

HR CONNECTION

Serving Employees of the Board of Commissioners

September 17, 2014

Policy Corner: County Property

A. General

Employees are prohibited from using County materials, tools, facilities, equipment and labor for personal or private use regardless of whether the use is during working or non- working time. Employees may not perform private work for themselves, co-workers, friends or family members during working time or while using County materials, tools, facilities, or equipment. All County tools and equipment must be used and operated within the laws of the State of Ohio and/or rules and regulations of the County. Employees who separate from service with the County are responsible for return of reusable County property in her possession.



Employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy in the use of County property and facilities. In order to safeguard employees and the workplace, and in order to maximize efficiency, safety and productivity, the County reserves the right, in its sole discretion and without notice to employees, to inspect, monitor or otherwise search County property and facilities or any other enclosed or open area within County property or facilities and to monitor or inspect any items found within such facilities. Employees are required to cooperate in any work place inspection. The County also reserves the right to inspect any packages, mail, parcels, handbags, briefcases, or any other possessions or articles carried to and from County facilities and job sites where permitted by law.

Employees required to answer the telephone as part of their assigned duties shall do so in a polite and courteous manner. No employee shall use foul or abusive language over the telephone or in any dealings with the public. The County reserves the right to monitor any phone at any time. Personal phone calls must be kept to an "on emergency basis" only. Toll calls and/or long distance for personal reasons shall not be charged to the County.

The County may issue electronic devices including but not limited to iPads, cellular phones, smart phones etc. to its employees. Electronic devices are not only capable of making and receiving phone calls, they may also be capable of email, text messaging, internet browsing, running third party applications, GPS, and entertainment. Regardless of the capability of a particular cellular phone, County-issued electronic devices are considered County property and are for business use only. Features other than phone use must not be used or activated without direct authorization from a supervisor. **Use of electronic devices such as cellular phones, smart phones iPads, laptop computers, etc. while operating a motor vehicle (County-owned or personal) is prohibited.**

Read the complete policy at <http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/hr/documents.asp>

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Learning and Development

Employee Training, October 2014

Personnel Policy Manual training will be conducted at the Hayes Building, 140 N. Sandusky Street, Room 235, on October 3, 7 and 8, with morning and afternoon sessions available. **Please coordinate your registration with your supervisor.**

This presentation will be conducted by Brad Bennett with Fishel, Hass, Kim and Albrecht and is **mandatory** for all employees, including supervisors, under the Board of Commissioners.



Don't forget to bring your copy of the Personnel Policy Manual to the training. A copy may be obtained at <http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/hr/documents.asp>

Do you have questions from a previous training? I am happy to assist. Please call me at extension 2121 or email me at psonagere@co.delaware.oh.us

Pam Sonagere

Human Resources Staff

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Excellent Customer Service – What Is It?

Every day you provide a valuable service to the public that demonstrates a high standard of integrity and professionalism. In the process, you gain trust and respect from your customers. You are in an admirable profession; be proud of what you do and where you work.

Excellent customer service is how we make customers feel important, feel heard and feel respected. Recall that our recent customer service training presented this summer explained that our customers are the employees of Delaware County *and* the community we serve. Although we can't always deliver what others ask for or need, we can choose to deliver the message with respect.

Inappropriate delivery

1. "I need you to..."
2. "You have to..."
3. "We don't take care of that in our department..."
4. "I'm not sure who takes care of that..."
5. "I'm sorry, he isn't here. Did you have an appointment?"

Fitting message

- "Will you....?"
- "Are you willing...?"
- "Let me give you a number..."
- "Let me research this and I will return your call..."
- "I'm sorry, he isn't here at the moment. How can I help?"

How do we deliver excellent customer service?

- ⇒ Properly greet everyone, interact and be courteous and be problem solvers.
- ⇒ Listen and gather more information.
- ⇒ Be experts in resources to solve problems.
- ⇒ Be masters of following through. Do what we say we will do.
- ⇒ Take care of our customer's needs.
- ⇒ Maintain a positive attitude.
- ⇒ Keep your focus on what you can do to solve a customer's problem.
- ⇒ Smile.
- ⇒ Say "thank you".
- ⇒ Treat your co-worker's requests with the same urgency you would an external customer.
- ⇒ Use active listening. Active listening skills can include non-verbal actions that indicate you are listening. Nodding your head while the customer is speaking, maintaining eye contact, and paraphrasing what was heard are all effective techniques for active listening.



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Five Easy Ways to Spot a Scam Phone Call

The IRS continues to warn the public to be alert for telephone scams and offers five tell-tale warning signs to tip you off if you get such a call. These callers claim to be with the IRS. The scammers often demand money to pay taxes. Some may try to con you by saying that you're due a refund. The refund is a fake lure so you'll give them your banking or other private financial information.

These con artists can sound convincing when they call. They may even know a lot about you. They may alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling. They use fake names and bogus IRS badge numbers. If you don't answer, they often leave an "urgent" callback request.

The IRS respects taxpayer rights when working out payment of your taxes. So, it's pretty easy to tell when a supposed IRS caller is a fake. Here are five things the scammers often do but the IRS will not do. Any one of these five things is a sign of a scam. The IRS will never:

1. Call you about taxes you owe without first mailing you an official notice.
2. Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the chance to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
3. Require you to use a certain payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.
4. Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
5. Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement to have you arrested for not paying.

If you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS and asking for money, here's what to do:

- If you know you owe taxes or think you might owe, call the IRS at 800-829-1040 to talk about payment options. You also may be able to set up a payment plan online at IRS.gov.
- If you know you don't owe taxes or have no reason to believe that you do, report the incident to TIGTA at 1.800.366.4484 or at www.tigta.gov.
- If phone scammers target you, also contact the Federal Trade Commission at FTC.gov. Use their "[FTC Complaint Assistant](#)" to report the scam. Please add "IRS Telephone Scam" to the comments of your complaint.

Remember, the IRS currently does not use unsolicited email, text messages or any social media to discuss your personal tax issues. For more information on reporting tax scams, go to www.irs.gov and type "scam" in the search box.

Source: IRS.gov



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Wellness

Cindi Blair,
Insurance Risk &
Wellness

Delaware County HR
740.833.2124
Mon – Fri ; 8 am – 3 pm
cblair@co.delaware.oh.us

Visit us online:

www.co.delaware.oh.us/HR/Wellness/

Stress: A Way of Life or a Fact of Life?

Stress is no longer related only to top executives or busy air traffic controllers. It is now recognized that all types of work involve stress—everyone experiences stress. Feeling stress is not always bad; it's how we manage stress that's important. Stress is our body's normal response to any extra physical, mental or emotional demand. Understanding more about stress, identifying your stressors and learning ways to cope can help you effectively manage high stress levels.

Stress and Your Health

In response to daily strains, your body automatically increases:

- Blood pressure
- Heart rate
- Respiration
- Metabolism
- Blood flow to your muscles

These responses help your body react quickly and effectively to high-pressure situations. However, when you are reacting to many stressful situations without making adjustments to counter the effects, stress can threaten your health by causing:

- Insomnia
- Backaches
- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease

Where Does Stress Affect our Bodies?

- **Immune System** (glands, white blood cells)
- **Skeletal Muscular System** (muscles, back, neck)
- **Cardiovascular System** (heart, circulation)
- **Digestive System** (stomach, intestines)
- **Circadian System** (sleep, awake, feeding)
- **Respiratory System** (lungs, sinuses)

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Answer the questions below and add up your score to assess how your lifestyle might be making you more or less susceptible to increased stress levels.

1. Which pattern most accurately describes your interaction with friends?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lots of casual acquaintances, few close friends b. A few good friends and lots of acquaintances but no time to see them c. Good friends who I communicate with more than once a week d. I live in a different city than most of my really good friends
2. How many hobbies and outside of work interests do you actively participate in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 1 or 2 at least once a week b. At least 3 times a week—lots of commitments fill my free time c. Lots of old hobbies I'd like to revisit, but I don't have time or energy d. None - no time
3. Have any major losses (death, divorce, job or home loss) occurred in your life over the past year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No b. Yes, 1 – 2 c. Yes, 3 or more d. None in past year, but in year before that
4. Which pattern best describes your feelings at the end of the day?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tired, but I feel I've accomplished a lot and am planning for tomorrow b. Exhausted, unable to unwind c. Discouraged, don't want to face tomorrow d. Sleepy or tired, looking forward to a quiet evening
5. How would you best describe your health?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Excellent no major problems b. Pretty good, don't always eat right or exercise c. Rundown, no major diseases but frequent colds and headaches d. One or more chronic or painful illnesses
6. How do you feel about your job?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Generally OK, but I would like to work a bit less and reduce work stress b. Hate it, but I need the money c. Like it a lot—but I work hard d. Neutral, look forward to end of each workday
7. If you were suddenly given 3 extra hours today that you could use as you please, what would you do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Catch up on "in" box at work b. Play a sport or go for a run or walk c. Sleep d. Read, watch movie, catch up on outside interests
8. If you feel overwhelmed by stress, what are you most likely to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Call a friend or family member and talk things over b. Try to forget it—this too shall pass c. Drink too much, start smoking again or take tranquilizers d. Go online to chat, post in forums or read things that might help

SCORING:

- 1. A=5, B=3, C=1, D=3
- 2. A=1, B=4, C=5, D=5
- 3. A=1, B=5, C=5, D=5
- 4. A=3, B=5, C=5, D=3

- 5. A=1, B=3, C=5, D=5
- 6. A=3, B=5, C=1, D=3
- 7. A=5, B=1, C=5, D=1
- 8. A=1, B=4, C=5, D=2

TOTAL:

- 32-40 = Potential for High Levels of Stress
- 18-32 = Potential for Average Levels of Stress
- 10-18 = Potential for Low Levels of Stress

Source: About.com/Melissa C. Stopper, MD.

Your body signals you when you are under stress. In order to become more aware of these signals and eventually learn how to calm yourself and feel more in control, it's important to become aware of your body's distress signs. Think of two situations in which you've recently experienced stress and jot down the reactions your body and mind experienced. Remember to consider both positive and negative events!

Stressor Negative and Positive Event	Signals Physical, Emotional or Mental	Level of Control High, Medium, Low, None	Level of Stress Scale of 1(low) to 10 (high)

Remember...the three keys to managing stress in our lives are:

1. Understand the causes of stress
2. Take control of your stressors
3. Create balance in your life

Coping With Stress

Whether it's a stressful day at work, or a longer-term life situation that is causing you stress, coping techniques can help you manage and reduce your stress level. Below are some common stress-reduction techniques. Find the ones that work best for you. How many are you already using?

- > **The Deep Ten:**
Take a deep breath and count to 10
- > **The Flight Response:**
Take a break
- > **The Fight Response:**
Clench fists or tense shoulders, hold for 5 seconds and release
- > **The Self-Admirer:**
Be good to yourself
- > **The Dreamer:**
Picture favorite places, complete with sounds/smells
- > **The Hobbyist:**
Explore your interests
- > **The Exerciser:**
Develop a regular routine
- > **The Honest Abe:**
Confront your feelings
- > **The Planner:**
Set future goals—both personal and professional
- > **The Philanthropist:**
Share your life and time
- > **The One-in-Charge:**
Take control of your surroundings
- > **The Networker:**
Use your resources
- > **The Communicator:**
Let people know what you need
- > **The Realist:**
Know your limits and stick to them

Assumptions for Lifestyle Changes

1. Accept responsibility for your own response to stressors
2. Recognize individual uniqueness
3. Learn effective stress-management techniques
4. Commit to action
5. Take one step at a time
6. Be patient! Small changes are just as valuable over time

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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 • 1-800-222-PERS (7377)

OPERS Tidbits

Timing of benefit payments can rely on paperwork

The Ohio Public Employees Retirement System periodically receives calls from members wondering when they'll receive their first pension benefit, and when the next one is coming.

Here's how the process works.

For new retirees, the first service retirement benefit can take 30-45 days to receive from the time of the member's effective retirement date, or when all of the paperwork is in order, whichever is later.

It's important that members complete all required paperwork as early as possible. In addition to the application, relevant documents include a marriage certificate, birth certificate and beneficiary information. In some cases additional documentation, such as division of property orders, is necessary.

OPERS recommends that all members file online. Filing for retirement online reduces errors and speeds up the processing of your application. Lack of proper documentation can increase the turnaround time of your application by months. The applications are available through your online account at www.opers.org. If you can't find them, give us a call at 800-222-7377.

Once the first benefit has been paid, benefit payments follow a release date schedule. Generally, that happens on the first day of every month. But, if the first lands on a holiday or weekend, we release the payments on the last business day of the previous month.

Benefits issued in January are always released on the first business day after Jan. 1. That's a result of an IRS rule that we have no control over.

Read the complete article at <http://perspective.opers.org/benefits/timing-of-benefit-payments-can-rely-on-paperwork/>

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