



## Workplace Relationships

Administrative Regulation | Workplace Respect, Inclusion & Support | #1.04

---

Effective Date: March 23, 2021  
Revised Date: February 5, 2025  
Supersedes: February 15, 2024

---

**Note:** Terms that are ***bolded and italicized*** the first time they appear in this regulation are defined below. After the first occurrence, defined terms appear in *italics only*.

### Purpose

To foster a positive and professional work environment that supports ***employee*** well-being and minimizes real or perceived conflicts of interest.

### Scope

This regulation applies to all City employees, volunteers, and elected officials.

### Policy

*Employees* are encouraged to consider any possible ***conflict of interest*** before entering a ***personal relationship*** with coworkers. *Employees* who enter a *personal relationship* with a colleague must maintain professionalism and keep personal matters separate from workplace interaction. *Employees* in ***supervisory*** roles must not engage in *personal relationships* with those they supervise or whose employment conditions they may influence, including decisions related to hiring, promoting, disciplining and compensating.

The City also prohibits relationships between individuals in inherently unequal positions where one party has real or perceived authority, influence, or power over the other's employment conditions or career progression, includes both formal and informal *supervisory* relationships.

### Procedure

#### 1. Disclosure Requirements

- a. *Employees* who enter into a *personal relationship* with a colleague must promptly inform their direct *supervisor*.
- b. *Employees* who become aware of a *supervisor* engaging in *personal relationships* with someone in their ***chain of supervision*** must report it to Human Resources (HR).

#### 2. Professionalism in the Workplace

- a. *Employees* must maintain professional conduct and refrain from behaviors that may make

others uncomfortable, such as public displays of affection, flirting, or inappropriate language.

- b. Management personnel are expected to model appropriate professional behavior in all work-related settings and avoid behaviors that could be perceived as inappropriate or unprofessional.

### **3. Addressing Workplace Impact**

- a. When a *personal relationship* is disclosed, HR and department leadership will assess and address any potential conflicts. Steps may include, but are not limited to:
  - (1) Reassignment of one *employee* to another department role.
  - (2) Removing a *supervisor* from decision-making authority over the other *employee*.
- b. If a *supervisor* relationship exists between two *employees* in a *personal relationship*, the City and the *employees* will explore potential transfer options. If no suitable solution is available:
  - (1) One *employee* must resign within 180 days of notification.
  - (2) The City may adjust *supervisory* reporting relationship to maintain impartiality.
  - (3) If no alternative position is available, the *supervisor* may be subject to a demotion or, at the discretion of the City Manager, termination.
- c. *Employees* involved in a *personal relationship* may be asked to sign an acknowledgment confirming their understanding of workplace expectations.

### **4. Guidelines for Supervisors**

- a. *Supervisors* must recognize that *personal relationships* with subordinates can lead to concerns about favoritism, misuse of authority, or workplace discomfort.
- b. *Supervisors* should avoid social interactions with direct reports that could be perceived as inappropriate or compromise workplace integrity.

### **5. Prior Relationships**

- a. If a *supervisor* has had a prior relationship with a subordinate, they should not participate in employment decisions affecting that individual, whenever possible.

### **6. Non-retaliation**

- a. The City prohibits retaliation against *employees* who report concerns or participate in investigations related to this policy.
  - (I) Any retaliatory conduct will result in discipline, up to and including termination.

## **Definitions**

<b>Term:</b>	<b>Definition</b>
--------------	-------------------

---

<b>Chain of Supervision:</b>	The reporting structure in which an employee has direct or indirect <i>supervisory</i> authority over another employee.
<b>Conflict of Interest:</b>	<p>A situation in which an employee’s personal interests, relationships, or activities could interfere (or appear to interfere) with their ability to make fair, impartial, and objective decisions in the course of their work. This includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial gain or benefit from City decisions,</li> <li>• Outside employment or business activities that overlap with City responsibilities,</li> </ul> <p>Family or <i>personal relationships</i> that influence (or appear to influence) work decisions.</p>
<b>Employee:</b>	Any individual performing work for the City, including regular employees, elected officials, volunteers, and interns. For the purposes of this regulation, the term does not include independent contractors unless specifically stated.
<b>Personal Relationship:</b>	A relationship involving dating, cohabitation, domestic partnership, family ties (such as parent, child, sibling, or other close relatives), or any intimate or financial connection within the past twelve (12) months. This includes, but is not limited to, romantic involvement, shared living arrangements, financial dependency, or familial relationships that could create real or perceived conflicts of interest in the workplace.
<b>Supervisor:</b>	Any individual who has responsibility for overseeing, directing, or evaluating the work of another employee. This includes, but is not limited to, team leads, managers, and directors. A supervisor may exercise either formal authority (assigned through an official job title or role) or functional authority (temporary or project-based oversight, regardless of title).

## Related Resources

### Administrative Regulations:

- [Standards of Conduct](#)
- [Hiring of Family Members](#)
- [Respectful Place to Work](#)