



**Office of Human Resources  
Standard Operating Procedure  
HR SOP #401**

**Subject:** Employee Conduct

**Effective Date:** March 1, 2018

**Policy Statement:**

The Department encourages a congenial work environment of respect and professionalism. Due to the important mission of the agency of managing and conserving Georgia's natural and cultural resources and its responsibility to the citizens of Georgia, the agency has established standards for employee conduct. Agency employees are required to conduct themselves in accordance with these rules and in a professional and ethical manner at all times in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, regulations and agency policies, procedures and standards. Employees will demonstrate good judgement and not engage in any activity that reflects adversely on the Department or State government service.

**Definitions:**

None.

**Procedure:**

The listed prohibitions in this procedure are not exhaustive. Employees must review, familiarize themselves and comply with all Department Standard Operating Procedures and local operating procedures. The prohibited activities below may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Since the list activities listed below are not intended to be a comprehensive list, the agency may impose discipline, up to and including, termination for violations or inappropriate conduct not listed below. This procedure does not alter the employment-at-will relationship between you and the Department of Natural Resources.

Employees must comply with all lawful requests and directives issued by those above within their chain of command.

General Prohibitions:

- Engaging in acts of dishonesty, fraud, theft or sabotage.
- Stealing or misappropriation of cash or cash equivalents.
- Fighting, horseplay or practical jokes or other conduct that might endanger or disrupt people on department premises.
- Insubordination, including refusal to work on an assigned task, refusal to comply with instructions and or policy.

- Failure to collaborate or interfering with the job performance of other employees.
- Failure to treat colleagues and the general public with respect and courtesy.

### Ethics:

It shall be prohibited for any employee of the Department to:

- Use, or permit the use of, State property for any activity other than official business;
- Use any privileged information gained through the performance of official duties for any personal advantage;
- Exert any influence by virtue of his/her employment with the Department for any personal advantage;
- Represent the Department as a spokesperson for any policy or position of the Department without express authorization from the appropriate authorities;
- Accept gifts or favors from any non-employee whose business interacts with, or is regulated by, the Department;
- Conduct personal business while on official duty, unless specifically authorized; or
- Engage in any behavior prohibited by the *Governor's Executive Order Establishing Code of Ethics for Executive Branch Officers and Employees* (Attachment 1).

### Workplace Violence:

The Department strives to provide a safe workplace for all employees.

Workplace violence committed by or against employees is not tolerated. The exception is law enforcement personnel in good faith performance of their official duties. Employees are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities in the workplace.

This list of behaviors, while not exclusive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited in the workplace:

- Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person;
- Verbally abusing others;
- Aggressive or hostile behavior or making threatening remarks that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person;
- Damaging employer property or property of another person; or
- Making malicious, false or harmful statements about others.

Any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to a supervisor or to the DNR Human Resources Director.

### Attendance:

Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to the operation of the agency. Excessive employee absences, tardiness or job abandonment are prohibited. Employees must remain in contact with their supervisor and request time off as required.

### Drugs and Alcohol:

The Department intends to provide a safe and drug-free work environment for our employees and customers. Therefore, the Department explicitly prohibits:

- The manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, unauthorized drugs, inhalants, or other controlled substances during an employee's working hours or while on State premises or worksites.
- Use or abuse of illegal drugs at any time. Impairment or being under the influence of illegal drugs may adversely affect work performance, the safety of other employees, or reflect negatively on the reputation of the Department.
- Entering, working, or remaining on Department work premises, operating Department vehicles (whether owned, leased or rented), or representing the Department in any capacity while under the influence of illegal drugs, inhalants, or alcohol.
- Consuming alcoholic beverages while on duty or being intoxicated while on duty, in uniform, or while operating a State vehicle or equipment or procuring, handling or transporting intoxicating beverages in a State vehicle or equipment.

An employee using legally obtained drugs must notify his/her supervisor and obtain prior authorization before operating a vehicle on Department business or reporting to work if the use of the drug(s) could impair the employee's ability to perform his/her job safely. The unauthorized use of legally obtained drugs (including drugs prescribed by a health care professional) that may adversely affect job performance or safety is prohibited.

### Drug Free Workplace Notice:

The preceding bulleted items and paragraph meet the requirement that the Department inform its employees of the State's Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Program. Also see DNR SOP HR201, *Drug Testing Program* and SOP HR202, *Alcohol Testing Program* for details regarding required employee drug and alcohol testing.

### Secondary Employment:

Agency employees must avoid secondary employment activities and/or relationships that conflict with the State's interests; create a perception of impropriety; or adversely affects the State's or DNR's reputation.

Employees must obtain permission for a secondary job, whether self-employed or employed by another, prior to accepting such employment. New employees, who are engaged in secondary employment at the time of their employment with the Department, must request permission to continue such employment.

See DNR SOP HR203, *Secondary Employment* for additional information.

### Nepotism:

No employee shall advocate for or cause the advancement, appointment, employment, promotion, demotion or transfer of a family member or someone with whom they have a special relationship to a position within the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. See DNR SOP HR204, *Employment of Family Members/Special Relationship* for additional information.

### Agency IT Resources:

No employee shall use the agency's information technology resources for purposes other than official agency business. See DNR SOP HR404, *Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources* for additional information.

### Equal Employment Opportunity:

In employment actions, agency employees must not harass, discriminate or retaliate against any applicant or employee based upon legally-protected status. See DNR SOP HR504, *Equal Employment Opportunity*, and SOP HR506, *Americans with Disabilities Act and Americans with Disabilities Act Amended* for more information.

### Harassment:

Harassment of employees, customers, vendors or applicants relating to an individual's race, color, sex/gender (including same sex), religion, age, national origin, disability or citizenship status is prohibited. See DNR SOP HR505, *Harassment* for additional information.

### Social Media:

The personal use of these media during work time and the posting of information that could harm the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is prohibited. See DNR SOP HR405, *Appropriate Use of Social Media Networks* for additional information.

### Safety:

Employees will adhere to agency safety procedures. See DNR SOP HR902, *Workplace Safety* for additional information.

DNR is responsible for assuring the health and safety of all employees. Animals may pose a threat of infection and may cause allergic reactions in other employees. Some employees may feel threatened or be distracted by the presence of animals. Therefore, employees are prohibited from bringing pets to work or having a pet in DNR controlled buildings with the exception of working animals such as a law enforcement K-9 or a service animal for a person with a disability. Service animals must be an authorized job accommodation approved by the Office of Human Resources and must not create a danger to others or impose an undue hardship to DNR.

### Notice Requirements:

Employees are required to notify their immediate supervisor of any arrests, convictions, and dispositions of criminal cases by the next business day after the occurrence. The employee shall provide the supervisor with a signed written explanation of the facts of the situation within 72 hours. Supervisors must report this information up the chain of command immediately.

### Consequences:

Any employee who violates this policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment. Any employee, who engages in unlawful drug use or the inappropriate use of alcohol, may be required to satisfactorily participate in a drug or alcohol abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1 - *Governor's Executive Order Establishing Code of Ethics for Executive Branch Officers and Employees*