



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Sections 19-28
Updated June 2023

19.0 DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

See Please refer to the Lewis County Safety and Risk Management Policies which can be y Manual.
The County's Safety and Risk Management policy is found on the Lewis County Intranet.

20.0 BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS (BBP) -STATEMENT OF CONCERN

The spread of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS Related Complex (ARC) through propagation of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and the potential for spread of Hepatitis B through propagation of the Hepatitis B virus (HBv), warrant the establishment of County policies to address the various aspects of these conditions as they relate to County employees and the County's interaction with the public. HIV and HBv policies are integrated into the broader program of Bloodborne Pathogen (BBP) control as mandated by WISHA Standard WAC 296-823. See Risk Management and Safety Policies. Policy, 4.400 of ATTACHMENTS.

21.0 DRESS AND GROOMING CODE

Each employee is expected to dress and groom appropriately for the job. The Elected/Director will offer guidance as to proper attire and grooming standards. Special requirements for reasons of safety may also be established. Failing to observe established standards for dress and grooming can be cause for disciplinary action.

22.0 VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are not normally employees of the County. However, volunteers may be deemed employees for all purposes relating to medical aid benefits under Chapter 51.36 RCW, at the option of Lewis County, and only when done through written agreements.

The definition of a "volunteer", as found in Chapter 51.12.035, RCW "...shall mean a person who performs any assigned or authorized duties for the state or any agency thereof, except emergency services workers as described by Chapter 38.52 RCW, brought about by one's own free choice, receives no wages, and is registered and accepted as a volunteer by the state or any agency thereof..." Furthermore, "Provided, that such person shall be deemed to be a volunteer although he or she may be granted maintenance and reimbursement for actual expenses necessarily incurred in performing his/her assigned or authorized duties".

Once registered and accepted, volunteers are subject to the County's rules and policies governing employee conduct. Any volunteer may have their registration and official acceptance withdrawn at the discretion of the Elected/Director.

23.0 WORK AREAS

23.1 APPEARANCE

The County's objective is to provide and maintain clean, safe and healthy work conditions. It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain a safe, neat work area and ensure that all working documents, desks, and cabinets are secured at the close of the workday. County vehicles are considered a work area when an employee is assigned a county vehicle.

23.2 WORK AREA PRIVACY

Except in areas and under conditions where employees are expressly permitted to provide their own locks and security devices, employees shall have no expectation of privacy in County provided work areas. Any exceptions shall be granted in writing only by the Board or independent Elected Official. County equipment, including, but not limited to, desks, computers (including but not limited to central processing units, network electronic mail files, disk drives, tapes, floppy disks, CD's, USB Drives, etc.), voice mail repository files, facsimile machines, file cabinets, lockers, and other storage facilities are subject to inspection by the Elected/Director or their designee at any time and without the employee's approval or knowledge, or notice given.

24.0 PERSONAL PHONE CALLS & TEXT MESSAGING

County phones or electronic transmission devices are to be used for County purposes. Under no circumstances shall an employee charge a personal long distance call to the County unless authorized by his or her elected or director. Telephone calls or electronic transmissions of a personal nature (incoming or outgoing) should be kept to an absolute minimum (even with the employees own device) and made during breaks or lunch periods whenever possible. Using County devices while at work or during working hours shall comply with all Lewis County policies and procedures as well as WAC requirements.

County cell phones are to be used for County purpose. In the event of an emergency or necessity, an employee may use a County cell phone for personal use. The usage must be reported. Employees will reimburse the Employer if applicable.

25.0 SMOKING

Commented [AS1]: Chewing Tobacco?

The County's smoking policy is set forth in Ordinance #91-1113, 1113A&B, and amendments. ~~in Part 10 of ATTACHMENTS. Smoking in this section shall include e-cigarettes.~~

All employees and the public shall ~~prevent~~ refrain from smoking within public places or any place of employment or within a minimum of twenty-five (25) feet from entrances, exits, windows that open, and ventilation intakes of said places. Smoking shall include e-cigarettes or vapes.

26.0 FAIR EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

~~These policies are found in Part 6 of ATTACHMENTS.~~

Sexual Harassment
Affirmative Action
Equal Employment
HIV/AIDS
Reasonable Accommodation
Complaint Procedure

26.1 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is an "unlawful employment practice" under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of an individual's employment;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual;
3. Submission to such conduct either explicitly or implicitly is a term or condition of service delivery to a client or a contract award; or
4. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment is defined as deliberate or repeated behavior of a sexual nature which is unwelcome. It can include verbal behavior such as unwanted sexual comments, suggestions, jokes or pressure for sexual favors; non-verbal behavior such as suggestive looks and leering; and physical behavior such as pats or squeezes, or repeatedly brushing against someone's body.

Lewis County will not tolerate sexual harassment and/or inappropriate sexual conduct. Sexual conduct is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This is especially so when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

All employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and businesslike manner at all times. Inappropriate sexual conduct that could lead to a claim of sexual harassment is

expressly prohibited by this policy. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, sexually implicit or explicit communication whether in:

- Written form, such as: cartoons, posters, calendars, notes, letters, e-mail, etc.
- Verbal form, such as: comments, jokes, foul or obscene language of a sexual nature, gossiping or questions about another person's sex life, or repeated unwanted requests for dates.
- Physical gestures or other nonverbal behavior, such as: unwelcome touching, grabbing, fondling, kissing, massaging, and/or brushing up against another person's body.

Any employee who feels harassed or is aware of harassment of another employee is urged to report this to an immediate supervisor, Elected/Director, Human Resource Department, the Board, or the Risk Management Department. The report may be informal or formal. A formal report shall include a written statement.

26.1.1 POLICY

Lewis County will take all precautions to discourage sexual harassment from occurring. It is the employee's responsibility to bring all concerns of sexual harassment to the attention of management. This includes employees who think they are the recipient of sexual harassment as well as those who believe they have witnessed another employee being harassed. Confidentiality will be maintained as much as is permitted by law.

Sexual harassment negatively effects morale, motivation, and job performance. It results in increased absenteeism, turnover, inefficiency, and loss of productivity. It is inappropriate, offensive and illegal, and it will not be tolerated in Lewis County government.

Any employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment is in violation of this policy and shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Employees proven to have filed an intentionally false complaint may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

No employee will be retaliated against for complaining about harassment. An employee who restrains, interferes with, coerces, discriminates or engages in retaliation against any employee filing a complaint, seeking resolution, or witnessing sexual harassment, shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

The Board of Lewis County Commissioners firmly believes the employees of Lewis County to be capable of exercising good judgment and common sense in their working relationships and to treat one another in a fair and courteous manner. Such behavior helps protect the County and its employees from legal or disciplinary actions.

26.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Lewis County is an equal opportunity employer that provides access, free from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, or any other basis protected by law, in employment or provisions of services. Lewis County strives to eliminate any barriers that may prevent access to County facilities and services.

It is the policy of Lewis County to provide equal opportunity to all its employees and applicants for employment. This policy shall be given the highest priority in the day-to-day operations of Lewis County personnel activities.

26.2.1 PURPOSE:

To assure a work environment free from discrimination and harassment against any persons on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other basis protected by law in all areas employment or provision of services. This Equal Opportunity policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Title 6 and Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Equal Employment Act of 1972, Presidential Executive Order #11246 (as amended by Presidential Executive Order #11375), and Chapter 60 of Title 41 CFR, Part 60-2.
- Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration's Equal Employment Opportunity Program Guidelines for Grant Recipients contained in Circular "UMTA C 4704.1" and the implementing regulation of UMT Act of 1964, as amended, 49 U.S.C. 1601, Section 19.
- The U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Civil Rights 28 CFR 42.301 governing requirements for grant recipients to establish and maintain an EEO Plan which includes race/gender workforce analysis, hiring and implementation plan components.
- Washington Administrative Codes governing employment regulations (Chapter 162-12, 16, 18, 20, 22 & 30), Revised Code of Washington Chapter 49.60 – Washington State Law Against Discrimination, as amended by Initiative 200.

26.2.2 REPORTING

The Affirmative Action Officer is responsible for the development of the Affirmative Action Program, including implementation and maintenance of systems which monitor

the effectiveness of the Affirmative Action Policy and related Fair Employment Policies, as defined by RCW 49.60.400. The Affirmative Action Officer is responsible for compiling data, preparing, and submitting the biennial EEO-4 report.

Any person applying for employment, a current employee, or an individual wanting to participate in a County sponsored program or activity, or their representative, may make a request for reasonable accommodation by contacting the ADA Coordinator (HR Dept.) at (360)740-1408 or (360) 740-1480 TTY.

Lewis County reserves the right to create and implement bona fide occupational qualifications for any position within Lewis County government. Administration of this policy does not imply a contract of employment or revoke the County's At-Will employment policy.

Anyone having questions or complaints regarding Affirmative Action or Equal Employment Opportunities in Lewis County government is asked to contact the Affirmative Action Officer at (360) 740-1408 or (360) 740-1480 TTY. The Affirmative Action Officer is responsible for reporting to the Lewis County Board of Commissioners regarding these matters.

26.3 HIV/AIDS: NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Lewis County recognizes persons who have or are perceived by others to have Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) or AIDS-Related Complex (ARC) and those who have tested positive for the AIDS HIV virus-antibodies, or who are members of one of the high risk groups, are related to or live with someone who has HIV/AIDS are protected by federal, state, and local laws prohibiting discrimination in employment. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is a medical condition considered to be a disability under the Washington State Law Against Discrimination, RCW 49.60. Every Lewis County employee has the right to be free from discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical handicap, or any other basis protected by law.

26.4 FAIR EMPLOYMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Anyone having complaints regarding affirmative action or equal employment opportunities in Lewis County government is asked to contact the Affirmative Action Officer at (360) 740-1408 or (360) 740-1480 TTY, or can be mailed to:

Affirmative Action Officer
Lewis County
351 NW North Street
Chehalis, WA 98532

All employees, candidates, clients, and applicants of Lewis County government agencies are encouraged to use this complaint procedure when it is believed discrimination has occurred in employment or services within Lewis County government or by its contractors. Complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible, and all records of the complaint and investigation will be maintained in a secure manner. Assistance will be provided to anyone requesting assistance in filing a complaint.

A complaint should be filed in accordance with the law, and have sufficient information for the Affirmative Action Officer to determine the substance of the complaint. If an informal investigation is warranted, the complainant and their representatives will be given an opportunity to submit additional information relevant to the investigation.

The Affirmative Action Officer will determine the complaint's validity and issue a written judgment resolving the complaint. The complainant will be notified of the decision and/or resolution. A request for reconsideration can be made within ten (10) calendar days of the decision to:

Board of County Commissioners
351 NW North St.
Chehalis, WA 98532-1900

The Board of County Commissioners may refer the reconsideration for further investigation, and after further investigation issue a decision on the complaint. The complainant shall be notified of the decision. The decision of the Board of County Commissioners is final within Lewis County.

A complaint may also be filed as per Washington State Law Against Discrimination, Chapter 49.60 RCW or Title VI and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act of 1964 with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Office of Equal Opportunity, Washington State Human Rights Commission, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Office of Civil Rights, or any other appropriate civil rights enforcement entity

26.5 PARKING ACCOMMODATION

Employees may request special accommodation in respect of parking. Employees may request their needs with the HR Department. Each case will be evaluated individually and may be granted based upon availability of space and on a temporary basis.

27.0 TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Any and all electronic transmissions across Lewis County systems are subject to monitoring. Occasional but limited use as defined by WAC 292-110-010 is permitted. Such as, use of personal email during breaks, wishing a "happy birthday" or advising of an "agency" social event over messaging, using the internet to retrieve general information during non-working time (i.e.: reading an online newspaper). Social networking sites (like Facebook and Twitter) and video

sharing websites (like YouTube) must comply with the internet usage policy. Use beyond de minimis usage may result in disciplinary action. Other usage that may lead to discipline are; accessing pornography or other sexually explicit material, suggestive, offensive, demeaning, insulting, harassing or disparaging of others, gambling, use for personal business, downloading software, posting information that is confidential and/or proprietary, distributing information about Lewis County or its employees, or any other usage that would violate Lewis County Policy or law. Furthermore, usage of these technologies must be approved by the Elected/Director.

The County's Technology Policy is in Part 11 of ATTACHMENTS.

27.1 **COUNTY EQUIPMENT**

All County equipment is the property of Lewis County as described in [Section 26-2](#) Work Area Privacy. Only where written permission is provided by the Elected, the employee shall have no expectation of privacy using County provided computer/electronic equipment. Review or search of such equipment for any reason may occur along with random searches.

28.0 **SOCIAL NETWORK AND BLOG POLICY**

Employees may access personal blogs/social networking sites on work premises for their own use, provided that this is outside of working hours and is not excessive (agreed for each division, department, and/or individual). Employees must ensure they are compliant with any rules in the [County's Internet Policy](#) outlined below ([LC policies, Part II](#)), Personal Conduct ([Section 4.1](#)), and Work Area Privacy ([Section 26.2](#)).

At Lewis County, we understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

Guidelines

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with Lewis County, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

Applying the basic principles and guidelines found in Lewis County policies and Employee Handbook to your activities online will be helpful. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online.

Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow associates or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of Lewis County or Lewis County's legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Know and Follow the Rules

Carefully read these guidelines, the Lewis County Statement of Ethics Policy, the Lewis County Technology Policy and the Discrimination & Harassment Prevention Policies, Workplace Violence Policy and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies.

Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Be Respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow associates, customers, members, suppliers or people who work on behalf of Lewis County. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our Open Door Policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet.

Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage customers, members, associates or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying.

Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or company policy.

Be Honest and Accurate

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered.

Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about Lewis County, fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers, or people working on behalf of Lewis County or other municipalities.

Post Only Appropriate and Respectful Content

- Maintain the confidentiality of Lewis County trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trades secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology.
- Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications.
- Respect financial disclosure laws. It is illegal to communicate or give a "tip" on inside information to others so that they may have a financial gain.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to a Lewis County website without identifying yourself as a Lewis County Lewis County.
- Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for Lewis County. If Lewis County is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are a Lewis County employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of Lewis County, fellow Lewis County employees, elected officials, customers, suppliers or people working on behalf of Lewis County.
- If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with Lewis County, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of Lewis County.
- It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Lewis County."

Using Social Media at Work

- Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your manager or consistent with the Technology and Equipment Policy.
- Do not use Lewis County email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Retaliation is Prohibited

Lewis County prohibits taking negative action against any Lewis County for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Media Contacts

Employees should not speak to the media on Lewis County's behalf without approval by the elected official or designee. All media inquiries should be directed to them. If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact your elected official, director, or the Human Resource Department.

Employees are advised not to write about their work or make reference to the County on external web pages, i.e. in blogs or on social networking sites.

When an employee chooses to do so, they should make it clear that the views expressed are his/hers only and do not reflect the views of the County. Failure to adhere to these

rules may be considered misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action under the County's Disciplinary Procedures ([Section 4.3](#)).

Employees must not:

- disclose any information that is confidential to the County or any third party, or disclose personal data or information about any individual, co-worker, or service user, which could be in a breach of the Data Protection Act;
- disclose any information which is not yet in the public arena; post illegal material, e.g. images of child abuse or material that incites racial hatred;
- link their own blogs/personal web pages to the County's website;
- include any information, sourced from the County, which breaches copyright;
- make defamatory remarks about the County, co-workers, or service users;
- misrepresent the County by posting false or inaccurate statements about the County.

USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES TO ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITIES

Some County employees need to communicate and engage with the public as part of their work. Social networking sites represent an opportunity for such engagement. However, there are risks associated with using these sites. Employees wishing to use this method of communication should consult with their supervisor who will conduct ongoing assessments.

This policy relies on employees acting responsibly and in accordance with the above rules. When employees have concerns that co-workers are acting in breach of the above rules, they are encouraged to report it under the County's Whistleblower procedure ([Part 5 of ATTACHMENTS](#)). Where concerns are raised, an investigation may be warranted.

~~The Social Media Policy is in Part 12 of ATTACHMENTS.~~ Incorporate 12

28.2 TIKTOK PROHIBITED

This policy applies to users, whether employees, volunteers, or guests on systems and/or networks owned, leased, rented, or otherwise under the responsibility of Lewis County. It covers Information Technology management decisions only. Following applicable office and/or department policies and applicable laws is assumed.

1. Users will not install TikTok on County Owned Devices Users will not install TikTok or TikTok-owned applications on devices owned, leased, rented, or otherwise under responsibility of Lewis County. Users will work with Lewis County IT to remove TikTok or TikTok-owned software where it is in violation of this policy.

2. Users will not access TikTok on County Operated Networks Users will not access TikTok or TikTok-owned services while connected to networks owned or operated by Lewis County.

3. Lewis County Information Technology will block domains owned by TikTok Lewis County IT will use firewalls and/or DNS block lists to deny access to domains owned or operated by TikTok in order to disrupt any attempt to use TikTok on networks owned or operated by Lewis County

28.3 PERSONAL RECORDINGS

Washington Law, RCW 9.73.030, requires that any person intercepting, recording, or divulging private communication obtain consent. Lewis County believes in the privacy of its workers and citizens. Any person seeking to film or record employees outside of Open Public Meetings, must first receive consent. acting outside of the RCW requirements and whereas the law allows such activity, is in violation of professional conducts.

28.4 PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES, WEARABLES, AND PDA'S

Personal computer devices may be used at work in accordance with Lewis County policies and office or department protocols. Such usage should be kept to an absolute minimum and made during breaks or lunch periods whenever possible. Devices should be silenced during working hours. Usage should not be disruptive or intrusive in the workplace.