

City of Estherville, Iowa

OPERATING POLICY

A. GENERAL

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of these policies is to provide a basis for the orderly and disciplined job performance for city employees. Their publication will promote a surer knowledge of what is expected of city personnel. This should result in a greater degree of self assurance in all positions.
2. **Applicability:** This policy shall apply to all employees of the city except the Police Department and Library. Violation of any operating policy may result in disciplinary action.
3. **Loyalty:** Loyalty to the city, the department supervisor, and to the administration is an important factor in departmental morale and efficiency. Employees shall maintain a loyalty to the city, department supervisor and the administration as is consistent with law, personal ethics and professional standards.
4. **Department:** Employees, whether on duty or off duty, shall be governed by the ordinary and reasonable rules of good conduct and behavior and shall not commit any act tending to bring reproach or discredit upon the city.
5. **Cooperation Between The Departments And Employees:** Cooperation between the employees and departments of the city is essential to effective city government. Therefore, all employees are strictly charged with establishing and maintaining a high spirit of cooperation within each department and with other departments of the city.
6. **Conduct Toward The Public:** Employees shall be courteous and orderly in their dealings with the public. They shall perform their duties quietly, not using harsh, violent, profane or insolent language and always remain calm regardless of provocation to do otherwise. Upon request they are required to supply their names, in a polite manner. They shall attend to requests from the public quickly and accurately, avoiding unnecessary referral to other departments.
7. **Reporting For Duty:** Employees of the city shall be punctual in reporting for duty at the time and place designated by their department supervisor. Repeated failure to report promptly at the time directed will be deemed neglect of duty. Sickness or illness must be reported to the department supervisor by the employee or his representative at least one half hour prior to the time he is due to report for duty. Once having reported off sick the employee shall keep the department advised as to his/her status and expected return to duty.
8. **Absence From Duty:** Employees who fail to appear for duty at the date, time, and place specified without the consent of the department supervisor will be "absent without leave".

9. **Loitering:** Employees shall not loiter in cafes, businesses, City Hall or other public places except for the purpose of transacting city business or to take regular meals and “coffee breaks”.
10. **Sleeping On Duty:** Employees shall not sleep on duty.
11. **Non-Duty Activity:** Employees shall not conduct personal business while on duty nor devote any of their on duty time to any activity other than that which pertains to their work with the city.
12. **Intoxicants:** No employee of the city will appear for or be on duty while under the influence of liquor or drugs or be unfit for duty because of their excessive use. Employees shall not bring into or keep any intoxicating liquor on city premises nor consume alcoholic beverages or drugs while on duty or on city premises.
13. **City Keys:** Employees shall obtain permission from the department supervisor before having duplicates made of any city key. Lending or furnishing city keys to any persons not employed by the city will require administrative supervisor approval.
14. **Non-Discrimination:** Employees will not discriminate against any person because of their nationality, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability or genetic information*.
15. **Contacting Council Members Or Press:** No employee shall contact council members, the mayor, or press on city matters except through regular administrative channels or by permission of the city administrator. Any member contacted by council members or the mayor shall immediately notify the department supervisor or city administrator of the incident and all details involved.
16. **Personal Preferment:** No employee may seek the influence or intervention of any person outside of their department for purposes of personal preferment, advantage, transfer, or advancement.
17. **Gifts, Gratuities, Fees, Rewards, Loans, and Soliciting:** Employees shall not under any circumstances solicit any gift, gratuity, loan or fee where there is any direct or indirect connection between the solicitation and their position with the city.
18. **Acceptance Of Gifts, Gratuities, Fees, and Loans:** Employees shall not accept any gift, gratuity, loan, fee, or other thing of value, the acceptance of which might tend to influence directly or indirectly the actions of said employee in any matter of city business.
19. **Off Duty Reporting In Emergencies:** Employees off duty shall upon official notice, report for duty immediately upon receipt of notification and comply with instructions given at the time of notification.

20. **Acts Or Statements By Employees:** Employees shall not perform any acts or make any statements oral or written for publication or otherwise which tend to bring the city or its administrative officers into disrepute or ridicule, or which destructively criticize the city or its administrative officers in the performance of their official duties; or which tend to disrupt or impair the performance of official duties and obligations of administrators of the city; or which tend to interfere with or subvert the reasonable supervision of proper discipline of city employees or management of the city.
21. **Constructive Criticism:** Constructive criticism of any department, operation, employee or policy of city government is encouraged. Whenever there are any such constructive criticisms they shall only be discussed with city administrators and shall be transmitted up the chain of command for appropriate consideration -- first to the department supervisor, then to administrative supervisor and finally to the city administrator.
22. **Correspondence And Other Public Communications:** It is imperative that the city speak with one coordinated voice. Except for routine correspondence, all letters, memos, reports, and news releases will be typed by the city hall secretarial staff and will either be over the signature of the city administrator or approved by the city administrator prior to transmitting same. No press conference or interview will be given without the approval of the city administrator. All questions from the press or general public about a sensitive, controversial, or city policy issue shall be referred to the city administrator's office.
23. **Change Of Address:** Employees shall notify the city clerk's office within 24 hours of change of address or telephone number.
24. **Telephone:** All employees of the city shall maintain a land line and/or cell phone* in their residence unless approved by their administrative supervisor.
25. **Respect To Management:** Every employee shall accord respect to their supervisor and other administrators at all times and shall refrain from critical or derogatory comment on orders received from or issued by them.
26. **Criticism of Orders:** Employees shall not publicly criticize instructions or orders they have received.
27. **Obeying Orders:** Employees shall promptly obey any lawful order from any supervisor or administrator. Failure to obey an order of a supervisor or administrator shall constitute insubordination and will result in disciplinary action. The ONLY acceptable reasons for disobeying an order of a supervisor or administrator are, (1) If the order is obviously illegal or, (2) If the order obviously places the employee in danger of being injured as a result of the act.
28. **Unlawful Orders:** No supervisory personnel shall knowingly issue any order which is in violation of any law, ordinance or city operating policy.

29. **Reporting Violations Of Laws, Ordinances, Policy, Orders:** Employees knowing of other employee(s) violating laws, ordinances, operating policy, or disobeying orders, shall report same to their department supervisor or the city administrator.
30. **Acting Supervisors:** An employee temporarily filling the position of a supervisor, in an acting capacity, shall be vested with all the authority, and responsibility of the supervisory position.
31. **Forwarding Communications To Higher Management:** Any employee receiving a written or verbal communication for transmission to a higher level of management shall in every case forward such communication from a subordinate to the higher level of management.
32. **Posted Notices:** Any order, notice, or memo posted on the bulletin boards of the department over the signature of the city administrator shall have the same effect as, and be construed as a part of, these operating policies.
33. **Marking Notices Or Defacing:** Employees shall not mark, alter, or deface any printed or written notices relating to city business. All notices of a derogatory character related to operations of the city or regarding any department or person are prohibited.
34. **Safety Policy And Rules:** Employees are expected to follow and obey the city's Safety Policy and Rules as if they were incorporated as a part of this document.
35. **Disciplinary Penalties:** Any employee of the city shall be subject to reprimand, reduction in pay, suspension from duty or dismissal for violating any of these operating policies according to the nature and aggravation of their offense.
36. **Departmental Authority To Discipline:** Final disciplinary authority and responsibility rests with the city administrator. Except for oral reprimands and emergency suspensions all departmental discipline must be taken or approved by the city administrator. Other supervisory personnel may take the following disciplinary action or measures:
 - a. Oral reprimand.
 - b. Written reprimand (subject to city administrator approval).
 - c. Emergency suspension.
 - d. Written recommendation of other penalties.

In the absence of the city administrator, the city clerk/finance director shall have the authority to hand down disciplinary action.

37. **Emergency Suspension:** *The following personnel have the authority to impose emergency suspensions until the next business day against an employee when it appears that such action is in the best interests of the city:*
 - a. Department supervisors.
 - b. City clerk/finance director.
38. **Follow Up Action On Emergency Suspensions:** *An employee receiving an emergency suspension shall be required to report to the city administrator on the next business day at 9:00 a.m., unless otherwise directed by the city administrator. The supervisor imposing or recommending the suspension shall also report to the city administrator at the same time.*

B. CARE AND USE OF VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

1. All employees are responsible for the safe-keeping and proper care of city property used by them. City vehicles and equipment shall only be used for official purposes and in the capacity for which it was designed.
2. City vehicles and equipment shall not be used for personal business. If any employee comes to work in a private vehicle he shall use that private vehicle to go to and from lunch and to conduct all other non-city-related business during the day.
3. City vehicles will be taken home overnight only with the prior approval of the city administrator. For those employees authorized to take vehicles home overnight, the following additional policies apply:
 - a. Vehicles will be parked off the street except for temporary storage not to exceed one hour during daylight hours. Vehicles shall never be parked on the street after dark in front of the employee's residence.
 - b. Vehicles are to be driven directly home from work and shall not stop at any location other than the employee's residence unless conducting city business. Exception: A doctor's appointment during or at the end of the workday that does not allow time for the employee to go home to get his personal vehicle.
 - c. Vehicles are to be locked and all equipment secured while parked at the employee's residence.
4. Keys are to be removed from the vehicle when left unattended.
5. There shall be no unnecessary driving of vehicles and no unnecessary idling of engines.
6. Only city employees or persons on city business will be allowed to ride in city vehicles.
7. A minimum number of vehicles shall be used for transporting personnel to and from coffee and lunch breaks.

8. No city equipment shall be rented or used for private purposes unless it is related to a city function and then only upon approval of the administrative supervisor. When in doubt, ask your administrative supervisor.
9. No city employee will be permitted to operate any city vehicle larger than a car or pickup without a valid commercial driver's license in their possession.
10. Prior to starting any truck or piece of light/heavy equipment each day, the operator of that truck or equipment shall perform the following preventive maintenance items:
 - a. Check the oil level and add as necessary.
 - b. Check the water level.
 - c. Check tires.
 - d. Check for loose or missing pins or parts.

At least once a week or as frequently as necessary:

- a. Check power steering fluid.
- b. Check battery.
- c. Grease all fittings.
- d. Check all lug nuts and axle nuts.
- e. Check all lights.

At least once a month or as frequently as necessary:

- a. Wash or clean unit inside and out.
 - b. Check for needed repairs or servicing by mechanics.
12. While any vehicle or equipment is working on the streets or while parked on the street with men working around it, the yellow flashing light(s) (or four-way flashers) shall be on.
 13. Employees shall immediately report to their department supervisor the loss or damage of city equipment assigned or used by them. The department supervisor shall also be notified immediately of any defects or hazardous conditions existing with any city equipment or property.
 14. In the event that city property is found bearing evidence of damage which has not been reported, it shall be prima facie evidence that the last person using the property or vehicle was responsible.

C. PURCHASING PROCEDURES

1. For purchases under \$5,000.00** the department shall use the "Local Purchase Order" form. All forms must be signed by the department supervisor. Leave two copies with the local business and deliver the third copy to the Finance Department as soon as possible.
2. For all purchases of \$5,000.00** or more, the following procedure will be followed:
 - a. Fill out "Purchase Requisition Form".
 - b. Deliver to your administrative supervisor.
 - c. If approved by administrative supervisor, the requisition form will be delivered to the Finance Department for processing.
 - d. Purchase order will be typed for purchases over \$5,000 and for any vendors requesting a purchase order.*** No purchase order will be issued without the requisition form signed by an administrative supervisor.
 - e. One copy of purchase order is to be given to the department head and administrative supervisor involved.
 - f. When bills are received in the Finance Office they are to be given to the proper administrative supervisor for payment approval.

Except for routine bills, no bill shall be paid unless approved by the respective administrative supervisors.

Purchase orders issued without approval of the administrative supervisor will not be approved for payment.

D. TRAVEL POLICY

1. All out-of-town travel will be approved in advance by the administrative supervisor prior to any registration, etc.
2. All registrations, reservations, etc., will be made through and by the administrative supervisor's office personnel.
3. City vehicles will be utilized for transportation whenever possible. Contact the community development director for scheduling of vehicles. If an administrative car is not available, the city vehicle with the best gas mileage should be utilized for the transportation. If there is not a City vehicle available, and the employee takes their private vehicle, the City will pay mileage both ways. If there is a City vehicle available, and the employee takes their private vehicle, the City will pay mileage one-way. The Library, in town mileage, will be paid both ways when an employee used their private vehicle. Employee's family members will not be allowed to ride in city vehicles.

** Revised 4-28-11; 2nd Revision 6/27/18

4. If the employee chooses to take their spouse to a conference, their private vehicle must be used and the city will pay mileage one-way for the use of that private vehicle. The city will also pay the single room rate for the motel room when spouse accompanies employee.
5. The employee will be reimbursed for their meal expenses up to the following maximums per meal:

Breakfast	\$10.00*
Lunch	15.00*
Supper	20.00
6. No payments will be made to an employee for travel expenses without receipts to substantiate same.

E. ENERGY POLICY

1. Turn out all lights when offices or work areas are not in use.
2. Temperatures in buildings shall be maintained at 65° in offices, except City Hall*, and 55° in other areas such as garages, storage areas, etc.
3. Department supervisors will be held responsible for the above policy compliance.

F. UNION BUSINESS DURING WORKING HOURS

1. As a general rule, union business should be conducted after normal working hours and not during a scheduled work shift.
2. If it is necessary for the department steward, union officer, etc., to take time off from their work shift for union business (i.e. grievance discussion, etc.) it must first be approved by the department supervisor and the time will be deducted from the time sheet for said lost hours if the time lost exceeds one-half hour.
3. Management will be the sole judge as to whether the time off from the work schedule can be spared on a case-by-case basis.
4. This time during business hours should not be used for general union business but only job-related issues that may arise from time-to-time during the work shift. If the discussion can wait until after business hours -- then it should.

* Revised 05-2018

5. If the city administrator calls a meeting of union representatives during business hours, the union representatives working for the city will be paid for those hours to attend the meeting while away from their work shift.

G. ON-CALL POLICY

1. Whenever employees are "on call" they shall carry a city cell phone* with them or have it within hearing distance at all times between scheduled working hours.
2. During scheduled working hours the department supervisor, or his designee, shall carry the cell phone*.

H. Employee Benefits

1. INSURANCE

The City offers a Health Savings Account (HSA) medical insurance policy for eligible employees. This plan is administered through a third-party administrator. The policy has a \$1,500 in-network deductible/maximum out-of-pocket for the single plan and a \$3,000 in-network deductible/maximum out-of-pocket for the family plan per year (January 1 – December 31).

Eligibility: To be eligible for an HSA employees or spouses:

1. Shall not be covered by another medical insurance plan;
2. Shall not be entitled to Medicare benefits; and
3. Shall not be claimed as a dependent on someone else's tax return.

Premium Cost Share: The City shall pay 80% of the single or family monthly premium for the HSA policy carried by the city for the employees. Employees shall pay 20% of the monthly premium for the single or family coverage they choose.

HSA Contributions: The City shall contribute one-twelfth (1/12) of the annual deductible per month to each employee's HSA (a total of \$1,500/year for single coverage or \$3,000/year for family coverage). The account administration fees shall be paid by the employee.

Non-Eligible Employees: Employees who are not eligible for the HSA shall be eligible for an alternative medical insurance plan. The current alternative plan is an HMO plan with a \$500 single/\$1,000 family deductible. Employees will receive the same monthly financial contribution from the City that the City contributes to the cost of the HSA plan.

Dental Insurance: The City shall pay 80% of the single or family premium for the dental insurance plan carried by the City for the employees. The employees shall pay 20% of the monthly premium for single or family dental insurance coverage they choose.

Vision Insurance: Vision insurance administered through a third-party vendor is available and the entire cost is paid by the employee.

Medical Insurance - Miscellaneous: The failure of any insurance carrier(s) to provide any benefit for which it has contracted shall result in no liability to the city, nor shall such failure be considered a breach by the city of any obligation undertaken under this policy. However, nothing in this agreement shall be construed to relieve any insurance carrier from any liability it may have to the city, employee, or beneficiary of any employee.

2. GROUP LIFE INSURANCE

Employees are entitled to group life insurance. The policy is based upon the following:

1. Covered employee shall be full-time, under age 70, and with one day's service.
2. Each covered employee will be provided life insurance amounting to Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) at city expense.
3. Waiver of premium benefits in the event of total and permanent disability will be included on life insurance only prior to age 60.
4. When an employee's service terminates, he may convert his group insurance to ordinary insurance without evidence of health. He must apply for conversion within thirty-one (31) days after terminating his services. Any of the regular plans of insurance issued by the company with the exception of term insurance may be selected.

3. RETIREMENT BENEFITS

All eligible employees of the city shall be covered by the Iowa Public Employee's Retirement System and Social Security.

Upon the death of an active city employee or retirement from the city, one-half of the unused portion of the employee's accumulated sick leave (not to exceed 60 days) shall be granted as severance pay to the employee or beneficiary. Retirement, as used in this subsection, shall mean an employee leaving city employment to receive benefits from IPERS or Social Security pension system and who is at least 55 years of age.

I. PROMOTIONS, TRANSFERS & LAYOFFS

The administration agrees to recognize the established practice of departmental seniority as a consideration in matters of promotion and transfers of unit personnel. The administration has the right to determine through fair and impartial opinion of the supervisory personnel, the qualifications of any employee who claims priority rights to promotions and any other advancements in his or her department.


Seniority shall be granted to all employees. This standing is to be determined on the basis of total length of continuous employment for the City of Estherville on a departmental basis. An employee's seniority shall not be terminated because of absences due to illness, authorized leave of absence or temporary layoff.

The City Administrator, at the direction of the City Council, may lay off employees after two weeks prior written notice whenever such action is made necessary by reason of shortage of work or funds, the abolition of a position, or because of a change in organization.

In the event of a layoff in a department, employees shall be laid off according to seniority in the inverse order of hiring in that department only. However, if the next senior employee remaining in that department would not be qualified to assume the junior employee's duties, then the next senior employee would be laid off.

This policy will become effective from and after the date signed below.

CITY OF ESTHERVILLE, IOWA

by 
Penny A. Clayton
City Administrator
2/7/2022