

# HR CONNECTION

Serving Employees of the Board of Commissioners

March 17, 2016

## Policy Corner

### CLASSIFICATION STATUS

The classified service shall comprise all County employees not specifically included in the unclassified service. Following completion of the probationary period, no classified employees shall be reduced in pay or position, fined, suspended or removed, or have his or her longevity reduced or eliminated, except and for those reasons set forth in the civil service laws of the State of Ohio. Such reasons include: incompetence, inefficiency, dishonesty, drunkenness, immoral conduct, insubordination, discourteous treatment of the public, neglect of duty, violation of any policy or work rule of the County, any other failure of good behavior, any other acts of misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance in office, or conviction of a felony, except for just cause.

Unclassified employees serve at will or at the pleasure of the Appointing Authority and may be terminated or otherwise separated from employment for any reason not inconsistent with law. An unclassified employee may not be rendered classified due to the provisions of this Manual.



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### OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees are required to notify their Appointing Authority or Agency Head of any outside employment. No employee shall have outside employment which conflicts in any manner with the employee's ability to properly and efficiently perform his or her duties and responsibilities with the County. Employees are expected to be at work and fit for duty when scheduled.

Employees are prohibited from engaging in secondary employment during the hours for which they are normally scheduled to work for the county while on approved sick leave, disability leave, administrative leave or family medical leave. Employees may not engage in secondary employment during any period while on sick leave, disability leave, and FMLA if the employment can be reasonably construed to delay or preclude full recovery and return to work. Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in or conducting outside private business during scheduled working hours and are further prohibited from engaging in conduct which creates a potential or actual conflict of interest with their duties and responsibilities as a County employee.

<http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/index.php/hr-forms>

Read all policies at <http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/index.php/policies>  
Questions? Contact HR at 740/833-2120.

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## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### Business Etiquette: Etiquette and professionalism go hand-in-hand

If you do not use the expected common courtesies, it shows a lack of consideration and professionalism. People then make judgments about you that can be lasting.

- Coworker will feel unappreciated and may become cynical and distrustful.
- You won't be trusted by your managers, employees, and peers.
- Customers will feel slighted and may even complain.
- Dealing with feelings of powerlessness and helplessness



#### Take control

- Tackle what you can control.
- Explore alternatives.
- Examine high performance leaders in your industry.
- Monitor journals, magazines, and newspapers that follow your business.
- Explore trends that affect your organization.
- Identify current abilities and those that will be needed for future success.
- Brainstorm the consequences of not changing. Ask what is the worst thing that can happen if nothing changes?
- Arrange for benchmarking visits to the competition.

#### Build resilience

- Increase self-awareness.
- Take ownership.
- Expect the best.
- Communicate and collaborate.
- Never stop learning ~ Take a class, explore new areas, and find a mentor.

#### Seek support

- Form alliances with others who have a positive approach to change.
- Informal networking
- Formal shadowing
- Supervisory task teams
- Avoid naysayers.

#### Respecting Others

The easiest way to demonstrate respect for the people you work with is to always act in ways that maintain their self-esteem. This is done by consistently showing support and courtesy to others.

- Do not belittle, embarrass, criticize, or demean others.
- Try a positive approach—you'll be pleasantly surprised that the energy, attitude, and behavior you put out in the world is what comes back to you. It may not happen instantly, but it will happen.
- Always consider the intent of behavior or statement versus the impact.
- Be clear and honest in your communication.
- Communicate in a genuine way.
- Understand that negative behaviors and reactions are only a moment in time.

#### First impressions

People form an impression about others in the first two minutes.

They then spend the rest of their time with that person verifying that their first impression is correct.

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## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### Avoiding communication stressors

These eight styles of communication, or more accurately non-communication, tend to increase stress in any organization. Take steps to avoid or minimize their negative effects.

1. Secrecy
2. Pollyanna thinking
3. Ignoring rumors
4. Assuming
5. Not taking ownership
6. Poor communication
7. Censoring
8. Sink or swim thinking



Build a communication network to help avoid these communication stressors. Use both formal and informal communication, but informal is best. Formal communication such as a news bulletin can make employees feel cut off from the action. Information coming directly from the source is often more acceptable.

### Dealing with “victim” stories

- Be on the alert for and recognize “victim” stories.
- People who tell “victim” stories tend to tell the same story over and over.
- The more you listen to these stories, the more likely you are to buy in to them.
- Go into neutral to avoid getting hooked by their story.

### Help the needy help themselves

- As tempting as it is, do not take on other people's problems. Help others see they have the ability to solve their own problems.
- If you must help, at least pick a person or problem you really care about.
- Helping the needy help themselves does not mean leaving them in the lurch. You can coach the needy person, or suggest another resource for them (such as another person or a place to go for information).
- Helping the needy help themselves does not mean sheltering yourself from their bad news. If you're a manager, encourage your staff to bring you bad news; just encourage them to come with potential solutions as well.



### Dealing with angry people

Positive attitude and good will are contagious. Lead by example, be persistent and “kill them with kindness.” The best response to an angry person that is in your face is a sincere, kind statement such as, “I really hope your day gets better,” or “I don't appreciate your lack of respect, but can understand your frustration.”

Be a broken record, be consistent and do not show weakness.

### Show consideration for property ~ General guidelines

- Keep your facility clean and orderly.
- Leave things nicer than the way you found them.
- Don't take others' belongings without asking.

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## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### Positive language

Negative language conveys a poor image to customers and everyone around you. It can also cause unnecessary conflict. The first place to start using positive language is with written material. Then it is easier to change your spoken words to present a more positive message.

### Positive phrasing

To eliminate negative phrases, replace them with more positive ways of saying the same thing.

### Positive language . . .

- Says what can be done
- Suggests alternatives and choices available
- Is helpful and encouraging, not bureaucratic
- Stresses positive actions and consequences



### Negative language . . .

- Says what cannot be done
- Has a subtle tone of blame
- Uses words like "can't, won't, unable"
- Stresses negative actions and consequences
- Encouragement

It is key to not only use positive language yourself, but to also coach others in rephrasing to lose a negative vocabulary. Try it out on the following statements by rewriting them.

Negative phrase	Positive phrase
"It's not my job."	
"We regret to inform you that your application cannot be processed."	
"You filled this form out wrong."	
"You said the package was sent from here three weeks ago. There's no way it hasn't arrived yet."	

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## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### Actions speak loudly

People may not remember polite behavior, but they will remember rude behavior. We are all responsible for the way that others view us. Being serious about this sends a signal that you are respectful both to yourself and to others—it's worth the small effort required. Nobody wants to be labeled "rude" or "annoying."

### The grapevine

Gossip is an unavoidable presence in all workplaces, and takes many shapes and forms. Gossip that is damaging, spreads false rumors, or is mean-spirited is never welcome. Gossip, though, can be beneficial.

### Using technology appropriately ~ E-mail for business communication

We lose facial expression, body language, and tone of voice in e-mail communication. This can lead to an increased likelihood of confusion—the do's and don'ts below will help to reduce this.



Do's	Don'ts
⇒ Be clear and focused.	⇒ Send bad news or confidential information—there is no such thing as private e-mail.
⇒ Check grammar and punctuation.	⇒ Be sloppy and careless.
⇒ Write only what you would say face-to-face to someone.	⇒ Use sarcasm, demean others, or gossip.
⇒ Double check address to make sure it is correct	⇒ Use "reply all" for messages that are meant for one person.
⇒ Respond in a timely manner	⇒ Use all CAPS. It is the equivalent of shouting.
	⇒ Get too casual or relaxed because of the ease and speed of e-mail.

### When Making and Receiving Calls

- Always identify yourself.
- Use a clear and pleasant voice.
- Be careful of other sounds that carry over the lines—don't eat, chew gum, type, or mouth a conversation with someone else.
- If making the call, state your purpose and ask if they have time to talk.
- If receiving the call, answer promptly—by the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> round and avoid answering on speakerphone.

### When Using Voice Mail/Leaving Messages

- Identify yourself—state your name and department.
- Keep it brief. If leaving a message, simply provide your phone number, state your reason for calling, and a good time to reach you.
- Speak a bit slower than usual so the recipient can catch all the information.

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## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ~ MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORY

### The Principles and Qualities of Genuine Leadership™

Create an environment that fosters high performance by following six 'Basic Principles':

#### 1. Focus on the situation, issue, or behavior, not on the person.

Focusing on the situation, issue, or behavior helps you remain objective when faced with challenges. You can solve problems more effectively, make better decisions, and maintain constructive relationships when you concentrate on the big picture and consider others' points of view with an open mind.

#### 2. Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others.

Contributing fully is easier in an atmosphere of acceptance and approval. When people feel free to express their ideas without fear of ridicule or personal criticism, they are more willing to take risks and stretch their capabilities. By showing respect and helping others develop their abilities and reach their goals, you multiply your own efforts in the workplace.

#### 3. Maintain constructive relationships.

The best work comes about when co-workers support one another's efforts. This doesn't mean that you need to be close friends with everyone you work with. Your work interactions will go more smoothly, however, if you approach everyone with a positive attitude and communicate support for others. By sharing information, acknowledging problems, and sorting out conflicts, you create strong relationships based on mutual trust and respect. This leads to strong partnerships that will help the organization face any challenge that arises.

#### 4. Take initiative to make things better.

No matter what your role in the organization, you can find ways to make things better. By surveying your own area and finding opportunities for improvement, you increase the organization's chances for success. You also increase your personal satisfaction by taking control of your work and creating visible improvement. Knowing when to ask for help and when to offer help to others is also key to making things better. Initiative follows naturally when you stay informed and alert to changes and work to find solutions to problems.

#### 5. Lead by example.

As organizations face new challenges, everyone is expected to be a leader. Being a good leader means setting a good example - even in the face of setbacks or reversals. Modeling the kind of behavior you want to see in others is the surest way to influence them. By actively honoring your commitments, admitting your mistakes, and staying receptive to new ideas, you will motivate others to do the same.

#### 6. Think beyond the moment.

For each action or decision, there are consequences. Being a good leader means considering how your actions and decisions will impact others and the organization, and avoiding actions that bring personal benefit at the expense of others. When you set compelling goals, make thoughtful plans, and behave ethically, you increase your trustworthiness and dependability. Anticipating the future also helps you prevent minor, manageable problems from turning into organizational crises.

**Source:** "The Principles & Qualities of Genuine Leadership™;" Overview of the Basic Principles Achieve Global



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## IRS Tax Tip: Top 10 Tax Tips about Debt Cancellation

If your lender cancels part or all of your debt, it is usually considered income and you normally must pay tax on that amount. However, the law allows an exclusion that may apply to homeowners who had their mortgage debt cancelled in 2015. Here are 10 tips about debt cancellation:

1. **Main Home.** If the cancelled debt was a loan on your main home, you may be able to exclude the cancelled amount from your income. You must have used the loan to buy, build or substantially improve your main home to qualify. Your main home must also secure the mortgage.
2. **Loan Modification.** If your lender cancelled part of your mortgage through a loan modification or 'workout,' you may be able to exclude that amount from your income. You may also be able to exclude debt discharged as part of the Home Affordable Modification Program, or HAMP. The exclusion may also apply to the amount of debt cancelled in a foreclosure.
3. **Refinanced Mortgage.** The exclusion may apply to amounts cancelled on a refinanced mortgage. This applies only if you used proceeds from the refinancing to buy, build or substantially improve your main home and only up to the amount of the old mortgage principal just before refinancing. Amounts used for other purposes do not qualify.
4. **Other Cancelled Debt.** Other types of cancelled debt such as second homes, rental and business property, credit card debt or car loans do not qualify for this special exclusion. On the other hand, there are other rules that may allow those types of cancelled debts to be nontaxable.
5. **Form 1099-C.** If your lender reduced or cancelled at least \$600 of your debt, you should receive Form 1099-C, Cancellation of Debt, by Feb. 1. This form shows the amount of cancelled debt and other information.
6. **Form 982.** If you qualify, report the excluded debt on Form 982, Reduction of Tax Attributes Due to Discharge of Indebtedness. File the form with your federal income tax return.
7. **IRS.gov Tool.** Use the Interactive Tax Assistant tool on IRS.gov to find out if your cancelled mortgage debt is taxable.
8. **Exclusion Extended.** The law that authorized the exclusion of cancelled debt from income was extended through Dec. 31, 2016.
9. **IRS Free File.** IRS e-file is fastest, safest and easiest way to file. You can use IRS Free File to e-file your tax return for free. If you earned \$62,000 or less, you can use brand name tax software. The software does the math and completes the right forms for you. If you earned more than \$62,000, use Free File Fillable Forms. This option uses electronic versions of IRS paper forms. It is best for people who are used to doing their own taxes. Free File is available only on IRS.gov/freefile.
10. **More Information.** For more on this topic see Publication 4681, Canceled Debts, Foreclosures, Repossessions and Abandonments.

Source: <https://www.irs.gov/uac/Top-10-Tax-Tips-about-Debt-Cancellation>

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## THE OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION

### Ohio Ethics Law - Webinars

The Ohio Ethics Commission presents monthly one-hour webinars to provide a convenient and helpful overview of the Ohio Ethics Law.

These webinar are presented by the Ohio Ethics Commission and are supported by the Ohio Department of Taxation.

**Register for a session now by clicking a date below:**

#### Overview of Law:

- April 11, 2016 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/595332042396740609>
- May 10, 2016** 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/7413756589468326401>
- June 16, 2016** 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/159825382239438849>

Once registered you will receive an email confirming your registration with information you need to join the Webinar

#### Topic Specific E-learning Courses

In recognition that many questions arise regarding specific areas of the law, the Ethics Commission has created several short e-courses specific to these topics.

These short e-courses serve as a springboard to begin discussion and to enhance understanding of the Ethics Law in your agency. Due to their brevity and specificity, they would be especially appropriate for staff meetings. Of course, each one can also be individually viewed on-demand.

**Please click on a link below to access a course.**

#### The Ohio Ethics Law and Gifts <http://dw.ohio.gov/ethics/education/elearning/Gifts/multiscreen.html>

Wondering if you can tee up with your agency's vendor? Or accept the tin of cookies from someone in the regulated community? This brief e-course will explore the Conflict of Interest provision of the Ethics Law as it relates to gifts. A helpful course for anyone in the public sector as well as private sector entities who do business with or are regulated by a state or local governmental agency.

#### The Ohio Ethics Law and Nepotism <http://dw.ohio.gov/ethics/education/elearning/Nepotism/index.html>

Public agencies are required to conduct all hiring activity in a fair, open and impartial manner. Therefore, nepotism – hiring or influencing the hiring process in favor of a family member into a public service position – is illegal. Watch this brief e-course for more information.

#### The Ohio Ethics Law and Post-Employment <http://dw.ohio.gov/ethics/education/elearning/PostEmployment/index.html>

Thinking of a new career adventure? Public officials and employees who are leaving public service or moving from one public position to another are subject to job-seeking and post-employment provisions of the Ethics Law and related statutes. These laws help ensure that the public is fairly represented in all interactions with the public and private sectors. This brief e-course offers information on how to make a smooth transition to the next chapter of your life.



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# Nepotism: Bad Idea, Illegal Practice

## **What is nepotism?**

Under the Ohio Ethics Law, nepotism is when a public official or employee authorizes a family member's employment or uses his/her position in any way to obtain a public job for a family member.

## **Such as voting for a family member's hire or finalizing the employment documentation?**

Direct hiring is clearly illegal. However, the Ohio Ethics Law also prohibits public officials and employees from indirectly influencing the hiring process for a family member. Examples of such indirect – but equally illegal – influences could include recommending a family member, participating in discussions about the family member's job application, or requesting an interview or job for a family member.

## **Is nepotism really a problem in Ohio?**

Absolutely. In fact, nepotism is the primary Ethics Law violation investigated by the Ethics Commission each year. On average, nepotism comprises almost one-third of the Ohio Ethics Commission's investigative workload.

## **Is nepotism a criminal matter or just bad public policy?**

The Ohio Ethics Law, which includes prohibitions against nepotism, is a criminal statute. While public agencies are wise to be aware of the appearance of impropriety that accompanies nepotism, it's important to understand that, in Ohio, the crime of nepotism is a fourth degree felony.

## **Why does this issue matter so much?**

Fair hiring practices are mandatory in government. Public agencies are required to conduct all hiring activity in a fair, open, and impartial manner. Giving precedence or advantages to family members in public hiring is unfair to other applicants who may be equally or even more qualified. Even more importantly, nepotism is unfair to the public; all Ohio citizens have the right to expect that government jobs will be awarded to the most qualified candidate – not merely to the most family-connected candidate.

## **If I am a public official or employee, can my family member even apply for a public job?**

In general, family members of public officials and employees can legally pursue public jobs. The issue is whether or not the applicant's family member who is already in public service can be recused from any aspect of the hiring process. If a public official or employee can be removed from any discussion, review, decision-making, or any other aspect of the hiring process, his/her family member generally can be awarded the public job. In other words, it's not illegal for your family to pursue or get the government job at your agency; it's illegal if you involve yourself in any aspect of the hiring process.



## **What if I can't recuse myself from the hiring process?**

There are situations in which a public official or employee cannot be removed from the hiring discussion or decision-making. Examples could include a township that has only one employee or an agency where the director is designated as the



sole hiring authority. Those situations, however, do not relieve public officials and employees from complying with the criminal law. If the public official or employee cannot recuse himself/herself, then that person's family member cannot be awarded the public job.

### **Who is my "family?"**

For purposes of the Ohio Ethics Law, a "family member" includes the following (regardless of where they live):

- Spouse;
- Children/Step-Children (whether dependent or not);
- Siblings;
- Parents/Step-Parents;
- Grandparents; and
- Grandchildren.

"Family member" also includes any other person related by blood or by marriage (e.g. cousins, aunts, uncles, in-laws, nieces, nephews) if that person resides in the same household as the public official or public employee.

### **What happens after my family member is hired?**

It's important to note that, should your family member legally receive the public job – without your involvement – recusal continues even after he/she is hired. For example, direct supervision, annual evaluations, or participation in discussions of promotions or raises would also be prohibited.

### **What about indirect benefits my family member could receive from my actions?**

There are circumstances in which a public official may participate in matters that indirectly benefit family members. For example, a public official is not prohibited from approving a union contract where a relative is a member of the union (as long as the relative is not a union officer, board member, member of negotiating team, and the public

official does not receive health care benefits from the union member). Other exceptions include matters impacting an entire class of employees or participating in general budget discussions that include a family member's compensation. For more information regarding such exceptions, please contact the Ohio Ethics Commission.

### **Does it matter if my child is a minor?**

Yes! Your minor child cannot work for the same agency unless you can show four things:

1. The agency's hiring process will be fair and open and will not favor your children;
2. The agency will provide a broad opportunity to qualified and interested applicants to submit applications;
3. All qualified and interested applicants other than your children have already been hired; and
4. Vacancies still exist.

In other words, the only way your minor child can receive a job/internship at your public agency is if all other qualified applicants have been hired but there are still open position. Keep in mind that even if your child is able to be awarded that open position after all other qualified applicants are hired, you still may not participate – in any way – in the hiring deliberation or decision.

### **Can I receive additional information or details about nepotism?**

Yes! On the Ohio Ethics Commission's web site, you will find fact sheets, advisory opinions, and even an e-course regarding nepotism. Feel free to contact the Ohio Ethics Commission at (614) 466 – 7090 if we can assist you in any way in



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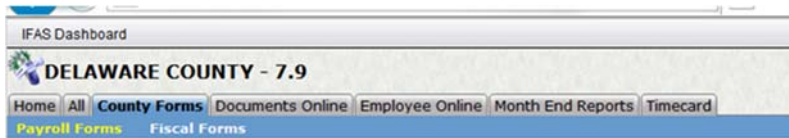
March 17, 2016

**Q. I'm thinking of going back to school to further my education in my current field. Does the County offer any financial assistance?**

A. Yes, Delaware County has instituted a tuition reimbursement plan. Full-time employees may be eligible. The complete policy may be found on our HR website under policies (<http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/hrdocuments/policies/tuition.pdf>). Click here to view the application: <http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/hrdocuments/policies/tuitionap.pdf>

**Q. How can I go about changing my W-4? I noticed that there is not enough federal tax taken out of my paycheck, and I don't want to owe again next year when I file taxes. Do I need to come in to the HR office or can this be done via interoffice mail?**

A. All payroll forms may be found by logging into Employee Online and clicking the "County Forms" tab. You may print, complete and submit via interoffice mail directly to the Auditor's Office.



Submit your questions to Mindy Owens at [mowens@co.delaware.oh.us](mailto:mowens@co.delaware.oh.us)

## WELCOME TO THE NEWEST EMPLOYEES, SERVING UNDER THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Sanitary Engineering/Regional Sewer District

Michael Frommer.....Director of Sanitary Engineering and Development.....Mar 7, 2016



## Human Resources Staff

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## Wellness

Cindi Blair,  
Insurance Risk &  
Wellness

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Visit us online:

[www.co.delaware.oh.us  
/index.php/wellness](http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/index.php/wellness)

### March: National Nutrition Month

Having a healthy diet is sometimes easier said than done. It is tempting to eat less-healthy foods because they might be easier to find or prepare, or because they satisfy a craving. Between family and work or school, you are probably balancing a hundred things at once. Taking time to buy ingredients and cook a healthy meal sometimes falls last on your to-do list, but you should know that it is not hard to make simple changes to improve your diet. And you can make sense of the mounds of nutrition information out there. A little learning and planning can help you find a diet to fit your lifestyle.



This column answers some frequently asked questions about healthy diets and sound nutrition practices. Be advised that you should consult with your physician or medical care provider before starting any diet or exercise plan.

#### Why is a healthy diet important?

Having a healthy diet is one of the most important things you can do to help your overall health. Along with physical activity, your diet is the key factor that affects your weight. Having a healthy weight for your height is important. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, breathing problems, arthritis, gallbladder disease, sleep apnea (breathing problems while sleeping), osteoarthritis and some cancers.

You can find out if you are overweight or obese by figuring out your body mass index (BMI). People with a BMI of 25 to 29.9 are considered overweight, whereas those with a BMI of 30 or more are considered obese. All adults (aged 18 years or older) who have a BMI of 25 or more are considered at risk for premature death and disability from being overweight or obese. These health risks increase as the BMI rises. Your health care provider can help you figure out your body mass, or you can use an online BMI calculator.

#### What are some components of a healthy diet?

There are many different factors that can influence your diet and the nutritional value you receive from it. Features common to many healthy diets include the following:

- The diet either helps you lose weight or keeps your BMI in the "healthy" range.
- The diet is balanced with foods from all food groups, including lots of delicious fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.
- The diet is low in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol. Keep your total fat intake between 20 and 35 percent of all the calories you consume, with most fats coming from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids, such as fish, nuts and vegetable oils.
- The diet includes a variety of grains consumed daily, especially whole grains, which are a good source of fiber.
- The diet includes a variety of fruits and vegetables (2 cups of fruit and 2 1/2 cups of vegetables per day are recommended for a 2,000-calorie diet).
- The diet has a small number of calories from refined sugars (like in candy, cookies and cakes).
- The diet has foods prepared with less sodium or salt (aim for no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day, or about 1 teaspoon of salt per day).

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# HR CONNECTION

Serving Employees of the Board of Commissioners

March 17, 2016

## Wellness

Cindi Blair,  
Insurance Risk &  
Wellness

Delaware County HR  
740.833.2124  
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### What fats are good for you?

There are different kinds of fats in our foods. Some can hurt our health, while others are not so bad – some are even good for you.

Monounsaturated fats (canola, olive and peanut oil and avocados) and polyunsaturated fats (safflower, sesame and sunflower seeds and many other nuts and seeds) do not raise your LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels but can raise your HDL ("good") cholesterol levels. To keep healthy, it is best to choose foods with these fats.

Saturated fat, trans fatty acids (TFAs) and dietary cholesterol raise your LDL ("bad") blood cholesterol levels, which can lead to heart disease. Saturated fat is found mostly in food from animals, like beef, veal, lamb, pork, lard, poultry fat, butter, cream, whole milk dairy products and cheeses. It is also found in foods from some plants, such as tropical oils. Tropical oils include coconut, palm kernel and palm oils that are found in commercial cakes, cookies and salty snack foods. Unlike other plant oils, these oils have a lot of saturated fatty acids. Some processed foods (such as frozen dinners and canned foods) can be quite high in saturated fat – it is best to check package labels before purchasing these types of foods.

Trans fatty acids are formed during the process of making cooking oils, margarine and shortening and are in commercially fried foods, baked goods, cookies and crackers. Some are naturally found in small amounts in some animal products, such as beef, pork, lamb, and the butterfat in butter and milk. In studies, TFAs tend to raise our total blood cholesterol. TFAs also tend to raise LDL cholesterol and lower HDL cholesterol. Some food manufacturers and restaurants are announcing they are taking TFAs out of their food.

### What are some guidelines for heart-healthy eating?

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of both men and women in the United States. Eating a heart-healthy diet helps reduce your risk factors for heart disease, like high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and being overweight or obese. It also will help you control these conditions if you already have them.

Here are some general guidelines for heart-healthy eating:

- Choose foods low in saturated and trans fats: These include fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products. Try to avoid commercially fried and baked goods, such as crackers and cookies.
- Choose a diet moderate in total fat: Keep total fat intake to between 20 to 35 percent of all the calories you eat. You do not have to eliminate all fat from your diet. This will give you enough calories to satisfy your hunger, which can help you to eat fewer calories, stay at a healthy weight and lower your blood cholesterol level. Try to substitute unsaturated fat for saturated fat to keep your total fat intake moderate.
- Choose foods low in cholesterol: Try to eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products, as well as moderate amounts of lean meats, skinless poultry and fish. Eat plenty of soluble fiber, which may help lower your LDL blood cholesterol. Good sources are oat bran, oatmeal, beans, peas, rice bran, barley, citrus fruits and strawberries. Insoluble fiber will not help your blood cholesterol level but is still good for healthy bowel function. Good sources of insoluble fiber are whole-wheat breads, kidney beans, almonds, beets, carrots,

### Heart Healthy Foods



Oatmeal	Red Bell Peppers
Brown or Wild Rice	Black Beans
Salmon	Kidney Beans
Sardines	Spinach
Tuna	Green Tea
Walnuts	Red Wine
Almonds	Cantaloupe
Flax Seeds	Papaya
Berries	Acorn Squash
Olive Oil	Tomatoes
Broccoli	Oranges
Carrots	Asparagus
Sweet Potatoes	Avocados

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- The American Heart Association recommends that you try to eat at least two servings of fish per week: Especially fatty fish like salmon and lake trout, because they are high in omega-3 fatty acids, which may help lower blood cholesterol. Some types of fish, such as swordfish, shark and king mackerel, may contain high levels of mercury and other environmental contaminants that can damage the brain and nervous system, especially in developing fetuses. Children, pregnant women and breastfeeding women should limit how much fish they eat to no more than 12 ounces per week.
- You can also eat omega-3 fatty acids from plant sources: These include tofu, soybeans, canola, walnuts and flaxseed (these contain alpha-linolenic acid, a less potent form of omega-3 fatty acid).
- Cut down on sodium: If you have high blood pressure, as well as high blood cholesterol – and many people do – your health care provider may tell you to cut down on sodium or salt. Even if you do not have high blood pressure or cholesterol, try not to consume more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium each day. You can choose low-sodium foods, which will also help lower your cholesterol, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, and moderate amounts of lean meat. To flavor your food, reach for herbs and spices rather than high-sodium table salt. Be sure to read the labels of seasoning mixes because some contain salt.
- Watch your body weight: It is not uncommon for overweight people to have higher blood cholesterol than people who are not overweight. When you reduce the fat in your diet, you cut down not only on cholesterol and saturated fat, but on calories, as well. This will help you to lose weight and improve your blood cholesterol, both of which will reduce your risk for heart disease.

### What do terms like "fat free" or "low calorie" mean?

Terms like "low calorie," "low fat" and "high fiber" appear on many food packages. Here are some definitions based on one serving of a food. If you eat more than one serving, you will go over these levels of calories, fat, cholesterol and sodium.

- Calorie-free means fewer than five calories.
- Low calorie means 40 calories or fewer.
- Reduced calorie means at least 25 percent fewer calories than the regular food item.
- Fat free means less than ½ gram of fat.
- Low fat means 3 grams of fat or fewer.
- Reduced fat means at least 25 percent less fat than the regular food item.
- Cholesterol means fewer than 2 milligrams of cholesterol and no more than 2 grams of saturated fat.
- Low cholesterol means 20 milligrams or fewer of cholesterol and 2 grams or less saturated fat.
- Sodium-free means fewer than 5 milligrams of sodium.
- Very low sodium means fewer than 35 milligrams of sodium.
- Low sodium means fewer than 140 milligrams of sodium.
- High fiber means 5 grams or more of fiber.



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### How can I follow a healthy diet when eating out?

The American Heart Association gives these tips for achieving a healthy diet when you are not cooking at home:

- Ask the server to make substitutions, like ordering steamed vegetables instead of fries.
- Pick lean meat, fish or skinless chicken.
- Make sure your entrée is broiled, baked, grilled, steamed or poached instead of fried.
- Ask for baked, boiled or roasted potatoes instead of fried.
- Order vegetable side dishes, and ask that any sauces or butter be left off.
- Ask for low-calorie salad dressing or a lemon to squeeze on your salad instead of dressing.
- Order fresh fruit or a sorbet in place of cake, pie or ice cream desserts.



### Resources

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

WomensHealth.gov: [www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov)

Nutrition.gov: [www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov)

ChooseMyPlate.gov: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

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## Safety and Risk Management

The Safety and Risk Management Office, part of the Human Resources Department, ensures that all County employees are provided a safe and healthful work environment as stated in the Public Employment Risk Reduction Program Act (PERRP).

Brad Euans, Workers Compensation/FMLA/HR Coordinator

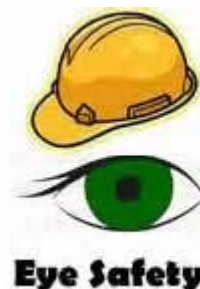
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## March is Workplace Eye Health and Safety Month

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports about 2,000 U.S. workers sustain job-related eye injuries that require medical treatment each day. Safety experts and eye doctors believe the right eye protection could have lessened the severity or even prevented 90% of workplace eye injuries. Prevent workplace eye strain and eye injuries by following the important steps listed below.

There are four things you can do to help prevent an eye injury:

- Know the eye safety dangers.
- Eliminate hazards before starting work, using machine guards, work screens or other engineering controls.
- Use proper eye protection and make sure it is correctly fitted.
- Keep safety eyewear in good condition and replace it if it is damaged.



Anyone working in or passing through areas with potential eye hazards should wear protective eyewear. Potential hazards against which eye protection is needed in the workplace are:

- Projectiles (dust, concrete, metal, wood, other particles)
- Chemicals (splashes and fumes)
- Radiation (visible light, ultraviolet radiation, infrared radiation, lasers)
- Blood borne pathogens from blood and body fluids.

Safety eyewear includes: non-prescription and prescription safety glasses, goggles, face shields, welding helmets, and full-face respirators. The type of safety protection you should wear depends on the hazards in your workplace.

Employers can take steps to make the work environment as safe as possible. This includes:

- Conducting an eye hazard assessment of the workplace
- Removing or reducing eye hazards where possible
- Providing appropriate safety eyewear and requiring employees to wear it.

According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), nearly half of all Americans (46%) spend five or more hours per day using a computer or a PDA (personal digital assistant). Prolonged use of electronic devices may lead to symptoms of Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) such as eye strain, dry eyes, headaches, fatigue, blurred vision and loss of focus. The AOA encourages all technology users to follow these recommendations:

1. Follow the 20-20-20 rule. At least every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break and look at something 20 feet away.
2. Sit about 25 inches away from the computer screen, positioning the screen so your eye gaze is slightly downward.
3. Increase font size instead of bringing the screen closer to your eyes.
4. Better resolution offers greater clarity and often more comfort. Adjust the screen to a comfortable intensity and resolution.
5. Reduce glare. Try to make sure lighting is not directly behind the head or in front of the screen.

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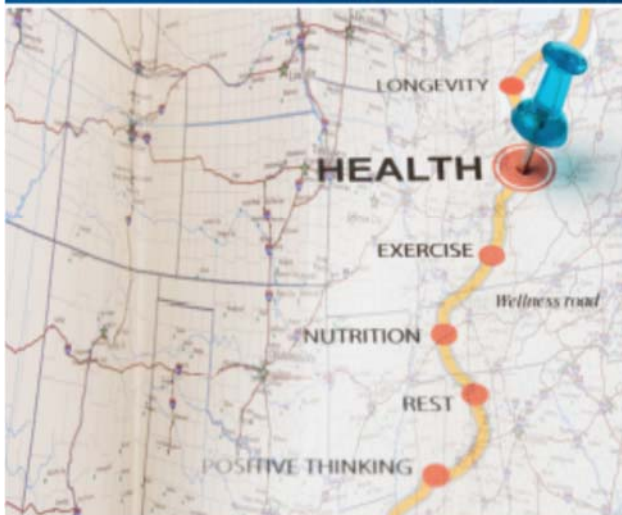
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## Map out your retirement pension income and health care



### Learn

**Learn:** Health care program changes may impact you. Know what you need to qualify for health care. OPERS provides retirement information online, in seminars and with publications—all available to members.

### Plan

**Plan:** Make strategic choices. Use the OPERS-provided retirement planner (online), the health care calculator (online), access counseling and checklists before you make important retirement decisions.

### Act

**Act:** Decision made? Take action. Remember, some applications for pension benefits take longer than others and you'll need specific documents.

Go online or call OPERS to **LEARN** what you need, **PLAN** to find your documents so that you can **ACT** on retirement when you know it's the right time for you.



[www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org) • 1-800-222-PERS (7377)

## OPERS Tidbits

### Impact of court orders on your application for retirement

If your marriage is terminated by divorce or dissolution and, as part of the property division, the court orders you to designate your former spouse as a beneficiary on a joint and survivor annuity, you are required to designate your former spouse as a beneficiary for a specified portion (i.e. a whole percentage) upon OPERS' receipt of the court order and upon your applying for retirement. When OPERS receives a copy of the court order, the retirement system may only accept and process your retirement application if you have complied with the court order by designating your former spouse as a beneficiary on a joint and survivor annuity.

If you are a member of the Combined or Member-Directed Plan, and OPERS receives a court order requiring you to designate a former spouse on a joint and survivor annuity, you are required to select a monthly annuity, based on your entire account balance, for your Member-Directed Plan account and the defined contribution portion of your Combined Plan account and to designate your former spouse as a beneficiary on a joint and survivor annuity.

Should you remarry prior to applying for retirement and are subject to a court order requiring you to designate your former spouse as a beneficiary for a specified portion on a joint and survivor annuity, you may select the annuity option **Multiple Life Plan** (see payment options on page 36) to designate your current spouse and former spouse as beneficiaries. Your current spouse must consent to your payment plan selection and beneficiary designation prior to your retirement application being processed.

### Changes to your address or personal data

Keeping your personal information up to date with OPERS is very important. If we do not have your correct information, you will not receive an annual statement of your Traditional Pension or Combined Plan account or quarterly statements if you are in the Member-Directed or Combined Plan, and the quarterly newsletters promptly. There are a number of convenient ways for you to let us know if you have a change in address or family status. The easiest and fastest way to make changes to your personal information is by accessing your account online at our website, [www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org). You will always receive a confirmation of any changes made online.

Source: [www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org)

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