U.S. Small Business Administration
Office of Disaster Assistance

Personnel and Administrative Support Center
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ORIENTATION FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

Welcome to the Office of Disaster Assistance. We're pleased that you have joined us and we hope this will help you to better understand our operating guidelines and requirements. If you have any questions, you may ask them during your orientation or you may discuss them at a later time with your supervisor.

Workweek
The regularly scheduled workweek is Monday through Friday. During periods of low disaster activity we have made available an Alternative Work Schedule (AWS). The 5/4/9 work schedule is four 9-hour work days and one 8-hour work day one week and four 9-hour work days with one day off the other week. The 4-10's work schedule is a four day work week of 10 hour days with one day off a week. When we experience a low disaster activity period, we will issue further details.

Lunch Period
While working Monday through Friday, each employee is required to take a lunch break. Thirty minutes of this time is unpaid and is incorporated as part of the daily work schedule. Monday through Friday, employees may not work through lunch and claim overtime. When you are required to work overtime on Saturday or Sunday, there is no regulatory requirement to take a lunch period; although managers do have that discretion.

Breaks
Two (2) 15 minute breaks are split throughout the day to take care of personal needs. We do not have set break periods as some State and local governments have. This office is "smoke-free" and smokers are to use only the designated smoking areas. Please note: there are no special smoke breaks. If supervisors determine that an individual is abusing break times then conduct action may be taken.

Performance and Conduct
Your supervisor should always be your initial source of information concerning performance (quality and quantity) and conduct (attendance, work habits, work behaviors, etc.). In addition, this orientation package details your responsibilities in regard to conduct situations.

Paid Holidays
There are ten holidays, listed below, for which you will receive pay. If the holiday, such as Christmas, falls on a weekend, then the preceding Friday or following Monday is considered to be the Federal holiday. If you are required to work on any of these holidays, you will receive eight hours of holiday pay at your regular pay rate plus whatever hours worked on the holiday at your regular rate up to eight hours. Anything over 8 hours on the holiday would be paid at the regular overtime rate.

Federally Recognized Holidays
New Year's Day
Martin Luther King's Birthday
Presidents' Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veterans' Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day

To be paid for a holiday, you must be in pay status for at least one hour the day before or one hour the day after. Being in pay status means that you either are at work for at least one hour, or you have approved annual or sick leave for at least one hour the day before or the day after.

Political Activity
The Hatch Act does not permit you to run for partisan office. Certain other political activities are expressly prohibited while you are on duty. Please contact the Administrative Attorney in the Personnel and Administrative Support Center in Herndon prior to becoming involved in any political activities.

GENERAL OFFICE INFORMATION

Office Security

ODA is committed to making our work environment as safe as possible. In addition there are some things that you can do to help.

1. Be aware of your surroundings; if something looks out of place, report it.
2. Do not leave valuables where they can easily be accessed or in plain sight.
3. Report anything stolen immediately.
4. Take the opportunity to leave in pairs if exiting the building late at night.
5. Make sure all visitors use the front entrance and sign in at the Reception Desk.
6. Wear your badge at all times. Report lost or stolen access badges immediately.
7. **Never** give out your computer password.
8. Log off of your computer every time you leave your desk.

Cell Phones

Personal cell phones will be turned off or set on vibrate during work. They may be used at breaks and during lunch periods.

Break Room

It is everyone's responsibility to keep the break room clean, including the microwave, counters and refrigerators. Please wipe up any spills.

Open Door Policy

Disaster Assistance has an open door policy. That means you should feel comfortable going to your immediate supervisor to discuss any concerns you may have.

Office Attire

Casual business attire is appropriate. Regardless of position or work schedule, you are considered to be a professional and should dress accordingly. Therefore, please use good judgment in selecting appropriate office attire. Dockers, khakis, jeans, etc. that are neat and clean are allowed during the week. Sneakers are acceptable on Fridays. Saturdays and Sundays are more relaxed with sneakers and sweat suits allowed. Shorts, tanks, beachwear, flip flops, sloppy clothing, untucked shirts, or excessively tight or revealing clothing are not appropriate office attire. Employees arriving in inappropriate outfits, especially related to excessively tight or revealing clothing, may be directed to go home and change. One note: if you are unsure if an outfit is appropriate for the office, then you probably should not wear it.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All employees have a professional and legal obligation to protect and maintain the confidentiality of the information and records with which we work. This confidential information must be protected from theft and accidental or unauthorized disclosures. Most information contained in SBA paper and electronic case files and records is confidential, including employee and applicant/borrower information. Official files or records are not to be removed from the work site, except under very specific circumstances.

We deal only with the applicant or an authorized representative when discussing details of an application or loan. You should also avoid discussing applicant specific or employee specific information outside of work. Even if this information is not used by those who overhear your conversation, it may reflect negatively on you, the Agency, and other federal employees.

You may never use confidential information for personal gain. Waste paper containing confidential information must be shredded. It may not be left lying around the workplace or disposed of in regular trash receptacles.

USE OF GOVERNMENT EQUIPMENT

Employees and contractors are expected to conduct themselves professionally in the workplace and to refrain from using Government resources for activities that are inappropriate or offensive, such as materials that are sexually explicit or ridicule others on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, sex, handicap, national origin, sexual orientation, etc. SBA employees do not have a right, nor should they have an expectation, of privacy while using any Agency equipment at any time, including accessing the Internet or using e-mail. By using Agency equipment, employees imply their consent to disclosing the contents of any files or information maintained or passed through Agency office equipment.

Telephone Usage

The telephones are to be used only for official business; some exceptions include emergency situations, parents making a call to home to determine whether or not children have arrived safely; calls to doctors concerning medical conditions or to make appointments. Using the office telephone for other personal calls may result in conduct action. When dialing long distance, dial 9-1 + area code and numbers. If you are aware of friends or relatives calling in on the toll free lines, advise them to stop.

E-Mail

E-mail is for official use only and is subject to the same restrictions on use and to the same review process as any other Government-furnished resource provided for the official use of employees. Using the system for the transport, delivery, storage or distribution of personal messages, files, images, or animations, is prohibited.

Password Security

You are responsible for changing your password every 90 days. The minimum length of the password is 8 characters and must include upper and lower case letters, numeric and/or special characters. Do not give out your password to anybody.

Desktop Security

Do not leave your computer logged on if you leave your desk for any reason. You must lock it even though a password-protected screensaver secures the desktop after 10 minutes of inactivity.

Internet Services

As with other SBA resources such as SBA's telephone and fax systems, you are allowed limited personal use of SBA's Internet services. You may make occasional personal use of the Internet on your own time, provided that such use is of short duration, does not adversely affect or hinder the mission of the SBA, and no fee is charged to SBA. Supervisors have management authority and responsibility to ensure that you appropriately use your official time and resources.

PAY AND OVERTIME

Pay periods are broken into two-week periods, which begin on a Sunday and end on a Saturday. A pay period chart is included in your package for your convenience. Your official payday is Thursday, 12 days after the end of the pay period. You are required by statute to have your check directly deposited into a checking or savings account. Usually, checks are deposited into your account on the Monday before the payday; however, some banks do not post the transaction until the next day.

Night Differential

You are eligible for night differential (10%) when your regularly scheduled tour of duty includes work after 6 p.m. Night differential is paid in addition to overtime, Sunday, or holiday premium pay.

Overtime Rate

The Federal overtime rate equals one and a half times your regular rate, until your salary is equivalent to the GS-10 step 1 for your locality. Then your overtime rate equals your regular time. This is the case whether your position is classified as FLSA NonExempt or FLSA Exempt.

If, however, you are classified as FLSA NonExempt, you cannot be required to earn compensatory time in place of overtime unless you request it. In addition, you also may not work longer than the hours set by your supervisors, including any authorized overtime.

40-Hour Requirement

Regarding overtime, if you use leave without pay (LWOP) on a weekday, your overtime will be affected. There is a 40-hour work week rule that states you need to have 40 hours of paid time (i.e., worked time, annual leave, or sick leave) in a week before you can receive overtime. If you do not have 40 hours of paid time accumulated, you will be paid

at the regular rate until you have reached 40 paid regular hours.

Daily, however, you are paid overtime for hours worked in excess of 8 regular hours. If you report for duty on a Wednesday, and you work 10 hours, you will be paid for 8 regular and 2 hours' overtime that day. The same holds true for Thursday and Friday. On Saturday, you likewise would be paid 8 regular and 2 overtime, because of the 40 hour work week rule.

Final Pay

When separating, you will want to be sure your travel card is completely current, and that you have returned all government property before you leave. A lump-sum payment will be made for any unused annual leave approximately two to four weeks after you separate. Prior to issuing the lump-sum payment, there will be a full audit of your leave records. Any discrepancies will be reconciled and added/subtracted from your final check.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

SBA has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to workplace violence, the threat of violence, and disruptive behavior. This policy furthers the Agency's commitment to provide a healthy, safe, and productive work environment. The goal is to maintain a work environment free from violence, threats of violence, intimidation, harassment or other behavior of a disruptive nature because such behavior interferes with accomplishing SBA's mission. You must report such behavior immediately to a supervisor or manager, who has an obligation to deal with such situations immediately.

Title 18 prohibits "dangerous weapons" on Federal facilities (owned or leased). "Dangerous weapon means any instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury".

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All persons have the right to apply for positions and work in an atmosphere of mutual respect that is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a serious conduct offense that will not be tolerated in our workforce. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines sexual harassment as deliberate, repeated, unsolicited, or unwelcome sexual advances of all types. A person is harassed sexually when submission to conduct of a sexual nature is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or, when such conduct unreasonably interferes with work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

It is SBA policy to provide a work environment free of sexual harassment, prohibit all sexual harassment, explicit or implicit, comply with the letter and spirit of all laws and regulations governing sexual harassment, taking immediate appropriate action both when sexual harassment is alleged or proven, and ensure availability of formal complaint channels for allegations of sexual harassment to all employees.

Some simple, basic guidelines include: don't discuss items of a sexual nature in the office; don't make lewd or demeaning comments; don't tell jokes of a sexual nature; don't repeatedly ask someone for a date once they have said "no".

If you feel that you are being harassed, alert a supervisor as quickly as possible. Management has a duty to address all incidents of potential sexual harassment.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of SBA to provide equal employment opportunity for all persons. Actions based on race, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, or other non-merit factors will not be tolerated. We will ensure that employees are free from any and all restraint, interference, and retaliation for participating in any stage of the equal employment opportunity complaint process. SBA's SOP 37 13 outlines its EEO program and includes all timeframes which must be met for timeliness in the complaint process.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT OR ACTIVITY

The fourteen principles of ethical conduct, which apply to Federal employees (see the attached fact sheet), require that outside employment not conflict with official government duties. Therefore, you should discuss all outside employment or volunteer activities with the Administrative Attorney in the Personnel and Administrative Support Center in Herndon, VA.

CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE

Children are not permitted to make extended visits to SBA offices. A short visit to show off a new baby or introduce your children to your fellow employees is fine, provided it does not disrupt or impede Agency business. As with all visitors to our facilities, they must enter through the front entrance and sign-in (or be signed in).

WEATHER DISMISSAL

The winter months may cause some days of inclement weather which could create delays in reporting to work, necessitate closing the office, or early dismissals. The following are different scenarios and how they will be handled:

If there is an announcement on radio or television that the office is closed, employees are excused from duty without loss of pay or charge to leave.

If there is no announcement that the office is closed, employees are expected to report to work on time, if possible. You must decide for yourself whether it is safe and prudent for you to come to work any time there are adverse weather conditions. For those employees who make it in even though they are late by an hour or two, administrative leave may be granted to cover tardiness. Those who are unable to come in are charged with annual leave or leave without pay.

If there is an announcement for an early dismissal, employees will be dismissed according to their normal departure times from work. For example, if a 3-hour “early dismissal” policy is announced, an employee who normally leaves at 4:30 pm would leave at 1:30 pm. Employees who leave work earlier than their early dismissal time will be charged annual leave or leave without pay from the time of their departure through the remainder of the normally/regularly scheduled workday. Employees already on pre-approved leave or unscheduled leave for the entire day will be charged for leave for the entire day.

INJURIES/ACCIDENTS ON THE JOB

If you sustain an on-the-job injury while working for the SBA, report the incident immediately to your supervisor. Even if the injury does not require medical treatment, you will be asked to complete an injury report form, a CA-1. Supervisors may obtain the CA-1 from the Personnel Office. If the injury requires immediate attention, the Personnel Office will also provide you with a Form CA-16, "Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment." This form will authorize the physician or facility of your choice to bill the government directly. However, if misconduct or disregard for safety causes the incident, medical bills will be the responsibility of the individual.

TELECOMMUTING

While all eligible Office of Disaster Assistance employees are encouraged to participate in the Telecommuting Program whenever possible, our mission and program requirements may limit the opportunity for telecommuting. The Center Directors, or designees, have the authority to approve an employee’s telecommuting arrangement when it is determined to be beneficial in achieving ODA’s mission.

If any employee anticipates requesting the authority to telecommute, even on an ad hoc basis, they need to formally apply in accordance with SBA SOP 33 59 1. In some functions it may be difficult to approve telecommuting due to the nature of the work.

ABSENCES FROM WORK

Requirements
If you are going to be late for duty, you must call your supervisor directly as soon as possible but no later than the end of the first 2 hours of your tour of duty. If you don't, you may be placed in absent without leave (AWOL) status and you will lose pay. More importantly, depending on the circumstances, the AWOL may be used then or later for leave restriction or further conduct action. On rare occasions, probably not more than once in a two or three week period, you might run a little late due to circumstances such as a flat tire or an accident on the highway which delays traffic. On these rare occasions and at management's discretion, you will not be charged with leave, up to the first 15 minutes, and it is expected that you will make up this time at the end of your normal workday schedule. Any additional time will require completion of a leave slip to request annual leave or leave without pay. It is expected that you take traffic and/or parking into consideration in order to arrive at work on time.

Recurring and/or excessive tardiness will result in one or more of the following: leave restrictions, AWOL, further conduct action.

Leave must be requested and approved in advance except in certain emergency situations.

Leave Without Pay (LWOP)
LWOP is an approved absence without pay (unlike AWOL). If you are absent from work on approved leave and do not have the appropriate leave accrued, you may be charged LWOP. Note: LWOP may be substituted for sick or annual leave; annual leave may substitute for sick leave; but sick leave may not substitute for annual leave (except in very specific circumstances).

Annual Leave
For eligible employees, annual leave is provided for two general reasons: 1) to allow for an annual vacation; and, 2) to provide periods of time off for personal purposes. When you request annual leave, your supervisor will balance the needs of the agency and the office against your need for time away. Whenever possible, the supervisor will approve the absence. Except for emergency situations, annual leave **must** be approved in advance and in writing by your supervisor. Leave accrual rates are as follows:

Length of Service	Pay Period	A Year
0-3 years	4 hours	13 days
3-15 years	6 hours	20 days
15+ years	8 hours	26 days

Your Earnings and Leave Statement (AD Form 334) will show your leave balances and any amount subject to forfeiture. The maximum number of hours which may be carried over from one leave year to the next is 240 hours.

Sick Leave
Sick leave can be used for five reasons: 1) personal illness or incapacitation; 2) physician, optical, or dental appointments; 3) exposure to a contagious disease which would endanger the health of co-workers; 4) to care for family members who are sick or need assistance; 5) to attend the funeral of a close family member. For reasons 4 and 5, you are limited to 40 hours of leave per calendar year unless your sick leave balance is in excess of 80 hours. If your balance is over 80 hours, higher limits apply and you should consult with the Personnel Office for details. All full-time employees, regardless of length of service, earn 4 hours of sick leave per pay period (13 days per year). There is no limit on the amount of sick leave that you can accrue.

If you are ill, you must call in as soon as possible but no later than the end of the first two hours of your normal work schedule and, unless previously directed otherwise, you must speak directly with your supervisor. If you are sick for more than 3 days, verification from your doctor may be requested. Frequent use of sick leave may result in a requirement to provide a doctor's certificate for each absence due to illness.

Other Paid Absences
There are certain other occasions when you may be absent from work and still be paid -- such as holidays, jury duty, or witness service. Be sure to check with your supervisor in advance.