

Rowan County
Register of Deeds Office
Employee Handbook



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Welcome

Welcome to the Rowan County Register of Deeds Office! We are delighted that you have chosen to join our organization and hope that you will enjoy a long and successful career with us. As you become familiar with our culture and mission, we hope you will take advantage of opportunities to enhance your career and further the Register of Deeds Office's goals.

The Rowan County Register of Deeds office provides numerous services to the working community and the general public. By law, the Register of Deeds is charged with the integrity, completeness, accuracy, and safekeeping of all public records recorded in the office. Our employees use their creativity and talent to invent new solutions, meet new demands, and offer the most effective services to the citizens of Rowan County. With your active involvement, creativity, and support, the Register of Deeds Office will continue to achieve its goals. We sincerely hope you will take pride in being an important part of our success.

Please take time to review the policies contained in this handbook. If you have questions, feel free to ask your supervisor or to contact the Human Resources Department.

Section 1 – Interface with Rowan County Policies and Procedures

1.0 County Personnel Policies Adopted by the Register of Deeds Office

To the extent that they directly relate to hiring, discharge and supervision, County personnel policies shall not apply to employees of the Register of Deeds Office pursuant to [NCGS 153A-103](#). However, the County Board of Commissioners may fix the number of salaried employees in the Register of Deeds Office in accordance with this same statute. In addition, the Register of Deeds Office is not subject to the State Human Resources Act as are many employees of the County. As a result, there are some County policies that do not apply to the Register of Deeds Office employees. There are also some policies that, although not required to do so, the Register of Deeds has elected to adopt. To avoid confusion, this policy addresses the applicability of [Rowan County Personnel and Procedures Manual](#) as it relates to employees referenced in this policy.

A. County Personnel Administration System Policies

The following policies related to the County's Personnel Administration System are applicable to the Register of Deeds Office:

1. Applicability
2. Centralized Personnel System
3. Office of Human Resources
4. Personnel Board

B. County Equal Employment Opportunity Policies

Although the Register of Deeds has the exclusive right to hire, discharge, and supervise employees, State and Federal equal employment opportunity laws also apply to the pay and benefits of employment which are administered by the County Human Resources Office. As a result, the following County policies apply to the Register of Deeds Office employees:

1. Policy 2.1 Equal Employment Opportunity Statement
2. Policy 2.2 Equal Employment Opportunity Plan

C. Recruitment and Selection

Although the Register of Deeds has the exclusive right to hire employees, the Register of Deeds has elected to adopt the following County recruitment and selection policies:

1. Policy 3.7 New Employee Probation (Full-Time and Part-Time Benefited)
2. Policy 3.9 New Employee Orientation

D. Classification, Compensation, Benefits and Leave of Absence

Because the Rowan County Board of County Commissioners sets the number of salaried employees in the Register of Deeds Office and funds employee benefits, the following County personnel policies related to classification, compensation, benefits, and leave of absence apply to employees of the Register of Deeds Office:

1. Policy 4.1 Merit-Based Classification System
2. Policy 4.2 Position Administration
3. Policy 4.3 Categories of Employment

- 4. Policy 4.4 Classification Administration
- 5. Policy 5.1 Merit-Based Compensation System
- 6. Policy 5.2 Established Salary Schedules
- 7. Policy 5.3 Wages and Salaries for New Employees
- 8. Policy 5.8 Guidelines for Pay Adjustments
- 9. Policy 5.9 Longevity/Merit Program and Bonus Pay
- 10. Policy 5.10 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)
- 11. Policy 5.11 Pay and Reclassification Studies
- 12. Policy 5.12 Overtime, Comp-time, and Pay Deductions
- 13. Policy 5.13 Voluntary Work
- 14. Policy 5.14 Waiting Time
- 15. Policy 5.15 On-Call
- 16. Policy 5.16 Permanent Residence on County Property
- 17. Policy 5.17 Continuing Education (Training)
- 18. Policy 5.18 Involuntary Training
- 19. Policy 5.19 Voluntary Training
- 20. Policy 5.20 Attending Board of Commissioners Meetings
- 21. Policy 5.21 Travel Time
- 22. Policy 5.22 Payment While Employed Outside the County
- 23. Policy 5.23 Timesheets
- 24. Policy 5.24 Pay Day
- 25. Policy 5.25 Adverse Weather
- 26. Policy 6.1 Availability of Employee Benefits
- 27. Policy 6.2 Vacation Time
- 28. Policy 6.3 Sick Time
- 29. Policy 6.4 Personal Time
- 30. Policy 6.5 Wellness Time
- 31. Policy 6.6 Use of Comp-Time
- 32. Policy 6.7 Holidays
- 33. Policy 6.8 Health Insurance
- 34. Policy 6.9 Dental Insurance
- 35. Policy 6.10 Life Insurance
- 36. Policy 6.11 Retirement
- 37. Policy 6.12 Retirement Death Benefit
- 38. Policy 6.14 401-K Supplemental Retirement
- 39. Policy 6.15 Cafeteria Plan
- 40. Policy 6.16 Workers Compensation Insurance
- 41. Policy 6.17 Social Security
- 42. Policy 6.18 Service Awards
- 43. Policy 6.19 Employee Assistance Program
- 44. Policy 6.20 Employee Wellness Program
- 45. Policy 6.21 Personal Liability Coverage
- 46. Policy 6.22 Uniforms/Clothing Allowance
- 47. Policy 7.1 Family Medical Leave (FMLA)
- 48. Policy 7.2 ADA Leave
- 49. Policy 7.3 Civil Leave

- 50. Policy 7.4 Military Leave
 - 51. Policy 7.5 Service Member Family Leave
 - 52. Policy 7.6 Funeral Leave
 - 53. Policy 7.7 Shared Leave
 - 54. Policy 7.8 Paid Administrative Leave
 - 55. Policy 7.9 Payment While on Approved Leave
 - 56. Policy 7.10 Health Insurance Payments While on Leave
 - 57. Policy 7.11 Returning from Leave
 - 58. Policy 7.12 Requesting an ADA Accommodation
- E. The following County personnel policies related to employee performance evaluations and expectations apply to employees of the Register of Deeds Office:
- 1. Policy 9.6 Operation of County Vehicles
 - 2. Policy 9.7 Parking Regulations
 - 3. Policy 9.10 Political Activities
 - 4. Policy 9.17 Improper Sexual or Romantic Relationships
 - 5. Policy 9.18 Technology Use
 - 6. Policy 9.19 Social Media
- F. Safety and Exposure Control
- The County Risk Manager is responsible for the administration of the following County Policies that apply to the employees of the Register of Deeds Office:
- 1. Policy 11.1 Statement of Policy
 - 2. Policy 11.2 Personal Protective Equipment Program
 - 3. Policy 11.3 Bloodborne Pathogens
 - 4. Policy 11.4 Driver Qualifications and Responsibilities
 - 5. Policy 11.5 Fit for Duty Policy
 - 6. Policy 11.6 Lockout/Tagout (LOTO)
 - 7. Policy 11.7 Confined Space
 - 8. Policy 11.8 Emergency Action and Fire Plan
 - 9. Policy 11.9 Hazard Communication Program
 - 10. Policy 11.10 Workplace Violence
 - 11. Policy 12.1 Policy Statement
 - 12. Policy 12.2 Orientation with Employees and Students
 - 13. Policy 12.3 Physical Examination and Immunizations
 - 14. Policy 12.4 Continuing Education and Inservice
 - 15. Policy 12.5 Safety Equipment and Supplies
 - 16. Policy 12.6 Tags-Hazard Identification
 - 17. Policy 12.7 Hand Washing
 - 18. Policy 12.8 Contact Isolation
 - 19. Policy 12.9 Housekeeping
 - 20. Policy 12.10 Linen
 - 21. Policy 12.11 Waste Disposal
 - 22. Policy 12.12 Transporting Lab Specimens
 - 23. Policy 12.13 Recommended Work Restrictions
 - 24. Policy 12.14 Reporting Exposures
 - 25. Policy 12.15 Post Exposure Follow-Up

26. Policy 12.16 Recommendations for Hepatitis B Prophylaxis Following Percutaneous Exposure
27. Policy 12.17 Blood/Body Fluid Exposure Follow-Up for HIV (Source Known)
28. Policy 12.18 Blood/Body Fluid Exposure Follow-Up for HIV (Source Unknown)
29. Policy 12.19 Airborne Exposure to TB Follow-Up Procedure
30. Policy 12.20 Record Keeping
31. Policy 12.21 Training
32. Policy 12.22 Compliance Monitoring
33. Policy 12.23 Annual Review of Exposure Control Policy

Section 2 – General Employment Policies

2.0 Employment at Will

- A. Employment in the Rowan County Register of Deeds Office is on an at-will basis. This means that either the employee or the Register of Deeds may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.
- B. Nothing in this employee handbook is intended to or creates an employment agreement, express or implied. Nothing contained in this or any other document provided to the employee is intended to be, nor should it be, construed as a contract that employment or any benefit will be continued for any period of time. In addition, no employee of the Register of Deeds Office is authorized to modify this policy for any employee or to enter into any agreement, oral or written, that changes the at-will relationship.
- C. Any salary figures provided to an employee in annual or monthly terms are stated for the sake of convenience or to facilitate comparisons and are not intended and do not create an employment contract for any specific period of time.

2.1 Equal Opportunity

- A. The Register of Deeds Office provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, gender identity, results of genetic testing, political affiliation, or service in the military. Equal employment opportunity applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, and training.
- B. The Register of Deeds Office expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment or discrimination based on any of the characteristics mentioned above. Improper interference with the ability of other employees to perform their expected job duties is absolutely not tolerated.
- C. Any employees with questions or concerns about equal employment opportunities in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Register of Deeds. The Register of Deeds Office will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who raise issues of equal employment opportunity. If an employee feels he or she has been subjected to any such retaliation, he or she should bring it to the attention of the Register of Deeds.
- D. Retaliation means adverse conduct taken because an individual reported an actual or perceived violation of this policy, opposed practices prohibited by this policy, or participated in the reporting and investigation process described below. “Adverse conduct” includes but is not limited to:
 - 1. shunning and avoiding an individual who reports harassment, discrimination or retaliation;

2. express or implied threats or intimidation intended to prevent an individual from reporting harassment, discrimination or retaliation; or
 3. denying employment benefits because an applicant or employee reported harassment, discrimination or retaliation or participated in the reporting and investigation process.
- E. Complaints of discrimination should be filed according to [Policy 4.3 Discrimination and Harassment](#).

2.2 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Reasonable Accommodation

To ensure equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, the Register of Deeds Office will make reasonable accommodations for the known disability of an otherwise qualified individual, unless undue hardship on the operation of the business would result in an undue hardship. Employees who may require a reasonable accommodation should contact the Register of Deeds.

2.3 Commitment to Diversity

The Register of Deeds Office is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace in which all employees have an opportunity to participate and contribute to the success of the office and are valued for their skills, experience, and unique perspectives. This commitment is embodied in office policy and the way we do business at The Register of Deeds Office and is an important principle of sound business management.

2.4 Commitment to Safety

- A. Protecting the safety of our employees and visitors is the most important aspect of running our business.
- B. All employees have the opportunity and responsibility to contribute to a safe work environment by using commonsense rules and safe practices and by notifying management when any health or safety issues are present. All employees are encouraged to partner with management to ensure maximum safety for all.
- C. In the event of an emergency, notify the appropriate emergency personnel by dialing 9 for an outside line, then dial 911 to activate the medical emergency services.

Section 3 – Office Operating Procedures

3.0 Organizational Charts

The County Human Resources office is responsible for the creation and maintenance of departmental organizational charts. Organizational charts are available on the [Rowan County Organizational Charts](#) website.

3.1 Job Descriptions

The County Human Resources office is responsible for the creation and maintenance of job descriptions for positions. Job descriptions are available on the [Rowan County Job Descriptions](#) website.

3.2 Salary Schedules

The County Human Resources office is responsible for the creation and maintenance of published salary schedules. These are available on the [Rowan County Salary Schedules](#) website.

3.3 Hours of Work

- A. The standard office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with a 1-hour lunch break. Individual work schedules may vary depending on the needs of each position.
- B. Alternate working schedules must be approved by the Register of Deeds (or designee).

3.4 Meal and Rest Breaks

- A. Employees are entitled to a 1-hour unpaid meal break each day. If a nonexempt employee is required to work through a meal break, he or she will be paid for the 30-minute period. Employees are also entitled to two 15-minute rest periods each day. Meal and rest breaks will be scheduled by the department supervisor or manager.
- B. Alternate meal and/or break periods must be approved by the Register of Deeds (or designee).

3.5 Employment of Relatives and Domestic Partners

- A. Relatives and domestic partners may be hired by the Register of Deeds if
- (1) the persons concerned will not work in a direct supervisory relationship, and
 - (2) the employment will not pose difficulties for supervision, security, safety, or morale.
- For the purposes of this policy, “relatives” are defined as spouses, children, siblings, parents, or grandparents. A “domestic partnership” is generally defined as a committed relationship between two individuals who are sharing a home or living arrangements.
- B. Current employees who marry each other or become involved in a domestic partnership will be permitted to continue employment with the office provided they don’t work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other or otherwise pose difficulties as mentioned above. If employees who marry or live together do work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other, the office will attempt to reassign one of the employees to another position for which he or she is qualified if such a position is available. If no such position is available, the employees will be permitted to determine which one of them will resign from the office.

3.6 Procedure for Reporting Unscheduled Absences

All employees are subject to the County Attendance Policy referenced in [Section 1.0](#).

In addition, when an employee of The Register of Deeds Office must be unexpectedly out or will be late, they shall contact the supervisory staff to make notification of reason and duration of absence.

3.7 Requesting Time Off

Any employee of the Register of Deeds Office requesting leave must submit a Request for Leave form. The form must be scanned to all supervisors and a copy placed on the desk of the Register of Deeds. Please give 30-day’s notice of any request whenever possible.

3.8 Personnel References

The confidentiality of employee information is regulated by North Carolina General Statutes. Therefore, all requests for employee information shall be directed to the Human Resources Office.

3.9 Separation from Employment

- A. In all cases of voluntary resignation (one initiated by the employee), employees are asked to provide a written notice to their supervisor at least 10 working days in advance of the last day of work. The 10 days must be actual working days. Holidays and paid time off will not be counted toward the 10-day notice. Employees who provide the requested amount of notice will be considered to have resigned in good standing and generally will be eligible for rehire.
- B. If applicable, Human Resources will provide information regarding benefits continuation through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) will be sent to the employee's home address.

3.10 Performance Evaluations

- A. Communication between employees and supervisors or managers is very important. Discussions regarding job performance are ongoing and often informal. Employees should initiate conversations with their supervisors if they feel additional ongoing feedback is needed.
- B. Formal performance reviews are conducted annually for full-time employees only. These reviews include a written performance appraisal and discussion between the employee and the supervisor about job performance and expectations for the coming year.
- C. Evaluation of performance of part-time employees is informal in nature.

3.11 Outside (Secondary) Employment

- A. Employees are permitted to work a second job as long as it does not interfere with their job performance with The Register of Deeds Office. Employees with a second job are expected to work their assigned schedules. A second job will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours.
- B. If outside work activity causes or contributes to job-related problems, it must be discontinued, or the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- C. Employees shall submit the Request for Secondary Employment form to obtain approval by the Register of Deeds prior to engaging in secondary employment. The Register of Deeds may revoke such authorization at any time if deemed necessary.

3.12 Dress and Grooming

- A. The Register of Deeds Office provides a casual yet professional work environment for its employees. Even though the dress code is casual, it is important to project a professional image to our customers, visitors, and coworkers. All employees are expected to dress in a manner consistent with good hygiene, safety, and good taste. Please use common sense.
- B. Any questions or complaints regarding the appropriateness of attire should be directed to the Register of Deeds.
- C. Decisions regarding attire will be made by the Register of Deeds (or designee).

3.13 Drug-Free Workplace

Rowan County is committed to maintaining a safe and productive working environment. The Rowan County Drug-Free Workplace Program endorses the federal government's efforts in implementing the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.

The [Drug-Free Workplace](#) website is intended to provide information to employees about the County's Drug-Free policies, standards of conduct, the health risks of drug and alcohol abuse, and available resources. This page is not intended as a substitute for counseling and treatment, but it can be a helpful starting point. Those who are interested in speaking with a professional about their questions and concerns are encouraged to visit this website for more information and to contact counseling services.

Section 4 - Employee Performance Expectations

4.1 Confidential Information

The protection of confidential County and citizen information is vital to the interests and success of the Register of Deeds Office. Confidential information is any and all information disclosed to or known by you because of employment with the County that is not generally known to people outside the County about its business.

An employee who improperly uses or discloses confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment in accordance with [4.7 Employee Discipline](#) and legal action, even if he or she does not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

All inquiries from the media must be referred to the Register of Deeds.

4.2 Reporting Immoral, Unethical, and Illegal Activities including Violations of Policies

- A. It is the policy of The Register of Deeds Office and Rowan County to uphold, promote, and demand the highest standards of ethics from all employees. Accordingly, employees should maintain the utmost standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and fairness in carrying out their public duties; avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants; and never use their County position or powers for improper personal gain.
- B. No employee shall use his/her position for unauthorized personal gain. Employees must not have any financial interest in, or receive any financial benefit from, any acquisition or expenditure related to County activities that interferes or conflicts with the full discharge of their duties. The basis of any possible conflict shall be disclosed to the involved employee's supervisor by the employee before any benefit there from is received by the employee.
- C. The County prohibits dishonest acts, fraudulent activity and illegal activity, and encourages County employees to report verbally or in writing to their supervisor, Department Director and/or their designee, Human Resources Director, or other appropriate authority evidence of activity by a County department, County employee, appointed or elected official constituting:
 1. a violation of a County policy;
 2. a violation of a state or federal law, rule or regulation;
 3. fraud;
 4. misappropriation of County resources;
 5. substantial and specific danger to the public health and safety;
 6. gross mismanagement, gross waste of monies, or gross abuse of authority; or
 7. alleged safety or health hazards.
- D. Depending upon the allegation, the County Manager shall appoint the appropriate individual(s) to investigate the matter.

- E. The term “fraud” as used in this policy includes, but is not limited to, the following:
1. any dishonest or fraudulent act;
 2. forgery or alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document or account;
 3. misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other assets;
 4. impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions;
 5. accepting or seeking anything of material value from vendors, contractors, or other persons providing services/materials to the County;
 6. intentional violation of laws, policies or regulations involving or regulating work performed;
 7. using County funds to make unauthorized purchases;
 8. authorizing or receiving compensation for hours not worked;
 9. any similar or related inappropriate conduct.
- F. No Department Director and/or their designee, supervisor, or other managing body shall dismiss, threaten, or otherwise discriminate against a County employee regarding the employee’s compensation, terms, conditions, location, or privileges of employment because the employee has refused to carry out a directive which in fact constitutes a violation of a state or federal law, rule, or regulation, constitutes a violation of a County policy, or poses a substantial and specific danger to the public health and safety.
- G. No County employee shall retaliate against another County employee because the employee has refused to carry out a directive which may constitute a violation of a state or federal law, rule, or regulation, a violation of a County policy, or poses a substantial danger to the public health and safety.
- H. Employees, supervisors, and/or Department Director and/or their designees found to have participated in fraudulent activity or in wrongful termination in violation of public policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment in accordance with [4.7 Employee Discipline](#) and possible criminal prosecution or civil action as appropriate.

4.3 Discrimination and Harassment

- A. Sexual and other unlawful harassment is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), as amended, as well as North Carolina State laws. Harassment based on a characteristic protected by law, such as race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, political affiliation, or other characteristic protected by state or federal law, is prohibited.
- B. It is The Register of Deeds Office policy to provide a work environment free of sexual and other harassment. To that end, harassment of The Register of Deeds Office’s employees by management, supervisors, coworkers, or nonemployees who are in the workplace is absolutely prohibited. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual or other harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. The Register of Deeds Office will take all steps necessary to prevent and eliminate unlawful harassment.
- C. Definition of Unlawful Harassment.

“Unlawful harassment” is conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; has the purpose or effect of substantially and unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual’s employment opportunities because of the individual’s membership in a protected class.

- D. Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, epithets; slurs; jokes; pranks; innuendo; comments; written or graphic material; stereotyping; or other threatening, hostile, or intimidating acts based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, or other characteristic protected by state or federal law.
- E. Definition of Sexual Harassment.
While all forms of harassment are prohibited, special attention should be paid to sexual harassment. “Sexual harassment” is generally defined under both state and federal law as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:
1. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of any individual’s employment or as a basis for employment decisions; *or*
 2. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
- F. Other sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to workers may also constitute sexual harassment.
- G. While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending on the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:
1. Unwanted sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching or not;
 2. Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one’s sex life, comments about an individual’s body, comments about an individual’s sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
 3. Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
 4. Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing up against the body, sexual gestures, or suggestive or insulting comments;
 5. Inquiries into one’s sexual experiences; *and*
 6. Discussion of one’s sexual activities.
- H. All employees should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated in The Register of Deeds Office.
- I. Complaint Procedure. Any employee who believes he or she has been subject to or witnessed illegal discrimination, including sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment, is requested and encouraged to make a complaint. You may complain directly to your immediate supervisor or department manager, the Register of Deeds, or any other member of management with whom you feel comfortable bringing such a complaint. Similarly, if

you observe acts of discrimination toward or harassment of another employee, you are requested and encouraged to report this to one of the individuals listed above.

- J. No reprisal, retaliation, or other adverse action will be taken against an employee for making a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment or for assisting in the investigation of any such complaint or report. Any suspected retaliation or intimidation should be reported immediately to one of the persons identified above.
- K. All complaints will be investigated promptly and, to the extent possible, with regard for confidentiality.
- L. If the investigation confirms conduct contrary to this policy has occurred, the Register of Deeds Office will take immediate, appropriate, corrective action, including discipline, up to and including immediate termination in accordance with [4.7 Employee Discipline](#).

4.4 Workplace Violence Prevention

- A. The Register of Deeds Office is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace for our employees. Due to this commitment, we discourage employees from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual or from behaving in a threatening or violent manner. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any employee will not be tolerated. A threat may include any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate others, menacing gestures, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, and/or destructive actions taken for the purposes of intimidation. This policy covers any violent or potentially violent behavior that occurs in the workplace or at County-sponsored functions.
- B. All employees bear the responsibility of keeping our work environment free from violence or potential violence. Any employee who witnesses or is the recipient of violent behavior should promptly inform their supervisor or The Register of Deeds. All threats will be promptly investigated. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this guideline.
- C. Any individual engaging in violence against the Register of Deeds Office, its employees, or its property will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All acts will be investigated, and the appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threatening behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination in accordance with [4.7 Employee Discipline](#).

4.5 Off-Duty Social Media Acceptable Use

The Register of Deeds Office is required to follow the County's Social Media policy. The Register of Deeds Office has additional requirements as follows:

- A. **Off-duty use of social media.** Employees may maintain personal websites or weblogs on their own time using their own facilities. Employees must ensure that social media activity does not interfere with their work. In general, the Register of Deeds Office considers social media activities to be personal endeavors, and employees may use them to express their thoughts or promote their ideas.

- B. **Respect.** Demonstrate respect for the dignity of the Register of Deeds Office, its customers, its vendors, and its employees. A social media site is a public place, and employees should avoid inappropriate comments. For example, employees should not divulge confidential information on social media sites. Similarly, employees should not engage in harassing or discriminatory behavior that targets other employees or individuals because of their protected class status or make defamatory comments. Even if a message is posted anonymously, it may be possible to trace it back to the sender.
- C. **Discipline.** Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment in accordance with [4.7 Employee Discipline](#).

Note: Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws.

4.6 Respectful Workplace

- A. It is the policy of The Register of Deeds Office to maintain a professional and respectful work and public service environment. The Office will not tolerate disrespectful behavior by or towards any employee or other individual. This policy provides for fostering a workplace which values diversity, personal dignity, courteous conduct, mutual respect, fairness and equality, and positive communication between people.
- B. Disrespectful behavior, includes but is not limited to offensive and inappropriate remarks, gestures, material and behavior, grouping or isolating, yelling, belittling, aggressive or patronizing behavior, bullying, embarrassing or humiliating behavior, covert behavior such as undermining or underhandedness.
- C. Disrespectful behavior related to a protected status shall be addressed through policy [4.3 Discrimination and Harassment](#).
- D. Supervisors and managers are responsible to immediately act upon any situation involving disrespectful behavior and will manage the situation towards a resolution between the parties if possible, with a view to correcting behavior and preserving long-term working relationships.
- E. Any employee found to have acted in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in accordance with policy [4.7 Employee Discipline](#).

4.7 Employee Discipline

The Register of Deeds expects employees to comply with the office's standards of behavior and performance and to correct any noncompliance with these standards.

The Register of Deeds Office may, at its sole discretion, implement progressive discipline in which attempts to provide employees with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve may be provided. It does, however, retain the right to administer discipline in any manner it sees fit.

The Register of Deeds has the exclusive right to hire, discharge, and supervise all employees of

the Register of Deeds Office in accordance with [NCGS 153A-103](#). This policy does not modify the status of employees as employees-at-will or in any way restrict the Register of Deeds Office right to bypass any disciplinary procedures.

A. Part-Time Employees

Progressive discipline will generally not be used for these employees. Such at-will employees may be dismissed at any time, without or without reason.

B. Full-Time Probationary and Part-Time Benefited Probationary Employees

Progressive discipline will generally not be used for these employees. Such at-will employees may be dismissed at any time, without or without reason.

C. Full-Time Non-Probationary and Part-Time Non-Probationary Employees

Although a reason is not required to discipline or dismiss these at-will employees, the Register of Deeds may implement progressive discipline for these employees as follows:

1. Reasons for Discipline

a. Unsatisfactory Job Performance – failure to perform the duties of the position in a manner considered acceptable by the Register of Deeds. Examples include, but are not limited to: poor work quality, insufficient work quantity, lack of requisite skills/knowledge to perform the position, excessive absenteeism, unauthorized absences, conduct unbecoming a Register of Deeds Office employee, or any other performance deemed unsatisfactory by the Register of Deeds.

b. Unacceptable Personal Misconduct - involves an employee deliberately behaving in a way that is inconsistent with continuing their employment. Examples include, but are not limited to: causing serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of another person or to the reputation of the Register of Deeds Office, theft, fraud, assault, willful violation of policies or procedures, violation of the substance abuse policy, insubordination, insolence, gross negligence, recklessness, violation of laws, workplace harassment; malicious gossip; unprofessional behavior; repeated inability to get along with staff members or members of the public, intentional or unintentional violation of any of the [County Personnel Policies Adopted by the Register of Deeds Office](#), or any other conduct deemed unacceptable by the Register of Deeds (or designee). Violations of this category will typically result in immediate dismissal in accordance with this policy.

2. Categories of Discipline

The Register of Deeds Office, at its sole discretion, may implement the following progressive disciplinary steps in which attempts to provide employees with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve are provided. However; If an offense is of sufficient severity, disciplinary action may begin at a more advanced stage, up to and including immediate dismissal. Therefore, the Register of Deeds maintains the right to dismiss any employee, as outlined in this policy, without providing for any or all of the following corrective disciplinary measures:

a. Counseling

Counseling by an employee's immediate supervisor/administrator may be the first effort to correct the employee's performance or conduct deficiencies. When an employee's work or conduct is unsatisfactory and if counseling does

not correct the situation, progressive discipline consisting of increasingly stronger disciplinary action may be followed.

b. Verbal Warning

A verbal warning may be issued in an attempt to correct relatively minor occurrences of inappropriate performance and/or conduct.

c. First Written Warning

A written warning may be issued for repetition of an offense covered in a previous verbal warning or the first occurrence of a more severe offense.

d. Final Written Warning

A final written warning may be issued for the first occurrence of a very serious offense(s) or may be issued for repeated lesser offenses which have been identified by the Assistant Register of Deeds or Senior Assistant of Register of Deeds and not corrected by the employee despite previous disciplinary action(s). The final written warning is considered a last chance and if an employee does not achieve improvement in performance/conduct, dismissal will normally be the result.

e. Dismissal

The Register of Deeds shall notify an employee in writing of their dismissal. Because the Register of Deeds has the exclusive right to fire in accordance with [NCGS 153A-103](#) the decision of the Register of Deeds shall be final. There is no right of appeal.