

# **TOWN OF BRANFORD**

## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
8/ 21 /2019**

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## **DISCLAIMER**

**THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK IS NOT A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT NOR IS IT INTENDED TO BE A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT OR A WARRANTY OF BENEFITS. ITS SOLE PURPOSE IS TO INFORM YOU OF THE TOWN OF BRANFORD'S POLICIES. THE TOWN OF BRANFORD RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE ITS POLICIES AND/OR BENEFITS SET FORTH IN THIS HANDBOOK ANY TIME IT DETERMINES A NEED TO DO SO.**

## **WELCOME TO THE TOWN OF BRANFORD**

On behalf of the Town of Branford, I wish to extend my congratulations on accepting the town's offer of employment. We are happy to welcome you as a member of our team.

We hope that your employment proves mutually satisfying and that you find your new role to be rewarding, challenging and meaningful. Every employee has an important role and we value the abilities, experience and background that you bring with you. It is our employees who provide the services that our citizens rely and depend upon.

With this letter, you will find our Employee Handbook that explains our policies and procedures. Please take the time to review this important document and contact the Human Resources Department with any questions or concerns.

We intend to provide you with all of the support and resources you will need to perform your job effectively. If you need assistance or guidance, at any point in time, please do not hesitate to contact your Supervisor or the Human Resources Department. .

Once again, welcome to the Town of Branford. We are glad to have you with us.

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James B. Cosgrove  
First Selectman

## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The Employee Handbook (hereinafter “Employee Handbook or Handbook”) applies to all employees of the Town of Branford (“Town”). *However, for **employees whose terms and conditions of employment are either covered by a collective bargaining agreement or an individual employment contract, this Handbook is not intended to supersede any provision of their respective collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between a provision of this Handbook and a provision of an applicable collective bargaining agreement or an individual employment contract, the bargaining agreement or the individual employment contract shall apply.***

This Handbook is not intended to create an express or implied contract. This Handbook is designed to acquaint you with the Town and to provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting your employment. You should read, understand and comply with all provisions of this Handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by the Town of Branford to benefit employees. One of our objectives is to provide a work environment that is conducive to both personal and professional growth.

The Employee Handbook supersedes any previous manual and/or verbal or written statements that may have been issued. Further, this Employee Handbook is not a contract of employment.

Employment is “**At-Will**”, which means that you may resign at any time without stating your reason or giving notice, or the Town of Branford may terminate employment at any time with or without cause or notice. The Town of Branford reserves the right to revise, delete and add to the provisions of this Handbook. All such revisions, deletions or additions must be in writing and must be signed by the First Selectman of the Town of Branford. No oral statements or representations can change the provisions of this Handbook.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or questions about policy. Where changes can be anticipated in advance, the Town of Branford will attempt to notify employees of such changes.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Employee Handbook, please ask the Director of Human Resources or his/her designee.

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

The Town of Branford does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, real or perceived disability or handicap, status as a veteran, sexual orientation, disability or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. In addition, the Town of Branford complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations or ordinances governing non-discrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment including policies and procedures relating to recruitment and hiring, compensation, working conditions, benefits and termination from employment. .

### **Affirmative Action**

The Town of Branford will continue to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants and employees are treated without regard to race, color, creed, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation or preference, gender identity, physical or mental disability, domestic violence, or national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, mental disorder (present or past history thereof), age, physical disability (not limited to blindness), marital status, or criminal record. The actions covered by this policy include, but are not limited to, employment, promotion, demotion, transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff, termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeships. The Town of Branford will continue to make good faith efforts to comply with all federal and state laws and policies which speak to equal employment opportunity.

Employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate Supervisor/Department Head or the Director of Human Resources. If at any time you do not feel a concern you have about discrimination has been adequately addressed, you should bring your concern directly to the attention of the First Selectman. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Americans with Disabilities Policy Statement**

The Town of Branford is committed to complying with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as with applicable state law that requires the Town to make reasonable accommodation in its workplace for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you believe you need an accommodation to perform the essential function of your assigned job, please contact the Human Resources Department. All medical information and records concerning disabilities or an ADA accommodation are strictly confidential.

## **IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE**

The Town of Branford is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States. The Town does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin. In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, 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. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with the Town of Branford within the past three years, or if their previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid.

Employees with questions or seeking more information on immigration law issues should contact the Human Resources Department.

## **EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES**

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform practices regarding the employment of relatives by the Town of Branford. The intent of this policy is to prevent the appearance of partiality in the hiring, promotion, demotion, reassignment, and transfer of employees, thereby limiting the negative effect on morale and the appearance of impropriety. Pre-existing employment relationships falling within the purview of this policy will be permitted to continue; however, that exception does not apply to promotions, reassignments, and transfers after the effective date of this policy.

For the purpose of this policy, immediate relatives include: parents, grandparents, spouses, partners in a Civil Union or a domestic partner, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, mothers-in-law or any other in law relationship; aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, first cousins, and adopted and step family members.

All applicants for employment are required to disclose the names of relatives currently employed by the Town of Branford, as indicated on the employment application. Current employees of the Town are required to disclose any prohibited employment relationship that may be created due to the hiring, promotion, demotion, reassignment, or transfer of an employee or elected official. Failure of employee to provide this information maybe ground for discipline, up to and including discharge.

Employees who become immediate relatives may continue employment as long as it does not involve any of the situations above. If one of the situations outlined above should occur, the employee must disclose it to Human Resources and attempts will be made to find a suitable position within the Town of Branford to which one of the employees will transfer if qualified for the position. If employees become immediate family members the Town will make reasonable efforts to transfer one of the employees to minimize problems of supervision, safety, security or morale. If accommodations of this nature are not feasible, the employees will be permitted to determine which of them will resign. If the employees cannot make a decision, the Director of Human Resources in consultation with the appropriate Department Head, will decide in its sole discretion who will remain employed.



The hiring supervisor/Department Head is responsible for ensuring policy compliance. The Director of Human Resources must be informed of any changes relating to this policy in a timely manner.

### **EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS**

The Town of Branford relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in the Town of Branford's exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

### **EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS**

It is the intent of the Town to clarify the employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Accordingly, the right to terminate the "At-Will" employment relationship at any time is retained by both the employee and the Town.

**Employee:** A person who receives wages from the Town.

**Introductory Employee:** A newly-hired person who has not yet successfully completed ninety (90) calendar days of uninterrupted employment in his or her position or who, in the Town's determination, has not yet demonstrated sufficient competency in the performance of his or her job duties. Successful completion of the Introductory Period does not guarantee continued employment and does not change the At-Will nature of the employment relationship.

**Exempt Employees:** Employees who are not subject to the overtime provisions of wage and hour laws. These employees have qualified for exemption under the law as executive, administrative or professional employees and are paid on a salary basis.

**Non-Exempt Employees:** Employees who are compensated hourly and who are eligible for overtime as provided in wage and hour laws.

*In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one of the following classifications of employees:*

**Regular Full-Time:** This is an employee who regularly works thirty five (35) or more hours weekly. Regular Full-Time employees are eligible for all Town benefits.

**Regular Part-Time:** After successfully completing the Introductory Period, this employee is regularly scheduled to work between ten (10) and thirty-four (34) hours weekly. However, can not exceed nineteen (19) hours weekly. These employees are not eligible to receive all Town benefits, but will receive all benefits required by law such as CT Paid Sick Leave, some paid holidays, FICA, and unemployment and workers compensation insurances.

**Part-Time Hourly:** This employee status generally works less than eleven (11) hours per week. These employees are not eligible to receive all Town benefits, except those required by law such as CT Paid Sick Leave, FICA, unemployment and workers compensation insurances.

**Seasonal Hourly:** Seasonal employees are those individuals who are employed for limited duration assignments, generally four (4) months or less, or to assist in the completion of a specific project or assignments. These employees are not eligible to receive Town benefits except those required by law such as CT Paid Sick Leave, FICA, and unemployment and workers compensation insurances.

**Temporary:** Temporary employees are those individuals who are employed to fill-in for either regular full-time or regular part-time employees who are absent from work. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits except those as required by law.

## **EMPLOYEE POLICIES**

### **Introductory Period**

All new and rehired employees are considered to be in an Introductory Period for a period of ninety (90) calendar days from their date of hire. Current employees who are transferred or promoted to a new position are also considered to be in an Introductory Period for a period of ninety (90) calendar days from their date of hire or promotion. The Introductory Period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations. The Town uses this period to evaluate employee capabilities, work habits, and overall performance. Either the employee or the Town may end the employment relationship At-Will at any time during or after the introductory period, with or without cause or advance notice.

Any significant absence, as determined by the Town, will automatically extend the Introductory Period by the length of the absence. The Town also reserves the right to extend an employee's Introductory Period at its discretion.

Successful completion of the Introductory Period does not guarantee continued employment and does not change the At-Will nature of the employment relationship.

## **New Employee Orientation**

All new employees are required to attend a new employee orientation session. Orientation is designed to welcome new employees, acquaint them with policies and information important to working at the Town of Branford and ensure that each employee is properly registered for payroll and benefits. In addition, all new employees are required to complete an I-9 form issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services attesting to his/her legal status. Verifying an individual's legal status to work in the United States requires proof of both the individual's identity and authorization to work. A newly hired employee is required to bring this identification on his/her first day of employment.

## **Outside Employment**

In order to protect the Town of Branford's interests, we must ensure that any outside employment undertaken by a Town employee does not conflict with his or her obligation to the Town. Outside employment is acceptable when: the activities related to the employment do not involve work time, Town equipment or facilities; the employee does not approach co-workers to buy products or services; the employee maintains high work performance standards and the outside employment does not conflict with the employee's obligation or reflect negatively upon the Town. If any of these criteria are not met, the outside employment is unacceptable. Employees who wish to undertake outside employment must receive prior written approval from the Director of Human Resources.

Any employee who violates this procedure shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

## **Performance Evaluations**

Department Heads and employees are encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on a regular basis. After successful completion of the Introductory Period, employees are evaluated on an annual basis.

## **Personal Appearance**

It is important that all employees maintain a personal appearance so as to project a professional image on behalf of the Town of Branford. Employees are expected to dress and groom themselves in accordance with accepted social and business standards. Employees should apply standards of good judgment when choosing work attire. Extreme fads in dress or grooming, wearing revealing clothing or clothing displaying offensive slogans is inappropriate and unacceptable.

The Town reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of an employee's dress and appearance. An employee who comes to work dressed or groomed inappropriately for the workplace, may be asked to leave the workplace until he or she is properly attired or

groomed. In addition, employees who violate these standards may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Office Security**

The Town requests that employees not leave valuables exposed during the day and remove all valuables overnight and on weekends. The Town is not responsible for the loss or damage of employees' personal belongings. Employees should refrain from bringing unnecessary personal items to work. If an employee loses or breaks personal items during the performance of the duties of his/her job, the Town will not replace or reimburse the employee.

Before borrowing any piece of equipment from another employee's work area, please ask permission. Employees who observe any suspicious or unusual activity are asked to report such activity to the Director of Human Resources.

### **Use of Equipment**

Equipment essential in accomplishing job duties is expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using Town property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Employees should notify their supervisor if any equipment or machines which appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damage, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others. Employees should not attempt to repair damaged equipment on their own.

### **Use of Town Vehicles**

Employees provided with the use of a Town vehicle are not permitted to use the vehicle for personal reasons outside of the employee's working hours. Town vehicles shall be used solely in the performance of Town business unless otherwise specified in an employment contract.

### **Expense Reimbursement (Airline, Bus, Car Rentals, Meals and Lodging)**

The Town will reimburse employees for mileage for work-related travel at an approved IRS mileage reimbursement rate. Mileage expenses will be reimbursed from the business starting point to the destination and from the destination back to the starting point. Reimbursements of mileage expenses will be calculated by the use of Map Quest. Tolls and /or parking receipts can be submitted with the Mileage requests. Employees should log their daily trips on the Mileage Reimbursement form and submit it to the Finance Department on a monthly basis, however no request should be submitted less than quarterly.

Other work-related expenses will be reimbursed by the Town, provided the expenses are approved by their Department Head or First Selectman, reasonable and an expense reimbursement form accompanied by a receipt is promptly submitted to the Finance Department but no later than 60 days from the date of the expense. All reimbursed requests must include a receipt and must be approved by the Department Head or First Selectman who may reduce the amount of the request if they think the amount requested is excessive or unreasonable.

### **Gifts and Gratuities**

Employees are prohibited from directly or indirectly soliciting or accepting any gift, loan or any item or service having monetary value from any person or company that is seeking to conduct or currently conducting business with the Town. (Please refer to the Code of the Town of Branford, Chapter 38 Code of Ethics)

### **Cellular Phone Usage**

Cell phones are provided to certain Town employees for business purposes only. Cell phones should not be used if lower cost alternatives are available. Accordingly, they should not be used in the office or for lengthy conference calls. The Town may require reimbursement for personal use of the Town's cell phone.

Employees are not permitted to use personal cell phones during work time except in the case of an emergency. Employees are free to use personal cell phones during their break time or other non-working time.

Cell phones may not be used for Town business while driving a vehicle. If you must use a cell phone for Town business while the driving a vehicle, come to a complete stop before doing so.

### **Use of Telephone and Mail Systems and Telephone Monitoring**

Personal use of Town-owned telephones for long-distance and toll calls is not permitted. Employees should limit the use of Town telephones when making personal calls.

The Town reserves the right to monitor all phone calls made from Town telephones without further notice to employees. Employees should not expect privacy while using the Town's telephones, including its cellular phones.

The use of Town-paid postage for personal business is not permitted.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

The Town of Branford expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on the Town. When employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as

scheduled, they must notify their supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness is disruptive. Either may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees who are absent from work for three (3) consecutive workdays without notifying their supervisor or Department Head will be considered to have voluntarily resigned from their employment with the Town.

## **EMPLOYEE INFORMATION**

### **Access to Personnel Files**

The Town maintains a "personnel file" on each employee which may be in hard copy or electronic. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's job application, resume, records of training, rate of pay and other employment records. Personnel files are the property of the Town and access to the information they contain is generally restricted. However, information may be disclosed to permit the Town to comply with legal obligations, including requests made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Employees who wish to review their personnel file should make a written request to the Human Resources Department.

### **Employee Data Changes**

Each employee is responsible for notifying the Human Resources Department of any changes in personal data. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, legal name changes, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, insurance beneficiaries, and other such information should be accurate and current at all times. Inaccuracies may prevent employees from receiving important correspondence or communications. If any personnel data has changed, employees must notify the Human Resources Department as soon as possible. Employees who wish to resign from their employment must notify in writing to their supervisor, department head and Human Resources Department as soon as possible, but no later than 2 weeks prior to the departure date.

## **ANTI- HARASSMENT**

The Town of Branford is committed to a collegial work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere. The Town of Branford prohibits discriminatory practice, including harassment, and promotes equal opportunities.

It is the policy of the Town that employment shall be based on merit, qualifications, and competence. Further, employment decisions shall be made without regard to an applicant's race, color, age, sex, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, marital status,

sexual orientation or preference, gender identity, physical or mental disability, status as a victim of domestic violence, sex offenses, or stalking, or any other basis prohibited by local, state or federal law. This policy governs all areas of employment, including hiring, compensation, training, apprenticeship, upgrading, downgrading, transfer, assignment, discipline, discharge and layoff.

The Human Resources Department has overall responsibility for this policy and maintain reporting and monitoring procedures. Any questions, concerns, and any incident or complaint of harassment or discrimination should be referred to the Director of Human Resources.

### **Individuals Covered Under the Policy**

This policy applies to all personnel whether related to conduct engaged in by a fellow co-worker, supervisor, department head, or someone not directly connected to the Firm (e.g. an outside vendor, consultant, client or customer).

This policy also applies to interns, contractors, and persons conducting business with the Town of Branford.

### **Definition of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state, and local laws. Sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and the status of being transgender.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances, subtle or overt requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes, innuendoes, advances or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling, touching, pinching, assault, coerced sexual acts, or suggestive, insulting, or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

### **Definitions of Harassment**

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, alienage or citizenship status, marital status, creed, genetic predisposition or carrier status, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by law, and the (1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; (2) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an

individual's work performance; or (3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

This kind of behavior is unacceptable at the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace such as during meetings with customer or town residents, business trips, and other business social events.

### **Consenting Relationships**

It is also essential to understand that consenting romantic and sexual relationships between management, supervisory and co-workers may lead to unforeseen complications. The respect and trust accorded a more senior/supervisory person by a lower-level position, as well as the power held by that person in evaluating or otherwise supervising lower-level position, could diminish the extent to which the lower level person really feels free to choose. All personnel should be aware of the risks associated with consensual relationships. If a consensual relationship is brought to management the Director of Human Resources in consultation with the department head, if appropriate, may reassign to change the reporting functions or roles of parties engaged in such relationship to avoid potential problems in this regard.

### **Reporting an Incident of Discrimination or Harassment**

The Town of Branford encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment, regardless of the identity or position of the individuals in question. Reports of any harassment, sexual or otherwise, may be made verbally or in writing. Individuals who believe they have been the victims of discrimination or harassment should bring their concerns to the Director of Human Resources and/or the First Selectman.

In addition, the Town of Branford, encourages individuals who believe they are being harassed to promptly advise the offender that this or her behavior is unwelcome and request that it be stopped. This action alone may solve the problem. The Town of Branford recognizes, however, that it is not necessary for an individual to talk directly with the offender if that individual feels uncomfortable doing so.

### **Supervisor Responsibility**

All supervisory and managerial personnel, including elected personnel, who receive a complaint or information about suspected harassment, sexual or otherwise, observe what may be harassing behavior or for any reason suspect that harassment is occurring, **are required** to bring their concerns to the Director of Human Resources or in his/her absence the First Selectman.

In addition to being subject to discipline if they engaged in harassing conduct themselves, supervisors and managers will be subject to discipline for failing to report suspected harassment or otherwise knowingly allowing harassment to continue.



## **Complaint Procedure**

### **a. Notifications of Appropriate Staff**

As noted above, individuals who believe they have been the victims of discrimination or harassment or believe they have witnessed discrimination or harassment should bring their concerns to their Supervisor/Department Head, Director of Human Resources, or the First Selectman.

### **b. Timeliness in Reporting Harassment or Discrimination**

The Town of Branford encourages the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken before relationships become irreparably strained. Therefore, while no fixed reporting period has been established, early reporting and intervention has proved to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of discrimination and harassment.

### **c. Investigatory Process**

All reported allegations of discrimination or harassment will be investigated promptly and confidentially. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, when necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have relevant knowledge. The complaining party will be told the result of the investigation.

### **d. Confidentiality**

The complaint and investigation will be handled with sensitivity, and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process, to the extent practical under the circumstances to ensure that all concerns are addressed in an appropriate manner.

### **e. Protection Against Retaliation**

Retaliation against an individual for reporting discrimination or harassment or assisting in providing information relevant to a claim of discrimination or harassment is unlawful and a serious violation of this policy. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated.

### **f. Responsive Action**

Misconduct constituting discrimination or harassment will be dealt with appropriately. Responsive action may include, for example, training, referral to counseling and disciplinary action such as warnings, reprimands, withholding a promotion or pay increase, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay, compensation adjustments, or termination as the Town of Branford may believe appropriate under the circumstance. Absent special circumstances, the reassignment of the complainant will not be an

acceptable corrective action unless the complainant agrees and wants to be transferred or reassigned.

g. Records of Complaint and Investigation

The Director of Human Resources will maintain a written record of each formal complaint, and how it was investigated and resolved. Written records will be maintained in confidence to the extent practical and appropriate by the Director of Human Resources.

Aside from the Town's internal process, employees may also choose to pursue legal remedies with federal, state and local authorities.

The Town of Branford has developed this policy to ensure that all of its personnel can work in an environment free from discrimination and harassment. The Town of Branford will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all personnel are familiar with this policy and are aware that any complaint received will be investigated and resolved appropriately.

## **HOURS OF WORK AND TIME RECORDS**

### **Working Hours**

The normal work schedule is Monday through Friday with an unpaid lunch break, except as otherwise established by the Department Head in accordance with the needs of the department. The Town, at its sole discretion, reserves the right at any time to modify work hours. Employees may be required to work additional hours or days in order to meet the needs of their department and the Town.

Employees of the Town are expected to devote all work time to Town business and may not perform personal, non-work related business, or supplemental tasks while being paid by the Town.

### **Overtime**

When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours, non-exempt employees may be scheduled to work overtime. All overtime must be authorized in advance by the First Selectman or his designee. Working overtime without prior authorization may result in disciplinary action. Non-exempt employees will be compensated for all overtime hours worked in accordance with state and federal law. Exempt employees are expected to work as much of each workday as is necessary to complete their job responsibilities.

The operating hours of all departments are established by the Board of Selectmen. The operating hours may vary by individual department based on the service requirements and the expectations of the public. Operating hours may include evening or weekend service, or

24 hour service for public safety departments. The public must be provided service throughout the established operating hours of each department.

All town employees have specific established working hours. For unaffiliated employees, the working hours are established by the First Selectman. In general, working hours should not be adjusted to meet the personal needs or preferences of employees. Employees working hours must be within the approved operating hours of their department.

Examples of such tasks or assignments include:

Required attendance at evening board or commission meetings (meeting time only) where the employee provides specific presentations or has assigned responsibilities;

Out of town meetings or conference recommended by the Department Head or First Selectman which exceed the normal work day hours;

Providing services to clients at scheduled hours during the evening or weekends;

Extraordinary projects with unusual time restraints;

Special situations with prior approval from the First Selectman.

### **Compensatory Time Policy**

Compensatory time is defined as time off granted to certain full time unaffiliated employees only for work performed during non-regular working hours which are immediately necessary to the operation of the Department or for specific projects and programs deemed necessary by the Department Head and/or First Selectman. No compensatory time will be granted for office work which should have been completed during the normal work week. Compensatory time is not the practice of taking time off for hours worked in excess of the normal work week to complete assigned tasks or normal work assignments. Working prior to, or after normal department work hours, or through all or part of the designated lunch hour, may not be used as justification for compensatory time off.

Executive Employees are legally exempt from overtime and are not entitled to compensatory time under this policy. Their compensation is based on the anticipation that their duties will normally equal or exceed 40 hours per week, and will include occasional evening and possible weekend work requirements.

Administrative and Professional Unaffiliated Employees are legally exempt from overtime. However, as a matter of Town of Branford policy, however and subject to change without notice, the administrative and professional employees listed below will be entitled to one hour of compensatory time-off for each hour actually worked, within the definition above, over and above their regular working hours, subject to the requirements below. The administrative and professional positions that are eligible for compensatory time are: **Clinical Director, Clinician, Clinical Intake Coordinator, Youth and Family**

## **Coordinator, Assistant Fire Chief, Assistant Director of Human Resources and Case Manager.**

Non-Exempt Unaffiliated Employees are legally not exempt from overtime, therefore they will be paid for the hours worked and if in excess of 40 hours a week be paid time and a half (1 ½). These are the Executive Administrative Assistant, and the Social Service Coordinator.

All earned overtime and compensatory time must be approved in advance within specific time parameters (e.g. up to 3 hours prior to overtime/compensatory time) by the department head or First Selectman;

Should overtime or compensatory time be approved for an evening meeting, only the time attending the meeting should be counted. Meal or waiting time should not be included, does not include non-exempt employees;

All earned compensatory time must be taken during the week earned; or during the following week. Under no circumstances may earned compensatory time be accumulated beyond the second week without the written approval of the Director of Human Resources or First Selectman. It is not the intent of this policy to supplement vacation with accumulated compensatory time.

All overtime and earned compensatory time, and utilized compensatory time, must be documented on the employee time record;

It is expected that compensatory time will be taken at times that minimize the negative impact on constituents and the public. The First Selectman and/or his designee has the prerogative to disapprove a request to take compensatory time when he/she thinks the department's services would be affected;

The use of compensatory time must be scheduled in advance, and approved by the First Selectman or his designee. It is not to be used as a justification for tardiness or early departure;

Under no circumstance should accumulated compensatory time exceed eight hours;

Compensatory time should be used in increments of two (2) hours, or the total accumulated compensatory hours, whichever is greater;

An employee cannot earn compensatory time while on a leave, compensatory time, workers compensation, sick leave etc...

### **Recording Time**

Federal and state laws require the Town of Branford to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. All non-exempt employees are

required to complete a timesheet each week, which is to include the start and end time of the workday and the start and end time for the employee's lunch period each day. Lunch periods are unpaid for non-exempt employees.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time report will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. It is the employee's responsibility to sign his or her timesheet to certify the accuracy of all time recorded.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

To ensure all usage of Town provided technology (computers, printers, phones, handheld devices, printers, etc.) are used for Town business only, treated with care and to affirm and adopt the State of Connecticut's policy regarding the proper retention of records for the Town of Branford and their availability to the public under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) laws.

All emails to and from town owned domains (i.e.; @branford-ct.gov, @brandfordfire.com, @branfordpolice.com) are archived and stored for a rolling period of two years by our email retention appliance. As such they are eligible for any FOIA requests unless otherwise protected or exempt pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes or federal laws. Additionally, toll bills for both desktop and cell based phones including text messaging, are available under FOIA regulations.

(The Office of the Public Records Administrator and State Archives issues a statement under authority granted it by Sections 11-8, 11-8a and 7-109 of the **Connecticut General Statutes** on retention.)

Desktop computers and or laptops will be provided with a current copy of the Windows operating system and Microsoft Office. Certain departments will receive specific software related to tasks that are applicable to an employee. Employees will also receive access to shared department drives and remote logins where applicable. Additional software that is needed can be installed upon request for an employee as requested to the IT department by the Supervisor/Department Head of said employee.

The IT staff reserves the right to use remote access software and will remove any applications that have not been approved for installation on Town owned desktops, laptops cell phones, tablets and all other electronic devices.

Town employees are instructed to save their files in their personal "H" drive which is stored on our Users' File server and backed up nightly. The IT department will not be responsible for files that are lost or damaged when stored incorrectly to the local hard disk or desktop.

Internet usage will be provided and is for work related tasks. The Town of Branford uses a web filtering service and any website which has been deemed inappropriate (i.e.: pornographic, racial), will be blocked. Certain departments who need specific unfiltered web access for their tasks will be granted such after it is signed off by The Director of Technology. The IT department reserves the right to view web traffic by employees if a virus or suspicious activity is detected or as directed by an employee's Supervisor or Department Head.

### **Public Records and Freedom Of Information (FOIA)**

**Any recorded data or information** relating to the conduct of the public's business, prepared, owned, used, or received by a public agency, whether such data or information be handwritten, typed, tape-recorded, printed, Photostatted, photographed or **recorded by any method, is subject to disclosure under FOIA unless otherwise protected or exempt from C.G.S. or federal law.** Town assets such as computers, phones, cell phones, etc. are subject to disclosure under these FOIA regulations.

### **Confidentiality of E-mail**

electronically transmitted information may travel though many networks, and many different computer connections. Unless encrypted, this information is not secure, and should not be considered private. Users of email are advised of the risk involved in using e-mail to deal with confidential issues.

Users must be aware of all applicable statutory or regulatory requirements that would prohibit the disclosure of certain information in any format. Of special concern is the confidentiality of individually identifiable health and personnel information. Users must be aware of this when transmitting this information by any method of communication, including e-mail, voice, or written communications.

### **Retention and Deletion of emails from the Outlook email user's account**

Emails not stored in a specified folder will be deleted from the user's email client (Outlook) according to the following schedule (please remember emails/documents deleted are still stored and available on our archive appliance for up to 2 years of their posted date.)

1. Items placed in the "Deleted Items" folder will be **deleted after one week.**
2. Items placed in the "Junk E-Mail/Trash" folder will be **deleted after one week.**
3. "Sent Items" will be deleted **after a month from receipt.**
4. "Inbox" emails will be deleted **after a month from receipt.**

### **Voice Mail**

Voice mail is considered a type of electronic mail communication. In this case, the message is recorded in an audible rather than a visible format. Voice mail messages stored from phone to email may also be reviewed in accordance with FOIA regulations.

### **Written/Fax Based Correspondence and Attachments**

All correspondence, faxes and attachments relating to Town business are to be scanned and stored in the Town's electronic storage system (Smart Search) when it is important to have a permanent record of the correspondence. At a minimum the indexing for the system will contain the following information; Source Department, Subject, Addressee (last name) and

Date of Correspondence. An index of this system is available and employees will be trained on usage as needed.

### **User Privileges and Expiry**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Privileges</b>	<b>Expiry</b>
Regular Full-Time Employee, Part-Time Employee and Intern with need for network access.	Town owned computer, electronic devices with approved software applications, account for email and internet browsing. Access to shared work server(s) and main shared application server(s). Access to appropriate application software with the level of access determined by the “application owner.”	Date of termination of employment.

The above privileges represent the allowable minimums. The Department Head or Acting Department Head and the Director of Information Technology must approve any additional privileges. Extension of privileges beyond the expiry date must also be approved by the Director of Human Resources. All extensions of expiry must be of limited duration, with a clearly indicated term and end date. The Department Head or acting Department Head is responsible for making sure all expiries are enforced. The Director of Human Resources is responsible for letting the Director of Information Technology know of all new hires, retirees or terminations and who will need system access and for what period of time.

A list of users and their access rights will be maintained by the IT Department. Department Heads are responsible for the accuracy of the application “permissions” for those applications they “own”.

### **Town’s Website and Priority of Use**

The Information Technology Director has the responsibility for the design, standards and consistency in format, look and availability of the Town’s website. Department Heads are individually responsible for the accuracy and timeliness of all content pertaining to their department.

Departments are required to post such items as; agendas, minutes and meeting notices in a timely and legal matter in the Town Clerk’s office as well as on the web when appropriate.

## **PAYROLL**

### **Paydays**

All employees are generally paid every other Thursday although some union contracts may require weekly payments. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed

through the end of the previous payroll period. In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a holiday, employees will receive pay on the last day of work before the regularly scheduled payday. If a regular payday falls during an employee's vacation, the employee's paycheck will be available upon his/her return from vacation.

Employees may choose to have their pay directly deposited into a designated account with their financial institution(s). Employees who choose direct deposit will receive an itemized statement of wages on paydays.

### **Error in Pay**

Every effort is made to avoid errors in employees' paychecks. Employees who believe an error has been made, should immediately inform the Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Department will take the necessary steps to research the problem and to assure that any necessary correction is made promptly. Corrections needed will be discussed with the employee and corrected on the upcoming payroll per legal requirements.

### **Pay Deductions**

The law requires that the Town of Branford make certain deductions from every employee's wages. Among these deductions are applicable federal and state income taxes. The Town must deduct Social Security taxes on each employee's earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security "wage base." The Town matches the amount of Social Security taxes paid by each employee.

The Town of Branford offers programs and benefits beyond those required by law. In some instances, the cost of these programs will be deducted from the employee's compensation.

Employees who have questions concerning the deductions made from their paycheck or how these deductions were calculated, should contact the Human Resources Department.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

Eligible employees are provided a variety of benefits. A number of the programs (such as Social Security, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law. Benefit eligibility is dependent upon several factors, including length of service and employee classification. Employees should contact the Human Resources Department for information on benefit eligibility.

### **Life Insurance Benefits**

Regular full-time employees are eligible for coverage under the Town's group life insurance policy. Currently, the Town pays the full cost of the premium for each eligible employee.



## **Medical Insurance Benefits**

Regular full-time employees and their dependents are eligible for insurance benefits in accordance with the terms of each plan. Both the Town and the employee pay a portion of the insurance premium. The Town determines the employee's portion of the insurance premium on a yearly basis. The Town may, in its sole discretion, change insurance coverage or the identity of insurance companies at any time as well as contributions by employees and co-pay provisions. Employees should speak with the Human Resources Department for eligibility requirements, premium share information and other plan details.

## **Retirement Plan**

Regular full-time employees are eligible to participate in the Connecticut Municipal Employee Retirement System ("CMERS"). Employees should speak with the Human Resources Department for eligibility requirements and other plan details.

## **Short Term Disability Policy**

Effective the first day of your start date, all full time employees (those scheduled to work 30 or more hours a week) are eligible to participate in the Town of Branford's Sun Life Insurance Short Term Disability program. (Some positions require a waiting period longer than one day. See the STD Summary Plan Description for specific information).

### **What is defined as Short Term Disability?**

Any eligible employee who is out of the office for more than 72 hours due to their own illness and who is not receiving any paid compensation such as sick time, personal time, workers compensation, vacation or compensatory time, may apply for Short Term Disability. Short term disability runs concurrently with paid time off or family medical leave if the illness is for more than 72 hours and is due to the employee's illness.

### **How do I File for Short Term Disability?**

You should contact the Human Resources department to request a form which will need to be completed by you and your Doctor stating the illness, the start date of the illness, the medical reasons you can work and your expected return date. When you send the completed disability form to Sun Life they will review it to confirm that your disability is approved. Once approved Sun Life will send you \$80 per week for the length of the approved disability period. The disability period can extend for 26 weeks.

## **Vacation**

The Town of Branford vacation policy for unaffiliated employees is as follows:

**Unaffiliated Executive With & Without Contracts**

Director of Human Resources, Director of Human Services, Director of Information Technology, Director of Parks & Recreation, Director of Public Works/Solid Waste & Recycling, Superintendent of Wastewater Treatment Plant, Director of Finance, Assistant Fire Chief, Fire Chief, Deputy Police Chief, Chief of Police.

During the first fiscal year of employment and upon completion of the first ninety (90) calendar days of employment, the employee will earn the lump sum equivalent of 1.25 days per month that are remaining in the fiscal year. On the first July 1 after hire, the employee will be granted fifteen (15) vacation days. On the second July 1 after hire, and each July 1 thereafter, the employee will be granted twenty-five (25) vacation days.

<b>NEW HIRES HIRED IN:</b>	<b>(8)EARN ON 91<sup>ST</sup> CALENDAR DAY:</b>	<b>(7.5) EARN ON 91<sup>ST</sup> CALENDAR DAY:</b>
July	90 hours	84.375 hours
August	80 hours	75 hours
September	70 hours	65.625 hours
October	60 hours	56.25 hours
November	50 hours	46.875 hours
December	40 hours	37.5 hours
January	30 hours	28.125 hours
February	20 hours	18.75 hours
March	10 hours	9.375 hours
April - June	0 hours	0 hours

*Example: An employee hired on October 1, 2019 will be granted the sum of 1.25 days per month through June 30, 2020 (60 hours) on 12/30/2019.*

*On July 1, 2020 the employee will earn fifteen (15) days. On July 1, 2021 and each July 1 after, the employee will earn twenty-five (25) days.*

**Unaffiliated Professionals & Support Employees**

Clinical Director, Clinicians, Youth & Family Coordinator, Clinical Intake Coordinator, Case Manager (BCC), Assistant Human Resources Director, Executive Administrative Assistants, Social Services Coordinator.

During the first fiscal year of employment and upon completion of the first ninety (90) calendar days of employment, the employee will earn the lump sum equivalent of 1.25 vacation days per month that are remaining in the fiscal year. On July 1, after hire, the employee will be granted fifteen (15) vacation days.

<b>NEW HIRES HIRED IN:</b>	<b>EARN ON 91<sup>ST</sup> CALENDAR DAY:</b>
July	90 hours
August	80 hours
September	70 hours
October	60 hours

November	50 hours
December	40 hours
January	30 hours
February	20 hours
March	10 hours
April - June	0 hours

On July 1 of the fiscal year that the employee will complete 5 years of service, vacation days will be earned as follows:

YEAR	VACATION DAYS
5	17
10	20
15	25

**Note: Vacation is intended to provide rest and relaxation for the employee and the health benefit it provides is in the best interest of both the employee and Town of Branford.**

**Vacation Accrual & Carryover**

All employees must take all of the basic ten (10) days of vacation by June 30 of the fiscal year earned. Carrying over any of the basic ten (10) days must be due to special circumstances and approved by the First Selectman or Director of Human Resources. All basic vacation approved for carry over must be taken by the following August 31 unless the employee is disabled.

Up to five (5) days of accrued vacation, up to a total of twenty-five (25) accrued vacation days may be carried over into the next fiscal year. Any days in excess of five (5) accrued vacation days must be due to special circumstances and must be approved, in writing, by either the First Selectman or the Director of Human Resources. Accrued vacation days carried over into the next fiscal year in excess of five (5) must be taken during that fiscal year unless the employee is otherwise incapacitated and is unable to take vacation time.

Accrued vacation days, not to exceed twenty five (25) days, will be paid at the employee's current compensation rate on the time of employment separation by retirement or resignation, but may be subject to adjustment.

**Use of Vacation**

All requests for vacation must be in writing and approved by the First Selectman or his designee two (2) days prior to actual leave.

### **Break in Service**

In determining an employee's length of service for vacation benefit purposes, employees who have left Town service, but subsequently returned to full-time Town employment may resume the same vacation eligibility when they ended their employment if they were rehired by the Town less than a year from their departure.

### **Transfers**

An employee who transfers between departments shall retain all accrued vacation credit.

### **Vacation Scheduling**

The First Selectman or his designee will determine the annual vacation schedule, taking into consideration the business needs and work demands of the department as well as the desire of employees for specific vacation leave. A conflict in scheduling vacation leave among multiple employees will be resolved by the First Selectman or his designee by giving preference to the employee(s) with the longest length of service, provided adequate notice is given by the senior employee.

### **Vacation as Sick Leave**

Vacation time may be used by employees in addition to, or in lieu of sick leave, with the approval of the First Selectman or Director of Human Resources

### **Holiday during Vacation**

If a holiday occurs during an employee's vacation period the employee will be paid holiday pay for the day and not vacation pay.

### **Illness during Vacation**

An employee who becomes ill while on vacation may charge such illness time to sick leave rather than vacation. If the illness exceeds three (3) normal work days, the employee must contact the First Selectman or his designee or the Town Human Resources Department to report the illness and the intention of utilizing sick leave.

Note: The First Selectman or his designee may grant exceptions to the vacation policy and/or may modify the policy.

### **Sick Leave**

Regular full-time employees will accrue one (1) day of sick leave per month for a total of twelve (12) days of sick leave per year. Sick leave may be carried over from year to year to a maximum accumulation of seventy (70) days.

Regular part-time employees will earn one sick hour for every 40 hours worked. The maximum number of sick hours can be accumulated to forty (40 hours).

Sick time may be taken under the following circumstances:

- a. Illness of the employee that prevents the employee from attending work.
- b. Medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of normal working hours.
- c. Illness of a member of the employee's immediate family that requires the attention of the employee. "Immediate family" shall mean any person residing in the employee's household.

Employees, whose positions do not require a relief employee, must notify their supervisor of the reason for their absence as soon as possible, but no later than one (1) hour after the start of their scheduled shift, on each the day of the absence. Employees, whose positions do require a relief employee, must notify their supervisor of the reason for their absence as soon as possible, but no later than one (1) hour prior to the start of their scheduled shift, on each the day of the absence.

Employees who are absent due to their own, or a family member's, illness may be required to submit a medical certificate from a licensed physician.

Abuse of sick leave or false sick leave claims may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Regular full-time employees shall be eligible for sick leave with pay upon satisfactory completion of the employee's introductory period and shall be credited with sick leave from date of employment. Sick leave shall be accrued at a rate of one (1) day per month, twelve (12) days per year, to a maximum accumulation of seventy (70) days. A regular full-time employee, upon retirement or death, who has accumulated and maintained the maximum of seventy (70) days for one (1) year at time of retirement or death shall receive twenty (20) days severance pay in a lump sum within two (2) months. No such payment shall be made to regular full-time employees who terminate or are terminated by the Town of Branford. Employees hired after January 1, 2002 are not eligible for a payout.

Sick leave shall not be considered a privilege that a regular full-time employee may use at his/her discretion, but rather shall be used only for the following purposes:

1. Personal illness, physical incapacity or non-compensable bodily injury or disease.
2. Enforced quarantine in accordance with public health regulations
3. To meet medical and dental appointments only when an employee has made reasonable efforts to secure such appointments outside of his/her normal working hours and provided the Department Head is notified at least one (1) day in advance of the day on which the absence occurs.

On the first day of an absence from work the regular full-time employee must report to his/her Department Head, no later than one (1) hour after the beginning of his/her scheduled work assignment, except where a relief employee is required, such report must be made at least one (1) hour prior to the beginning of his/her scheduled work assignment. On the first day of an absence from work, a Department Head must report to either the First Selectman or the Human Resource Department , as determined by the Town, no later than one (1) hour after the beginning of his/her scheduled work assignment,

The Director of Human Resources or her/his designee may require proof for authorized sick leave. In the judgment of the Director of Human Resources or his/her designee, proof of sick leave may include a doctor's certificate or other proof from the employee's physician indicating the duration of the absence. The Town may investigate any absence for which sick leave is requested.

Abuse of sick leave will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **Personal Days**

### **Unaffiliated Executive Employees**

The list of full-time unaffiliated positions set forth below may request to exchange three (3) days of sick leave for three (3) days of personal time each fiscal year. Such requests shall be made in writing to the Director of Human Resources or his/her designee.

The list of full-time unaffiliated positions set forth below in addition to the exchange of three (3) sick leave for three (3) days of personal time each fiscal year will also be entitled to two (2) personal leave days per fiscal year. Personal leave days are not cumulative, must be taken within the fiscal year and must be approved by the Department Head and the Director of Human Resources or his/her designee.

Director of Human Resources

Chief of Police (written agreement personal days not addressed must be with approval of First Selectman or his/her designee)

Director of Park and Recreation

Director of Public Works/Solid Waste and Recycling

Superintendent of Wastewater Treatment Plant

Director of Human Services

Director of Information Technology

### **Unaffiliated Executive Employees with Contracts**

The list of full-time unaffiliated positions with written employment contracts shall be entitled to personal leave days in each fiscal years as addressed in their written agreements.

### **Unaffiliated Professional and Administrative Employees**

The list of full-time unaffiliated positions as set forth below may request to exchange three (3) days of sick leave for three (3) days of personal time each fiscal year. Such requests shall be made in writing to the Director of Human Resources or his/her designee.

Clinical Director  
Clinician  
Clinical Intake Coordinator  
Youth and Family Coordinator/Clinician  
Case Manager  
Administrative/Executive Assistant  
Assistant Human Resources Director  
Social Services Coordinator

### **Bereavement**

Regular full-time employees shall be granted up to three (3) days of paid bereavement time or the equivalent in hours if the work day is more than 8 hours in one day, for the death of the employee's spouse, child, parent, sibling, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law or brother-in-law and one (1) day of paid bereavement time for the death of a grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew. Extended leave may be granted for special cases with the approval of the First Selectman or his designee. Employees requesting bereavement leave may be required to provide proof of death and relationship to the deceased.

### **Holidays**

The Town of Branford observes twelve (12) full-day holidays each calendar year and two (2) half-day holidays per year. Regular full-time employees are eligible to receive paid time of eight (8) hours for each holiday or the number of hours they are normally scheduled to work not to exceed 8 hours a day. Regular part-time employees are eligible to receive payment, in the amount of four (4) hours, for each of the twelve (12) full-day holidays.

The Town observes the following holidays each year:

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King Day  
President's Day  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Columbus Day

Veterans' Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
The Day after Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Eve Day (1/2 day)  
Christmas Day  
New Year's Eve Day (1/2 day)

Holidays occurring on Saturday are normally observed the preceding Friday, and those occurring on Sunday are normally observed the following Monday.

Non-Exempt full-time employees who are required to work on a Town holiday will be paid at one and one-half (1 ½) times their regular rate of pay for the hours worked on the holiday.

The Town reserves the right to grant additional holidays or paid days off at its discretion.

### **Workers Compensation and Injury Pay**

The Town of Branford provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers certain injuries and illnesses arising out of and in the course of employment. It is the responsibility of every employee to report all accidents, incidents and occupational illnesses immediately to their Supervisor/Department Head. Supervisors/Department Heads are required to complete an Employee Injury Report and contact the Human Resources Department the same day, if possible. In addition, an accident investigation will take place to determine the cause of the accident and take steps to prevent similar accidents or injuries in the future. The Town's Safety Committee will assist in this process.

The Town provides regular full-time employees with supplemental pay during the employee's leave of absence for a work-related injury which is covered by workers' compensation. The supplemental pay provided by the Town is the employee's regular rate of pay minus payments made to the employee through the workers' compensation insurance. Workers' compensation will be supplemented for a period of time not to exceed six (6) months from the date of an injury. However, if it is determined at any time during the employee's absence that (s)he, because of his/her injury, will never be able to perform the essential functions of his/her position, employment with the Town will be separated. Further, if an employee remains out of work for a period in excess of six (6) months, for any reason including but not limited to a workers' compensation leave of absence, employment with the Town will be separated.

Nothing shall prohibit an employee whose employment with the Town is separated pursuant to this section from reapplying for a position with the Town in the future.

### **Longevity Payments**

Regular full-time employees are eligible for longevity pay based on the following schedule:



5-9 years of continuous service:	\$250
10-14 years of continuous service:	\$500
15-19 years of continuous service:	\$750
20 and over years of continuous service:	\$1,000

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary, work-based program that offers three (3) free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems. EAP’s address a broad and complex body of issues affecting mental and emotional well-being, such as stress, grief, family problems, and psychological disorders. EAP counselors can also work in a conductive role with managers and supervisors to address employee and organizational challenges and needs. They are also active in helping organizations prevent and cope with workplace violence, trauma, and other emergency response situations.

The Town of Branford’s EAP is Branford Counseling Center, located at 342 Harbor Street, Branford, CT. If you need assistance, please call (203) 481-4248 and ask to schedule an intake screening appointment.

IMPORTANT: If you are not a Branford resident, you must specify that you work for the Town of Branford in order to be scheduled.

**LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

**Military Leave**

The Town of Branford complies with all rights and conditions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (“USERRA”) which expands both job and benefit protections for workers who serve in the military. Under USERRA, anyone who has been absent from work due to service in the uniformed services has certain reemployment or reinstatement rights.

USERRA prohibits discrimination against applicants and employees who serve in the military in the areas of hiring, job retention and advancement and strengthens the right to reemployment without any loss of seniority, status or pay.

The uniformed services include Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including the Reserves for each of these branches of the military. Also included is service in the Army National Guard or Air National Guard, commissioned corps of the Public Health

Service and any other category of persons designated by the President in time of war or emergency.

### **Notice and Eligibility**

All regular full time and regular part time employees are covered by USERRA. A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the U.S. uniformed services in accordance with the USERRA. Service includes active duty for training, full time National Guard duty and absence from work for an examination to determine a person's fitness for any of these types of service.

Advance notice of service is required unless it is not possible due to military necessity or is otherwise impossible or unreasonable. Notice may be provided in writing or verbally by the employee or an appropriate officer of the military branch.

### **Compensation and Benefits**

Military leave is unpaid and vacation, holidays and sick days will not accrue during military leave. However, employees may use vacation time for a portion of the absence. The employee and those dependents covered by the health benefits plan chosen by the employee prior to active duty will continue to be covered for a minimum of eighteen (18) months during military service. The employee cost will be the same as would be incurred if the employee were actively employed. The appropriate "premium share" (employee premium contribution) will be billed by the Human Resources Department to an employee designated person quarterly. Payments must be paid within thirty (30) days or coverage may be terminated. At such time that health benefits coverage is terminated, the employee may elect to continue the coverage under COBRA and may not be charged more than 102% of the cost of the total premium.

Life insurance will continue to be in force under the same terms and in the amount assigned for active employees in the same employee unit.

Any employee in military service shall have their pension plan benefits accrue (MERS for all eligible employees or for the Police the Branford Police Retirement Fund), with the Town paying both the employer and employee payments, during his/her Military Leave. The employee must repay the Town for the employee contributions within the period that begins on the date of reemployment and extends for three times the period of service, but not more than five years. All such make-up payments shall be made on a pre-tax basis.

Note: If employee presents proof from the veteran's administration that he/she has been a prisoner of war, the Town has to pay the employee contribution (C.G.S... Sec. 7-436b (b))

### **Reemployment/Reinstatement**

Employees returning from military leave after 15 days or less must return to work on the next scheduled work day following completion of their leave.

Employees returning from military leave after 16-30 days must return to work on the next scheduled work day following completion of leave plus an 8 hour rest period.

Employees returning from military leave after 31-180 days must file a written request for reinstatement to the Director of Human Resources within 14 days of discharge.

Employees returning from military leave after 180 days must file a written request for reinstatement to the Director of Human Resources within 90 days of discharge.

### **Connecticut State Law**

In addition to the federal requirements under USERRA, C.G.S. 7-461 requires municipal employers to pay their employees who are reservists the difference between their regular salary and their military salary (for up to 30 days in any calendar year), while they engage in required field training.

### **Town of Branford Supplemental Compensation Policy**

A Town government employee who is called to active duty in a uniformed military service will be entitled to receive Town military compensation for a maximum of eighteen (18) months as follows:

Fifty percent (50%) of the difference between the employee's gross weekly Town base salary as of the beginning of the military active duty, and the employees' gross weekly military base salary as of the beginning of the military active duty. All military supplementary payments will be considered as salary. Documentation and verification of the military salary must be provided prior to any payments. The employee must immediately advise the Human Resources Department of any change to the military salary, and periodic requests for salary verification by the Town must be provided when requested. Salary checks will be issued either weekly or bi-weekly based on the employee's prior schedule. All military supplementary payments will be considered as salary, and will be subject to normal withholding, including health benefit premium sharing, but not union dues. The payments made by the Town may be directed to the Town's 457 plan. Any change to withholding must be requested in writing in the normal manner.

### **Jury Duty**

Employees will be granted time off for jury duty. Employees will be expected to give advance notice to their Supervisor/Department Head of having been called for jury duty, supply a time verification slip from the clerk of the court as evidence of having served, and work as much of the day as possible for each day the employee is called to serve. Regular full time employees will receive their regular base salary while serving jury duty. The

Department Head will send the notice of the employee having served jury duty from the courts to the Human Resources Department after the employee has completed his/her jury duty.

## **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

### **Employment Eligibility**

To be eligible for Family and Medical Leave benefits employees must have worked for the Town for a total of at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months.

### **Leave Available**

In all circumstances except when leave is required to care for an ill or injured member of the Armed Services, eligible employees may receive up to a total of 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during a 12 month period or take intermittent leave or reduced schedule leave. A reduced schedule leave is one that changes the employee's normal work schedule for a period of time by reducing the employee's usual number of working hours per work or hours per day. An intermittent leave is taken in separate blocks of time due to a single qualifying reason. A 12 month period begins on the date of the employee's first use of federal Family and Medical Leave. Successive 12 month periods commence on the date of an employee's first use of federal Family and Medical Leave after the preceding 12 month period has ended. When leave is taken to care for an injured or ill service member, an eligible employee may take up to 26 workweeks of leave during a single 12 month period to care for the service member. Leave to care for an injured or ill service member, when combined with other FMLA-qualifying leave may not exceed 26 weeks in a single 12-month period. Service member FMLA runs concurrent with other leave entitlements provided under federal and state law.

Leave may be used for one or more of the following reasons: (1) for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care; (2) to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child or parent or parent-in-law) with a serious health condition; (3) to take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of their own serious health condition; (4) a "qualifying exigency" arising out of a covered family member's active duty or call to active duty in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency plan; or (5) to care for a covered family member who has incurred an injury or illness in the line of duty while on active duty in the Armed Forces provided that such injury or illness may render the family member medically unfit to perform duties of the member's office, grade, rank or rating and (6) to provide service as an organ or bone marrow donor. (Under some circumstances, employees may take Family and Medical Leave intermittently, which means taking leave in blocks of time, or by reducing their normal weekly or daily work schedule.)

Certain restrictions on these benefits may apply.

## **Notice and Certification**

Employees who are in need of Family and Medical Leave, may be required to provide:

- a. 30 days advance notice when the need for leave is foreseeable;
- b. Medical certification from a health care provider (prior to the start of the leave period and before returning to work);
- c. Periodic re-certification; and
- d. Periodic reports during the leave.

When leave is needed to care for an immediate family member or an employee's own serious health condition, and is for planned medical treatment, employees are required to schedule treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the Town's operation.

## **Compensation during Leave**

Family and Medical Leave is unpaid. The Town may require employees to use accrued paid leave (such as sick and vacation time) to cover some or all of the Family and Medical Leave. The use of paid time does not extend the length of a Family and Medical Leave.

## **Benefits during Leave**

The Town will maintain, for up to a maximum of 12 workweeks of Family and Medical Leave, any group health insurance coverage for the employee on Family and Medical Leave whenever such insurance was provided before the leave was taken and on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. If applicable, employees will need to make arrangements to pay their share of the health insurance premiums while on leave.

In some instances, the Town may recover premiums it paid to maintain health coverage for an employee who fails to return to work from Family and Medical Leave.

## **Job Reinstatement**

Under most circumstances, upon return from Family and Medical Leave, employees will be reinstated to their previous position, or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits and other employment terms and conditions. Upon return from a Family and Medical Leave, employees have no greater right to reinstatement than if that had been continuously employed.

## **EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

The Town is committed to providing quality service to its residents and a work environment for its employees that is conducive to congenial and professional working relationships, productivity and employees' well-being. It is therefore appropriate to establish fundamental guidelines for all employees that will protect the best interests of all employees and the Town.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are some examples of infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. In all cases, the penalty to be applied is within the discretion of the Town:

- Activities prohibited by Town Charter, ordinance or State law;
- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property;
- Dishonesty, including but not limited to dishonesty, on an application for employment and falsification of time records or other Town records;
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and/or the possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace;
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace;
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace;
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of Town-owned property;
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct toward other employees or supervisors;
- Violation of safety or health rules;
- Fraudulently obtaining sick or injury leave;
- Smoking in prohibited areas;
- Sexual harassment or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment;
- Acceptance of a gift or other valuable consideration which was given and received with the expectation of influencing the employee in the performance of his or her duties;
- Possession of weapons or other dangerous materials;
- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness, or any absence without notice;
- Unauthorized use of the Town's telephones, mail system, computer system or other Town-owned equipment;
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.

#### **PROHIBITION AGAINST VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

The Town maintains a zero tolerance policy on violence in the workplace. To this end, the Town has adopted a policy prohibiting workplace violence and threats of violence. Consistent with this policy, providing or otherwise contributing to any violent or disruptive act in the workplace including but not limited to acts or threats of physical violence, including intimidation, harassment, coercion, assault, battery, which involve or affect the Town of Branford or which occur on the Town's property or worksites is strictly prohibited.

To ensure a safe workplace and to reduce the risk of violence, all employees are required to review and understand the provisions of this Workplace Violence Policy.

### **Prohibited Conduct**

Acts or threats of violence include conduct which is sufficiently severe, offensive, or intimidating to alter the employment conditions at the Town of Branford or to create a hostile, abusive, or intimidating work environment for one or several employees. Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. All threats or acts of violence occurring on the Town's premises or worksites, regardless of the relationship between the Town and the parties involved.
2. All threats or acts of violence occurring off the Town of Branford's premises involving someone who is acting in the capacity of a representative of the Town.

Specific examples of conduct which may be considered threats or acts of violence in violation of this policy, include, but are not limited to the following:

- Hitting or shoving an individual;
- Causing physical injury to another person;
- Making threatening remarks concerning an individual, his or her family, friends, associates or property;
- Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or that subjects another individual to emotional distress;
- Intentionally damaging, or threatening to damage, Town property or the property of another employee;
- Making harassing or threatening phone calls;
- Harassing surveillance or stalking (following or watching someone);
- Unauthorized possession of a weapon while on Town property or while acting in the capacity of a representative of the Town.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Each employee is encouraged to report threats or acts of violence to the Human Resources Department.

### **Enforcement**

The Town's prohibition against threats and acts of violence applies to all persons involved in Town business, including but not limited to personnel, contract and temporary workers and anyone else on Town property or worksites.

Threatening conduct or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Any employee determined to have committed such acts will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and/or legal action as appropriate.

### **Weapons**

The Town of Branford believes it is important to establish a clear policy that specifically addresses weapons in the workplace. The Town prohibits all persons who enter Town property from carrying a handgun, firearm, knife, or other prohibited weapon of any kind regardless of whether or not the person is licensed to carry the weapon. In addition, all employees are prohibited from carrying weapons on Town worksites or while conducting Town business.

Any employee found in violation of this policy will be subject to immediate termination of employment.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE**

The Town of Branford maintains a policy against drug and alcohol use by its employees. The use of any illegal drugs, intoxicants or controlled substances is strictly prohibited. Illicit drug use and indiscriminate alcohol consumption puts everyone at risk and cannot be tolerated. In keeping with our efforts to promote health and safety and protect the interests of our employees, customers, and the Town, we cannot allow anyone to use, possess, sell, manufacture, purchase or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, intoxicants or controlled substances at any time on Town premises, in Town vehicles or while on Town business.

### **Prohibited Acts**

The following acts are strictly prohibited by the Town and apply to all employees:

- a. Possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol, an illegal drug intoxicant or controlled substance while on Town property or worksites and while performing Town business.
- b. Driving a vehicle on Town business while under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug, intoxicant or controlled substance.



- c. Distributing, selling, manufacturing or purchasing or attempting to distribute, sell, manufacture, or purchase of an illegal drug or controlled substance during working hours or while on Town-owned or occupied premises.
- d. Testing positive on a required or requested drug or alcohol test or screen.
- e. Refusing either to take or to release information regarding a required or requested drug or alcohol test or screen; and
- f. Violating any Town rule or policy regarding alcohol and drug use.

### **Testing Program**

- a. After an offer of employment but before the applicant commences employment;
- b. When a reasonable suspicion exists that any employee is under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug, intoxicant, or controlled substance while on the job, or is otherwise in violation of this policy. Reasonable suspicion means suspicion based on information regarding among other things, an employee's appearance, behavior, speech, attitude, mood and/or breathe odor.
- c. When any employee is found in possession of alcohol or an illegal drug, intoxicant or controlled substance in violation of this policy, or when any of those items are found in an area controlled or used by the employee, such as a desk or locker.
- d. When an accident, near-miss, or incident occurs in which safety precautions are violated or careless acts are performed, and a reasonable suspicion exists that the employee involved is under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug, intoxicant or controlled substance.
- e. After any employee has participated in a rehabilitation program; and
- f. When required by a state or federal law or regulation (e.g. (i) persons driving commercial motor vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more or carrying hazardous materials in interstate commerce ("DOT testing"); or (ii) for other reasons required by law). The testing required by the Town will involve an initial screening test. If that result is positive, the positive result will be confirmed using a different testing methodology.

Employees suspected of possessing alcohol, illegal drugs, intoxicants or controlled substances are subject to inspection and search, with or without notice. Employees who are suspected of possessing alcohol, illegal drugs, intoxicants or controlled substances are subject to having their personal belongings, including any bags, purses, briefcases and clothing, and all Town property, subject to inspection and search, with or without notice. Employees who violate the Town's drug and alcohol abuse policy will be removed from the workplace immediately. The Town may also bring the matter to the attention of

appropriate law enforcement authorities. Any conviction for criminal conduct involving illegal drugs, intoxicants or controlled substances whether on or off duty, or any violation of the Town's drug and alcohol abuse policy, including, having a positive drug-test result, may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Any employee's conviction on a charge of sale, distribution, manufacturing or attempted sale, distribution, or manufacturing, or possession of any controlled substance while off Town property will not be tolerated because that conduct, even though off duty, reflects adversely on the Town. In addition to reflecting adversely on the Town, the Town must keep people who are involved with illegal drugs and controlled substances off premises owned or occupied by the Town in order to keep those substances off the premises.

The use of prescription drugs and/or over-the-counter drugs may also affect an employee's job performance and seriously impair that employee's ability to perform his or her duties. Any employee who is using prescription or over-the-counter drugs that may impair his or her ability to safely perform the job or may affect the safety or well-being of others must submit a physician's statement that the prescription drug use will not affect job safety. The employee is not required to identify the medication or the underlying illness. Various federal, state and local laws protect the rights of individuals with disabilities and others with regard to the confidentiality of medical information, medical treatment, and the use of prescription drugs and substances taken under medical supervision. Nothing contained in this policy is intended to violate or interfere with individual rights under these laws.

### **Accommodation of Employees Seeking Treatment/Rehabilitation**

The Town will attempt to reasonably accommodate employees with chemical dependencies (alcohol or drugs), if they voluntarily wish to seek treatment and/or rehabilitation. Employees desiring that assistance should request an unpaid treatment or rehabilitation leave of absence. The Town's support for treatment and rehabilitation does not obligate the Town to employ any person who violates the Town's drug and alcohol abuse policy or whose job performance is impaired because of substance abuse. The Town is also not obligated to reemploy any person who has participated in treatment or rehabilitation if that person's job performance remains impaired as a result of dependency. Employees who are given the opportunity to seek treatment and/or rehabilitation and are involved in any further violations of this policy will not be given a second opportunity to seek treatment or rehabilitation.

## **SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT**

### **Voluntary Separation**

If you are choosing to voluntarily end your employment with the Town please submit an email or letter to your Supervisor and Human Resources Department as soon as practical but no less than 2 weeks before your departure date. Human Resources Department will

conduct by phone or in person an exit interview. This will give you the opportunity to discuss changes you would suggest that the Town consider to improve or enhance your job responsibilities and productivity as well as the positive aspects of your current role in the Town.

### **Return of Property**

Employees are responsible for all Town property issued to them. Any Town property issued to employees, such as keys and cell phones, must be returned to the Town immediately upon request or upon the employee's separation of employment. Employees will be responsible for all lost or damaged items belonging to the Town. The value of any property issued and not returned may be deducted from an employee's pay, and employees may be required to sign a wage deduction authorization form for this purpose.

### **Post -Employment Inquiries**

The Human Resources Director will respond to employment reference inquiries that are received in writing and will only verify dates of employment and position title, unless required by law to provide other information. Employees are not permitted to respond to employment reference inquiries or requests for letters of recommendation for present or former Town employees. Employees and former employees should direct the person or organization seeking the information to contact the Town's Human Resources Department.

## EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Town of Branford Employee Handbook.

The Employee Handbook describes important information about the Town of Branford (the "Town"). I understand that I should consult the Director of Human Resources regarding any questions not answered in the handbook. I have entered into my employment relationship with the Town voluntarily and acknowledge that my employment is At-Will and that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either I or the Town can terminate the relationship at any time.

The policies described in the handbook take effect immediately and supersede and replace all previous personnel practices, guidelines, and any oral or written representations made by any Town employee. I understand that the only exceptions to the above are express, written agreements between an individual employee and the Town that is signed by both the employee and an authorized agent of the Town.

Because the information, policies, and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur. All such changes will be communicated through written notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. Any other alteration or modification of the policies must be in writing signed by an authorized representative.

**I acknowledge that this handbook is not a contract of employment and does not guarantee employment and/or benefits for a particular period nor does it guarantee any specific process prior to termination. I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.**

EMPLOYEE'S NAME (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_