

# ASCENSION PARISH

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## TOURISM COMMISSION - LOUISIANA

### **ASCENSION PARISH TOURISM COMMISSION Employee Handbook (Revised 2-29-12)**

#### **Welcome!**

Welcome to the Ascension Parish Tourism Commission (“APTC”). Our mission is to actively market, advertise and promote the full range of destination assets for recreational, cultural, environmental, business and visitor travel that are available in Ascension Parish. Through these efforts, we strive to enhance and promote the travel and tourism industry of Ascension Parish on local, regional, national and international levels.

This employee handbook is a source of information about payroll, benefits, procedures, along with general rules and policies. This handbook is not a legal document or an employment contract. Your employment with APTC remains at-will at all times. This Handbook is for your information and cannot anticipate every situation about your employment. It is neither all-inclusive nor inflexible. APTC reserves the right to modify or amend this guide in its sole discretion.

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# **SECTION I. EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

## **Employment At Will**

We anticipate our employment relationship will be mutually rewarding and long term, but employment with APTC is not for a definite term. Employment can be terminated at any time, with or without cause, for any reason or no reason, with or without notice, by either APTC or the employee. No supervisor, manager, or representative of APTC has the authority to enter into an agreement to employ me for any specified period of time or to make any agreement different from the conditions of employment set forth in this statement. I understand any oral or written statement which differs from the condition of employment set forth in this statement is expressly disavowed by APTC and shall not be relied upon by me.

THIS HANDBOOK DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT FOR SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT OR A GUARANTEE OF EMPLOYMENT FOR ANY SPECIFIC DURATION.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity and Sexual and Workplace Anti-Harassment Policy**

APTC provides all applicants and employees equal consideration in hiring, promotion, and all other employment decisions without regard to race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, disability, or any other protected classification. APTC prohibits any form of discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment, by any employee or supervisor. Allegations of discrimination or harassment that come to APTC's attention will be promptly investigated and violators of our Equal Employment Opportunity/Sexual and Workplace Anti-Harassment Policy will be appropriately disciplined.

APTC prohibits harassment based on any protected classification, including unwelcome and offensive comments, jokes, threats, gestures, depictions, images, e-mails, communications, and physical contact of any kind. Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, unnecessary touching, comments about a person's body, showing sexually suggestive pictures or objects, and explicit or implied promises or threats that participation in sexual conduct might affect a person's employment.

Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited. No employee shall be made to submit to sexual advances or to suffer a sexually hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment that unreasonably interferes with such person's work performance. Prohibited sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, sexually suggestive remarks or propositions, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about a person's body, sexual and degrading words used to describe a person, and the display of sexually suggestive objects, cartoons, or pictures. It is a violation of this policy for any employee to engage in such actions to use his or her authority in making sexual advances toward employees over whom such person is authorized to make or recommend employment decisions, to take, recommend, or refuse to take action

because of sexual favors, or to take or fail to take action as a reprisal against any employee for rejecting sexual advances or for reporting sexual harassment or violations of this policy. It also is a violation of this policy for any employee in a supervisory position to allow a subordinate employee to be harassed by another employee, supervisor, or other person with authority on the basis of any protected classification.

No employee may threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that another employee's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect such person's job, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, hours of work, or any other term or condition of employment.

Workplace harassment on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability or any other protected classification also is strictly prohibited. Prohibited workplace harassment also includes actions that are motivated by hostility toward a person's gender or that is gender-based even though such actions may not be sexual in nature. No employee shall be made to suffer a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment that unreasonably interferes with such person's work performance as the result of conduct of another employee, supervisor, or person in authority that is motivated by any of the factors set forth above. Prohibited acts of workplace harassment may include, but are not limited to, racial, ethnic, religious, or gender-based slurs, and any name-calling or acts of physical violence or intimidation that are based on any protected classification. It is a violation of this policy for any employee to engage in such conduct or for any employee in a supervisory position to allow a subordinate employee to be harassed by another employee, supervisor, or person with authority on the basis of any protected classification.

Any employee who believes any discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy has occurred, regardless of whether the alleged conduct affects the complaining employee or any other employee, must immediately or as soon as possible inform his or her Director. If the Director is unavailable or unwilling to assist in the matter the employee shall contact the APTC Board Chairman. Any supervisor or manager who receives a complaint of discrimination or harassment must report such complaint or conduct immediately to the APTC Board Chairman. Any supervisor or manager who fails to report a complaint of discrimination or harassment to the APTC Board Chairman will be subject to disciplinary action. Complaints of sexual and workplace harassment will be treated as confidentially as possible. All complaints of sexual and workplace harassment will be promptly investigated and all violations will be appropriately disciplined.

Any retaliatory action against an employee who reports discrimination or harassment or who provides information concerning a complaint about discrimination or harassment is strictly prohibited. Any employee, supervisor, manager, or officer who engages in prohibited retaliatory action will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

## **Reasonable Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities**

APTC is committed to making reasonable accommodations whenever necessary to allow qualified persons with disabilities to enjoy equal employment opportunities. If an employee needs an accommodation to perform one or more of the essential functions of his/her job, it is a responsibility of the employee to discuss the need for accommodation with his/her Director. An employee's request for an accommodation will be treated confidentially insofar as is practicable, and APTC will make good faith efforts to accommodate the employee's disability, provided the accommodation does not result in an undue hardship for the agency. Although APTC will endeavor to provide an accommodation that is satisfactory to the employee, the accommodation provided to the employee may not necessarily be the accommodation requested or preferred by the employee.

## **Drug Free Workplace**

APTC enforces a no drug/no alcohol policy. The presence in your system or the use of alcohol, drugs, or other substances that can affect your senses and responses during working time and while on APTC's property, or in their vehicle is strictly prohibited. It is a proven fact that drugs are dangerous; they are major contributors to accidents and time lost from work; they interfere drastically with work performance and safety; they are a major cause of crime, so APTC is very serious about drugs.

Safety is important at APTC and all employees should conscientiously follow safe work practices and conduct themselves in a manner, which will achieve productivity of high quality in a safe working environment. In pursuit of those objectives, no potentially dangerous substances are allowed in or APTC's property or vehicle, or in your possession or system while on APTC's property. Furthermore, this policy prohibits an employee's use of drugs off of APTC's property or after hours if such use will result in the presence of detectable levels of the drug in the employee's system during working time or while on APTC's property. A violation of the policy will be considered "gross misconduct."

Any violation of this policy jeopardizes an employee's right to collect unemployment and/or worker's compensation benefits under Louisiana law.

## **Open Door Policy**

APTC is committed to providing a work place that is conducive to a productive and positive work environment. Part of this commitment involves encouraging an open atmosphere in which problems, complaints and questions can be raised and addressed in a timely manner without fear of reprisal.

APTC is available to help you resolve misunderstandings. Employees at all levels are encouraged to direct work-related concerns to the attention of his/her immediate supervisor at APTC. If the employee's concern is about his/her immediate supervisor, or

if the immediate supervisor does not satisfactorily resolve the matter, you may contact APTC Board Chairman directly for assistance.

### **Immigration and Eligibility**

In compliance with the Immigration reform and control act, APTC will hire only individuals who are authorized to work in the United States. All individuals will be required to submit documentary proof of their identity and employment authorization. Employees will also be asked to complete and sign under oath, Immigration and Naturalization Form I-9. Form I-9 requires you to attest that you are authorized to work in the job for which you are hired and that the documents you submit are genuine.

### **Distribution and Solicitation Policy**

For the protection of all our employees, annoying requests, solicitations and distributions are strictly prohibited, with the exception of APTC Board approved activities (i.e. Toys for Tots, etc.), in work areas and during work time. The following policy is to be followed at all times:

- 1) No employee may solicit or distribute any personal literature of any kind for any purpose during the working time of either employee or in work areas. For example raffle tickets, etc.
- 2) No non-employee may solicit or canvass employees or distribute literature on APTC property for any purpose at any time, without the express written permission of an appropriate APTC representative.
- 3) All solicitations and distributions of literature by employees, if approved, will be limited to non-working areas. Harassment or intimidating communication of any kind will not be tolerated. If anyone feels that they are being harassed or intimidated, report the conduct immediately to your supervisor.

## **SECTION II. COMPENSATION AND HOURS**

### **Hours of Work**

Employees will be classified as either part-time employees or regular full-time employees. At the time of hire the employee will be notified of his/her employment status. Part-time employees will work less than 40 hours per week (unless special circumstances require otherwise) and less than 1000 hours per year. Part-time employees will not be eligible for any employment benefits including, but not limited to, earned vacation, paid funeral leave, paid civil leave, paid short term disability leave, etc. Regular full-time employees will be classified either as exempt or non-exempt and will be required to work at least 40 hours per week. Regular full-time employees are eligible for all employment benefits as set forth in this handbook.

The basic work day for full-time employees is established by the APTC Board. Various factors, such as workloads, operational efficiency, staffing needs and client working schedules, may require variations in the employee's schedule. The schedule for part-time employees will be established by the employee's supervisor prior to the start of the work week. The beginning and ending of your standard workweek will be given to you by your supervisor. Punctual and consistent attendance is a condition of employment.

### **Time-Keeping for Payroll**

Your work hours are to be recorded by means of the use of time sheets. You are to report to work no earlier than five minutes before your work schedule begins and leave no later than five minutes after it ends. You are responsible for making sure your time is recorded accurately. If you find any errors, contact your supervisor at APTC immediately. You must record your own time, never the time of another employee.

### **Overtime Pay**

You will only work overtime at the request and authorization of your APTC supervisor. Employees who qualify as exempt from overtime pay are not subject to this policy. Only non-exempt employees qualify for overtime pay.

Overtime pay is based on hours worked per workweek in accordance with legal requirements. Employees shall record all time worked, including time worked over their normal schedule, on their time sheet when the work actually occurs. Time is rounded up or down to the nearest quarter hour. Overtime hours worked in excess of forty hours in a work week will be paid one and one half times your base rate of pay per hour. Hours worked means time actually spent performing job duties. It does not include hours away from work due to vacation, sickness, or holiday even when these days are compensated. Unpaid Sick Leave, personal leave or any other time away from work is also not considered hours worked.

### **Payroll Deductions**

APTC may be required by law to recognize certain court orders, liens, and wage assignments. When the agency receives a notice of a pending garnishment or wage assignment, we will call the employee to inform them of the deduction, the amount of the deduction and when it will start.

APTC is required to make proper deductions from your earnings on your behalf. Amounts withheld vary according to how much you earn your marital status, government employment regulations, and other factors. These state or federal mandated deductions are made until the maximum amount is reached. Some of which include the following: Social Security Tax, Medicare Tax, State Income Tax, etc.

Other deductions may be made from your paycheck with your permission, including but not limited to:

- Other Services Requested by the Employee

Questions regarding your paycheck should be directed to the Director or member of the APTC Personnel Committee.

## **Payday**

Paydays are on a bi-monthly basis (on the 15<sup>th</sup> and last day of the month).

APTC does not provide any payroll advances or extend credit to employees.

In case of an error in your paycheck, contact your supervisor immediately to review the possible error. If you lose your paycheck, NOTIFY APTC IMMEDIATELY. APTC will replace the check after bank authorization. Employees may be charged a fee by APTC for a stop payment order.

## **Final Paycheck Policy**

It is the policy of APTC to issue a final paper paycheck regardless of whether the employee had or is in the process of setting up direct deposit. There is no direct deposit of payroll monies due on an employee's final paycheck. This policy applies even where the employee's first paycheck is also their last paycheck.

It is also the employee's responsibility to leave a mailing address for their W-2 that will be mailed by the end of January following the current calendar year end.

## **Absenteeism and Tardiness**

Absenteeism and tardiness represent a serious loss to you and your company. If you are absent others have to pick up your part, work scheduling becomes difficult and imposes a hardship on your co-workers. It is important that you be at work at your appointed time every day you are scheduled.

If you are going to be absent or late, you must report to your supervisor before this happens. If you fail to report to work for three consecutive scheduled working days without proper notification to your supervisor, you will be considered to have "abandoned" your job and you will be subject to separation.

## **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

Employees who work at APTC which employs less than fifty (50) persons within a 75-mile radius are not eligible for leave under FMLA.

## **SECTION III. PAID LEAVES AND BENEFITS**

### **Workers' Compensation**

Employees who are injured in the course of their employment are entitled to appropriate workers' compensation benefits. Benefits received shall be in accordance with the provisions of applicable Louisiana Workers' Compensation statutes.

This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if the employee is hospitalized, immediately.

Employees who have a work-related injury or illness should inform their supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on the job injury may appear or whether immediate medical attention is needed, it **must** be reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible. If an injury warrants, medical attention should be obtained promptly.

Employees absent from work while on workers' compensation are required to maintain routine contact with their supervisor, and, if eligible, to return to work on light duty, if available. Upon discharge from the health provider, the employee shall submit to the APTC a report from the treating physician authorizing the employee to return to work.

The APTC will vigorously defend any misrepresentation or fraudulent claims presented to the APTC or our insurance carrier. Intentional misrepresentations by the employee may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### **General Leave Provisions Unless Otherwise Specified Leave Provisions Apply Only To Regular Full-Time Employment.**

In order to establish uniform standards governing the use of sick leave and vacation provisions for employees, APTC sets forth the following provisions:

1. Eligibility to Accumulate Leave. Employees shall not be eligible to accumulate any leave days during all periods of absence due to unpaid leave, workers' compensation, or periods of suspension.
2. Continuous Service. Continuous service with APTC shall be considered in determining the amount of leave for which an employee is eligible.
  - a. An employee who has left the service because he or she has voluntarily resigned, "quit without notice", or has been dismissed shall be considered as having interrupted service so that the employee's continuous service

shall be computed from the date on which the employee last entered the service of APTC.

- b. When an employee has been laid off through no fault of his/her own and subsequently re-employed within six (6) months, the period of absence shall not cause the employee to lose prior service credit, but neither shall it be counted in computing the employee's continuous service.
- c. The periods of absence from work due to authorized leave of less than two (2) months duration, funeral leave, civil leave, military leave, vacation leave, sick leave, periods of suspension less than two (2) months duration, or workers' compensation shall not interrupt the employee's continuous service nor shall they be deducted from his/her service. However, periods of absence from work due to authorized leave without pay of two (2) months or more shall be deducted from the employee's continuous service.

### **Short Term Disability Leave**

Short Term Disability Leave is a gratuitous benefit of employment provided to regular full-time employees who have been continuously employed for a period of at least six months for periods of temporary absence due to the employee's short term disability as diagnosed by a qualified licensed medical doctor.

Maximum Short Term Disability Leave granted to an employee during any year is six weeks. Short Term Disability Leave benefits will be calculated based on the employee's base pay rate at the time of the absence and the employee will be entitled to payment of one-half of that base pay rate up to a maximum of six weeks for any Short Term Disability duly diagnosed by a qualified licensed medical doctor. Short Term Disability Leave hours cannot be accumulated and because Short Term Disability Leave is a gratuitous benefit of employment, which does not accrue as a wage, it will not be paid out upon an employee's termination or resignation.

#### **1. Certification of Short Term Disability and Return to Work**

- a. An employee who seeks Short Term Disability Leave shall file with the APTC a request for leave stating the cause of the disability and the amount of leave needed as well as a certification letter from the employee's treating physician indicating the nature of the illness or injury and the necessity for absence.
- b. Medical Exam: If APTC has reason to doubt the validity of the certification provided by the treating physician, or if APTC requires further clarification due to the specific demands of the employee's position, APTC may require, at APTC's expense, a second medical opinion of a physician approved by APTC. If requested, an employee shall be required to submit to such a medical exam as a condition of employment.

2. Unpaid Sick Leave. If all accumulated Short Term Disability Leave is exhausted prior to the time a regular full time employee is able to return to work, the employee may be placed on Unpaid Sick Leave. However, no employee shall be granted leave which exceeds more than six (6) months, whether paid or unpaid, unless a such leave is recommended by the Tourism Commission Personnel Committee and approved by the Tourism Commission Board. When an employee does not return to work at the expiration of this time period and is not on any other form of leave, the employee shall be considered as having resigned his/her position.
3. Planned Medical Treatment. If Short Term Disability Leave is used in accordance with a scheduled surgery, planned medical treatment, or birth of a child, the employee shall provide APTC with thirty (30) days notification, if possible.

## **Vacation**

Newly hired full time employees shall be granted vacation time once they have completed three (3) months of continuous full time service, at which time, the employee shall be eligible for leave and shall be credited with vacation leave retroactive to the date of full time employment. The amount of vacation earned by eligible employees is set forth below:

<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Annual Leave</u>
First Year	40 hours      (1 week)
2 plus years	80 hours      (2 weeks)

1. Vacation Requests. Employees must submit vacation request letters to their supervisor at least two weeks in advance. Only in emergency situations will vacation time be approved when the request is made less than one week in advance. Each request will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Availability of vacation time will be based on staffing needs and requests for leave that have already been submitted by other employees and approved by the Director.
2. Carrying Leave Forward. No unused vacation earned by an employee shall be carried forward to the succeeding calendar year. All vacation must be taken in the calendar year that it is earned. If vacation is earned but not taken by the end of the calendar, then it will be lost and will not carry over to the following year.
3. Payment for Accumulated Vacation Leave. Upon separation of employment, employees will be paid for any vacation leave earned for the current year. The rate of pay shall be computed on the basis of the rate the employee is earning at the time of separation of employment.

Upon death, the balance of vacation leave due the employee shall be paid to his/her beneficiary, as designated in the employee's personnel file for such payment, based upon the rate of pay the employee was earning at the time of death. If no beneficiary is designated in the personnel file, the check shall be made payable to the estate of the employee.

4. Planned Medical Treatment. If vacation leave is used in accordance with a scheduled surgery, planned medical treatment, or birth of a child, the employee shall provide the APTC with thirty (30) days notification, if possible.

## **Funeral Leave**

Full-time employees who wish to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify their supervisor immediately. For the purposes of this policy, APTC defines "immediate family" as the employee's spouse, parent, child, sibling; the employee's spouse's parent, child, or sibling; the employee's child's spouse; grandparents or grandchildren; or equitable step relationships. Up to three (3) days off with pay may be granted to allow the employee to attend the funeral and make any necessary arrangements associated with the death of an immediate family member. Unless otherwise approved by the Tourism Commission Board to allow for extraordinary circumstances, the three (3) days shall be limited to: the day before the funeral, the day of the funeral, and the day after the funeral. Holidays or scheduled days off which may fall within the three day period shall be counted towards the three (3) days of funeral leave.

Up to one (1) day off with pay may be granted to allow an employee to attend the funeral of the employee's or the employee's spouse's aunt/uncle. This day shall be limited to the day of the funeral, only.

Any additional request for extended leave could be addressed on a case by case basis, and the employee will be required to use leave without pay or vacation for the additional days off.

Employees who use funeral leave must make a notation on their timesheets and state in the comments section the relationship that they have to the deceased. If this is not done, the employee will be docked for time that was taken off.

Funeral leave will normally be granted unless there are unusual business needs or staffing requirements.

## **Civil Leave**

Civil leave shall be granted when a full-time employee is performing jury duty in any local, state or federal court, or is serving as an election commissioner in either a primary or general election. Employees must show the jury duty summons or notification for

work as an election commissioner to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate the absence.

Pay for civil leave will be limited to the three days of service calculated on the employee's base pay rate times the number of hours the employee would otherwise have worked on the day(s) of the absence less the jury fees or commissioner pay.

Employees on civil leave are expected to report for work for partial or full days whenever the court schedule permits.

### **Military Leave**

A military leave of absence will be granted to employees, except those occupying temporary positions, to attend scheduled drills or training or if called to active duty with the U.S. Armed Services Reserves or National Guard.

Copies of an order requesting the employee to report to military duty shall be presented to the employee's supervisor (10) days prior to commencement of the duty if possible or as soon as obtained thereafter.

Employees on two week active duty training assignments or inactive duty training drills are required to return to work for the first regularly scheduled shift after the end of training, allowing reasonable travel time.

Every reasonable effort will be made to return eligible employees to their previous position or a comparable one. They will be treated as though they were continuously employed for the purposes of determining benefits based on length of service, such as job seniority.

### **Holiday Pay**

The regular holidays for all regular full time employees shall be those established as follows:

- New Year's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

The rotating holidays shall be those established as follows:

- New Year's Eve
- Mardi Gras
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Day after Thanksgiving

## Christmas Eve

The APTC office will be open during these holidays unless a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday. It shall be the responsibility of the Director to ensure the office is open and staffed with at least one employee on these holidays but no employee shall be required to work more than 3 of these holidays in a given year.

## Other Employee Benefits

APTC may provide life insurance, credit union membership and retirement programs for eligible full-time employees. Details on eligibility and benefits offered by APTC are available at time of employment by the APTC Personnel Committee.

These benefits are at the discretion of APTC and are not a guaranteed condition of employment.

## SECTION IV. GENERAL POLICIES

### Safety and Accident Prevention

Safety is a vital concern of APTC. The ultimate responsibility for safety lies with you. We need your help in promoting safety and the prevention of accidents by observing the following common sense rules.

- Learn your job and how to be safe in the work place.
- Learn the location of fire alarm boxes, extinguishers, and your duties in case of fire.
- Promptly report all unsafe or potentially hazardous conditions, such as the following to your supervisor.

Wet or slippery floors.

Trashy or unsafe areas at work.

Equipment left in halls or walkways.

Exposed or unsafe electrical wiring.

Careless handling of equipment.

Defective equipment.

- Do not operate electrical equipment with wet hands.
- Immediately report all accidents to your supervisor.

- Use proper lifting procedures and get help when needed.
- Wear safety glasses and protective clothing when necessary. Handle hazardous chemicals with care.

## **Personal Appearance**

### **Dress Codes**

*We place a high emphasis on the importance of dress in helping to promote a positive image of APTC to our parish residents and to the public.*

Employees Who Meet the Public and Customers Face to Face

If your position requires that you deal with the public and customers on a face to face basis you are responsible (but not limited to) the following policies:

- Your attire should always be professional, should create a good image of our Tourism Commission and never be revealing or offensive.

Will Not Be Allowed (but not limited to):

- Low cut blouses / shirts / tops or dresses that reveal cleavage
- Short skirts that are shorter than two (2) inches above the knee
- Blouses / shirts / tops that expose the midriff
- T-shirts / Tank tops / muscle shirts
- Clothing with inappropriate print on them
- Jeans of any color
- Clothing made of see-through materials
- Loose/baggy Clothing

All employees are to dress in a fashion that helps to promote a good image of APTC and should be clean, tidy and not wrinkled. Personal hygiene is a very large part of your personal appearance.

### **Dress Codes Violations**

Helping to promote a professional image of our business, Dress Codes / Personal Hygiene will be strictly enforced. Violation of the Dress Codes / Personal Hygiene policy will be as follows:

- Inappropriately dressed employees or employees with poor personal hygiene may be sent home and directed to return to work with proper attire or proper hygiene. Employees will not be compensated for time away from work.
- Employees who continue to violate Dress Codes and the Personal Hygiene policy risk serious disciplinary action.

## **Courtesy**

Courtesy and your attitude toward the people you come in contact with will influence the image people have of APTC where you work-either positively or negatively. Develop an attitude of helpfulness toward your visitors, fellow workers, and supervisors. Courtesy is the key to good human relations.

If you would like further training in such areas as how to handle the telephone properly or supervise people in a more constructive manner please contact your supervisor.

## **Care of Equipment**

You are responsible for safekeeping of equipment used by you. Any damage or failure of this equipment is to be reported to your supervisor immediately. Equipment or supplies are not to be removed from your work premises without proper authorization. When your employment terminates, voluntarily or involuntarily, you must return equipment, name tag, keys or logo shirts provided to you before picking up your final paycheck. This policy permits APTC to recover the cost of such items where they are furnished without a deposit and not returned upon termination of employment with a written authorization signed by the employee.

## **Parking**

Convenient parking may be limited at some work locations. You may be restricted to parking in areas designated by your supervisor at your worksite. The company is not responsible for damage to your car on company property or when carrying out company business.

## **Phone Calls, Personal Mail and Visitors**

The use of business phones is limited to official company business. Local personal calls are to be kept to emergencies only. Friends and relatives should be discouraged from calling during working hours unless there is an emergency. Under no circumstance should you make or charge a long-distance call unless it is work-related and approved by your supervisor.

Good telephone etiquette is important when dealing with the public. Identify yourself and APTC, in a pleasant and helpful voice. Be courteous and confine the conversations to the subject at hand. The first representation that many people have with an office or business is through the telephone. You are encouraged to cultivate a pleasant voice and cheerful manner.

Do not use company stationary, stamps, postage meters or other company supplies for your personal mail. Have all of your personal correspondence sent to your home address, unless you have permission from your supervisor.

Friends, relatives, and unauthorized persons shall not be permitted to visit employees during work hours or at work locations without the express permission of the employee's supervisor or Director.

## **Confidential Information**

The protection of confidential business information is vital to the interests of APTC. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to the following examples: confidential employee data, medical data, citizen data (i.e. visitor sign-in sheets).

Employees who are exposed to confidential information may be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement as a condition of employment. Whether or not such an agreement is signed, no official or employee shall under any circumstances use confidential information to advance the financial or other private interest of himself or others. Employees who improperly use or disclose confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

Furthermore, employees who erroneously or maliciously release confidential information, which is not covered by public records laws, may subject themselves to personal legal liability.

Information provided pursuant to public information laws shall be released only according to prescribed administrative procedures.

## **Computer & Communication Systems Security and Usage**

E-mail, the computers and telephone recorders or voice mail systems provided at work are the property of APTC and are reserved for business purposes only. Such devices are considered to be located in work areas and should be used only for business purposes. All employees waive any right to or expectation of privacy in the use of the APTC's Communication Systems. All employees consent to APTC's access by authorized persons to information on its Communication System.

Consistent with our other policies and well established past practice, employees must refrain from using discriminatory, derogatory, or otherwise offensive comments in leaving messages on telephone recorders, entering information in our computers, or sending e-mail or voice mail messages. Such negative, prohibited comments include those based on an individual's race, national origin, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, disability, religion, or political beliefs. Employees will also refrain from using the Communication Systems to create, transmit or store material containing vulgarities, obscenities, jokes or sexually explicit images or messages of any kind. These Communication Systems are such stations located in designated work areas and not to be used for any purpose other than work. Personal use of the Worksite Employer's Communication Systems during break time for non-business related purposes is

prohibited. In keeping with the solicitation and distribution policy, Communication Systems are not to be used to solicit others.

The same level of care and professionalism should be used in preparing e-mail messages and entering information in our computers as in any normal, work-related correspondence. Care should be used in the transmission and entering of information and should only be sent to individuals who have business to receive them. Transmission of sensitive or confidential information via e-mail, or storing such information in the computer is strictly prohibited. The Communication Systems may not be used to copy and/or transmit documents, software, images or other information protected by copyright without authorization.

### **E-Mail and Internet Access:**

The purpose of this policy is to define the proper use of electronic mail (e-mail) and internet services at APTC. This policy applies to all users of the APTC's computer systems.

APTC is committed to providing an environment that encourages the use of computers and electronic information as essential tools to support our business. It is the responsibility of each employee to insure that this technology is used for proper business purposes and in a manner that does not compromise the confidentiality of proprietary or other sensitive information.

### **E-Mail Procedures:**

- All e-mail correspondence is the property of APTC.
- Employee e-mail communications are not considered private despite any such designation either by the sender or the recipient.
- Offensive, demeaning or disruptive messages are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, messages that are inconsistent with the policies concerning "equal employment opportunity;" and "sexual harassment and other unlawful harassment." Any employee who violates this policy shall be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.
- The Company's distribution and solicitation policy specifically applies to e-mail usage.

### **Internet Procedures:**

- APTC's network, including its connection to the internet, is to be used primarily for business related purposes. Any unauthorized use of the internet is strictly prohibited. Unauthorized use includes, but is not limited to: connecting, posting or downloading pornographic material; engaging in computer "hacking" and other related activities; attempting to disable or

compromise the security of information contained on the worksite employer's computers.

- Because postings placed on the internet may display our address, make certain before posting information on the internet that the information reflects the standards and policies of the worksite employer. Under no circumstances shall information of a confidential, sensitive or otherwise proprietary nature be placed on the internet.
- Subscriptions to news groups and mailing lists are permitted when a subscription is for a work-related purpose.
- Information posted or viewed on the internet may constitute published material. Therefore, reproduction of information posted or otherwise available over the internet may be done only by expressed permission from the author or copyright holder. Unless the prior approval of management has been obtained, users may not establish internet or other external network connections that could allow unauthorized persons to gain access to the worksite employer's systems and information. All files downloaded from the internet must be checked for possible computer viruses. If uncertain whether your virus checking software is current, you must check with an authorized information systems representative before downloading.
- Offensive, demeaning or disruptive messages are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, messages that are inconsistent with policies regarding "equal employment opportunity" and "sexual harassment and other unlawful harassment." Any employee who violates this policy shall be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

## **General Smoking and Workplace Smoking Policies**

In compliance with the Louisiana Smoke Free Air Act and to protect all employees and visitors from secondhand smoke, smoking is not permitted anywhere in the indoor workplace, including without limitation, APTC owned or hired vehicles, private enclosed offices, conference and meeting rooms, the lunchroom and exterior doorways.

This policy strictly prohibits any form of discrimination or unlawful harassment against an individual who reports a violation of this policy. If an employee feels that he/she has been discriminated against or has experienced any job-related harassment for reporting violations of this policy, he/she should immediately report the matter to his or her supervisor, who will investigate it promptly and take appropriate action, including discussing it with the Director. If the employee feels that it would be inappropriate to discuss the matter with his/her supervisor, he/she may bypass his/her supervisor and report it directly to the Director, who will undertake a prompt and thorough investigation.

Compliance with the smoke-free workplace policy is mandatory for all employees and persons visiting the company, with no exceptions. Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action.

## **Dishonesty**

APTC consider theft and dishonesty a serious offense. Taking, unauthorized possessions, or converting another's property or money is a serious offense which can lead to severe discipline up to and including termination from employment.

## **Your Work Environment**

You are expected to demonstrate good judgment, ethical personal behavior and common sense. If your conduct as an employee comes into question, APTC will make an effort to resolve the matter fairly. APTC wants its employees to know what it expects from its employees including the sorts of conduct that will trigger disciplinary action by APTC. While APTC has provided the examples below to its employees for informational purposes only, this list is not exhaustive. Further, APTC specifically reserves the right to modify the disciplinary procedures in any way, as appropriate in management's judgment.

- You are expected to be at your work place and ready to work at the established starting time and are expected to remain at these positions and perform their work assignments until the end of their work shift.
- You are not to gather on APTC's premises or conduct personal business during working hours.
- Certain protective equipment, when provided by the supervisor, must be properly utilized as directed.
- You must report all injuries or accidents to your supervisor at your worksite immediately.
- You must be physically and mentally capable of performing your work assignments with or without reasonable accommodation.
- You must perform all assigned duties and fulfill your responsibilities to APTC. Productivity and workmanship must be up to standard.
- You must be available for work as scheduled or requested.
- You will be responsible for all property that has been placed in your custody.
- You should not neglect your job duties or responsibilities, nor refuse any work assigned to you.

### **The Following Conduct is prohibited:**

- Bringing firearms or weapons of any kind, intoxicating liquors or narcotic drugs or chemicals into the office or onto the premises of work.
- Being on the job while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or intoxicants of any type.
- Falsifying information on forms, reports, records, including personal absence, sickness, time sheets and production records.
- Falsely stating or making claims of injury.
- Removing or using, without authority, property, records or other materials of APTC or other persons.
  - The making or publishing of false, vicious or malicious statements concerning another employee, supervisor, manager, or APTC Board Member.
- Fighting or threatening, intimidating or coercing any visitor or employee.
  - Harassing or retaliating against another employee or visitor.
- Damaging or destroying APTC's property or wasting of materials.
- Loitering or sleeping while on duty.
- Refusing to follow supervisor's directions or instructions or other insubordinate conduct.
- Violating safety or health rules or practices, or engaging in conduct which creates a safety hazard.
- Leaving your department or work before the end of the shift without the authorization of your supervisor.
- Using APTC's facilities and time for personal business, or unauthorized possession or use of APTC's keys.
- Soliciting or accepting tips from visitors or other employees.
  - Employees may not accept any benefit of economic value, gift, gratuity, present, property, or service of any kind or nature, regardless of value, which may be directly or indirectly offered as a result of, or in anticipation of, an employee's position or performance of duties under the APTC. The only exception to this rule is for employees who may be invited as the guest of someone to share a meal. For example, a gift certificate to a restaurant offered by a vendor may not be accepted, but the employee may

accept a vendor's invitation to go out to lunch, provided the vendor eats lunch with the employee.

- Smoking in restricted, posted no smoking areas.

**Note:** The foregoing rules are not intended to be inclusive of the required discipline, proper standards of conduct or obligations which employees must observe at all times.

## **Evaluation Period**

Unless specifically changed in the addendum, employment may be considered to be on a trial basis for the first ninety days of employment (90 days). Eligibility for employee benefits will also be considered the first day following your ninety days of employment.

This Evaluation period gives you an opportunity to get to know the business where you work and introduce you to your responsibilities. During this period you and your supervisor will have an opportunity to observe and evaluate each other. After the trial period of satisfactory performance you will normally achieve regular full-time or part-time employment and may be eligible for employee benefits. If your worksite employer determines that the designated evaluation period does not allow sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate your performance, the evaluation period may be extended for an additional period of time. Your employment remains at will at all times.

## **Performance Appraisal**

Formal performance appraisals are conducted to provide both supervisors and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals.

1. Conducting Performance Appraisals. Performance appraisals should be conducted upon the following occasions:
  - a. By the end of the first 90 days of employment for a newly hired or promoted employee.
  - b. At least once per year.
  - c. By the end of 90 days of the employee's placement in a probationary status due to performance problems.
  - d. When a reduction in staff is necessary.
  - e. At other times as directed by the Tourism Commission.
2. Rating Scale Performance Evaluation. The standards of performance for personnel appraisals shall consist of levels as follows:

**Rating Scale:**

- 5 = Performance consistently exceeds expectations.
  - 4 = Performance consistently meets expectations and job requirements.
  - 3 = Performance usually meets expectations and job requirements.
  - 2 = Performance is marginal or inconsistent in terms of meeting expectations and job requirements.
  - 1 = Performance is below the minimum acceptable requirements of the job.
- Supervisor comments will be required for each performance factor rated 3 or below.

**Constructive Discipline**

The purpose of this policy is to state APTC's position on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory performance and/or conduct in the workplace. The major purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct the problem, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future. Therefore, it shall be the duty of APTC to take such action as circumstances may warrant maintaining the standards of effective employment. In all disciplinary cases, discipline shall bear a reasonable relationship to the violation.

Disciplinary action may call for any of the following:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Suspension without Pay (up to 30 calendar days in any 12 month period)
4. Termination of Employment

The Discipline policy pertains to matters of conduct as well as the employee's competence. However, an employee who does not display satisfactory performance and accomplishment on the job may be dismissed, in certain cases, without resorting to the steps set forth in this policy.

Under normal circumstances, supervisors are expected to follow the three step procedure outlined below. There may be particular situations, in which the seriousness of the

offense justifies the omission of one or more of the steps in the procedure. Likewise, there may be times when a supervisor may decide to repeat a disciplinary step.

To insure that the Tourism Commission's business is conducted properly and efficiently, the employees must conform to certain standards of attendance, conduct, work performance and other work rules and regulations.

When problems in these areas do arise, the supervisor will coach and counsel the employee to address these issues. If, however, the employee fails to respond to coaching or counseling, or an additional incident transpires requiring formal discipline, the following procedures occur.

**The three step Discipline Procedure is outlined as follows:**

**Step 1: Verbal Warning**

The supervisor will meet with the employee to discuss the problem, making sure that he/she understands the nature of the violation and the expected remedy. The purpose of this conversation is to remind the employee of exactly what the rule or performance expectation is, and also reminds him/her that it is their responsibility to meet that expectation.

The employee will be informed that this is the first step in the disciplinary procedure. The verbal reminder will be documented on a form, placed in the employees personnel folder, and will remain in effect for twelve (12) months.

**Step 2: Written Warnings**

If the employee's performance or conduct does not improve or if the employee is once again in violation of APTC's practices, rules or standard of conduct, the supervisor will discuss the problem with the employee, emphasizing the seriousness of the problem and the need for the employee to remedy this problem.

Following the conversation, the supervisor will fill out the approved disciplinary action form. The supervisor and employee will both sign this document, and it will be placed in the employees file.

**Step 3: Suspension / Termination**

If the employee continues to display unsatisfactory performance or violate company policy APTC may choose to implement a suspension without pay or terminate the individual's employment.

As stated above APTC reserves the right to terminate any employee if it determines the policy violation for poor performance warrant immediate termination.

APTC must provide notice of the disciplinary action to the employee in writing, including a statement of the employee's rights to appeal the discipline to the Board Chairman and the Personnel Committee. The employee and the supervisor administering discipline shall sign the original disciplinary action form, and it shall be filed in the employee's personnel file.

The implementation of the constructive discipline policy and procedure should not be construed as preventing, limiting or delaying APTC from taking appropriate disciplinary action against an employee at any point in the procedure, including termination without prior warning, where APTC, in its sole discretion, finds such action appropriate.

## **Human Resources Records**

Your employment record begins with your job application, which is kept in a file in the personnel department of APTC. Performance appraisals, promotions, transfers and other matters that affect you, as employees, are recorded here. Our files are maintained in a manner to ensure access to your information is used properly in the operation of our business.

You should be sure that your records are always kept current. You are required to report changes in address, phone number, number of dependents, or marital status to APTC. If information on your paycheck stub is not correct, or problems arise concerning your taxes, benefits, or other matters please contact your supervisor immediately.

This important information is available for reference and review. If you need employment information for a home loan or other employment verification please notify APTC Director.

You should list APTC as your employer of record for insurance purposes, workers' compensation related injuries, and other instances requiring an employer of record.

## **Resignation**

If you find it necessary to resign, you are requested to give advance notice in writing to your supervisor indicating the last day you will be working. A two-week notice is appreciated. If you resign without notice, you may forfeit your eligibility to be rehired. Final paychecks for employees who quit without notice are mailed to the most recent address on file in the human resources office at the next regularly scheduled pay period, or within 15 days of the separation whichever comes first.

## **Workplace Security**

APTC recognizes the importance of a safe workplace in these troublesome times. In an effort to improve workplace safety and security APTC requests your assistance and cooperation. The following policies are important to our efforts:

- APTC takes all threats seriously and will conduct a thorough investigation of each and every one.
- APTC has zero tolerance for violence and threats of violence.
- It is imperative that everyone enforce our "NO WEAPONS ALLOWED ON THE PREMISES" policy.

- A. Employees are to report all threats to upper management immediately.
- B. Employees are responsible for contacting local law enforcement. Employees are responsible for notifying members of management in the event that they are not present at the time of an incident.

### ***Conclusion***

We have tried to cover in this handbook the basic policies, rules, regulations, benefits, responsibilities, and obligations that affect your employment with the Ascension Parish Tourism Commission. There are some points, however, that have not been covered. When questions arise, you should not hesitate to try to find a solution with your supervisor. You should keep this handbook accessible so that you can review it from time to time.

Any references in this handbook to gender or use of pronouns referring to a specific gender are to be construed to mean any employee regardless of sex. The terms "ATPC", "Tourism Commission", and "Ascension Parish Tourism Commission" have been used interchangeably throughout this handbook to refer to the organization comprised of the office of the APTC, its appointees, and its employees.

This employee handbook is not an employment contract between you and the APTC. The contents of this handbook may be changed to reflect changes in policy, or changed rules. Employment with ATPC is for no set term and you are free to leave at your will. We hope this does not occur. We hope you give sufficient advance notice if you decide to leave (customarily two weeks notice). Also, ATPC reserves the right to adjust its work force at any time, including the right to separate employees when necessary.