

MPERA provides regular Retirement Plan Choice webinars that employees can attend at their convenience from their own computer. MPERA also offers workshops at different locations around the state throughout the year.

Relevant Information: MCA 19-3-101, et seq.; Montana Public Employee Retirement Administration

SAFETY

Workplace Safety Program

The County has a workplace safety program established to maintain a safe and healthy work environment for County employees and the citizens they serve. The success of the safety program depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all. The department shall provide information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, Email, memos, or other written communications.

A. Contributing Suggestions and Reporting Concerns

Excellent safety improvement ideas often come from employees, since they are the ones who are most familiar with their work environment. Those with ideas, concerns, or suggestions for improved safety in the workplace are encouraged to raise them with their supervisor, department head, safety supervisor, or member of an internal safety committee. Reports and concerns about workplace safety issues may be made anonymously if the employee wishes. All reports can be made without fear of reprisal

B. Reporting Violations and Disciplinary Action

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or fail to report or (where appropriate) remedy such situations may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should immediately notify the appropriate supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefit procedures.

Workplace Violence Prevention

The County is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. The County has adopted guidelines to deal with intimidation, harassment, or other threats of (or actual) violence that may occur during business hours or on its premises. All County employees contribute to the type of environment in which they work, and it is therefore essential to follow these guidelines, treat fellow workers with dignity and respect, and immediately report any violations or untoward behavior.

A. Guidelines, Definitions and Reporting

- All employees, including supervisors and temporary employees, should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, roughhousing, or any other conduct that may be dangerous to others. It is important to note that employees with different backgrounds might have very different ideas about what is innocent tomfoolery and what seems to be threatening and intrusive. Work is not the place for it.
- Firearms, weapons, explosives and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances are prohibited from the premises of the County without proper authorization.
- Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a customer, or a member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods, will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes all acts of harassment, including harassment that is based on an individual's sex, race, age, or any characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.
- All threats of (or actual) violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to the immediate supervisor or any other member of management. The County shall promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats or (or actual) violence and of suspicious individuals or activities.

Use of Vehicles and Equipment

Employees whose jobs require them to travel using County vehicles or equipment to perform their duties for the County are expected to treat such County property with the utmost degree of care and respect. The vehicles and equipment owned by the County are essentially paid for by County citizens; and as public servants, employees' actions should reflect positively upon the County by doing everything possible to maintain well-functioning, carefully maintained, and clean vehicles and equipment to ensure longevity. This also includes safe operation according to all relevant laws. This policy also covers situations when an employee uses a personal vehicle to conduct County business. The following guidelines shall be observed.

A. Vehicle Use Guidelines

1. Employees are to use County vehicles for business purposes. Authorized drivers may use County vehicles to conduct business on behalf of the County and to respond to medical or other emergency situations. Using County vehicles or equipment for personal convenience is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. Certain employees (emergency response, on-call, etc.) may be authorized by their department head to take County vehicles home.
2. To use a County vehicle, an employee must have an acceptable use. Acceptable uses include conducting business on behalf of the County as stated above, getting food and lodging when in a travel status, and certain other activities that may be up to the department head's discretion. Employees can park a County vehicle at their home overnight if they must begin travel the next day or if they are subject to other off-shift duty related to County employment.

3. County employees are expected to travel in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The rules of the road and established safety practices must be practiced at all times. Any abuse of County vehicles when in an employee's possession or violations of safety practices or traffic laws during work hours may result in disciplinary action. Commissioners must be made aware of all non-Rosebud County employees as passengers.
4. Some job descriptions require employees to have a valid driver's license or a Commercial Driver's License. The ability to legally operate a vehicle is an essential job duty for some positions. Employees who, as part of their job, have to operate County vehicles are required to have an acceptable driving record. A copy of the employee's current, valid driver's license may be requested before they operate a County vehicle.
5. An employee who drives his own vehicle on authorized County business shall be reimbursed at the federal mileage rate. The federal mileage reimbursement rate is to cover auto expenses, which include personal auto insurance. The County's insurance does not cover any damage to the employee's vehicle if an accident occurs while used for business. Employees are also responsible for deductibles and co-insurance payments under their personal vehicle policies. If employees drive their personal vehicles for County business, they must maintain it according to the manufacturer's specifications and have current registration.
6. Employees should use County vehicles for work-related travel whenever possible. With pre-approval, employees may use their personal vehicles for County business when the supervisor determines it is in the best interest of the County. Employees who are operating their personal vehicles during the course of employment and receiving mileage reimbursement must have liability insurance and provide evidence of such to the County.
7. County employees who use vehicles in the course of their jobs shall maintain a current, valid licensure or certification (a Montana driver's license or CDL, as required by the job). Employees whose personal vehicles are used for County business are responsible for immediately notifying their supervisor of any change in the status of their driver's license, any convictions affecting their driving record, and any changes in personal vehicle liability coverage.
8. County employees are required to secure seat belts while driving or riding in County-owned vehicles or when using personal vehicles for County business.
9. Employees must operate vehicles in a careful and prudent manner at all times to avoid endangering other people and property. Employees are prohibited from operating a vehicle for County business if they are under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, improperly used prescription drugs, or legally prescribed drug if that drug affects their ability to safely operate the vehicle. Employees taking prescription drugs are responsible for notifying their medical providers if they are required to operate a vehicle for County business, and they must notify their supervisor of any restrictions on operating a vehicle.

10. In compliance with the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act (MCIAA) and the County's Smoke-Free Workplace Policy which bans smoking statewide in all enclosed workplaces in Montana, smoking is prohibited in ALL County vehicles and in all County facilities.
11. Neither employees nor any passengers can have an open alcoholic beverage container in the passenger compartment of a County-owned, leased, or loaned vehicle.
12. Employees are prohibited from using personal communication devices while driving a vehicle on County business. Texting is prohibited by the driver at all times while the employee driver is seated in the driver's seat. Use of a cell phone while driving is prohibited unless calls can be made using hands-free devices.
13. Employees must follow established County procedures regarding the care, maintenance, and cleaning of County vehicles. Employees must immediately report any problems or issues to their department head to ensure that all problems are fixed promptly and vehicles safely operate at maximum efficiency for as long as possible.

Weapons on County Property

The County strives to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees. As part of this effort, the County has a policy limiting the possession and storage of firearms in County-owned buildings and vehicles.

A. Firearms

Employees on County business may not carry a firearm on their person or carry or store a firearm in a County-owned or County-leased building or vehicle, unless they are:

- specifically authorized by state or federal law to carry a firearm as a condition of employment;
- in actual service as a member of the National Guard; or
- engaged in firearm instruction or field work in which the employee carries a firearm for conducting official County business.

The County may grant an individual employee or job class a written exception to this policy.

B. Dangerous Weapons

Possession of other dangerous weapons, explosives, large knives, swords, etc., and/or any other weapon deemed inappropriate by the County is prohibited on all County premises, in all County buildings, in County vehicles, or in a personal vehicle while conducting County business.