

# MEHS Employee Manual



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**MEHS Employee Manual  
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## **Introduction**

Metro East Humane Society (MEHS) is a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to improving animal welfare in the St. Louis Metro East by providing quality animal services including adoption of animals, advocacy and preventative initiatives. To achieve our mission, we...

- Staff and support a "no-kill" animal shelter dedicated to providing a safe and healthy environment for cats and dogs;
- Provide humane medical treatment, vaccinations, and spay/neuter services to animals in our community;
- Promote the education of adults and youth on the humane treatment of animals, including responsible pet ownership and population control measures;
- Value and encourage partnerships with community-based organizations, schools, public institutions, private corporations, and elected officials; and
- Respect the public trust through the proper management of our resources.

MEHS is financially supported solely through the generosity of the public. MEHS receives no financial support from taxes or from the government. Our financial survival depends on generous donations from humane members of the public.

As a shelter employee of MEHS you will be the first, and perhaps the only, contact members of the public may have with MEHS. The impression that you give to members of the public is the impression they will have of MEHS. Your courtesy, patience, kindness, and humanity to not only the animals in your care but to the people with whom you interact is of the utmost importance. Only with the support of members of our community can MEHS, and the animals it cares for, survive.

This Employee Policy Manual sets forth your benefits and privileges as an employee of MEHS, as well as your duties and responsibilities. It is not intended to form a contract guaranteeing employment. Any disciplinary or grievance procedures set forth herein are not intended to confer on you any right to continued employment and are intended to serve as guidelines and not a guarantee to you of the application of any such procedure. If you have any questions about any provision of this Manual, or any policies or procedures of MEHS, you should consult the Executive Director.

### **1) Equal Employment Opportunity Policy**

MEHS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, handicap, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other factor prohibited by federal, state, or local law. It is the intent of MEHS to abide by all fair employment practices laws, and the qualifications of potential employees or present employees shall be the determining factor in all hiring, promotion, disciplinary and termination decisions.

### **2) Initial Probationary Employees**

All new hires shall serve an initial probationary period of six months, during which time they may be terminated with or without cause or explanation and without notice. During this six-month probationary period, probationary employees shall be evaluated and advised by the Executive Director of any deficiencies of their performance or conduct.

If the probationary employee completes the six-month probationary period, the probationary employee shall be evaluated by the Executive Director. The Executive Director will decide whether to terminate the employee or to make the employee a permanent employee with all the benefits and privileges attendant thereto. The employee shall be notified of the Executive Director's decision within seven days of the end of the six-month probationary period.

A new probationary Development Manager, Program Manager or Veterinarian shall be evaluated by, and the employment decision made by, the Executive Director. A new Executive Director shall be evaluated by, and the employment decision made by, the Board of Directors.

No notice of termination will be required with respect to probationary employees, and termination may be effective immediately.

### 3) **Permanent Employees**

Permanent employees shall be entitled to the benefits and privileges provided herein.

#### **A. Evaluations and Salary Adjustments:**

Permanent employees shall be evaluated by the Executive Director at the end of the first six months of their permanent status, and every twelve months thereafter. The permanent employee shall receive a written evaluation from the Executive Director that shall specify areas in which the employee's performance requires improvement and those areas in which the employee excels. Salary increases shall be considered only at the time of these performance evaluations, but evaluations shall occur every twelve months whether or not a salary increase is being considered.

The Development Manager, Program Manager and Veterinarian shall be evaluated by the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall be evaluated by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall set a range for possible salary increases. The Executive Director shall have sole discretion to determine the amount of salary increase, if any, within this range set by the Board. A salary increase may be granted if the employee's performance and conduct warrant it and MEHS financial condition allows for it.

Any salary increase shall be retroactive to the anniversary date on which the evaluation was based. Periodic salary increases are not to be taken for granted; salary increases will depend in part on the financial soundness of MEHS and its ability to fund salary increases. The Board of Directors, in its sole discretion, can place a moratorium on salary increases in the event MEHS financial condition warrants it.

MEHS reserves the right to decrease salaries in the sole discretion of the Board of Directors in the event its financial condition requires such action. Any salary decrease shall be effective only on 30-day advance notice to the employee. Also, MEHS reserves the right to lay off employees in the sole discretion of the Board of Directors should its financial condition warrant it.

### **B. Vacation Time**

After one full year of employment, all full-time employees (37.5 hours or more per week, averaged over prior 6 months) shall earn six vacation days on their anniversary of their hire date. Unearned vacation days for each year of employment may be taken in advance; however, if the employee leaves employment prior to the end of that year, pay for any advanced but unearned vacation days shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck. All full-time employees shall earn one additional day per year of service, to accrue at the beginning of each anniversary year, for each additional year of employment thereafter up to a maximum of eighteen days.

The use of vacation days must be requested in writing and approved two weeks in advance by the Executive Director and may be disapproved in the sole discretion of the Executive Director if the employee's presence is required at work. Vacation requests of the Development Manager, Program Manager and Veterinarian must be approved by the Executive Director. Vacation requests of the Executive Director must be approved by the President of the Board of Directors. Every person approving vacation requests shall keep accurate records of vacation time taken by employees.

Employees may carry over a maximum of three vacation days per calendar year. All other unused vacation days will be lost if not used during the year. Because MEHS recognizes the importance of vacation time in providing an opportunity for rest, relaxation, and stress reduction, employees are encouraged to use all of their vacation time each year.

### **C. Sick and Mental Health Time**

Full time employees shall receive 40 hours of paid sick and 24 hours of mental health leave per calendar year. In the event an employee is sick and cannot make it to work, he or she must notify the Executive Director at least one hour prior to the time he or she is scheduled to report to work so that a substitute may be arranged. If the Executive Director cannot be reached, the employee must notify a coworker scheduled to work that day. The Executive Director shall notify any other employee scheduled to work of their inability to attend because of illness. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary procedures.

Paid sick and mental health days may not be used on Holidays or on the day prior to, or immediately following a designated Holiday. Anyone missing a day of employment that is a Holiday or the day following or preceding the Holiday will

not be paid for those days. Unused vacation days may be used for sick and mental health days. Sick and mental health days may not be carried over into a new year and unused sick and mental health days shall be forfeited at the end of the year. Unused sick and mental health days shall be forfeited on termination of employment, and the employee shall not be compensated therefore.

#### **D. Insurance**

Full-time employees, including the Executive Director, may be offered health insurance benefits at the discretion of the MEHS Board of Directors

#### **E. Tardiness**

Immediately upon learning that he/she is going to be tardy to work, an employee must notify the Executive Director. If the Executive Director cannot be reached, the employee must notify a coworker scheduled to work that day.

#### **F. Leaving Work**

Employees shall not leave their jobs during their scheduled working hours without permission from the Executive Director, which permission may be denied if the employee's presence is required at work. In the event of a bona fide emergency, Executive Director shall give permission.

#### **G. Holidays**

MEHS is closed to the public in observance of the following holidays: Easter, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Full-time employees are paid 8 hours of regular pay for a holiday. Any of those hours that are worked are paid at time and one-half. For example: If an employee works 4 hours on a holiday, he or she shall receive the equivalent of 6 hours pay for hours worked that day, plus four hours of straight time for the hours not worked. Only the kennel cleaners shall work holidays when the shelter is closed, but shall only work those hours reasonably necessary.

#### **H. Dress Code**

All employees are required to wear long pants, closed-toe shoes and sleeved shirts with no inappropriate or offensive sayings. Employees working during times that the shelter is open to the public must also wear a name tag on their shirt, visible to the public.

#### **I. Hours of Operation**

MEHS shelter hours shall be set by the Board of Directors as it sees fit and can be changed in its sole discretion. Offsite adoption events are also held at PetsMart and other locations at times to be determined by the Executive Director. Hours of operation are subject to change.

Employee hours and shelter hours may be curtailed or expanded in the sole discretion of the Board of Directors if the financial condition of MEHS warrants it. Employees are entitled to no notice of the curtailment or expansion of their hours.

#### **J. Overtime**

All hours worked by non-salaried employees in a one-week period in excess of 40 hours shall be considered overtime. Overtime hours shall be compensated at time-and-a-half, based on the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act and its state equivalent. Overtime hours must be approved in writing by the Executive Director. Failure to obtain approval for overtime hours worked may result in nonpayment for those hours and/or discipline up to and including discharge.

#### **K. Time Records**

All non-salaried staff members are to clock in and out using a time clock. Each employee is responsible for accurately recording his/her time in and out. Clocking in for another employee is strictly prohibited, and disciplinary action, including termination, may be taken. Falsification of time records is grounds for immediate termination. The Executive Director is responsible for approving and signing off on all hours. An employee's repeated failure to record time in a timely and accurate manner is grounds for discipline up to and including termination. The Board President or designee is responsible for tracking the vacation, sick leave and overtime usage of the Executive Director.

#### **L. Pay Periods/Paychecks**

Employees shall be paid every two weeks by electronic transfer.

#### **M. Outside Employment**

MEHS has no objection to its employees having outside employment provided it does not interfere with the employee's performance and ability to work for MEHS.

#### **N. Employee Breaks**

Employees shall receive a half-hour unpaid meal break each day to be taken when it is convenient within the first five hours of reporting to work. Employees scheduled for 3 or more consecutive hours are required to take at least a 20 minute meal break within the first five hours of reporting to work. All meal breaks shall be recorded on an employee's time card. Employees, working six or more consecutive hours, shall also receive two 15 minute breaks, one to be taken in the morning and the second to be taken in the afternoon. Breaks shall be staggered so that the shelter is staffed at all times.

#### **O. Employee Animals and Children at Work**



Employees may not bring their animals or their children to the workplace without the consent of the Executive Director. Consent shall be given only in emergency situations where the employee cannot be spared from work.

### **P. Leaves of Absence**

Any employee, on written application to the Executive Director, may be granted an unpaid leave of absence not to exceed 30 days when the Executive Director determines it is for a justifiable cause, taking into account the needs of MEHS. Leaves of absence for less than one week will not be granted.

Extensions of a leave of absence may be granted for additional periods of up to 30 days when the Executive Director determines it is for a justifiable cause, taking into account the needs of MEHS. The extension must be requested in writing by the employee before the expiration of the first 30 day leave of absence.

If an employee accepts employment elsewhere during a leave of absence, he/she shall be considered to have terminated his/her employment with MEHS. Employees not returning to work immediately upon termination of a leave of absence are considered to have forfeited their job.

Leaves of absence based on illness, injury, or disability of the employee or a family member must be supported by a doctor's statement. Employees returning to work from a leave of absence for illness, injury or disability, must provide a doctor's statement that the employee is fit to perform his/her normal duties.

The Executive Director shall make application for leaves of absence and extensions to the Board of Directors.

Vacation time does not accrue during the leave-of-absence period.

#### **4) Temporary Employees**

Employees hired to work only on a temporary basis shall receive no paid vacation or sick days but are required to comply with mandatory employee policies and procedures. Temporary employees shall not be granted a leave of absence.

#### **5) Job Duties**

Job descriptions for the various employee positions are appended hereto. Employees shall at all times comply with all shelter policies, including foster-care policies, as established by the Board of Directors and published to the employees.

With the exception of the Executive Director, all employees shall be required to complete training as directed by the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall complete training as directed by the Board of Directors.

All employees, regardless of job description or title, are responsible for maintaining all areas of the shelter in a clean, safe and sanitary condition. Any employee observing any unsafe, unsanitary, or unclean condition shall remedy it immediately or, if busy, bring it to the attention of an employee who is available to remedy it immediately. All areas of the shelter must be kept clean, safe, and sanitary, including pens and cages, public areas, restrooms, office areas, etc. Any and all animal health concerns shall be immediately brought to the attention of the Veterinarian and/or Executive Director.

6) **Code of Conduct and Discipline**

**A. Proscribed behaviors**

MEHS employees are expected to abide by the standards of work and conduct established for their respective positions, and to behave in a professional manner toward MEHS's management, their coworkers, and the general public.

To that end, the following rules of conduct shall apply to all employees, and the violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment. The list is not exhaustive and is subject to change at any time without notice. The enumeration of the following proscribed behaviors should not be taken as limiting MEHS's discretion to terminate employees for reasons not enumerated. Nothing in this policy affects MEHS's ability to discipline employees up to and including termination of employment as MEHS deems appropriate under the circumstances and in its discretion.

- Inhumanity to any animal;
- Misuse of any medications of MEHS, including unauthorized use of medications for the employee or the employee's own animals or unauthorized release of any medication to any person for an unapproved use, such as use on a non-MEHS animal;
- Unauthorized or unapproved release of any animal from MEHS care, including unapproved release to foster care;
- Repeatedly bringing their animals or children to the workplace, resulting in a disruption of work activities;
- Unauthorized use of keys to the shelter;
- Failure to effectively perform assigned tasks, endangering animals, self, other staff members or the public due to impairment from prescription drugs;
- Use, possession or sale of intoxicants or illegal drugs by an employee while on duty, reporting to work while under the influence of alcohol, narcotics or other drugs, or otherwise violating MEHS's Drug and Alcohol Policy;
- Stealing, regardless of amount or value;

- Unauthorized possession of, removal of, or an attempt to remove property that belongs to MEHS, employees and/or volunteers;
- Carrying, displaying or using a weapon;
- Dishonesty, including falsification of employment application or other records kept in the normal course of business (regardless of when discovered);
- Unauthorized alteration of MEHS documents, forms, or memoranda;
- Sleeping or failing to remain alert while on duty, or failure to report to your supervisor any condition or circumstances that may affect alertness and/or performance;
- Assaulting a fellow employee, investor, guest or other visitor;
- Insubordination or disrespect toward supervisors;
- Commission of any violation of the law that may reflect adversely upon MEHS;
- Destruction of property;
- Engaging in harassment or discrimination of any kind;
- Refusal to cooperate in an investigation by MEHS, including refusal to take a drug, alcohol or medical test when requested to do so;
- Violation of safety and security rules;
- Inadequate work performance, inattention to duties or carelessness in the performance of work;
- Excessive absences or tardiness or failure to provide proper notification of an anticipated tardiness, absence or leave;
- Discourteous, unprofessional or abusive treatment of volunteers, coworkers or others having business with MEHS;
- Making malicious, false or derogatory statements about MEHS, its volunteers, or its employees; or
- Misuse or abuse of MEHS property.

In most instances, disciplinary actions will include a verbal warning, written warning, suspension with or without pay, and immediate termination of employment. However, MEHS reserves the right to determine, in its sole discretion, the appropriate level of discipline under the circumstances and to terminate without giving any warnings.

## **B. Conviction or Arrest**

Employees must notify the Executive Director immediately, and in any event within five (5) days, of any conviction, guilty plea or arrest. Failure to report a conviction or guilty plea or arrest may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **C. Employment Termination**

All employees of MEHS are employees at-will.

### **7) Communications with Media**

All media inquiries regarding MEHS and its operations must be referred to the Executive Director or Development Manager. These are the two individuals who are authorized to make or approve public statements pertaining to MEHS. No other employee, unless under the direct supervision of the Executive Director, is authorized to make any statements. Violation of this policy will not be tolerated.

### **8) Social Media Policy**

This policy provides guidance for employee use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner.

#### **A. Procedures**

The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of MEHS, as well as personal use of social media when referencing MEHS.

- Employees should know and adhere to all MEHS policies when using social media;
- Employees should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as the image of MEHS;
- Employees should be aware MEHS may observe content and information made available by employees through social media, and as such should use their best judgment in posting material;
- Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment;
- Employees are not to public post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public;
- Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Employees should refer these inquiries to authorized MEHS spokespersons;

- If employees and volunteers encounter a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, employees should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of a supervisor;
- Employees should get appropriate permission before referring to or posting images of current or former employees, volunteers, our customers, vendors, or other entities doing business with MEHS;
- Social media use shouldn't interfere with employees' responsibilities at MEHS. MEHS computer systems are to be used for business purposes only. When using MEHS computer systems, use of social media for business purposes is allowed (ex: Facebook, Instagram, and blogs), but personal use of social media networks is discouraged and could result in disciplinary action;
- If employees publish content after hours that involves work or subjects associated with MEHS, a disclaimer should be used, such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and may not represent the position, strategies or opinions of MEHS."

#### 9) **Whistle-Blower Policy**

Existing legal provisions protect individuals working in charitable organizations from retaliation for engaging in whistle-blowing activities. Federal law prohibits employment-related retaliation by all entities against whistle-blowers who provide information on certain financial crimes delineated under federal law. MEHS complies with these federal policies and agrees to assure that the employees, volunteers or clients of MEHS are allowed to report suspected wrongdoing within the organization without fear of retribution. This policy includes the reporting of incidents of theft, financial reporting that is intentionally misleading, improper or undocumented financial transactions, improper destruction of records, improper use of assets, and any other improper occurrences regarding cash, financial procedures or reporting.

Any MEHS employee who is aware of any violation of MEHS policy by another MEHS employee, board member or volunteer should immediately contact their immediate supervisor about the issue. If the employee is uncomfortable reporting to a supervisor, or if the concern be related to a supervisor, the employee is encouraged to contact a member of the MEHS Board of Directors.

Employees should be aware that the confidentiality of their reporting will remain in place throughout the investigation of the proposed infraction to the extent permissible by law. Should the employee feel that his or her rights have been violated under this provision, the employee is encouraged to immediately contact a member of the MEHS Board for further action.

Employees should be aware that Whistle-Blower legislation is not meant to serve as a means for personal retaliation against other employees or supervisors. Should investigation of the allegations reveal that there had been no infraction or rules and that, in fact, the report was made in other than good faith, the reporting employee may be subject to discipline up to and including termination

#### 10) **Destruction of Documents or Business Records**

Charitable organizations are required to maintain permanently their organizational documents, board materials, policies and materials. In addition, MEHS is required, by law, to maintain records on adoptions, surgeries and health records of animals in our care, as well as adoption applications (both successful and non-successful) and financial records. Therefore, MEHS has a strict policy against the destruction of any documents that are part of the business operations and/or charitable records of MEHS. This is particularly true of any documents that might support or diminish any procedures, action or activity that is under review by the Board of Directors, county or state agencies, or legal authorities.

MEHS employees are forbidden from destroying any documents that deal with the day-to-day operations of MEHS and its services. Violation of these policies can lead to immediate termination and possibly legal actions against the employee. Employees who are unsure as to whether documents fall within these guidelines should present the documents to the Executive Director for a decision relative to their destruction.

#### **11) Harassment/Discrimination**

MEHS seeks to make its workplace as pleasant and professional as possible by creating and maintaining a work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, whether sexual in nature or not. MEHS will not tolerate any form of unlawful harassment or any other improper conduct that has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Unlawful harassment based on an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other protected classification is strictly prohibited. Employees of MEHS may not engage in unlawful harassment of other employees or of third parties. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

MEHS takes allegations of harassment seriously, and will take all steps reasonably required to prevent, investigate and promptly correct any harassment or other improper conduct in the workplace or in settings in which employees may find themselves in connection with their employment.

##### **A. Prohibited Conduct**

MEHS's goal is to avoid the risk of unlawful harassment (including sexual harassment) by prohibiting any conduct that may possibly be construed as unlawful harassment, whether it is sexual in nature or not. To achieve this goal, the following conduct is prohibited, regardless of whether it is sufficiently severe or widespread to be unlawful:

- All sexual assaults, advances, or propositions – whether they involve physical touching or not.
- Sexually oriented, suggestive, obscene, or insulting comments, language, or jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, comments about an individual's body, sexual activities, experiences, deficiencies, or preferences.

- Displaying or possessing in the workplace sexually suggestive, revealing, or pornographic objects, pictures, graffiti, or cartoons.
- Physical horseplay, practical joking, leering, unnecessary touching such as patting, pinching, or intentional brushing against another's body, or sexual gestures.
- Threats, or promises of preferential treatment, designed to induce submission to or toleration of any of the above conduct.
- Disparaging remarks, epithets, graffiti or other offensive or inflammatory conduct based on an individual's race, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other protected classification.
- Any other conduct, which if unwelcome and sufficiently severe and widespread, may constitute unlawful harassment.

MEHS employs professional people who should know what conduct is, and what is not, appropriate for the workplace. Employees are advised to refrain from questionable statements, jokes, touching, etc.

## **B. Complaints of Discrimination and Harassment**

### **Reporting Discrimination and Harassment**

All employees of MEHS have a responsibility to come forward and report offensive, harassing, discriminatory or other improper behavior they believe may constitute discrimination and/or harassment. Most incidents of discrimination and harassment can be effectively addressed with a minimum of disruption to the affected employee and MEHS if promptly reported. Failure to report discrimination and harassment or other improper conduct in a timely manner may make it difficult for MEHS to take effective corrective action.

If you believe you or another employee has been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment, you may file a complaint with the Executive Director or the President of the MEHS Board of Directors. If you fail to file a complaint and fail to take other reasonable steps to avoid being harmed by the discrimination and/or harassment, it will be impossible for you to obtain the protection of this policy.

If at any time you feel your complaint has not received prompt and adequate attention, you should immediately contact the President of the MEHS Board of Directors (if not previously contacted). While it may take a short time for MEHS to review and investigate your concerns, feel free at any time to inquire about the status of your concerns by contacting the person receiving your complaint.

### **Investigation of Reports of Discrimination and Harassment**

When an employee complains about discrimination, harassment or other improper conduct MEHS will promptly and thoroughly investigate the employee's concerns. While it will be necessary to discuss the employee's concerns with the alleged offender and possibly other employees, MEHS will attempt to conduct the investigation as confidentially as possible. Upon completion of the investigation, MEHS will inform the person filing the complaint and the alleged offender of the results of the investigation and, to the extent appropriate, any remedial action to be taken.

If it is determined that the terms of this policy have been violated, MEHS will take reasonable steps designed to prevent reoccurrence of the offending conduct. Any employee who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in discrimination and/or harassment in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

If it is determined, after investigating any complaint of harassment or discrimination, that the complaint is not bona fide and was not made in good faith, or that an employee has provided false information regarding the complaint, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual who filed the complaint or gave false information.

MEHS recognizes that in some cases, despite thorough investigation, it may be impossible to determine whether the alleged violations of the Equal Employment Opportunity, Non-Harassment and/or Disability policies have, in fact, occurred. In such cases, MEHS may take action designed to reinforce the effectiveness of these policies and to prevent future violations.

Once MEHS has addressed concerns raised with respect to discrimination, harassment or other improper conduct, it will assume that the problem is not continuing in nature unless it is informed otherwise. If you are again the subject of discrimination or harassment, you must immediately report this reoccurrence to the Executive Director or the President of the MEHS Board of Directors. A prompt and thorough investigation will be conducted.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

Any retaliation against an individual who has complained about or who has participated in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment or other improper conduct is strictly prohibited. If you feel that you are being retaliated against in violation of this policy, immediately contact the Executive Director or the President of the MEHS Board of Directors and your concerns will be promptly and thoroughly reviewed.

### **12) No Smoking Policy**

The MEHS shelter is a no-smoking facility. Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone found smoking in the building. Smoking is permitted outside only in designated smoking areas.



**13) Work-related Accidents**

Work-related accidents/injuries must be reported immediately to the Executive Director. Failure to report an accident/injury may be grounds for termination.

**14) Employee Suggestions**

Suggestions from employees are welcome, and should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director or any member of the Shelter Committee in writing, to be addressed at the earliest convenient meeting of the Shelter Committee. Any employee suggestion that is adopted will be noted in the employee's file and considered in the employee's next performance evaluation.

**15) Staff Adoption of MEHS Animals.**

MEHS staff are entitled to a reduced adoption fee of any MEHS animal at a rate of \$25 per adoption. Staff must comply with all adoption standards, complete all adoption paperwork, and be approved for the adoption by a supervisor. Staff may not adopt more than one animal per calendar year and may not adopt any animal for family members or friends under this policy.

**16) Former Employees Who Return**

All former employees who return to employment will relinquish all seniority and accumulated benefits accrued during the previous tenure. They shall serve the initial probationary period. They may or may not be rehired at their previous wages or salary.

**17) Mileage**

Employees shall be reimbursed for the use of their personal vehicle for MEHS business at the statutory rate only when an MEHS vehicle is unavailable and only when used for the following purposes: delivery or pick up of MEHS animal; attendance at mandatory training sessions away from the shelter; transporting animals to and from adoption events; abuse-and-neglect investigations; picking up necessary supplies and food; for public relations and humane education purposes; or any other activity pre-approved by the Executive Director. All requests for mileage reimbursement must be submitted in writing to, and approved by, the Executive Director. Use of personal vehicles for MEHS business should be kept to a minimum, and trips should be consolidated as much as possible to keep reimbursement to a minimum. Travel in or out of area, or out of state must be approved by the board on a case-by-case basis, at which time maximum travel expenses will be determined by board approval.

**18) Confidentiality**

All information contained in employee personnel files shall be kept strictly confidential by all employees. Employees may review their own personnel files but only in the presence of the Executive Director or in the case of the Executive Director, in the presence of the President of the Board of Directors. Other confidential information learned through employment about MEHS adopters, or potential adopters, must be kept strictly confidential. Violation of confidentiality may be grounds for disciplinary action.

**19) Political Activity**

No employee of MEHS shall endorse on behalf of the Society, or represent that the Society endorses, any candidate for political office.

**20) Applicability**

The provisions of the Employee Policy Manual shall apply only to employees working at the shelter and not to those employed for other purposes (e.g. telephone solicitors and abuse/neglect investigators who do not otherwise work at the shelter). Any veterinarian who is not a full-time employee and who works at the shelter on an as-needed basis must conform to the provisions of the Employee Policy Manual regarding documents, records, sexual harassment and confidentiality.

**21) Modification or Amendment**

This Employee Policy Manual may be amended or modified at any time at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Any such amendments or modifications shall be effective immediately on publication to the employees.

**THIS EMPLOYEE POLICY MANUAL, AMENDED AND APPROVED SEPTEMBER 15, 2022 BY MEHS' BOARD OF DIRECTORS, SUPERCEDES ANY FORMER POLICIES OR PROCEDURES OF MEHS WITH WHICH IT IS INCONSISTENT.**