Personnel Policy Handbook

**Madison SWCD**

**&**

**Clark SCD**

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# INTRODUCTION

The Madison Soil and Water Conservation District is one of 50 Conservation Districts in Idaho. Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of state government but are not state agencies. Conservation Districts are charged with carrying out a program for the conservation, use and development of soil, water, and other natural resources.

Conservation Districts are the primary entities to aid private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement and enhancement of Idaho’s natural resources. They are catalysts for coordinating and implementing conservation programs, channeling expertise from all levels of government into action at the local level. Programs are nonregulatory; science-based technical assistance, incentive–based financial programs and informational and educational programs at the local level.

Both by legislation (Soil Conservation District Law, 22-27) and by agreement the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical assistance to landowners and land users through Conservation Districts. Each Conservation District in Idaho has a signed Mutual Agreement with the Secretary of Agricultural and the Governor of Idaho that establishes a framework for cooperation.

All SWCD programs, services, and employment opportunities are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap. Revisions to this handbook need to be approved at a district board meeting.

# HIRING

The district may hire, as funds permit, an employee(s)s needed to accomplish its operations. Employee(s) hired is shared with the Clark Soil Conservation District. In hiring its employees, Madison SWCD adopts the following policy of the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission regarding nepotism:

It shall be the policy of the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission to discourage the employment by soil conservation districts of personnel related within the second degree to

district supervisors or NRCS personnel assigned to district field offices. Relatives within the second degree include grandparents, parents, wife, husband, children, sisters, brothers, grandchildren, and the spouse of children, sisters, brothers and grandchildren.

# PROBATIONARY PERIOD AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

At the time of hiring, a new employee of Madison SWCD shall receive a written job description and a copy of the district’s Personnel Policy Handbook.

All employees are subject to a 90-day probationary period as part of the selection process.

During this period, employees shall receive direction, training, and professional guidance to acclimate them to the position for which they were hired.

During the probationary period, employees who do not perform their duties satisfactorily shall be released from their jobs at the discretion of the board of supervisors. The NRCS District Conservationist should be consulted with during the probationary period as to the performance of the employee.

At the end of the probationary period, a written review of the employee performance shall be conducted by the Board Chairperson, who shall recommend to the Board of Supervisors dismissal or granting of regular status.

An annual performance review of all regular-status employees shall be conducted by the chairperson of the district prior to January 31. Employees shall receive a summary of that evaluation.

Termination of employees requires two weeks’ notice by the party instigating termination, except during the probationary period.

# EMPLOYEE STATUS

The availability of funds, workloads, seasonal and economic influences as well as supply of prospective employees dictate the need for varied and flexible classification of personnel to be employed by the three SWCD. Classifications are as follows:

## **Regular Part-Time**

A regular part-time employee who consistently works more than ten but less than 40 hours per week.

## **Regular Full-Time**

A regular full-time employee who consistently works at least 40 hours per week.

## **Temporary**

A temporary employee is an employee who is hired for a specific period or purpose.

# PAID TIME OFF AND HOLIDAYS

The Madison SWCD provides paid time off (PTO) for all employees at their current hourly rate. PTO is used at the employee’s discretion. Employees will not be paid for any unused accrued leave at the time of separation.

In addition to PTO, employees are allowed time off without pay with prior approval from the respective district supervisors.

Full-time and Regular part-time employees are eligible for paid holiday leave for the following holidays if they fall on a regularly scheduled workday:

New Year’s Day Labor Day

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Columbus Day

Presidents Day Veterans Day

Memorial Day Thanksgiving Day

Juneteenth Christmas Day

Independence Day

The District Office will also be closed the day following Thanksgiving. The District Office will also be closed the day before (Christmas Eve) or the day after Christmas (depending on which day Christmas falls on, i.e. Sunday). These days are paid holidays.

Sick leave will accrue at a rate of four hours per pay period for full-time employees. For part-time employees, sick leave will accrue at a rate of four hours per two pay periods.

Full-time will be given administrative leave and other holidays in accordance with those observed by the USDA. Paying the existing District Employees for Federal Holidays based on the percentage of time worked, compared to a 40-hour work week. Example: If an employee’s regularly established work schedule is 20 hours per week, then the percentage of time worked is 50%. When a Federal Holiday occurs then that employee receives 50% of their regular pay for that day.

Employees are eligible to earn PTO and receive holiday pay after the successful completion of the probationary period.

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Paid leave of absence is available to regular full-time and part-time employees. Included are jury, duty and bereavement leave. Leave of absence due to jury duty may be requested by the employee and approved by the district conservationist. If employees are reimbursed for their services, they will be expected to reimburse the district for the difference between their wages or salary during the leave and the amount of jury compensation; otherwise, the amount will be deducted from the employee’s wages.

Bereavement leave of up to three days with pay is granted to employees when a death occurs in the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as mother, father, husband, wife, children, stepchildren, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, brother-in-law and sister-in-law. Bereavement leave may be extended by using PTO or leave without pay upon approval of the district conservationist or board chairperson.

**HEALTH INSURANCE** **AND PARENTAL LEAVE**

Madison SWCD provides paid time off to all employees. Length of service and employee benefits are maintained during sick leaves.

The districts may provide health insurance to employees at a rate specified in a memo of understanding agreed upon by supervisors and employees at hiring or as revised during the annual performance review.

A parental leave stipend of up to $1,200 may be provided to eligible employees. This benefit will be agreed upon by the employee and board chairmen; and specified in the employee’s work agreement.

Employees who have a newborn or adopt a child are entitled to work from home three days per week for up to 24 weeks. This parental leave benefit will be agreed upon by the employee and board chairmen; and specified in the employee’s work agreement.

# COMPENSATION

## **Payment of Salary**

Employees shall be paid bi-weekly on Fridays following submission of their time sheets on the previous Wednesday. Checks will be issued. Responsibility for stop payment charges or other incurred charges will fall on the recipient of the paper check for lost or stolen checks should the paper check method be used.

**Phone Compensation**

All permanent district employees shall receive $50 per month to offset cell phone costs when the employee uses a personal cell phone to text supervisors regarding meetings, projects or other district business. This compensation begins immediately for new hires.

**Internet Assistance**

All district employees are entitled to receive assistance with their internet expenses during

prolonged periods when they are working from home such as during a pandemic when office capacity is limited or during an extended leave that has been approved by the district chairman or district conservationist. This assistance may be in the form of a mobile hotspot or monetary reimbursement for monthly internet bill and must receive prior approval from the district chairmen.

## **Workman Compensation**

Workman Compensation Insurance is available to all employees on Madison SWCD payroll. This insurance provides coverage from the date of hire at no cost to the employee.

## **Unemployment Compensation**

The district contributes to the State Unemployment Compensation Fund in order to provide unemployment benefits to district employees who are laid off or terminated without cause.

## **Travel Allowance**

All employees are eligible to be reimbursed for travel and other work-related expenses with prior approval of the board of supervisors. Employees will be compensated for time spent in travel when related to the employee position within the district as directed by the board of supervisors. Travel time to and from work will not be compensated. Reimbursable items include the following:

Travel: Actual cost for plane and bus. Use of own vehicle at the current rate determined by the district. Any advances on expenses must be approved by the board chairperson.

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT

All regular full-time employees of Madison SWCD who have completed the probationary period are encouraged to participate in employee development activities as deemed necessary by the board of supervisors. Regular part-time employees will participate in a prorated amount or as advised by the board of supervisors and/or district conservationist. Employee development activities include graduate, undergraduate or technical school courses; conferences; institutes; seminars; workshops; and district training programs.

Time off for participation in college or technical school courses must be approved by the board of supervisors, and missed work hours must be made up or deducted from wages. All employees will be paid for hours of attendance at required development activities.

The conservation district may pay the cost of enrolling in the development activity or course, depending on the program content and relevance to district business.

# HOURS OF WORK

The normal work week for regular full-time employees is 40 hours, eight hours per day, Monday through Friday.

All employees are entitled to one fifteen-minute paid rest period in both the morning and afternoon. All employees are entitled to one hour without pay for lunch. Normal office hours are 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. unless otherwise agreed to by the employee and the district. Changes in working hours are subject to prior approval of the district board of supervisors based on availability of funds, workloads, seasonal and economic influences.

When an employee is asked to cover the office for a non-scheduled workday the employee will be paid a minimum of 4 hours. Employees may be required to attend some meetings beyond normal working hours. In those instances, employees will be paid their regular hourly rate plus mileage for attendance.

They will be excused from evening meetings at 10:00 p.m. and will also receive one hour of compensation time to be used the morning of the workday following the meeting. All time sheets will be approved by the treasurer or any board member in the absence of the treasurer.

# ABSENTEEISM AND TARDINESS

All employees of the SWCD are expected to be present for the working day unless excused.

Excused absences will be allowed at the discretion of the district board chairpersons.

Up to two hours of administrative leave will be granted when hazardous driving conditions exist, provided that the employees notify the district board chairperson.

If the agency (NRCS) deems it necessary to close the office on a regular workday the employee will be paid for a full day. A pattern of tardiness or absenteeism will lead the chairperson to question the employee’s commitment to the conservation district and may lead to disciplinary actions up to, and including, termination.

# EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

In order to provide an efficient and effective program and to protect the health and safety of all employees and other who come into contact with the district, employees must maintain appropriate levels of self-discipline at all times. Thus, Madison SWCD prohibit the following activities:

1. Use of alcohol or illegal drugs at work.
2. Use of cigarettes and other forms of tobacco at work.
3. Reporting to work under the influence of any type of drug, including alcohol, unless

that drug has been prescribed by a licensed physician and it has been determined that the drug does not cause side effects which would adversely affect job safety or performance.

1. Falsification of records.
2. Theft of private, federal or district property.
3. Refusal to obey immediate supervisor during work time.
4. Personal conduct at work resulting in injury to others.
5. Falsification of job application.
6. Unsatisfactory quality of work.
7. Public criticism of the district, NRCS or their employees.
8. Unethical or discriminatory business practices.
9. Criminal acts away from work for which an employee is convicted in a court of law. Failure to abide by any of the above rules can result in dismissal by the board of supervisors.

The above rules and any resulting disciplinary action are not exclusive and do not preclude the districts right to discipline or dismiss for other just cause. Employees are also expected to abide by the following general guidelines:

Employees are not permitted to make long distance personal calls on office telephones.

Government vehicles will be used solely for official business. Only those employees who receive proper authorization may use the vehicles.

Employees shall not use office equipment, computers, typewriters, copy machines, etc.-- for personal or non-SWCD purposes.

The use of district letterhead for personal or non-business purposes is prohibited.

Employees are not permitted to engage in personal business on district premises except for normal personal or family maintenance activities, such as telephone calls to doctors and childcare facilities, etc. Then such activities should be held to a minimum. Employees may bring their children to the workplace during work hours at the discretion of the NRCS District Conservationists and /or the board chairperson.

Employees who are receiving the phone compensation must acknowledge texts or calls from district supervisors, chairpersons and the district conservationist. The acknowledgement can be as simple as a thumbs up for a text or a text acknowledging the call.

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of Madison SWCD to uphold a system of personnel management that ensures high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and conduct. Sexual harassment is misconduct that compromises these standards.

Any SWCD employee who uses implicitly or explicit sexual behavior to control, influence or otherwise affect the career, salary or job of another individual is engaging in sexual harassment. Similarly, any SWCD employee who participates in deliberate or repeated unsolicited verbal comments, gestures or physical contact of sexual nature that are unwelcome or interfere with work productivity is engaging in sexual harassment. Finally, anyone who engages in any of the behaviors cited above while conducting business with the district is engaging in sexual harassment.

All reports of such behavior will be examined immediately, and an employee who sexually harasses another individual while conducting SWCD business will be subject to disciplinary action.

# COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Persons who believe that they are being, or have been, subjected to harassing or discriminatory behavior should report the incident(s) to the district board chairperson. Throughout any harassment resolution process, the confidentiality of the complainant(s) and witness(es) will be maintained.