

Anne Arundel

Soil Conservation

District

Personnel Policy

Approved by a board resolution; 2011-2 on October 18, 2011

Amendment to Bereavement Leave and Compensatory Time; approved by board and effective as of August 19, 2015

Amendments to Compensatory Time, Office Hours, Flex Time and Lunch Time effective as of June 20, 2018

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PURPOSE

The purpose of soil conservation districts, as provided in the Natural Resources Conservation Districts' Law, is to carry out programs which implement the policy of the State to "provide for the conservation of the soil, water and related resources of the State and for the control and prevention of soil erosion in order to preserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect the public lands, protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the State and otherwise enhance their living environment." The purpose of the Anne Arundel Soil Conservation District is to carry out this policy as it relates to Anne Arundel County. Assistance from the District is provided on a voluntary request basis unless made mandatory by the requirements of some other program. The purpose of the Anne Arundel Soil Conservation District in relation to the mandatory urban Sediment Control Program is to implement soil erosion control programs to control sediment deposits in waters of the State which lie within Anne Arundel County. As stated in the Sediment Control Law, these waters "are being polluted and despoiled to such a degree that fish, marine life and recreational use of the waters are being affected adversely."

The Board of Supervisors is committed to carrying out the purpose for the District and has adopted the following Mission and Vision statements.

MISSION

The mission of the Anne Arundel Soil Conservation District is to carry out programs, both voluntary and mandated, which implement the policy of the County, State and Federal Government as provided in the Soil Conservation Districts Law, to provide for the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources and for the control and prevention of soil erosion.

VISION

The Anne Arundel Soil Conservation District, as an independent agency, will be recognized as the lead organization for providing information and programs for the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources and improvement of water quality in the Anne Arundel Soil Conservation District/County; and that the District supervisors and personnel are recognized as the conservation authorities for these programs.

EMPLOYMENT

District employees are employed by the Board of Supervisors under direction of the District Manager. Positions may be temporary or permanent and full-time or part-time depending upon the District's needs. In July of 1988 the District moved into County office space. As part of this arrangement, District employees were placed on the County payroll system as County comparable employees. This was not a specific category of employees but rather a statement of comparability. This designation did not mean that District and County employees were identical.

The agreement with the County specified that the District maintain supervision of its employees and the keeping of time and leave records, etc. Time is forwarded to the County so that checks can be issued for the employees. Pay to District employees, provided by the County system, includes the employee's share of social security, retirement and medical insurance.

PROBATION

All employees shall serve a probationary period of six months. This period may be extended an additional six months at the Board's discretion.

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Employees will be evaluated at the end of their probationary period and annually thereafter. Evaluations will be conducted on the anniversary of the employees first day of employment and will include their performance over the last twelve months. Each employee will be rated on work quality, quantity, habits and attitudes. The evaluation will be conducted by the District Manager with concurrence by the Board of Supervisors.

PAY, DEDUCTIONS & RAISES

New employees will enter the position at the base salary for that position. Any exceptions would need the approval of the Department of Inspections and Permits. Employees are paid bi-weekly with regular deductions being made for State and Federal withholdings. Merit increases will be based on employee performance. Should the employee qualify for a merit increase, the amount of increase will be awarded in accordance to the amount approved during the County budget hearings and is subject to approval from the Board of Supervisors and Director of Inspections and Permits. The request for a merit increase will be submitted to the Office of Personnel and is generally effective the next full pay period after the anniversary date.

SALARY SUPPLEMENTS

An annual salary supplement may be given to District employees, MDA personnel and contractual employees. The amount of the supplement is based on employee performance, years of employment and fiscal stability of District funds. See appendix C. Salary supplements for part-time employees will be on a pro-rata basis.

HOURS OF WORK

Scheduling of hours worked, and days off must be coordinated and approved by the District Manager in writing so the office is open and functioning each workday 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The manager may approve an employee starting as early as 6:00 am and working as late as 5:30 if the office is open as required. (Effective June 2018).

COMPRESSED WORK WEEK

A compressed work week was made available to all employees. The compressed work week may consist of working 10-hour days for 8 days to fulfill the 80-hour requirement for a full pay period. Or working 9-hour days for 9 days and having a day off every two weeks or half a day off every week. When participating in a compressed work week the District Manager shall coordinate the days the employees will be off to as to make sure the office runs efficiently and can provide quick and accurate service to its customers in both the urban and agricultural communities.

FLEX TIME

Flex time may be approved at the discretion of the District Manager for a temporary time. Flex time is the ability to start work and end work outside the standard office hours. Employees may begin their workday up to 1 hour before the official opening hour (7:00 am) of the office or extend their work day for as much as one hour after the office is closed (3:30). So long as a full 8-hour day plus 0.5-hour lunch is worked. Flex time is not available for employees on a compressed work week.

COMPENSATORY TIME

The District tries to complete its tasks during the usual work hours. In some instances, however, such as when important work falls behind schedule, when a rush job is assigned, or attendance is required at a specific meeting or function, employees may be required to work longer hours. In this event, the District Manager will schedule employees for such additional time as is necessary. The District does not have funding to pay for overtime; therefore, compensation for overtime is awarded in the form of compensatory time at a predetermined rate. See appendix A. Earning of compensatory time must be approved by the District Manager prior to being accrued except when employees are working in the field and a job cannot be completed or needs to be stabilized with extra hours. Compensatory time must be used before annual leave. Not more than 20 hours may be carried at any time.

Compensatory time will be given at a rate of 1.5 times for every hour worked over 40 hours when the employee is performing a task directly related to their assigned duties, attending formal training beyond their standard hours, representing the District at after hour meetings or participating in promotional or outreach activities. Compensatory time will be given at a rate of 1.0 times every hour worked over 40 hours when attending social events as a representative of the District.

When leaving for an event at the end of the employee's work hours, compensatory time starts from the time the employee's workday ends, until when the employee returns to the office. If an employee goes directly home after the event, they may claim compensatory time for travel home, minus the normal time it takes to travel from home to work.

When an employee ends their work day and the event does not start until a later time at which the employee leaves from their home. Compensatory time begins when the employee leaves home and ends when they return home.

HOLIDAY COMPENSATORY TIME

Holiday time consist of 8 hours as given by the county. For employees working a compressed work week, the employee receives 8 hours of holiday leave and will take annual or compensatory leave in the amount needed to fulfill his or her workday.

LUNCH

Employees receive 30 minutes of unpaid time as a lunch break each day. The Designated lunch time is 12:00 to 12:30 though employees may take their lunch at any time based on their dietary needs. The 30-minute lunch break may not be used as leave time.

BREAKS

Two 15-minute breaks are allowed during an 8 hour or greater workday. The District considers the breaks as compensable work hours that would be included in the sum of hours worked during the work week and considered in determining if overtime was worked.

SUPERVISION

The District Manager, through policies and directives set by the Board, provides administrative supervision of District operations and employees. The District Manager maintains personnel records and attends to other administrative matters and may assist with the technical program as time permits.

Through a memorandum of understanding with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, technical assistance is provided for carrying out a soil and water conservation program and urban ponds meeting Maryland Technical Standard 378. Coordination of technical and administrative supervision is worked out between the District Conservationist and District Manager.

The District has staff that, in general, works with the agricultural program or with the urban program. Although "Agricultural" and "Urban" are accepted as working identities, it must be recognized that the operating goal of the SCD is the "Total District Program" and, at times, the District Manager must utilize the talents of all employees, notwithstanding job titles.

The District Board of Supervisors is the final authority on all personnel matters.

COMPLAINTS AND PROBLEMS

It is the responsibility of the District Manager and employees to establish and maintain a work climate within which an employee's problem or complaint may be promptly identified, presented, discussed and given fair and timely consideration. All complaints or problems should first be discussed with the District Manager; if the District Manager cannot resolve the problem, the employee may appeal to the District Board of Supervisors.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

It is the District's policy to provide equal opportunity in employment for all persons, regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation and marital or family status.

TRAINING

Technical employees may receive on-the-job training and other formal training from the Natural Resources Conservation Service as funds and schedules permit. The District Manager will work with the District Conservationist and employee to develop a training plan. This plan will be reviewed and updated as needed. Training through other sources may be available for both technical and administrative staff through the county or private sources. Employees may attend these trainings if they are directly related to their job duties. Funding for training is dependent on District monetary assets at the time the training is offered.

Attendance at formal training sessions must be approved in advance by the District Manager.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL CLASSES

The District recognizes the value in the continuing education of its employees and encourages all employees to seek such opportunities. The Board of Supervisors will address each request for reimbursement for tuition on a case-by-case basis using the following guidelines: (1) Is the class applicable to the employee's position with the District, (2) Are adequate budget funds available and (3) Is the employee willing to pay for the class upfront. The District will reimburse the employee up to 100% of the cost of the class once proof is supplied by the employee that he/she has successfully completed the approved class with a "B" or better grade or he/she has received a certificate of successful completion for the approved course.

VEHICLES

District employees doing technical work with or for the Natural Resources Conservation Service or Maryland Department of Agriculture are required to use the U.S. Government vehicle(s), District or State vehicle(s), if available. Employees must become familiar with and follow all rules and regulations relative to the use of Federal and State vehicles. Such vehicles must only be used to carry out official District/Natural Resources Conservation Service/Maryland Department of Agriculture work.

Employees must possess a Maryland driver's license before driving either a US government, State government or District vehicle.

Employees may use their personal vehicles, with approval by the District Manager, when agency vehicles are not available and will be reimbursed at the official mileage rate paid by the State.

Each employee is strongly encouraged to purchase a rider to his or her personal auto insurance policy to cover driving agency vehicles and using personal vehicles for District business.

HEALTHCARE INSURANCE

District employees are eligible for healthcare insurance through the County. Available plans are Blue Cross/Blue Shield and HMO's. Grant employees are required to obtain healthcare insurance on their own if so desired. An invoice showing the cost of the healthcare shall be submitted to the District and that amount incorporated into the employee's biweekly pay. Dental and vision care for grant employees are also eligible for reimbursement.

LEAVE

Leave is considered any time off from regular duties with or without pay. Absence from work which is not approved is known as "absence without leave" or AWOL. An employee who is absence without leave is subject to disciplinary measures or termination. Part-time employees who are eligible for leave will earn it on a pro-rata basis. Hours in pay status in excess of the basic working hours of the part-time employee in any pay period are excluded from this computation. Employees wishing to take leave will submit the latest version of the leave request form before taking planned leave.

ANNUAL LEAVE

Permanent full-time employees earn paid vacation leave (annual leave) on the basis of length of service, as follows:

During the first 3 years, leave is earned at the rate of 13 working days (104 hrs.) per year (approximately 4.000 hrs. per pay period).

From the beginning of the 4th through the 15th year, 20 days (160 hrs.) are earned per year (approximately 6.154 hrs. per pay period).

After 15 years of service, 26 days (208 hrs.) are earned per year (approximately 8.000 hrs. per pay period).

Annual leave is credited at the appropriate rate on a biweekly basis. When an employee's annual leave earning rate changes, the appropriate rate is shown on the biweekly time sheet. The appropriate increase in accumulation of annual leave will occur on the anniversary date of hire. Eligible part-time employees will be credited on a pro-rata basis.

Unused annual leave may be accumulated for use in succeeding years to a maximum of 280 hours. Annual leave accumulated in excess of 280 hrs. will be carried over and converted into disability leave at the end of the calendar year. Maximum accumulation for eligible part-time employees is on a pro-rata basis.

Usage of annual leave may be charged in units of one quarter of an hour. Employees are expected to plan their vacations as far in advance as possible. This will allow the District Manager to accommodate their desires as well as schedule the work of the District. All annual leave must be approved in advance by the District Manager. To use annual leave employees must fill out a leave request form (AASCD Form 45). For three or more consecutive workdays, a request must be filed 30 days in advance. The application will usually be approved or rejected within 5 days. It must be recognized that it may not be possible to grant leave to several employees at the same time.

DISABILITY LEAVE

Permanent full-time employees are authorized 15 days of disability leave per year, which is credited at the rate of 4.62 hours on a biweekly basis. Eligible part time employees will be credited on a pro-rata basis. There is no limit on the number of disability leave days that can be accumulated. Usage of disability leave may be charged in units of one quarter of an hour.

Besides leave due to sickness, mental health, injury, dental or physician appointments, disability leave may be used when an employee's spouse, dependent child or dependent parent is incapacitated by physical or mental impairment.

Up to 4 hours, if necessary, may be used for medical, dental or optical examination or treatment. Whenever disability leave is taken for a routine medical, dental or optical appointment, the request must be made prior to the beginning of the absence.

Except for death in the family, a doctor's certificate is required to charge disability leave in any part of three or more consecutive workdays. The certificate must include a statement by the doctor that the

employee was "unable to work" or "Quarantined" during the period of absence. A medical certificate is required when doctors' appointments are longer than 4 hours.

PERSONAL DAYS

The county eliminated the floating holidays and instead granted employees 5 personal days. The District will also grant 5 personal days and follow the county's guidelines regarding the use of these five days. The personal day(s) may only be taken in full working day increments. Employees working 8-hour days cannot take any personal day in less than 8-hour increments. Employees working 10-hour days cannot take any personal day in less than 10-hour increments. Personal days cannot be carried over into the next calendar year.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

In the event of the death of a spouse, child, stepchild, grandchild, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, parent, stepparent, foster parent, parent-in-law, guardian, grandparent, or grandparent-in-law, an employee is entitled to a maximum of 3 workdays (24 hours) of paid bereavement leave.

If additional time is required by the employee, the District Manager will make all reasonable efforts to arrange the work so that the employee may take annual leave for this purpose.

If it is necessary to take unannounced leave the employee will, prior to their start time, contact the District Manager and Office Manager and notify both they will not be coming into the office. A leave request form shall be submitted the day they return to the office.

Employees on lengthy illness are expected to report to the District Manager at least once in every two weeks any changes in their condition and their anticipated return to work. A medical certificate shall be forwarded to the District Manager no less than once a month.

In order to prevent abuse of disability leave and to assure proper medical attention for employees, the District Manager may require the employee to submit a medical certificate signed by a duly licensed physician who authenticates a period of illness of one day or more. This is done when the employee has been absent for more than five occurrences in the last six months or there is a repetitive pattern of disability leave use which suggests the employee may not be sick.

Any employee having nine or more occurrences of disability leave in a year will be rated as unsatisfactory in Work Habits on their annual efficiency ratings unless documentation is on file which satisfactorily explains a condition necessitating such absences. Such absences may result from injuries in the line of duty, operations to improve a health condition or absences due to treatment of a condition where management has been made aware of the circumstances by medical documentation.

After eleven occasions of disability leave in a year, an employee's efficiency will be considered unsatisfactory in Work Quantity, and Productivity, unless documentation listed above is on file.

HOLIDAY LEAVE

Holidays (8 hrs.) for District Employees are as listed below and are observed the same as County holidays. Holiday leave for eligible part-time employees is on a pro-rata basis.

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Washington's Birthday, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Election Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Thanksgiving Friday, Christmas Day.

MATERNITY LEAVE

A pregnant employee is expected to work prior to childbirth if she is able to perform her normal duties or until a physician advises otherwise. Since pregnancy is considered a temporary disability, a pregnant employee may use disability leave or any combination of accumulated leave and leave without pay. Annual and disability leave must be exhausted before leave without pay is used. Up to 12 weeks of Maternity leave may be taken. If additional time is requested, the employee must present certification from her physician explaining why the employee cannot return after 12 weeks. When returning to work, the employee must present a certificate from a physician stating that she has physically recovered and is able to perform her regular duties. The employee's spouse may be granted up to 1 week of paternity leave if they have the annual or disability leave available.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP)

Any employee may apply to the District Manager for a leave of absence without pay. Annual and disability leave is not earned when on leave without pay.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

Administrative leave may be granted due to unusual or emergency conditions. Administrative leave will be granted when County offices are closed due to hazardous working conditions or severe weather conditions. To be eligible for administrative leave due to emergency conditions, the employee must be at work or scheduled to report for work.

LIBERAL LEAVE

When the office is open but hazardous conditions prevent an employee from reporting for work on time, the employee may use annual leave or compensatory time provided the District Manager is notified as soon as possible.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

Each employee is entitled to participate in the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Although the District is exempt from being required to offer FMLA to its employees, the Board has elected to offer it. FMLA provides that eligible employees are entitled to twelve (12) weeks of leave in any twelve (12) month period to attend to certain personal or family member's health condition. The District requires employees to use accrued paid annual, disability, personal and other kind of paid leave before going on Leave of Absence without Pay (LWOP). To be eligible for FMLA coverage, an employee must have worked for the District at least 12 months (not necessarily consecutively) and provided 1,250 hours of service (hours actually worked) within the twelve months preceding the date leave is to begin.

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICS

The conducts of all employees located in the District Office are subject to standards and requirements that have been established to protect the interests of the public, to promote the efficiency of the employees and to protect the good name of the District. General requirements to be observed by employees of the District are listed herewith.

ATTENTION TO DUTY

During official working hours, employees are responsible for devoting their full attention and best efforts to the duties of their positions. In order to utilize an employee's services to the best advantage, the District Manager should be informed by the employee if there is not sufficient work to keep the employee fully occupied. Recurring or unwarranted tardiness, extended lunch periods, unauthorized absences from assigned tasks during duty hours and leaving work early are causes for disciplinary action. Attending to personal affairs during duty hours, except in serious emergencies, should be kept to a minimum and shall not interfere with the performance of District functions.

APPEARANCE AND CONDUCT

Dress, grooming and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the image the District presents to the public. Employees are expected to present a clean and neat appearance and to dress according to the requirements of their position and the duties being performed. Dress in the field should be according to the work being performed. Shorts and jeans may be appropriate in the field. Short skirts or short shorts are not appropriate at any time.

MEN: Casual pants and slacks such as dockers style or khakis, button-down shirt or departmental logo polo shirts and casual shoes such as loafers. Blazers and ties are optional but are encouraged if interacting with the public.

WOMEN: Dresses, skirts, casual pants and dress slacks, sweaters, blouses, or departmental logo polo shirts and casual shoes.

FIELD VISITS: When conducting field visits, denim jeans, overalls or coveralls may be worn as well as other durable clothing to protect against injury from briars and other field related hazards.

INAPPROPRIATE ATTIRE: Sports or exercise apparel, tee-shirts, spandex/lucre items or stretch pants, beachwear, athletic shoes or sneakers, flip flops, athletic shirts, shorts (indoors), tank tops, halter or cropped tops.

Consult the District Manager if you have questions as to what constitutes appropriate attire.

The conduct of officials and employees, while representing the District, must at all times, be of such a nature that the District is free from valid criticism of any kind. Any employee guilty of personal misconduct or delinquency while representing the District, regardless of whether the employee is in a duty status or leave status, is subject to appropriate discipline.

USE OF DISTRICT FACILITIES

Telephone - District telephones are provided for use in conducting official business and personal calls should be limited. Use of your own personal cell phone also takes time away from District business.

Personal Mail - Personal mail should be directed to the employee's home address.

Misuse of Postage - Use of District postage and envelopes to send personal letters, applications for employment, transfer, reassignment, promotion, etc. is prohibited.

Misuse of District, NRCS, MDA and County Property - Unauthorized use of or willful or negligent loss, damage or other misuse of property, including equipment, tools and instruments is prohibited. This prohibition also applies to defacing District/County offices, restrooms and other facilities.

Negligence - Employees who are negligent or careless in their attention to or performance of duty resulting in wasted public funds, duty hours spent unproductive, or wasting supplies, equipment or other District, County, State or Federal facilities, are subject to disciplinary action.

SOLICITATION

Employees may not, during official working hours, engage in soliciting of any type on District premises, regardless of whether they are in a duty or non-duty status, without official authorization.

GENERAL CONDUCT WITH THE PUBLIC

All employees in the District office who are in direct contact with the public play a significant role in influencing the public's attitude towards the District, both by the manner in which they serve the public and by the way they conduct themselves generally in the public view. In contacts with the public, business community and each other, all employees are expected to be courteous, considerate and prompt.

GIFTS AND GRATUITIES

District employees cannot accept, seek, solicit or take directly or indirectly any gift or benefit of more than a \$25.00 economic value, including money, service, gratuity, fee, property loan, promise or anything else from or on behalf of any individual who is doing, or is seeking to do, business with the District.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

The Anne Arundel Soil Conservation District, through the District Manager and/or the Board of Supervisors will approve of its employees engaging in other part-time employment so long as there is no conflict with, detraction from or other interference with the proper and timely carrying out of District duties. The District will not approve any employment that could place an obligation on the employee that could affect District activities.

OFFICE SUPPLIES

Office supplies, including items such as pencils, paper, envelopes, notebooks, rubber bands, paper clips, etc. should be used wisely. If supplies are provided for which there is no need, they should be returned so that someone else may make use of them.

SAFETY AND HEALTH

The safety and health of its employees are of major importance to the District. Employees are expected to avoid unsafe acts, observe good health habits and to correct or report all unsafe conditions promptly to the District Manager. Employees must closely follow safety regulations as posted in employee common areas.

FIRST AID AND MEDICAL CARE

In case of injury sustained in the line of duty, the employee should:

Secure first aid treatment at the nearest emergency room or from an appropriate first-aid source and notify the District Manager immediately.

PERSONAL EMERGENCIES - NOTIFICATION OF RELATIVES

When employees begin work with the District, they are asked to designate persons who should be contacted in the event of any emergency. When such information is not current and an emergency does occur, it can be extremely difficult to locate and contact the proper person on behalf of the employee. In order to avoid such situations, the employee should keep the District Manager supplied with the current information.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

It is the District's policy to provide a drug-free, healthful and safe workplace. To promote this goal, employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner. While on District premises and while conducting business-related activities off District premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.

Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment, and/or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

Employees with questions on this policy or issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace should raise their concerns with the District Manager.

SEPARATION FROM DISTRICT SERVICE

An employee may be permanently separated from the District through resignation, rejection on probation or removal, or may be temporarily separated through layoff, suspension or leave of absence.

RESIGNATION

When an employee decides to leave District service, there are certain procedures designed to protect both the District and the employee. Employees wishing to resign in good standing shall give the

District Manager at least two weeks' notice in writing unless the District Board consents to the employee leaving on a shorter notice.

The employee who has submitted a resignation but fully continues to perform the duties of the position and assists in the training of a replacement, leaves a favorable impression which can influence future success in a positive way.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

If an employee is separated from the District because of layoff or if the appointment terminates, the employee may be eligible for unemployment compensation while looking for another job. If discharged for misconduct or if the employee resigned voluntarily without good cause, or refused a suitable job without good cause, there may be a period of disqualification during which unemployment compensation cannot be paid. The local employment agency or the State Employment Security Administration may be contacted for additional information.

RETURN OF DISTRICT AND/OR NRCS PROPERTY

When employees are separated from the District, they are responsible for returning materials which were assigned to them in the course of their employment. These include items such as calculators, surveying equipment, office equipment, door swipe cards, etc.

EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES

The Board of Supervisors recognizes the fact that the hiring of close relatives can create morale problems among the employees and arouse suspicion of favoritism in assignments, promotions, etc. This applies to close relatives of the Board of Supervisors as well as to other employees.

Given reasonably comparable qualifications of eligible persons, the District Board will refrain from selecting any employee who has a close relative, supervisor or other employee working in the District, regardless of who pays the relative - federal, state, county or district.

If there are compelling reasons to hire a close relative, the employee will be so placed that one close relative does not supervise the other or be in a position to influence the other's promotion, salary or other personnel actions.

The appointment of a new supervisor or changes in personnel, not under the control of the Board of Supervisors, shall in no way affect the status of an existing employee.

For purposes of this policy, close relatives include parents, children, spouse, brothers, sisters, grandparents and grandchildren or another member of the same household.

NONDISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Anne Arundel Soil Conservation District to follow the nondiscrimination provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and other related nondiscrimination statutory provisions, and to provide all soil conservation programs and services on a nondiscrimination basis without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation and marital or family status.

HARASSMENT

Harassment in any form is unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated by the District. In general, harassment is any conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Harassment is defined to include: participating in coercive or repeated, unsolicited and unwelcome verbal comments or gestures; or using implicit or explicit coercive behavior in the process of conducting business, or to control, influence or affect the career, salary or job of an employee.

Harassment includes such unwelcome behavior as: verbal abuse; insults; suggestive, demeaning or degrading comments; jokes, notes or picture displays alluding to race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, veteran status or disability. Harassment may also take the form of physical aggressiveness, threats or other intimidating behaviors.

Sexual harassment is a specific type of harassment based on sex, and is prohibited by Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature such as deliberate, repeated, unsolicited verbal comments, gestures, or physical actions of a sexual nature (e.g. touching, pinching, or patting another person) may constitute sexual harassment. It can also include: verbal abuse, insults, whistles, or suggestive comments; jokes; notes or pictures; touching and physical aggressiveness; pressure for dates; or threats or sexual assault. These rules and guidelines are not confined to the office, but also apply to business trips, meetings and conferences away from the workplace and work related social activities. Persons who believe they are being subjected to harassment should report the incident to the District Manager immediately.

The District Manager will inform the Board of the inappropriate behavior immediately upon receiving the information. If the employee being accused of the inappropriate behavior is the District Manager, the employee experiencing the inappropriate behavior shall notify the Chair of the Board of Supervisors.

TRAVEL

1. DEFINITIONS

- a. In-State Travel - travel to destinations inside the boundaries of Maryland and to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
- b. Out-of-State Travel - travel to destinations outside Maryland and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, including outside the United States.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The District Manager may authorize out-of-state travel for employees and approve requests for travel advances relating to out-of-state travel.

3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- a. Lodging may be approved if traveling more than 50 miles from the District Office.
- b. If possible, the District will pay for lodging and air fare in advance.
- c. A daily per diem will be given to the employee based on current State of Maryland rates. The per diem shall cover meals and incidentals. Meals are defined as breakfast, lunch and dinner. Incidentals are defined as parking fees, taxi fees, registration fees or other fees associated with the District sanctioned event.
- d. All requests for reimbursement must be accompanied by original receipts, with the exception of mileage for a personal vehicle and tips.
- e. If a request for reimbursement relates to expenses provided to other employees or business associates, the name of the individual(s) must be indicated on the expense reimbursement form, with an explanation of the business purpose, and on the back of the original receipt documenting the expense for which reimbursement is requested.
- f. Travel for Out-of-State business will be conducted at the minimum cost necessary to achieve success of the mission. Reservations must be made as far in advance as possible to obtain the lowest logical fares available. Travel in first class or business class is not allowed unless documented evidence clearly indicates the travel is in the best interest of the District. An employee may not participate in any promotional plan, such as a frequent flyer program, when participation entails foregoing a more favorable fare rate. Travel awards accrued under a promotional plan as a result of District business travel will be applied to District business travel expenses whenever feasible.

4. REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

- a. Parking fees and taxi, bus, and airport limousine fares are reimbursable.

Subject to approval by the District Manager, employees may rent cars while on travel when other means of transportation are unavailable, more costly, or impractical. In addition to the cost of the vehicle rental, the employee will be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable expenses not covered under the rental agreement.

- b. Employees will be reimbursed for registration fees relating to conferences, seminars, and the like.
- c. Reasonable and customary tips of up to 15% are reimbursable.
- d. Telephone and postage expenses incurred in the performance of official duties are reimbursable.
- e. When an employee is required to be on travel for a period exceeding five working days, the cost of necessary laundry, cleaning, and pressing is reimbursable.
- f. If incurred as a result of the performance of official duties, fees for passports, visas, and traveler's checks are reimbursable.

g. Reimbursement for use of privately owned vehicles:

- District employees who utilize a privately owned vehicle for District business shall be reimbursed at the State of Maryland mileage reimbursement rate.
- District employees will be reimbursed for parking and toll expenses when appropriate documentation is provided.
- Reimbursable mileage is defined as that mileage in excess of normal commute mileage for the employee if an assigned office is reached at any point during the day.
- A District employee using a privately owned vehicle who leaves the office to conduct District business and returns to the office will be reimbursed for all mileage associated with the business portion of the trip. Any personal or commute mileage shall be deducted. The employee shall submit for mileage reimbursement for mileage driven by providing a printout of Google Maps with the route and mileage shown.
- A District employee who leaves home to conduct District business without stopping at the assigned office during the entire workday will be reimbursed for all mileage associated with the business portion of the trip. Any personal or commute mileage shall be deducted.
- A District employee, who conducts business prior to coming into the office, or on the way home from the office, will be reimbursed for all mileage in excess of the employee's normal commute mileage.
- This policy applies to any normal working day, after hours business travel, and approved business travel on weekends or holidays.
- The District Manager is responsible for ensuring that reimbursement to employees for the use of a privately owned vehicle is controlled and utilized only in the District's best interest.

5. NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

- a. The District will not reimburse an employee for transportation, lodging, meal expenses, or any other costs incurred by a spouse, child, or other person not essential to the business mission who accompanies the employee.
- b. Reimbursement will not be made for the cost of alcoholic beverages.
- c. The District will not reimburse for entertainment (such as the use of athletic facilities, boat trips, skiing, golf, day trips, cable movies, or movie rentals, etc.) unless the activity is an integral part of the conference registration fee or included in the cost of the room.

APPENDIX A

SOIL CONSERVATION EXEMPT CLASSES BY PAY GRADE

PAY GRADE	CLASS TITLE	CLASS CODE	FLSA CODE	NO. OF POSITIONS
ES-01	Soil Conservation Office Assistant	8701	Non-Exempt	0.0
ES-02	Soil Conservation District Secretary	8702	Non-Exempt	1.0
ES-03	Soil Conservation Office Manager	8703	Non-Exempt	1.0
ES-04	Soil Conservation Specialist	8704	Exempt	4.0
ES-05	Senior Soil Conservation Specialist	8705	Exempt	2.0
ES-06	Soil Conservation District Manager	8706	Exempt	1.0
GRAND TOTAL		6 Classes		9.0

APPENDIX B

MDA GRANT EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The District understands the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund Agreement states, on attachment A-2, “Contractual position (s) hired under this grant are eligible for 80 hours of paid time off (PTO) annually in addition to paid State Holidays. PTO is considered use or lose each fiscal year and not eligible for a payout of the unused balance at employment termination.” MDA does not supply salary funding for the grant position upon termination, so funds to pay accumulated leave is not available to the District. The full 80 hours of PTO will be given at the start of employment. Accumulation for part-time employees will be on a pro-rata basis.

The District will offer MDA grant employees 12 holidays, and 13 days on election years. These observed holidays will be:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Washington's Birthday, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Election Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Thanksgiving Friday, Christmas Day.

Any days listed above that are not State holidays are extended to grant positions as county offices are not accessible that day, making it impossible for employees to report to work.

APPENDIX C

For less than 3 years of service as of December 31 st	\$0.00
For 3 to less than 15 years of service as of December 31 st	\$0.00
For 15 years or more of service as of December 31 st	\$0.00