

UNIFIED PERSONNEL SYSTEM

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Beverly Waldron
Interim Director

To: The Honorable Chair and Members of the Unified Personnel Board

From: Beverly Waldron, Director of Human Resources (interim)

Date: January 7, 2016

Subject: Information Item: Personnel Rules Communications

With the passing of the new Personnel Rules, Unified Personnel Board Policies, and the new Appeal Procedures at the December 3, 2015, Unified Personnel Board Meeting, the Human Resources Department began a communications campaign to inform employees and supervisors.

We began with an email blast to all employees on December 4th. The blast contained a link to a flyer and to a prepared webpage. The webpage contained links to the new rules, policies, and procedures but also had links to four other documents:

- Announcement Flyer
- Frequently Asked Questions
- What Changed in the Personnel Rules?
- Current Rules versus New Rules: Where Did They Go?

The new rules were also the cover story for the December issue of The Pen (our newsletter).

At the end of the first two weeks (12/20/2015) our web traffic to these pages was as follows:

Item	Hits
Webpage	1,715
Announcement flyer	1,120
What changed?	555
Current versus new rules	239
FAQs	157
All Personnel Rules	215
Rule Intro	92
Rule Definitions	69
Rule 1 Classification Plan	273
Rule 2 Filling Positions	214
Rule 3 Compensation	443
Rule 4 Time Off	471
Rule 5 Reduction in Force	189
Rule 6 Discipline	211
Rule 7 Grievances	127
Rule 8 Political Activities	117
Total	6,207

This volume of traffic shows that our communications efforts have paid off and employees are exploring the new rules, policies, and procedures.

While we have received a few questions around paying on the mid-point for general increases and inquiries about whether or not a particular employee qualifies for the two additional floating holidays, the overwhelming response from employees and supervisors has been very positive.

Our plans are to have additional communications to all employees in January as the new rules go into effect and we will continue to use the AskHR section of The Pen to address questions that may be of interest to all employees.

For your information we have attached copies of the four documents mentioned above.

I would like to recognize and thank Camille Evans, Mary Sault, and Tim Closterman for their outstanding work to make all this happen.

Updated Personnel Rules

Now shorter and easier to understand

The Pinellas County Personnel Rules have been updated and the changes are effective January 1, 2016. Here are some highlights:

- **Fewer rules.** There are 8 rules instead of 28.
- **Some rules converted to policies.** There are now 11 Unified Personnel Board policies regarding items that are administrative or procedural in nature.
- **Easier to find information.** The rules were reorganized so that similar information is grouped together. For example, there used to be four separate rules regarding leave time. Now there is just one: *Rule 4 - Time Off*.
- **Easier to understand.** The text is in plain English instead of “legalese” whenever possible.
- **Two additional floaters for long-time employees.** Employees with 25 or more years of service will get two additional floating holidays the next year (e.g., those with 25+ years by 12/31/15 will get two more floaters in 2016).
- **Midpoint increases.** General pay increases will be calculated on the midpoint of a pay grade range, rather than an employee’s actual salary.
- **Promotional increases.** Higher promotional pay raises are possible with a range of 4 to 10%, or above 10% by the Appointing Authority in consultation with the Human Resources Director.
- **Funeral leave expanded.** Grandparents-in-law were added to the immediate family, the three paid days off no longer need to be consecutive, and the time off doesn’t have to be used to attend a funeral or memorial service, but for any needed purpose.
- **Disciplinary actions revisions.** Oral and Written Reminders are now called Verbal and Written Warnings. Disciplinary guidelines have been combined so there are a total of 38 infractions instead of 49. Employees are required to sign Verbal or Written Warnings to acknowledge receipt.
- **Time periods changed from working days to calendar days.** For example, the time to file a grievance was changed from 10 working days to 15 calendar days to avoid confusion about working on a weekend, holidays, alternate work schedules, etc.

To learn more, visit www.pinellascounty.org/hr/rules.



Personnel Rules Update FAQs

1. Why did the Personnel Rules change?

The goals were to:

- Reorganize the rules so that similar information was placed together and that information was easier to locate.
- Make the rules easier to understand and use plain language instead of “legalese” whenever possible.
- Ensure that the Unified Personnel Board and Human Resources Department’s authority is consistent with the provisions of the Personnel Act.

2. Who changed the rules?

A Rules Committee was formed and met for the first time in May 2012. Many employees from a variety of Appointing Authorities served on the committee and provided assistance including members of the Employees’ Advisory Council (EAC) and the County Attorney’s Office. Drafts were shared with the Appointing Authorities and the EAC. The Unified Personnel Board (UPB) met five times in 2015 to review the proposed changes. The UPB ratified the revised Personnel Rules on December 3, 2015.

3. When do the new Personnel Rules go into effect?

The new Personnel Rules and Unified Personnel Board policies are effective as of January 1, 2016. Actions and transactions occurring during the transition period will be handled as follows:

Item:	Adjudicated under the rules, policies & procedures in effect on:
Grievances	The date the employee first became aware of the aggrieved situation
Termination appeals	Effective date of the termination
All other actions	The effective date of the action

4. What has changed?

There are many revisions. Review the complete rules ([Current Personnel Rules effective through 12/31/15](#) and [New Personnel Rules effective 1/1/16](#)) or see:

- [Updated Personnel Rules Announcement Flyer](#)
- [What Changed in the Personnel Rules?](#)
- [Current Rules versus New Rules: Where Did They Go?](#)

5. Where are the new Personnel Rules?

The rules are posted at www.pinellascounty.org/hr/rules or view below:

- [Rule 1. The Classification Plan](#)
- [Rule 2. Filling Positions](#)
- [Rule 3. Compensation](#)
- [Rule 4. Time Off](#)
- [Rule 5. Reduction in Force](#)
- [Rule 6. Discipline](#)
- [Rule 7. Employee Grievances](#)
- [Rule 8. Political Activities](#)

6. Were more rules added?

No. The rules were reduced from 28 rules to 8.

7. Why were some rules removed?

- Some rules were combined to group similar content within a single rule. For example, there were separate rules for holidays, annual leave, extended illness leave and leave of absence. These were combined into a new *Rule 4: Time Off*.
- The content of some rules was deemed to be more appropriate as policies. For example, *Rule XXII. Resignations* was converted to a policy. For more info, see [Current Rules versus New Rules: Where Did They Go?](#)

8. How do the new rules impact current disciplines, grievances or terminations?

The new rules have no impact on current disciplines, grievances or terminations. The new rules apply to any actions after January 1, 2016.

9. How do the new Personnel Rules impact funeral leave?

Funeral leave has been expanded. The rule no longer specifies that the 3 days leave with pay time must be used “to attend a funeral or memorial service” since the time may be used for any purpose needed. Also, the 3 days no longer need to be consecutive, and grandparents in-law were added as immediate family (new *Rule 4. Time Off*).

10. How do the new Personnel Rules impact leave time?

There are no changes in leave time except that a new provision has been added to reward employees with 25 or more years of service with two additional floating holidays the following calendar year (new *Rule 4. Time Off*). An employee who has 25+ years by 12/31/15 will get two additional floaters in 2016. An employee who reaches the 25 year mark in 2016 will receive the additional floaters in 2017, and so on.

11. How do the new Personnel Rules impact new hires?

Starting pay for new hires may be above the minimum with approval of the Appointing Authority in consultation with the Human Resources Director. Previously, starting pay which exceeded the third quartile of the pay grade range required approval of the Personnel Board (new *Rule 3. Compensation*).

12. How do the new Personnel Rules impact discipline?

Changes include:

- Oral and Written Reminders are renamed Verbal and Written Warnings.
- Disciplinary guidelines have been combined to eliminate redundancies and simplify the process of choosing an appropriate infraction. There are now a total of 38 infractions instead of 49. For example, the new infraction #D28 for offensive conduct combines #25 (profane language), #26 (violating decency) and a portion of #38 (offensive conduct).
- Some of the discipline ranges have been revised.
- Employees are required to sign a Verbal or Written Warning to acknowledge receipt.

13. How did the new Personnel Rules affect employee grievances?

Changes include:

- The time periods were changed from working days to calendar days for grievances and appeals to avoid confusion about how to count holidays, alternate work schedules, working on weekends, etc. For example, the time to

file a grievance was changed from 10 working days to 15 calendar days, and the time to schedule an informal grievance committee meeting was changed from 20 working days to 30 calendar days.

- The rule more clearly delineates what issues may be grieved, and an easy-to-use chart has been added to clarify the level of grievance for each issue.
- The 4-step grievance process has been simplified to 3 steps: (1) department head, (2) Informal Grievance Committee and (3) Unified Personnel Board. Talking with one's supervisor (informal resolution) is still the recommended starting point, but is not included as part of the formal process.

14. How do the new Personnel Rules impact employees who are maxed out?

Employees who are at the top of their pay grade will be able to receive raises in a lump sum (new *Rule 3. Compensation*). This was the practice for the past few years but it has now been codified in a rule.

15. How do the new Personnel Rules impact raises?

- Promotional raises: The new *Rule 3. Compensation* allows for higher raises, with a promotional increase range of 4 to 10% at the discretion of the Appointing Authority, or above 10% in consultation with the Human Resources Director. Previously a promotion of 1 to 2 pay grades netted a 4% pay increase, and a promotion of 3 or more pay grades netted an 8% pay increase (or the new minimum pay rate for that pay grade, whichever is higher).
- General raises: The new *Rule 3. Compensation* allows for general pay increases to be calculated on the midpoint of a pay grade range, rather than an employee's actual salary. The midpoint of a salary range is considered the market value of a position. Raises based on the midpoint increase the amount of a raise for employees paid less than market value. Once an employee's pay exceeds the market value (midpoint), the increases slow down accordingly.

16. How do the new Personnel Rules impact demotions?

Pay reduction due to demotion is now at the discretion of the Appointing Authority so long as the pay does not fall below the minimum or exceed the maximum of the new pay grade (new *Rule 3. Compensation*). Previously, the rules specified that an employee's pay was reduced 2.5% for one pay grade reduction, 5% for two grades and 1% for each additional lower pay grade.

17. How do the new Personnel Rules impact military training or duty?

No changes. The rule regarding Military Training/Duty was simplified to state that leave will be granted in accordance with Florida and Federal law (new *Rule 4. Time Off*).

18. Were the appeals procedures for the Personnel Board changed?

Yes. Updates to the procedures for appealing grievances or terminations to the Personnel Board include:

- Changed working days to calendar days.
- Restructured for better organization and understanding including making the language consistent.
- Added *Section 15. Quorum* which requires at least 5 of the 7 Board members to be present at an appeal hearing.

19. How will the updated Personnel Rules be communicated throughout the organization?

A website has been created at www.pinellascounty.org/hr/rules which includes copies of the new rules, a comparison of the current and new rules, list of changes, and these FAQs. Also, there will information in *The Pen* newsletter, a Two-Minute Tuesday video and a [flyer](#) that may be posted to employee bulletin boards.

20. What about the current/old Personnel Rules? Will they still be accessible?

Yes. After January 1, 2016, the “old” Personnel Rules will still be available on the Human Resources website at www.pinellascounty.org/hr/policies.

21. Who should I contact with questions?

- For questions about applying the rules, check with your supervisor.
- For questions about a particular area such as hiring or discipline, contact staff in the area of Human Resources which handles that function such as employment or employee relations (see contact info at www.pinellascounty.org/hr/contacts.htm).
- Also, you may direct general questions to Human Resources at 464-3367 or AskHR@pinellascounty.org.

22. Will someone from Human Resources be available to discuss rules changes at staff meetings?

Yes. Contact Human Resources at 464-3367 or humanresources@pinellascounty.org to request a speaker.

What Changed in the Personnel Rules?

UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS

The Personnel Rules have been updated, and the changes are effective January 1, 2016. The following details some of the key revisions:

1. **Easier to find information.** The rules have been reorganized so that similar information is grouped together. For example, the new *Rule 4. Time Off* includes holidays, leave time, annual leave, funeral leave, extended illness, etc. Previously there were four separate rules with information about leave time.
2. **Easier to understand.** The text is in plain English instead of “legalese” whenever possible.
3. **Fewer rules.** There are 8 rules instead of 28:
 - Rule 1. The Classification Plan
 - Rule 2. Filling Positions
 - Rule 3. Compensation
 - Rule 4. Time Off
 - Rule 5. Reduction in Force
 - Rule 6. Discipline
 - Rule 7. Employee Grievances
 - Rule 8. Political Activities
4. **Some rules converted to policies.** There are 11 Unified Personnel Board (UPB) Policies regarding items that are administrative or procedural in nature:
 - UPB Policy #1: Employee Identification
 - UPB Policy #2: Selection for Classified Service Positions
 - UPB Policy #3: Employee Performance Management Program
 - UPB Policy #4: Employee Training -Tuition Reimbursement
 - UPB Policy #5: Outside or Non-County Employment
 - UPB Policy #6: Personnel Files
 - UPB Policy #7: Nepotism
 - UPB Policy #8: Resignation from County Service
 - UPB Policy #9: Transfer to Inactive Status
 - UPB Policy #10: Discipline Policy
 - UPB Policy #11: Grievance Process

The UPB Policies have the same compliance and enforcement requirements as the Personnel Rules. The policies must be followed and the wrongful application of a policy is grievable.
5. **Two additional floating holidays for longtime employees.** A new provision has been added to reward employees with 25 or more years of service with two additional floating holidays the following calendar year (new *Rule 4. Time Off*). An employee who has 25+ years by 12/31/15 will get two additional floaters in 2016. An employee who reaches the 25 year mark in 2016 will receive the additional floaters in 2017, and so on.

6. **Funeral leave.** The rule no longer specifies that the three days leave with pay time must be used “to attend a funeral or memorial service” since the time may be used for any needed purpose. Also, the three days no longer need to be consecutive, and grandparents in-law were added as immediate family (new *Rule 4. Time Off*).
7. **General raises based on midpoint.** The new *Rule 3. Compensation* allows for general pay increases to be calculated on the midpoint of a pay grade range, rather than an employee's actual salary. The midpoint of a salary range is considered the market value of a position. Raises based on the midpoint increase the amount of a raise for employees paid less than market value. Once an employee's pay exceeds the market value (midpoint), the increases slow down accordingly.
8. **Promotional raises.** The new *Rule 3* allows for higher raises, with a promotional increase range of 4 to 10% at the discretion of the Appointing Authority, or above 10% with consultation with the Human Resources Director. Previously a promotion of 1 to 2 pay grades netted a 4% pay increase, and a promotion of 3 or more pay grades netted an 8% pay increase (or the minimum pay rate for the new pay grade, whichever is higher).
9. **Demotions.** Pay reduction due to demotion is now at the discretion of the Appointing Authority so long as the pay does not fall below the minimum or exceed the maximum of the new pay grade (new *Rule 3. Compensation*). Previously, the rules specified that an employee's pay was reduced 2.5% for one pay grade reduction, 5% for two grades and an additional 1% for each additional lower pay grade.
10. **Raises for maxed-out employees.** Employees who are at the top of their pay grade will be able to receive raises in a lump sum (new *Rule 3. Compensation*).
11. **New hire pay.** Starting pay may be above the minimum with approval of the Appointing Authority in consultation with the Human Resources Director. Previously, starting pay which exceeded the third quartile of the pay grade range required approval of the Personnel Board (new *Rule 3. Compensation*).
12. **Military training/duty** was simplified to state that leave will be granted in accordance with Florida and Federal law (new *Rule 4. Time Off*).
13. **Probation period for exempt to classified.** Exempt employees who move to a classified position are now required to serve a one-year probationary period (new *Rule 2. Filling Positions*).
14. **Annual leave chart simplified.** The leave chart in the new *Rule 4. Time Off* no longer includes a separate chart for employees hired before 12/25/94 since they now fall within the existing leave chart as employees with 20+ years of service.
15. **Calendar days.** The specified time periods in the rules were changed from working days to calendar days to avoid confusion about how to count holidays, alternate work schedules, working on weekends, etc. For example, the time allowed to file a grievance was changed from 10 working days to 15 calendar days, and the time to schedule an informal grievance committee meeting was changed from 20 working days to 30 calendar days.

16. **Disciplinary actions.** Updates in the new *Rule 6. Discipline* include:
 - Oral and Written Reminders are renamed Verbal and Written Warnings.
 - Disciplinary guidelines have been combined to eliminate redundancies and simplify the process of choosing an appropriate infraction. There are now a total of 38 infractions instead of 49. For example, the new infraction #D28 for offensive conduct combines #25 (profane language), #26 (violating decency) and a portion of #38 (offensive conduct).
 - Some of the discipline ranges have been revised.
 - Employees are required to sign a Verbal or Written Warning to acknowledge receipt.
17. **Employee grievances.** Updates in the new *Rule 7. Employee Grievances* include:
 - The rule more clearly delineates what issues may be grieved, and an easy-to-use chart has been added to clarify the level of grievance for each issue.
 - The 4-step grievance process has been simplified to 3 steps: (1) department head, (2) Informal Grievance Committee and (3) Unified Personnel Board. Talking with one's supervisor (informal resolution) is still the recommended starting point, but is not included as part of the formal process.
18. **Seniority points and veterans' preference.** The new *Rule 2. Filling Positions* no longer includes the awarding of points for seniority. Eligible veterans will continue to be given a preference in each step of the hiring process.
19. **Political office.** Exempt employees were removed from the rule. It now applies to classified employees only. The policies regarding exempt employees' political activity are governed by the Appointing Authority and state law.
20. **Unified Personnel Board Appeal procedures.** The procedures for appealing grievances or terminations to the Personnel Board have been updated to:
 - Changed working days to calendar days.
 - Restructured for better organization and understanding including making the language consistent
 - Add *Section 15. Quorum* which requires at least 5 of the 7 Board members to be present at an appeal hearing.
21. **Definitions.** The current *Rule 1. Definitions* was removed, and terms are now defined within each rule as needed. Also, a supplemental list of definitions was added at the end of the rules.
22. **Worker's compensation.** The current *Rule 17. Worker's Compensation Injuries* was removed since this is covered by state law and Risk Management policies. The provision to allow 10 hours of paid leave per pay period for treatment of injuries is now listed in the new *Rule 4. Time Off*.
23. **Student work.** The current *Rule 26. Student Work Experience Programs* was removed since this is covered by provisions within the job classification system for interns, project assistants, etc.
24. **Disabling illness.** The current *Rule 27. Disabling Illness* was removed since this is covered by federal and state law including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Current Rules versus New Rules: Where Did They Go?

The summary below indicates the current Personnel Rule number, and where the information is found in the new Personnel Rules or Unified Personnel Board Policies.

Current Rule until 12/31/15	New Rule or Policy as of 1/1/16
I. Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms defined within each rule as needed • Supplemental definitions at the end of the Rules
II. Recruitment, Selection, and Examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 2. Filling Positions • Policy 2: Selection for Classified Positions • Policy 7: Nepotism
III. Eligible Registers, Certifications, Appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 2. Filling Positions • Rule 3. Compensation • Policy 2: Selection for Classified Positions • Policy 7: Nepotism
IV. The Classification Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 1. The Classification Plan
V. The Pay Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 3. Compensation
VI. Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 2. Filling Positions • Rule 3. Compensation • Policy 2: Selection for Classified Positions • Policy 7: Nepotism
VII. Demotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 2. Filling Positions • Rule 3. Compensation
VIII. Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 2. Filling Positions • Rule 3. Compensation
IX. Position Reclassification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 2. Filling Positions • Rule 3. Compensation
X. Pay Grade Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 3. Compensation
XI. Standard Workweek, Overtime Compensation, and Standby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 3. Compensation
XII. Holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 4. Time Off
XIII. Annual Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 4. Time Off
XIV. Extended Illness Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 4. Time Off

Current Rule	New Rule or Policy as of 1/1/16
XV. County Service Optional Exchange of Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repealed in 2011; leave exchange is now offered during annual enrollment for benefits
XVI. Leave of Absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rule 4. Time Off
XVII. Worker's Compensation Injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covered by policies from Risk Management, the Appointing Authorities and state law
XVIII. Employee Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy 4: Employee Training - Tuition Reimbursement
XIX. Employee Performance Review Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy 3: Employee Performance Management Program
XX. Adjustment of Employee Grievance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rule 7. Employee Grievance Policy 11: Grievance Process
XXI. Outside or Non-County Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy 5: Outside or Non-County Employment
XXII. Resignations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy 8: Resignation from County Service
XXIII. Layoff, Displacement and Re-Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rule 5. Reduction in Force
XXIV. Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rule 6. Discipline
XXV. Political Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rule 8. Political Activities
XXVI. Student Work Experience Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rule 3. Compensation
XXVII. Disabling Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covered by the County's American with Disabilities Act Policy, Family Medical Leave Act, etc.
XXVIII. Transfer to Inactive Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy 9: Transfer to Inactive Service

New Personnel Rules

Introduction

Rule 1. The Classification Plan

Rule 2. Filling Positions

Rule 3. Compensation

Rule 4. Time Off

Rule 5. Reduction in Force

Rule 6. Discipline

Rule 7. Employee Grievances

Rule 8. Political Activities

Definitions