

**HARBOR BRANCH OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE**  
— FOUNDATION —

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

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## **WELCOME**

We believe that each employee contributes directly to the growth and success of the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation, and we hope you will take pride in being a part of our organization.

This handbook was developed to describe some of the expectations of our employees and to outline the policies, programs, and benefits available to eligible employees. Employees should familiarize themselves with the contents of the employee handbook as soon as possible, for it will answer many questions about employment with the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation

The Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation reserves the right to alter, amend, or modify these policies with or without prior notice. No statement by management or the Board of Directors may be interpreted as a change in policy, nor will it constitute an agreement with an employee.

At the end of this document please find an Employee Acknowledgment. By signing this form, you acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document; you have received the handbook; and, you understand that it is your responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

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

*Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation, Inc.*

## **NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT**

Employment with Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as the Foundation) is voluntarily entered into, and the employee is free to resign at will at any time, with or without notice or cause. Similarly, the Foundation may terminate the employment relationship at will at any time, with or without notice or cause.

Policies set forth in this handbook are not intended to create a contract, nor are they to be construed to constitute contractual obligations of any kind or a contract of employment between the Foundation and any of its employees. The provisions of the handbook have been developed at the discretion of management and, except for its policy of employment-at-will, may be amended or cancelled at any time, at the Foundation's sole discretion.

These provisions supersede all existing policies and practices and may not be amended or added to without the express written approval of the Foundation.

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at the Foundation will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. The Foundation does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

Any employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor or any Board Member. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

A work week is considered Sunday-Saturday.

**Part-time Staff:** Any staff member whose scheduled hours of work are less than 35 hours per week.

**Full-time Staff:** Any staff member who successfully completes the introductory period and whose scheduled hours of work are 35 or more hours per week.

These status categories serve the purposes expressly stated in this Manual. They do not guarantee employment or continued employment and are not in any way intended to alter the prevailing at-will employment relationship.

### ***Exempt / Non-Exempt Status***

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, staffs are classified as "Exempt" or "Non-Exempt."

**Exempt:** Exempt staffs are those whose employment is exempt from applicable Federal wage and hour laws and are thus not paid overtime pay.

**Non-Exempt:** Non-exempt staffs are those who are paid overtime at the rate of one and one-half times their regular hourly rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 40 in any one work week. Non-Exempt staffs shall not work over 40 hours in any one work week unless directed to in writing by their direct supervisor and approved by the Executive Director.

Staff will be informed of Exempt / Non-Exempt status when hired, and again if the status changes during the period of employment due to a transfer, promotion or otherwise.

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

### **Position Descriptions**

The position description identifies the responsibilities of the position. Staff members need to become familiar with their position description and to discuss questions regarding the contents of the description with their supervisor. After reviewing it, the staff member must sign it as an acknowledgement of the responsibilities. The position description will become part of the employment record. Whenever a position is substantially revised, a new position description will be prepared. Position descriptions are not to be construed as a limitation on the authority of supervisory personnel to assign any and all tasks appropriate or essential to the staff's position or function.

Performance reviews shall be based in large part on the performance against the position description as well as on performance against any annual work goals and general work behaviors.

### **Introductory Period**

While either the staff member or the Foundation may end the employment relationship at will at any time during or after the introductory period, with or without cause or advance notice, the first 90 days of employment is considered the introductory period and is intended to give new staff members the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations. The Foundation uses this period to evaluate staff member capabilities, work habits, and overall performance.

At the end of this 90-day period the staff member will participate in an informal performance review with his/her immediate supervisor. The staff member's attendance, timeliness, and accuracy in their assigned areas of responsibility will be evaluated. The review also provides an opportunity for the staff member and supervisor to develop short and long term employment goals as well as competencies necessary for successful growth within the organization.

Once the introductory period is completed, the staff member will be eligible for any and all benefits offered to the staff member's position and/or employment status.

### **Annual Performance Review**

The purpose of the annual performance review is to:

- Help to clearly define the staff member's duties and responsibilities within the organization, to establish criteria by which their performance will be evaluated, and provide steps in which they can improve their overall performance.
- Identify staff members with potential for advancement within the Foundation.
- Help management communicate, distribute and achieve organizational goals;
- Provide a fair and equitable process for awarding compensation and promotion based on merit and/or sector compensation adjustments.

When deemed warranted, a special review may be conducted; however, future reviews will be conducted in accordance with review schedule based on date of hire.

### *Review Schedule*

- Annual Performance Reviews will be held in March or April of each year using a staff appraisal form to be completed by the Executive Director
- Said form shall be provided to the staff member for their review and written comment and returned to the Executive Director
- The Executive Director will then schedule a review meeting with the staff member to discuss the review and understand each one's assessment and goals. Additional comments and agreement shall be added as necessary.
- The Executive Director and staff member will sign the final document to be placed in the staff member's file.
- The Executive Director shall recommend merit increases according to these reviews and subject to budget availability in the draft budget for the coming fiscal year. Any adjustments in salary shall be incorporated into the next operating budget and effective July 1

The Annual Performance Review of the Executive Director will follow the same schedule and be completed by the Board of Directors with a designated liaison.

### **Personnel Files**

The personnel files will contain: staff records, employment application, resume, reference replies, performance evaluations, present employer salary history, any papers correspondence, or other documentation relating to the staff's work tenure and performance, and termination record. These records are confidential and may be inspected only by the staff member's supervisor. Any staff members reviewing files other than their own, without proper authorization will be terminated.

Records will be retained for the following periods of time based on State and Federal statutes:

- Applications and resumes for individuals not hired will be kept one year from the date it became inactive (six months after received).
- Personnel files will be kept three years after termination.
- Time sheets will be kept for two years.
- Payroll records will be kept for three years.

If a staff member wants the Foundation to verify his or her employment for credit agencies, another employer, or other agency, he or she must provide permission by completing an informational release form, available from the Executive Director.

Responses to authorized inquiries will be provided by the Executive Director, confirming dates of employment, wage rates, and position(s) held. The Foundation does not typically provide assessment of job performance or willingness to re-employ a former staff member when contacted for a reference.

### **Personnel Data Changes**

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the Foundation of any changes in personnel data. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of emergency, educational accomplishments, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. If any personnel data has changed, notify the Executive Director.

### **Paydays**

All employees are paid on a bi-weekly basis every other Friday. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period.

### **Pay Deductions**

The law requires that the Foundation make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes, if applicable. The Foundation also must deduct Social Security taxes on each employee's earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security "wage base." The Foundation matches the amount of Social Security taxes paid by each employee.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

A number of the programs (such as Social Security, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law.

The following benefit programs are available to eligible employees:

- Vacation
- Personal Leave
- Time Off to Vote
- Jury Duty
- Funeral Leave
- Holidays
- 401(k) Savings Plan
- Workers' Compensation Insurance

### **Vacation Policy**

Vacation time off with pay is available to regular employees to provide opportunities for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. The amount of paid vacation time employees receive each year increases with the length of their employment as shown in the following schedule:

Vacation leave will begin accruing immediately upon hire, however a full-time employee is not eligible to take paid vacation until after 6 months of employment:

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Per Pay Period</u>
0-2	3.08 hours
3-6	4.62 hours
7+	6.47 hours

The above policy is pro-rated by half for a part-time employee.

Vacation time is important and staff certainly earn and deserve the vacation time coming to them. Requests for vacation time will be honored but must be balanced against adequately staffing the Foundation.

Accrued but unused vacation time cannot be rolled over to the next year and will be lost if not used.

If an employee is unable to report to work due to illness, vacation time (or personal days as set forth below) will be paid if accrued. If the employee does not have any accrued vacation time, days absent will not be paid.

Vacation time accrued and not used within a fiscal year may be paid at termination at management's discretion and in accordance with State law.

## **Personal Leave**

The Foundation provides up to five (5) personal days per year to be used for sickness, pre/post holidays, or general personal reasons. Upon start date, these personal days will accrue at the rate of ½ day per month. Employees are eligible for personal leave after successful completion of the introductory period. Personal leave time is calculated on a fiscal year basis and re-starts each July. If personal leave is not used during the course of the year, that personal leave time is lost, and may not be carried over to the following year.

In order to make a more efficient administration of the policy, the Foundation has determined to enforce the use of personal days for personal errands and appointments. The Foundation will not allow “make-up” time over lunch or after hours. If you need to be absent for a personal errand or appointment, you are required to fill out a request form in the same manner as vacation time requests. Time out of the office will be credited against your personal days as follows:

0 hours up to 2 hours:	0.25 days
More than 2 but less than 4 hours:	0.50 days
More than 4 but less than 6 hours:	0.75 days
More than 6 hours:	1.0 day

The above policy is pro-rated by half for a part-time employee.

In addition to Personal Leave, other leave available is as follows:

## **Time Off To Vote**

The Foundation encourages staff members to fulfill their civic responsibilities by participating in elections. Generally, staff members are able to find time to vote either before or after their regular work schedule. If staff members are unable to vote in an election during their nonworking hours, they will be granted up to 1 hour of paid time off to vote.

Staff members should request time off to vote from their supervisor at least two working days prior to the election-day. Advance notice is required so that the necessary time off can be scheduled at the beginning or end of the work shift whichever provides the least disruption to the normal work schedule. Staff members must submit a voter’s receipt on the first working day following the election to qualify for paid time off.

## **Jury Duty**

The Foundation encourages staffs to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. The Foundation policy conforms to applicable state and federal laws.

Staff members who are notified of jury duty must immediately notify their supervisor.

Either the Foundation or the staff member may request an excuse from jury duty if, in the Foundation's judgment, the Staff member's absence would create serious operational difficulties. The Foundation will continue to provide benefits for the full term of the jury duty absence. Vacation, sick leave, and holiday benefits will continue to accrue during jury duty leave.

### **Funeral Leave**

The Foundation allows for up to three (3) paid emergency funeral leave days to all staff members in the event of a death of an immediate family member. Immediate family is defined as a staff member's spouse or significant other, child, mother, father, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law or child's spouse or significant other.

Funeral leave can be combined with use of accrued paid leave; however, those additional days would be subject to approval. Funeral leave is not accrued subsequently cannot be carried over nor is paid out upon termination of employment with the Foundation.

Staff members must submit a time off request before or as of the day after returning from the leave. Said request will be placed in the staff member's file for record purposes.

### **Holidays**

All employees are eligible for holiday pay. Identified days are subject to change at the discretion of the Board of Directors of the Foundation; however, the Foundation will typically observe the following holidays\*:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November)
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas (December 25)
- Extended Holiday (December 26, 27, 30, 31 if business days)

*\*\*These currently conform to the HBOI at FAU holiday schedule.*

### **401(k) Savings Plan**

HBOIF has established a 401(k) plan to provide employees the potential for future financial security for retirement. You are immediately eligible for participation in the plan upon employment.

The 401(k) savings plan allows you to elect how much salary you want to contribute so you can tailor your own retirement package to meet your individual needs. Because your contribution to a 401(k) plan is automatically deducted from your pay before federal and state tax withholdings are calculated, you save tax dollars now by having your current taxable amount reduced. While the amounts deducted generally will be taxed when they are finally distributed, favorable tax rules typically apply to 401(k) distributions. Complete details of the 401(k) plan are described in the Summary Plan Description provided to eligible employees.

### **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

The Foundation provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses should inform their supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it be reported immediately.

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

### **Business Ethics and Conduct**

The successful business operation and reputation of the Foundation is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of our employees. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The continued success of the Foundation is dependent upon our donor's trust, and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees owe a duty to the Foundation and its donors to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

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

Compliance with this policy of business ethics and conduct is the responsibility of every Foundation employee.

### **Employee Conduct and Work Rules**

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

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

- Divulging any donor information to anyone outside of Board members and employees of HBOIF without the donor's prior consent
- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
- Falsification of timekeeping records
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice
- Unauthorized disclosure of business "secrets" or confidential information
- Violation of personnel policies
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct

## **Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment**

HBOIF is committed to providing a work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated and should be reported to the Executive Director or the Board of Directors.

## **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

HBOIF is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive work environment for all employees. Using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on the job may pose serious safety and health risks. While on HBOIF premises and while conducting business-related activities off premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.

To help ensure a safe and healthful working environment, job applicants and employees may be asked to submit to a pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion and/or post-accident drug screen to determine the illicit or illegal use of drugs. Refusal to submit to drug testing or yielding a positive result may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **Disciplinary Action**

From time to time it is necessary to take disciplinary action, which may include written or verbal counseling, suspension, or other discipline up to and including discharge. Employment with the Foundation is at-will, therefore employees are not guaranteed that they will receive advance warning prior to any disciplinary action, or that discipline will be applied progressively (i.e. employees are not guaranteed verbal or written warnings prior to more severe discipline including discharge being applied).

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, the Foundation expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Regular attendance and promptness are considered a part of each employee's essential job function. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on the Foundation. In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Continuing patterns of absences, early departures, or tardiness, regardless of the number of days, may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If you fail to report for work without any notification, you may be considered to have abandoned your employment.

### **Non-Disclosure**

The protection of donor information, documents and confidential communications as well as confidential business information of the Foundation and any other information that is considered a trade secret is vital to the interests and the success of the Foundation. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples

- Confidential communications and other protected donor information
- Trade secrets or technical information
- Computer processes
- Donor lists
- Financial records and information

Employees who improperly use or disclose such confidential or protected information or trade secrets will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and legal action, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

### **Personal Appearance**

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image the Foundation presents to donors and visitors. During business hours or when representing the Foundation, you are expected to present a clean, neat, and tasteful appearance. You should dress and groom yourself according to the requirements of your position and accepted social standards. This is particularly true if your job involves dealing with donors or visitors in person.

### **Credit Cards**

Credit cards will be issued to authorized staff members depending on the scope of their responsibilities. The staff member is personally responsible for any and all charges made to the Foundation credit card. The Foundation credit card may not at any time be used for personal expenses. Personal usage may result in immediate termination.

Each staff member using an authorized HBOIF card must submit monthly expense reports with scanned original receipts to the Executive Director for approval by a specified date each month. Expense reports should contain the specific Chart of Accounts line for which the expense belongs and a short description. Expense reports will then be submitted to the Foundation bookkeeper for payment. Staff members are advised to make copies of submitted reports and receipts and keep on file if any questions arise.

Lost or stolen cards should be reported to the credit card company and an immediate supervisor immediately. Abuse of this policy may result in immediate termination.

### **Media/Photo Release**

HBOIF does not, in any way, require that a staff member agree to participate in interviews, stories, or additional media and/or pictures unless their job description clearly states that this is a component of the position. However, due to the nature of our efforts, staff members may be asked to participate in interviews, news stories or events where the media may be present. Unless a staff member provides a written request to the contrary, staff members give permission for HBOIF to use interviews, stories, or additional media and/or pictures for the sole purpose of HBOIF promotion.

### **Computer/E-Mail Usage/Internet/Social Networking**

Computers, computer files, the e-mail system, and software/hardware furnished to staff members are intended for business use. Access to computing and communications devices/systems are provided to staff members for the purpose of conducting business, facilitating business communications, and enhancing productivity. HBOIF prohibits the use of computers, the e-mail system, or any social networking sites to include blogs in ways that are abusive, offensive, disruptive, defamatory or libelous to the organization, offensive to others, or harmful to morale. Staff members who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. HBOIF reserves the right to inspect an employee's computer files or email-system at any time, with or without notice.

### **Cell Phone Use**

Employees may carry and use personal cell phones while at work on a sporadic basis. Personal cell phones shall be turned off or set to silent or vibrate mode during meetings, conferences and in other locations where incoming calls may disrupt normal workflow. If employee use of a personal cell phone causes disruptions or loss in productivity, the employee may become subject to disciplinary action. In addition, HBOIF recognizes that employees may need to use their personal cell phones for work-related calls. Employees will ensure organizational confidentiality during such use.

## **TRANSITION FROM THE FOUNDATION**

### **Return of Property**

Employees are responsible for all HBOIF property, materials, or written information issued to them or in their possession or control. Employees, on or before their last day of work, must return all HBOIF property.

### **Resignation**

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with the Foundation. Although advance notice is not required, the Foundation requests at least 2 weeks' written resignation notice from all employees.

### **Final Pay**

Final paychecks will be distributed on the next regular payday following termination. Final paychecks will be mailed to the employee's home address unless other arrangements are made in advance. Vacation time accrued may be paid at management's discretion and in accordance with state law.

## EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

The employee handbook describes important information about the Foundation, and I understand that I should consult the Board of Directors regarding any questions not answered in the handbook.

I have entered into my employment relationship with the Foundation voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, the Foundation or I can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur, except to the Foundation's policy of employment-at-will. I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. Only the Board of Directors of the Foundation has the ability to adopt any revisions to the policies in this handbook.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

EMPLOYEE'S NAME (printed):

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EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE:

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