



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose

Town of Bluffton departments may utilize social media and social network sites to further enhance communications with various stakeholder organizations in support of Town goals and objectives. Town officials, Town committees, and staff have the ability to publish articles, facilitate discussions and communicate information through various media related to conducting Town business. Social media facilitates further discussion of Town issues, operations and services by providing members of the public the opportunity to participate in many ways using the Internet.

For the purpose of this Town of Bluffton Social Media Policy, the following terms are defined as provided below:

- A. Social Media:** Social media is content created by individuals using accessible and scalable technologies through the Internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, blogs, MySpace, RSS, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Delicious, Flickr, etc.
- B. Blog:** An abridgment of the term web log is a Town of Bluffton website with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video.
- C. Town of Bluffton Author:** An authorized Town of Bluffton official that creates and is responsible for posted articles and information on social media sites.
- D. Article:** An original posting of content to a Town of Bluffton social media site by a Town of Bluffton author.
- E. Commenter:** A Town of Bluffton official or member of the public who submits a comment for posting in response to the content of a particular Town of Bluffton article or social media content.
- F. Comment:** A response to a Town of Bluffton article or social media content submitted by a commenter.
- G. Town of Bluffton Moderator:** An authorized Town of Bluffton official, who reviews, authorizes and allows content submitted by Town of Bluffton authors and public commentators to be posted on Town of Bluffton social media sites.



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1. All Town of Bluffton social media sites shall be:
 - Approved by the Town Manager and the requesting Department Head;
 - Published using an approved Town social networking platform and tools;
 - Created by the Department of Information Technology Web Team, IT personnel or the Public Information Officer, their designee or the Town of Bluffton Moderator. Designees can be any department employee or volunteer designated by the requesting Department Head that has a complete understanding of this policy and has appropriate content and technical experience.
2. All Town of Bluffton social networking sites shall adhere to applicable state, federal and local laws, regulations and policies including the **Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy** and other applicable Town policies.
3. **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** and policies apply to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.
4. All social network sites and entries shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.
5. Content submitted for posting that is deemed not suitable for posting by a Town of Bluffton social networking moderator because it is not topically related to the particular social networking site objective being commented upon, or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria in [Item 8](#) of this policy, shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content is deemed not suitable for posting.
6. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.
7. Each Town of Bluffton social networking site shall include an introductory statement which clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the blog and/or social network site. Where possible, social networking sites should link back to the official Town of Bluffton Internet site for forms, documents and other information. See [Attachment A – Blog Standards](#).
8. Town of Bluffton social networking content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed for posting:
 - Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being commented upon;
 - Profane language or content;
 - Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;



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- Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - Solicitations of commerce;
 - Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
9. All Town social networking moderators shall be trained regarding the terms of this Town of Bluffton policy, including their responsibilities to review content submitted for posting to ensure compliance with the policy.
10. All social networking sites shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the Town of Bluffton and shall have the Town of Bluffton contact information prominently displayed.
11. Employees representing the Town government via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the Town, ~~and~~ in accordance with all human resource policies, ~~and in compliance with the Attachment B—Employee Guidance for Participating~~ Participation in Social Networking (~~see Attachment B~~).
12. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
13. Due to the evolving nature of social media, the policies and guidelines are subject to revision by the Town of Bluffton as approved by the Town Manager.



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Attachment A - Blog Standards

Comments submitted by members of the public must be directly related to the content of the articles. Submission of comments by members of the public constitutes participation in a limited public forum.

Town of Bluffton blog moderators shall allow comments that are topically related to the particular article being commented and thus within the purpose of the limited public forum, with the exception of the prohibited content listed in [Social Media Policy - Item 8](#).

Author and Commenter Identification:

1. All Town of Bluffton blog [authors](#) and public commentators shall be clearly identified. Anonymous blog postings shall not be allowed.
2. Enrollment of public commentator shall be accompanied by valid contact information, including a name, address, and email address.

Ownership and Moderation:

1. The content of each Town of Bluffton [blog](#) shall be owned by and the sole responsibility of the department producing and using the blog.
2. Documents and articles submitted to a Town of Bluffton blog shall be moderated by an authorized and trained blog moderator.

Blog Comments & Responses:

1. All blog articles and comments shall be reviewed and approved by an authorized blog moderator before posting on a Town of Bluffton blog.
2. All blog articles and comments submitted for posting with attached content shall be scanned using antivirus technology prior to posting.
3. The linked content of embedded hyperlinks within any Town of Bluffton blog articles or blog comments submitted for posting shall be evaluated prior to posting by the Information Technology Web Team.
4. Any posted hyperlinks shall be accompanied by a disclaimer stating that the Town of Bluffton guarantees neither the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness nor security of the link, website or content linked thereto.

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Attachment B - Employee ~~Guidance for Participating~~ Participation in Social NetworkingMedia

I. Purpose and Definitions.

The Town of Bluffton ("Town") understands that social networking and Internet services have become a common form of communication in the workplace and among stakeholders and citizens. Social networks are online communities of people or organizations that share interests and/or activities and use a wide variety of Internet technology to make the interaction a rewarding experience.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to ensure that social media tools are used properly and in a uniform manner across all departments, while at the same time protecting the Town and its employees by addressing potential risks. For this policy the two types of social media use are defined as:

1. Official Use: Social media engagement on behalf of the Town and authorized by the Town on sites that hold out as an official site of the Town. Use of a Town e-mail address and communicating in an official capacity will constitute conducting Town business regardless if on an official site of the Town.
2. Non-Official/Personal Use: Use of social media sites by an individual, not related to the individual's employment or official duties, and not on behalf of the Town.

Additionally, this policy is intended to ensure Town employees are informed and understand the difference between Official Use and Non-Official use of social media, and as a Town employee you should be thoughtful when participating in Non-Official use of social media.

II. Requirements for Official Use.

During an employee's Official Use of social media, the employee understands and agrees that the requirements and guidelines contained in this section must be followed at all times.

~~Employees that choose to participate in social networks as a Town employee should adhere to the following guidelines:~~

- ~~1. Town policies, rules, regulations and standards of conduct apply to employees that engage in social networking activities while conducting Town business. Do not use ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the Town's workplace. Avoid comments or topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. An employee's personal opinion is prohibited from being included in any comment, post or publication on social media.~~
- ~~4. Use of your Town e-mail address and communicating in your official capacity will constitute conducting Town business.~~
- ~~2. Town employees must notify their supervisor and the IT department if they intend to create a social networking site or service to conduct Town business.~~
- ~~3.2. Departments have the option of allowing employees to participate in existing social networking sites as part of their job duties. Town employees must notify their supervisor and the IT Department in writing if they intend to create a social networking site or service to conduct Town business. Departments have the option of allowing employees to participate in existing social networking sites as part of their job duties, and Department Heads may allow or disallow employee participation in any social networking activities in their departments.~~

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~~4-3.~~ Protect your privacy, the privacy of citizens, and the information the Town holds. Follow all privacy protection laws, e.g., HIPAA, and protect sensitive and confidential Town information. Employees shall not make careless or intentional unauthorized disclosures of nonpublic or confidential information.

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~~5-4.~~ Follow all copyright laws, public records laws, retention laws, fair use and financial disclosure laws and any other laws that might apply to the Town or your functional area.

~~6-5.~~ Do not cite vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders without their written approval.

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~~7.~~ Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the Town of Bluffton. If you publish content on any website outside of the Town of Bluffton and it has something to do with the work you do or subjects associated with the Town, use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent the Town's positions or opinions."

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~~8.~~ Do not use ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the Town's workplace. Avoid comments or topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.

~~9.~~ If you identify yourself as a Town employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues, citizens and other stakeholders.

~~10-6.~~ Correct your mistakes, and don't alter previous posts written by others without indicating that you have done so. Frame any comment or response to an e-or opposing views in a positive manner.

~~11-7.~~ Add value to the Town of Bluffton through your interaction. Provide worthwhile information and perspective.



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III. Guidance for Participating in Personal Social NetworkingGuidelines for Non-Official/Personal Use. As an employee of the Town of Bluffton, it is understood that your personal social media presence may reflect upon the Town, whether the content is related to the Town or not. An employee is solely responsible for taking the necessary precautions to ensure their Personal Use is not inadvertently perceived as an Official Use. The following guidelines should be considered by employees when participating in social media in a Non-Official capacity.

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1. If you choose to identify yourself as a Town employee on social media, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues, citizens and other stakeholders.
2. Make it clear that your participation in social media is a Non-Official Use and any comment or opinion is not on behalf of the Town of Bluffton. If you publish content on social media and said content is related to your employment or subjects associated with the Town, it is suggested you use a disclaimer such as: "The postings on this site are my own, my statement has not been approved by the Town of Bluffton, and my statement does not necessarily represent the Town of Bluffton's positions or opinions."
3. Consider how posts, comments or opinions made in your Non-Official Use may affect your work environment and professional relationships.
4. During employment, you may be provided nonpublic, confidential and/or sensitive information that should not be released publicly. During Personal Use of social media, you should not allow for the improper use or disclosure of said information to endorse a product, service or enterprise, or for the private gain of friends, relatives, or acquaintances.
5. Protect your privacy, the privacy of citizens, and the information the Town holds. Follow all privacy protection laws, e.g., HIPAA, and protect sensitive and confidential Town information.
6. To ensure that your participation in social media adheres to the applicable standards of conduct for all public employees, you should review all applicable federal, state and local policies, guidelines, and regulations related to public employment including but not limited to the Hatch Act and S.C. State Ethics Commission Act.

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Town of Bluffton Social Media Policy Acknowledgement

My signature below acknowledges that I am in receipt of the following Town of Bluffton policy. I understand that all employees are expected to honor this policy.

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Employee Signature

Date

Print Employee Name

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2.16 Traveling on Business.

All forms referenced in the policy below are located within the Travel folder under Finance Forms

It is the policy of the Town that business travel must be approved in advance and should be engaged in and reimbursed according to the guidelines below. This policy is established in accordance with applicable Internal Revenue Service (IRS) guidelines.

1. Each Department Head is responsible for ensuring that employees review this policy and understands its intent and requirements prior to departure on their ~~first~~ business trip. Employees who know or anticipate that they will have a special exception to anything listed in this travel policy should discuss with their Supervisor and the Director of Finance before incurring the expense. Absent extraordinary circumstances, all travel should be undertaken in an economical and efficient manner.
2. Department Heads must approve any employee travel in advance. (See [Travel Advance Request Form](#).) Travel must be in connection with the official business of the Town. Town funds will only be expended on conventions, conferences, project-related meetings, workshops, professional development, training, or seminars (hereinafter collectively referred to as “meetings”) when:
 - a. The main purpose of the meeting is in connection with the official business of the Town and directly relates to the performance, duties and responsibilities of the Town employee;
 - b. The meeting provides a direct educational benefit supporting the work and public purpose of the Town;
 - c. The essential duties and responsibilities of the person seeking to attend the meeting are compatible with the objectives of the particular meeting, and
 - d. Attendance for the meeting is approved prior to submitting a requisition, departure and/or incurring expenses.
3. Approvals and Review: Expenses incurred as the result of business travel requires the approval of the Department Director. Implicit in the approval is that the approver has personally reviewed the details of the expense report. Final review, prior to reimbursement, is the responsibility of the Finance Department.
4. Employees traveling on Town business are representatives of the Town and are expected to maintain a high level of professionalism and to follow all Town policies and rules. (See [Employee Behavior and Expectations on page 39](#).)
5. Time spent by non-exempt employees (those covered by the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act) traveling away from home on Town business during normal working hours is considered hours worked for pay purposes. (See [Hours of Work on page 23](#).)
6. The Town may issue guidelines specifying or restricting travel based upon budgetary or international travel restrictions. Under normal circumstances, employees should use the most appropriate form of transportation available and book the most reasonable fares for airfare and lodging. Employees must adhere to the per diem schedule for the city which they are traveling. Log onto <http://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> for the current rates.

7. Expenses Paid by Other Agencies: Meetings for which the traveler will be reimbursed by another agency, organization, or institution are excluded from these provisions.
8. Prior to Travel
 - a. Employees should provide their Supervisor with a copy of their itinerary before leaving on business travel. Itineraries must be included with all pre-travel and post-travel expense reports and purchasing card reconciliations.
 - b. Under normal circumstances, employees should make all travel arrangements for transportation and lodging. Approved expenses should be paid using a Town Purchasing Card (P-Card) prior to and during travel. No personal debit or credit cards should be used unless prior approval has been granted by the Finance Director. If the employee does not have a Town Purchasing Card, a Town Visa Card must be requested from the Accounts Payable Administrator for use while traveling.
 - c. Combined Business and Personal Travel
 - i. The Town will pay for the cost of the business segment, and the employee will pay for the difference between that and the total. The difference can be paid via a check payable to the Town or a payroll deduction. If the total is equal to or less than the business segment, there are no additional charges.
 - d. Guest on a Trip
 - i. If an employee chooses to take a guest on an approved business trip, the additional expense incurred is personal. The Town will pay expenses to the extent that it would have cost for the employee alone.
 - e. Meal Per Diem
 - i. Employees required to travel on Town business may receive a meal per diem for the cost of meals during their travel. The Town uses the published rates on the GSA website for calculating per diem. Receipts are not required to be kept for per diem allowances.
 - ii. Employees are eligible to receive a meal per diem for those meals not provided by the conference, meeting or seminar.
 1. Any meal included in the registration fee cannot be claimed on a travel expense report, even if the traveler chooses not to partake of the meal. The exception to this is for allergy or dietary restrictions that are not made available.
 - iii. Per diem rates are published annually at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.
 - iv. First & Last Day of Travel Meal Per Diem Guidelines
 1. First Day of Travel
 - a. If departing before 7am, breakfast can be claimed
 - b. If departing between 7am and 2pm, lunch can be claimed
 - c. If departing after 2pm, dinner can be claimed
 2. Last Day of Travel
 - a. If returning home before Noon, breakfast can be claimed
 - b. If returning home between Noon and 6:30pm, lunch can be claimed
 - c. If returning home after 6:30pm, dinner can be claimed
 - v. For non-full meal per diem days, use the breakout as listed on the

GSA website to calculate the per diem.

f. Travel Expenses to Pay with P-Card or VISA Card

i. Lodging

1. Employees are expected to use sound business judgment in selecting accommodations. In many cases, a government rate is available and employees should request this rate when registering at the hotel. Short-term rentals are permitted if nearby hotels lack availability or the rate is cheaper than a hotel.
2. No reservations should be made for overnight lodging within 60 miles roundtrip of the traveler's official headquarters.
3. On the day your meeting ends, if your return time to the traveler's official headquarters occurs before 6:30pm, then travelers are expected to depart that day and not incur any additional lodging expenses.
4. If the lodging reservation must be cancelled, the cancellation must be made within the time required to not incur any expense. The Town will not pay for no-shows except for illness or extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the employee (documentation must be provided). Outside of extenuating circumstances, the Town will not pay for early departure fees.
5. Non-refundable rates are not encouraged when booking lodging (see prior paragraph regarding no-shows). Employees may request a VISA card from the Accounts Payable Administrator before departing for travel, if needed.
6. All charges shown on the lodging folio/receipt should be itemized to show charges/taxes/fees, parking, etc. In-room movies and use of mini-bars are considered personal expenses and therefore, not allowed.

ii. Registration

1. Registration fees for a conference, seminar, or workshop should be paid in advance using a P-Card or VISA card.
2. A copy of the paid registration and itinerary should be included with all expense reports.

iii. Airfare

1. Airfare should be purchased using the economy-class airfare.
2. The receipt must show the airfare rate/charges and flight itinerary.
3. Driving in Lieu of Airline Travel
 - a. When the most economical means of transportation is an airline flight and the employee elects to travel by personal vehicle, mileage reimbursement will be limited to 650 roundtrip miles.
4. Seat Upgrades
 - a. Fees for upgraded seats are considered personal expenses and, therefore, are not allowed.
5. Airline Clubs
 - a. Fees for memberships/entry in airline clubs are considered personal expenses and, therefore, are not

allowed.

6. Insurance

- a. Travel insurance may be purchased with prior approval of the employee's Supervisor.
- b. Proceeds and Credits from travel insurance claims should be made payable directly to the Town. See the **After Travel** section of this policy for instructions related to proceeds and credits that are payable or reimbursed directly to the employee and not the Town.

7. Delayed/Cancelled Flights

- a. Employees should communicate any potential travel delays or cancellations with their supervisors and use sound judgment when booking alternative travel plans.

iv. Baggage

1. Charges imposed by a carrier on personal luggage will be paid by the Town. Personal luggage that exceeds weight or other established limitations will be borne by the employee unless the Supervisor who authorized the trip approves a particular exception. The Town will pay any charges for business materials that an employee is specifically authorized to carry in or as part of the employee's personal luggage.

v. Rental Car

1. The use of a rental car is permitted only when it is in the interest of the Town to do so. Ask for a government rate or take the lowest rate available and ensure Unlimited mileage is selected. If using Enterprise, please contact the Finance Department for the Corporate Discount code. Personal use days if added to the employees approved travel schedule will not be reimbursed by the Town. Airport shuttles, taxis and other methods of public transportation are encouraged when they provide a more economical alternative for the Town.
2. Insurance should be considered from the car rental agency if traveling with a Town VISA card. If traveling with a P-Card issued in your name, rental car insurance coverage is provided by Bank of America and therefore additional coverage is not needed. Employees traveling on business are covered through workers' compensation insurance and have limited rental car insurance coverage through the Town's vehicle insurance provider.
3. For less than three (3) employees traveling together, the Town will reimburse for the cost of a compact car. Upgrades to mid-size are permissible if three (3) or more employees travel together.
4. If rental cars are retained over a weekend, such expenses are personal except when used to travel on a weekend to another location on Town business or if it would be cheaper for the employee to retain the vehicle over a weekend by paying a weekly rate rather than a daily rental rate.

5. Rental car fees and gas must be paid for using a P-Card or VISA card and all receipts should be turned in with the travel expense report. The employee should make sure the gas tank is returned at the same level as when the vehicle was picked up.

vi. Airport Parking

1. Airport Parking fees must be paid for using a P-Card or VISA card. A receipt must be obtained and included with the travel expense report.

9. During Travel

a. Travel to and from Airport Terminals

- i. Travel to and from airport terminals will be by the least costly method available consistent with business requirements.

b. Transportation

- i. Transportation costs such as ride share services (i.e. Uber, Lyft), taxis, and subway systems should only be used for work-related transportation and commuting to/from meals. These expenses should be paid for using a P-Card or VISA card. Receipts must be obtained and provided with travel expense reports.

1. Transportation costs to run errands and visit attractions that are not part of the conference/meeting are considered personal and not permitted.

10. After Travel

a. Mileage Reimbursement

- i. It is the policy of the Town to reimburse mileage to any employee using their personal vehicle for business travel at the rate specified by the Internal Revenue Service each year. For the current mileage rate log on to <https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates> or a lesser amount as declared by the Town Manager. The Town will also provide reimbursement for any tolls and parking charges personally incurred while traveling on business with provided receipts.
- ii. Those employees who receive a monthly car allowance are not entitled to additional mileage reimbursement for local business travel. However, trips that exceed 100 miles may be reimbursed only for the amount that exceeds 100 miles.
- iii. Business travel will be measured from Town Hall or other Town of Bluffton Office building where the employee typically operates from to the business destination, regardless of the employee's starting point, (i.e. home residence.)

b. Miscellaneous Expenses

- i. The Town may reimburse an employee for miscellaneous expenses personally incurred (not paid with a P-Card or Town VISA card) while on business-related travel. Examples include internet fees, dry-cleaning expenses, and foreign-travel transaction fees.

c. Travel Expense Report

- i. A post-travel expense report should be filed within five (5) working days after completion of a trip. Any prepaid travel expenses listed in Section 8 should be noted on this report. The employee shall submit the travel expense report and all receipts to the Finance Department

for reimbursement once it has been approved by their immediate Supervisor.

- ii. Any travel refunds or rebates related to items originally paid for with Town funds, but made payable directly to the employee, should be listed in the notes section and will be deducted from the final travel expense report reimbursement. Any remaining balance will be deducted from the employee's next paycheck via a payroll deduction.

b. Travel Expense Review

- i. The Finance Department reserves the right to deny reimbursement of travel-related expenses for failure to comply with policies and procedures. The Town Manager may approve, in writing, exceptions to any travel policies or procedures.

- h) ~~Travel Advances: Employees may obtain a cash advance for approved business travel by submitting a written request to the Finance Department (see the Travel Advance Request Form attached or click on the Public drive, under Finance Forms, then Travel, then Travel Advance Request.) Employees whose jobs are designated as requiring extensive travel may be issued Town purchasing cards for payment of business expenses. Advances may be made for 100% of the meal expenses. Travelers requesting an advance of funds shall indicate the amount needed on the Travel Advance Request form, have it approved by their immediate Supervisor, and forward it to the Finance Department for final approval allowing for seven (7) days to process. Under extenuating circumstances, the Finance Department may approve an immediate processing of payment. Cash advances and Town credit and purchasing cards are Town property, and their use must be properly documented and approved.~~
- i) ~~Meal Reimbursement: Employees required to travel on Town business may charge to the Town, or be reimbursed for, the cost of meals during their travel.~~
- j) ~~Employees participating in an approved business conference during meal periods are eligible for meal reimbursement if a meal is not included in the cost of the business conference.~~
- k) ~~Employees eligible for meal reimbursement must present a Travel Expense Report Form with receipts. Meal expenses must be reasonable and should follow the per diem schedule, www.gsa.gov/travel/plan_book/per_diem_rates?contentType=GSA_BASIC&contentId=17943~~
- l) ~~The eligible employee's Supervisor must approve all meal expense documentation with the appropriate finance form (**Purchasing Card Receipt Form, Visa DI Form, Visa RQ Form, or Check Request Form**) and send it to the Finance Department for processing and payment.~~
- q) ~~Other Expenses: The Town provides a maximum of \$10.00 a day for miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses. As an example valet tips, baggage handling or room service tips.~~
- 18) ~~Registration Fees: To receive reimbursement of registration fees not paid prior to the trip, the registration receipt must be supported by a copy of the program or agenda of the meeting itemizing registration fees, meals (if any), and lodging included in the registration fee.~~



SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM

The Town of Bluffton's Service Award Program has been established to recognize and reward employees for their long-term dedication and service to the Town of Bluffton. This program seeks to honor both full-time and part-time employees reaching their 5, 10, 15 and 20-year marks with monetary awards, expressing the Town's appreciation for their ongoing commitment and contribution to our community. The Mayor, Councilpersons and judges are not eligible for this program.

Program Details

The service awards program includes:

- **5-Year Milestone:** Employees who achieve 5 years of continuous service will receive a monetary award of **\$100**.
- **10-Year Milestone:** Employees who achieve 10 years of continuous service will receive a monetary award of **\$250**.
- **15-Year Milestone:** Employees who achieve 15 years of continuous service will receive a monetary award of **\$500**.
- **20-Year Milestone:** Employees who reach 20 years of continuous service will receive a monetary award of **\$1000**.

These milestones are selected to reflect significant durations of service that warrant special recognition.

The Milestone Awards will occur on the employees' anniversary, and the employee will receive a check (separate from their regular biweekly paycheck) on the pay date following the anniversary date. If a part-time employee goes to full-time employment or from full-time to part-time employment, the anniversary date for the Milestone Award would be based on the date the employee was hired.

Purpose

1. **Enhancing Employee Retention and Engagement:** Recognizing service anniversaries can contribute to increased employee satisfaction and loyalty. By acknowledging their long-term commitment, the Town of Bluffton can foster a stronger organizational culture and encourage retention.

2. **Demonstrating Appreciation for Dedication:** The awards recognize the dedication and hard work employees invest in their roles, directly supporting the growth, safety, and success of our community.

3. **Boosting Morale and Motivation:** Acknowledging these significant milestones helps employees feel valued and appreciated, positively impacting morale and motivation across the organization.

4. **Supporting Employee Well-being:** Financial awards help employees meet personal needs or goals, contributing to their financial well-being and reinforcing the Town of Bluffton's investment in their success.



ON CALL POLICY

Purpose:

The purpose of on-call pay is to have employees available and committed to support and to respond to unexpected events and/or technical/operational issues outside the normal working hours. This policy is put in place to provide administrative practices in processing payroll in the above-mentioned instances and to ensure compliance with Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), for calculating on-call pay.

Definitions:

On-call is defined by the FLSA as "an employee is restricted in an 'engaged to wait' or 'stand-by for call— The FLSA does not require payment for waiting to be engaged calls.

Exempt Employees: Pursuant to FLSA, exempt employees are not owed overtime pay or compensatory time off for those hours worked over 40 hours in a work week.

Non-Exempt Employees: Employees classified as non-exempt receive hourly wages and must be compensated for all hours worked over in a workweek (84 hours for Sworn Police Officers and 39 hours for Non-Sworn Personnel).

Compensable Work Time: Hours worked, includes all of the time a non-exempt employee is on duty at the Town (or prescribed worksite) and that time has been given either by work schedule or the supervisor has given permission and/or direction to work outside the schedule.

Non-Covered Employees: Non-covered employees are elected officials.

Guidelines

On-Call cannot be used as a means of payment to complete regularly assigned work done after hours or a means to compensate for special projects and/or work assignments. "On-call" time is not considered in calculating total hours worked. Employees are assigned to be "on-call" during non-operating hours. No "on-call" hours are required within the general normal operating hours, 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Monday – Thursday, and 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on Fridays (or 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday – Thursday and 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Fridays, for the Police Department Civilian Staff).

Policy

On-Call Pay

1. Any employee is subject to being called upon to perform duties outside of normal hours in the event of an unexpected event. However, in departments which frequently are called upon to provide after-hours services, certain individuals may be designated as being "on-call" by their supervisor.
2. Department Supervisors will be responsible for all scheduling of "on-call" assignments and a list of those employees who will be "on-call" must be provided to Human Resources and Payroll.
3. Those individuals so designated shall normally be called first in the event that services are needed. Employees who are on-call may be required to carry a Town

provided cell phone by which they can be reached but associates who are on-call are not generally otherwise restricted while on-call. Where possible, supervisors should endeavor to rotate on-call status to distribute assignments equitably among the individuals qualified to perform them.

4. On-call employees are expected to be at a location where they may be reached without difficulty. Additionally, on-call employees are required to remain in a location within approximately 45 minutes of Town of Bluffton at all times during the on-call period.
5. While on call, associates must adhere to the Town of Bluffton's Drug Free Workplace Policy.
6. An employee designated as on-call is expected to respond in a timely manner. Failure to respond while on-call may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
7. An hourly non-exempt associate required to be available for possible recall (on-call) will be compensated as explained below.
8. Exempt employees do not receive pay in addition to their regular salaries for on-call assignments.
9. Employees not in attendance to perform their work during normal work hours due to sick and/or annual leave, should not be placed in or kept in on-call status. For example, if an employee is out sick for the day or leaves work prior to their scheduled time off due to illness, the employee should not be on-call. The employee who takes leave for a portion of their normal workday for either routine medical visits, or any other activity, where illness is not a factor, may remain in an on-call status.
10. Employees must adhere to the Town of Bluffton Employee Handbook policies and be able to perform their duties in accordance with such policies and procedures.

Compensation

1. Employees shall receive seven (7) hours of compensatory time for every week (7 consecutive days) they are on-call. If they do actually report to duty, their service shall be compensated from the time of their arrival at the work location at their regular hourly rate of pay unless the call to work results in overtime during the workweek. If the call to work results in overtime, the service shall be compensated at the rate of 1-1/2 hours for every hour worked (overtime or compensatory time off). If the call to work occurs on a recognized Town holiday, the employee called back shall receive holiday pay in addition to any other compensation earned.
2. Call-in pay begins or is granted only if the employee has left work for their regularly scheduled workday for over 30 minutes and has left the premises. If recalled within that 30-minute period after regular work hours, compensation will be made as if they had not left for the day.

a) Code of Conduct

The following is a list of offenses that will reflect against your Performance Review and promotion opportunities and may require disciplinary actions up to and including termination. This list is not inclusive of all behaviors that may potentially result in disciplinary action. The disciplinary action that is appropriate for any particular misconduct is at the sole discretion of the Town. The Town reserves the right to discipline employees for any reason. Failure of management to discipline an employee shall not constitute a waiver of the Town's future right to discipline its employees. At the time of disciplinary action, an employee's Supervisor will inform him/her of the conduct that is the basis for the action.

Employees Shall:

1. Be courteous and professional in their dealings with the public.
2. Adhere to the Town of Bluffton Mission Statement.
3. Be punctual in reporting for duty at the time and place designated by their supervisor.
4. Be committed to one's work and loyalty to the Town of Bluffton.
5. Act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
6. Protect and conserve Town property and not use it for other than Town authorized activities.
7. Satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations such as child support or other court ordered payments.
8. Adhere to all State and Federal employment laws.
9. ~~Avoid political activity and campaigning.~~ Employees shall avoid political activity and campaigning during work hours and shall not use any Town resources for political activity or campaigning.
10. Immediately report a work-related accident to your supervisor.
11. Immediately report personal injury or property damage to your supervisor.
12. Report for duty, and for all assignments, at the time and place required and be prepared and equipped to perform job duties or assignments.
13. Notify management of a suspended or revoked driver's license (especially those employees that operate a Town Vehicle), or if you receive a citation for a moving violation while in a Town vehicle, or if you are convicted of a moving violation whether in a Town or personal vehicle.
14. Remain awake on-duty. If unable to do so, they are required to notify a supervisor who will determine the proper course of action.
15. Avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards promulgated pursuant to this policy.
16. Maintain their financial obligations to their creditors to prevent collection agencies from contacting the Town. Financial difficulties stemming from unforeseen medical expenses or personal disaster shall not be cause for discipline, provided that a good faith effort to settle all accounts is being undertaken.
17. Adhere to Town of Bluffton policies, procedures, or protocols as described in the Employee Handbook, Departmental Standard Operation Procedures, or as communicated by management from time-to-time.

Employees Shall Not:

1. Violate the Town's EEO Policies prohibiting against any employee based on race, age, color, creed, sex, religion, or national origin; and any other status protected by applicable local, state, or federal nondiscrimination laws, harassment of any employee, which may include slurs, provocative conduct or offensive jokes or stories; or other acts that make the working environment unpleasant for fellow workers.
2. Employees shall not engage in harassment of any kind (i.e. sexual, racial, etc.) toward fellow employees, customers, or others.
3. Use abusive, violent, profane or insulting language or gestures and will attempt to remain calm, regardless of provocation.
4. Violate safety rules, neglect, or engage in unsafe practices.
5. Leave a post, assignment or their shift without having been properly relieved. Employees shall notify their supervisor as soon as possible if an emergency arises and they must vacate their assignment.
6. Fail to provide information or falsify Town records or provide falsified records to the Town for any purpose.
7. Be neglectful or careless.
8. Mishandle customer payments or deposits, cash on hand, receipts or financial records.
9. Misuse Town Intellectual Property, specifically including confidential and proprietary information about the Town's business activities, plans, or employees which is not publicly known or disclosed by the Town.
10. Use unauthorized absences or excessive tardiness as defined by Department Head.
11. Display an inability, unwillingness or failure to perform the duties assigned in a satisfactory manner or refuse to carry out instructions.
12. Use physical violence, threats of physical violence or assault or other behavior that would cause other Town employees to be concerned for their personal safety.
13. Carry weapons in the workplace unless specifically authorized by the Town. No Employee may carry a weapon or firearm, concealed or otherwise, onto any property owned, operated or controlled by the Town. No employee may carry a weapon or firearm, concealed or otherwise, into a Town workplace or while using machinery or operating a vehicle owned by the Town. Law enforcement officers on duty are expressly permitted to carry firearms on such premises as provided by law. An employee carrying a weapon or firearm during work hours in any location not directly addressed in this section shall comply with all other Town policies at all times.
14. Lie to any supervisor or other member of management, or any other form of dishonesty.
15. Hold financial interests that conflict with their job duties.
16. Divulge confidential information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.
17. Use public office for private gain.
18. Engage in outside employment or activities, that conflict with official Town business and

responsibilities. (See [Secondary or Outside Employment](#))

19. Employees must disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate Town authorities.
20. Show lack of good judgement.
21. Interfere with the work of others.
22. Threaten, coerce, or intimidate fellow employees.
23. Show insubordination, including disrespect for authority, or other conduct, which tends to undermine authority. Should an employee take exception to an order or policy, it should be taken to the next highest-ranking supervisor for resolution.

~~23.~~ —

- ~~24. Publicly criticize instructions or orders they have received. Should an employee take exception to an order or policy, it should be taken to the next highest-ranking supervisor for resolution.~~

25. Be disrespectful either through gestures or defamatory statements.

- ~~26. Publicly criticize the Town, its policies or other employees by talking, writing, or expressing in any other manner, where such talking, writing or other expression is defamatory, or obscene, or unlawful or tends to impair the operation of the Town. The Town considers the internet and other written and electronic media as public domain. Any expression of ideas or opinions must be respectful. Employees must refrain from an expression against the Town or other employees that would be considered defamatory, harassing, obscene, hostile, unlawful, may be considered cyberbullying, or tends to impair the operation of the Town.~~

- 27.26. Steal, misappropriate or destroy Town property or equipment or the property or equipment of other employees or customers.