



**CHARLESTON RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE**

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

Supporting research today to meet Veterans' health  
needs tomorrow



## Disclaimer

OUR COMPANY IS AN AT-WILL EMPLOYER. THIS MEANS THAT REGARDLESS OF ANY PROVISION IN THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK, EITHER YOU OR THE COMPANY MAY TERMINATE THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY REASON, WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE OR NOTICE. NOTHING IN THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK OR IN ANY DOCUMENT OR STATEMENT, WRITTEN OR ORAL, SHALL LIMIT THE RIGHT TO TERMINATE EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL. NO OFFICER, EMPLOYEE OR REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMPANY IS AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT—EXPRESS OR IMPLIED—WITH ANY EMPLOYEE FOR EMPLOYMENT OTHER THAN AT-WILL.

THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK IS NOT A CONTRACT, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE  
SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_



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DATE \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE  
SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_



## **Welcome to Charleston Research Institute!**

Starting a new job is exciting, but at times can be overwhelming. This Employee Handbook has been developed to help you become acquainted with our company and answer many of your initial questions.

As an employee of Charleston Research Institute, the importance of your contribution cannot be overstated. Our goal is to provide the finest-quality services to our Veterans, board members, investigators, study participants and sponsors and to do so more efficiently and economically than our competitors. By satisfying their needs, they will continue to do business with us and will recommend us to others.

You are an important part of this process because your work directly influences our company's reputation.

We are glad you have joined us, and we hope you will find your work to be both challenging and rewarding.



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# **The Way We Work**

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## A Word About This Handbook

This Employee Handbook contains information about the employment policies and practices of the company. We expect each employee to read this Employee Handbook carefully, as it is a valuable reference for understanding your job and the company. The policies outlined in this Employee Handbook should be regarded as management guidelines only, which in a developing business will require changes from time to time. The company retains the right to make decisions involving employment as needed in order to conduct its work in a manner that is beneficial to the employees and the company. This Employee Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior Employee Handbooks and any inconsistent verbal or written policy statements.

Except for the policy of at-will employment, which can only be changed by the Board of Directors of the company in a signed written contract, the company reserves the right to revise, delete and add to the provisions of this Employee Handbook at any time without further notice. All such revisions, deletions or additions to the Employee Handbook must be in writing and must be signed by the Executive Director of the company. No oral statements or representations can change the provisions of this Employee Handbook.

The provisions of this Employee Handbook are not intended to create contractual obligations with respect to any matters it covers. Nor is this Employee Handbook intended to create a contract guaranteeing that you will be employed for any specific time period.

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**RELATIONSHIP AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY REASON, WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE OR NOTICE. NOTHING IN THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK OR IN ANY DOCUMENT OR STATEMENT, WRITTEN OR ORAL, SHALL LIMIT THE RIGHT TO TERMINATE EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL. NO OFFICER, EMPLOYEE OR REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMPANY IS AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT— EXPRESS OR IMPLIED—WITH ANY EMPLOYEE FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR A SPECIFIED PERIOD OF TIME UNLESS SUCH AN AGREEMENT IS IN A WRITTEN CONTRACT SIGNED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COMPANY.**

This Employee Handbook refers to current benefit plans maintained by the company. Refer to the actual plan documents and summary plan descriptions if you have specific questions regarding the benefit plan. Those documents are controlling.

Likewise, if a written contract is inconsistent with the Employee Handbook, the written contract is controlling.

## Building for the Future

As with any business, revenues are an absolute necessity for maintaining jobs and building for the future. Rather than look at generating sales and revenue as an "undesirable task", we look at it as a "must" situation. How do we continue to generate revenues to ensure a secure future and continued opportunities for all employees? With teamwork. Together we must meet the challenges we face on a daily basis.

In general, we have mentioned benefits, responsibilities and operations. We have saved the most crucial component of this business for last -- You.

At all times, you represent the company, and it is up to each one of you to take this responsibility seriously. Our company exists with your joint efforts. Don't underestimate your contribution to it. A great many people outside the business who invest their time, money and faith in us are part of that equation. They are our Veterans, board members, investigators, study participants and sponsors who will determine how fast we grow, how many people we will employ, how much service we render and the profit we make. We want to ensure service continues by always giving our Veterans, board members, investigators, study participants and sponsors the best possible value and quality. Working together and working well provides us with a bright future and with the most important commodity, a good reputation.

## **Types of Services We Offer**

### **Our Mission Statement:**

The sole purpose of Charleston Research Institute is to advance the research mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and specifically Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center through the support of research-related activities. The Corporation may be used to further any educational purposes related to research including the attendance at scientific meetings

In 1988, Congress passed United States Public Law 100-322, Section 204. This legislation broadened VA's ability to conduct research by authorizing the establishment of nonprofit research corporations affiliated with VA Medical Centers and, through these state-chartered corporations, opened the door to new sources of research funding. Charleston Research Institute (CRI) was founded in September 1997.

Charleston Research Institute is a nonprofit research corporation offering comprehensive research administration services for industry, foundation, and federally funded studies. These services include study contract negotiation, budgeting, human resources, and fiscal oversight.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

Our company is committed to equal employment opportunity. We will not discriminate against employees or applicants for employment on any legally-recognized basis ["protected class"] including, but not limited to: Veteran status, uniform servicemember status, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, physical or mental

disability or any other protected class under federal, state or local law.

In South Carolina, the following are a protected class: race; religion; color; sex; pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions; age [40 or over]; national origin; disability; and tobacco use outside the workplace.

You may discuss equal employment opportunity related questions with human resources or any other member of management.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Our company is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities. This may include providing reasonable accommodation where appropriate in order for an otherwise qualified individual to perform the essential functions of the job. It is your responsibility to notify your supervisor of the need for accommodation. Upon doing so, your supervisor may ask you for your input or the type of accommodation you believe may be necessary or the functional limitations caused by your disability. Also, when appropriate, we may need your permission to obtain additional information from your physician or other medical or rehabilitation professionals.

## **Life Threatening Illnesses**

Employees occasionally develop serious or life threatening illnesses. Our company is committed to supporting such employees' efforts to continue their normal pursuits, including working. When necessary and where required by law, the company will provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities, including employees with serious or life threatening illnesses. All employees, including employees with serious or life threatening illnesses, must maintain acceptable performance standards.

An employee's medical information is confidential. Disclosure of employee medical information is restricted to limited situations where a manager or supervisor has a job-related reason to know it. Employees who disclose employee medical information without proper authorization will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Employees with questions or concerns about life threatening illnesses are encouraged to contact human resources for information and referral to appropriate services and resources.

## **A Word About our Employee Relations Philosophy**

We are committed to providing the best possible climate for maximum development and goal achievement for all employees. Our practice is to treat each employee as an individual. We seek to develop a spirit of teamwork; individuals working together to attain a common goal.

In order to maintain an atmosphere where these goals can be accomplished, we provide a comfortable and progressive workplace. Most importantly, we have a workplace where communication is open and problems can be discussed and resolved in a mutually respectful atmosphere. We take into account individual circumstances and the individual employee.

We firmly believe that with direct communication, we can continue to resolve any difficulties that may arise and develop a mutually beneficial relationship.

## **Non-Harassment**

We prohibit harassment of one employee by another employee, supervisor or third party for any reason ["protected class"] including, but not limited to: Veteran status, uniform service member status or any other protected class under federal, state or local law. Harassment of third parties by our employees is also prohibited.

In South Carolina, the following are a protected class: tobacco use outside the workplace.

The purpose of this policy is not to regulate the personal morality of employees. It is to ensure that in the workplace, no employee harasses another for any reason or in any manner. The conduct prohibited by this policy includes conduct in any form including but not limited to e-mail, voice mail, chat rooms, Internet use or history, text messages, pictures, images, writings, words or gestures.

While it is not easy to define precisely what harassment is, it includes: slurs, epithets, threats, derogatory comments or visual depictions, unwelcome jokes and teasing.

Any employee who feels that (s)he is a victim of sexual harassment or has been retaliated against for complaining of sexual harassment, should report the situation immediately to the following member of management who has been designated to receive such complaints: Kelsie Cochran, Executive Director at (843) 789-6702 and 109 Bee Street, Charleston, SC 29401. If an employee makes a report to this member of management and the manager either does not respond or does not respond in a manner the employee deems satisfactory or consistent with this policy, the employee is required to report the situation to any member of the Board of Directors.

The company will investigate all such reports as confidentially as possible. Adverse action will not be taken against an employee because he or she, in good faith, reports or participates in the investigation of a violation of this policy. Violations of this policy are not permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## Sexual Harassment

Any type of sexual harassment is against company policy and may be unlawful.

We firmly prohibit sexual harassment of any employee by another employee, supervisor or third party. Harassment of third parties by our employees is also prohibited. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate the morality of employees. It is to ensure that in the workplace, no employee is subject to sexual harassment. While it is not easy to define precisely what sexual harassment is, it may include: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including, but not limited to, sexually-related drawings, pictures, jokes, teasing, uninvited touching or other sexually-related comments. The conduct prohibited by this policy includes conduct in any form including but not limited to e-mail, voice mail, chat rooms, Internet use or history, text messages, pictures, images, writings, words or gestures.

Sexual harassment of an employee will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. There will be no adverse action taken against employees who report violations of this policy in good faith or participate in the investigation of such violations.

Any employee who feels that (s)he is a victim of sexual harassment should immediately report such actions in accordance with the following procedure. All complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated as confidentially as possible.

1. Any employee who believes that (s)he has been harassed should report the situation immediately

to the following member of management who has been designated to receive such complaints: Kelsie Cochran, Executive Director at (843) 789-6702 and 109 Bee Street, Charleston, SC 29401. If an employee makes a report to this member of management and the manager either does not respond or does not respond in a manner the employee deems satisfactory or consistent with this policy, the employee is required to report the situation to any member of the Board of Directors.

2. The company will investigate every reported incident immediately. Any employee, supervisor or agent of the company who has been found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including immediate discharge.
3. The company will conduct all investigations in a discreet manner. The company recognizes that every investigation requires a determination based on all the facts in the matter. We also recognize the serious impact a false accusation can have. We trust that all employees will continue to act responsibly.
4. The reporting employee and any employee participating in any investigation under this policy have the company's assurance that no reprisals will be taken as a result of a sexual harassment complaint. It is our policy to encourage discussion of the matter, to help protect others from being subjected to similar inappropriate behavior.

## Categories of Employment

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES** regularly work at least a 40-hour workweek.

**PART-TIME EMPLOYEES** regularly work less than a 40-hour workweek.

**REGULAR EMPLOYEES** work on a regular, defined schedule.

**SEASONAL EMPLOYEES** are hired for a specified period of time.

**INTERMITTENT EMPLOYEES** work on an as needed basis.

In addition to the preceding categories, employees are also categorized as "exempt" or "non-exempt."

**NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES** are entitled to overtime pay as required by applicable federal and state law.

**EXEMPT EMPLOYEES** - Pursuant to applicable federal and state laws, exempt employees are not entitled to overtime pay, and are not subject to certain deductions to their salary under the company's policies.

Upon hire, human resources will notify you of your employment classification.

## **Anniversary Date**

The first day you report to work will be recorded in company records as your anniversary date. This date may be used to calculate many different company benefits. If you have any questions regarding your anniversary date, please see human resources.

## **Certification, Licensing and Other Requirements**

You will be informed by human resources if there are any licensing, certification or testing requirements for your job. Failure to qualify or to maintain a certification or license may be sufficient cause for discharge.

## **Immigration Reform and Control Act**

In compliance with the federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), as amended, and any state law requirements, if applicable, our company is committed to employing only individuals who are authorized to work in the United States.

Each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility.

If an employee is authorized to work in this country for a limited time period, the individual will be required to submit proof of renewed employment eligibility prior to expiration of that period to remain employed by the company.

## **New Employee Orientation**

Upon joining our company, you were given this copy of our Employee Handbook. After reading this Employee Handbook please sign the receipt page and return it to human resources. You will be asked to complete personnel, payroll and benefit forms.

If you lose your Employee Handbook or if it becomes damaged in any way, please notify human resources as soon as possible to obtain a replacement copy.

Your supervisor is responsible for the operations of your department. (S)he is a good source of information about the company and your job.

## **Your Human Resources Department**

The Human Resources department acts as an information center for both employees and management. This department plays an important part in formulating and interpreting company policy and offers help with a variety of problems and matters that concern employees and management. Human Resources staff members are available to discuss subjects such as employment/recruitment, benefits, employee records, safety and disciplinary problems.

The Human Resources department is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Appointments may be arranged for other times.

You are encouraged to contribute suggestions or questions so the staff may be more responsive to your needs.

## **Suggestions and Ideas**

We are always interested in your constructive ideas and suggestions for improving our operations. Your suggestions should be submitted in writing to human resources.

After we investigate your suggestion, you will be notified whether it is feasible to be put into practice.

We believe that suggestions indicate initiative. With your approval, we will place the written suggestion in your personnel file and consider it at the time of your performance review.

## Talk to Us

We encourage you to bring your questions, suggestions and complaints to our attention. We will carefully consider each of these in our continuing effort to improve operations.

If you feel you have a problem, present the situation to your supervisor so that the problem can be settled by examination and discussion of the facts. We hope that your supervisor is able to satisfactorily resolve most matters.

If you still have questions after meeting with your supervisor or if you would like further clarification on the matter, request a meeting with human resources. (S)he will review the issues and meet with you to discuss possible solutions.

Finally, if you still believe that your problem has not been fairly or fully addressed, request a meeting with the Executive Director.

Your suggestions and comments on any subject are important, and we encourage you to take every opportunity to discuss them with us. Your job will not be adversely affected in any way because you choose to use this procedure.

If at any time you do not feel comfortable speaking with your supervisor or the next level of management, discuss your concern with any member of the Board of Directors with whom you feel comfortable.



## Your Pay and Progress



## **Recording Your Time**

Non-exempt employees must record their hours on time sheets and give them to human resources by Monday morning every two weeks.

Accurately recording all of your time is required in order to be sure that you are paid for all hours worked. You are expected to follow the established procedures in keeping an accurate record of your hours worked.

Exempt employees may be required to accurately record their time worked in accordance with federal and state wage and hour law.

All employees subject to this policy are required to accurately record all time worked.

The workweek starts on Sunday and ends on Saturday.

## **Payday**

You will be paid biweekly on Friday for the period that ends on the previous Saturday.

When our payday is a holiday, you normally will be paid on the last working day before the holiday.

Please review your paycheck for errors. If you find a mistake, report it to human resources immediately. Human resources will assist you in taking the steps necessary to correct the error.

## **Paycheck Deductions**

The company is required by law to make certain deductions from your paycheck each pay period. Such deductions typically include federal and state taxes and Social Security (FICA) taxes. Depending on the state in which you are employed and the benefits you choose, there may be additional deductions. All deductions and the amount of the deductions are listed on your pay stub. These deductions are totaled each year for you on your Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement.

It is the policy of the company that exempt employees' pay will not be "docked," or subject to deductions, in violation of salary pay rules issued by the United States Department of Labor and any corresponding rules issued by the state government, as applicable. However, the company may make deductions from employees' salaries in a way that is permitted under federal and state wage and hour rules. Employees will be reimbursed in full for any isolated, inadvertent, or improper deductions, as defined by law.

Thus, exempt employees may be subject to the following salary deductions, except where prohibited by state law, but only for the following reasons:

- Absences of one or more full days for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability; or
- Absences of one or more full days due to sickness or disability, if there is a plan, policy, or practice providing replacement compensation for such absences; or
- Absences of one or more full days before eligibility under such a plan, policy, or practice or after replacement compensation for such absences has been exhausted; or

- Suspensions of one or more full days for violations of safety rules of major significance; or
- Suspensions of one or more full days for violations of written workplace conduct rules, such as rules against sexual harassment and workplace violence; or
- Payment of actual time worked in the first and last weeks of employment, resulting in a proportional rate of an employee's full salary; or
- Any unpaid leave taken under the Family and Medical Leave Act; or
- Negative paid-time-off balances, in whole-day increments only.

If questions or concerns about any pay deductions arise, employees may discuss and resolve them with human resources.

## **Garnishment/Child Support**

When an employee's wages are garnished by a court order, our company is legally bound to withhold the amount indicated in the garnishment order from the employee's paycheck. Our company will, however, honor applicable federal and state guidelines that protect a certain amount of an employee's income from being subject to garnishment.

## **Direct Deposit**

You are required to have your pay deposited into your bank account through our direct deposit program.

## **Performance Reviews**

Your performance is important to our company. Once each year your supervisor will review your job progress within our company and help you set new job performance plans.

Our performance review program provides the basis for better understanding between you and your supervisor, with respect to your job performance, potential and development within the company.

## **Job Descriptions**

The company maintains a job description for each position in the company. The job description outlines the essential duties and responsibilities of the position. When the duties and/or responsibilities of a position change, the job description is revised to reflect those changes. If you have any questions or wish to obtain a copy of your position's job description, please see human resources.

## Overtime

There will be times when you will need to work overtime so that we may meet the needs of our clients. Although you will be given advance notice when feasible, this is not always possible. Non-exempt employees must have all overtime approved in advance by their supervisor.

Non-exempt employees will be paid at a rate of time and one-half their regular hourly rate for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek, unless state law provides a greater benefit in which case, we will comply with the state law.

Only actual hours worked count toward computing weekly overtime.

If you have any questions concerning overtime pay, check with your supervisor.

## Reporting Time Pay

The company will make every effort to notify employees in advance when it is not necessary to report to work. These circumstances may include inclement weather, fire, flood, power outage, lack of work, etc. In the event you report for work without being notified in advance that your services are not needed, you will be compensated in accordance with applicable state and federal wage and hour laws.



## Time Away From Work and Other Benefits



## **Employee Benefits**

Our company has developed a comprehensive set of employee benefit programs to supplement our employees' regular wages. Our benefits represent a hidden value of additional income to our employees.

This Employee Handbook describes the current benefit plans maintained by the company. Refer to the actual plan documents and summary plan descriptions if you have specific questions regarding the benefit plan. Those documents are controlling.

The company reserves the right to modify its benefits at any time. We will keep you informed of any changes.

## **Holidays**

Our company normally observes the following holidays during the year:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

If one of the above holidays falls on Saturday, it normally is observed on the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on Sunday, it normally is observed on the following Monday.

Full-time and part-time regular employees are eligible for paid holidays immediately upon hire.

Exempt employees will receive holiday pay in compliance with state and federal wage and hour laws.

Part-time regular employees are eligible for holiday pay in proportion to the number of hours they normally are scheduled to work.

## Vacation

Full-time and part-time regular employees are eligible for paid vacation time.

All regular full-time employees will accrue and be given credit for annual leave on a graduated basis determined on the basis of total years of service with Charleston Research Institute rendered:

Employees with less than 3 years service

4 hours per pay period

Employees with 3 but less than 15 years of service

6 hours per pay period

Employees with 15 or more years of service

8 hours per pay period

All regular part-time employees will accrue leave and receive credit as provided for in the case of full-time employees, except that such accruals and credits will be on a pro-rated basis. An example for a 20 hour per week part-time employee follows:

Employees with less than 3 years service

2 hours per pay period

Employees with 3 but less than 15 years of service

3 hours per pay period

Employees with 15 or more years of service

4 hours per pay period

Submit vacation requests in writing at least one month in advance to your supervisor. When possible, vacation requests are granted, taking into account operating requirements. Length of employment may determine priority in scheduling vacation times.

Vacation pay is not granted in lieu of taking the actual time off. However, vacation time can be carried over to

the following year, up to a maximum of two hundred forty hours with management approval.

Eligible employees who provide at least 2 weeks' advance notice of their resignation will be paid for accrued but unused vacation, unless state law dictates otherwise. All other employees will not be paid for accrued but unused vacation upon termination.

## **Sick Days**

All regular full-time employees will accrue sick leave without regard to length of service at 4 hours per pay period. All regular part-time employees are entitled to accrue sick leave and receive credit as provided for in the case of full-time employees on a pro-rated basis.

You may use accrued sick time to care for your sick child or other immediate family members.

Employees are not paid for any unused sick days. However, if you do not use your sick days during the year, you can carry them into the following year.

Employees are not paid for earned but unused sick days upon termination.

## **Jury Duty**

Regular full-time and part-time employees summoned for jury duty are paid their normal rate of pay. All other employees are granted an unpaid leave in order to serve.

Employees must provide the company with a copy of the court payment records in order to be compensated.

Exempt employees may be provided time off with pay when necessary to comply with state and federal wage and hour laws.

We reserve the right to request proof of jury service issued by the Court upon return.

Make arrangements with human resources as soon as you receive your summons.

We expect you to return to your job if you are excused from jury duty during your regular working hours.

## **Voting Leave**

Our company believes that every employee should have the opportunity to vote in any state or federal election, general primary or special primary. Supervisors may excuse employees, without charge to leave, for voting and registration. Generally, where the polls are not open at least 3 hours either before or after an employee's regular work hours, approving officials may grant a limited amount of excused absence that will permit employees to report for work 3 hours after the polls open or leave from work 3 hours before the polls close, whichever requires the lesser amount of time off. An employee's "regular work hours" should be used to determine the time of day the employee normally arrives at and departs from work.

## **Military Leave**

Employees who are required to fulfill military obligations in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States or in state military service will be given the necessary time off and reinstated in accordance with federal and state law.

Regular full-time and part-time employees are paid the difference between their normal rate of pay and their military pay for up to a maximum of two weeks. Thereafter, the time off is unpaid, unless state law dictates otherwise.

All other employees are granted an unpaid leave in order to serve, except where state law dictates otherwise.

Exempt employees may be provided additional time off with pay when necessary to comply with state and federal wage and hour laws.

Accrued vacation may be used for this leave if the employee chooses. Military orders should be presented to human resources and arrangements for leave made as early as possible before departure. Employees are required to give advance notice of their service obligations to the company unless military necessity makes this impossible. You must notify human resources of your intent to return to employment based on requirements of the law. Your benefits may continue to accrue during the period of leave in accordance with state and federal law.

Additional information regarding military leaves may be obtained from human resources.

## **Witness Leave**

Employees are given the necessary time off with pay to attend or participate in a court proceeding in accordance with state law. We ask that you notify human resources of the need to take witness leave as far in advance as is possible.

## **Bereavement Leave**

CRI will provide bereavement pay for up to 3 days of regularly scheduled work in the 5 days following the death in the regular employee's immediate family as follows: spouse, domestic partners, parents, brothers, sisters, children, children of domestic partners, grandchildren, grandparents, parents-in-law, and parents of domestic partners.

Requests for bereavement leave should be made to human resources as soon as possible. Our company reserves the right to request written verification of an employee's familial relationship to the deceased and his or her attendance at the funeral service as a condition of the bereavement pay.

## **Section 125 Plans**

Our company offers a pretax contribution option for employees. This employee benefit is known as a Section 125 plan.

A Section 125 plan is a benefit plan that allows you to make contributions toward premiums for out-of-pocket medical expenses and dependent care expenses on a “before tax”, rather than an “after tax” basis. Your premium contributions and qualified expenses are deducted from your gross pay before income taxes and Social Security is calculated.

To participate in this plan, complete an election form and return it to human resources.

You cannot make any changes to your pretax contributions until the next open enrollment period, unless your family status changes or you become eligible for a special enrollment period due to a loss of coverage. Family status changes include marriage, divorce, death of a spouse or child, birth or adoption of a child or termination of employment of your spouse. A change in election due to a change in family status is effective the next pay period.

## **Disability Leave**

Full-time Regular and Part-Time Regular employees are eligible for an unpaid disability leave after completing their introductory period. Disability leave due to non-occupational illness, injury or pregnancy-related disability is not to exceed eight weeks.

Employees requesting leave must provide written notice of the disability, including a doctor's certificate stating the nature of the disability and the expected date of return to work. We reserve the right to require a physical examination by a physician of our own choosing prior to your approval of disability leave, as allowed by state law.

To the extent allowed by the insurance contract, we will continue to provide medical insurance coverage for employees on authorized disability leave for the first month of disability. During this time you will be responsible for paying your portion of the monthly premium(s). When the above period expires, you may continue your medical insurance coverage by making arrangements with your supervisor to pay the entire monthly premium in advance each month.

When you are able to return to work, give us at least one week's advance written notice. Include a doctor's certificate stating that you are medically able to return to your normal duties. We reserve the right to require a physical examination by a physician of our own choosing prior to your resumption of duties, as allowed by state law.

We will return you to the same or similar position you held prior to the disability leave, subject to our staffing and business requirements. Your continued absence from work beyond your disability (as determined by your physician) will be deemed a voluntary termination of your employment.

This leave may run concurrently with any other leave where permitted by state and federal law.

## **Isolation and Quarantine Leave**

An employee subject to an isolation or quarantine order issued in compliance with state law and pursuant to DHEC's rules and orders will be granted unpaid leave.

Affected employees may elect to use accrued paid or unpaid leave for the time off allowed under this policy. This leave will run concurrently with any other applicable leave.

Please notify human resources of your need for leave as soon as practicable.

## **Social Security**

During your employment, you and the company both contribute funds to the federal government to support the Social Security program. This program is intended to provide you with retirement benefit payments and medical coverage once you reach retirement age.

## **Unemployment Insurance**

Upon separation from employment, you may be entitled to state and federal unemployment insurance benefits. Information about unemployment insurance can be obtained from human resources.

## **Workers' Compensation**

On-the-job injuries are covered by our Workers' Compensation insurance policy. This insurance is provided at no cost to you. If you are injured on the job, no matter how slightly, report the incident immediately to human resources. Consistent with applicable state law, failure to report an injury within a reasonable period of time could jeopardize your claim. We ask for your assistance in alerting management to any condition that could lead to or contribute to an employee accident.

## **401(k) Qualified Retirement Plan**

Our company provides eligible employees with a 401(k) Qualified Retirement plan which is an excellent means of long-term savings for your retirement. The company's contribution, if any, is determined by the employer on an annual basis.

You can obtain a copy of the Summary Plan Description which contains the details of the plan including eligibility and benefit provisions from human resources. In the event of any conflict in the description of any plan, the official plan documents, which are available for your review, shall govern. If you have any questions regarding this plan, see the plan administrator.

## **Employee Assistance Program**

Eligible full-time and part-time employees may participate in our employee assistance program immediately upon hire.

Our *BalanceWorks*®, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and Work/Life Benefit help eligible employees and their immediate families with a wide range of problems. Situations addressed by the EAP include marriage and family problems, emotional problems, alcoholism and alcohol abuse, drug abuse and dependency, financial problems, compulsive gambling and eating disorders. Your conversations and all records are strictly confidential.

The administrative cost of this program is fully paid by the company.

Additional information regarding this program is available at [www.eniweb.com](http://www.eniweb.com) or by calling 1-800-EAPCALL. Complete details of this program may be obtained from human resources.



## **On the Job**

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## **Confidentiality of Client Matters**

Our professional ethics require that each employee maintain the highest degree of confidentiality when handling client matters.

To maintain this professional confidence, no employee shall disclose client information to outsiders, including other clients or third parties and members of one's own family.

Questions concerning client confidentiality may be addressed with your supervisor.

## **Care of Client Records**

The impression that clients have of our company is based, in part, on the way we care for their records. If we are careless with their files and records, clients may conclude that we have the same attitude toward our technical work. As professionals, we must respect the confidence in which we are entrusted and ensure that client files are handled with care.

When possible, obtain all material from client files and then return the material back to the files. Material should be returned in the same condition or better than when it was received.

Under no circumstances will outside requests for client material be fulfilled unless prior written permission is received from your supervisor.

## **Social Security Number Privacy**

To ensure to the extent practicable the confidentiality of our employees' and applicants' Social Security Numbers (SSNs), no employee may acquire, disclose, transfer, or unlawfully use the SSN of any employee except in accordance with company policy. The release of employee SSNs to external parties is prohibited except where required by law. Internal access to employee SSNs is restricted to employees with a legitimate business need for the information.

Employee SSNs may be collected in the ordinary course of business for the purpose of identity verification or to administer benefits and in accordance with state and federal laws. Records that include Social Security numbers will be maintained in accordance with federal and state laws.

Any documents that include employee SSNs and are to be discarded must be destroyed by shredding paper documents and running a "cyberscrub" program before disposing of electronic storage media.

Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Where this company policy and operating procedures may conflict with state law, the state law shall supersede this policy.

For more information about this policy and the company's operating procedures, please contact human resources.

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

Attendance and punctuality are important factors for your success within our company. We work as a team and this requires that each person be in the right place at the right time.

If you are going to be late for work or absent, notify your supervisor as far in advance as is feasible under the circumstances, but before the start of your workday.

Personal issues requiring time away from your work, such as doctor's appointments or other matters, should be scheduled during your nonworking hours if possible.

If you are absent for three days without notifying the company, it is assumed that you have voluntarily abandoned your position with the company, and you will be removed from the payroll.

## **Working Hours**

Our company's workweek is Monday through Friday.  
Our normal working hours are 8:00 a.m.  
- 4:30 p.m.

## **Meal Time**

A 30-minute, unpaid meal break should be taken each day. Your supervisor is responsible for approving the scheduling of this time.

## **Breaks**

Employees will receive one, 15-minute paid break in the morning and one, 15-minute paid break in the afternoon. This time must be approved by your supervisor each day.

## **On The Job Training**

Your supervisor is responsible for initiating all on-the-job training for employees within your department. This may include safety training, participation in off-site training and continuing education when necessary for job safety and work performance. Training will be conducted during regular working hours whenever possible.

The company will pay for any required training programs. Employees may be tested from time to time to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program.

If you have any questions regarding training, please see your supervisor.

## Standards of Conduct

Each employee has an obligation to observe and follow the company's policies and to maintain proper standards of conduct at all times. If an individual's behavior interferes with the orderly and efficient operation of a department, corrective disciplinary measures will be taken.

Disciplinary action may include a verbal warning, written warning, suspension with or without pay, and/or discharge. The appropriate disciplinary action imposed will be determined by the company. The company does not guarantee that one form of action will necessarily precede another.

Among other things, the following may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge: violation of the company's policies or safety rules; insubordination; unauthorized or illegal possession, use or sale of alcohol or controlled substances on work premises or during working hours, while engaged in company activities or in company vehicles; unauthorized possession, use or sale of weapons, firearms or explosives on work premises; theft or dishonesty; physical harassment; sexual harassment; disrespect toward fellow employees, visitors or other members of the public; performing outside work or use of company property, equipment or facilities in connection with outside work while on company time; poor attendance or poor performance. These examples are not all inclusive. We emphasize that discharge decisions will be based on an assessment of all relevant factors.

**Nothing in this policy is designed to modify our employment-at-will policy.**

## **Access to Personnel Files**

Upon written request, you may inspect your own personnel file up to twelve times each year. Inspections will be held on company premises in the presence of a company official. Contact human resources to arrange a time to view these records. You will be permitted to review records related to your qualification for employment, compensation and disciplinary action. You are not permitted access to any letter of reference maintained by the company. If you disagree with the accuracy of any statement in the records and no correction can be agreed upon, you may submit an explanatory statement, which will be attached to the records.

For more information, contact human resources.

## **Client and Public Relations**

Our company's reputation is built on excellent service and quality work. To maintain this reputation requires the active participation of every employee.

The opinions and attitudes that Veterans, investigators, study participants and sponsors have toward our company may be determined for a long period of time by the actions of one employee. It is sometimes easy to take a Veteran, investigator, study participant or sponsor for granted, but if we do we run the risk of losing not only that Veteran, investigator, study participant or sponsor, but his or her associates, friends or family who may also be a Veteran, investigator, study participant or sponsor or prospective Veterans, investigators, study participants and sponsors.

Each employee must be sensitive to the importance of providing courteous treatment in all working relationships.

## **Solicitation and Distribution**

To avoid unnecessary annoyances and work interruptions, solicitation by an employee of another employee is prohibited while either person is on working time.

Employee distribution of literature, including handbills, in work areas is prohibited at all times.

Trespassing, soliciting or distribution of literature by non-employees on these premises is prohibited at all times.

## **Changes in Personal Data**

To aid you and/or your family in matters of personal emergency, we need to maintain up-to-date information.

Changes in name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents or changes in next of kin and/or beneficiaries should be given to human resources promptly.

## **Care of Equipment**

You are expected to demonstrate proper care when using the company's property and equipment. No property may be removed from the premises without the proper authorization of management. If you lose, break or damage any property, report it to your supervisor at once.

## **Employment of Relatives**

A supervisor may not hire or supervise an individual if that individual and the supervisor have an on-going romantic relationship, including but not limited to, marriage, or if that individual is a member of the supervisor's immediate family. The term "immediate family" refers to parents, children, sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews or other family members residing in the same household.

In the case of marriage of persons within the same department, an effort will be made to assign comparable job duties so as to minimize problems of supervision, safety, security and morale.

## **Travel/Expense Accounts**

The company will reimburse employees for reasonable expenses incurred through pre-approved business travel or entertainment. All cash advances must be accounted for and expense receipts are required.

The following business expenses will be reimbursed:

- Travel Expense
- Automobile/Mileage
- Lodging
- Tips
- Business Meals

This list is not all-inclusive. See human resources regarding additional reimbursable business expenses.

## **Personal Property**

The company is not responsible for loss or damage to personal property. Valuable personal items, such as purses and all other valuables should not be left in areas where theft might occur.

## **Identification Badges**

You will be issued an identification badge upon hire. It must be worn where it can be seen at all times when you are working.

## **Visitors**

If you are expecting a visitor, please notify your supervisor. All visitors must first check in at the reception area. Visitors are not allowed in any area of the building without being accompanied by an authorized employee. Under no circumstances will visitors be allowed in confidential, unauthorized or potentially hazardous areas.

## **Severe Weather**

Severe weather is to be expected during certain months of the year. Although driving may at times be difficult, when caution is exercised the roads are normally passable. Except in cases of severe storms, we are all expected to work our regular hours. Time taken off due to poor weather conditions while the business remains open is to be used as vacation, a sick day, or is unpaid.

Exempt employees may be provided time off with pay when necessary to comply with state and federal wage and hour laws.

If extreme weather conditions require closing of the building, you will be notified by your supervisor.

## **Natural Disasters**

Natural disasters, including earthquakes, hurricanes, mudslides, floods and fires are to be expected from time to time. Although driving may be difficult in some areas due to damaged freeways and streets, when caution is exercised the roads are normally passable or alternate routes are available. Except in severe cases, we are all expected to work our regular hours. Time taken off due to natural disasters while the business remains open is to be used as vacation, a sick day, or is unpaid.

Exempt employees may be provided time off with pay when necessary to comply with state and federal wage and hour laws.

If extreme weather conditions require closing of the building, you will be notified by your supervisor.

## **Personal Telephone Calls**

It is important to keep our telephone lines free for client calls. Although the occasional use of the company's telephones for a personal emergency may be necessary, routine personal calls should be kept to a minimum.

Personal cellular telephones must be turned off or set to a silent alert during working hours while on company premises.

Employees are prohibited from using cellular telephones to text message during working hours while on company premises.

## **Electronic Mail and Monitoring**

We recognize your need to be able to communicate efficiently with fellow employees and clients. Therefore, we have installed an internal electronic mail (e-mail) system to facilitate the transmittal of business-related information within the company and with our clients.

The e-mail system is intended for business use only. The use of the company's e-mail system to solicit fellow employees or distribute non job-related information to fellow employees is prohibited to the extent allowed by applicable law.

Our company's policies against sexual and other types of harassment apply fully to the e-mail system. Violations of those policies are not permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Therefore, employees are also prohibited from the display or transmission of sexually-explicit

images, messages, ethnic slurs, racial epithets or anything that could be construed as harassment or disparaging to others.

Employees shall not use unauthorized codes or passwords to gain access to others' files.

All e-mail passwords must be made available to the company at all times. Please notify your supervisor if you need to change your password.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

For business purposes, management reserves the right to enter, search and/or monitor the company's private e-mail system and the files/transmissions of any employee without advance notice and consistent with applicable state and federal laws. Employees should expect that communications that they send and receive by the company's private e-mail system will be disclosed to management. Employees should not assume that communications that they send and receive by the company's private e-mail system are private or confidential.

## **Internet Usage and Monitoring**

As a growing company, we recognize the need to stay on the cutting edge of technology. This is one of the reasons we allow employees to have access to the Internet.

The Internet is intended for business use only. Use of the Internet for any non-business purpose, including but

not limited to, personal communication or solicitation, purchasing personal goods or services, gambling and downloading files for personal use, is strictly prohibited.

Our company's policies against sexual and other types of harassment apply fully to Internet usage. Violations of those policies are not permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Therefore, employees are also prohibited from displaying, transmitting and/or downloading sexually explicit images, messages, ethnic slurs, racial epithets or anything that could be construed as harassment or disparaging to others.

Consistent with applicable federal and state law, the time you spend on the Internet may be tracked through activity logs for business purposes. All abnormal or inappropriate usage will be investigated thoroughly. For business purposes, management reserves the right to search and/or monitor the company's Internet usage and the files/transmissions of any employee without advance notice and consistent with applicable state and federal laws. Employees should expect that communications that they send and receive by the Internet will be disclosed to management. Employees should not assume that communications that they send and receive by the Internet are private or confidential.

Employees learning of any misuse of the Internet shall notify a member of management.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

## Acceptable Use of Electronic Communications

This policy contains guidelines for Electronic Communications created, sent, received, used, transmitted, or stored using company communication systems or equipment and employee provided systems or equipment used either in the workplace, during working time or to accomplish work tasks. “Electronic Communications” include, among other things, messages, images, data or any other information used in e-mail, instant messages, voice mail, fax machines, computers, personal digital assistants (including Blackberry, iPhone or similar devices), text messages, pagers, telephones, cellular and mobile phones including those with cameras, Intranet, Internet, back-up storage, information on a memory or flash key or card, jump or zip drive or any other type of internal or external removable storage drives. In the remainder of this policy, all of these communication devices are collectively referred to as “Systems.”

Employees may use our Systems to communicate internally with co-workers or externally with clients, suppliers, vendors, advisors, and other business acquaintances for business purposes.

All Electronic Communications contained in company Systems are company records and/or property. Although an employee may have an individual password to access our Systems, the Systems and Electronic Communications belong to the company. The Systems and Electronic Communications are accessible to the company at all times including periodic unannounced inspections. Our Systems and Electronic Communications are subject to use, access, monitoring, review, recording and disclosure without further notice. Our Systems and Electronic Communications are not

confidential or private. The company's right to use, access, monitor, record and disclose Electronic Communications without further notice applies equally to employee-provided systems or equipment used in the workplace, during working time, or to accomplish work tasks.

Although incidental and occasional personal use of our Systems that does not interfere or conflict with productivity or the company's business or violate policy is permitted, personal communications in our Systems are treated the same as all other Electronic Communications and will be used, accessed, recorded, monitored, and disclosed by the company at any time without further notice. Since all Electronic Communications and Systems can be accessed without advance notice, employees should not use our Systems for communication or information that employees would not want revealed to third parties.

Employees may not use our Systems in a manner that violates our policies including but not limited to Non-Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Equal Employment Opportunity, Confidentiality of Client Matters, Care of Client Records, Protecting Company Information, Solicitation and Distribution, Electronic Mail and Monitoring, and Internet Usage and Monitoring. Employees may not use our Systems in any way that may be seen as insulting, disruptive, obscene, offensive, or harmful to morale. Examples of prohibited uses include, but are not limited to, sexually-explicit drawings, messages, images, cartoons, or jokes; propositions or love letters; ethnic or racial slurs, threats, or derogatory comments; or any other message or image that may be in violation of company policies.

In addition, employees may **not** use our Systems:

- To download, save, send or access any defamatory, discriminatory or obscene material;
- To download, save, send or access any music, audio or video file;
- To download anything from the internet (including shareware or free software) without the advance written permission of the Systems Supervisor;
- To download, save, send or access any site or content that the company might deem “adult entertainment;”
- To access any “blog” or otherwise post a personal opinion on the intranet;
- To solicit employees or others;
- To attempt or to gain unauthorized or unlawful access to computers, equipment, networks, or systems of the company or any other person or entity;
- In connection with any infringement of intellectual property rights, including but not limited to copyrights; and
- In connection with the violation or attempted violation of any law.

An employee may not misrepresent, disguise, or conceal his or her identity or another’s identity in any way while using Electronic Communications; make changes to Electronic Communications without clearly indicating such changes; or use another person’s account, mail box, password, etc. without prior written approval of the account owner and without identifying the actual author.

Employees must always respect intellectual property rights such as copyrights and trademarks. Employees must not copy, use, or transfer proprietary materials of the company or others without appropriate authorization.

All Systems passwords and encryption keys must be available and known to the company. Employees may not install password or encryption programs without the written permission of your supervisor. Employees may not use the passwords and encryption keys belonging to others.

Numerous state and federal laws apply to Electronic Communications. The company will comply with applicable laws. Employees also must comply with applicable laws and should recognize that an employee could be personally liable and/or subject to fine and imprisonment for violation of applicable laws.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge as well as possible civil liabilities or criminal prosecution. Where appropriate, the company may advise legal officials or appropriate third parties of policy violations and cooperate with official investigations. We will not, of course, retaliate against anyone who reports possible policy violations or assists with investigations.

If you have questions about the acceptable use of our Systems or the content of Electronic Communications, ask your supervisor for advance clarification.

## Laptop Security

Each employee provided with a laptop is responsible for the physical security of the laptop. All laptops acquired for or on behalf of the company are company property. The Laptop must be locked up and stored in a secure location when it is not in the immediate possession of the authorized user. In addition, the user must return the laptop immediately upon request of the company. A laptop user must notify human resources immediately if the laptop is lost, stolen, misplaced, or damaged. All work created or performed on the laptop is company property. The laptop is subject to inspection by the company at any time without further advance notice. The laptop must be used in a manner that complies with all company policies including the Acceptable Use of Electronic Communications, Non-Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Equal Employment Opportunity, Confidentiality of Client Matters, Care of Client Records, Protecting Company Information, Solicitation and Distribution, Electronic Mail and Monitoring and Internet Usage and Monitoring.

Violations of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

## **Dress Policy**

Employees are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal cleanliness and present a neat, professional appearance at all times.

Our clients' satisfaction represents the most important and challenging aspect of our business. Whether or not your job responsibilities place you in direct client contact, you represent the company with your appearance as well as your actions. The properly-attired individual helps to create a favorable image for the company, to the public and fellow employees.

The company maintains a business casual environment. All employees should use discretion in wearing attire that is appropriate for the office and client interaction.

## **Personal Hygiene**

Maintaining a professional, business-like appearance is very important to the success of our company. Part of the impression you make on others depends on your choice of dress, personal hygiene and courteous behavior. A daily regimen of good grooming and hygiene is expected of everyone. Please ensure that you maintain good personal hygiene habits. While at work, you are required to be clean, dressed appropriately and well groomed.

## **Recycling and Waste Prevention**

The VA Medical Center is committed to the environment and its future. Therefore, recycling containers are located throughout the buildings for the collection of recyclable materials. Waste of time, materials and utilities is costly to Charleston Research Institute and the VA Medical Center. If you have any waste prevention ideas, please advise your supervisor in writing.

## **Reference Checks**

Our company will not honor any oral requests for references. All requests must be in writing and on company letterhead. Generally, we will only confirm our employees' dates of employment, salary history and job title.

Under no circumstances should an employee provide another individual with information regarding current or former employees of our company. If you receive a request for reference information, please forward it to human resources.

## **Protecting Company Information**

Protecting our company's information is the responsibility of every employee, and we all share a common interest in making sure information is not improperly or accidentally disclosed. Do not discuss the company's confidential business with anyone who does not work for us.

All telephone calls regarding a current or former employee's position/compensation with our company must be forwarded to human resources.

The company's address shall not be used for the receipt of personal mail.

## **Document Retention**

The company maintains a formal document retention policy and procedure. Your supervisor will explain how that policy applies to you and the work that you perform. You must retain all work products in the manner required and for the time period required by our policy. Never destroy or delete any work product until the retention periods specified by the company's policy have been satisfied. Failure to comply with the company document retention policy and procedure may result in discipline up to and including discharge.

## **Conflict of Interest/Code of Ethics**

A company's reputation for integrity is its most valuable asset and is directly related to the conduct of its officers and other employees. Therefore, employees must never use their positions with the company, the VA Medical Center or any of its Veterans, investigators, study participants or sponsors, for private gain, to advance personal interests or to obtain favors or benefits for themselves, members of their families or any other individuals, corporations or business entities.

The company adheres to the highest legal and ethical standards applicable in our business. The company's business is conducted in strict observance of both the letter and spirit of all applicable laws and the integrity of each employee is of utmost importance.

Employees of the company shall conduct their personal affairs such that their duties and responsibilities to the company are not jeopardized and/or legal questions do not arise with respect to their association or work with the company.

## **Outside Employment**

We hope that you will not find it necessary to seek additional outside employment. However, if you are planning to accept an outside position, you must notify your supervisor in writing.

Outside employment must not conflict in any way with your responsibilities within our company. You may not work for competitors nor may you take an ownership position with a competitor.

Employees may not conduct outside work or use company property, equipment or facilities in connection with outside work while on company time.

## **Parking**

Parking facilities are limited. You are required to park within the designated areas.

The company is not responsible for loss, damage or theft of your vehicle. Therefore, we suggest that you lock your car doors.

## **Contact with the Media**

All media inquiries regarding the company and its operations must be referred to the Executive Director. Only the Executive Director is authorized to make or approve public statements pertaining to the company or its operations. No employees, unless specifically designated by the Executive Director, are authorized to make those statements.

## **Recording Devices in the Workplace**

Employees are prohibited from having any form of recording or photography device in the workplace and from recording or photographing fellow employees in the workplace or during working time. Violations of this policy may result in discipline (including the possibility of discharge), immediate removal of the recording device and/or the employee from the workplace, and retention of the recording device for inspection by the company and/or legal authorities. Limited exceptions will apply when the employee in possession of the recording device has been provided advance written authorization to use the recording device by an authorized member of company management and the recording device is being used in an authorized manner to further company business.

Prohibited “recording devices” under this policy include but are not limited to cameras, camcorders, video devices, picture or video capable cellular telephones, cassette recorders, and digital voice or image recorders. Cellular telephones, PDAs, MP3 and DVD devices, portable computers, and other devices are covered if they are equipped with any device or technology that has the capability to record images or sounds. This prohibition applies irrespective of whether the recording capability is activated or not.

## **If You Must Leave Us**

Should you decide to leave your employment with us, we ask that you provide human resources with at least two weeks' advance written notice. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated and will be noted favorably should you ever wish to reapply for employment with the company.

Our company does not provide a "letter of reference" to former employees. Generally, we will confirm upon request our employees' dates of employment, salary history and job title.

Additionally, all resigning employees should complete a brief exit interview prior to leaving. All company property, including this Employee Handbook, must be returned upon termination. Otherwise, the company may take action to recoup any replacement costs and/or seek the return of company property through appropriate legal recourse.

You should notify the company if your address changes during the calendar year in which termination occurs so that your tax information will be sent to the proper address.



## **Safety in the Workplace**

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## **Each Employee's Responsibility**

Safety can only be achieved through teamwork at our company. Each employee, supervisor and manager must practice safety awareness by thinking defensively, anticipating unsafe situations and reporting unsafe conditions immediately.

Please observe the following precautions:

1. Notify your supervisor of any emergency situation. If you are injured or become sick at work, no matter how slightly, you must inform your supervisor immediately.
2. The use of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances during working hours will not be tolerated. The possession of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances on the company's property is forbidden.
3. Use, adjust and repair machines and equipment only if you are trained and qualified.
4. Know the proper lifting procedures. Get help when lifting or pushing heavy objects.
5. Understand your job fully and follow instructions. If you are not sure of the safe procedure, don't guess; just ask your supervisor.
6. Know the locations, contents and use of first aid and fire fighting equipment.
7. Wear personal protective equipment in accordance with the job you are performing.

A violation of a safety precaution is in itself an unsafe act. A violation may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## **Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control**

To protect employees who may reasonably anticipate being occupationally exposed to blood and other potentially infectious materials during work tasks, our company has instituted a Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Program.

Briefly, our program includes an employee exposure determination, information and training about bloodborne pathogens, the availability of hepatitis B vaccinations, Universal Precautions, engineering controls, safe work practices, personal protective equipment and housekeeping measures to help reduce the risks of occupational exposure. Procedures to be used following an exposure incident and necessary record keeping are also included. These matters are discussed in our written Infection Control Plan, which is available to you in accordance with the plan.

Further information about our Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Program will be provided to affected employees and may be obtained from your supervisor.

## **Workplace Violence**

Violence by an employee or anyone else against an employee, supervisor or member of management will not be tolerated. The purpose of this policy is to minimize the potential risk of personal injuries to employees at work and to reduce the possibility of damage to company property in the event someone, for whatever reason, may be unhappy with a company decision or action by an employee or member of management.

If you receive or overhear any threatening communications from an employee or outside third party, report it to your supervisor at once. Do not engage in either physical or verbal confrontation with a potentially violent individual. If you encounter an individual who is threatening immediate harm to an employee or visitor to our premises, contact an emergency agency (such as 911) immediately.

All reports of work-related threats will be kept confidential to the extent possible, investigated and documented. Employees are expected to report and participate in an investigation of any suspected or actual cases of workplace violence and will not be subjected to disciplinary consequences for such reports or cooperation.

Violations of this policy, including your failure to report or fully cooperate in the company's investigation, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## **Workplace Searches**

To protect the property and to ensure the safety of all employees, clients and the company, the company reserves the right to conduct personal searches consistent with state law, and to inspect any packages, parcels, purses, handbags, brief cases, lunch boxes or any other possessions or articles carried to and from the company's property. In addition, the company reserves the right to search any employee's office, desk, files, locker, equipment or any other area or article on our premises. In this regard, it should be noted that all offices, desks, files, lockers, equipment, etc. are the property of the company, and are issued for the use of employees only during their employment. Inspection may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the company.

Persons entering the premises who refuse to cooperate in an inspection conducted pursuant to this policy may not be permitted to enter the premises. Employees working on or entering or leaving the premises who refuse to cooperate in an inspection, as well as employees who after the inspection are believed to be in possession of stolen property or illegal substances, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, if upon investigation they are found to be in violation of the company's security procedures or any other company rules and regulations.

## **Good Housekeeping**

Good work habits and a neat place to work are essential for job safety and efficiency. You are expected to keep your place of work organized and materials in good order at all times. Report anything that needs repair or replacement to your supervisor.

## **Smoking in the Workplace**

Our company is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for employees and visitors. Smoking is allowed only in designated areas.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## **No Weapons in the Workplace**

Possession, use or sale of weapons, firearms or explosives on work premises, while operating company machinery, equipment or vehicles for work-related purposes or while engaged in company business off premises is forbidden except where expressly authorized by the company and permitted by state and local laws. This policy applies to all employees, including but not limited to, those who have a valid permit to carry a firearm.

Employees who are aware of violations or threats of violations of this policy are required to report such violations or threats of violations to your supervisor immediately.

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## **In An Emergency**

Your supervisor should be notified immediately when an emergency occurs. Emergencies include all accidents, medical situations, bomb threats, other threats of violence, and the smell of smoke. If your supervisor is unavailable, contact the nearest company official.

Should an emergency result in the need to communicate information to employees outside of business hours, your supervisor will contact you. Therefore, it is important that employees keep their personal emergency contact information up to date. Notify your supervisor when this information changes.

When events warrant an evacuation of the building, you should follow the instructions of your supervisor or any other member of management. You should leave the building in a quick and orderly manner. You should assemble at the pre-determined location as communicated to you by your supervisor to await further instructions or information.

Please direct any questions you may have about the company's emergency procedures to your supervisor.

## **Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace**

The company has vital interests in ensuring a safe, healthy and efficient working environment for our employees, their co-workers and clients we serve. The unlawful or improper use of controlled substances or alcohol in the workplace presents a danger to everyone. In addition, as a federal contractor and/or grantee we have a duty to comply with the requirement of the Drug-

Free Workplace Act of 1988. For these reasons, we have established as a condition of employment and continued employment with the company the following drug and alcohol free workplace policy.

The company has implemented a drug testing program in compliance with local, state and federal laws. Employees are prohibited from reporting to work or working while using illegal or unauthorized substances. Employees are prohibited from reporting to work or working when the employee uses any controlled substance, except when the use is pursuant to a doctor's orders and the doctor advised the employee that the substance does not adversely affect the employee's ability to safely perform his or her job duties. Employees are also prohibited from reporting for duty or remaining on duty with any alcohol in their systems. Employees are also prohibited from consuming alcohol during working hours, including meal and break periods.

In addition, employees are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful or unauthorized manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of illegal or unauthorized substances and alcohol in the workplace including: on company paid time, on company premises, in company vehicles or while engaged in company activities.

In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, employees must notify your supervisor of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring within the workplace within five days of such conviction.

Your employment or continued employment with the company is conditioned upon your full compliance with the foregoing drug and alcohol free workplace policy. Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Furthermore, any employee who violates this policy and is subject to termination may be permitted in lieu of termination, at

the company's sole discretion, to participate in and successfully complete an appropriate treatment, counseling, or rehabilitation program as recommended by a substance abuse professional as a condition of continued employment and in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Consistent with its fair employment policy, the company maintains a policy of non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation with respect to recovering addicts and alcoholics, and those having a medical history reflecting treatment for substance abuse conditions. We encourage employees to seek assistance before their drug and alcohol use renders them unable to perform their essential job functions or jeopardizes the health and safety of themselves, or others. The company will attempt to assist its employees through referrals to rehabilitation, appropriate leaves of absence and other measures, consistent with the company's policies and applicable federal, state or local laws.

The company further reserves the right to take any and all appropriate and lawful actions necessary to enforce this drug and alcohol free workplace policy including, but not limited to, the inspection of company issued lockers, desks or other suspected areas of concealment, as well as an employee's personal property when the company has reasonable suspicion to believe that the employee has violated this drug and alcohol free workplace policy.

This policy represents management guidelines. For more information, please speak to human resources.

In order to maintain a drug and alcohol free workplace, the company has established a drug and alcohol free awareness program to educate employees on 1) the danger of drug abuse and alcohol in the workplace; 2) the company's drug and alcohol free workplace policy; 3) the availability of any drug and alcohol counseling,

rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and 4) the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse and alcohol violations, and violations of the company's drug and alcohol free workplace. Such education includes: the distribution of our drug and alcohol free workplace policy at the employment interview; a discussion of our drug and alcohol free workplace policy at the new employee orientation session; the distribution of a list of drug and alcohol assistance agencies, organizations and clinics; the distribution of published educational materials regarding the dangers of drug abuse and alcohol misuse; reorientation of all involved employees in cases in which a drug and/or alcohol-related accident or incidents occurs; and inclusion of the company's drug and alcohol free workplace policy in the Employee Handbook and any other personnel policy publications.

## **Receipt of Employee Handbook and Employment-At-Will Statement**

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Charleston Research Institute Employee Handbook and I understand that it contains information about the employment policies and practices of the company. I agree to read and comply with this Employee Handbook. I understand that the policies outlined in this Employee Handbook are management guidelines only, which in a developing business will require changes from time to time. I understand that the company retains the right to make decisions involving employment as needed in order to conduct its work in a manner that is beneficial to the employees and the company. I understand that this Employee Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior Employee Handbooks and any inconsistent verbal or written policy statements.

I understand that except for the policy of at-will employment, which can only be changed by the Board of Directors of the company in a signed written contract, the company reserves the right to revise, delete and add to the provisions of this Employee Handbook at any time without further notice. All such revisions, deletions or additions to the Employee Handbook will be in writing and will be signed by the Executive Director of the company. I understand that no oral statements or representations can change the provisions of this Employee Handbook.

I understand that this Employee Handbook is not intended to create contractual obligations with respect to any matters it covers and that the Employee Handbook does not create a contract guaranteeing that I will be employed for any specific time period.

**THIS COMPANY IS AN AT-WILL EMPLOYER. THIS MEANS THAT REGARDLESS OF ANY PROVISION IN THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK, THE COMPANY OR I MAY TERMINATE THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY REASON, WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE OR NOTICE. NOTHING IN THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK OR IN ANY DOCUMENT OR STATEMENT, WRITTEN OR ORAL, SHALL LIMIT THE RIGHT TO TERMINATE EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL. NO OFFICER, EMPLOYEE OR REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMPANY IS AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT—EXPRESS OR IMPLIED—WITH ME OR ANY EMPLOYEE FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR A SPECIFIED PERIOD OF TIME UNLESS SUCH AN AGREEMENT IS IN A WRITTEN CONTRACT SIGNED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COMPANY.**

I understand that this Employee Handbook refers to current benefit plans maintained by the company and that I must refer to the actual plan documents and summary plan descriptions as these documents are controlling.

I have read and understand the Vacation Policy in this Employee Handbook.

Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I also understand that if a written contract is inconsistent with the Employee Handbook, the written contract is controlling.

If I have questions regarding the content or interpretation of this Employee Handbook, I will ask human resources or a member of management.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE  
SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_



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