



RESOLUTION R-024-25

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF WALKER COUNTY TO ADOPT A FORMAL SEPARATION POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Walker County ("Board") is the governing authority of Walker County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined it is desirable and necessary to adopt a formal separation policy for all employees paid through the Walker County Government Payroll Department; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to establish and maintain guidelines for handling the various types of separation, whether voluntary and involuntary separation, as well as recommendations for re-employment;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia that the Formal Separation Policy, attached hereto marked "Exhibit A," and incorporated by reference, is hereby adopted and shall be implemented immediately.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED any other Resolution or county policy addressing separation from employment prior to this date, that is now in conflict with any of the provisions of this Resolution, is hereby repealed.

SO RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this 3rd day of April, 2025.

ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

Lisa Richardson

LISA RICHARDSON, County Clerk

Angela Teems

ANGELA TEEMS, Chairwoman



The foregoing Resolution received a motion for Approval from Commissioner Teems, second by Commissioner Askew, and upon the question the vote is 4 ayes, 0 nays to Approve the Resolution.



SEPARATION

SUMMARY

It is the policy of Walker County Government to maintain a formal separation policy that applies to all employees paid through the Walker County Government Payroll Department.

DEFINITIONS AND PROCEDURES

TYPES OF SEPARATION

1. VOLUNTARY

- a. Resignation - An employee may be separated from employment with Walker County Government upon the submission of the employee's resignation. Resignations may be submitted in writing or orally to the employee's Elected Official or Department Head, supervisor, or the Human Resources Director. The resignation is effective immediately and is final. There will be no opportunity for the employee to seek to withdraw or rescind the resignation. If it is tendered to anyone other than the Human Resources Director, the Human Resources Director must be notified immediately. All employees are expected to submit a two-week resignation notice. No Paid Time Off may be taken after the notice is submitted. Scheduled personal leave are excluded as part of the notice. Employees who fail to work the entire notice will be deemed as having quit with no notice and will not be considered eligible for re-hire for at least two (2) years from the date of the resignation. The resignation notice will be maintained in the employee's personnel file in the Human Resources Department.
- b. Abandonment of Position – An employee shall be considered to have abandoned their position when any of the following occur:
 - i. An employee is absent without notice to the Elected Official, Department Head, or their designees for three (3) or more consecutive working days;
 - ii. An employee is absent for three (3) or more consecutive working days after providing notice, but without having any available paid time off;
 - iii. An employee is absent three (3) or more consecutive working days without receiving approval for the absences.

For purposes of this policy only, a "working day" is defined as: eight (8) hours worked for county employees who normally work 8-hour shifts; ten (10) hours worked for Public Works and Motor Pool employees who work a 10-hour shift; twelve (12) hours worked for Law Enforcement sworn officers and E-911 who work a 12-hour shift; and twenty-four (24) hours for Fire and Rescue Department employees who work a 24-hour shift.

The Human Resources Director shall be notified immediately of any employee who has resigned as a result of abandonment of position.



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- c. Failure to Return from Leave of Absence – Any employee who fails to return to duty at the expiration of a duly approved leave of absence for three (3) consecutive working days following the expiration of the leave of absence shall be deemed to have abandoned their position and to have resigned as of the end of the third day.
 - d. Retirement – An employee may be separated from employment with WCG upon their retirement consistent with retirement eligibility contained in Federal and State law, as well as in the Walker County Retirement Benefits plans. Any employee who wishes to retire shall provide written notice a minimum of ten (10) regularly scheduled working days prior to the intended retirement date to the affected Elected Official or Department Head and to the Human Resources Director. After providing notice of retirement, the employee is not eligible to utilize paid time off. All compensation due to be paid to the employee shall be paid out in a lump sum and through the payroll process as with all other departing employees. *(See Final Pay-Out Section at the end of this policy.)* The employee should be made available to meet with the Human Resources Director to process the retirement benefit as efficiently and as quickly as possible.

2. INVOLUNTARY

- a. Lay-off –
 - i. Lay-off is defined as a reduction in force that may result in the separation of employees due to abolishment of a position, a shortage of funds, or work, a need to increase efficiency, or a material change in the duties or organizational unit of the Department. No layoffs shall be done for the purpose of dismissing an employee for incompetence, misconduct, or for other reasons, except those included in this policy. The lay-off does not reflect discredit upon the service of the employee. A lay-off can be recommended by any Elected Official, Department Head, and/or the Human Resources Director. Any lay-off must be approved by the Human Resources Director prior to becoming effective.
 - ii. Order of Lay-Off – Prior to the lay-off, the Elected Official or Department Head shall make recommendations to the Human Resources Director who shall consider work records, employee evaluation ratings, and length of service in determining which employees shall be laid-off. If it is found that two or more people in the department in which the lay-off is to be made have equal ratings as determined by the review of employee records and evaluation ratings, the order of lay-off shall be based upon seniority. No full-time employee shall be laid off while another person is employed on a temporary or part-time basis in a position with the same job description if the employee is willing to accept the temporary or part-time work. In evaluating employees for purposes of a lay-off care should be taken to accurately evaluate all employees. An employee shall not be laid off based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, political affiliation,



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- disability, or any other protected category recognized by State and/or Federal law.
- iii. Transfers and Demotions – Prior to lay-off and in an effort to avoid separation of employment, the Human Resources Director may direct lateral transfers or demotions as necessary to place employees into positions for which they are qualified rather than lay them off. Lateral transfers or demotions, in accordance with this policy, will be effective unless the employee elects in writing to be laid off. Written notice of said election from the employee must be received by the Human Resources Director within three (3) calendar days after the employees has received notice of the transfer or demotion.
 - iv. Special Cases – Should an Elected Official or Department Head determine that the retention of a certain employee is essential to the effective operation of the department or unit because the employee possesses special skills or abilities, and should the Elected Official or Department Head wish to retain such employee in preference to another with a higher rating or seniority, then the Elected Official or Department Head shall submit a written request to the Human Resources Director. This notification shall set forth in detail the specific skills and abilities possessed by the employee and the reasons why such employee is essential to the effective operation of the Department. The Human Resources Director will then review the request with the Legal and Policy Director. With their approval, the individual may be retained to the detriment of the higher ranking employee.
 - v. Re-Employment Register – The Human Resources Director shall prepare a register of employees who have been laid-off to be utilized in accordance with this policy. The order of names appearing in the register will be based upon the order of the lay-off. If there is a tie seniority will be the determining factor. The names of the employees shall remain on the register for a period of one (1) year. During the life of the lay-off register, an employee may submit a written request to have their name removed from the list. Employees who are on the list shall be given primary consideration when conditions warrant rehiring. This means the employee shall not have to go through the recruiting process and will be notified by Human Resources that there is an opportunity for that employee to return to a comparable position, either full-time or part-time, as long as the employee meets the minimum qualifications for the position. All employees appointed to a position in this manner shall serve the normal and stated probation or introductory period for that position. Employees whose names appear on the lay-off register are welcome to apply for other positions within Walker County at any time. If the employee is hired for another position, they will be removed from the lay-off register and no other special consideration will be given. If a person placed on the lay-off register does not accept the first offer for re-employment having the same classification as the one held at the time of separation, the employee's name shall be removed from the lay-off register and no other special consideration shall be given.
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- b. Death – An employee who dies while in Walker County's employment shall be separated effective as of the date of death.
- c. Inability to Perform - If an employee suffers from a condition or physical or mental disability that prevents them from performing the essential functions of the position, or is otherwise unfit for duty to the degree that the employee cannot perform the essential functions of the position, even with reasonable accommodation or in the absence of an available reasonable accommodation, the employee may be subject to dismissal for inability to perform the job. This should be considered a last step alternative after all other considerations have been exhausted. The Elected Official or Department Head should work closely with the Human Resources Director throughout the process to ensure that the employee's rights under Federal and State law are not violated.
- d. Loss of License or Certification – any employee who is unable to perform the essential functions of their job adequately because of a loss of a required license or certification shall be subject to dismissal. All employees are independently and solely responsible for ensuring that any license or certification required to perform the job are maintained in good standing.
- e. Termination- the involuntary separation of an employee from employment with Walker County Government. A dismissal normally occurs after all steps of Progressive Discipline have failed to achieve the desired conduct or performance. However, life safety issues do not require progressive disciplinary steps and may result in immediate termination without prior warning. In such an event, the Human Resources Director should be notified no later than the end of the day. In all other cases, when Progressive Discipline reaches the suspension or termination level, it should be conducted in consultation with the Human Resources Director. The Elected Official or Department Head will arrange to meet with the Human Resources Director and the employee to conduct a dismissal conference. The employee will be told the reason for the conference, and that Walker County Government intends to dismiss them. If the employee refuses the conference, the dismissal will become automatic and enforced, and all rights to a dismissal conference shall be waived by the employee. The dismissal conference shall consist of the applicable Elected Official or Department Head, or designee, any applicable supervisor, the Human Resources Director, and the employee. The employee should be advised of the specific reasons for the dismissal prior to being discharged. The employee's verbal response at the conference should be considered. If deemed appropriate, the County shall proceed with the dismissal. If deemed inappropriate, the County shall proceed with an alternate disciplinary action.

RECOMMENDATION OF RE-EMPLOYMENT

In every instance other than death or retirement, upon separation of an employee from a position, the applicable Elected Official or Department Head shall specify on the Payroll Change Notice (PCN) whether



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the employee can be considered for re-employment. An answer of "no" disqualifies the employee for further appointments with Walker County Government for at least two (2) years from the date of separation.

FINAL PAY-OUT

A separated employee shall be paid all accumulated salary, earned PTO, and compensatory time due.

The Department Head or designee is responsible for ensuring that all County property and equipment has been returned in proper working order. Any property or equipment that has not been returned should be itemized with fair market value in writing. This should be attached to the Payroll Change Notice (PCN) and signed by the Department Head or supervisor, authorizing the Payroll Clerk to deduct the total amount from the employee's final check.

The Payroll Clerk will pay for all hours worked by the employee for the final payroll period in which the employee was separated. The Payroll Clerk will then calculate all PTO and compensatory time due, and all deductions due, such as employee benefit premiums and any charges reported by the Department Head. This will be processed and paid to the employee in the next payroll cycle.

APPROVED

Angie Teems
Chairwoman/CEO
Walker County Government
101 S. Duke Street
LaFayette, GA 30728



Walker County Government
Office of the Commissioner
Human Resources Department

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EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECEIPT

I, _____, acknowledge that I have had the TERMINATIONS reviewed with me completely and in full detail. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about any section I did not understand.

I understand that my failure to comply with any part of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. I also understand that violation of those sections that are defined as zero tolerance will result in immediate termination of employment.

By signing this document, I am stating that I understand the standards as explained in this policy and agree to abide by them and that I have received a copy of this policy for my personal records.

X

Employee

Date: _____

X

Witness

Date: _____