

Cullman County Employee Handbook, Approved February 23, 2016

Changes Effective October 1, 2024:

- Change **Introduction** section. Add the following to paragraph 3: “**Due to the state constitutional nature of the Sheriff’s Office some sections of this Handbook do not pertain to employees of the Cullman County Sheriff’s Office (SO). All SO employees serve at the pleasure of the Sheriff, who exercises sole discretion with respect to all employment matters, and are subject to internal SO policies and procedures.**”
- Change section **I-F. Workplace Rules of Conduct**. Change #5 (Sleeping or giving the appearance of sleeping while on County property or during the time in which the employee is supposed to be working) to #6 and move to paragraph 2. Change #6 (Failure to prepare and submit required reports and/or records in a timely manner) to #5. Change #26 (Multiple or repeated violations of workplace rules of conduct) to #29. Add to paragraph 2: “#26. Using (or attempting to use) position as a County employee for personal gain and/or violation of Alabama Ethics Law; #27. Violation of Fleet Safety Policy; #28. Violation of Data and Cybersecurity Policy, Social Media Policy or Data Breach Notification Policy”. #29. Engaging in any activity that reflects or may reflect negatively on the County, its employees, or its services. #30. Failure to obtain and maintain all licenses and/or certifications required for performance of job duties.
- Change section **I-I. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). (Add Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) to this Section)**. Add the following: “The Cullman County Commission will provide reasonable accommodation to pregnant employees for known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or other related medical conditions in accordance with the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness act (PWFA). The employee must notify the supervisor if an accommodation is required. If the need for a particular accommodation is not obvious, the employee may be asked to include relevant information such as: The reason an accommodation is needed; A description of the proposed accommodation; How the accommodation will address limitations caused by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Cullman County Commission will not require the employee to accept any accommodation without engaging in the interactive process to accurately understand the limitations and explore potential accommodations. Cullman County Commission is not required to make the specific requested accommodation and is not required to provide any accommodation that would constitute an undue hardship on the Cullman County Commission. If leave is provided as a reasonable accommodation, it may run concurrently with leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and/or any other leave where permitted by law.”
- Change section **I-T. Promotions**. Replace the third sentence in paragraph five with the following: “If the employee’s performance during the probationary period does not meet acceptable standards, he or she may be reassigned back to the position they held prior to the promotion (if that position is available) or he or she may be assigned to a position comparable to the job he or she held prior to the promotion, if one is available, otherwise the employee will be terminated. Any reassignment will result in a pay change to be determined on an individual case by case basis. See Section I-U. Transfers and Reassignments for more information.”
- Change section **I-U. Transfers and Reassignments (Add Reclassifications to this Section)**. Delete sentence four (last sentence) in paragraph three. Replace with the Following: “Pay changes as the result of a transfer, reassignment or reclassification will be determined on an individual case by case basis considering the employee’s skill set, current rate of pay, the rate of pay of employees currently serving in the position that the employee is transferring to (who have a similar skill set, length of service, etc.) and other factors.”
- Change section **I-V. Voluntary Demotions**. Delete sentence four (last sentence) in paragraph one. Replace with the following: “All voluntary demotions will result in a pay change to be determined on an individual case by case

basis considering the employee's skill set, current rate of pay, the rate of pay of employees currently serving in the position that the employee is transferring to (who have a similar skill set, length of service, etc.) and other factors.”

- Change section **I-FF. Employee Assistance Program Policy**. Add the following to Referrals 1. Self-Referral: “Employees are encouraged to seek assistance through the EAP for any issues regarding substance abuse. Asking for assistance after a positive drug and/or alcohol test will not negate any disciplinary actions against the employee (up to and including immediate termination of employment).”
- Change section **II.N. Breaks**. Add the following: “In compliance with the federal Pump for Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP), the Cullman County Commission will provide nursing mothers reasonable break time to express milk for their infant child for up to one year following the child's birth. If you are nursing, you will be provided with a space, other than a restroom), that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public. Expressed milk can be stored in refrigerators provided in the lactation room. You may also bring a personal cooler for storage. Break time should, if possible, be taken concurrently with any other break time already provided. If you are nonexempt (paid hourly), you may be required to clock in and out/record the start and end time for any time taken that does not run concurrently with normally scheduled rest periods. You must make reasonable efforts to not disrupt you department's operations. You are encouraged to discuss the length and frequency of these breaks with your supervisor or manager. The Cullman County Commission will not discriminate or retaliate against employees who express milk in the workplace in accordance with the federal PUMP Act.”
- Change section **III-D. Involuntary Demotions**. Delete sentence two (last sentence) in Item #1. Replace with the following: “Depending on the individual circumstances of the involuntary demotion, no progressive discipline will be followed prior to the demotion. Pay changes as the result of an involuntary demotion for cause will be determined on an individual case by case basis considering the employee's skill set, current rate of pay, the rate of pay of employees currently serving in the position that the employee is transferring to (who have a similar skill set, length of service, etc.) and other factors.” Add the following to Item #2: “Pay changes as the result of an involuntary demotion due to a reduction in force will be determined on an individual case by case basis considering the employee's skill set, current rate of pay, the rate of pay of employees currently serving in the position that the employee is transferring to (who have a similar skill set, length of service, etc.) and other factors.”
- Change section **III-E. Terminations**. Change #1.h (Any other infraction when termination is determined to be in the best interest of the County) to #1.l. Add the following: “1.h-Using (or attempting to use) position as a County employee for personal gain and/or violation of Alabama Ethics Law; 1.i-Abuse of Power. Instructing a subordinate to do something in violation of County Policy; 1.j-Violation of Fleet Safety Policy; 1.k-Violation of Data and Cybersecurity Policy, Social Media Policy or Data Breach Notification Policy.” Delete #2.g and #2.h.
- Change section **IV-J. Administrative Leave with Pay**. Add the following; “Any investigation that goes beyond ten (10) days that may require an extension of administrative leave with pay will be considered on a case by case basis and must be approved/acknowledged by the County Commission.”
- Change section **V-0. Benefits Due at Retirement**. Add “Tier II employees receiving Tier 1 benefits” to sentence 1 in paragraph 1. Remove sentence 2 in paragraph 1. Add “Tier II employees receiving Tier 1 benefits” to sentence 1 in paragraph 2. Remove paragraph 3.
- Change section **VI-A. Ethical Conduct**. Add the following to paragraph one; “Violations of the Alabama Ethics Law will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.”
- Change section **VII-E. Workers Compensation Payments**. Delete sentence three (last sentence) in paragraph two. Replace with the following: “The current limits (effective 7/1/2024) are a minimum of \$311 per week and a maximum of \$1130 per week.”

- Change section **VII-N. Alcohol and Drugs – Drug Free Workplace Policy**. Add the following to #23. Employee Assessment; “Any employee who tests positive for the presence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol above the minimum thresholds set forth in 49 CFR Part 40, as amended or has refused to submit to a drug or alcohol test will be subject to the county disciplinary policies up to and including immediate termination of employment.” Add the following to #24. Employee Assistance Program (EAP); “Employees are encouraged to seek assistance through the EAP for any issues regarding substance abuse. Asking for assistance after a positive drug and/or alcohol test will not negate any disciplinary actions against the employee (up to and including immediate termination of employment).”
- Change section **VII-O. Fleet Safety Policy**. Replace Driver Eligibility section with the following:

Driver Eligibility

- County vehicles are to be driven by authorized employees only, except in emergencies, or in case of repair testing by an outside mechanic. Spouses and other family members are not authorized to drive the County vehicle.
- Authorized employees are defined as all county employees whose driving record is in compliance with the County Vehicle Fleet Safety Policy and have consented to an annual MVR check.
- Any employee who has a driver’s license revoked or suspended shall immediately notify his or her Supervisor and the Safety Department, and **discontinue operation of the county vehicle**. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.
- All vehicular accidents, regardless of severity, must be reported to the police and to your Supervisor and the Safety Department. Failing to stop after an accident and/or failure to report an accident may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal. This includes accidents involving your personal vehicle in order to determine continued driver eligibility.
- Drivers must immediately report all summons (tickets/citations) received for any Type A or Type B moving violations (as defined below) during the operation of a county or non-county vehicle to your Supervisor and the Safety Department.
- All CDL drivers must comply with all applicable DOT regulations, including successful completion of medical, drug and alcohol evaluations.
- Motor Vehicle Records (MVR) will be ordered annually and/or when prompted by self-report of citation, accident, etc. to assess all authorized employees’ driving records. These records will be reviewed for compliance with the requirements of this policy. An unfavorable record and/or record violating the requirements of this policy, will result in loss of the privilege of driving a County vehicle.
- Any county employee refusing to consent to an MVR will automatically be excluded from driving a county vehicle. Proper documentation will be required acknowledging this restriction (to be signed by the employee, the Supervisor and the Safety Department).

Add extenuating circumstances to three (3) or more accidents in the last three (3) years for non-moving (parked vehicle) accidents. Add Exemption for Law Enforcement/Sheriff’s Office.