2.1 Conduct while outside the office on CBOH business.

CBOH employees who are working outside of the office, traveling on business, or attending meetings or conferences outside the office, are subject at all times to the same standards of conduct that apply inside the office. Employees must be mindful that they will be viewed as representatives of the CBOH while acting on business outside the office, and act in a respectful and courteous manner.

5.2.2 Conduct while off duty.

The CBOH generally is not concerned as an employer with the conduct of employees while off duty. However, off-duty conduct becomes a legitimate concern when it causes actual disruption to board operations or relationships among other employees, or if it constitutes behavior that is unethical or criminal or discredits the CBOH. In those cases, off-duty conduct may result in appropriate disciplinary action or termination from employment.

5.3 ARRESTS OR CONVICTIONS

Employees are required to notify both their immediate supervisor and the HR/DPD of any arrest or criminal convictions within five calendar days of arrest or conviction. A determination of appropriate action will be made on a case by case basis. This paragraph does not apply to routine traffic offenses for which the only penalty authorized by law is a fine.

5.4 CARE AND USE OF CBOH and/or STATE PROPERTY

Employees are responsible for the care and maintenance of any property used or entrusted to them. Negligent treatment, damage, or destruction of property is prohibited. An employee may not take or use CBOH and/or State property for personal use except as expressly permitted elsewhere in this or other policies.

5.5 REPRESENTING THE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

5.5.1 CBOH employees shall never misrepresent the nature or extent of their authority, to other employees or to persons outside the CBOH.

5.5.2 When discussing matters pertaining to public health with persons outside of the CBOH, employees should assume that they will be perceived as representatives of the CBOH and conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner.

5.5.3 CBOH employees are not allowed to commit the CBOH to any financial commitment, including agreements and contracts, unless they have authorization. Unauthorized commitments could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

6.0 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

CBOH employees have the constitutional right to participate in the political process when off-duty and outside of work hours. However, under no circumstances may a CBOH employee engage in political advocacy when performing CBOH business or during work hours. CBOH and/or State-owned computers, telephones, or assets shall not be used in connection with activities on behalf of political candidates or parties. Employees shall not solicit money or support for political parties or candidates, nor shall they display political buttons, stickers, bumper stickers, posters, or literature, when performing CBOH business or during work hours. In any discussion of the CBOH or its mission, whether on-duty or off-duty, the employee should not state or imply that the CBOH has any partisan political leaning or affiliation.

7.0 SOLICITATION ACTIVITIES AND ACCESS

There shall be no solicitation on premises owned, leased or occupied by the CBOH, either by CBOH employees or by third parties, except as stated in the District 2 No Solicitation Policy #166.

8.0 REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.1.1 An employee who has information which indicates a possible criminal offense against the CBOH, by an employee of the CBOH or any other individual working on behalf of the CBOH, shall immediately report such information to HR/DPD and/or DHD. Examples of such offenses include, but are not limited to, bribery, fraud, perjury, conflict of interest, misuse of funds, equipment, or facilities, and other conduct by a government officer or employee, grantee, contractor or other person which is prohibited by title 16 of the Georgia Code.
- 8.1.2 An employee who has information which indicates a possible criminal offense against the State of Georgia, by an employee of the Board or any other individual working on behalf of the Board, shall immediately report such information to DPH Inspector General. Examples of such offenses include, but are not limited to, bribery, fraud, perjury, conflict of interest, misuse of funds, equipment, or facilities, and other conduct by a government officer or employee, grantee, contractor or other person which is prohibited by title 16 of the Georgia Code.
- 8.1.3 Responsibility for reporting possible misconduct:
 - 8.1.3.1 An employee who has information which indicates the existence of an activity constituting (a) a possible violation of a rule or regulation of the CBOH; or (b) mismanagement, waste of funds, or abuse of authority; or (c) a substantial and specific danger to the public health and safety, shall immediately report such information to his or her supervisor, any management official of the CBOH, or directly to the HR/DPD and/or the DHD.
 - 8.1.3.2 Any supervisor or management official, who fails to report known or suspected misconduct immediately upon receiving knowledge of such, will be subject to disciplinary action. The supervisor must report misconduct even though he or she may believe that disciplinary action is not warranted based upon circumstances of the case.
 - 8.1.3.3 Employees shall cooperate and assist as requested with any type of investigation regarding alleged criminal offenses or misconduct. This includes activities such as cooperating in interviews, answering questions related to the performance of official duties, producing requested documents, and polygraph examinations.

9.0 RELATED FORMS

Standards of Conduct Acknowledgement

Approval:		
	District Health Director/Appointing Authority	Date