

		Policy 204.01 Separation			
Owner:	HR Manager	Approving Position:	Common Council	Pages:	4
Issue Date:	12/22/2011	Revision Date:	10/03/2023	Review Date:	
Special Instructions:					

I. PURPOSE -

The City will process separating employees according to a standardized procedure for the following reasons: ensure the consistent and equitable treatment of employees; review the employee's benefits; reclaim City property; and/or arrange for the distribution of the final paycheck, if applicable.

For purposes of this policy, retirement shall refer to a voluntary separation of employment initiated by the employee in good standing when the employee has worked for the City of Whitewater for 15 years or more; or meets requirements for retirement as defined by the WRS and ETF. This includes the eligibility of the employee to begin receiving WRS payments within 30 days of the date of separation

II. GUIDELINES

III. DEFINITIONS – All employee separations shall be designated as one of the following:

A. Resignation

1. Separation is initiated by the employee for such reasons as other employment, retirement, return to school, leaving the area, or change in family circumstances.
2. Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by an employee to end employment with the City. The employee must provide a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice prior to resignation to leave employment in good standing.
3. All resignation notices will be submitted to the employee's Department Director. Original resignation notices are placed in the employee's personnel file in the Human Resources Office.

B. Lay Off

1. Involuntary separation initiated by the City Manager upon approval of the Common Council due to:

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- a. shortage of funds or work
 - b. the elimination of a position(s)
 - c. other material changes in the duties or organization
 - d. for related reasons which do not reflect unfavorably upon the service of the employee.
 2. The duties performed by an employee laid off may be assigned to other employees already working in the appropriate classification.
 3. In laying off employees because of a reduction of forces, the employee with the least seniority may be laid off first, provided that those remaining are capable of carrying on the City's usual operations effectively.
 4. The order of layoff should be limited to employees within the affected department or division, or work unit.
 5. Employees may be afforded a two-week notice of impending lay off.
 6. Employees separated from City service through lay off may be placed on a reemployment list in order of their separation.
 7. The last person separated may be the first rehired in the affected department. No other person may be hired in the affected department while there remain employees on lay off.
- C. Death:
1. Separation due to employee death is effective as of the date of the death.
 2. All compensation will be paid to the estate of the employee, except for such sums specified by law.
- D. Termination - Involuntary separation.
- E. Completion of Assignment
1. Employees hired to fill limited term positions will be separated upon completion of the duties for which the position was established.
 2. These employees are not eligible for benefit provisions of the City.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Administrative Guidelines

1. Employees who separate will receive payment for all earned salary, vacation, and any other pay to which the employee is entitled, subject to proper withholding and deductions.
 - a. Final pay, if applicable, is normally made available on the first regular payday following the date of separation.

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- b. Final pay is issued through normal ACH distribution channels; alternative arrangements may be made for checks to be mailed, or retained for issue at a later date.
 2. It is the responsibility of an employee who intends to resign to notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible to allow for the timely selection and training of a suitable replacement.
 3. Employees must notify their Supervisor, Department Director or Human Resources in writing of a resignation.
 4. Separating employees are required to return all City owned property such as keys, tools, manuals, computers, etc. prior to the date of separation.
- B. Insurance Continuation and Conversion Privileges
1. Eligible separating employees of the City are entitled to continue on all COBRA qualifying insurance plans in accordance with the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, also known as COBRA.
 - a. Group Health Insurance – Eligible separating employees of the City are entitled to convert or continue their coverage under the Wisconsin Public Employees Group Health Insurance Program in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Department of Employee Trust Funds.
 - b. Group Life Coverage – Eligible separating employees of the City are entitled to convert or continue their life insurance coverage in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Department of Employee Trust Funds.
 2. Conversion of Sick Leave at Separation
 - a. This benefit is only available to employees hired on or before June 29, 2011. For employees hired after June 29, 2011, no sick leave payout option exists.
 - b. Employees resigning from service with the City after providing a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice after having worked for the City for a minimum of five (5) consecutive years are eligible to receive a cash payout of fifty percent (50%) of that entire employee's accumulated sick leave.
 - c. Accrual of sick days for this purpose shall be a maximum of one-hundred eighty (180) days. Therefore, the maximum payout of accumulated sick leave shall not exceed ninety (90) days.
 3. Conversion of Sick Leave at Retirement
 - a. General Employees (This option does not exist for employees hired after June 29, 2011): Upon an employee's retirement, all accumulated sick leave days, up to a maximum of 90 days, may be converted to a dollar value and used for the payment of group health insurance premiums. (Conversion formula: the last full year's base wage divided by two thousand eighty (2080) hours multiplied by eight (8) hours multiplied by the number of days of accumulated sick leave).

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- b. Base wages may include longevity pay.
- c. Such premium contributions by the City may continue thereafter unless any of the following events are applicable to the employee:
 - 1) primary insured dies, or
 - 2) primary insured is accepted into a substantially similar program of health insurance coverage.
- d. If the employee later chooses to stop buying into the City' group health plan prior to exhaustion of the accumulated sick leave funds, the City will then reimburse the remaining balance without any interest earnings.

C. Exit Interviews

An exit interview will be conducted for separations of employment for regular full and part-time employees through the Human Resources Department. This voluntary interview is intended to be beneficial for both the city and the departing employee. Employees will have the opportunity to air concerns and receive answers to specific questions. And, it is the intention of the City to obtain information that will help in recruitment and retention efforts.

The Human Resources Department is responsible for ensuring the exit interview has been scheduled as part of the checkout process. During the interview, an exit questionnaire (Appendix A) form will be completed by the employee and the employee will have an opportunity to ask questions, discuss any areas of concern, as well as answer more specific questions directed by the Human Resources Department. Alternatively, the employee may return the exit interview form to the Human Resources Department, independent of the checkout process.

The Human Resources Department will conduct the exit interview and document any issues that the departing employee identifies. The staff will verify that the department check out process has occurred, ensure that the exit questionnaire is completed, process any benefit information and distribute the required information to the departing employee.

Information obtained from the exit interview will be shared with the appropriate department managers and/or staff. Summary information will be provided to the Common Council on a yearly basis.

V. REPORTING

VI. JOB AIDS - Appendix A