

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER

AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET

Agenda Item: Personnel Handbook Amendment – Protective Clothing

Meeting Date: Personnel Committee on July 21, 2025

Requested by: Ashley Oliphant, City Administrator

Background: Policy 405 Safety Equipment of the Personnel Handbook requires “at-risk” employees to wear safety-toed shoes and safety glasses. The policy defines “at risk” employees as Public Works employees that are considered “to always be working in a situation in which there is a risk of injury unless the employee’s supervisor advises otherwise.” Given their “at risk” status, the policy allows Public Works employees to be reimbursed for the purchase of safety toed boots and prescription glasses.

This policy does not address specific uniforms or other protective clothing items. While not discussed in the Handbook, the City has historically purchased high visibility shirts, sweatshirts, outerwear, and hats for Public Works employees. The only clothing or uniform related references found in the Handbook are as follows:

- Work Rule A(5) Failure to observe all safety rules and practices on the job, including failure to use protective equipment and clothing.
- Work Rule D(15) When City employment requires wearing of a uniform, unauthorized or improper use of the uniform or failure to wear the uniform properly.

To formalize historical practices and ensure proper guidelines for protective clothing are in place, the following amendment to Policy 405 is recommended:

Policy 405 Safety Equipment - Section C: Protective Clothing

C. Protective Clothing

1. Whenever a Public Works employee is working in a situation in which there is a risk of physical injury or where high visibility is required, the employee shall wear protective clothing, which may include pants and high-visibility vests, shirts, sweatshirts, or outerwear, deemed appropriate by the Director of Public Works (DPW) or their designee. Such situations include, but are not limited to, tasks involving heavy machinery, sharp objects, hazardous materials, or work in areas with vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Employees, including seasonal or temporary employees, are required to wear pants unless the DPW or their designee explicitly permits otherwise.
2. The City will always make high visibility safety vests available to all Public Works employees. Other protective clothing, including high-visibility shirts, sweatshirts, and outerwear like vests, may be issued based on available funds and operational needs. When purchasing their own protective clothing, employees are responsible for ensuring they have the appropriate protective clothing, which may include high-visibility shirts, sweatshirts, or outerwear that meet City standards, such as ANSI/ISEA 107-2020 for high-visibility clothing. Employees are encouraged to consult with the DPW or their designee before purchasing protective clothing to ensure compliance with City standards.
3. City issued vests will always be available and replaced when needed. For City issued protective clothing that becomes damaged or worn, the employee must promptly notify the DPW or their designee to assess whether replacement is necessary. If the protective clothing, excluding vests, is damaged or defective, the City may replace it if funding is available. However, if funds are not available or if the damage or defect results from employee

negligence or other avoidable causes, the employee may be responsible for purchasing a replacement at their own expense.

4. In the event a Public Works employee terminates employment, any City issued vests, high-visibility shirts, sweatshirts, or outerwear, shall be returned to the City before the employee's final paycheck is issued. If the employee wishes to purchase any employer-purchased protective clothing, the City and the employee shall attempt to negotiate a purchase price to allow the employee to retain those items after employment is terminated.
5. Seasonal employees who engage in Public Works activities shall wear protective clothing, which includes pants and a high-visibility vest, or shirts, sweatshirts, or outerwear. The City may provide seasonal employees with up to two high-visibility shirts. Seasonal employees will not be provided with high-visibility sweatshirts or outerwear by the City and will not be reimbursed for the cost of any additional protective clothing.
6. Failure to comply with this protective clothing policy will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination.

Financial Impact: Determined annually. Set by the adopted budget.

Funding Source: Department line items set by the budget.

Requested Action: Amend Handbook to include protective clothing

PERSONNEL: Motion to amend Policy 405 of the Personnel Handbook to include Section C: Protective Clothing as presented.