

When I arrived in 1998 the town did not have an employee handbook. The Interim Town Manager (ITM) at that time, Dallas Everhart, had a few examples, these examples were evaluated and I was tasked to develop a comprehensive manual. This manual was approved by the ITM, legal, and adopted by the town council in winter of 1998. As a result during the ensuing years, the manual has become outdated, contains items and departments that no longer exist, and, in at least one case, conflicts with employment law. Since 1994 the document has been used and, other than the following, has remained virtually unchanged.

- Between 2008 and 2012 the employee retirement contribution schedule was changed. The original town contribution was 8%, it was reduced to 6%, it was then modified to match the employee contribution up to 6%, it was then modified to match up to 4% where it currently sits.
- Over the years, as requested by our liability insurance carrier CIRSA, we have added:
  - A supplemental Police Statement
  - A drug and alcohol policy
  - A supplemental ICMA Code of Ethics
  - An internet and e-mail usage policy
  - A supplement on workplace threats and violence

On and off over the last couple of years or so, staff has taken on the task of a comprehensive review. In early 2024 we utilized Employer's Council to review the manual and recommend changes. Employers Council is a statewide organization that specializes in human resources consulting and outsourcing for employers, provides legal services on employment law, and provides employer and employee training and development. Our manual was reviewed by Employers Council and found to be significantly deficient on current legal standards and they recommended essentially starting over, which we did. The resulting attached document is the result of that work. Items of note that have been included in this proposed document include:

- The entire document was streamlined to create an Employee Manual that no longer includes employee policies and procedures.
- The noted supplements that were added over the years have been incorporated within the document rather than as an appendix.
- Departments like police and fire have been removed.

The Leave Policy was the most crucial and all-encompassing requested change in the Handbook. The original policy prior to 1998 had vacation and sick separate but used the same accrual process. Our current policy combines vacation and sick into one Paid Time Off definition which in 1998 was legal and has now been found by Employers Council to be illegal due to employment law changes in the late 2000s. The reasoning was that upon termination (for any reason) of employment the employee was compensated at 30%, 40%, and 50% based on years of service at the then current hourly wage of the employee. This payout was deemed to be taking accrued time from

the employee. The leave policy was originally derived from the then existing leave allocation of:

Sick leave = 1 day accrued each month

Vacation Leave =

0-5yrs = 10days annual accrual

5-10yrs = 15days annual accrual

Over 10yrs = 20days annual accrual

One personal day

This leave policy gave an annual total of 23days (180hrs), 28days (224hrs), or 33days (264hrs) respectively. This annual accrual was capped at 2yrs accrual based on your current accrual rate. Further, this accrual has never changed since well before 1998 as far back as I could find.

The revised policy presented will revert back to separate sick and vacation categories. Under the new policy of accrual, the employee will accrue as follows (no change in total value):

	0-5yrs = 10days vacation plus 1day personal, 11 days sick annual accrual
	5-10yrs = 15days vacation plus 1day personal, 11 days sick annual
accrual	
	Over 10yrs = 20days vacation plus 1day personal, 11 days sick annual
	accrual

The important note is that sick time can be taken for sick, but vacation can be taken for both sick and vacation. This is important because the combined balance may be enough to carry an injured or sick employee from the date of leave through the date of Long-Term Disability. The same 2yr accrual for both sick and vacation will remain in place. Upon termination (for any reason) the employee will be compensated at the employee's then current rate for the vacation balance ONLY, they will receive nothing for the sick leave balance (essentially no change in total value).

The intent is to bring our manual into compliance not to reward or burden the employee or the town. It is important to note that our liability for the previous leave policy and the proposed policy should not change.