



# Employee Handbook

Approved by Valley Regional Transit Board of Directors  
January 9, 2023



Dear Valley Regional Transit employee:

On behalf of your colleagues, I welcome you to Valley Regional Transit (VRT) and wish you every success here.

We believe each employee contributes directly to VRT's growth and success and hope you will take pride in being a member of our team. We are delighted you have joined our staff of transit professionals. The minute you start working here, you become an integral part of VRT and its future. Every job in our organization is important, and you will play a key role in the continued growth of our organization.

VRT is the Treasure Valley's regional public transportation authority. We are an organization committed to providing safe and efficient transit services to the citizens of the Treasure Valley in the most professional, courteous, and friendly manner possible. Your job will be to join us in our endeavor to serve the needs of our passengers by providing unsurpassed customer service. We do this by treating each other and our customers with respect.

As a Valley Regional Transit employee, one of your roles is that of a transit "ambassador" who put riders first. We will provide you with the tools you need to accomplish this role. We will provide training designed to stress the impact you have on the community, keep you informed about what is on the horizon, and provide you with the basic customer service and marketing/communications tools you need to do your job effectively.

VRT is a unique place to work. We are at the forefront of driving transit adoption during a critical point of major growth in the Treasure Valley. We continue to build a culture where we put riders first. We strive to make improvements that will best utilize our resources and improve the service that we offer to customers. This includes fixed-route service, on-demand transit, shared mobility options.

Through passion and innovation, we define the mobility in our community. We are the people who help people move.

We hope that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding.

Again, welcome aboard!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelli Badesheim".

Kelli Badesheim  
Chief Executive Office

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## **Mission Statement** (Adopted by the VRT Board April 2018 – ValleyConnect 2.0)

Valley Regional Transit's (VRT) mission is to develop and manage transportation resources and to coordinate the effective and efficient delivery of safe transportation options to the region's citizens.

## **Vision Statement**

We envision a region with adequate and secure funding to support public transportation options designed to meet the needs of citizens and businesses and to support livable, healthy, and sustainable communities.

## **Guiding Principles**

**Develop community benefit** in an overall, not just a public transportation, focused manner by enhancing the ability of citizens to make a number of choices for transportation and by providing alternative transportation for those who have no choice.

**Maximize public investment** in transportation options throughout the region to assure that resources are utilized efficiently and effectively.

**Provide connectivity** to create ease of services between people, places, and modes, by assuring reasonable ways to connect between different providers and different modes are not only available but are truly easy to understand and easy to use.

**Develop geographic reach** to assure that the geographic locations and concerns of stakeholders, both rural and urban, are thoughtfully integrated into planning and delivery of transportation options to the greatest degree possible.

**Ensure quality customer service** by placing the customer as the focal point of our processes and assure that the ease of use, flexibility of service, and satisfaction are of paramount concern to Valley Regional Transit, providers, and other partners.

**Be action-oriented** by providing the appropriate sense of urgency not only to the matter of immediate improvements, but also for longer range planning efforts with the ultimate goal of enhanced livability for the citizens of the region.

**Work as a team** in collaboration with our partners, stakeholders, and the public by demonstrating our willingness to improve how we work together for the benefit of our constituents.

**Communicate openly and directly and constantly** in an honest manner on all things, always encouraging positive communication and creating an environment where everyone's contribution to the region is acknowledged and respected.

## **About Valley Regional Transit**

Valley Regional Transit (VRT) is the regional public transportation authority for Ada and Canyon counties and is governed by a Board of Directors. The 29-member Board of Directors is primarily composed of elected and appointed officials from the cities, counties, and highway districts within Ada and Canyon counties. This Board sets the policies for regional public transportation services. In addition to the local governments represented on the board, Valley Regional Transit's Board is made

up of several special members such as Boise State University, Capital City Development Corporation, College of Western Idaho, Meridian Development Corporation, and Idaho Transportation Department.

The Valley Regional Transit Board approves the budget and sets the fare structure and service levels for all Valley Regional Transit services. The services directly operated and contracted through Valley Regional Transit are funded through a combination of federal grants and voluntary contributions from our member jurisdictions in accordance with intergovernmental agreements. All capital assets of Valley Regional Transit including buses, facilities, and equipment are owned and/or leased by Valley Regional Transit.

Valley Regional Transit directly provides, contracts, and coordinates a variety of public and specialized transportation services and programs in both Ada and Canyon counties. The specific services provided or coordinated through Valley Regional Transit are:

- Help Desk, a regional customer service call center for public transportation information
- Fixed-route transit service serving the urbanized communities of Boise and Garden City
- On Demand bus services in Nampa, and Caldwell
- Inter-county Express, a peak-hour commuter services between Canyon and Ada counties
- ACCESS Boise and ACCESS Canyon County, an ADA paratransit services for eligible persons with disabilities
- Bike Share, a bike-sharing program that operates primarily in downtown Boise
- CityGo, which offers programs with the goal of providing seamless access to a variety of transportation options and reducing single-occupant vehicle traffic in and out of downtown Boise

In addition to those services directly operated or contracted by Valley Regional Transit, the Authority is responsible for planning and administering a variety of federal transit grant programs.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this employee handbook is to provide basic rules and guidelines concerning employment. This handbook supersedes any previously issued handbooks or policy statements dealing with the subjects discussed within this document. VRT reserves the right to interpret, modify, or supplement the provisions of this handbook at any time.

Please understand that no employment handbook can address every situation in the workplace. If there are questions about employment, ask them. If there is any difficulty reading or understanding any of the provisions of this handbook, please contact your supervisor.

### **At Will Statement**

Employment with VRT is “at-will.” This means employment may be terminated at any time and for any reason, with or without notice by the employee or VRT. Nothing in this employee handbook or any other VRT document should be understood as creating a guarantee of continued employment, a right to termination only for specific reasons, or pursuant to specific procedures, or of any other guarantee

of continued benefits. Only the CEO has the authority to make promises about guaranteed or continued employment, and any such promises are only effective if placed in writing signed by the CEO and specifically stating it is to have a contractual effect.

## **Ethics**

The successful operation and reputation of VRT is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of employees and the public. VRT's reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity. The continued success of VRT is dependent upon the public's trust, and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees owe a duty to VRT and the communities we serve to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

VRT will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its board, officers, and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct.

In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide employees with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation should arise where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with an immediate supervisor for advice and consultation.

Compliance with this policy of ethics and conduct is the responsibility of every VRT employee. Disregarding or failing to comply with this standard of ethics and conduct may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Introductory Period**

The first 90 days of employment is considered an introductory period. During this period, employees will become familiar with VRT, job responsibilities, and the culture of the organization. At the same time, VRT will have the opportunity to monitor the quality and value of performance and make any necessary adjustments in job descriptions or responsibilities. The introductory period with VRT may be revised, as deemed appropriate, by the supervisor. Completion of this introductory period does not imply guaranteed or continued employment. Nothing that occurs during or after this period should be construed to change the "at-will" nature of the employment relationship.

## **Appearance**

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image VRT presents to the public and visitors.

While representing VRT, employees are expected to present a professional, clean, neat, and tasteful appearance. Dress and grooming should be appropriate according to the requirements of the position and accepted social standards. This is particularly true where jobs involve dealing with the public.

Shirts/tops must be long enough to cover the tops of pants or skirts at all times. Clothing that shows excessive cleavage is not allowed.

An employee may be sent home by his/her supervisor if he/she is found to have the following:

Unclean clothing

Offensive body odor  
Inappropriate attire

Supervisors may place additional requirements on attire as is appropriate for specific positions and for the safety of employees.

### **Attendance**

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, VRT expects employees to be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on VRT. In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence. Employees may be required to work different shifts, times, days and/or locations as directed by their supervisor.

Employees who miss three (3) or more unscheduled, consecutive days may need to provide a doctor's note or other acceptable documented reason for the absence. It is the employee's responsibility to maintain consistent communication with the Authority regarding the status of their absence.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Excessive absenteeism is defined as three (3) or more occurrences in one month. Either may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Not reporting to work and not calling to report an absence for three (3) consecutive days is job abandonment and is a serious matter. Job abandonment will be considered as a voluntary termination.

### **Personnel Files**

VRT maintains a confidential personnel file for each employee. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's job application, resume, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals and salary increases, and other employment records.

It is the responsibility of each employee to notify VRT of any changes in personal data. Mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, emergency contacts, educational accomplishments, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. If any personal data has changed, notify the payroll specialist within three (3) days of the change. Employees who falsify information are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Personnel files are the property of VRT, and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only supervisors and management personnel of VRT who have a legitimate reason to review information in a file are allowed to do so.

Employees who wish to review their own file should contact the payroll specialist. With reasonable advance notice, employees may review their own personnel files in VRT's offices and in the presence of an individual appointed by VRT to maintain the files.

## II. EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

### Employee Relations

Experience has shown that when employees deal openly and directly with supervisors the work environment can be excellent, communications can be clear, and attitudes are generally positive. We believe VRT amply demonstrates its commitment to employees by responding effectively to employee concerns.

VRT strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. Supervisors and employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. Employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism. Not every suggestion can be implemented; however, every effort will be made to determine the viability of suggestions.

### Public Relations

Every employee represents VRT to the public. The way jobs are performed presents an image of the entire organization. The public judges VRT by how they are treated with each employee contact. Therefore, one of VRT's first business priorities is to assist the public. Nothing is more important than being courteous, friendly, helpful, and prompt in response to the public. All those who contact VRT deserve to be treated with respect. Demeaning, confrontational, or other inappropriate behavior, regardless of the circumstances, directed toward any member of the public will not be tolerated.

VRT will provide public relations and services training to all employees with extensive contact with the public. Any person who wishes to lodge specific comments or complaints should be directed to the Customer Service Department for appropriate action. Employee's personal contact with the public, manners on the telephone, and the communications sent are a reflection not only of the employee, but also of the professionalism of VRT. Positive public relations not only enhance the public's perception or image of VRT, but also pay off in greater loyalty to the organization through increased ridership and funding support.

### Standards of Conduct

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, VRT expects employees to follow standards of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all employees and the organization.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of infractions of standards of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
- Falsification of timekeeping records
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace

- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of employer-owned or customer-owned property
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice
- Violation of personnel policies
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
- Inappropriate use of social media or computers
- Inappropriate personal use of VRT computers

### **Authority Property**

Employees are always expected to be respectful of VRT property. Unless specifically pre-approved by management, VRT's property is only to be used for legitimate business purposes. Any abuse, misuse, unsafe, or reckless use of VRT's property will not be tolerated.

In limited circumstances and with pre-approval from an employee's supervisor, employees may be authorized to use VRT equipment for personal use. The employee will be required to keep an accurate inventory and to return VRT property in the same condition as it left. The employee will be responsible for the cost of VRT property that is misplaced or damaged during personal use.

VRT will not tolerate property theft of any kind. Property theft includes unauthorized use of VRT's services or facilities or taking VRT property for unauthorized personal use. Every employee is responsible for making reasonable efforts to safeguard VRT's property and must report any known violations of this policy to the appropriate supervisor.

When an employee separates from VRT, he/she shall be responsible to surrender all VRT property within 24 hours, in the same condition in which it was issued.

### **Tobacco Use**

VRT is strongly committed to maintaining and improving the health of all employees; therefore, employees have the right to work in an environment free of the hazards of tobacco. The goal is to balance the respect for individuals with the need to maintain a safe, productive, and smoke-free environment.

In keeping with the goal, no smoking or other use of tobacco products (including, but not limited to, cigarettes, pipes, cigars, snuff, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, or vaping) is permitted in any part of the buildings or on VRT owned or leased property, including but not limited to restrooms, break rooms, exterior entrances/exits, patios, or parking lots. Smoking, vaping, or other use of tobacco products is also prohibited in vehicles owned, leased, or rented by VRT. No additional breaks beyond those customarily allowed may be taken for using tobacco products. This policy applies to all employees, clients, contractors, and visitors.

Violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Outside Employment**

In general, VRT does not prohibit employees from holding employment outside of VRT except in cases where the secondary employment affects performance at VRT or creates a conflict of interest. All employees will be evaluated by the same performance standards and will be subject to the same scheduling demands regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

Employees have an obligation to conduct VRT business within guidelines that prevent actual or potential conflicts of interest.

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative resulting from dealings with VRT. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is like that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

Transactions with outside firms must be conducted within a framework established and controlled by the executive level of VRT. Dealings with outside firms should not result in unusual gains for either party. Unusual gain refers to bribes, product bonuses, special fringe benefits, unusual price breaks, and other windfalls ultimately designed to benefit the employer, the employee, or both. Promotional plans that could be interpreted to involve unusual gain require specific executive-level approval.

No “presumption of guilt” is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, if an employee has any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases, it is imperative he/she disclose the possible conflict to an executive level manager of VRT as soon as possible.

Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which VRT does business, but also when an employee or relative receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving VRT.

Relatives of current employees may not occupy a position that will be working directly for or supervising their relative. Individuals involved in a dating relationship with another current employee are not permitted to hold a position that creates a direct reporting relationship with whom they are involved. VRT also reserves the right to take prompt action if an actual or potential conflict of interest arises involving relatives or individuals involved in a dating relationship who occupy positions at any level (higher or lower) in the same line of authority that may affect the review of employment decisions.

If a relative relationship or dating relationship is established after employment between employees who are in a reporting situation described above, it is the responsibility and obligation of the supervisor involved in the relationship to disclose the existence of the relationship to management. The individuals involved will have 30 days to decide who will be transferred to another available position or resign from VRT immediately. If that decision is not made within 30 days, management will decide who is to be transferred or, if necessary, terminated from employment.

Employees in a close personal relationship with another employee should refrain from public workplace displays of affection or excessive personal conversation.

### **Gifts**

Employees must report, in writing, all gifts, tickets to sporting or music events, or any item having more than nominal value in excess of \$50 (fifty dollars). Employees should be very cautious about receiving gifts from vendors who are competing for VRT's business as the receipt of such gifts might create an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

### **Bulletin Boards**

Bulletin boards have special notices and important information that all employees will want to know about. Items to be posted on bulletin boards or anywhere on the premises must be submitted to a supervisor for prior approval. Employees are required to check bulletin boards regularly for items of interest and importance.

### III. VRT POLICIES

#### Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Program

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws prevent employers and their contractors from implementing discriminatory employment practices. These laws ensure all qualified persons are entitled to equal employment opportunities based on merit. Discrimination against qualified employees or applicants because of race, color, gender, national origin, disability, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity is strictly prohibited.

VRT is committed to complying with these laws. Non-discrimination is emphasized and prevails throughout every aspect of the employment relationship, including recruitment, hiring, promotion, examination, training, performance evaluation, transfer, compensation and benefits, discipline, layoff, recall, and termination. All personnel actions are administered in accordance with the EEO laws.

VRT is further committed to taking affirmative action to encourage minorities and women to apply for employment and advancement within VRT. It is a goal of VRT to achieve an employee population representative of the locally available workforce. Successful achievement of this policy will allow VRT to reap the benefits of a diverse workforce.

VRT requires each employee to conduct him/herself in support of this policy to ensure the working environment is free from intimidation, harassment, and all other discriminatory actions. In addition, VRT management and administration will continue to encourage and implement employment practices based on fair and equitable job-related criteria. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disability, religious conviction, or belief, will be explored upon request when such accommodation would enable an otherwise qualified individual to perform the essential functions of a position. Management will conduct policy oversight.

An applicant or employee who feels his/her rights under this policy have been violated may file a complaint by contacting the CEO. If the employee is uncomfortable contacting the CEO or if he/she believes the CEO violated his/her rights under this policy, the employee may make a complaint by contacting VRT's Board chair. Supervisors, employees, and applicants may file a complaint alleging discrimination or participate in an investigation without fear of retribution or other penalty. An immediate investigation will ensue, and a response made as soon as possible. At any time, either party may pursue additional action by contacting the following external resources designed to protect Human Rights:

EEO Commission  
Seattle District Office  
Federal Office Building  
909 1st Ave., Suite 400  
Seattle, WA 98104-1061  
TTY (208) 334-4751

Idaho State Human Rights Commission  
317 Main Street  
Boise, ID 83735  
(208) 334-2873

#### Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)

VRT is committed to employing only United States citizens and individuals who are lawfully authorized to work in the United States and does not discriminate based on citizenship or national origin.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment and regardless of the nature of the job or the number of hours or months employed, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility prior to beginning employment. Those unable to present the required documentation will not be allowed to work. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with VRT within the past three (3) years, or if their previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid.

Employees with questions or seeking more information on immigration law issues are encouraged to contact the payroll specialist. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

### **Respectful Workplace**

VRT is committed to providing a work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment.

Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature perceived or intentional. This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser. The following is a partial list of sexual harassment examples:

- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances
- Visual conduct that includes leering, making sexual gestures, or display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters
- Verbal conduct that includes making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, or jokes
- Verbal sexual advances or propositions
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations
- Physical conduct that includes touching, assaulting, or impeding or blocking movements

Unwelcome sexual advances (either verbal or physical), requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of employment
- submission or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making employment decisions

- the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment

Other forms of harassment include ethnic slurs, racial jokes, verbal/physical abuse or other offensive or persistently annoying conduct directed at a person's gender, race, color, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or age which:

- has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile work environment
- unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance
- otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities

Employees are responsible to make an immediate report to a supervisor if he/she experiences or witnesses sexual or other unlawful harassment in the workplace. If the supervisor is unavailable or it is believed it would be inappropriate to contact that person, employees should immediately contact any member of management. Concerns may be raised, and reports made without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

Any supervisor who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment must immediately advise the CEO so it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner.

All allegations of harassment will be investigated quickly and discreetly. To the extent possible, confidentiality will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. When the investigation is completed, the accuser will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

If the findings of the investigation indicate that a violation of this policy has occurred, VRT will take immediate and appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment of the harasser. Corrective actions shall be proportional to the seriousness or repetitiveness of the offense. Specific information regarding corrective action shall be communicated on a strictly need to know basis only.

Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees who complain of harassment or discrimination, provide information related to such complaints, or oppose harassing and/or discriminating behavior, shall be protected from retaliation. Retaliation is considered as serious as prohibited discrimination or harassment. Accordingly, individuals found to have engaged in acts of retaliation shall be subject to immediate and appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. During the complaint investigation, all parties shall be reminded that retaliation is prohibited.

Examples of retaliation include negative actions such as poor performance evaluations, changes in job duties or other negative employment decisions, laughing at, ignoring, or failing to take seriously reports/complaints of discrimination or harassment, or continuing/escalating harassing behavior after the employee objects.

## Inappropriate Workplace Conduct

While it is expected that everyone in the workplace will behave in a professional manner and treat each other with dignity and respect, it does not always happen.

Inappropriate workplace conduct includes, repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment.

The purpose of this policy is to communicate to all employees, including supervisors and executive level managers, that VRT will not tolerate inappropriate conduct. Employees found in violation of this policy will be disciplined up to and including termination.

Inappropriate behavior may be intentional or unintentional. However, it must be noted that where an allegation is made, the intention of the alleged conduct is irrelevant and will not be considered when determining appropriate disciplinary actions. What is important is the effect of the behavior upon the individual. The following are examples of inappropriate conduct (not an inclusive list):

<b>Verbal</b>	Slandering, ridiculing, or maligning a person or his/her family; persistent name calling that is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; using a person as the butt of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks
<b>Physical</b>	Pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping, assault, or threat of physical assault; damage to a person's work area or property
<b>Gestures</b>	Nonverbal threatening gestures or glances that convey threatening messages
<b>Exclusion</b>	Socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in work-related activities
<b>E-mail</b>	Disparaging or negative conversations or comments about the target via email

In addition, the following examples may constitute or contribute to evidence of inappropriate conduct in the workplace:

- Persistent singling out of one person
- Shouting or raising voice at an individual in public or in private
- Using verbal or obscene gestures
- Not allowing the person to speak or express him or herself (i.e., ignoring or interrupting)
- Personal insults and use of offensive nicknames
- Public humiliation in any form
- Constant criticism on matters unrelated or minimally related to the person's job performance or description
- Ignoring or interrupting an individual at meetings

- Public reprimands
- Repeatedly accusing someone of errors that cannot be documented
- Deliberately interfering with mail and other communications
- Spreading rumors and gossip regarding individuals
- Encouraging others to disregard a supervisor's instructions
- Manipulating the ability of someone to do his or her work (e.g., overloading, under-loading, withholding information, assigning meaningless tasks, setting deadlines that cannot be met, giving deliberately ambiguous instructions)
- Inflicting menial tasks not in keeping with the normal responsibilities of the job
- Taking credit for another person's ideas
- Refusing reasonable requests for leave in the absence of work-related reasons not to grant leave
- Deliberately excluding an individual or isolating him or her from work-related activities, such as meetings
- Unwanted physical contact, physical abuse, or threats of abuse to an individual or an individual's property (defacing or marking up property)

### **Workplace Violence Prevention**

VRT is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. VRT has adopted the following guidelines to deal with intimidation, harassment, or other threats of (or actual) violence that may occur during business hours or on its premises.

All employees, including supervisors and temporary employees, should always be treated with courtesy and respect. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that may be dangerous to others.

Firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances are prohibited on the premises of VRT 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 or actual violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to your immediate supervisor or any other member of management. This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by customers, vendors, solicitors, or other members of the public. When reporting a threat of violence, you should be as specific and detailed as possible.

All suspicious individuals or activities should be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor. Do not place yourself in peril. If you see or hear a commotion or disturbance near your workstation, do not try to intervene or see what is happening.

All reports of threats or actual violence and of suspicious individuals or activities will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as is practical. To maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, VRT may suspend employees, either with or without pay, pending investigation.

Anyone determined to be responsible for threats or actual violence or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines may be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

VRT encourages employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisor before the situation escalates into potential violence. Employees will not be disciplined for raising such concerns. VRT is committed to assist in the resolution of employee disputes.

### **Accommodation**

VRT is committed to fully complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAAA) and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities.

It is the policy of VRT to provide fair and equitable employment related opportunities to qualified persons with disabilities and, upon request by such person, reasonable accommodation(s), unless accommodation would impose an undue hardship. For this policy, the term “disability” means a physical or mental impairment, whether permanent or temporary, that substantially limits one or more major life activities. A “disabled person” means any person who: 1) has a disability; 2) has a record of a disability; or 3) is regarded as having a disability. The term “otherwise qualified disabled person” means a disabled person who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position that such person holds or desires. Applicants or employees who are currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs, or whose alcohol or illegal drug abuse inhibits meeting the same standards of performance and conduct that are set for other employees are not considered disabled for the purpose of this policy.

VRT is also committed to not discriminating against any qualified employees or applicants because they are related to or associated with a person with a disability. VRT will follow all state or local laws that provides individuals with disabilities greater protection than the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA).

This policy is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. VRT is committed to taking all other actions reasonably necessary to ensure equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the ADAAA and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws.

### **Drug Free Workplace and Alcohol Use**

In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, VRT has a longstanding commitment to provide a safe, quality-oriented, and productive work environment consistent with the standards of the region in which the Authority operates. Alcohol and drug abuse poses a threat to the health and safety of VRT employees and to the security of the Authority’s equipment and facilities. For these reasons, VRT is committed to the elimination of drug and alcohol use and abuse in the workplace.

VRT prohibits all employees, including employees performing work under government contracts, from manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing, or using an illegal drug in or on company premises or while conducting Authority business. VRT employees are also prohibited from misusing legally prescribed or over the counter (OTC) drugs. Law enforcement personnel should be notified, as appropriate, when criminal activity is suspected.

VRT does not desire to intrude into the private lives of its employees but recognizes that employees' off-the-job involvement with drugs and alcohol may have an impact on the workplace. Therefore, VRT reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action for drug use, sale, or distribution while off company premises. All employees who are convicted of, plead guilty to, or are sentenced for a crime involving an illegal drug are required to report the conviction, plea, or sentence to the payroll specialist within five days. Failure to comply will result in automatic termination.

VRT will assist and support employees who voluntarily seek help for such problems before becoming subject to discipline or termination under this or other VRT policies. Such employees will be allowed to use accrued paid time off, placed on leaves of absence, referred to treatment providers and otherwise accommodated as required by law. Such employees may be required to document that they are successfully following prescribed treatment and to take and pass follow-up tests if they hold jobs that are safety-sensitive or require driving, or if they have violated this policy previously. Once a drug test has been scheduled, unless otherwise required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, the employee will have forfeited the opportunity to be granted a leave of absence for treatment, and possible discipline, up to and including termination, will be unavoidable.

This policy does not prohibit employees from the lawful use and possession of prescribed medications. However, employees must consult their doctors about the medications' effect on their fitness for duty and ability to work safely, and they must promptly disclose any work restrictions to their supervisor.

- Whenever employees are working, are operating any VRT vehicle, are present on VRT premises or are conducting Authority-related work offsite, they are prohibited from:
  - using, possessing, buying, selling, manufacturing, or dispensing an illegal drug (to include possession of drug paraphernalia)
  - being under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug as defined in this policy
  - possessing or consuming alcohol
- The presence of any detectable amount of any illegal drug or illegal controlled substance in an employee's body, while performing Authority business or while in an Authority facility, is prohibited.
- VRT will not allow employees to perform their duties while taking prescribed drugs adversely affecting the ability to perform job duties safely and effectively. Employees are encouraged to provide their supervisor with information regarding any prescription medication that could potentially impair their ability to perform their job functions.

- Any illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia will be turned over to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

### **Drug Free Workplace Testing – Non-Safety-Sensitive Employees**

As a condition of employment, all applicants are required to participate in pre-employment drug testing. These requirements are applied to non-safety sensitive employees, which all VRT employees are considered, and as such are not governed by the Federal Department of Transportation drug and alcohol regulations. Applicants who refuse to cooperate in a drug test or who test positive will not be hired and will not be allowed to reapply/retest in the future.

VRT employees may be required to participate in reasonable suspicion, post-accident, and follow-up drug testing upon selection or at the request of their department manager or the CEO. Testing will be performed only with the employee's knowledge and consent. However, any employee who refuses to consent to a test will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees who refuse to cooperate in required tests or who use, possess, buy, sell, manufacture, or dispense an illegal drug in violation of this policy will be terminated. If the employee refuses to be tested, yet VRT believes he or she is impaired, under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to drive himself or herself home.

The first time an employee tests positive for alcohol or illegal drug use under this policy, will result in discipline up to and including termination.

Employees will be paid for time spent in alcohol or drug testing and then suspended pending the results of the drug or alcohol test. After the results of the test are received, a date and time will be scheduled to discuss the results of the test; this meeting will include a supervisor and the third-party Human Resource provider. Should the results prove to be negative; the employee will receive back pay for the times/days of suspension.

All drug-testing information will be kept confidential to the extent required by law and maintained in secure files separate from normal personnel files. Such records and information may be disclosed among supervisors on a need-to-know basis and may be disclosed when relevant to a charge, claim or other legal proceeding initiated by or on behalf of an employee or applicant.

### **Electronic Media**

Computers, computer files, cell phones, the e-mail system, and software furnished to employees are VRT property intended for business use only. Employees should not use a password, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization.

VRT strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and is sensitive to the diversity of its employees. Therefore, VRT prohibits the use of computers, cell phones and the e-mail system in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale. For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, and cartoons is not allowed. Other such misuse includes, but is not limited to, ethnic slurs, racial comments, off-color jokes, or anything that may be construed as harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetic or health information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

To enforce this policy and other policies, VRT reserves the right to conduct such searches of its property as it determines are appropriate, including searches of personal information stored in VRT's e-mail and computer systems. Accordingly, information that an employee considers private and confidential should not be stored in or accessed through VRT's information systems.

### **Workplace Monitoring**

Employees shall have no expectation of privacy in their use of VRT property, including electronic media. Workplace monitoring may be conducted by VRT to ensure quality control, employee safety, security and client satisfaction.

### **Social Media Policy**

VRT understands that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities.

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communication or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to an individual or someone else's blog, journal, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether associated or affiliated with VRT, or not, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

Ultimately, each employee is responsible for what he/she posts online. Before creating online content, employees are encouraged to consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Employees should be aware that content that adversely affects their job performance, the job performance of co-workers, or otherwise adversely affects VRT customers, clients, suppliers, or other people who work on behalf of VRT may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees are encouraged to be fair and courteous to fellow employees, customers, clients, suppliers, or other people who work on behalf of VRT. Employees are also reminded that conflicts or complaints are more likely to be resolved through direct, face-to-face communication, rather than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if an employee decides to post a complaint or criticism, employees are asked to avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage customers, clients, suppliers, or employees, or that might constitute harassment or bullying.

### **Personal Property**

VRT discourages the use or storage of personal property within the facilities or vehicles. VRT will not be held responsible for the loss or damage to an employee's personal property that is brought to or left on the premises.

Employees who drive their personal vehicles to work are responsible for the security of their vehicle. VRT is not responsible for loss or damage to private automobiles parked on Authority property except for damages caused by at-fault drivers operating agency owned or leased vehicles.

### **Personal Devices**

The purpose of this policy is to promote a safe and productive work environment. To that end, VRT expects the following:

- Cell phones and personal devices shall be turned off or set to silent or vibrate mode during meetings, conferences and in other locations where incoming calls may disrupt normal workflow.
- Employees may carry and use personal cell phones or devices while at work on a sporadic basis. If an employee's use of a personal cell phone causes disruptions or loss in productivity, the employee may become subject to disciplinary action per Authority policy.
- Use of handheld cell phones for sending or receiving text messages, reading, or taking notes while operating a VRT vehicle is strictly prohibited.

Failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Employee Exposure or Positive Test of a Communicable Disease During Active Public Health Orders**

It is VRT's policy to ensure a safe workplace by monitoring the health of its employees. VRT requests employees: who exhibit symptoms of a communicable disease; who know they have been exposed to a communicable disease; or who test positive for a communicable disease, to report these findings to their immediate supervisor. The employee must follow any direction that the supervisor gives them and follow any current directives from the local health district or other agency, which may be directing efforts to contain said disease. The disclosure will be kept confidential, and no employee shall be discriminated or retaliated against because of the disclosure.

#### **Responsibilities**

**Employees:** VRT will rely on all employees to self-monitor their health and report anything that may cause a communicable/contagious disease to infect other employees.

**Supervisors:** All front-line supervisors shall report to their immediate manager any reports from employees where the employee suspects they may be contagious. The supervisor is to work with the employee to ensure the employee's identity, well-being, and safety is given high priority and that all HIPAA regulations are followed. The supervisor will also determine from the employee what the possible exposure is to other employees. All information shall be passed onto their manager and the HR representative working with VRT.

**Managers:** All managers shall make sure the supervisor knows and understands the HIPAA regulations. The managers shall monitor the situation closely and work with the HR representative assigned to VRT at that time. The manager shall ensure all regulations and procedures are followed and that all sanitation measures have been taken to ensure a safe environment for all employees.

#### **Reimbursement Guidelines**

Valley Regional Transit (VRT) may ask or require employees to work from home, temporarily, due to an active public health order. VRT recognizes employees will need certain office supplies to complete their work remotely in these instances. VRT requires employees to pick up existing office supplies from their respective VRT facility when feasible (paper, pens, etc.). When employees are unable to obtain necessary supplies from their facility, VRT will reimburse employees for the following work-related expenses.

#### **Covered Expenses**

- Personal cell phone expenses will be reimbursed up to \$50 per month

- Personal internet expenses will be reimbursed up to \$35 per month
- Mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS issued standard mileage rate
- Printer ink will be reimbursed at the actual purchase price
- Printer paper will be reimbursed at the actual purchase price

**Non-Covered Expenses** (This is not a complete list. Please refer to the list of covered expenses.)

- Electricity
- The purchase of personal office equipment or furniture
- Mileage for commuting to your respective VRT facility to complete routine work assignments

### Responsibilities

**Employees** are required to submit all requests for reimbursements, on VRT's expense report, form to their supervisor with bills or receipts for the requested reimbursements. Travel reimbursement requests need to include the date, mileage, and reason for travel.

**Supervisors** are required to review all requests for reimbursements to determine they are compliant with the guidelines and the appropriate documentation has been submitted.

### Hybrid Work Model

The Valley Regional Transit hybrid work model gives some employees the ability to split their time between working onsite at a designated VRT location, or at a remote/offsite location. The purpose of this policy is to outline the parameters and approval process for hybrid work arrangements. Management and supervisors are responsible for administering hybrid work in accordance with this policy. Regular full-time and regular part-time employees, including probationary employees, who are regularly assigned to work 19-hours or more per week and who are in positions that meet the hybrid work eligibility requirements may be permitted to work in a hybrid work model. Temporary staff do not qualify to work in a hybrid manner.

The hybrid work model is not considered a VRT-wide employee benefit, right or entitlement. The Hybrid Work Model Policy in no way creates a contract, changes the terms and conditions of employment, modifies the employment relationship between VRT and the employee, or restricts management's rights to revise or end remote work or a hybrid work model assignment at any time.

Employees who work in the hybrid work model are expected to comply with all VRT policies, regardless of work location, and all work product remains the property of VRT. VRT reserves the right to modify or terminate any/all conditions of this policy, at any time, with or without notice.

While some positions are conducive to hybrid work arrangements, other positions simply are not. The hybrid work model eligibility and availability are based on the position and will depend on a variety of factors. Please see executive assistant for additional information on Hybrid Work Model Procedures.

### Credit Card Policy

Eligibility for a business-related credit card is determined by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) on a case-by-case basis. If a staff member believes they are eligible for a business-related credit card, they may submit a request with their business case to hold a credit card. That case must also have the approval of the staff member's immediate supervisor.

Card limits are determined by the CFO on a case-by-case basis. If a card holder believes they should have a different limit than they currently hold, they may submit a request with their business case for a different limit. That case must also have the approval of the card holder's immediate supervisor.

If a card holder needs to make a purchase on their credit card that is higher than their limit, or over \$3,000, the card holder must get prior approval from the CFO or Controller before the purchase occurs.

### ***Allowable Expenses***

Business-related credit card purchases are limited to micro purchases and purchases where it is not possible to comply with the standard requisition and procurement processes.

The following are examples of expenditures that are eligible for purchase on Authority credit cards.

- Online purchases where the company does not allow for invoicing
- Travel including hotel and flight
- Small items typically found on expense reports

### ***Ineligible Expenses***

The following are examples of expenditures that are **NOT** eligible for purchase on Authority credit cards.

- Purchases of gift cards
- Cash advances
- Payments to contracted vendors

## **Card Holder Responsibilities**

### ***Reconciliation***

Authority card holders must submit all original receipts for each month to accounts receivable staff within ten (10) days after the end of the month. A card holder may request an extension due to vacation or business travel, but that request must be approved by accounts receivable staff prior to the ten (10)-day deadline.

### ***Personal Purchases***

Authority card holders may not make personal purchases on their company credit card. If a personal purchase is accidentally made on an Authority credit card, the card holder must immediately notify accounts receivable staff and will be required to reimburse the Authority the full cost of the purchase. The reimbursement will be withheld from the card holder's next paycheck.

### ***Card Security***

A card holder has ultimate responsibility for an Authority credit card. A card holder shall treat the safety of the card the same way they treat the safety of their personal credit cards. They will not leave it unattended or give it to any other person (e.g., friends, family, colleagues) even just to hold.

- Card holders shall report a stolen or missing credit card to the CFO immediately

### ***Policy Violation***

Any violation of this policy or abuse of credit cards by Authority card holders will be addressed as noted below and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

- First time violations will result in a minimum 6-month suspension from card holding
- Second time violations will result in an indefinite suspension from card holding

### **Travel Policy**

All employees who travel and incur business expenses on behalf of the Authority, as well as those responsible for the approval of these expenses are expected to use prudence, discretion, good judgment, and the application of these policies to assist in maintaining control over travel expenses. Employees shall not gain a personal financial benefit from travel on behalf of the Authority unless otherwise permitted in the travel procedures. The absence of guidance covering particular situations does not relieve a supervisor or employee from the responsibility of exercising good judgement. For the purposes of this policy, the term “travel” refers to a work-related trip or journey that is outside of an employee’s regular/typical job duties. Transitioning between home and work is not considered travel for the purpose of this policy.

Travel authorization is required prior to commencement of travel and incurring expenses. Authorization requirements may vary depending on the person(s) traveling and the destination.

All travel requests shall be authorized and approved by the employee’s Department Director or designee. Travelers should attempt to use the most cost-effective and efficient mode of travel after considering total time and convenience involved, as well as direct costs for airfare, mileage, taxi’s, rental cars, other fares, etc.

Per diem will be provided via direct deposit in most cases. Employees may also request reimbursement for allowable travel expenses that are actually incurred and paid for using personal funds.

The Authority will follow travel guidelines in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FSLA) when an Authority employee is required to travel.

Please see executive assistant for travel procedure and processes document.

## IV. PERFORMANCE

### Performance Management

The most successful performance management process occurs all year long, not just at review time. Ongoing performance management supports each employee's efforts throughout the review period, from setting goals to documenting performance to providing feedback. In addition to regular ongoing coaching, VRT has chosen to conduct three quarterly coaching periods and one annual evaluation.

Maintaining ongoing performance-related documentation makes it easier to plan, track, evaluate, and improve employee performance. The quarterly coaching and annual reviews allow employees and supervisors to:

- Set and track goals
- Record examples of ongoing performance, including achievements, training, and critical incidents
- Document coaching sessions
- Measure performance against job descriptions, past reviews, and other performance-related documents

The performance review provides an opportunity for a one-on-one exchange between an employee and his/her supervisor for the purpose of communicating expected work standards of performance, establishing job objectives, and discussing work accomplishments and progress. Performance reviews with an overall ranking of average does not mean an employee is a poor performer but is an opportunity to grow within the current position.

Increases in pay are not directly tied to performance evaluations. Performance evaluation results will be taken into consideration should the budget allow for pay increases.

### Progressive Discipline

The purpose of this policy is to state VRT's intent to administer equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. The best disciplinary measure is the one that does not have to be enforced and comes from good leadership and fair supervision at all employment levels.

Although employment with VRT is based on mutual consent and both the employee and VRT have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause or advance notice, VRT may use progressive discipline at its discretion.

Disciplinary action may call for any of five steps:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Final written warning

- Suspension with or without pay
- Termination

Depending upon the severity of the incident, there may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed.

### **Wage and Salary Administration**

The wage and salary administration program at VRT was created to achieve consistent pay practices, comply with federal and state laws, mirror VRT's commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity, and offer competitive salaries within the labor market. Because recruiting and retaining talented employees is critical to success, VRT is committed to paying its employees equitable wages that reflect the requirements and responsibilities of their positions, experience levels, and wage comparability studies. VRT periodically reviews its salary administration program and restructures it as necessary.

- Employees will normally begin at the entry level of their position pay range. However, management may choose to assign certain employees at a higher rate because of recruiting difficulty or the experience level of the candidate.
- Employees are eligible for, but not guaranteed, salary or wage increases one-time per year until the upper limit of the position's salary range is reached. Salary and wage increases are awarded based on various factors such as budget and job performance.
- Employees who have reached the upper limit of their position's salary range will receive increases only in the event of salary range adjustments. Management will periodically analyze the wage and job responsibilities of each position and will adjust as necessary.

### **Job Descriptions**

VRT maintains job descriptions to aid in orienting new employees to their jobs, identifying the requirements of each position, establishing hiring criteria, setting standards for employee performance evaluations, and establishing a basis for making reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Job descriptions do not necessarily cover every task or duty that might be assigned, and additional responsibilities may be assigned as necessary. Upon hire, each employee will be required to sign a copy their job description and when any updates/changes are made to their job description.

### **Training**

Upon hire, all new employees will receive an orientation to VRT and its policies and procedures. Continuing training for all employees will occur at regular intervals to promote a high degree of safety, skill, performance, and morale.

## V. COMPENSATION

### Employment Classification

It is the intent of VRT to clarify the definitions of employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified time-period. Accordingly, the right to terminate the employment relationship at will at any time is retained by both the employee and VRT.

- **Full-time employee:** an employee who is regularly scheduled to work 40 or more hours per week and is eligible to participate in all benefit programs
- **Part-time employee:** an employee who is regularly scheduled to work less than 39 hours per week and may be eligible for some benefits
- **Temporary employee:** a full-time or part-time employee, who is working for a short, defined time-period and is not eligible for benefits

### Employee Categories

VRT is subject to and complies with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938, as amended. As such, all employees are categorized as either exempt or non-exempt from the FLSA provisions. These categories determine eligibility for overtime pay.

- **Exempt Employee:** an employee who is paid a set salary, regardless of time required to complete the job, and is not eligible for overtime pay
- **Non-Exempt Employee:** a full-time or part-time employee who is paid on an hourly basis for time worked. Such employees are eligible for overtime pay

### Timekeeping

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every employee. Federal and State laws require VRT to keep an accurate record of time worked to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked, is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties. Records must include time worked, sick leave, vacation, and holiday hours.

Timecards and time off requests are to be submitted through the payroll system that VRT is currently utilizing. Full-time and part-time hourly employees must enter their time and approve their timecards prior to the employee's supervisor approving.

Exempt employees are only required to submit time off requests when they are using sick, vacation, or floating holidays.

Non-exempt employee pay is based upon a regular schedule, usually 40 hours per week. Any exceptions to the regular schedule including paid holidays, floating holidays and vacation time should be submitted in the payroll system.

**It is important that time off requests and timecards are submitted in a timely manner, therefore they are due by 5pm on the Monday after the pay period is completed. Any changes to this deadline because of requirements from the payroll processor will be communicated.**

## **Meal and Rest Breaks**

While no state or federal law requires rest breaks, VRT may do so as a courtesy. The appropriate use of short breaks may increase employee efficiency and result in better customer service. A manager may determine the appropriate duration of a break for the office, up to a maximum of 20 minutes total. These breaks will be considered paid work time. Managers may discontinue breaks as needed to ensure proper staffing to meet customer demand. Unauthorized extensions of authorized work breaks will not be considered work time. Breaks may not be combined or foregone to leave earlier in the day.

In addition, all employees who work more than six hours in a day shall take a meal break. Meal breaks are not less than 30 minutes and are generally unpaid; however, employees who are required to work during the meal break will be paid for that time.

## **Travel Time**

The time an employee spends commuting to and from work is considered “home-to-work travel” and is not considered work time. However, the time an employee spends traveling from one worksite to another for work purposes is considered work time.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee’s time record will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

VRT takes all reasonable steps to ensure employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday. Should an error occur, promptly notify your supervisor or the payroll specialist.

## **Overtime and Compensatory Time**

Consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), non-exempt employees shall receive monetary compensation at the rate of one and one-half times their regular hourly rate for overtime hours (hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week). Non-Exempt employees may accept compensatory time in lieu of overtime by so informing their supervisor prior to working the overtime and clearly documenting this on the time sheet on the week the overtime is accrued. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime or compensatory time.

Time off for sick leave, vacation leave, or holiday pay will not be considered hours worked in overtime calculations.

- All overtime must be approved by the supervisor in advance. Failure to work assigned overtime may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **Pay Periods**

All employees are paid biweekly every other Friday. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period. Pay periods for all employees shall be 14 days and will end on the Saturday before the bi-weekly pay date.

When a regularly scheduled payday falls on a day off such as a holiday, employees will receive pay on the preceding Thursday.

Employees are expected to have pay directly deposited into personal bank accounts. Employees will have access to an itemized statement of wages when VRT makes direct deposits.

## Payroll Deductions

The law requires VRT make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable Federal, State, and local income taxes. VRT must also deduct Social Security taxes on each employee's earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA), and any wage garnishments.

VRT offers programs and benefits beyond those required by law. Eligible employees may voluntarily authorize deductions from their paychecks to cover the costs of participation in these programs.

Any changes affecting payroll and deductions, including an employee's name or tax withholdings as identified on the W-4 form, must be submitted through the payroll system that VRT is currently utilizing no later than the final day of the pay period. Any changes to dependents for insurance purposes must be communicated to the payroll specialist the month before they start. Any changes to PERSI 401(k) deductions must be submitted in writing to the payroll specialist no later than the final day of the pay period.

## **VI. BENEFITS AND LEAVE**

Eligible employees at VRT are provided a wide range of benefits. Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors. Please see the summary plan description (SPD) for specific eligibility. When this handbook conflicts with the SPD and/or the benefit plan, the language of the benefit plan shall control. VRT reserves the right to modify or terminate any benefit plan at any time.

### **Group Health Insurance**

VRT provides group medical insurance programs to all full-time employees based upon individual benefit eligibility requirements. VRT pays a portion of the medical premium for the employee and dependents.

### **Group Life Insurance**

VRT pays 100% of the life insurance premium for employees. Details of the insurance plans are available from the payroll specialist.

### **Short Term/Long Term Disability**

VRT pays 100% of the insurance premium for Short Term and Long-Term Disability. Details of these plans are available from the payroll specialist.

### **Retirement**

VRT is a participant in Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho (PERSI). All VRT employees who work more than 20 hours per week for five consecutive months are defined as an employee within the PERSI statutes and are required to participate in the PERSI Basic Retirement Plan. The Basic Plan is a defined benefit plan that pays retirement income to the employee based upon an established formula. PERSI Basic Plan contributions for both the employer and employee are set annually by the PERSI Board of Directors.

In addition to the Basic plan, PERSI also offers a 401(k) plan for participating employees known as the PERSI Choice 401(k) Plan. Employees may make voluntary contributions to the PERSI Choice plan. VRT does not match employee voluntary contributions to the PERSI 401(k) plan.

PERSI Basic and Choice plans are automatically deducted from each employee's pay before Federal and State tax withholdings are calculated. While the amounts deducted will generally be taxed when they are distributed, favorable tax rules typically apply to PERSI Basic and Choice distributions.

Complete details of the plans are described in the PERSI Handbook, which is provided to eligible employees and is available on-line from PERSI. Contact the payroll specialist for more information.

### **Flexible Spending Account (FSA)**

VRT offers Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) to its employees. An FSA is a voluntary account where employees can set pre-tax dollars aside to pay for eligible medical expenses. For employees that choose to participate, all funds added to their account will come solely from voluntary payroll deductions. VRT will not provide any match to the funds. However, VRT will cover all the administrative fees associated with managing their account.

Plan years are based on a calendar year. Employees that opt out at the time of hire will not be able to participate until the next open enrollment period. For employees that choose to participate, plans

will go into effect the first month after their hire date. VRT's plan allows employees to carry over the current IRS maximum amount from one year to the next.

### **Free Transportation**

Each employee, his/her spouse, and dependent children (high school age or younger) will be allowed to ride for free on any regularly scheduled transit bus operated within the VRT service area. Bus passes will be issued by customer service and must be shown to the bus driver upon each boarding.

### **Workers' Compensation**

Workers' compensation is a no-fault insurance required by law that provides medical treatment and partial loss of wage compensation for covered workers whose injury or illness is a result of employment activities. VRT pays 100% of the cost of premiums for workers' compensation insurance.

### **Unemployment Benefits**

VRT pays all costs of unemployment benefits required by law. Unemployment benefits provide unemployment compensation benefits to employees if an employee loses his or her job due to no fault of his or her own, such as when an employee is laid off due to lack of work. This benefit provides eligible employees with temporary income for a limited time-period until other employment is secured. State law will determine eligibility requirements and waiting period.

### **COBRA Health Insurance Coverage**

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) provides employees and qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue, temporarily, health insurance coverage at group rates under VRT's health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of health care insurance coverage. The type of qualifying event will determine who may elect to participate in COBRA and the amount of time that health insurance coverage will be offered to the individual under COBRA.

#### **Qualifying Events for Employees:**

- Voluntary or involuntary termination of employment for reasons other than gross misconduct
- Reduction in the number of hours of employment
- Covered employee's becoming entitled to Medicare
- Divorce or legal separation of the covered employee
- Death of the covered employee
- Loss of dependent child status under the plan rules

#### **Eligibility:**

- To be eligible for COBRA coverage, the employee must have been enrolled in VRT's health insurance plan and the plan must continue to be in effect for eligible employees.

The COBRA administrator will provide each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when employees become eligible to participate in VRT's health insurance plan. The notice contains important information about employees' rights and

obligations. Employees will have 60 days from the date VRT's insurance ends or 60 days from the date the employee receives such information, whichever is later, to elect continued coverage under COBRA.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Full-time employees who wish to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify his/her supervisor immediately. VRT defines "immediate family" as the employee's spouse, parent, child, sibling; mother-in-law; father-in-law; son-in-law; daughter-in-law; brother-in-law; sister-in-law; grandparent; or grandchild.

Bereavement leave will be paid as follows:

- Three (3) consecutive workdays if the location of the funeral is less than 200 miles from Boise, Idaho
- Four (4) consecutive workdays if the location of the funeral is more than 200 miles from Boise, Idaho
- An employee may take additional days of leave, if necessary and approved by the employee's immediate supervisor

Pay for bereavement leave will be computed based on the employees' normal hours worked per day. This leave is not considered in the calculation of overtime pay.

Dishonesty in reporting a death will be considered a falsification of payroll records and may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

### **Holiday Pay**

Holiday pay is for the days when VRT is normally closed in recognition of a holiday. The following are recognized as paid holidays for full-time employees:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- Five (5) Floating Holidays (Floating holidays must be used in full workday increments, just like any other holiday)

The following are recognized as paid holidays for part-time employees:

- Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- Five (5) Floating Holidays (Floating holidays must be used in full workday increments.)

Holidays will be paid at the rate of eight (8) hours per day for full-time employees or six (6) hours per day for part-time employees. Non-exempt employees who are normally paid for four 10-hour days shall be paid the rate of ten (10) hours per normally worked day.

### **Floating Holidays**

Beginning on their hire date, each full-time employee shall receive forty (40) hours of floating holiday leave. Each full-time employee will receive forty (40) hours of Floating Holiday leave on the anniversary of their hire date. Time spent on vacation or holiday leave counts as time worked for purposes of this calculation.

Employees should attempt to use floating holidays within each employment year. Only one floating holiday can be carried over to the next year.

To utilize floating holidays, employees must submit a time off request through the payroll system prior to the requested leave date.

Employees are eligible to begin using floating holiday after 30 days of employment. Negative balances are not allowed.

Full-time employees retiring or terminating employment after six months of consecutive employment, shall be compensated for their accrued floating holiday leave at their current hourly rate of pay.

### **Jury Duty**

VRT encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. Full-time employees called upon to serve jury duty will be paid the difference between the jury fees and the employee's base wages for the days of service.

When an employee is required to report for jury duty and is released for all or part of a day, he/she shall report to his/her supervisor for work for the day or balance of the day.

### **Personal Leave of Absence**

Employees who require time off in addition to vacation or sick days may request a personal leave of absence without pay for up to a maximum of 30 days. An extension may be approved in limited circumstances.

All regular employees employed for a minimum of 90 days are eligible to apply for an unpaid personal leave of absence. Job performance, absenteeism and departmental requirements will all be taken into consideration before a request is approved. Please contact the payroll specialist for more information on leave request procedures.

The employee must return to work on the scheduled return date, or the employee will be considered to have voluntarily resigned from his/her employment. Extensions of leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**It is the employee's responsibility to maintain consistent communication on approved leaves-of-absence with the Authority regarding the status of their leave and adequate notice of employee's return-to-work date(s).**

VRT is not a qualified employer for the purposes of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

### **Military Leave**

A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the U.S. uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Advance notice of military service is required, unless military necessity prevents such notice, or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable. VRT will attempt to accommodate the work schedule of all full-time regular employees who are required to participate in military training or active duty.

The leave will be unpaid. However, employees may use any available paid time off for the absence.

Continuation of health insurance benefits is available as required by USERRA based on the length of the leave and subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans for which the employee is otherwise eligible.

Employees on military leave for up to 30 days are required to return to work for the first regularly scheduled shift after the end of service, allowing reasonable travel time.

Employees returning from military leave will be placed in the position they would have attained had they remained continuously employed or a comparable one depending on the length of military service in accordance with USERRA. They will be treated as though they were continuously employed for purposes of determining benefits based on length of service.

### **Sick Leave**

Beginning on the first day of the month following completion of 30 days of service, each full-time employee shall receive eight (8) hours of sick leave per month, provided the employee has worked at least one-half the working days for the month. Time spent on vacation or holiday leave counts as time worked for purposes of this calculation.

Sick leave may be used in the following situations:

- Personal illness
- Medical appointments
- Injury not arising in the course of employment, but requiring medical attention
- Quarantine
- Illness of a member of the employee's immediate family necessitating the employee's absence from duty

- When an employee is not able to report for work at their assigned time due to the conditions mentioned above, they shall notify a supervisor at least one hour before the start of the assigned work, or as soon as possible.
- Employees who miss three (3) or more unscheduled, consecutive days may need to provide a doctor's note or other acceptable documented reason for the absence. (See section on Attendance) **It is the employee's responsibility to communicate with the Authority regarding the status of their leave and return to work date(s).**

Any employee who is unable to report to work for one of the above reasons but has exhausted accrued sick leave, or exhausts sick leave during the absence, may be placed on an unpaid personal leave of absence. Vacation time and/or floating holidays may only be used in accordance with the vacation benefits and holiday pay policies.

Approved sick leave shall be paid at straight time and will not be considered in overtime calculations. Employees may accumulate up to 800 hours of sick leave. Employees retiring at age 65 or older shall have their accumulated sick leave balance converted to a cash payout equal to the rate of fifty cents on the dollar at the employee's current straight time rate of pay.

Habitual absenteeism and misuse of sick leave is a violation of VRT policies. Those who abuse sick leave may be subject to disciplinary action up to termination of employment.

### Vacation Benefits

Vacation pay is provided to eligible employees to provide opportunities for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. Vacation pay is generally accrued based time worked; some exceptions may be negotiated at the time of hiring. Employees generally accrue time based upon the schedule below:

First full pay period worked through end of 4 <sup>th</sup> year	80 hours per year or 3.33 hours twice a month
Start of 5 <sup>th</sup> year through end of 9 <sup>th</sup> year	120 hours per year or 5.00 hours twice a month
Start of 10 <sup>th</sup> year through end of 14 <sup>th</sup> year	160 hours per year or 6.67 hours twice a month
15 or more years	200 hours per year or 8.33 hours twice a month

Employees may accrue vacation time up to the maximum accrual noted in the schedule below. Employees will stop accruing vacation once the maximum accrual is reached. VRT does recognize that under certain circumstances organizational needs may prevent employees from using vacation benefits and may allow exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis.

First full pay period worked through end of 4 <sup>th</sup> year	120 hours maximum accrual
Start of 5 <sup>th</sup> year through end of 9 <sup>th</sup> year	160 hours maximum accrual
Start of 10 <sup>th</sup> year through end of 14 <sup>th</sup> year	200 hours maximum accrual
15 or more years	240 hours maximum accrual

Employees are eligible to begin using vacation time as soon as it is accrued. Negative vacation balances are not allowed.

Determination of the number of full-time employees who may be permitted to be on vacation at any one time shall rest with management.

**To utilize vacation leave, employees must submit a time off request through the payroll system prior to the requested leave date.**

Full-time employees retiring or terminating employment shall be compensated for their accrued vacation hours at their current hourly rate of pay.

## VII. EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND RECORDS

### Employment Reference Checks

To ensure that individuals who join VRT are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of VRT to check the employment references of all applicants.

When an employee is no longer employed by VRT, the payroll specialist will respond to reference check inquiries. Responses to such inquiries will confirm only dates of employment, wage rates, and position(s) held. No employment data will be released without a written authorization and release signed by the individual who is the subject of the inquiry.

### Background/Criminal History Checks

VRT reserves the right to conduct background checks to review the criminal history of applicants upon employment, promotion, or transfer. If an applicant has been convicted of a crime, a determination will be made by management as to whether the nature of the crime and conviction is incompatible with the job in question and the applicant should be disqualified from consideration. All VRT positions require a background check, which is conducted before the final offer of employment, is extended to the prospective employee.

Applicants are required to list any convictions (including traffic violations, if part of job description) within the past five years. Falsification of this information will automatically disqualify an applicant from consideration. Convictions may or may not be grounds for disqualification; each case will be judged separately.

### Employment Termination

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated with VRT:

- **Resignation** - voluntary employment termination initiated by an employee
- **Retirement** - voluntary employment termination initiated by the employee meeting age, length of service, and any other criteria for retirement from PERSI. An employee eligible to retire with PERSI may continue to work as long as he/she can successfully perform the duties of the job
- **Layoff/Recall** - an involuntary separation brought about through no fault of the employee and without adverse effect on his/her eligibility for future reinstatement
- **Suspension** - a temporary, involuntary separation for disciplinary purposes
- **Discharge** - involuntary, permanent employment termination initiated by the organization

To continue the work of VRT with as little disruption as possible, VRT requests at least two (2) weeks written notice of resignation or retirement.

VRT shall issue final pay for hours worked. Any unused vacation hours, and unused floating holidays in accordance with the holiday pay policy will be included in the employee's final paycheck. VRT shall deduct and withhold from the final paycheck any amount owed to VRT for payment of unearned leave, as well as group insurance premiums.

## VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

### Use of Equipment and Vehicles

Equipment and vehicles essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using VRT property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Use of VRT owned vehicles or equipment for personal purposes is strictly prohibited. Individuals that have VRT vehicles assigned to them shall not have any other person in the vehicle unless it is for official business, or the employee has been granted permission by their immediate supervisor. Vehicles must be parked at a VRT facility overnight except when attending a VRT approved event more than 100 miles from Boise.

Notify a supervisor if any equipment, machines, tools, or vehicles appear to be damaged, defective, or require repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others.

At no time shall VRT require any employee to use equipment that is not in safe operating condition.

The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment or vehicles, as well as excessive or avoidable traffic and parking violations, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### Distracted Driving

When driving on Authority business, VRT employees may not use cell phones (including hands free) or any other mobile electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle. This includes, but is not limited to, answering calls or making phone calls, engaging in phone conversations, reading or responding to e-mails and text messages, adjusting a Global Positioning System (GPS), and accessing the internet.

These restrictions do not apply to calls made to report an emergency. In all such cases, all cautionary measures should be practiced.

Furthermore, VRT employees are required to:

- consider turning off, putting on silent or vibrate wireless phones or other devices before starting the car
- pull over to a safe place and put the vehicle in "Park" if a call must be made or received while on the road
- consider modifying your voicemail greeting to indicate that you are unavailable to answer calls or return messages while driving
- inform clients, associates, and business partners of this VRT policy as an explanation of why calls may not be returned immediately
- pull over to a safe place and put the vehicle in "Park" to adjust a Global Positioning System (GPS) or other navigation devices

## **Solicitation**

To ensure a productive and harmonious work environment, persons not employed by VRT may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose.

VRT recognizes that employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace. However, employees may not solicit or distribute literature concerning these activities during working time.

Sending solicitation emails or posting of written solicitations on Authority bulletin boards is not allowed without a supervisor's authorization.

## Employee Acknowledgement Form

This employee handbook describes important information about VRT, and I understand I should consult the department supervisor regarding any questions not answered in the handbook.

I have voluntarily entered an employment relationship with VRT, acknowledging there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either VRT or I can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time and for any reason.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur, except to VRT's policy of employment-at-will. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. Only the Board of Directors can adopt any revisions to the policies in this handbook.

Furthermore, I acknowledge this handbook is not a contract of employment and does not create any contractual rights, either expressed or implied, but it is presented as a matter of information only. I have received the handbook, and I understand it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

**EMPLOYEE'S NAME (printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_