

# Sample Township Personnel Policies

## Township Provided Cellular Phones

Township provided cellular phones are to be used for Township business and may be used for personal business on a limited basis only. Township employees must reimburse the Township for any personal call charges incurred. Township employees should review detailed cellular phone statements, indicate all non-business related calls, affix and reimburse the Township for all non-business related calls within thirty (30) days. Elected township officials (Township Trustees and the Township Fiscal Officer) or their designees (Department Heads) should routinely review employees' cellular phone usage.

## Township Issued Credit Cards

**What:** The Township has been issued credit cards (purchasing cards) by their financial institution as a convenience for making township related purchases.

**Who:** Only elected township officials (Township Trustees and the Township Fiscal Officer) or their designees (Department Heads) are authorized signers for use of the township credit card for purchases. Township officials and the list of their designees must be on file with the Township Fiscal Officer and the credit card issuing financial institution as having authorized signing privileges for purchases made with the credit card. Any changes to the list of authorized signers for use of the township credit card must be filed with the Township Fiscal Officer and the credit card issuing financial institution as soon as possible.

**Not in Use:** When not in use, the credit cards must be maintained in a secure location within the Township either in a safe or with the Township Fiscal Officer.

**In Use:** All purchases using a credit card must be approved in advance.

**Dollar Limit:** The transaction dollar limit for any single charge on the township credit card is \$500. Only purchases less than \$500 may be made using the township credit card.

**Receipts:** The following payment review and approval procedures must be adhered to: Detailed invoices or receipts are required for all transactions using the township credit card. Invoices and/or receipts must show the transaction date, the dollar amount of the transaction, as well as a description of the

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transaction (service or item(s) purchased, and the authorized signature (if applicable) of the Township elected official or employee making the purchase. All such paperwork must be submitted to the Township Fiscal Officer no later than the next business day after completing a transaction.

Personal Cards: Personal credit cards are not to be made for purchases. Reimbursements will not be made for any such purposes.

## Travel Expenses While on Township Business

It is the policy of the Township to reimburse employees for reasonable and necessary expenditures made by employees while on official Township business outside the Township. Mileage, parking fees, and registration fees will be reimbursed for both single-day travel and overnight travel. Meals and lodging will only be reimbursed for overnight travel.

Mileage will be reimbursed at a rate per mile equal to the allowable IRS rate, with all other allowable expenses on an actual cost basis. Claims for reimbursement other than mileage shall be accompanied by invoices and/or receipts showing proof of payment of such claims. Claims for reimbursement must be submitted to the Township Fiscal Officer. Only travel that is pre-approved by the Board of Trustees will be eligible for reimbursement.

Overnight Travel:

Lodging - Hotel and motel expenses will be reimbursed upon completion of authorized travel and submission of proper claim with receipts. A reasonable class of accommodation shall be selected where choice is available.

Meals - Meal reimbursements for all overnight trips are to be itemized with receipts showing proof of payment. Breakfast: Reimbursement for this meal shall not exceed \$7.00. Lunch: Reimbursement for this meal shall not exceed \$11.00. Dinner: Reimbursement for this meal shall not exceed \$18.00. Reimbursement for meals shall not exceed \$36.00 per day for three meals. These maximums are not cumulative. The employee shall not be reimbursed in excess of these amounts regardless of whether or not reimbursement is requested for each meal to which the employee is entitled.

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Mileage Allowance - Employees utilizing their own vehicle will be reimbursed at the IRS allowable rate per mile. Each employee who drives a personal vehicle on Township business must have liability insurance on said vehicle. No reimbursement for mileage shall exceed the dollar amount of round trip air fare at the coach rate on a licensed common carrier, plus auto rental or taxi fare at point of destination. If an employee for his or her own convenience travels by an indirect route or interrupts travel by the most economical route, the employee shall bear any extra expense involved. Reimbursement for such travel shall be for only that part of the expense as would have been necessary in order to travel.

## Parking:

Parking fees shall be reimbursed at cost when itemized on the trip with receipt showing proof of payment.

## Non-Allowable Expenses:

The following expenses are not reimbursable:

- Laundry, cleaning, or valet services (unless trip duration exceeds seven (7) days)
- Tobacco products
- Alcoholic beverages
- Entertainment
- First class travel accommodations when economy or coach class fares are available
- Meals and lodging in lieu of other meals and/or lodging the expenses of which are included in the Registration Fee.
- Fines, forfeitures or penalties
- Rental vehicles except as pre-approved by the Board of Trustees
- Expenses of a spouse or other non-employee
- Loss or damage to personal property
- Barber, beauty parlor, shoe shine, or toiletries
- Personal telephone calls
- Personal postage

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## Firearms

Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code, no person, including township employees, shall carry, possess, or convey onto township property or township facilities or in township vehicles any firearm or dangerous ordnance. Violation of this policy shall result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. This policy does not apply to a law enforcement officer certified to carry a firearm and acting within the scope of their authority.

## Investments

The primary objective of the township's investment activities is the preservation of capital and the protection of investment principal. The township will diversify its investments to avoid incurring unreasonable and avoidable risks regarding specific security types or individual financial institutions. The township's investment portfolio will remain sufficiently liquid to enable the township to meet operating requirements that might be reasonably anticipated. In investing public funds, the township will strive to maximize the return on the portfolio but will avoid assuming unreasonable investment risks. Banks vary in the services they provide, their service fees, interest rates earned on account balances, and the investment service provided. The township's objective is to obtain good banking services while minimizing the cost of banking services to the township. The Fiscal Officer will abide by the Ohio Revised Code Chapter 135 for investment and deposit activities. With the exception of construction funds where the interest income shall remain a part of the fund, all other interest income shall be posted to the general fund unless specifically designated otherwise.

## Records Retention

See Attached State of Ohio Attorney General's Recommended Sample Policy.



# MARC DANN ATTORNEY GENERAL

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## STATE OF OHIO

### **Introduction:**

It is the policy of (this office) that openness leads to a better informed citizenry, which leads to better government and better public policy. It is the policy of (this office) to strictly adhere to the state's Public Records Act. All exemptions to openness are to be construed in their narrowest sense and any denial of public records in response to a valid request must be accompanied by an explanation, including legal authority, as outlined in the Ohio Revised Code. If the request is in writing, the explanation must also be in writing.

*(AG comment: The introduction section is meant to convey the public office's philosophy toward openness and to set the tone for how the office will interact with the public in terms of customer service and the free flow of information.)*

### **Section 1. Public records**

This office, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, defines records as including the following: Any document – paper, electronic (including, but not limited to, e-mail), or other format – that is created or received by, or comes under the jurisdiction of a public office that documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office. All records of (this office) are public unless they are specifically exempt from disclosure under the Ohio Revised Code.

#### **Section 1.1**

It is the policy of (this office) that, as required by Ohio law, records will be organized and maintained so that they are readily available for inspection and copying (See Section 4 for the e-mail record policy). Record retention schedules are to be updated regularly and posted prominently.

*(AG comment: The purpose of this section is to define what is a public record. This will vary from agency to agency. Law enforcement, for instance, has unique exemptions under*

*the Open Records Act. School districts have different standards for student records than for administrative records. Law offices, such as those of city law directors or county prosecutors, will have records that are exempt from disclosure requirements based on attorney-client privilege and work-product in reasonable anticipation of litigation. The public entities are encouraged to examine their current policies to ensure “public record” is defined as broadly as possible.)*

## **Section 2. Record requests**

Each request for public records should be evaluated for a response using the following guidelines:

### **Section 2.1**

Although no specific language is required to make a request, the requester must at least identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the public office to identify, retrieve, and review the records. If it is not clear what records are being sought, the records custodian must contact the requester for clarification, and should assist the requestor in revising the request by informing the requestor of the manner in which the office keeps its records.

### **Section 2.2**

The requester does not have to put a records request in writing, and does not have to provide his or her identity or the intended use of the requested public record. It is this office’s general policy that this information is not to be requested.

### **Section 2.3**

Public records are to be available for inspection during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. Public records must be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records must be made available within a reasonable period of time. “Prompt” and “reasonable” take into account the volume of records requested; the proximity of the location where the records are stored; and the necessity for any legal review of the records requested.

### **Section 2.4**

Each request should be evaluated for an estimated length of time required to gather the records. Routine requests for records should be satisfied immediately if feasible to do so. Routine requests include, but are not limited to, meeting minutes (both in draft and final form), budgets, salary information, forms and applications, personnel rosters, etc. If fewer than 20 pages of copies are requested or if the records are readily available in an electronic format that can be e-mailed or downloaded easily, these should be made as quickly as the equipment allows.

All requests for public records must either be satisfied (see Section 2.4) or be acknowledged in writing by the (public office) within three business days following the office's receipt of the request. If a request is deemed significantly beyond "routine," such as seeking a voluminous number of copies or requiring extensive research, the acknowledgement must include the following:

**Section 2.4a** – An estimated number of business days it will take to satisfy the request.

**Section 2.4b** – An estimated cost if copies are requested.

**Section 2.4c** – Any items within the request that may be exempt from disclosure.

## **Section 2.5**

Any denial of public records requested must include an explanation, including legal authority. If portions of a record are public and portions are exempt, the exempt portions are to be redacted and the rest released. If there are redactions, each redaction must be accompanied by a supporting explanation, including legal authority.

*(AG comment: The purpose of this section is to outline how the public body responds to requests for public records. While the Ohio Revised Code says merely a "reasonable time" is required for making copies available in response to public records requests, this model policy contemplates that public offices should at least respond to the request within three business days. Further, public bodies should strive to provide copies in responses to routine public records requests immediately, or at the maximum within three business days. Some public bodies may find this onerous. We encourage, however, each agency and body to set parameters on response times as a way to manage expectations and facilitate openness.)*

## **Section 3. Costs for Public Records**

Those seeking public records will be charged only the actual cost of making copies.

**Section 3.1** The charge for paper copies is 5 cents per page.

**Section 3.2** The charge for downloaded computer files to a compact disc is \$1 per disc.

**Section 3.3** There is no charge for documents e-mailed.

## **Section 3.4**

Requesters may ask that documents be mailed to them. They will be charged the actual cost of the postage and mailing supplies.

*(AG comment: The purpose of this section is to define actual costs of copies, which under Ohio law may only consist of the costs of paper, ink, etc., and not the time used for gathering, reviewing or physically copying the records.)*

#### **Section 4. E-mail**

Documents in electronic mail format are records as defined by the Ohio Revised Code when their content relates to the business of the office. E-mail is to be treated in the same fashion as records in other formats and should follow the same retention schedules.

**Section 4.1** – Records in private e-mail accounts used to conduct public business are subject to disclosure, and all employees or representatives of this office are instructed to retain their e-mails that relate to public business (see Section 1 Public Records) and to copy them to their business e-mail accounts and/or to the office’s records custodian.

**Section 4.2** – The records custodian is to treat the e-mails from private accounts as records of the public office, filing them in the appropriate way, retaining them per established schedules and making them available for inspection and copying in accordance with the Public Records Act.

*(AG comment: The purpose of this section is to clarify the ongoing debate over records in e-mail and other electronic formats. The key issue is not format, but content. If an e-mail or other electronic communication involves the business of a public office, it is a record of that office and is subject to disclosure.)*

#### **Section 5. Failure to respond to a public records request**

(The public office) recognizes the legal and non-legal consequences of failure to properly respond to a public records request. In addition to the distrust in government that failure to comply may cause, (the public office’s) failure to to comply with a request may result in a court ordering (the public office) to comply with the law and to pay the requester attorney’s fees and damages.

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