

*.....from the mountain headwaters
to the delta lowlands.....*



Employee Handbook

"Our Watershed – Our Responsibility"

Revised April 9, 2015

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WORK PHILOSOPHIES

1. **Business Code of Conduct**

1.1. Philosophy

The Athabasca Watershed Council (AWC-WPAC) is committed to operating at a professional level at all times and creating a work environment with high standards and integrity.

1.2. Code of Business Conduct

The Code of Business Conduct applies to anyone who has a working relationship of any kind with the AWC-WPAC.

The Code of Business Conduct must be followed at all times while acting in any capacity as a representative of the AWC-WPAC, whether within normal business hours or not.

Employees must always:

- Carry out business dealings in a fair, consistent and honourable manner.
- Act with integrity and without any form of prejudice or favouritism.
- Consider the interests of the AWC-WPAC first in all business transactions.
- Make purchases on behalf of the AWC-WPAC without prejudice and at maximum value.
- Avoid using their connection with the AWC-WPAC or authority for any form of personal gain.
- Deal with utmost honesty and integrity and never participate in improper or questionable business practices.
- Comply 100% with all laws.
- Enter only into contractual obligations which are in the best interests of the AWC-WPAC.

Any infraction of the above Business Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

2. **Conflict of Interest**

2.1. Philosophy

Employees of the Athabasca Watershed Council are expected to uphold the Code of Business Conduct at all times with respect to any dealings on behalf of the AWC-WPAC. To do this, Employees are expected to think and act independently when it relates to company business versus their personal business. One should not influence the other.

Conflicts of Interests must be avoided at all times. Conflicts of interest arise whenever the personal, professional or business interests of an Employee are potentially at odds with the interests of the AWC-WPAC.

Employees must be aware of the potential for a conflict of interest and should avoid being put in a situation where there may be a conflict between the interests of the AWC-WPAC and their own personal or professional interests, or those of relatives or friends.

Where such a conflict occurs or is perceived to occur, the interests of AWC-WPAC will be balanced against the interests of the staff member, and unless exceptional circumstances exist, the conflict will be resolved in favour of the AWC-WPAC.

2.2. Procedure Regarding Conflicts of Interest:

- Declare any potential, actual or perceived conflicts of interest that exist on becoming employed with the AWC-WPAC;
- Declare any potential, actual or perceived conflicts of interest that arise or are likely to arise during employment by the AWC-WPAC; and
- Avoid being placed in a situation where there is potential, actual or perceived conflict of interest if all possible.

If an Employee declares a conflict, the AWC-WPAC will review the potential conflict with the Employee and mutually agree on practical arrangements to resolve it.

Employees must disclose any other employment that may cause a conflict of interest with the AWC-WPAC. Alternative employment must not affect performance or attendance whilst working at the AWC-WPAC. If such involvement does affect performance or attendance it will be considered a conflict of interest.

To avoid conflicts of interest:

- Employees will not benefit personally from any AWC-WPAC business transaction.
- Employees will keep any information regarding financial matters, plans, upcoming business ventures, clients, prospects and any other confidential AWC-WPAC information internal and will not disclose to anyone other than AWC-WPAC Employees who need to have this information.
- Employees will disclose any relationship they have with an outside vendor, business partner, or anyone with a potential business relationship with AWC-WPAC to the Administrator or Executive Committee.
- Employees will not use their connection with the AWC-WPAC or their authority for any form of personal gain.
- Employees will not accept any form of bribery or personal payment of any kind in return for a business transaction.
- Employees will discuss with the Administrator or Executive Committee any potential conflict of interest.

Entering into a conflict of interest situation will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

3. Harassment and Violence Policy

3.1. Philosophy

The AWC-WPAC strives to provide all staff and visitors with a safe, healthy, and pleasant working environment. No form of violence, aggression or otherwise inappropriate behaviour is tolerated.

3.2. Definitions

Harassment is any unwanted physical or verbal conduct that offends or humiliates an individual. Such conduct can interfere with a person's ability to do a job or obtain a service. Harassment is a type of discrimination. It can take many forms, such as:

- Threats, intimidation, or verbal abuse;
- Unwelcome remarks about a person's sex, race, religion, disability or age;
- Displaying sexist, racist or other offensive pictures or posters;
- Sexually suggestive remarks or gestures;
- Inappropriate physical contact, such as touching, patting, pinching or punching;
- Yelling, screaming, swearing or similar behaviour aimed at intimidating, frightening, coercing or offending those at whom it is directed;
- Physical assault, including sexual assault.

Harassment can consist of a single incident or several incidents over a period of time.

Aggression or violence is any occurrence in which an Employee is mentally or physically molested, threatened or attacked during or in direct connection with the work.

If any Employee feels they are a victim or witness of harassment, aggression, violence or otherwise inappropriate behaviour in the workplace or during work related activities, please contact the Administrator immediately for assistance. If an Employee is not comfortable contacting the Administrator, the AWC-WPAC President or other Executive Committee member may be contacted. Any report of this nature will be taken seriously and will be documented. Depending on the degree of seriousness of the situation, the Employee may choose and/or be directed by the AWC-WPAC to report the offence to the R.C.M.P. In such cases, the law will always take precedence over any in-house disciplinary action.

Upon being informed, the Administrator or member of the Executive Committee will assure that the complaint is investigated fairly and confidentially, and that it is resolved promptly and effectively.

All actions taken through internal investigations must be conducted impartially, consistent with the needs of the investigation, and to the extent possible, will be handled confidentially. The Employee will be advised of the findings and conclusion. Any other Employee who is found, after an investigation, to have engaged in harassment of another Employee will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of Employment.

4. Substance Abuse

4.1. Guidelines

Smoking and the use of drugs and alcohol are not allowed on AWC-WPAC premises. AWC-WPAC Employees may not use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on AWC-WPAC premises or while conducting any business-related activity away from AWC-WPAC premises.

The moderate use of alcohol during social business situations such as business dinners, parties and trips is allowed. However, Employees should use caution and always ensure they have a designated driver or take a cab and the AWC-WPAC will reimburse the expense.

Please also keep in mind that during these social events, Employees may be interacting with colleagues, vendors or clients. They will be an ambassador for the organization and are expected to behave as such at all times. Alcohol abuse in business related situations is not acceptable and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

An Employee may use legally prescribed drugs on the job only if these drugs do not impair ability to perform essential job functions effectively and safely without endangering or encumbering the Employee or other people.

It is the Employee's responsibility to advise AWC-WPAC and/or seek treatment before alcohol or substance abuse affects their workplace conduct, performance, or attendance. Should an Employee suspect that someone is under the influence of alcohol or drugs and may present a safety hazard, please notify the Administrator or Executive Committee immediately.

Any violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment. If employment is not terminated, participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program may be required.

5. Privacy

5.1. Philosophy

The AWC-WPAC collects personal information about Employees and Board members for legitimate purposes, including the administration of the employment relationship or where otherwise required or permitted by law. AWC-WPAC Administration and Executive Committee are responsible to ensure that all personal information collected remains confidential until it is purged from the records of the AWC-WPAC.

The AWC-WPAC follows the guidelines of the *Personal Information Protection Act*. Employees and Board members have the right to request to see their personal information, and should address such requests to AWC-WPAC Administration or Executive Committee.

5.2. Guidelines

If an Employee's or Board member's personal information changes, they must provide AWC-WPAC Administration or Executive Committee with updated and current information. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, data provided for payroll and emergency purposes, such as Social Insurance Number, marital status, name and number of dependents, health information, phone numbers, home address etc.

The AWC-WPAC will release an Employee's or a Board member's personal information to third parties only with the Employee's or Board member's consent or where otherwise required at law.

The AWC-WPAC will not provide reference information beyond verifying dates of employment or last position held, without the Employee's or Board member's written permission.

The AWC-WPAC recognizes and respects each Employee's and Board member's right to privacy. To maintain this right, we have adopted these basic principles:

- The AWC-WPAC collects only personal information that is reasonably required for business, personnel, and legal purposes.
- Records containing the personal information collected from Employees or Board members will be maintained securely to protect the privacy of the individual.
- Internal access to Employee records will be limited to those Employees having an authorized, business-related, "need-to-know".
- Anyone with access to personal information is required to adhere to all privacy legislation policies and practices.
- Access to personal records by third parties, including law enforcement and other governmental agencies, is provided only pursuant to statutory authority such as court order or subpoena.
- The AWC-WPAC will not release an Employee's or a Board member's personal information to outside sources without the Employee's or Board member's written consent, unless otherwise required by law.
- An Employee or Board member is authorized to access their own personal information in AWC-WPAC records. Individuals may submit documentation to correct inaccuracies or provide written comments in disagreement with any material contained in their personal records.
- The personal information in possession of the AWC-WPAC is destroyed when it is no longer required by legal standards.
- If anyone violates legislation or policy, disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment will be taken.

AT THE WORKPLACE

6. Hiring

6.1. Philosophy

The Athabasca Watershed Council strives to hire the most qualified individuals in a fair and equitable manner for positions within its organization.

6.2. Guidelines

The AWC-WPAC hires all permanent Employees dependent upon qualifications after the position has been publicly advertised for a period of no less than two (2) weeks in newspapers and online job boards. All advertisements for positions should contain minimum education and experience requirements, as well as a request that prospective candidates hold at least a Class 5 Driver's Licence. This is to facilitate travel to and from the AWC-WPAC's frequent meetings and/or outreach engagements.

6.3. New Hire Requirements

All new hires will be required to provide the AWC-WPAC with a current Driver's Abstract and clear Criminal Record Check.

6.4. Probationary Period

The first three (3) months of employment are probationary. During this probationary period, both parties will have the opportunity to assess suitability for employment.

At any time during the probationary period, the Employee or the AWC-WPAC can terminate the employment relationship without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

The probationary period may be extended for an additional three (3) months at the discretion of the Administrator or Executive Committee. Should the AWC-WPAC determine that the additional three (3) month probationary term is required; such an extension will be communicated to the Employee in writing with sufficient reason for the action.

During any such extended probationary period, employment may be terminated in accordance with the terms of this Handbook or in accordance with the Employee's employment agreement if applicable. However, an Employee's failure to meet the expectations of employment during such an extended probationary period will constitute just cause for dismissal, on which cause the AWC-WPAC may choose to rely.

7. Training

7.1. Philosophy

The AWC-WPAC fully endorses furthering an Employee's skill set with company-provided training. Employees will receive such training that is reasonably required to carry out their duties and responsibilities.

7.2. Guidelines

Employees may request to be provided with external training. Only training and educational activities that are reasonably connected to an Employee's roles and responsibilities are eligible for sponsorship by the AWC-WPAC.

If an Employee would like the AWC-WPAC to sponsor any training or work-related educational activities, they must provide a written request to the Administrator or Executive Committee. At a minimum, such a request should detail the nature of the training, the total and all-inclusive cost of the training, and how the training is related to the Employee's roles and responsibilities.

This request will then be taken up with the Administrator or Executive Committee for their approval. This training or education shall not exceed the amount specified in the annual budget. Ultimately, the decision to approve or not to approve training rests with the Executive Committee at its sole discretion.

In the event that a request for training under this Policy is approved, the Employee may be required to execute a Return Service Agreement in a form to be provided prior to commencing the training.

8. Company Technology Use, Security and Safety

8.1. Information Security

The integrity and security of AWC-WPAC information is fundamental to the organization's success. However, the systems are only a good as the manner in which they are used.

The AWC-WPAC expects all Employees to make an effort to stay informed about what can be done to safeguard our information. Information security is everyone's responsibility.

8.2. Data Collection and Classification

Use data collected and stored on the AWC-WPAC computer systems for only the purpose for which it was originally collected. Data stored on any AWC-WPAC computer systems must not be copied or stored externally without the prior approval of an immediate supervisor.

The AWC-WPAC strongly supports strict adherence to all software vendors' license agreements. The use of unlicensed or pirated software on any AWC-WPAC computer system is prohibited and a failure to adhere to this policy will result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

8.3. User Account and Password Management

Access to the AWC-WPAC computer systems is controlled by usernames and passwords. Each Employee will be provided with a user account and password.

8.4. Internet Access

If an Employee has a valid user account they will have access to the Internet. The AWC-WPAC monitors online usage at any given time. Unless otherwise approved, an Employee may not establish modems, Internet, or other external network connections to the AWC-WPAC systems.

8.5. Virus Protection

Licensed virus checking and cleansing software is installed on all desktop and laptop systems. These programs are to be updated daily, internet access permitting. Employees may not sell or transfer any AWC-WPAC computer software, documentation, or any other types of internal information to any third party.

8.6. Inappropriate Use of Office Equipment

Use all organization-owned equipment for organization business purposes. The AWC-WPAC understands there may be some occasions where it is necessary to conduct personal business during the work day and that an Employee may require access to a scanner, etc., however, inappropriate use of organization-owned equipment may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

This policy also applies to organization-owned equipment for home or telecommuting use.

8.7. Long Distance Calls

Long distance calls are often necessary to complete AWC-WPAC work; however, Employees should treat each call as if they were paying for it themselves and only engage in long distance calls where reasonably necessary. Employees should use e-mail to communicate whenever possible or appropriate.

Personal long distance calls are not permitted on AWC-WPAC telephones. If an Employee must make a personal long distance call, the AWC-WPAC asks that they keep these calls to a minimum during business hours and that they use their personal calling card or cell phone to make the call.

8.8. Security

All Employees are provided a key to the office and a key to the office building. All the file cabinets and desk drawers in the office have locks and they must all be locked when not being used and when the office is closed.

If an Employee is alone in the office outside of regularly scheduled work hours, we ask that you keep all doors locked at all times. This safeguard is designed to protect your personal safety and AWC-WPAC property. The Employee who is working alone in the office must ensure that the Administrator or Executive Committee or another designated person knows that he/she is working alone and that he/she can communicate with any of these persons in case of emergency.

If someone an Employee does not recognize comes to the office or building door, they should not let the person in until it is ascertained they are on legitimate business. An Employee also has the right to ask that they come back during regular business hours.

8.9. Safety

Everyone wants to stay healthy and avoid accidents at work. In most cases, using good judgement ensures safety. If someone becomes seriously ill or injured at work, call 911. Employees should report any potential health or safety hazard to the Administrator or Executive Committee.

8.10. Office Safety Tips

Using good judgement ensures the safety of yourself and others:

- Walk; don't run, up and down stairs.
- Do not overload or put heavy objects on top of filing cabinets.
- Wipe up all liquids spilled on floors immediately.
- Don't lift heavy objects by yourself.
- Don't leave file drawers open and unattended.

Employees should notify the Administrator or Executive Committee and/or the building manager immediately if they notice anything that may pose a safety hazard at work.

If an accident does occur while an Employee is working, they must report it immediately to the Administrator or Executive Committee. Every accident or injury must be reported, no matter how small it may seem at the time.

If medical treatment is required, the Employee may go to his/her own personal physician or a hospital emergency room. If they are unable to drive to the doctor or hospital, someone from the AWC-WPAC will attempt to ensure safe and timely transportation, either by ambulance or private vehicle, as the situation may require.

In cases where medical treatment is required, the Employee should inform the Administrator or Executive Committee as soon as possible.

8.11. Administration and Board Responsibilities

The AWC-WPAC Administration and Board of Directors are responsible for reviewing safety procedures with new hires, investigating all safety concerns and taking prompt action as required.

9. Expense Claims and Business Travel

9.1. Philosophy

The AWC-WPAC recognizes the necessity of business travel and provides the following guidelines to ensure consistency of practice and control of incurred expenses.

9.2. Definition

In general, business related expenses must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for reimbursement:

- The expense must be directly related to the performance of duties on behalf of the AWC-WPAC and be supported with receipts and business reasons; and
- Expenses must not be excessive in terms of value as an acceptable business expense.

9.3. Meals

While traveling on business, without a receipt, an Employee may claim personal meal allowances as outlined on the AWC-WPAC expense forms. Meals may also be eligible for general reimbursement, provided they are not excessive. Meals expensed for the purpose of entertaining clients or stakeholders require receipts with details of the person(s) being entertained. It is preferable, in all cases, for Employees to obtain prior approval before arranging to entertain clients or stakeholders. Employees are expected to exercise good judgement in purchasing reimbursable meals. The Employee will bear the cost of alcoholic beverages.

9.4. Accommodations

Employees are to book all accommodations in advance. Additional accommodation charges such as long distance calls will be the Employee's responsibility unless they can be demonstrated to be reasonably required to conduct AWC-WPAC business.

9.5. Air Travel

Employees are encouraged to make reservations as far in advance as possible to gain full advantage of the lowest or discounted fares. Any fares including substantial penalties for cancellation or changes should be used only when travel plans are not likely to change. In all cases, the most economical fare must be used.

9.6. Auto Rentals

Employees should rent vehicles in the name of the AWC-WPAC so that in the event the rented vehicle is damaged, whether due to the theft, collision, vandalism or any other cause, the AWC-WPAC will cover the costs.

It is not necessary to take out the additional insurance coverage offered by rental agencies unless the Employee will be using the vehicle for personal use as well as for business. In this case, the extra insurance is the Employee's responsibility. If the Employee is renting a vehicle outside of North America or is uneasy or unfamiliar at all about the driving conditions, they should purchase additional insurance and the AWC-WPAC will cover the cost; this is left up to the Employee's judgement.

Rental vehicles should be refuelled whenever possible prior to check-in, thereby minimizing excessive fuel charges.

9.7. Use of Personal Vehicles

If it is more economical for an Employee to use their personal vehicle while on AWC-WPAC business, they must ensure that the vehicle is properly insured with full, valid insurance coverage.

When travelling on official business, Employees must keep a detailed log of kilometres travelled. They will be reimbursed for business travel as outlined on the applicable AWC-WPAC expense form. On a voluntary basis, Employees may charge a lower rate for mileage, the difference being reflected as an in-kind contribution to the WPAC.

9.8. Travel Advances

With the approval of the Administrator or Executive Committee, Employees may receive a cash advance for special travel circumstances.

10. Expenses

10.1. Submitting Expenses

Employee Expense Claims must be completed and submitted within one month following completion of business trips or when personal expenditures are made on behalf of the AWC-WPAC. Any expense claims over three months past their occurrence may be considered an in-kind contribution to the AWC-WPAC and will only be reimbursed in extenuating circumstances.

Employees must provide receipts for all expenses in cases where receipts are normally available, such as for hotel accommodation, transportation, gas, meals, etc.

10.2. Approval of Expenses

The Administrator or Treasurer approves Employee Expense Claims. The Treasurer approves the Administrator's Expense Claims. Any expenses that are not approved and are considered outside the guidelines of this policy are the Employee's responsibility.

11. Personal Activities During Work Hours

11.1. Philosophy

This policy describes what is meant by “appropriate levels” of personal activities during work hours. The AWC-WPAC defines appropriate levels of personal activities during working hours as no more than fifteen (15) minutes per day.

Remember, this is a paid benefit of the AWC-WPAC, and we trust in an Employee’s ability to work within in these guidelines. It is the responsibility of the Employee to ensure that such activities do not exceed fifteen (15) minutes per day, and that individual job accountability and deadlines are met. Employees must fit personal activities into their breaks if at all possible.

Violations of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

11.2. Guidelines

Examples of personal activities during working hours include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Computer use for personal matters;
- Internet use for personal matters;
- E-mail using personal webmail and personal E-mail account;
- Instant messaging use;
- Personal telephone conversations;
- Errands;
- Other activities unrelated to work.

12. Progressive Discipline

12.1. Philosophy

The Athabasca Watershed Council practices progressive disciplinary action for its Employees who contravene its policies, interfere with another person’s safety or right to a harassment-free workplace, or otherwise misconduct themselves at the workplace.

12.2. Progression

The Administrator or a member of the Executive Committee needs to discuss unacceptable work conduct with Employees and provide a plan with clear expectations to assist in the improvement of work conduct.

Once a situation has been brought to the attention of the Administrator or Executive Committee, the below steps are to be followed:

1. Investigate the matter thoroughly.
2. Keep detailed notes of the situation and include as much information as possible.
3. Determine an appropriate course of action based on information recorded.

The key to a successful progressive discipline policy involves a thorough and complete investigation, accurate assessment of the surrounding circumstances, comprehensive record keeping and proportionate and appropriate response to the conduct in question.

12.3. Process

The steps below will generally be followed when implementing the progressive discipline policy. **Please note that depending on the severity of the situation, the AWC-WPAC may decide to start at any one of the steps below or forego any of the step(s) before it.**

1. Counselling - Informal discussions with the relevant manager or supervisor of the AWC-WPAC.
2. Verbal Warning - Formal meeting with the Employee regarding a situation. A record of the discussion and warning will be placed on file.
3. Written Warning on File - A disciplinary letter is presented to the Employee and placed on their file.
4. Suspension Without Pay - Depending on the severity of the misconduct and the number of prior warnings, an Employee may be suspended without pay.
5. Termination With Cause

Termination of an Employee for just cause must be approved by the Administrator or Executive Committee in all cases. Termination of the Administrator must be approved by the Board of Directors.

AWC-WPAC also reserves its right to suspend an Employee from work with pay pending the outcome of an investigation relating to an inappropriate incident or behaviour.

12.4. Exceptions

Some offences are so serious that progressive discipline may be bypassed and termination of employment with cause may result on first offence. Such offences include, but are not limited to theft from the AWC-WPAC, gross negligence, and breach of a fiduciary duty, willful dishonesty, or committing fraudulent acts under the AWC-WPAC name.

12.5. Guidelines

In assessing discipline, consideration is given to the Employee's length of service, past record, the seriousness of the offence and any other pertinent facts.

An Employee whose unsatisfactory behaviour or performance is attributable to physical, personal or domestic problems should be encouraged to seek professional help or treatment. This does not exempt the Employee from correcting the inappropriate behaviour or performance issues. If this is unsuccessful, it may be necessary to resort to disciplinary measures.

Disciplinary action should be taken within a reasonably short period of time.

12.6. Last Chance Agreements

In certain extenuating circumstances, and where changing inappropriate behaviour or performance issues within the boundaries of the progressive discipline policy is impractical or unduly difficult, an Employee may be issued a “Last Chance Agreement” which will clearly outline the steps the AWC-WPAC will require the Employee to take to correct or improve the behaviour or performance within a specified timeframe. If the Employee fails to meet the terms of the Last Chance Agreement, the Employee will be terminated for cause. The Employee must sign such an agreement, or the Employee will face immediate termination.

Last Chance Agreements are generally to be used where ongoing misconduct arises out of matters that may require a measure of accommodation, for example, misconduct related to disabilities like alcoholism. **Last Chance Agreements are not to be used as a substitute for discipline, but as last step during an accommodation process that involves ongoing Employee misconduct.**

13. Termination of Employment

13.1. Philosophy

The Athabasca Watershed Council requires that whether the termination of an Employee from a position is a result of resignation or dismissal by the employer, the utmost courtesy and good faith is maintained.

13.2. Resignation by Employee

Other than the Administrator, an Employee intending to resign from their position with the AWC-WPAC is required to give written notice to the Administrator or Executive Committee at least two (2) weeks prior to their effective termination date.

The Administrator must give written notice to the Board of Directors of the AWC-WPAC advising of resignation at least thirty (30) days prior to the effective termination date.

13.3. Termination by Employer

If the termination of an Employee is at the behest of the AWC-WPAC, the employer shall give notice of the termination of employment that accords with the Employee’s employment agreement, or where no such agreement is in force, in accordance with the common law and applicable employment standards legislation.

PAY AND PROGRESS

14. Hours of Work and Overtime

14.1. Philosophy

The Athabasca Watershed Council promotes a healthy work life balance but does recognize that sometimes it is necessary for Employees to work overtime. It is important that Employees eligible for overtime are compensated fairly by being given time off for any overtime they work.

14.2. Hours of Work

The AWC-WPAC staff generally work 7.25 hours per day (08:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.); five (5) days per week. The AWC-WPAC covers two fifteen (15) minute breaks in those hours with a one (1) hour unpaid lunch break.

14.3. Overtime Definition

Overtime is defined as hours worked over 8 hours per day or 44 hours per week, whichever is greater.

If there is a need for overtime to be worked by staff, it must first be approved by the Administrator or Executive Committee. Unapproved overtime may not be paid, unless it was unreasonable or impractical to obtain prior approval in the circumstances.

14.4. Acting Incumbency Pay

The AWC-WPAC will compensate an Employee asked to take on the responsibilities of a more senior staff member for a minimum of five (5) consecutive work days or more, during which time they may also be required to perform some of the duties of their regular position. On completion of the minimum five (5) day qualifying period in an acting incumbency position, an Employee shall be eligible for acting incumbency pay for the total period of acting incumbency, including the five (5) day qualifying period. These provisions shall not apply where an Employee is designated only minimal extra duties.

When an Employee has been duly appointed to act on behalf of a more senior staff member, they shall be compensated at an additional rate of ten (10%) above their regular rate of pay for the incumbency period.

14.5. Time Off in Lieu

As general policy the AWC-WPAC intends to limit overtime payments. Employees are granted Time Off in Lieu instead. All Employees are required to execute an overtime agreement that sets out the terms and conditions of this arrangement.

Overtime is not payable, nor is Time Off in Lieu provided for any Employee who works in a managerial or supervisory capacity, or who is otherwise exempted from overtime by operation of the *Employment Standards Regulation* (Alberta).

15. Timesheets and Payroll

15.1. Philosophy

To ensure fair treatment and compensation of all Employees, the AWC-WPAC captures all Employee hours with the use of timesheets.

15.2. Timesheet System

Timesheets are completed twice each month, for the 15th and for the last working day of the month.

The timesheet record includes hours worked, holidays, banked hours accrued and used, and sick days/sick leave.

Timesheets must be approved by the Administrator or Executive Committee member for all Employees; the Treasurer or Executive Committee member approves the Administrator's timesheets.

15.3. Payroll

The Athabasca Watershed Council processes payroll by direct deposit twice monthly; on the 15th and the last day of each month for the time period preceding the payment as per submitted timesheets.

16. Pay Grades

16.1. Philosophy

The Athabasca Watershed Council endeavors to provide salaries that equitably compensate Employees for their respective duties and responsibilities and adequately address the current rate of inflation.

16.2. Pay and Increments for New Hires

The Board of Directors is responsible for setting rates of pay for Employees of the AWC-WPAC. Starting rates will be based on an individual's level of education and experience in relation to the position for which they have been hired.

The pay structure of all AWC-WPAC Employees will be reviewed by the Board of Directors upon budget approval of each year.

Any pay increments approved by the Board of Directors will take effect on July 1. The decision to grant increments will be based both on a favourable performance review and the availability of budgeted funds, but will ultimately remain in the sole discretion of the Board of Directors.

17. Annual Performance Reviews

17.1. Philosophy

The Athabasca Watershed Council supports the continued personal growth and education of all of its Employees. **Regular Performance Reviews and Performance Reviews following probationary periods are essential in assessing an Employee's progress and educational requirements.**

17.2. Annual and Probationary Period Reviews

Employee performance reviews shall be conducted by the Administrator or Executive Committee, or by the Board of Directors in the case of the Administrator, at the following times:

- At the completion of the Employee's probationary period;
- Each year on the Employee's anniversary date or more often if necessary; or
- Whenever a major change is noted in the Employee's performance of duties.

TIME AWAY FROM WORK

18. General Holidays

18.1. Philosophy

Employees of the AWC-WPAC are entitled the following General Holidays after completing 30 days of employment before the General Holiday:

New Year's Day - January 1

Family Day - Third Monday in February

Good Friday - Friday before Easter*

Easter Monday - Monday after Easter

Victoria Day - Monday before May 25

Canada Day - July 1, except when it falls on a Saturday or Sunday, then it is the following Monday

Heritage Day - First Monday in August

Labour Day - First Monday in September

Thanksgiving Day - Second Monday in October

Remembrance Day - November 11

Christmas Day - December 25

Boxing Day - December 26

*Good Friday is a movable religious holiday falling on the Friday before Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday is the first Sunday after the full moon on or after March 21 or one week later if the full moon falls on Sunday.

When the Holiday falls on a weekend, the holiday is observed on the following Monday.

18.2. Other Religious Observances

The AWC-WPAC also recognizes the importance of granting time off for Employees who have religious observances that do not fall on statutorily recognized holidays.

Although under Human Rights legislation, the AWC-WPAC has no obligation to pay an Employee for this time off, AWC-WPAC recognizes its obligation to accommodate such observances. Therefore, Employees who are accommodated with time off for religious observances may be allowed to make up the time if possible.

19. Vacation Policy

19.1. Philosophy

The Athabasca Watershed Council promotes a healthy lifestyle and encourages a balance between work and home life. As part of this, the AWC-WPAC encourages Employees to take and enjoy time away from the work environment for rest and relaxation.

19.2. Guidelines

The AWC-WPAC's vacation policy works on a calendar year basis from January to December. Employees earn paid vacation upon completion of one year of continuous service. Vacation accrues from the date of hire. Employees are granted vacation time according to the following schedule:

Years of Service	Vacation Days
1-4	10
5-9	15
10 or more	20

Hourly Employees accrue vacation at a rate of:

- 4% for Years 0-4;
- 6% for Years 5-9;
- 8% for Years 10 and more.

Vacation should not normally be taken during the first six months of Employment. Employees actually earn their vacation for the next year in their first year of employment.

The AWC-WPAC may reschedule vacation due to business needs, provided the Employee is given reasonable notice.

An Employee may not carry forward more than 10 days of paid vacation time past the end of a calendar year. Accrued vacation time over 10 days carried past December 31st of any year will be paid out in the first pay period of the following year.

19.3. Process

Employees should notify the AWC-WPAC at least one month prior to the proposed vacation date.

20. Leave of Absence

20.1. Philosophy

The overall well-being of Employees is important to the Athabasca Watershed Council. While each Employee's contribution on the job is valued, it is recognized that situations may necessitate temporary absences.

20.2. Bereavement Leave

Athabasca Watershed Council Employees are eligible for three (3) days paid leave in the event of a death of a Family Member.

Family Member, for the purposes of this policy, is defined as anyone related to the Employee as follows:

- Spouse or common law partner;
- Child or child of common law spouse or partner; or
- Parent or parent of spouse or partner.

Bereavement Leave is taken at the time of loss; it is not cumulative and cannot be split into three (3) separate days to be taken at different date(s).

20.3. Voting

Should an Employee choose to vote, they should try and vote before or after working hours. In cases where an Employee's work schedule conflicts with the required voting times, arrangements can be made with the Administrator or Executive Committee to schedule paid time off in which to vote.

20.4. Jury or Witness Duty

The AWC-WPAC will ensure that an Employee does not suffer from loss of base pay, not including other types of pay, when subpoenaed to serve Jury or Witness duty.

- Paid duty: To qualify for Jury or Witness Duty pay, an Employee must provide the Administrator or Executive Committee with a copy of the Jury Summons, a regular update of the Jury Schedule, and a Release from Jury Duty upon completion of service. Employees will receive base pay for time lost from regular scheduled work. The maximum base pay is 36.25 hours per week. If Employees receive any form of payment from the court system resulting from Jury Duty, that portion will be set-off from the Employee's earnings.
- Unpaid duty: In the case where an Employee volunteers for Witness Duty, they will be granted reasonable time off without pay subject to business requirements.

20.5. Maternity or Parental Leave

Employees must have 52 weeks of continuous employment with the AWC-WPAC to be eligible for maternity or parental leave.

Employees will be supported by the AWC-WPAC and federal and provincial agencies during the arrival of their child. A pregnant Employee may take maternity leave without pay for a length of time in accordance with the minimum provincial legislation (52 weeks). Adoptive parents and fathers are also entitled to leave without pay in accordance with minimum provincial legislation (37 weeks). Once the leave is complete, Employees may resume work in their former position or a comparable position with no loss in wages.

Entitlement after one year employment with the AWC-WPAC:

- Maternity Leave (Birth mother only): Fifteen (15) weeks (Employees may begin their leave up to twelve (12) weeks before the baby is due).
- Parental Leave (Either mother or father and adoptive parents): Up to thirty-seven (37) weeks (this leave must be completed within one year of the birth or placement of the child).

If both parents are Employees, the 37 weeks of parental leave may be taken entirely by one of the parents, or can be shared between the mother and father. If the leave is to be shared, the AWC-WPAC must be notified.

20.6. Process

Employees should request leave at least six (6) weeks prior to the anticipated start date of the leave. If Employees need to begin the leave early due to medical reasons, a note from their doctor is required and they will be put on sick leave until the birth of the child.

21. Compassionate Care Leave

21.1. Philosophy

Athabasca Watershed Council recognizes the need to allow Employees time to care for gravely ill or dying family members. The AWC-WPAC offers employees an unpaid leave program that works with the entitlement under the federal compassionate care leave initiative.

21.2. Compassionate Care Leave

Under the *Employment Standards Code*, eligible Employees who leave work to become the primary caregiver for a family member who suffers from a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks, are entitled to up to eight weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave.

Employees must have 52 consecutive weeks of either full-time or part-time employment with AWC-WPAC to be eligible for compassionate care leave. They may split the leave into two sections of at least one week in length. The ill family member may reside in Alberta or elsewhere.

22. Sick Leave

22.1. Philosophy

The Alberta *Employment Standards Code* does not legislate paid sick day provision for Employees. The Athabasca Watershed Council recognizes the need to allow Employees time to recover from illness or injury at home. The AWC-WPAC encourages Employees who are ill to stay home, not only for their own benefit, but to prevent the spread of illness within the workplace.

22.2. Sick Leave

All Employees who have worked for the AWC-WPAC for at least three (3) months are eligible for paid sick leave.

Employees who are unable to work due to injury or illness are eligible for five (5) days paid leave per calendar year at 100% of regular earnings. A doctor's note may be required at the discretion of the Administrator or Executive Committee, or in the case of the Administrator falling sick, the Executive Committee. Sick days do not count towards the calculations of overtime and are not to be used to extend a holiday or weekend.

If sick days are not used during the calendar year they will not be banked for future use. Unused sick days are not paid out when the Employee leaves the AWC-WPAC.

22.3. Procedure

If an Employee is sick, they must phone in or e-mail to advise the Administrator or Executive Committee.

23. Absence Without Notice

23.1. Philosophy

The Athabasca Watershed Council expects to be kept informed of the whereabouts of its Employees during regularly scheduled work hours.

23.2. Guidelines

Any Employee who finds they must be absent from regularly scheduled work hours for any reason, must notify the Administrator or Executive Committee as far in advance as possible, but in any event no later than two (2) hours after they were scheduled to report to work. Absence in excess of three (3) consecutive working days without prior notice satisfactory to the AWC-WPAC will be considered an abandonment of the Employee's position.

**I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES PRESENTED
IN THIS HANDBOOK. I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES
IN THIS HANDBOOK FORM PART OF THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF MY
EMPLOYMENT WITH AWC-WPAC**

Signature _____ **Date** _____