

Welcome to the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System!

Dear Employee:

You and Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System have made an important decision: The Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System (MMRLS) has decided you can contribute to our success, and you've decided that Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System is the organization where you can pursue your career productively and enjoyably.

We believe we've each made the right decision, one that will result in a mutually profitable relationship. The minute you start working here, you become an integral part of Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System and its future. Every job at MMRLS is important, and you will play a key role in the continued growth of the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System.

As you will quickly discover, our success is based on providing unsurpassed customer service. How do we do it? By working very hard, thinking about our customers' needs, and doing whatever it takes. We do it by treating each other and customers with respect. We do it by acting as a team.

Should you have any questions concerning this handbook, your employment or benefits, please feel free to discuss them with your department head or me.

Again, welcome to our library family!



Richard O. Greene
Regional Library Director

(This handbook replaces all previous handbooks and supersedes all earlier oral and written materials about library policies and procedures. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System reserves the right to change, add or delete benefits and policies as necessary. This handbook does not create a contract for employment for any specified period or definite duration.)

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Introduction & Description of The Library System

Description

The Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System became a regional multi-county public library system in 1957. It is a tax-supported, 501(c) (3) public library organization that serves the five county areas of Attala, Holmes, Leake, Montgomery, and Winston. The thirteen public libraries, within this five county library system, provide library services for over 94,000 customers. We have centralized libraries in Attala County (Kosciusko) and Winston County (Louisville). There are two public libraries in Leake County located in Carthage and Walnut Grove. Three public libraries serve Montgomery County at Duck Hill, Kilmichael, and Winona. Six public libraries are located in Holmes County in the cities and towns of Durant, Goodman, Lexington, Pickens, Tchula, and West.

Mid-Mississippi libraries deliver measurable results in public information services. MMRLS operates with the highest level of ethics and honesty to provide opportunities to meet, communicate, collaborate, and partner with the information industry and the business community. The library staff is dedicated to our customers, cheerfully assisting with a wealth of information available throughout our public libraries.

Mission Statement

The Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System offers the best possible information services to the citizens of Attala, Holmes, Leake, Montgomery, and Winston Counties in Central Mississippi.

The management and staff of the public library system envision the continuation of the blending of traditional public library services with the electronic information services and technologies. This blending of traditional services with new electronic services is for the enrichment of educational opportunities for all citizens.

Confidential Information & Conflict of Interest

General Confidentiality Obligations

Information that pertains to Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System's business, including all nonpublic information concerning MMRLS, its customers and suppliers, is strictly confidential and must not be given to people who are not employed by Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System.

Please help protect confidential information -- which may include, for example, customer lists and library financial information -- by taking the following precautionary measures:

- Discuss work matters only with other Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System employees who have a specific business reason to know or have access to such information.
- Do not discuss work matters in public places.
- Monitor and supervise visitors to Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System to ensure that they do not have access to confidential information.
- Destroy hard copies of documents containing confidential information that is not filed or archived.
- Secure confidential information in desk drawers and cabinets at the end of every business day.

Your cooperation is particularly important because of our obligation to protect the security of our customers' and our own confidential information. Use your own sound judgment and good common sense, but if at any time you are uncertain as to whether you can properly divulge information or answer questions, please consult a Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System department head or the regional library director.

Conflict of Interest

Employees must avoid any interest, influence or relationship which might conflict or appear to conflict with the best interests of Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System. You must avoid any situation in which your loyalty may be divided and promptly disclose any situation where an actual or potential conflict may exist.

Examples of potential conflict situations include:

- Having a financial interest in any business transaction with Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System
- Owning or having a significant financial interest in, or other relationship with, a Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System supplier, and
- Accepting gifts, entertainment or other benefit of more than a nominal value from a Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System customer or supplier.

Anyone with a conflict of interest must disclose it to management and remove themselves from negotiations, deliberations or votes involving the conflict. You may, however, state your position and answer questions when your knowledge may be of assistance.

Discrimination & Harassment

Americans w/ Disabilities Act

It is Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System's policy that we will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities with regard to any aspect of their employment. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System is committed to complying with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its related Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as applicable. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System recognizes that some individuals with disabilities may require accommodations at work. If you are currently disabled or become disabled during your employment, you should contact the library system director to discuss reasonable accommodations that may enable you to perform the essential functions of your job.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, employees with AIDS will be treated like any other ill employee. If the individual is fit to work, he or she will be provided with work in accordance with normal procedures. Usually, no special precautions in the workplace are indicated. However, employees with AIDS may request reasonable accommodation by contacting Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System's director. We are committed to safeguarding the health of all employees and maintaining productivity.

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System provides equal opportunity in all of our employment practices to all qualified employees and applicants without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital status, military status or any other category protected by federal, state and local laws. This policy applies to all aspects of the employment relationship, including hiring, compensation, promotion, transfer, disciplinary action, layoff, return from layoff, training and social, and recreational programs. All such employment decisions will be made without unlawfully discriminating on any prohibited basis.

Languages Spoken at Work

Every employee is expected to treat others with respect in all aspects of their working relationships. Employees are prohibited from making offensive remarks or gestures toward fellow employees or visitors to the library who are not fluent in English. In turn, we urge employees not to use their fluency in another language in any way to humiliate or offend your fellow employees or visitors to our library system.

Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System strives to maintain an environment free from discrimination and harassment, where employees treat each other with respect, dignity and courtesy.

This policy applies to all phases of employment, including but not limited to testing, hiring, promoting, demoting, transferring, laying off, terminating, paying, granting benefits and training.

Prohibited Behavior

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System does not and will not tolerate any type of discrimination or harassment of our employees, applicants for employment, or our customers. Discriminatory conduct or conduct characterized as harassment as defined below is prohibited.

The term harassment includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, and other verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's gender (including pregnancy), race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, military status, or any other protected category under federal, state or local law, that unreasonably interferes with a person's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile work environment.

Sexually harassing behavior in particular includes unwelcome conduct such as: sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, offensive touching, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct may constitute sexual harassment when it:

- is made an explicit or implicit condition of employment;
- is used as the basis for employment decisions;
- unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance; or
- creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

The types of conduct covered by this policy include: demands or subtle pressure for sexual favors accompanied by a promise of favorable job treatment or a threat concerning employment.

Specifically, it includes sexual behavior such as:

- repeated sexual flirtations, advances or propositions;
- continued and repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature, sexually related comments and joking, graphic or degrading comments about an employee's appearance or displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures including cartoons and vulgar e-mail messages; and
- any uninvited physical contact or touching, such as patting, pinching or repeated brushing against another's body.

Such conduct may constitute sexual harassment regardless of whether the conduct is between members of management, between management and staff employees, between staff employees, or directed at employees by non-employees conducting business with MMRLS, regardless of gender.

Harassment by Non-employees

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System will also endeavor to protect employees, to the extent possible, from reported harassment by non-employees in the workplace, including customers and suppliers.

Complaint Procedure and Investigation

Any employee who wishes to report a possible incident of sexual harassment or other unlawful harassment or discrimination should promptly report the matter to your immediate department head. If that person is not available, or you believe it would be inappropriate to contact that person, contact the assistant director or the director.

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System will conduct a prompt investigation as confidentially as possible under the circumstances. Employees who raise concerns and make reports in good faith can do so without fear of reprisal; at the same time, employees have an obligation to cooperate with Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System in enforcing this policy and investigating and remedying complaints.

Anyone found to have engaged in such wrongful behavior will be subject to appropriate discipline, which may include termination.

Retaliation

Any employee who files a complaint of harassment or other discrimination in good faith will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment and will not be retaliated against or discharged because of the complaint.

In addition, we will not tolerate retaliation against any employee who, in good faith, cooperates in the investigation of a complaint. Anyone who engages in such retaliatory behavior will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including termination.

Employment at Will

Employment At-Will

Unless expressly proscribed by statute or contract, your employment is "at-will." All Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System employees are at-will, which means they may be terminated at any time and for any reason, with or without advance notice. Employees are also free to quit at any time. If an employee is a system department head or a head librarian, it should take System Trustee Board approval to terminate them. Any employment relationship other than at-will must be set out in writing and signed by Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System's Director.

Employees who are terminated from their positions will be paid only up to 30 days for any accumulated leave. [Miss Code Ann 25-11-103(k).]

Resignation

Employees who resign from their position will be paid the balance of their accumulated personal and sick leave plus the balance of their compensatory time; up to 30 days for any accumulated leave. Employees can not use any leave during their resignation notice. Employees will be paid for holidays during their resignation period.

Compensation & Work Schedule

Attendance & Punctuality

Every employee is expected to attend work regularly and report to work on time.

If you are unable to report to work on time for any reason, telephone your department head as far in advance as possible. If you do not call in an absence in advance, it will be considered unexcused.

Unsatisfactory attendance, including reporting late or quitting early, may be cause for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Breaks

Employees are entitled to a 15-minute break for rest twice each day, spaced approximately evenly throughout the work period.

Employees are also entitled to a 60-minute unpaid break for meals during each work period.

Breaks may be scheduled at staggered times to allow department coverage.

Child Support Reporting Requirements

Federal and state laws require us to report basic information about new employees, including your name, address, and social security number to a state agency designated as the State Directory of New Hires. The state collects this information in an effort to enforce child support orders. Please be advised that if the state determines that you owe child support, it will send us an order requiring us to withhold money from your paycheck to pay your child support obligations. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System is required to comply with such orders as a matter of federal and state law.

General Pay Information

Certain deductions will be made in accordance with federal and state laws.

In addition, MMRLS makes available certain voluntary deductions as part of the library's benefits program. If an employee elects supplemental coverage under one of the library's benefits plans, which requires employee contributions, the employee's share of the cost will be deducted from his or her check each pay period. If the employee is not receiving a payroll check due to illness, injury, or leave of absence, he or she will be required to pay the monthly cost directly to Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System.

Pay Schedule

Regular employees will be paid on the last working day of the month. If the regular payday falls on a holiday, payday will be the last regular workday before the holiday.

The pay period starts at the beginning of the first day of the month and includes all work you perform up to the end of the month.

A few additional facts about pay:

- You will be paid your first month's wages at the end of the first month.
- If a paycheck is lost or stolen, notify the business manager immediately.

Performance Evaluations

Department heads and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals informally any time.

Additional formal performance reviews will be conducted to provide both department heads and employees with the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals. These formal reviews will be conducted annually.

Performance Reviews and Salary Increases

Wage reviews are conducted annually for each employee, and salary increases are based on those reviews, as well as availability of funds. However, an employee receiving a performance appraisal will not necessarily receive a salary increase.

Overtime and Flextime

- Approved by the Administrative Board of Trustees of the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System on 1-21-2010.
- On January 21, 2010 this policy was approved and recorded in the minutes of the MMRLS Administrative Board of Trustees.
- On October 24, 2016 revisions to this policy were approved by the Administrative Board of Trustees of the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System.
- The October 24, 2016 revisions to this policy go into effect December 1, 2016.

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), eligibility for overtime pay and flextime is specified. All employees are to be paid or given time and one-half (1.5 hours) for any hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a standard work week.

At the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System, all employees are eligible for flextime. **All flextime must be approved in advance by the System Director. Any flextime not approved in advance by the System Director will be considered volunteer time.**

For purposes of the Overtime and Flextime Policy of the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System, flextime or overtime refers to time given in lieu of overtime payments at the rate one and one-half (1.5) hours for each hour of overtime worked. Flextime refers to weekly schedule adjustments where work hours exceed 40 hours in a standard work week.

The Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System's policy is to avoid whenever possible, overtime for any staff. **With careful planning, overtime should not be necessary except in cases of emergency.** Staff may choose to volunteer their time.

Overtime is defined as time worked above 40 hours in a work week by the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System. **If overtime is necessary, and approved in advance by the director, employees are eligible for flextime in lieu of overtime payments** at a rate of one and one-half (1.5) hours for each hour of overtime worked.

Overtime does not include hours worked in excess of the eight (8) hours a day unless more than 40 hours are worked at Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System during a one (1) week pay period.

Under Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), vacation, holidays, and sick leave will not be considered as time worked in computing overtime.

Flextime must be taken within the 7-day pay period that the overtime was earned. **Flextime cannot be accrued and must be used before all other leave is taken.**

Part-time Employees:

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) applies to employees working over 40 hours a week. When part-time staff members work more hours than their normal weekly work period, they are paid on a straight-time, hour-for-hour basis. The System Director must approve, in advance, additional hours for part-time staff.

If part-time employees work over 40 hours a week, Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System's overtime and flextime policies will apply, as appropriate.

Timekeeping Rules for Substitutes and Pages

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System strives to maintain strict compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The rules below are designed to help Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System with the FLSA and to ensure that all employees are paid fairly and legally. Failure to follow these rules may subject you to discipline up to termination. These rules apply to Substitutes and Pages:

- Substitutes work on an as-needed basis. Pages usually have a routine schedule of hours but may be asked to work additional hours when deemed necessary.
- You must keep an accurate record of all of your work hours in the manner designated by Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System (e.g., monthly time sheet).

- You must review the accuracy of your time records before submitting them to your Branch Manager for processing. If you need to make a change on your time records to correct an error, make the correction before you submit it for processing. When you sign and submit your time records, you are certifying that they are complete and that they accurately reflect all hours that you worked.
- Substitutes and Pages are responsible for maintaining their own time records with approval from their Branch Manager.
- Branch Managers must obtain the library director or assistant director's approval before Pages are allowed to work over and above their regularly scheduled work hours. This includes time incurred before or after their regular hours, during unpaid meal breaks or an off-site location. If they do perform any work outside of their regularly scheduled hours, they should record the time accurately on their time records.
- Your time records should include entries for time spent at mandatory, job-related training programs, lectures, or meetings.
- Do not carry over hours of work from one day to the next, or from one week to the next. Your time records should reflect the exact hours worked for each day indicated.

Work Eligibility Records

The federal government requires that within three business days of your first day of work, you must complete an employment eligibility verification form (I-9 Form), and show us documentation proving your identity and your eligibility to work in the United States.

If you have previously worked for MMRLS, you need only provide this information if it has been more than three years since you last completed an I-9 Form for us or if your current I-9 Form is no longer valid.

I-9 Forms are maintained separately from other personnel records and are treated as confidential to the extent possible. If you need additional information about the I-9 Form, please contact the business manager.

Work Hours

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System follows a full-time work schedule of 40 hours per week. Your department head and the director may establish alternative hours.

Libraries Open on Saturdays (Attala, Carthage and Winston)

Attala, Carthage and Winston staff works ½ day Saturdays on a rotating basis. If it is an employee's Saturday to work ½ day, they take ½ day off during the week prior to that Saturday.

Example:

Attala – Friday Afternoon

Carthage – Wednesday Morning

Winston – Thursday Morning

In regards to the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays, if the library is closed on Wed, Thursday, or Friday, then the employee takes ½ day off prior to the holiday.

Employees still have to work their 40 hours a week including their holiday hours.

Conduct Standards

Library Equipment and Vehicles

When using the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System's property, including computer equipment or hardware, exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Notify your department head if any equipment or machines appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. This prompt reporting could prevent the equipment's deterioration and could also help prevent injury to you or others. Should you have questions about the maintenance and care of any workplace equipment, ask your department head.

If you use or operate equipment improperly, carelessly, negligently, or unsafely, you may be disciplined or even discharged. In addition, you may be held financially responsible for any loss to Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System because of such mistreatment.

Library Property

Please keep your work area neat and clean and use normal care in handling MMRLS property. Report any broken or damaged equipment to your department head at once so that proper repairs can be made.

You may not use any MMRLS property for personal purposes or remove any library property from the premises without prior written permission from the director.

Conduct Standards & Discipline

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System expects every employee to adhere to the highest standards of job performance and of personal conduct, including individual involvement with MMRLS personnel and outside business contacts.

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System reserves the right to discipline or discharge any employee for violating any MMRLS policy, practice or rule of conduct. The following list is intended to give you notice of our expectations and standards. However, it does not include every type of unacceptable behavior that can or will result in disciplinary action. Be aware that Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System retains the discretion to determine the nature and extent of any discipline based upon the circumstances of each individual case.

Employees may be disciplined or terminated for poor job performance, including, but not limited to the following:

- Unsatisfactory quality or quantity of work
- Repeated unexcused absences or lateness
- Failing to follow instructions or MMRLS procedures, or
- Failing to follow established safety regulations.

Employees may also be disciplined or terminated for misconduct, including, but not limited to the following:

- Falsifying an employment application or any other MMRLS records or documents
- Failing to record working time accurately or recording a co-worker's timesheet
- Insubordination or other refusal to perform
- Using vulgar, profane or obscene language, including any communication or action that violates our policy against harassment and other unlawful forms of discrimination
- Disorderly conduct, fighting or other acts of violence
- Misusing, destroying or stealing MMRLS property or another person's property
- Possessing, selling, using or reporting to work with alcohol, controlled substances or illegal drugs present in the employee's system, on MMRLS property or on MMRLS time
- Violating conflict of interest rules
- Disclosing or using confidential or proprietary information without authorization
- Violating MMRLS' computer or software use policies, and
- Being convicted of a crime that indicates unfitness for a job or presents a threat to MMRLS or its employees in any way.

Dating In The Work Place

Department heads and employees under their supervision are strongly discouraged from forming romantic or sexual relationships. Such relationships can create the impression of impropriety in terms and conditions of employment and can interfere with productivity and the overall work environment.

If you are unsure of the appropriateness of an interaction with another employee of MMRLS, contact your immediate department head for guidance. If you are encouraged or pressured to become involved with a customer or employee in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable and is unwelcome, you should also notify the library director, and in his absence: the assistant director; and in both their absences: the administrative assistant immediately. No customer or employee of MMRLS has the right to subject any employee to sexual or other unlawful harassment, including requests for sexual favors, sexual advances, offensive touching, and any other unwanted verbal, graphic conduct or communications of a sexual nature.

You should also be aware of, and are expected to comply with, Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System's policy against sexual and other forms of illegal harassment in the workplace.

Appropriate action, which may include a transfer or reassignment, leave of absence, suspension or termination, will be taken against those who violate this policy.

Dress Policy

Appropriate office attire is required. Local and state officials, suppliers, and customers visit our offices and we wish to put forth an image that will make us all proud to be Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System employees.

Appropriate dress for female staff:

- **Dresses and skirts which are no shorter than three inches above the knee. The slit of a dress or skirt must come no higher than three inches above the knee.**
- **Sleeveless clothing must cover undergarments.**
- **Slacks and Capri pants may be worn in an appropriate manner. Capri pants must be no shorter than mid-calf. Dress denim may be worn**
- **Leggings may be worn with a top or dress that is no shorter than fingertip length.**
- **Dress shirts/blouses, sweaters are acceptable.**
- **System approved library slogan t-shirts/shirts are acceptable.**
- **Dress or casual shoes/sandals are acceptable.**

Inappropriate dress for female staff:

- **Shorts, walking shorts, skorts, and gym clothes are NOT acceptable.**
- **Dresses and skirts that are ankle length and tight enough to hinder walking or bending are NOT acceptable.**
- **Low-cut blouses, see-through clothing, off the shoulder, strapless, spaghetti strap, halter style, tank tops, or clothing which reveals the midriff are NOT allowed.**
- **Flip-flops are NOT allowed. Tennis shoes are NOT allowed unless an employee has health issues that require them.**
- **Earrings on females are the ONLY visible piercing allowed. Employees CANNOT wear jewelry in facial and/or tongue piercings.**
- **Visible cleavage is NOT acceptable.**
- **Hats are NOT to be worn inside.**
- **Blue Jeans, non-library slogan t-shirts and tennis shoes may be worn on clean-up days when employees are not serving the public.**

Appropriate dress for male staff:

- **Men must wear a dress shirt or collared pullover shirt.**
- **System approved library slogan t-shirts/shirts**
- **Slacks and casual dress pants are acceptable.**
- **Casual or dress shoes are acceptable.**
- **Facial hair must be kept neat and clean.**

Inappropriate dress for male staff:

- **Flip-flops are NOT allowed. Tennis shoes are NOT allowed unless an employee has health issues that require them.**
- **Hats are NOT to be worn inside.**
- **Earrings on males are the ONLY visible piercing allowed. Employees CANNOT wear jewelry in facial and/or tongue piercings.**
- **Blue Jeans, non-library slogan t-shirts and tennis shoes may be worn on clean-up days when employees are not serving the public.**

Any employee deemed inappropriately dressed according to this dress policy will be sent home until he/she returns dressed in the appropriate attire. An employee will not be paid for the time off the job for this purpose unless they choose to use personal leave.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System strives to maintain a workplace free of drugs and alcohol and to discourage drug and alcohol abuse by its employees. Misuse of alcohol or drugs by employees can impair the ability of employees to perform their duties, as well as adversely affect our customers' confidence in our library system.

Alcohol

Employees are prohibited from using or being under the influence of alcohol while performing business for Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System, while operating a motor vehicle in the course of business or for any job-related purpose, or while on MMRLS premises.

Illegal Drugs

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System employees are prohibited from using or being under the influence of illegal drugs while performing library business or while on a library facility. You may not use, manufacture, distribute, purchase, transfer or possess an illegal drug while in Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System facilities, while operating a motor vehicle for any job-related purpose, while on the job, or while performing library business. This policy does not prohibit the proper use of medication under the direction of a physician; however, misuse of such medications is prohibited.

Disciplinary Action

Employees who violate this policy may be disciplined or terminated, even for a first offense. Violations include refusal to consent to and comply with testing and search procedures as described.

Searches

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System may conduct searches for illegal drugs or alcohol on library facilities without prior notice to employees. Such searches may be conducted at any time. Employees are expected to cooperate fully.

Searches of employees and their personal property may be conducted when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the employee has violated this policy or when circumstances or workplace conditions justify such a search. Personal property may include, but is not limited to, purses, boxes, briefcases, as well as any Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System property that is provided for employees' personal use, such as desks, lockers, and files.

An employee's consent to a search is required as a condition of employment and the employee's refusal to consent may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

Drug Testing

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System may require a blood test, urinalysis, hair test or other drug or alcohol screening of employees suspected of using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol or where other circumstances or workplace conditions justify such testing. The refusal to consent to testing may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

Unpaid Suspension as a Disciplinary Measure

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System expects the highest standards of professional conduct at all times.

In accordance with Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System's policies on harassment, drug or alcohol use, and other work conduct rules, MMRLS reserves the right to discipline or discharge any employee for violations of rules pertaining to behavior within the workplace.

An employee will be subject to an unpaid disciplinary suspension for infractions of workplace conduct rules. Suspensions without pay apply to everyone. For exempt employees, suspensions without pay will be in one or more full-day increments. For non-exempt employees, suspensions may be any period of time within MMRLS' discretion.

Ethical and Legal Business Practices

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System expects the highest standard of ethical conduct and fair dealing from each employee, officer, director, volunteer and all others associated with the library. Our reputation is a valuable asset, and we must continually earn the trust, confidence and respect of our city, county, and state officials; our suppliers; our customers; and our local communities.

This policy provides general guidance on the ethical principles that we all must follow, but no guideline can anticipate all situations. You should also be guided by basic honesty and good judgment, and be sensitive to others' perceptions and interpretations.

If you have any questions about this policy, consult your department head or the director or assistant director. Exceptions to this policy may be made only by the regional library director.

You are expected to promptly disclose to the management of the library anything that may violate this policy. We will not tolerate retaliation or retribution against anyone who brings violations to management's attention.

Complying With Laws and Regulations

All our activities are to be conducted in compliance with the letter and spirit of all laws and regulations. You are charged with the responsibility of understanding the applicable laws, recognizing potential dangers and knowing when to seek legal advice.

Receiving Gifts

You may not receive money or any gift from a supplier, government official or other organization. Exceptions may be made for gifts that are customary and lawful, are of nominal value and are authorized in advance.

You may accept meals and refreshments if they are infrequent, are of nominal value and are in connection with business discussions.

If you do receive a gift or other benefit of more than nominal value, report it promptly to a member of management. It will be returned or donated to a suitable charity.

Employee Privacy and Other Confidential Information

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System collects only personal information about employees that relates to their employment. Only people with a business-related need to know are given access to this information, and the director must authorize any release of the information to others. Personal information, other than that required to verify employment or to satisfy legitimate investigatory or legal requirements, will be released outside the library system only with employee approval.

If you have access to any confidential information, including private employee information, you are responsible for acting with integrity. Unauthorized disclosure or inappropriate use of confidential information will not be tolerated.

Accounting and Financial Reports

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System's financial statements and all books and records on which they are based must accurately reflect MMRLS' transactions. All disbursements and receipts must be properly authorized and recorded.

You must record and report financial information accurately. Reimbursable business expenses must be reasonable, accurately reported and supported by receipts.

Those responsible for handling or disbursing funds must assure that all transactions are executed as authorized and recorded to permit financial statements in accord with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Account and Customer Information

Employees are prohibited from distributing account, client, and/or customer information to anyone, in any form, except the named account holder, client, or customer.

Compliance

Employees who fail to comply with this policy will be disciplined, which may include a demand for reimbursement of any losses or damages, termination of employment and referral for criminal prosecution. Action appropriate to the circumstances will also be taken against department heads or others who fail to report a violation or withhold relevant information concerning a violation of this policy.

Political/Campaign Activities

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System encourages employees to exercise their constitutional right to vote and participate in the political process. However, political and campaign activities can be disruptive and is prohibited during work hours. In the interest of maintaining a productive and tension-free work environment, Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System has adopted the following policy prohibiting political and campaign-related activities in the workplace. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action, up to termination, for violating this policy.

Prohibited Employee Activities

Employees are not permitted to participate in any political activity that interferes with or disrupts the workplace in any manner. It is against MMRLS' policy for any employee to:

- Use work time or MMRLS resources to accomplish goals that are politically motivated.
- Solicit or encourage monetary contributions or other support for a political party, campaign, candidate, or political belief during work hours.
- Use MMRLS facilities, such as break or eating areas, conference rooms, or offices for any political or campaign activity.
- Utilize the MMRLS' property or MMRLS-issued property, including but not limited to, telephones (both cellular and desk phones), computers, facsimile machines, email systems, interoffice mail or voicemail, photocopiers, postage, paper, envelopes, or other office supplies, for any political or campaign activity.
- Use MMRLS' name or affiliation in connection with any political or campaign activity, at any time, without the library system's express written approval.

Requesting Time Off for Voting

MMRLS encourages every employee to play an active role in the election process. Employees are generally permitted to take time off from work to vote in the event the employee's work schedule does not allow sufficient time for voting either before or after work.

Employees are encouraged to check local poll operation times before requesting time off to vote. Requests should be made as far in advance of the election date as possible to minimize disruption to work flow and operations. The library will attempt to accommodate all requests for voting leave; however, management has discretion to deny leave requests or designate permissible voting times for business reasons, to the extent permitted by law. The library also reserves the right to demand proof that a vote was cast as a condition for excusing an employee's absence or issuing pay for time off. State law and library policy will determine whether you will be paid for time off used for voting.

Political Coercion, Harassment and Retaliation

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System embraces diversity and respects each employee's political beliefs and preferences. It is against MMRLS policy for anyone to behave in a threatening, harassing, or discriminatory manner toward any other employee with respect to his or her political beliefs or activities. MMRLS does not permit its officers or managers to coerce employees into supporting or opposing any political candidate, party, or belief. It is a violation of MMRLS' policy for any manager to retaliate, threaten to retaliate, or take any adverse action against an employee for his/her support or opposition to any political campaign or party affiliation.

Employees Running for Public Office

Employees who decide to run for public office are expected to keep politics separate from employment, and should not allow political involvement to interfere with work performance. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System strictly prohibits employees seeking public office from using MMRLS' name in association with any political or campaign activity without MMRLS' express written permission. Employees wishing to run for public office should notify their department head, and the library system director in writing of their intentions, specifying the position and venue in which they are seeking election. Employees running for office are expected to maintain all regular work duties during the campaign and upon election. Employees elected to a full-time office are encouraged to either resign or request a leave of absence without pay. MMRLS does not guarantee that employees will be reinstated to their prior position or any other position upon return from a leave of absence for political service. Employees elected to public office must disclose to an officer of MMRLS the existence of any potential or actual conflict of interest affecting the employee's duties or loyalty to MMRLS, and shall cooperate to the extent practicable to resolve such conflicts to MMRLS' satisfaction.

Open Door

Communication is a two-way street. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System has an open-door policy whereby any employee can speak to their department head, then assistant director, or the director, on any matter. Our leaders are dedicated to being available and attentively listening to employees. The bottom line is: we can't implement change(s) if we are unaware of the need for change(s).

Grievances

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System recognizes that a peaceful working environment facilitates productivity, and will continue to take the necessary steps to create a harmonious working environment. In the event that a misunderstanding or conflict arises, every effort should be made to resolve the situation in a timely manner. Should the situation persist, you are encouraged to bring the complaint to the attention of management by following the procedures outlined below:

1. Discuss the situation with your immediate department head. If this is not sufficient or appropriate, then proceed to step two.
2. Meet with the director or the assistant director, who may proceed to conduct an investigation into the situation and find possible remedies. You should receive a response within a reasonable period of time. MMRLS will attempt to respond and/or resolve the situation within 14 days, or sooner as the circumstances warrant.
3. Should the director be the subject of the grievance then the Board of Trustees may be notified. This may be done by first notifying the Board Chairperson.

Note: Complaints alleging violations of MMRLS' discrimination/harassment policy should be handled in accordance with the policy entitled "Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination."

Progressive Discipline

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System retains the discretion to discipline its employees. Oral and written warnings and progressive discipline up to and including discharge may be administered as appropriate under the circumstances.

Please note that Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System reserves the right to terminate any employee whose conduct merits immediate dismissal without resorting to any aspect of the progressive discipline process.

Use of Library Cell Phones While Driving

This policy applies to: (1) the operation of library-provided vehicles at any time; and (2) the operation of private vehicles while an employee is on work time or conducting business for MMRLS.

The use of a cell phone while driving may present a hazard to the driver, other employees and the general public. Employees must adhere to all federal, state or local rules and regulations regarding the use of cell phones while driving. Accordingly, employees must not use cell phones while driving if such conduct is prohibited by law, regulation or other ordinance.

Employees should not use hand held cell phones for business purposes while driving. Should an employee need to make a business call while driving, he/she should locate a lawfully designated area to park and make the call. Employees may use hands-free cell phones only in emergency situations. Such calls should be kept short and should the circumstances warrant

(e.g., heavy traffic, bad weather), the employee should locate a lawfully designated area to park to continue the call.

Violation of this policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Recording Devices/Camera Phones

In an effort to secure employee privacy and other business information Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System, prohibits employee use of recording devices such as cameras, camera phones, tape recorders or any other recording device which may pose a threat to employee and MMRLS privacy.

This policy is applicable to all employees and their visitors while on MMRLS premises. Employees are responsible for making their visitors aware of this policy and that all recording devices should be left either at the reception area or in their vehicles.

Procedures

1. Employees are strictly prohibited from bringing cameras or recording devices into the workplace unless prior authorization was granted from the director or a department head. This prohibition includes cellular phones with built in cameras and other video devices.
2. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System may grant authorization for the use of these devices when a particular business purpose will be served. Employee privacy should not be jeopardized by such usage. Unless otherwise authorized by federal and state law, all parties involved must be aware that the conversation or meeting will be recorded.
3. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System prohibits the use of camera-equipped and recording devices in research areas or in any other areas where there may be sensitive information, without prior approval from the director.
4. Employees are prohibited from taking any camera-equipped or recording device into any MMRLS restroom.
5. In limited circumstances, employees may be granted permission to bring a recording device into the workplace. These requests, however, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
6. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System reserves the right to revoke authorization at any time for any reason. In such instances employees will be granted the opportunity to have the equipment removed from library premises.
7. Employees should contact their department head or the director with any questions regarding this policy.

Prohibited Use of Personal Communication Devices

The use of personal communication devices shall be limited in the workplace to alleviate distractions and the disruption of regular work routines. Personal communication devices are defined as, but not limited to, cellular or two-way phones and audible pagers. Personal

communication devices are prohibited from use during work hours and in work areas, unless MMRLS has provided such device(s) to the employee for business use only. Any employee carrying a non-MMRLS issued pager with an audible alarm or ring must ensure the sound is turned off during work hours and in work areas.

Limited and temporary exceptions to this policy permitting the use of personally-owned communications devices for ongoing personal emergency situations (such as the imminent birth of a child) can be made only with the prior and continued approval of the employee's department head. In the case of an accident involving a family member or other urgent personal emergency where the employee's department head or the director cannot be immediately contacted for permission, reasonable and appropriate use of a personal communication device is permitted.

Violation(s) of this policy may be grounds for discipline up to and including termination.

Prohibited Personal Use of Library Cell Phone

Unless otherwise authorized, a library cell phone may be used only for business purposes. In addition, employees should use a library-provided cell phone only when a less costly alternative does not exist. Employees must fully reimburse MMRLS for any personal use of a library-provided cell phone. Violation of this policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited inside Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System facilities. Effective July 1, 2006, smoking is prohibited by state law in any state and county municipal facility.

All employees, clients and other visitors are expected to comply with this policy, and employees who violate it may be disciplined.

Workplace Solicitation

To promote a professional and collegial workplace, prevent disruptions in business or interference with work, and avoid personal inconvenience, Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System has adopted rules about soliciting for any cause and distributing literature of any kind in the workplace.

Employees may not solicit on Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System property or use MMRLS facilities, such as e-mail, voicemail or bulletin boards during working time for solicitation. This

policy applies to collecting funds, requesting contributions, selling merchandise, gathering employee signatures and promoting membership in clubs or organizations.

Working time means time during which employees are expected to be actively engaged in their assigned work; it does not include scheduled meal or break periods.

You may solicit another employee only if both you and the other employee are not on working time, and you may distribute literature only in nonworking areas and while not on working time to other employees who are not on working time.

Non-employees may not make solicitations or distribute literature at any time.

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System may grant limited exemptions from these rules for charitable purposes at its discretion.

Zero Tolerance for Workplace Violence

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System has a zero-tolerance policy concerning threats, intimidation and violence of any kind in the workplace either committed by or directed to our employees. Employees who engage in such conduct will be disciplined, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Employees are not permitted to bring weapons of any kind onto library premises or to library functions. Any employee who is suspected of possessing a weapon will be subject to a search at the library's discretion. Such searches may include, but not be limited to, the employee's personal effects, desk and workspace.

If an employee feels he or she has been subjected to threats or threatening conduct by a coworker, vendor or customer, the employee should notify his or her department head or another member of management immediately. Employees will not be penalized for reporting such concerns.

Return of Library Property Upon Separation

When an Employee's employment with Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System terminates, for whatever reason, the Employee is required to immediately return all MMRLS-owned property used during his/her employment, and all documents, disks, and other materials containing proprietary or confidential information belonging to MMRLS. This includes without limitation, keys, credit cards, computers, vehicles, communication devices, identification cards or badges, and any other equipment, materials, or items purchased, leased, owned, or otherwise belonging to Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System.

Upon separation, employees must return any originals or duplicates of any written or other tangible items, whether maintained in hard copy, film, or electronic medium, belonging to MMRLS, including without limitation, correspondence, reports, memoranda, records, data, charts, notes, devices, specifications, drawings, customer lists, and any other item containing confidential information relating to Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System services, designs, computer programs, databases, customers/clients, marketing strategies, financial information, and employee information. These items are property of Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System.

Leave

General Information

These leave policies for full-time and permanent half-time or more employees were adopted July 15, 2004 by the Administrative Board of the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System and became effective October 1, 2004.

Each month Mid- Mississippi Regional Library System permanent employees earn two types of leave: personal and medical leave. All leave benefits are based on a 40 hour work week.

Permanent part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week are entitled to personal and major medical leave as pro-rated based by the number of hours worked.

With the exception of an emergency or illness, all leave must be approved in advance by the Executive Director.

Bereavement Leave

Absence for death in the immediate family (spouse, children, parent, grandparent, brother, or sister) is allowed with pay from the day of the death through the day of the funeral (not to exceed three days).

Time off to attend funerals of near relatives or friends not living in the same household are granted; the employee may use Personal Leave or take Leave without Pay.

The director must approve all bereavement time, and MMRLS may request verification of the facts surrounding the leave and grant or deny the leave as deemed appropriate. Bereavement leave will not be paid if it occurs when the employee is on vacation or leave of absence, absent due to illness or injury, or not working due to a paid holiday.

Family and Medical Leave

You may be eligible for family and medical leave if you have worked for Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System for at least 12 months and have put in at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period before the leave is to begin.

Reasons for the Leave

You may be entitled to take up to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave:

- to attend to the birth, adoption or foster care placement of your child;
- to attend to the serious health condition of your child, spouse or parent; or
- to receive care for your own serious health condition.

A serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition during which you are incapable of working that involves either:

- treatment requiring inpatient care in a hospital, hospice or residential care facility, or
- continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that lasts more than three consecutive days, or for pregnancy or prenatal care, or for a chronic health condition which continues over an extended period of time, requires periodic visits to a health care provider and may involve occasional episodes of incapacity, such as serious asthma or diabetes.

It also includes a permanent or long-term condition such as Alzheimer's, a severe stroke and terminal cancer. In addition, leave may be used to cover absences due to multiple treatments for restorative surgery or for a condition which would likely make you incapable of working for more than three days if not treated, such as chemotherapy or radiation treatments for cancer.

Substituting Paid Leave

MMRLS may require you to substitute accrued personal leave time for family and medical leave. If the request for leave is due to your own serious health condition, you may be required to first exhaust all accrued medical leave time. Any accrued personal leave time will then be used. Your total FMLA leave time, which may include paid personal and medical leave, may not exceed 12 weeks. MMRLS has the right to designate such leaves as running concurrently with FMLA leave.

Notice of Leave

If your need for leave is foreseeable, you must give 30 days prior notice if possible.

If your need for leave is due to a planned medical treatment, make every attempt to schedule the treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the work of your department. If your need for leave is not foreseeable, you must request it as soon as practicable, no later than two business days after the need for leave arises.

Medical Certification

If leave is requested due to your own or a family member's serious health condition, you must provide medical certification from an appropriate health care provider. The medical certification must include the date on which the condition began and its probable duration. You may be denied leave if you do not provide satisfactory certification. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System may also require a second opinion or third opinion regarding certification of a serious health condition, at our expense.

Returning to Work

If an extended medical leave is necessary, you are required to provide medical certification from your doctor that you are able to resume work before returning.

Upon returning to work, you will ordinarily be entitled to be restored to your former position or to an equivalent position with the same employment benefits and pay if possible. If you do not return to work at the end of the leave and do not notify Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System of your status, you may be terminated.

Benefits During Leave

Taking family and medical leave will not cause you to lose any employment benefits accrued prior to the first day of leave. The leave period will be treated as continued service for purposes of determining vesting and eligibility to participate in any retirement plan in effect. However, employees on FMLA leave normally will not accrue any other additional benefits during the leave period, unless it is paid leave under which benefits would otherwise accrue.

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System will maintain your insurance benefits while you are on leave, although you may be required to pay your portion of the premium. However, if you do not return to work after the leave, you may be asked to reimburse us for the cost of maintaining insurance coverage during the leave. This provision will not apply in cases where your inability to return is through no fault of your own -- for example, at the end of leave you remain physically unable to return due to your serious health condition.

Misrepresenting Reasons for Leave

If you intentionally misrepresent the reasons for requesting family and medical leave, you may be discharged.

Jury Duty

Employees are encouraged to serve on jury duty and fulfill their civic obligations. Employees who are scheduled for jury duty must provide documentation of the jury duty summons to the director and the business office immediately.

Unless otherwise required by state or local law, Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System will compensate employees their regular pay for up to the maximum number of days of time they are required to serve. Employees must provide evidence of service including monies received from jury duty to the directory for submission to the business office.

If excused or released from jury duty, employees are expected to return to work promptly.

No charge against personal leave is made.

Military Leave

Your Rights Under USERRA

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act

USERRA protects the job rights of individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily leave employment positions to undertake military service or certain types of service in the National Disaster Medical System. USERRA also prohibits employers from discriminating against past and present members of the uniformed services, and applicants to the uniformed services.

Reemployment Rights

You have the right to be reemployed in your civilian job if you leave that job to perform service in the uniformed service and:

- You ensure that your employer receives advance written or verbal notice of your service;
- You have five years or less of cumulative service in the uniformed services while with that particular employer;
- You return to work or apply for reemployment in a timely manner after conclusion of service; and
- You have not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge or under other than honorable conditions.

If you are eligible to be reemployed, you must be restored to the job and benefits you would have attained if you had not been absent due to military service or, in some cases, a comparable job.

Right To Be Free From Discrimination and Retaliation

If you:

- Are a past or present member of the uniformed service;
- Have applied for membership in the uniformed service; or
- Are obligated to serve in the uniformed service;

Then an employer may not deny you:

- Initial employment;
- Reemployment;
- Retention in employment;
- Promotion; or
- Any benefit of employment

because of this status.

In addition, an employer may not retaliate against anyone assisting in the enforcement of USERRA rights, including testifying or making a statement in connection with a proceeding under USERRA, even if that person has no service connection.

Health Insurance Protection

- If you leave your job to perform military service, you have the right to elect to continue your existing employer-based health plan coverage for you and your dependents for up to 24 months while in the military.
- Even if you don't elect to continue coverage during your military service, you have the right to be reinstated in your employer's health plan when you are reemployed, generally without any waiting periods or exclusions (e.g., pre-existing condition exclusions) except for service-connected illnesses or injuries.

Enforcement

- The U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) are authorized to investigate and resolve complaints of USERRA violations.
- For assistance in filing a complaint, or for any other information on USERRA, contact VETS at **1-866-4-USA-DOL** or visit its website at **<http://www.dol.gov/vets>**. An interactive online USERRA Advisor can be viewed at **<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/userra.htm>**.
- If you file a complaint with VETS and VETS is unable to resolve it, you may request that your case be referred to the Department of Justice for representation.
- You may also bypass the VETS process and bring a civil action against an employer for violations of USERRA.

The rights listed here may vary depending on the circumstances.

State Law

Additionally, state law provides that employees who are members of the U.S. reserves or who are former members of the U.S. military service discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable are entitled to 15 days of paid leave per year when called for training at encampments, field exercises, maneuvers, outdoor target practice, or for other exercises.

Time Off From Work In Connection With Court Cases

We recognize that an employee might be subpoenaed or otherwise required to serve as a witness in a court case or arbitration. If you are called to serve as a witness, notify the director as soon as possible.

Unless otherwise required by state or local law, employees called to testify will not be paid for the time they are away from work as a result of their participation in a court case or arbitration, but may use available personal days to cover their time away from work.

Personal Leave

An employee of the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System will be entitled to take personal or medical leave after he/she has been employed for a continuous period of 120 working days or 6 months (whichever comes first).

Personal Leave: Rates of accrual will be based on length of service.

Full Time (40 hours per week) Employees:

<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Accrual Rate (Monthly)</u>	<u>Accrual Rate (Annually)</u>
Less than 2 years	1 day per month up to 10 days	10 days
2 - 5 years	1 day per month	12 days
5 - 10 years	1 1/4 days per month	15 days
10 - 20 years	1 2/3 days per month	20 days
20 or more years	2 days per month	24 days

Permanent half-time or more employees: who work at least 20 hours per week are entitled to Personal Leave as pro-rated based on the number of hours worked.

All personal leave must be approved IN ADVANCE by the Regional Library Director or Assistant Director. Leave forms must be filled out prior to leave dates.

Scheduling will be made in consideration of the wishes of the employee, but it is the prerogative of the Regional Library Director to make the final decision as to when the leave will be used. Personal leave can be carried over from one fiscal year (October 1 - September 30) to the next. Upon an employee's termination from employment any unused, uncompensated personal leave may be certified to PERS for additional retirement service credit only to the extent that such leave does not exceed the accrual rates under State Leave Law.

Time Off To Vote

Employees who are eligible to vote but do not have sufficient time outside of regular working hours to vote in an election may request time off to do so. Employees may be excused for a reasonable time with pay to vote or register in any election or in referendums on civic matters in their community. Such time off will be granted at the director's discretion.

If you plan to take time off to vote, you must provide the director with reasonable notice before Election Day. MMRLS may specify which hours you take off to vote.

Medical Leave

A total of ten days a year of major medical leave can be earned by a full-time employee at the rate of 6.67 hours per month. Only permanent part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week are entitled to major medical leave as per percentage based on the number of hours worked.

An employee of the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System will be entitled to take major medical leave after he or she has been employed for a continuous period of 120 working days. Major Medical leave may be accumulated. Upon an employee's termination from employment any unused, uncompensated medical leave may be certified to PERS for additional retirement service credit only to the extent that such leave does not exceed the accrual rates under State Leave Law. Employees may use major medical leave as needed when away from work for the following reasons:

1. Unable to work because of illness, injury, or pregnancy and confinement.
2. Receiving medical, dental, or optical treatment (for yourself or your immediate family) and have obtained advance approval from your department head.
3. A family member needs constant care due to illness or has a contagious disease.

<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Combined Monthly Personal & Major Medical Accrual Rates</u>	<u>Combined Annual Personal & Major Medical Accrual Rates</u>
Less than 2 years	13 1/3 hours per month	20 days per year
2 - 5 years	14 2/3 hours per month	22 days per year
5 - 10 years	16 2/3 hours per month	25 days per year
10 - 20 years	20 hours per month	30 days per year
20 or more years	22.66 hours per month	34 days per year

Maternity/Paternity Leave

Maternity/Paternity leave will be granted to any permanent half-time or better employee of at least six month tenure. It may consist of medical leave, personal leave, leave without pay, or a combination. As soon as an employee or employee's spouse knows she is pregnant, the employee's director should be informed. Then steps needed to protect her health on the job can be taken. Also, plans can be made for taking care of her work when she will be out.

How long a woman can be off on maternity leave depends on a number of things. How is her health? How much leave does she have? What are her plans for coming back to work after a baby comes? Is she a temporary employee? Does she want to take leave without pay? Is it

administratively feasible to grant it? The ultimate decision lies with the woman, her doctor, and the Regional Library Board of Trustees.

The period of maternity leave varies from person to person. It usually begins not later than 6 weeks before she expects her baby. It usually lasts at least 8 weeks after her baby comes. It will be assumed to be of this duration unless a medical certificate shows it is not, or the Regional Library Director has determined with medical advice, that for the particular type of work the woman does, the period of incapacitation is longer.

Maternity/Paternity leave can be used as follows:

1. Any medical leave she/he has to their credit.
2. As much of the personal leave she/he has to their credit as she/he needs to use provided she/he plans to come back to work. If she/he does not plan to come back to work, ordinarily she cannot take the personal leave. Instead, when she/he leaves the service at the end of their medical leave, she/he will be paid the sum of his/her accrued personal leave.
3. Leave without pay may be used if she/he is a permanent half-time or better employee, and she/he plans to come back to work. Leave without pay is not granted to a temporary employee, or one who does not expect to return to duty, except for short periods and under special circumstances to be determined by the Regional Library Board of Trustees.

The woman and her physician will determine how long she can work before the baby arrives. We will require a certificate from her physician or practitioner upon her return to work that she is able to do her job. The usual period of incapacitation consists of at least 14 weeks of leave.

Maternity/Paternity leave can be taken beyond the period of incapacitation. Such leave is granted under the following conditions:

1. The employee plans and is expected to come back to work when the leave ends, and
2. It is administratively feasible to approve leave without pay for the whole period she/he requests.

The longest period of maternity/paternity leave, including the time when she is unable to work, is usually four months. If circumstances warrant, and it is administratively feasible, a longer period can be granted.

Birthday Leave

If a full-time or permanent half-time or better employee's birthday falls on his or her normal working day, that employee will be granted the day off. No compensation time will be granted for birthdays for non-working days. The sole intent and purpose of birthday leave is to grant our employees the date of their birth off from work.

If the Regional Library Director or Assistant Director requires an employee to be at work on his/her birthday that employee will be given equal hours off on another day.

Absence Without Leave

Any absence other than personal leave, medical leave and holidays is not to be reimbursable with pay, and employees incurring such absences will have deductions made from their salary.

Such absences are not to be taken without knowledge and permission of the regional library director.

Voluntarily Staff Leave Donation for Catastrophic Injury or Illness

Under these provisions, **library system employees are allowed to voluntarily donate their accrued personal leave and/or major medical leave to a fellow employee who has exhausted all their personal leave and major medical due to a life-threatening injury or illness**. The library system will provide a leave donation form upon request.

Each request for catastrophic leave donations and the resulting actions will be reported to the Library System Administrative Board by the System Library Director.

Catastrophic injury or illness means a life threatening injury or illness of an employee which totally incapacitates the employee from work, as verified by a licensed physician, and forces the employee to exhaust all leave time earned, resulting in the loss of MMRLS compensation and state health insurance for the employee.

Chronic illness or injuries such as cancer or major surgery, which result in intermittent absences from work, which are long-term in nature and which require long term recuperation periods, may be considered catastrophic.

Conditions that are short-term in nature, including, but not limited to, common illnesses such as influenza and the measles and common injuries are not catastrophic.

An employee with a catastrophic illness or injury must submit in writing a request to the Library System Director for consideration for leave donations from their fellow employees.

<p>The System Library Director will review all requests and approve the requests for leave donations by a recipient employee that meets the following stipulations:</p>

1. **An employee must exhaust all of his/her earned major medical leave and personal leave** before any approved donated leave is used.
2. **An employee must be employed for a total of at least 12 months by the library system** on the date the leave request is made and have been **employed at least one thousand, two hundred fifty (1,250) hours of service during the 12 month period.**
3. Before receiving donated leave, **the employee must provide the Library System Director with a physician's statement that states the beginning date of the catastrophic illness or injury and the anticipated date that the employee will be able to return to work.**
4. **A maximum of 160 working days** of donated leave is allowed if available donations are made.

4. If the total amount of leave that is voluntarily donated to any employee is not used by the recipient employee, the **balance of the donated leave shall be returned to the donor employee(s) on a pro-rated basis.**

Staying Home When ILL

Purpose: To ensure all employees can safely and effectively perform assigned job duties, prevent the spread of disease/illness and to protect the health of the general public.

Employees are encouraged to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of any type contagious/infectious disease/illness in the workplace. Employees who know they are infected with a contagious/infectious disease/illness must notify their supervisor and System Director.

Employees who report to work with a contagious/infectious disease will be sent home by their supervisor or System Director. Employees who are sent home under this policy will be required to utilize medical or personal leave or leave without pay.

Under OSHA, an employer has an obligation to provide a workplace free from serious recognized hazards. Therefore, when dealing with a serious contagious/infectious disease, an employer may be subject to liability if they allow an employee sick with a serious disease to come to work and expose other staff and the general public.

Contagious/Infectious Disease

Before returning to work, employees who have been diagnosed as having a contagious/infectious disease must present written documentation from his/her physician or primary care provider documenting that the individual is medically cleared (no longer infectious to others) and is able to return to work as of a specified date. This document will be given to their supervisor and System Director.

Diseases named as or caused by include:

- Chicken pox
- Chicken pox, if you have been exposed and not had chicken pox
- Diarrhea caused by Amebiasis, Cholera, Cryptosporidiosis, E. coli, Giardia, Salmonella, Shigella
- Draining wound caused by Staphylococcus aureus
- Hepatitis A
- Herpes simplex on the hand – like a cold sore on the hand
- Impetigo
- Influenza
- Lice
- Measles
- Mumps, active
- Mumps, if you have been exposed and not had mumps
- Pink eye – conjunctivitis (viral)
- Resistant organisms colonized or infected such as MRSA, VRE, others
- Rubella, active
- Rubella, if you have been exposed and not had rubella
- Scabies
- Shingles

- Shingles, if you have been exposed and not had chicken pox
- Strep Throat caused by Group A Streptococcus
- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Anthrax
- Boils caused by Staphylococcus aureus (Staph)
- Brucellosis
- Diphtheria
- Leprosy (Hansen disease)
- Meningitis caused by Neisseria meningitis
- Typhoid Fever
- Whooping cough

This policy is not intended to cover common contagious illnesses such as colds and viruses

Common Contagious Illnesses

Employees who report to work with common contagious illnesses (colds and viruses) and symptoms will be sent home. They will be required to utilize medical or personal leave or leave without pay. Symptoms include:

- Influenza-like illness – Fever/sore throat/cough/muscle ache/fatigue/weakness
- Viral respiratory illness – Severe cold with continuous cough/runny nose
- Acute Gastroenteritis (Norovirus) – Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea

Employees can return to work when:

- Temperature returns to normal for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications
- Controlled cough/runny nose
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea resolved for 48 hours

Employees will not be required to obtain written documental from his/her physician or primary care provider before returning to work for these common illnesses.

Any employee who fails to follow the supervisor’s or System Director’s directive relating to Staying Home When ILL will be considered insubordinate and will be subject to formal disciplinary action as stated under Conduct Standards & Discipline

General Employment

Employee Classifications

Employees at Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System are either full-time or part-time. The library may on occasion hire temporary or seasonal employees, who will not generally be eligible for benefits.

Part-time employees work fewer than 20 hours per week. Unless specifically stated, part-time employees are not afforded any benefits other than wages; for example, they do not accrue benefits such as sick days, personal days, and health insurance.

All other employees are full-time.

Employee Records

An employee's personnel file consists of the employee's employment application, withholding forms, reference checks, emergency information and any performance appraisals, benefits data or other appropriate employment-related documents.

It is the employee's responsibility to notify the business office of any changes in name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, military service status, beneficiaries or person to notify in case of an accident.

You may be dismissed for misrepresenting any fact on your application or in your personnel file.

Personnel records are considered MMRLS property and are not available for review by employees unless specifically authorized by management.

Introductory Period

The first 180 days of employment are an Introductory Period for both the employee and MMRLS. However, during and after this period, the work relationship will remain at will.

This time period allows you to determine if you have made the right career decision and for Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System to determine whether your initial work performance meets our needs. The director and/or department head or head librarian will monitor your work performance, attitude and attendance during this time, and be available to answer any questions or concerns you may have about your new job.

Time off for personal days during this period will be leave without pay.

The Introductory Period may be extended at the director's discretion.

Job Postings & Promotions

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System has a job posting program to inform employees of available staff positions. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System will fill job vacancies whenever possible by promoting qualified employees from within MMRLS.

To apply for a posted position, an employee must:

- Have completed any mandatory Introductory Period at a satisfactory performance level
- Meet the minimum requirements for the position, and

- Not have received written correction counseling within the past 90 days; employees who have received a verbal warning may also be prohibited from applying.

Employees interested in applying for a posted position should submit a memorandum with an updated resume to the director indicating interest in the position. And qualified employees must inform their department head that they have applied for the job. Candidates will be judged on individual performance, conduct, experience, and potential. Length of service, although considered, shall not be the sole determining factor in selecting candidates for promotion.

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System has the discretion to fill job vacancies from outside if we consider that circumstances call for outside recruitment.

HIPAA Portability Rights

If you should terminate your AHS State Network health plan coverage, you may need to provide evidence of your prior coverage in order to enroll in another group health plan, to reduce a waiting period in another group health plan, or to get certain types of individual coverage. This policy describes certain protections available to you under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) when changing your health insurance coverage. If you should have any questions regarding your HIPAA portability rights, please contact the business office.

Preexisting condition exclusions. Some group health plans restrict coverage for medical conditions present before an individual's enrollment. These restrictions are known as "preexisting condition exclusions." A preexisting condition exclusion can apply only to conditions for which medical advice, diagnosis, care, or treatment was recommended or received within the 6 months before your "enrollment date." Your enrollment date is your first day of coverage under the plan, or, if there is a waiting period, the first day of your waiting period (typically, your first day of work). In addition, preexisting condition exclusion cannot last for more than 12 months after your enrollment date (18 months if you are a late enrollee). Finally, preexisting condition exclusion cannot apply to pregnancy and cannot apply to a child who is enrolled in health coverage within 30 days after birth, adoption, or placement for adoption.

If a plan imposes preexisting condition exclusion, the length of the exclusion must be reduced by the amount of your prior creditable coverage. Most health coverage is creditable coverage, including group health plan coverage, COBRA continuation coverage, coverage under an individual health policy, Medicare, Medicaid, State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and coverage through high-risk pools and the Peace Corps. Not all forms of creditable coverage are required to provide Certificates of Group Health Plan Coverage. If you do not receive a certificate for past coverage, talk to your new plan administrator.

You can add up any creditable coverage you have, including the coverage shown on your Certificate of Group Health Plan Coverage. However, if at any time you went for 63 days or more without any coverage (called a break in coverage) a plan may not have to count the coverage you had before the break.

Therefore, once your coverage ends, you should try to obtain alternative coverage as soon as possible to avoid a 63-day break. You may use your Certificate of Group Health Plan

Coverage as evidence of your creditable coverage to reduce the length of any preexisting condition exclusion if you enroll in another plan.

Right to get special enrollment in another plan. Under HIPAA, if you lose your group health plan coverage, you may be able to get into another group health plan for which you are eligible (such as a spouse's plan), even if the plan generally does not accept late enrollees, if you request enrollment within 30 days. (Additional special enrollment rights are triggered by marriage, birth, adoption, and placement for adoption.)

Therefore, once your coverage ends, if you are eligible for coverage in another plan (such as a spouse's plan), you should request special enrollment as soon as possible.

Prohibition against discrimination based on a health factor. Under HIPAA, a group health plan may not keep you (or your dependents) out of the plan based on anything related to your health. Also, a group health plan may not charge you (or your dependents) more for coverage, based on health, than the amount charged a similarly situated individual.

Right to individual health coverage. Under HIPAA, if you are an "eligible individual," you have a right to buy certain individual health policies (or in some states, to buy coverage through a high-risk pool) without a preexisting condition exclusion. To be an eligible individual, you must meet the following requirements:

- You have had coverage for at least 18 months without a break in coverage of 63 days or more;
- Your most recent coverage was under a group health plan (which can be shown by your Certificate of Group Health Plan Coverage);
- Your group coverage was not terminated because of fraud or nonpayment of premiums;
- You are not eligible for COBRA continuation coverage or you have exhausted your COBRA benefits (or continuation coverage under a similar state provision); and
- You are not eligible for another group health plan, Medicare, or Medicaid, and do not have any other health insurance coverage.

The right to buy individual coverage is the same whether you are laid off, fired, or quit your job.

Therefore, if you are interested in obtaining individual coverage and you meet the other criteria to be an eligible individual, you should apply for this coverage as soon as possible to avoid losing your eligible individual status due to a 63-day break.

State flexibility. This policy describes minimum HIPAA protections under federal law. States may require insurers and HMOs to provide additional protections to individuals in that state.

For more information. If you have questions about your HIPAA rights, you may contact your state insurance department or the U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) toll-free at 1-866-444-3272 (for free HIPAA publications ask for publications concerning changes in health care laws). You may also contact the CMS publication hotline at 1-800-633-4227 (ask for "Protecting Your Health Insurance Coverage"). These publications and other useful information are also available on the Internet at: <http://www.dol.gov/ebsa>, the DOL's interactive web pages - Health Elaws, or <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/hipaa1>.

HIPAA Privacy and Security Compliance

It is the intent of Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System to safeguard and protect the privacy and security of its applicants and employees' "protected health information" as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA").

"Protected health information" includes individually identifiable information, maintained or transmitted through any medium, relating to an individual's past, present, or future physical or mental health or healthcare. Health information is considered "individually identifiable" if it either identifies a person by name or creates a reasonable basis to believe the individual could be identified (through identifiers such as address, social security number, dates of service, telephone number, email address, or vehicle identification number).

It is the policy of Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of protected health information entrusted to the library system by its applicants and employees by protecting those assets from unauthorized access, alteration, deletion, or unauthorized transmission and to ensure their physical security. Employees and department heads of Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System shall not at any time access, use, or disclose to any person or entity, any protected health information of the library system's applicants or employees, except as necessary and authorized in the course of their duties and responsibilities with the library. Similarly, employees and department heads are prohibited from making any unauthorized transmission, alteration, deletion, or unauthorized access of protected health information. Such unauthorized transmission includes, but is not limited to, removing and/or transferring protected health information in the library system's computer system to an unauthorized location.

These privacy and security obligations apply regardless of the manner in which the employee or manager acquires the protected health information, whether it was communicated verbally, in writing, electronically, or in any format, and regardless of whether it was communicated directly to the individual or intended for his/her access.

The unauthorized access, use, disclosure, alteration, deletion, or unauthorized transmission of protected health information in violation of this policy may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Identity Theft Protection

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System respects the privacy of your personal data and is committed to ensuring that it will only be accessed and utilized as necessary, in a professional and confidential capacity. In all circumstances, we take reasonable steps to:

- Give you clear notice when we are requesting information from you, the types of information we request from you, the general purposes for which that information will be used or disclosed, and the categories of users to whom we provide the information; and
- Use safe and secure systems, physical and electronic, to safeguard your non-public personal information, including your social security number.

If at any time you feel as if your personal data has been misused or improperly accessed, please report your concerns to the library director for further investigation.

Reference/Background Checks

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System conducts reference and background checks on all new employees. Employees who have falsified information on their employment applications will be disciplined, which could include termination. Applicants who have provided false information may be eliminated from further consideration for employment.

Termination, Resignation and Discharge

Unless expressly proscribed by statute or contract, employment with Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System is on an "at will" basis and may be terminated with or without cause or notice. Similarly, employees are free to resign their employment at any time. If at any time it is necessary for an employee to resign his or her employment with MMRLS, Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System requests at least four weeks notice, when possible.

Any employee who is discharged or resigns will be paid all wages accrued but not paid through the date of separation.

Transfers & Relocation

To meet business needs, Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System may occasionally need to transfer employees to a different department or location. Employee requests for transfers will be accommodated where possible.

Contact the director for help or information about transfers.

Safety & Emergency

Emergency Measures

We realize that bad weather or hazardous commuting conditions may occasionally make it impossible for employees to report to work on time.

However, you are expected to make a diligent effort to report to work when conditions have improved. If you determine that you are unable to report to work because of the conditions, inform your department head as soon as possible. Your absence will be charged to personal time.

If it becomes necessary to shut down the office due to weather or other emergency, every effort will be made to notify employees. If there is a question as to whether the office will be open, call your place of work. If there is no answer within one hour after the normal start time, assume the office is closed.

Fire Safety

Every employee is responsible for recognizing potential fire dangers and taking an active role in preventing fires.

Employees are required to observe all OSHA safety requirements and regulations. Flammable materials are to be stored in covered metal containers. Employees should not block any fire doors, fire exits, fire extinguishers, windows or doorways. Review the fire escape routes posted in each work area.

Safety

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all employees. Report all accidents, injuries, potential safety hazards, safety suggestions and health and safety related issues immediately to your department head.

If you or another employee is injured, contact your department head, director, or business manager immediately. Seek help from outside emergency response agencies, if needed. Contact information is posted on the library bulletin board.

You must complete an Employee's Claim for Worker's Compensation Benefits Form if you have an injury that requires medical attention. If your inquiry does not require medical attention, you must still complete an Employee Report of Accident Form in case medical treatment is later needed and to ensure that any existing safety hazards are corrected. You can obtain the required forms from the business manager.

A federal law, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, requires that we keep records of all illnesses and accidents that occur on the job. OSHA also provides for your right to know about any health hazards that might be present on the job.

In addition, the state Workers' Compensation Act also requires that you report any illness or injury caused by the workplace, no matter how slight. If you do not report an injury, you may jeopardize your right to collect workers' compensation payments as well as health benefits.

You can get the required reporting paperwork from the business manager.

Communications & Technology

Memos, E-mails and Headquarters Bulletin Board

Check and read all system memos, e-mails, and headquarter bulletin board regularly to obtain important information about the library system events and policies. Only Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System employees should use the headquarters MMRLS bulletin board.

Employee Suggestions

The Employee Suggestion program is established to supply all employees with an opportunity to express their own creative and original ideas on methods and procedures that ultimately will:

- Improve efficiency
- Improve attitudes and working conditions
- Improve the library system's competitive position
- Improve productivity

We consider the ideas and suggestions of our employees to be one of our best sources of information for making Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System the best system possible. It is the desire of management to encourage ongoing efforts in creative thinking and originality so that we can maximize our potential.

Investigations

In an effort to safeguard the property of our employees, customers, and Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System, Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System reserves the right to inspect property owned and/or supplied by MMRLS. MMRLS-supplied property (including but not limited to offices, desks, file cabinets, computers and software, library vehicles, lockers and other storage facilities) are MMRLS property and are subject to inspection by the director at any time, with or without notice. Therefore, employees should have no reasonable expectation of privacy in property owned and/or supplied by MMRLS. Employees may be permitted to store personal items in facilities. However, MMRLS is not responsible for loss, damage or theft of employees' personal belongings, so employees should exercise discretion in storing any personal items.

Software Policy

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System regulates employees' use of its computer software.

You may not duplicate any licensed software or related documentation for use, either on MMRLS premises or elsewhere, unless expressly authorized to do so by written agreement with the licensor. And you may not provide licensed software to anyone outside MMRLS. Employees should be aware that the illegal duplication of software may result in the filing of

criminal copyright charges by the owners of the copyrights and can subject both the employee and MMRLS to liability.

All software that Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System acquires must be purchased by the technology coordinator. Upon delivery, all software must be registered properly by the technology coordinator and installed by the technology coordinator. You may not load personal software on Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System computers.

Use of Library Communication Systems

The Communication and Information Systems at Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System should be used only for conducting MMRLS business. Communication systems include, but are not limited to any handheld wireless device such as palm organizers, laptops and blackberries or more traditional devices such as phones, facsimile-machines and mailing systems. Information systems include computers, internet/intranet networks and electronic mail.

Since Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System reserves the right to access any personal communication without prior notice, MMRLS systems should not be used by employees to transmit any messages or to access any information that they would not want to be viewed or heard by a third party.

Incidental, occasional and infrequent use of MMRLS' communication and information systems for personal use is permitted as long as such use does not interfere with your work or the work of any other employee or with the computer's operations.

The communication and information systems of Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System may not be used for any illegal, unethical, destructive or wasteful purpose. Employees should exercise care in personal use of any communication and information systems device and should not expect their use of personal information stored in these systems to be kept private.

Telephone Usage

The telephone system (including voicemail) at Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System is the property of MMRLS and is provided for business purposes. To the extent permitted by law, Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System may periodically monitor the use of the telephone systems to ensure compliance with this policy. Therefore, employees should not consider their conversations on the MMRLS telephone system to be private.

Internet/Intranet and E-mail Usage

The use of MMRLS' information systems is subject to the Library System policies applicable to traditional forms of communication. These include, but are not limited to, policies prohibiting discrimination, sexual harassment, solicitation, and use of library property and resources, disclosure of confidential information, misconduct and profanity.

The electronic mail (e-mail) system is provided by MMRLS to facilitate business activities within the organization. The hardware of the e-mail system is considered to be MMRLS property. All messages written, sent or received remain MMRLS' property and are not considered to be private property of any employee.

The information systems should not be used to upload (send) or download (receive) proprietary information, copyrighted information, or any similar materials without prior authorization of MMRLS officials.

MMRLS' internet/intranet and e-mail systems must not be used to create disruptive or offensive messages. These may include, but are not limited to racial slurs, sexually implicative messages, or offensive comments about someone's age, disability, national origin, political or religious belief, sexual orientation or national origin.

Accessing files, utilizing codes or retrieving stored information is prohibited unless an employee has received prior authorization from management to conduct any such activity. Employees are also prohibited from gaining access to another employee's e-mail unless permission was granted to do so.

Blogging / Cybersmearing

Weblogs or blogs are publicly accessible diaries that focus on specific persons or topics.

Generally Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System views the use of weblogs and personal websites positively. MMRLS recognizes the right of employees to use blogs as a medium of self expression. Should you choose to identify yourself as an employee of Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System to discuss business related matters on your weblog or site, bear in mind that some readers may view you as a MMRLS representative or spokesperson. We therefore ask you to observe the following guidelines when referring to MMRLS:

1. Ensure that readers understand that the views expressed are entirely your own, and that these views do not necessarily reflect the views of Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System. Please include a disclaimer that is easily visible to all visitors to the site.
2. All bloggers should reveal their identity on the blog and should not use a pseudonym to post their views.
3. Do not disclose any sensitive, financial, proprietary or confidential library information. This may include, but is not limited to financial data or library announcements that are not made available to the public.
4. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System expects that bloggers will be respectful to the library, fellow employees, our customers, partners and competitors. Bloggers must not post materials that violate the privacy or publicity rights of another individual or entity.
5. Blogging activity should not interfere with work requirements at any given time.

6. Copyrights and laws regulating what can be written must be respected at all times. Blogs should not be used to make statements that are libelous, defamatory, profane, harassing or obscene.
7. MMRLS reserves the right to suspend blogging activities temporarily if it has any concerns about compliance with securities regulations or other laws.
8. Ask the technology coordinator for guidance if you are uncertain whether the content of your blog will conflict with MMRLS' blogging policy.
9. Breaching this blogging policy may result in discipline up to and including termination.

Unsolicited Messages

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System strictly prohibits the transmission of unsolicited e-mails or mass-messages of any kind. Spam (i.e., unsolicited commercial or bulk e-mails, mass and junk e-mails) will not be tolerated. The electronic mail system is reserved for MMRLS business. It may not be used for personal solicitation or any other improper purposes.

General Computer and Software Usage

It is the policy of MMRLS to respect all computer software copyrights and adhere to the terms of all software licenses to which MMRLS is a party.

Employees may not duplicate any licensed software for their use unless the library system has expressly permitted the employee to do so by an agreement with the licensor and with the approval of the director.

Only software purchased by Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System with the approval of the appropriate management may be used on MMRLS computers. Employees are not permitted to bring software from home and load it on MMRLS computers, unless: (1) such action is approved by MMRLS' management and technology department and (2) such use of the software is consistent with the terms of the software licensing agreements.

Use of MMRLS communication and information systems constitutes consent to MMRLS' Communication and Information Systems policy.

CAN-SPAM

Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act (CAN-SPAM) was passed by Congress and took full effect on January 1, 2004. This anti-spam legislation imposes new requirements on the use of commercial e-mail messages (known as CEMMs).

The Act prohibits transmission of a CEMM without disclosing: (a) clear identification that the message is an advertisement or solicitation; (b) an opportunity to decline or "opt-out" of receiving further e-mail messages from the sender; and (c) a valid physical postal address of the sender. To comply with this Act, MMRLS requires employees sending commercial e-mails on behalf of MMRLS to follow these guidelines:

1. The use of misleading subject lines and headers are prohibited. Subject lines/ headers should be a true reflection of the subject matter or message.
2. Unsolicited CEMMs must be labeled in the message subject. CEMM must bear clear notice that they are advertisements or solicitations.
3. Each CEMM must contain a working "opt-out" mechanism. To fulfill this requirement one must provide a return e-mail address or another internet based mechanism that permits a recipient to request that future email messages are not sent to this address.
4. When a recipient selects the opt-out option, the sender is required to honor the request and must stop sending e-mail messages to the recipient's address within 10 days of receiving the request. The sender (or any other individual made aware of the request) is prohibited from selling or transferring the e-mail addresses of individuals who have selected the "opt-out" option, except in cases where the recipient has granted consent.

Staff Computer Use Policy

This policy is applicable to all computers owned by Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System, with the exception of public access computer workstations. Computers provided at library sites are to be used for library purposes.

Only those employees and volunteers authorized by the Library Director or his designee will be allowed access to, and use of, library owned computers.

Employees are forbidden from revealing their assigned user logon and password or gaining access to another employee's logon or password without authorization from the Library Director or his designee.

Destroying or modifying data, committing any form of vandalism, or downloading/installing unauthorized software on a computer is prohibited.

No employee has a right to privacy while using a library owned computer. All library owned computers are subject to random electronic monitoring.

Employees found to be in violation of these policies may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Library System personnel policies.

All employees and volunteers must read and understand this Staff Computer Use policy and sign and date an "Acknowledgement of Staff Computer Use" policy.

Employee Benefits

COBRA

The right to continuation coverage for group health plan benefits was created by a federal law, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA). COBRA continuation coverage can become available to you when you would otherwise lose your group health coverage. It can also become available to other members of your family who are covered under the group health plan when they would otherwise lose their group health coverage. For additional information about your rights and obligations under the group plan and under federal law, you should review the plan's Summary Plan Description (SPD) or contact the business manager.

What is COBRA Continuation Coverage?

COBRA coverage is a continuation of plan coverage when coverage would otherwise end because of a life event known as a "qualifying event." Specific qualifying events are below. After a qualifying event, COBRA continuation coverage must be offered to each person who is a "qualified beneficiary." You, your spouse, and your dependent children could become qualified beneficiaries if coverage under the plan is lost because of the qualifying event. Under the plan, qualified beneficiaries who elect COBRA continuation coverage must pay for COBRA continuation coverage.

If you are an employee, you will become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the plan because either one of the following qualifying events happens:

- Your hours of employment are reduced, or
- Your employment ends for any reason other than your gross misconduct.

The spouse of an employee will become a qualified beneficiary if he/she loses coverage under the plan because of any of the following qualifying events:

- The employee/spouse dies;
- The employee/spouse's hours of employment are reduced;
- The employee/spouse's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct;
- The employee/spouse becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both); or
- The individual becomes divorced or legally separated from the employee/spouse.

Your dependent children will become qualified beneficiaries if they lose coverage under the plan because any of the following qualifying events happens:

- The employee/parent dies;
- The employee/parent's hours of employment are reduced;

- The employee/parent's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct;
- The employee/parent becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (Part A, Part B, or both);
- The parents become divorced or legally separated; or
- The child stops being eligible for coverage under the plan as a "dependent child."

Sometimes, filing a proceeding in bankruptcy under title 11 of the United States Code can be a qualifying event. If a proceeding in bankruptcy is filed with respect to your employer sponsoring the plan, and that bankruptcy results in the loss of coverage of any retired employee covered under the plan, the retired employee will become a qualified beneficiary with respect to the bankruptcy. The retired employee's spouse, surviving spouse, and dependent children will also become qualified beneficiaries if bankruptcy results in the loss of their coverage under the plan.

When is COBRA Coverage Available?

The plan will offer COBRA continuation coverage to qualified beneficiaries only after the Plan Administrator has been notified that a qualifying event has occurred. When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of hours of employment, death of the employee, commencement of a proceeding in bankruptcy with respect to the employer, or the employee's becoming entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both), the employer must notify the Plan Administrator of the qualifying event.

You Must Give Notice of Some Qualifying Events

For the other qualifying events (divorce or legal separation of the employee and spouse or a dependent child's losing eligibility for coverage as a dependent child); **you must notify the Plan Administrator within 60 days, unless the Plan specifically allows a longer notice period, after the qualifying event occurs.**

How is COBRA Coverage Provided?

Once the Plan Administrator receives notice that a qualifying event has occurred, COBRA continuation coverage will be offered to each of the qualified beneficiaries. Each qualified beneficiary will have an independent right to elect COBRA continuation coverage. Covered employees may elect COBRA continuation coverage on behalf of their spouses, and parents may elect COBRA continuation coverage on behalf of their children.

COBRA continuation coverage is a temporary continuation of coverage. When the qualifying event is the death of the employee, the employee's becoming entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both), divorce or legal separation, or a dependent child's losing eligibility as a dependent child, COBRA continuation coverage may last for up to a total of 36 months. When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee's hours of employment, and the employee became entitled to Medicare benefits less than 18 months before the qualifying event, COBRA continuation coverage for qualified beneficiaries other than the employee lasts until 36 months after the date of Medicare entitlement. For example, if a covered employee becomes entitled to Medicare 8 months before the date on which his employment terminates, COBRA continuation coverage for his spouse and children

can last up to 36 months after the date of Medicare entitlement, which is equal to 28 months after the date of the qualifying event (36 months minus 8 months). Otherwise, when the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee's hours of employment, COBRA continuation coverage generally lasts for only up to a total of 18 months. (Note: If the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction in hours due to the employee's active military service, alternative continuing coverage may be available for up to 24 months under a separate law - the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. Ask the Plan Administrator for qualification requirements and additional information about this benefit.) There are two ways in which this 18-month period of COBRA continuation coverage can be extended:

(1) Disability extension of 18-month period of continuation coverage

If you or anyone in your family covered under the plan is determined by the Social Security Administration to be disabled and you notify the Plan Administrator in a timely fashion, you and your entire family may be entitled to receive up to an additional 11 months of COBRA continuation coverage, for a total maximum of 29 months. The disability would have to have started at some time before the 60th day of COBRA continuation coverage and must last at least until the end of the 18-month period of continuation coverage. You must notify the Plan Administrator of the Social Security Administration's determination within 60 days of the date of the determination.

(2) Second qualifying event extension of 18-month period of continuation coverage

If your family experiences another qualifying event while receiving 18 months of COBRA continuation coverage, the spouse and dependent children in your family can get up to 18 additional months of COBRA continuation coverage, for a maximum of 36 months, if notice of the second qualifying event is properly given to the Plan. This extension may be available to the spouse and any dependent children receiving continuation coverage if the employee or former employee dies, becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both), or gets divorced or legally separated, or if the dependent child stops being eligible under the Plan as a dependent child, but only if the event would have caused the spouse or dependent child to lose coverage under the Plan had the first qualifying event not occurred. You must notify the Plan Administrator of the second qualifying event within 60 days of the date of the event.

If You Have Questions

Questions concerning your Plan or your COBRA continuation coverage rights should be addressed to the contact or contacts identified below:

Business Manager
201 South Huntington Street, Kosciusko, MS 39090
662-289-5151
busmanager@midmissregional.lib.ms.us

For more information about your rights under ERISA, including COBRA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and other laws affecting group health plans, contact the nearest Regional or District Office of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) in your area or visit the EBSA website at www.dol.gov/ebsa.

(Addresses and phone numbers of Regional and District EBSA Offices are available through EBSA's website.)

Disability Insurance

Employees who have completed any mandatory Introductory Period may qualify for disability insurance coverage, which can be paid for in full by the employee. Please see the business manager for further explanation of this benefit and its tax implications.

Employee Benefits Policy

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System employees are entitled to a wide range of benefits. A number of the benefit programs -- such as Social Security, workers' compensation, state disability, and unemployment insurance -- cover all employees as required by law.

Eligibility for most other benefits depends upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. The business manager can identify the programs for which you are eligible. You can find the details of many of these programs in separate written summaries. For more information, contact the business manager.

Most benefit programs require contributions from employees, but some are fully paid by Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System. We reserve the right to add, amend, modify or terminate any employee benefit plans or programs.

See the business manager for the current list of benefit programs provided.

Flexible Benefits Plan

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System has implemented a flexible benefits plan where employees can elect to pay for insurance premiums with wages excluded from taxable income. The flexible benefits plan includes health, cancer, accident, vision, intensive care, and dental cost of coverage.

New employees that are at a full-time or part-time status become eligible to enroll in the plan after 90 days of employment. The coverage is then effective the first of the month following 90 days of employment. In the event that an employee signs up for the plan and later needs to make a change in his or her annual election, the change must be consistent with the qualifying event and be made within thirty (30) days of that event.

Details regarding the flexible benefits plan and the annual election forms are available from the business office.

See Eligibility paragraph under the Employee Benefits policy for eligibility requirements.

Life Insurance

You will receive documents under a separate cover that explain the life insurance program that Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System offers. This coverage becomes effective on your first day of work if you choose to participate. Your cost for life insurance is matched by the library system.

In general, the amount of coverage equals two times the annual compensation rounded to the next thousand. If wages are under \$15,000.; coverage will be \$30,000.

If a covered employee dies, the insured amount will be paid to his or her named beneficiary. You are responsible for naming your beneficiary and may change that selection by submitting a change form to the business manager.

Medical Insurance

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System offers AHS State Network Medical insurance and bears a substantial cost of this plan for the employee. Refer to the printed information from the insurance provider for details of eligibility and coverage or contact the business office.

Retirement Savings Plan

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System is a member of the Public Employees Retirement System. It is mandatory that every regular employee who works 20 hours or more per week must contribute 7.25% of their salary to this plan. The plan trustee is the Public Employee Retirement System. You can request a full copy of the plan summary description of either plan from the Public Employee Retirement System online at www.pers.state.ms.us. In addition, contributions may be made voluntarily to the Government Employees Deferred Compensation plan. The plan includes a provision for employee tax deferred compensation contributions.

Workshop or Seminar Attendance

In its sole discretion, Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System may pay 100% of the cost of the workshop or seminar sponsored by professional organizations that are job related. Employees must make a written request to the director to request approval for seminar attendance. The request must include the employee's name, seminar title, date/location of the seminar, and expenses related to the seminar. The director will approve/disapprove of the request in writing. A written workshop evaluation report of the workshop or seminar will be filed by the employee and sent to headquarters.

Travel & Expenses

Employees will be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses they incur while traveling on Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System business. Use your discretion, but try to keep costs low.

When it's necessary to travel for Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System business, please contact the MMRLS Director. This agency will be responsible for making all your travel arrangements.

You must record all travel activities on the library's travel reimbursement form and submit it to the business manager. Use of personal vehicles will be reimbursed at MMRLS' current rate per

mile. You must fill out a MMRLS Workshop Report and submit to the director and the assistant director.

All Expense Report Forms should be submitted to the business manager.

Workers' Compensation

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System provides insurance to compensate for any illness or injury an employee might suffer while working on library premises, traveling on official library business, or attending an activity officially sponsored by MMRLS. If you become ill or injured, please get medical attention at once.

You must also report the details to the director and business manager immediately. And you must complete a report for every injury, no matter how small, to keep the coverage in force and to get any benefits or other compensation to which you may be entitled.

Unemployment Compensation

The law provides unemployment compensation benefits to protect workers from economic hardship due to a loss of employment. A terminated employee who is unable to secure new employment may file a claim for unemployment compensation. An employee may be eligible for unemployment compensation if he/she was terminated for reasons other than misconduct, as defined by state law. Generally, employees who voluntarily resign without "good cause" are not eligible for benefits.

When an employee files a claim for unemployment compensation, the employer is required to provide a written statement detailing the circumstances or reasons for the employee's termination. The employer will also be asked whether payment of unemployment compensation is opposed. The answer provided by the employer may determine the employee's eligibility for benefits. If either party disagrees with the initial determination with respect to coverage, an appeal can be made. A formal hearing is held in the event that there is an appeal.

Holidays

Holidays

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System observes the following holidays:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Day
President's Day
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving and the day after
Christmas (see below)

You will be paid for these holidays if you:

- Have worked the full day before and the full day after the holiday, unless time off has been approved in advance as vacation or personal days.

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Independence's Day, and Veteran's Day are floating holidays. They, like Christmas, will rotate around so that everyone over a period of time will get equitable leave. If this legal holiday falls on Sunday, all libraries will be closed on Monday. No compensatory time will be given for these floating holidays.

Good Friday, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, are fixed holidays for which everyone will receive time off, if you are scheduled to work.

Although Christmas Eve and the day following Christmas are not holidays, these are days that all libraries will be closed and all librarians will be paid if normally scheduled to work. If Christmas Day falls on Saturday, all libraries will be closed on Monday. Christmas is a floating holiday and will work itself around to an equitable arrangement for everyone over a period of time. No compensatory time will be given for this floating holiday.

Libraries Open on Saturdays Following a Holiday **(Attala, Carthage and Winston)**

Attala, Carthage and Winston staff works ½ day Saturdays on a rotating basis. If it is an employee's Saturday to work ½ day, they should take ½ day off during the week prior to that Saturday just like they would throughout the year.

Example:

Attala – Friday afternoon

Carthage – Wednesday morning

Winston – Thursday morning

In regards to the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays, if the library is closed on Wed, Thursday, or Friday for the holiday, then the employee takes ½ day off prior to the holiday

Employees still have to work their 40 hours a week including their holiday hours.

If a Christmas holiday falls on a Saturday, since staff will not be working ½ day that Saturday, no one should take off ½ day prior to that Saturday.

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System Employee Handbook and that I have read and understand the policies.

I understand that this Employee Handbook represents only current policies and benefits, and that it does not create a contract of employment. Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System retains the right to change these policies and benefits, as it deems advisable.

Unless expressly proscribed by statute or contract, my employment is "at-will." I understand that I have the right to terminate my employment at any time, with or without cause or notice, and that MMRLS has the same right. I further understand that my status as an "at-will" employee may not be changed except in writing and signed by the Director of Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System.

I understand that the information I come into contact with during my employment is proprietary to MMRLS and accordingly, I agree to keep it confidential, which means I will not use it other than in the performance of my duties, or disclose it to any person or entity outside MMRLS. I understand that I must comply with all of the provisions of the Handbook to have access to and use MMRLS resources. I also understand that if I do not comply with all provisions of the Handbook, my access to MMRLS resources may be revoked, and I may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

I further understand that I am obligated to familiarize myself with MMRLS' safety, health, and emergency procedures as outlined in this Handbook or in other documents.

Signature

Date

Please Print Your Name