

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK FOR CVT**

# **Concho Valley Council of Governments**



**Revised: April 2023**

# CONTENTS

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MISSION OF THE CONCHO VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS .....	7
DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY .....	7
ABOUT THE CONCHO VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS .....	7
ABOUT CONCHO VALLEY TRANSIT .....	7
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.....	8
HANDBOOK.....	9
EMPLOYMENT TERMS, CONDITIONS AND BUSINESS ETHICS.....	10
COMPLIANCE.....	10
EMPLOYMENT-AT-WILL .....	10
GIFTS AND GRATUITIES .....	10
CVT FREE WILL CONTRIBUTIONS .....	11
CONFLICT OF INTEREST .....	11
INTERNS, FIELD STUDENTS, VISTA, CONTRACTORS AND TEMPS .....	12
JOB POSTING.....	13
SELECTION OF EMPLOYEES .....	13
OUTSIDE ACTIVITY.....	15
OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT/MOONLIGHTING .....	16
EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES (NEPOTISM) .....	16
TRANSFERS, PROMOTIONS AND DEMOTIONS.....	16
POLYGRAPH EXAMINATIONS .....	17
PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS.....	17
LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS AND REGISTRATIONS .....	18
JOB DESCRIPTIONS.....	18
ORIENTATION.....	18
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT .....	18
TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....	19
EDUCATION ASSISTANCE POLICY.....	19
RULES OF CONDUCT .....	21
OPEN DOOR POLICY.....	21
EMPLOYEE INVESTIGATIONS .....	21
PROBLEM - SOLVING PROCEDURE.....	21
DISCIPLINARY ISSUES AND PROCEDURES.....	22
FIREARMS AND WEAPONS.....	23
ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, DRUG USE, AND TESTING .....	23
MEDICATION USE WHILE DRIVING.....	25

HORSEPLAY .....	25
THEFT .....	25
ABUSIVE, PROFANE, OR OBSCENE LANGUAGE.....	25
VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE .....	25
ARRESTS AND INCARCERATIONS.....	27
INSUBORDINATION.....	27
CONFLICT OF CONSCIENCE.....	27
CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLIENT INFORMATION .....	27
DUTY OF LOYALTY.....	28
FALSIFICATION OF RECORDS / FACTS .....	28
FOOD PREPARATION AND STORAGE.....	28
GAMBLING.....	28
PERSONAL APPEARANCE, HYGIENE AND DRESS .....	29
PERSONAL TELEPHONE CALLS AND CELLULAR PHONE USAGE.....	30
PERSONAL USE OF CVT PROVIDED CELLULAR PHONES.....	31
CLIENT AND GUEST RELATIONS .....	31
SUGGESTIONS AND CLIENT FEEDBACK.....	32
VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS.....	32
CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE .....	32
POLITICAL ACTIVITY .....	33
RESTRICTING PRODUCTIVITY/OUTPUT.....	33
SOLICITATION.....	33
UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE.....	34
NON-COMPETE COVENANTS.....	34
TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT .....	34
RETIREMENT .....	35
ACCESS TO PERSONNEL RECORDS.....	35
PAY .....	36
PAY POLICIES .....	36
CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES.....	36
NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEE TIME AND PAY .....	37
EXEMPT EMPLOYEE PAY .....	38
PROCESS FOR COMPLAINTS REGARDING PAY.....	39
RECORDING OF WORK AND NON-WORK TIME .....	39
INCENTIVE PAY .....	40
BAD WEATHER AND UNEXPECTED OR EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY.....	40
BENEFITS.....	41

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.....	41
HOLIDAYS .....	41
LEAVE .....	42
VACATION LEAVE.....	42
SICK LEAVE .....	43
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT.....	45
BEREAVEMENT/ EMERGENCY LEAVE.....	46
MILITARY LEAVE.....	46
LEAVE OF ABSENCE .....	47
JURY DUTY.....	47
VOTING RIGHTS .....	47
SOCIAL SECURITY.....	47
TEXAS COUNTY AND DISTRICT RETIREMENT SYSTEM.....	47
DEFERRED COMPENSATION .....	48
HEALTH SERVICES.....	48
WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE .....	48
CONTINUATION OF GROUP INSURANCE (COBRA).....	49
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.....	50
POLICIES .....	51
WORKING HOURS.....	51
FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE .....	51
TELEWORK OR REMOTE WORK.....	52
ATTENDANCE .....	54
UNEXCUSED ABSENCES FROM WORK .....	54
EMPLOYEE RELATIONS.....	54
SECURITY .....	55
INTERNET CONDUCT AND USE.....	56
SOCIAL MEDIA .....	56
CVCOG COMMUNIQUEs & MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS.....	57
ID BADGE.....	57
KEY CARD / FOB .....	58
USE OF COMPANY VEHICLES .....	58
DENIAL OF PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE.....	59
OTHER WORKPLACE ISSUES .....	60
EMPLOYEE INFORMATION SYSTEMS.....	60
MONITORING EMPLOYEE ACTIVITY.....	60
RECORDING DEVICES IN THE WORKPLACE.....	61

RESTRICTED ITEMS .....	61
PATENTS, COPYRIGHTS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY .....	61
TRAVEL .....	62
WHISTLEBLOWERS.....	62
RETALIATION.....	62
HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND BULLYING .....	64
HARASSMENT / DISCRIMINATION.....	64
SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	64
BULLYING .....	66
HIV/AIDS DISCRIMINATION.....	66
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES .....	67
CVT PROGRAMS.....	69
ADA (AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT) PARA-TRANSIT TRANSPORTATION.....	69
NON-EMERGENT MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (MTP) .....	69
VIDEO EVENT RECORDING .....	70
CVT PROCEDURES .....	72
INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN .....	72
FUEL CARD PROCEDURE.....	72
SAFETY ANNEX .....	73
SAFETY GUIDELINES.....	73
GENERAL OFFICE SAFETY .....	73
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES .....	75
FIRE SAFETY.....	75
BOMB THREAT PROCEDURE.....	75
SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES / SUBSTANCES.....	75
IN CASE OF ROBBERY.....	76
ACTIVE SHOOTER.....	77
PARKING/PARKING LOT SAFETY.....	78
SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURE.....	78
CVT OPERATOR'S GUIDE & PROCEDURES .....	80
GENERAL RULES.....	80
ADDITIONAL ORDERS AND INSTUCTIONS .....	80
UPDATING PERSONAL INFORMATION .....	80
REPORTING FOR DUTY .....	81
FIT FOR DUTY .....	82
OPERATOR DISQUALIFICATION .....	82
OPERATOR CONDUCT .....	82

OPERATOR REPORTS POLICY .....	83
OBSERVANCE OF SCHEDULES & ROUTES .....	83
OPERATOR COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES .....	83
FARES COLLECTION PROCEDURE .....	84
VEHICLE OPERATION .....	85
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE .....	88
VEHICLE CONDITION REPORT (VCR).....	88
PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE .....	89
SCHEDULES & TRANSFERS .....	89
VEHICLE OPERATION & DRIVING BEHAVIOR .....	91
CLIENT RELATIONS.....	95
WHEEL CHAIR LIFTS/RAMP AND LIFT/RAMP EQUIPMENT .....	99
LOADING CLIENTS .....	99
UNLOADING A CLIENT .....	100
ACCIDENT PROCEDURES .....	101
ACCIDENT REPORT FORM.....	103
CLIENT ILLNESS OR INJURY .....	103

## MISSION OF THE CONCHO VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Concho Valley Council of Governments (CVCOG) is a voluntary organization of local governments which fosters cooperative efforts toward resolving problems, policies, and plans that are common and regional.

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### DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

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CVT has a duty and responsibility to represent CVCOG in a professional manner to the clients, the general public and community stakeholders; to maintain the highest regard for the safety of its clients and others; to provide our clients with consistent, high-quality service; to meet or exceed job standards and client requirements; to maintain the highest standard of ethical and legal conduct; to properly care for all equipment; to take an active role in communicating ideas, issues, and suggestions to management; and to forward thorough and correct reporting to appropriate parties.

## ABOUT THE CONCHO VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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CVCOG is a voluntary association of local governments (cities, counties, schools and special-purpose districts) established in 1967 under the provisions of Section 391 of *Texas Local Government Code*. CVCOG is an independent political subdivision covering the 14-county Concho Valley region.

CVCOG's primary purposes are to make plans to guide the future development of the region and to provide joint services which local governments are unable to provide individually.

CVCOG is funded by grants and contracts from state and federal governments, as well as by local funds.

CVCOG conducts major programs in services for the aging, public transportation, 9-1-1 emergency communications, criminal justice planning and training, economic development, regional services, 211, and Head Start.

CVCOG is governed by a General Assembly made up of local elected officials representing each of the local governments, which meet annually; and an Executive Committee chosen from General Assembly representatives, which meets monthly to conduct the on-going business of CVCOG.

The Executive Committee appoints an Executive Director, who serves as CVCOG's chief administrative officer and is responsible for hiring and supervising all other employees.

## ABOUT CONCHO VALLEY TRANSIT

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Concho Valley Transit (CVT) is a department under the umbrella of CVCOG allowed by Chapter 458 of the Texas Transportation Code. CVT receives local, state, and federal funding and serves as a rural transit district (RTD) and as an urban transit district (UTD). CVT services 12 counties in central west Texas, including Coke, Concho, Crockett, Irion, Kimble, McCulloch, Menard, Reagan, Schleicher, Sterling, Sutton, and Tom Green.

As an RTD, CVT operates demand-response services in the urbanized area (UZA) of San Angelo and its 12-county service area; providing regular out-of-county bus service. As a UTD, CVT operates fixed-route service and ADA para-transit service within the city limits of San Angelo. In addition, CVT contracts with Medicaid to provide non-

emergency medical transportation for eligible residents of the Concho Valley Region. CVT also partners with various local agencies and organizations, to provide transit services to their clients.

The Concho Valley Council of Governments (CVCOG) is the parent agency of CVT. For the purposes of this handbook, CVCOG and CVT will be used interchangeably.

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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This Employee Handbook for CVT employees has been developed to establish uniform procedures for handling the daily operations of the CVT. When applicable, policy statements are accompanied by procedures, guidelines, and clearly defined steps to assist in implementation. Uniform and consistent implementation of these policies and procedures allows CVT to provide safe, friendly and reliable transportation for our clients. In the event that there is no written policy that addresses a specific operational issue, remember that there is no substitute for sound and reasonable judgment.

# HANDBOOK

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This Handbook will assist in learning about the Concho Valley Council of Governments (CVCOG) and Concho Valley Transit (CVT). Specifically, it will help understand many important points about how we work with our employees, guests, and each other.

CVCOG has an obligation to help you get acquainted as quickly as possible with the way we do business. That includes making you familiar with our practices, policies, procedures, and training you properly. Your responsibility includes working in accordance with our policies and procedures

This Handbook has been created to give you direction on how to handle yourself, and what is expected of others. The policies and procedures in this handbook are not to be interpreted as a contract for employment. The Executive Director, with the permission of the Executive Committee, has the complete right to alter, modify, delete, change, add or interpret as deemed necessary. You will be notified of any such changes, deletions, additions, modifications and decisions. All changes are subject to approval from the Executive Director and the Executive Committee. This handbook and its policies will be reviewed annually to ensure Federal and State compliance as well as to ensure all policies in place create clear and concise boundaries that are in line with our commitment to service our community. Policies not listed in this handbook (such as financial policies) can be found on our CVCOG team website, or you can seek direction from your supervisor, Director, or Human Resources (HR) at any time.

CVT is required by federal, state, and local agencies to have certain specified policies in place that do not affect other areas or operations of CVCOG. These specified policies are published in this separate handbook that addresses the items listed in the CVCOG Handbook along with CVT's additional requirements. This Handbook supersedes all other policies and Statements regarding employment issues.

The policies outlined in this Handbook are established by the CVCOG Executive Committee. These policies completely replace and supersede any and all personnel policies previously adopted individually or as a set of policies by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Director, along with HR, is responsible for the administration of CVCOG'S personnel policies and procedures. The Executive Director will make all final decisions regarding policies and in the event of his absence may delegate authority to appropriate staff to act on his or her behalf in the administration of these policies and procedures.

These personnel policies apply equally to all employees of CVCOG unless a class of employees is specifically exempted by these policies. In cases where federal or state laws or regulations supersede policy for specific groups of employees, such laws or regulations will control only insofar as necessary for compliance. Please note this is a possibility since the varied parts of CVCOG work from different program regulations and grant requirements.

While it is impossible for any policy to take into account every situation that may occur, it is essential that every employee understand, commit and use common sense in applying all CVCOG policies. The emphasis must be to never compromise the intent of any policy.

CVCOG's leaders, Department Directors and supervisors are willing to answer your questions and give you the help you need in order to learn about CVCOG, its organizational structure, and its policies.

# EMPLOYMENT TERMS, CONDITIONS AND BUSINESS ETHICS

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## COMPLIANCE

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Any violation of the policies and procedures listed in this handbook will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Any CVT employee having knowledge of any violations that require reporting are required to promptly report such violation to the appropriate level of management. Each supervisor, director, manager, and officer of CVCOG is responsible for policy compliance in their area of responsibility. When questions arise concerning any aspect of these contact your supervisor, director, manager, or HR.

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## EMPLOYMENT-AT-WILL

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Nothing in this Handbook is to be interpreted as representing a contract of employment. CVCOG is an employment-at-will employer. This means both you and CVCOG have the freedom to terminate our employment relationship at any time, with or without cause. No representative of management has the authority to make any arrangements or commitments to the contrary, or seek to enter into employment contracts without the express, written approval of the Executive Director.

CVCOG's employees maintain only the highest ethical standards in the conduct of CVCOG's affairs. The intent of this policy is that each employee conducts CVCOG's business with integrity, and complies with all applicable laws in a manner that excludes considerations of personal advantage or gain.

Further, the Executive Director and the Executive Committee have the right and freedom to alter, modify, change, delete, add to or interpret the guidelines as they deem appropriate.

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## GIFTS AND GRATUITIES

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An officer or employee may not: solicit or accept or agree to accept a financial benefit other than from CVCOG/CVT, that might reasonably tend to influence his or her performance of duties for CVCOG/CVT or that he or she knows or should know is offered with intent to influence the employee's performance; accept employment or compensation that might reasonably induce him or her to disclose confidential information acquired in the performance of official duties; accept outside employment or compensation that might reasonably tend to impair independence or judgment in performance duties for CVCOG/CVT; make any personal investment that might reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the employee's private interest and duties for CVCOG/CVT; or solicit or accept or agree to accept any financial benefit from another person in exchange for having performed duties as a CVCOG/CVT employee in favor of that person.

Gifts, favors, and payments may be given to others, at CVCOG'S expense, if they meet all of the following criteria:

- They are consistent with accepted business practices,
- They are of sufficiently limited value and in a form that cannot be perceived as a bribe or payoff,
- They are not in violation of applicable law or generally accepted ethical standards; and
- Public disclosure of the facts will not embarrass CVCOG or CVT.

Gifts, Favors, Entertainment and Payments received by CVT Employees:

Employees shall not seek or accept, for themselves or others, any gifts, favors, entertainment, or payments without a legitimate business purpose; neither shall they seek or accept personal loans (other

than conventional loans at market rates from recognized lending institutions) from any persons or business organizations that do, or seek to do business with, or are a competitor of CVT.

In the application of this policy, employees may accept for themselves or their family's common courtesies usually associated with customary business practices. These include but are not limited to:

- A strict standard is expected with respect to gifts, services, discounts, entertainment or considerations of any kind from suppliers
- Lunch and/or dinner with vendors sometimes including spouses as long as the invitation is extended by the vendor
- Gifts of small value from vendors such as calendars, pens, pads, knives, etc.
- Gifts of perishable items usually given during the holidays such as hams, cookies, nuts, etc., are acceptable
- The receipt of alcoholic beverages is allowed but employees must follow CVCOG and CVT Drug and Alcohol Policies.
- Day outings such as golf, fishing, and hunting are acceptable if offered by the vendor and the vendor accompanies the employee to the event. These are not to be solicited by CVCOG employee and must be approved by the Executive Director. Participation by the employee's family is not acceptable
- It is never permissible to accept stocks or other forms of marketable securities of any amount.
- A gift of cash or cash equivalent, such as gift cards, should not be accepted in violation of generally accepted ethical standards
- Employees are not expected to buy gifts for supervisors, managers, and/or directors. If so, management employees should not accept gifts of more than limited value from those under their supervision. Gifts to management employees should be given on their own free will and it is understood that the employee will not receive any form of fiduciary gains
- Operators of paid charters and/or rentals may receive unsolicited tips and must not exceed the cost of the charter/rental

For further clarification, seek out guidance from your supervisor or HR. *The exception to this policy is employee incentives received via donation and delivered through CVCOG Engagement Committee activities.*

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### CVT FREE WILL CONTRIBUTIONS

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Gifts may be received only in the case of free-will contributions, wherein the contributor and contractor sign a written, dated statement which includes both a complete description of gift and a description of the recipient of the gift. The statement must indicate that the Contributor understands that any services provided to the contributor by the contractor are payable by the department, and that the gift is made as a free-will contribution by the contributor. The statement must be retained by the contractor for the period of time specified in the records retention section of the contractor's contract.

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Employees should avoid any situation which involves or may involve a conflict between their personal interest and the interest of CVCOG/CVT. As in all other facets of their duties, employees dealing with clients, suppliers, contractors, competitors or any person doing or seeking to do business with CVCOG/CVT are to act in the best interest of CVCOG/CVT. Each employee shall make prompt and full disclosure in writing to their manager of any potential situation which may involve a conflict of interest. Such conflicts include:

- Ownership by the employee, or by the employee's family, of a significant interest in any outside enterprise which does or seeks to do business with or is a competitor of CVCOG/CVT.

- Serving as a director, officer, partner, consultant, or in a managerial or technical capacity with an outside enterprise which does or is seeking to do business with or is a competitor of CVCOG/CVT. Exceptions to this may be approved by the Executive Director.
- Acting as a broker, finder, go-between or otherwise for the benefit of a third party in transactions involving or potentially involving CVCOG/CVT or its interests.
- Any other arrangements or circumstances, including family or other personal relationships, which might dissuade the employee from acting in the best interest of CVCOG/CVT.

Employees of CVCOG/CVT will neither have financial interests in the profits of any contract, service, or other work performed for CVCOG/CVT nor derive personal profit directly or in-directly from any contract, purchase, sale or service between CVCOG/CVT and any person or company.

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## INTERNS, FIELD STUDENTS, VISTA, CONTRACTORS AND TEMPS

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**Field Students and Interns** –CVT understands the importance of working with local universities and other entities to provide hands on job experience to those seeking out degrees or jobs in fields related to public service. CVT will continue to seek out qualified applicants for field students & internships while working in partnership with said agencies to provide experience to potential future applicants. All field students & interns interested in creating an agreement with CVCOG will be required to follow the same process of applying for a regular position allowing CVT to follow its hiring process. Field students & Interns will also comply with the following guidelines;

- Acknowledgement that any field student’s assignment or internship with CVT is purely an educational experience
- A field student’s assignment, project, task, or internship will have no exchange of wages unless otherwise arranged
- Any creations, inventions, designs, projects, or intellectual material developed while working as a field student or during internships are property of CVT regardless of whether they were developed by external consultants, employees of CVT, field students or interns
- There are no expectations of a job offer once a field student assignment or internship is completed
- Field students and interns are required to follow all policies and procedures
- The Department Director and or Executive Director have the right to terminate a field student’s assignment or internship at any time

*Please see CVT Intern Policy and Procedures for more information regarding CVT interns.*

**VISTA** – AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) staff are those that provide needed resources to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to increase their capacity to lift communities out of poverty. At times, CVCOG may utilize these VISTAs in order to provide support to our programs.

The VISTA Director will contact the HR department with details such as the date the VISTA will start, location, shift, duration of the assignment, etc. Based on the information provided, HR will do the onboarding and conduct orientation.

VISTAs will be issued a badge and may be given a keycard & keys for building access. They are responsible for following the ID Badge and the Key Card/Keys Policies.

The VISTA Director and VISTA Program Manager will be responsible all aspects of the VISTA’s employment, during the assignment, which includes training, job responsibilities, time management, and will also monitor performance. If any performance concerns arise, the supervisor/manager or VISTA Director must notify the HR department immediately. Disciplinary actions will be handled by the HR department and AmeriCorps.

**Contractors and Temporary Workers** – CVCOG acknowledges that a portion of its staffing requirements may be met through the use of agency temporary (temp) workers and contractors. The HR department will oversee the management of the selection and hiring processes related to temporary and contract staff.

The Department Director will contact the HR department with a request for a temp worker and will provide details such as the date the worker is needed, job responsibilities, location, shift, duration of the assignment, and recommended salary. HR will contact a staffing agency with a request for a temp worker, provide the specifics of the position, review the candidates, and work with the Department Director to make a selection.

The Department Director will be responsible for signing the temp’s timesheets during the assignment and will monitor performance. If any performance concerns arise, the supervisor/manager or Department Director must notify the HR department immediately. Disciplinary actions will be handled by the HR department and the temp agency’s representative.

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## JOB POSTING

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In accordance with Texas Government Code 656.024, as soon as a position becomes available or vacant, CVCOG will publicly list said vacancy on, at minimum, the Texas Workforce Solutions and CVCOG website along with other appropriate platforms. Jobs are posted, in accordance with the requirements of the EEO Policy/Affirmative Action Plan. If appropriate and effective, newspaper advertisements, flyers placed in the community and word of mouth may be utilized as well. Vacancies will be posted for a minimum of 10 (ten) working days and notice provided to current employees.

Certain situations may call for the Executive Director, to not publicly or internally post a position, or post for less than 10 (ten) days. The Executive Director will use guided discretion based on operational and program need or the availability of a highly qualified internal candidate. If this situation occurs, CVCOG will continue to adhere to all local, state, and federal EEO requirements.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all CVCOG employees are made aware of and have the opportunity to apply for open positions, either before or concurrent with CVCOG’s consideration of external candidates for the position. While it is CVCOG practice to promote from within whenever possible; certain business conditions could cause a position to be filled without posting internally.

Regardless of the source of applicants, CVCOG seeks to locate the **best-qualified** person for the job.

All regular part time and full-time employees with 90 days or more of continuous employment with CVCOG or with approval from the Executive Director and who have satisfactory performance and attendance records are eligible to apply for any CVCOG position. Operational exceptions may be approved by the Department Director and Executive Director.

Qualified and eligible employees who wish to apply for a posted position must notify their Department Director. Interested employees will be prompted to submit their resume and CVCOG’s online application. These employees may contact HR for guidance in applying for these positions.

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## SELECTION OF EMPLOYEES

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Our application and screening processes are designed and carried out in a **non-discriminatory** manner in order to maintain compliance with Federal, Local, and State Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws; CVCOG will not discriminate against applicants based on a person's protected status such as race, color, religion, national

origin, age, sex, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, disability status, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected group status. It is our goal to employ the best-qualified applicant for the job. Additionally, we seek to promote from within whenever we can find the best-qualified person for the job inside our workforce.

All candidates for employment must fully complete CVCOG's online application. The forms must be completed in detail and electronically signed by the applicant to verify the accuracy and completeness. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. A resume will not be accepted in place of a completed application. If an applicant wishes, the resume may accompany the completed application form as additional information.

In compliance with our funding agency and contractual requirements, it is our policy to conduct background investigations on all new employees. The following types of searches may be conducted during the hiring process:

**Verification of Identity** – CVCOG requires all employees to have a valid and current license or some form of verifying documentation, used to verify and person's identity.

**Reference Checks** – To ensure that individuals who join CVCOG are well-qualified and have strong potential for success and productivity, CVCOG may verify previous employment references prior to extending a job offer.

**Education Verification** – CVCOG may verify education listed on your job application as CVCOG feels necessary.

**Employment Verification** – CVCOG may seek to verify all prior employment.

**Criminal Records Search** – CVCOG will conduct a criminal records search for information such as misdemeanor or felony convictions, open arrest warrants, or other related illegal activities. CVCOG will obtain a sex offender record and any other criminal record search required by their department. CVCOG employees may not have any felony or misdemeanor convictions within the last 7 years from the time of the employment offer. Felony or misdemeanor convictions outside of the 7-year time frame are up for review by the Department Director and Executive Director. Severity of charges as well as length of time passed since charges were made is taken into consideration. Immediate disqualification may occur if the applicant has charges of physical violence, domestic abuse, child abuse/neglect, or elderly abuse during any time on their search history.

**National and State Data Bases** – Depending on department requirements, CVCOG may submit your information through various national data bases such as the Office of Inspector General (OIG) US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Exclusion and the Texas Health and Human Service Commission Exclusion data bases. Immediate disqualification may occur if the applicant is listed on either of these exclusion data bases, in accordance with program requirements.

**Social Security Number Verification** – CVCOG verifies an individual's connection to his or her social security number by participating in a government program called E-Verify. This program determines an employee's eligibility to work in the United States.

**Driving Eligibility** – CVCOG/CVT verifies if an individual has a valid and current 's license. In order to access CVT vehicles, employees must have a valid and current license. Some CVT positions require a Department of Public Safety 3-year history check. Based on the position, and in order to meet all funding requirements and contractual obligations, applicants may be excluded from hire based on the outcome of these results. The history check may be conducted on an annual basis but no less than every 5 years.

**Skills/Competencies** - Certain jobs may require an applicant to test for the position, in order to evaluate skills with computers, internet/e-mail, word processing, program-specific hardware, or other specific aptitudes.

Certain employees must be capable of being bonded. This may be a required condition of employment, if the position involves the handling of money or other negotiable instruments.

**The following types of searches may be conducted during employment:**

Any of the aforementioned searches may be conducted during an employee's tenure as based on program and contractual requirements but may also include:

**Office of Attorney General (OAG)** - CVCOG will enter every hired employee's information to the Child Support Division of the OAG data base, in accordance with Federal and State Law. CVCOG will follow all laws and regulations regarding these types of withholdings

**Verification of Employment** - All requests for information on current or former employees must be referred to the HR Department. Prospective employers, financial institutions, and residential property managers routinely contact employers requesting verification of a former or current employee's work history and/or salary. Requests must be submitted in either physical or electronic written format, with a wet signature, and all responses will only be provided in written format. Regardless of employment status and/or termination reason; the only information to be provided will be dates of employment, last position held, salary or hourly rate, nature of the separation (voluntary or involuntary) and rehire status (only if available). Representatives of Government or law enforcement agencies, in the course of their business, may be allowed access to additional personnel file information.

**Rehire Policy**- Employees that have terminated from employment on a permanent basis are not prohibited from applying for any position with CVCOG. Due to TCDRS requirements (see pg. 36 for more details), previous employees, no matter reason for termination, will not be considered for rehire until a full 3 calendar month period has passed. The following items will be taken under consideration before CVCOG rehires an employee;

- Previous resignation was submitted in a timely manner
- Reason for leaving
- Severity of disciplinary issues
- Ability to meet all current hiring requirements
- Previous supervisors suggested rehire status (if available)

Previous employees have no guarantee of rehire. HR and the Department Director will seek the approval from the Executive Director regarding rehiring employees.

CVCOG reserves the right to add to or take away from the searches listed above in accordance with grant, local, State or Federal, and contractual requirements. The Executive Director has final discretion on if an applicant meets CVCOG background requirements.

*See the Employee and Volunteer Background Check Policy for more information.*

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## OUTSIDE ACTIVITY

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Employees may not engage in any outside employment, activity, or enterprise determined by the Executive Director to be inconsistent or incompatible for employment with CVCOG or affects the employee's job performance adversely. CVCOG does not intervene in the private lives of its employees. However, should a conflict with a client, or an employee's activity, be of a nature that could tarnish the image of CVCOG or hurt our

business position in the community, the Executive Director reserves the right to enforce proper disciplinary action.

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### OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT/MOONLIGHTING

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Moonlighting is considered as additional employment. Such extra employment will be allowed if it does not interfere with your duties to CVCOG and is not in competition with CVCOG. Should any outside financial endeavor become damaging to our business position in the community, CVCOG will require corrective action on your part.

If a supervisor or director becomes aware that an employee's second job is having an adverse effect on his or her job with CVT, a supervisor or director may request the employee to make a choice between employment with CVCOG/CVT or with their alternate employer.

The operator will need to submit an *Employee Availability / Change of Availability* form upon starting employment and anytime that schedule changes.

All outside employment must be conducted COMPLETELY off of CVCOG premises. CVCOG equipment, supplies, or space may never be used toward outside employment.

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### EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES (NEPOTISM)

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Nepotism is the demonstration of favoritism toward a relative. The practice of nepotism in the hiring of personnel or awarding of contracts is forbidden by CVCOG.

No person may be hired who is related within the first (parent or child), second (brother, sister, grandparent or grandchild) or third (great-grandparents, great-grandchildren, parent's brother or sister, or nieces and nephews) degree of affinity (marriage) or consanguinity (blood) to any member of the Executive Committee or to the Executive Director. No person who is related to a member of the Executive Committee or to the Executive Director in one of the prohibited degrees may continue in CVCOG's employ. The exception will be if the employee has been employed continuously by CVCOG for a period of:

**At least 30 days**, if the Executive Director or member is appointed;

**At least 6 months**, if the Executive Director or member is elected at general election (other than the general election for State and county officers); or

**At least 1 year**, if the Executive Director or member is elected at general election for State and county officers.

All other employees may not directly supervise any member of their family. CVCOG strongly advises against hiring family members within the same department. Any applicant related in any way by affinity or consanguinity to a current employee must have Executive Director approval before hiring.

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### TRANSFERS, PROMOTIONS AND DEMOTIONS

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All internal job transfers, promotions and demotions are handled on the same non-discriminatory basis as new hires; CVCOG will not discriminate against applicants or employees based on a person's protected status such as race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, disability status, veteran status, genetic information or other protected group status. All internal job transfers, promotions and demotions will be subject to a 90-day probationary period. If an employee is within their 90-day probationary

period, their transfer, promotion or demotion will be subject to the Department Director's discretion with the approval of the Executive Director.

A **transfer** is an assignment to another job of equal pay, status, or benefits. A transfer is not a promotion. Transfers to other positions can be requested by you, the Department Director, or both. The purpose of a transfer may be: to relocate you in a more suitable position; to achieve better scheduling; to address personal issues; to be able to retain you if you might otherwise have to leave; or to train you in other tasks so that you can ultimately make a more significant contribution to the organization and our clients.

A **promotion** occurs when you move to a new position with more pay or status. Promotions will always put the best-qualified person into a job that demands more skills, knowledge and judgment. There are no scheduled promotions or raises at CVCOG.

Previous performance management discussions and seniority are important considerations for both transfers and promotions. Any employee wishing to be considered for a promotion or transfer must notify the Department Director and submit an updated resume and online application to HR.

A **demotion** may occur in your best interest, in the best interest of CVCOG, or both. A demotion is a move to a job with lesser pay or status.

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## POLYGRAPH EXAMINATIONS

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In the event of an investigation, or other CVCOG required event you may be asked to submit to a polygraph examination. Any polygraph examination will be limited solely to inquiries related to CVCOG's business affairs. You will not be asked about your personal or private affairs unrelated to CVCOG's business affairs. Any polygraph examinations are conducted in compliance with the "Employee Polygraph Protection Act of 1988."

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## PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

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With the exception of CVT and the Head Start Department, CVCOG does not generally conduct health-related inquiries or medical examinations on job applicants, although there are certain positions in CVCOG which may require agility testing prior to starting work.

All Concho Valley Transit (CVT) operators and Road Supervisors are required to maintain a valid Medical Examiners Certificate (MEC), by passing a Department of Transportation (DOT) physical. The DOT Physical is listed as a requirement on the job descriptions for ALL operators and ALL Road Supervisors.

CVT will pay for one (1) DOT physical per calendar year. If the employee fails their DOT physical or is issued a Medical Examiners Card for a period of less than one (1) calendar year, the employee is responsible for any additional cost in regards to maintaining the Medical Examiners card, any cost for a subsequent DOT Physical within one (1) calendar year, or any cost associated with additional medical testing needed to obtain their MEC.

If an employee has a disability that requires special consideration, please inform HR so a review of your eligibility and or a plan for an accommodation can be implemented.

Any physical examination, including agility testing, is conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act and EEO Laws.

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## LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS AND REGISTRATIONS

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Some jobs, such as operators, require a Commercial Diver License, PASS certification, First Aide & CPR certification. Other jobs may require a specific certification or registration. Certain funding &/or contractual obligations may require this as a condition of being able to legally and ethically perform the job. In these cases, it is your responsibility to provide proper documentation prior to being allowed to perform any duties of the job or work with your supervisor on obtaining certifications in a timely manner. All licenses, certifications and registrations are verified prior to any performance of job duties but may take up to 30 days to obtain.

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## JOB DESCRIPTIONS

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A job description has been prepared for each position, including general duties and responsibilities, minimum qualifications, and reporting and supervisory information.

You will be presented with your specific job description, which will remain available for you to review. You must sign a copy of your job description.

Job descriptions are reviewed periodically for content and accuracy. Job descriptions are updated as needed; revisions and updates to your job description do not necessarily give reason for a pay raise.

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## ORIENTATION

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On your first day, you will be given a general orientation to CVCOG. Basic safety issues and training will be given to you during this time but CVT's Safety & Compliance Department will provide additional safety procedures & guidelines that are specific to transit operations. During your first few weeks and months your supervisor will work closely with you and your supervisor to help you learn your duties quickly and to provide you with guidance as you need it.

Transit Operators will receive Passenger Assistance Safety & Sensitivity (P.A.S.S.) training to become a P.A.S.S. certified operators within the first two weeks of employment. This, along with intensive hands-on training with operator trainers, ensures that every operator starts with all of the tools necessary to succeed in providing safe, friendly, & reliable services.

Feel free to ask your immediate supervisor or Department Director for understanding and clarification of any new words, terms, or concepts you do not understand. Questions can also be directed to HR.

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## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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When you have completed the 90-day introductory period, you will receive a review of your performance. This is to determine early on how you are performing. During this review, we will point out job functions that you are performing satisfactorily. Any areas that may need further development will be discussed and documented for your benefit. At this time, and anytime throughout your employment, the employee and CVCOG have the right to terminate employment.

Your supervisor does have the discretion to meet with you sooner to discuss early interventions for any behaviors and or performance issues that require immediate action. In this case, the disciplinary process may be applied.

Subsequent performance management will be conducted semi-annually via discussions with your supervisor. This provides semi-annually checks on your performance, development, satisfaction of your job requirements,

job knowledge, growth plans and needs. These annual performance management sessions will become part of your permanent record of performance and may be taken into consideration for pay increases, promotions, etc.

*See Disciplinary Issues and Procedures section for more information.*

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## TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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CVT provides several avenues for you to advance your knowledge. This starts with the new skills you learn to perform the basics of your job functions. Depending on your position, there may be opportunities for you to attend job-related programs. CVT has a training program for both operators and administrative staff. This training could be performed in-person, by computer, and/or virtually and is managed through the Safety & Compliance Department, which is required by their funding agencies and contractual requirements.

If CVT requires you to attend any educational or training course, conference, or seminar, CVT will adjust your schedule to allow for the necessary time off, with pay, and will reimburse you for associated costs, including tuition, or registration fees, and authorized travel, meals, and lodging. When appropriate, CVCOG may prepay registration fees, hotel costs, and/or airline or other public transportation costs directly to the entity involved. See the Travel Policy for additional information regarding more detailed travel instructions.

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## EDUCATION ASSISTANCE POLICY

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CVCOG/CVT strives to be a desired and competitive workplace and to hire the most qualified of applicants. Various factors contribute to an applicant's decision to work for CVCOG, but benefits are high on the list. This Education Assistance policy would be an additional benefit to working at CVCOG and is established to allow CVCOG to offer, when appropriate and authorized by funding agencies, the opportunity for employees to receive assistance in higher education expenses. CVCOG does not guarantee issuance of assistance. This policy would not only offer an additional benefit, but support CVCOG in succession planning. Employees advancing their education increase their skill and knowledge base, which in turn benefits their program, and CVCOG as a whole.

**Eligibility:** This policy applies to full-time and part-time employees. Temporary and seasonal employees, along with interns, are not eligible for any type of Education Assistance. For the purposes of this policy, program and department will be used synonymously.

**Guidelines:** Education assistance will be specific to each department and or program. CVCOG administers a various number of programs with each program having its own set of requirements and regulations. Some programs may ask employees to show proof of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application completion to determine if they may qualify for grants or other assistance. In addition to program requirements, CVCOG also includes the following criteria for an employee to be eligible to request education assistance;

- Employee's program and/or funding agency must allow for such expenses.
- Education assistance is contingent on availability of funds within the program budget.
- Employee must have been employed for six months (unless program requirements specify otherwise).
- Employees must be in good standing and not have received any type of disciplinary reprimand in the last six months.
- Degree or certification sought must be relevant to their current position or as a component of a documented department succession plan.
- The employee must complete their department specific form and include a statement stating their purpose and commitment.

- Classes should be scheduled per the availability of the employee, with minimal disturbance to their regular work schedule.
- No more than two hours per week of paid worked time are allowed for coursework.
- For graded courses, employees must maintain a GPA of 2.5 or higher at all times.
- Departments will specify their individual allowances and requirements every fiscal year or upon the implementation of their plan.
- Once coursework is completed, the employee must stay employed with CVCOG for a minimum of three years or will be required to pay back a pro-rated amount of the assistance provided.
  - An exception would be in the event of an involuntary termination.
- The maximum amount of assistance, regardless of department, will be \$3500 unless authorized by the Executive Director.
- Departments will have different individual requirements to meet but may require monies be returned in the event of a failing grade or termination of employment, (whether voluntary or involuntary) prior to designated time.

**Types of Education Authorized:**

- Required program certifications
- Associate degree programs
- Bachelor degree programs
- Graduate degree programs
- Any other degree or certification required by the program

**Approval:** Department Directors will approve the initial employee request, then submit to the Executive Director for final approval. Education Assistance forms are located on the CVCOG team site or may be requested from your supervisor/director.

**Changes to Education Assistance Policy:** The Executive Director, with approval from the Executive Committee, reserves the right to alter, modify, delete, change, add, or interpret this Education Assistance Policy as needed. Notification of changes will be made to all appropriate employees.

## RULES OF CONDUCT

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The purpose of this section is to provide you with the rules, or expectations, that are common to all of us. Hopefully, CVCOG can answer many of your questions about how to conduct business and the behavior required of all employees. Our purpose is to point out what can cause you problems so that inappropriate conduct can be avoided.

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### OPEN DOOR POLICY

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Our "open door" policy States that your supervisor, Department Director, HR, and the Executive Director are accessible to discuss issues. Should you have a personal or business need to discuss, please feel free to do so. CVCOG wants you to enjoy a full, productive and healthy work relationship with us. If CVCOG can assist you, please approach us and give us the opportunity to help you.

CVCOG does request you respect the "chain of command" when needing to discuss matters of concern. However, if you are unable to discuss your concern with your immediate supervisor, any member of management, or Department Director, you may also contact HR. If HR is not available, you may contact the Executive Director. If neither is available and your situation is such that a response is required immediately, you may also contact another Department Director.

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### EMPLOYEE INVESTIGATIONS

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There are times during the operations of any business, including ours, when investigations for various reasons and purposes are necessary. CVCOG will attempt to keep sensitive information discovered during such necessary investigations confidential; however, this does not equate to total secrecy. Although our effort and intent is to achieve confidentiality during investigations, CVCOG cannot guarantee total confidentiality.

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### PROBLEM - SOLVING PROCEDURE

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The first step is to review with your immediate supervisor what is of concern to you- unless there is a concern about talking with your supervisor. If there is a concern, another member of management may be sought out. The supervisor, or management team member, will receive your problem/concern and seek to resolve the issue within a reasonable period of time.

If you do not believe you have received a satisfactory solution, you may then speak with any other member of management or the Department Director. At this point you will be asked to submit your issue in writing. This extra step will further ensure the Department Director understands clearly the exact nature of your concern.

The Department Director, with assistance from HR, will need a reasonable amount of time to investigate this issue, research options for a solution, and get back to you with an answer.

We ask that you do not speak with anyone, who is not a member of management, regarding the concern as this would be considered as perpetuating gossip or rumors.

Should you feel you still are not satisfied with a resolution to your problem/concern, you have another avenue of assistance: you may request to discuss it with the Executive Director. As in the prior steps, the Executive Director will need a reasonable amount of time to study, obtain necessary facts and opinions, conduct research and finally provide you with an answer to your inquiry.

It is critical to realize that having had adequate appeals steps, the decision of the Executive Director will be final and there is no other appeal or avenue to take for resolution.

During this entire problem-solving procedure, you are free to consult with HR. This person can assist you in: submitting your problem/concern in writing and articulating the issue clearly; explaining the steps in the procedure and answering questions for you; possibly arranging the meetings with your immediate supervisor, Department Director and the Executive Director; interpreting the resolution; and ensuring all the steps are conducted in a non-discriminatory manner.

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## DISCIPLINARY ISSUES AND PROCEDURES

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There are times when corrective action becomes necessary. In most instances an attempt will be made to correct the behavior that causes disciplinary action. However, sometimes a behavior or an action will be deemed serious enough to justify immediate termination.

Examples that would call for immediate termination include but are not limited to theft, drug or alcohol use/abuse, insubordination, misconduct, physical violence, sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, dishonesty, breach of business ethics, incorrect treatment of our employees, certain forms of outside activity, mistreatment of fellow employees, abusive behavior, inappropriate language, lack of productivity, or an inability to meet goals.

Our preferred course of action is coaching and training. For acts not resulting in immediate termination, the employee will be verbally counseled. This will include demonstrating for and discussing with the employee their incorrect action(s) and what changes are expected. The manager will document the occurrence of the verbal counseling. All verbal counseling documentation will be removed from an employee's personnel file after one year if the employee has corrected the action and no additional disciplinary proceedings occurred.

Should further violations occur, or if the violation is severe enough and verbal counseling is not appropriate, the employee will be given a formal written warning. Again, the behavior, action, practice, policy or principle involved will be pointed out and explained for the employee's benefit.

If further infractions occur, the employee will receive a formal write-up. At this time the Director and Executive Director will have the option of probation, suspension or termination. The employee may be suspended, with or without pay, for up to 30 days. During this time the employee will be asked to consider if they truly want to work for CVCOG.

Probation can be set for a term of 30, 60, 90, or other situation appropriate number of days, and must be approved by both HR and the Executive Director. During the set time, an employee must meet all goals set by their supervisor. Supervisors will closely work with the employee and meet no less than twice a month. At the end of the probation period, the employee will be evaluated and a decision will be made regarding the employee's future with CVCOG.

Suspension can be effective immediately and set for one to thirty (30) days. Suspensions are for more serious infractions that would be cause for immediate termination, immediate removal from the work place, or an immediate investigation. This will give CVCOG time to make a well-informed decision regarding corrective action and future employment with our organization.

After a suspension, CVCOG may deem it necessary to terminate employment based on information acquired through an investigation, or from receiving clarification on the violation. If CVCOG believes the behaviors or actions can be remedied or prevented in the future an employee may continue employment if the employee

indicates the desire to work for CVCOG and follow its policies, practices, and corrective actions. However, if the employee decides they do not agree with CVCOG'S purpose, practices, policies and beliefs, they will be terminated or given the opportunity to resign. If, following suspension, the employee further violates our policies, practices, and/or beliefs, the employee will be terminated. Should management decide suspension would not accomplish any purpose, they may terminate the employee immediately.

Supervisors and Directors are not required to use above mentioned coaching and training method. Nor are they required to place an employee on probation or suspension. CVCOG has the right to terminate an employee when it is the best course of action for CVCOG, its employees and clients. All final decisions require HR review and approval from the Executive Director.

Employees have the option to appeal any disciplinary action they receive. The employee will need to contact the Director of Human Resources and may be asked to complete the Disciplinary Action Appeal Form. Submission of an appeal, verbally or in writing, should occur no later than five (5) business days after receiving the disciplinary action. If the Director of Human Resources upholds the disciplinary action, the employee may then take their appeal to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will make the final decision regarding the disciplinary action.

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## FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

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Employees are only permitted to carry any firearms, in a concealed manner, while on the COG's premises, while conducting company business, or while acting as a company representative at any work-related activities, meetings, or functions. This prohibition against the possession or carrying of firearms applies even if the employee is licensed to carry a concealed handgun or to openly carry a handgun by the state of Texas. This policy is intended to comply with all applicable state laws concerning employee rights to possess and carry firearms and shall be interpreted and enforced accordingly.

Per funding and contractual requirements, employees are **NOT** allowed to have a weapon, of any kind, while in CVT vehicles. This includes having the weapon on their person, in a backpack or other personal purse/bag, or stored anywhere on the vehicle.

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## ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, DRUG USE, AND TESTING

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Due to the nature of our business and ever-increasing concerns about health and safety, CVT, all its employees, contractors and subcontractors, collectively referred to as CVT, have an obligation to comply with the Drug- Free Work Place Act of 1988, Omnibus Transportation Act of 1991, DOT rules and regulations, FTA rules and regulations, US Coast Guard rules and regulations, Research and Special Programs Administration, and all other applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations. CVT must maintain strict standards of conduct which include the possible effects of drugs and alcohol in the workplace. Our position toward substance abuse is the same regardless if alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, prescription drugs or any controlled substances are involved.

**It is clearly the position of CVCOG to not condone, authorize or tolerate alcohol or drug use.** Tobacco use, in any form (i.e., snuff, dipping, smoking, or vaping), is also prohibited while conducting CVT business. There should be (no smoking, dipping, or vaping in CVCOG owned vehicles, facilities, or in high pedestrian traffic areas such as any exterior doors).

Employees who require breaks to smoke, vape, etc. should communicate this need with their supervisor. Breaks should be minimal and not interfere with the employee's productivity.

CVCOG is a drug and alcohol-free workplace and strives to foster an environment free of alcohol and controlled substances during work hours. No controlled substances (including but not limited to alcohol, illegal drugs, mind-altering chemicals, depressants, stimulants, prescription drugs, marijuana, and any other controlled substances) is allowed on CVCOG/CVT premises; in the possession of CVT personnel; or anywhere in the physical system of any CVT personnel. The off-duty use of a controlled substance is also prohibited if the off-duty use results in the on-duty presentation of evidence of the substance in the physical system of any CVT personnel. All CVT personnel are reminded that controlled substances may be detectable in the human body for a substantial period after consumption.

Employees are expected to report for work and remain at work in condition to perform assigned duties free from the effects of any controlled substances. Alcohol abuse or illegal drug use and their physiological effects present a threat to the well-being and security of employees and could cause extensive damage to CVCOG's reputation and community standing. If an employee comes to work under the influence of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or other controlled substances, or improperly using prescription drugs, that either affects work performance; affects the safety of oneself or of others, on or off premises; or negatively impacts CVCOG interests and position in the community (either in fact or to be reasonably expected) is in violation CVCOG's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy. CVCOG reserves the right to react to what it deems the reasonable possibility of the influence of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, other controlled substances, or improper use of prescription drugs

CVCOG/CVT reserves the right to request any employee to submit to testing for alcohol or drug usage, based on the employee's condition, actions, comments, or observations; or on input from others, or an accident occurrence. In addition, CVCOG reserves the right to initiate the following types of drug testing in the future should we feel it necessary:

- Pre-employment testing
- Random testing
- For cause/Reasonable suspicion testing
- Safety-related testing
- Rehabilitation and follow-up testing
- Department of Transportation mandatory tests/post-accident
- Testing for compliance with program requirements

Such requests will be made when, in our belief, there is a legitimate reason for needing the test results. The test results will be treated as confidential information and only a limited number of people will know the results. These persons will be on a "need to know" basis only.

The use, possession, sale or transfer of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, other controlled substances, or improper use of prescription drugs, either on CVCOG property, while on or while performing duties of work for CVCOG is not permitted. For all employees, alcohol consumption is prohibited during the workday, including rest periods and meal periods. CVCOG reserves the right to inspect the workplace and your work area. This may include desks, lockers, storage areas and packages. (This provision makes allowance for items required by the Criminal Justice Department to conduct legitimate law enforcement training.)

This statement summarizes the CVCOG's policy regarding the use, abuse, trade, possession, presence in the system, and sale of alcohol or any other controlled substance which may affect an employee's fitness for duty or the safety of others. This policy applies to all CVT personnel, as well as to all CVT leased and part time employees. CVT employee, leased or part time, found to be in violation of this policy will be removed immediately from work duty.

It is important that you know and understand that compliance with these requests and this action are clearly a **condition of employment** with CVCOG. A refusal to test, refusal to give written permission to test or a "no show" for testing as directed will be interpreted as quitting work on your part, and your resignation will be effective immediately.

Operators are covered by the Department of Transportation's random and mandatory drug testing. These policies are contained in the Transit Department's "Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy" and will be explained to Transit employees.

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### MEDICATION USE WHILE DRIVING

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CVT understands employees take medications for a variety of reasons. Medicines include medications that your doctor prescribes and over-the-counter medications that you buy without a doctor's prescription. Many individuals also take herbal supplements. Some of these medications and supplements may cause a variety of reactions that may make it more difficult for you to drive a car safely. These reactions may include, but not limited to:

- sleepiness
- blurred vision
- dizziness
- slowed movement
- fainting
- inability to focus or pay attention
- nausea

Often people take more than one medication at a time. The combination of different medications can cause problems for some people. The more medications you take, the greater your risk that your medicines will affect your ability to drive safely. To help avoid problems, it is important that at least once a year you talk to your doctor or pharmacist about all the medications both prescription and over-the-counter you are taking. Also let your medical professional know what herbal supplements, if any, you are taking. Do this even if your medications and supplements are not currently causing you a problem.

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### HORSEPLAY

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It is impossible to list all the possible forms of horseplay. Examples of horseplay include: exploding fireworks; throwing things around the work area; tampering with food; pulling a chair out from under a person who is about to sit down or any other behavior that could be perceived as dangerous or cause potential harm to employees and or the facility. Horseplay has been shown to be insulting, dangerous and unsafe.

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### THEFT

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Theft can occur in many different ways. Stealing property of any kind from a coworker, visitor, vendor, client or CVCOG/CVT is considered theft. All manner of theft is prohibited and will be dealt with quickly.

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### ABUSIVE, PROFANE, OR OBSCENE LANGUAGE

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This type of language is unacceptable in the workplace. It is not acceptable, for any reason, to direct this type language towards clients, visitors, or fellow employees and it will not be tolerated.

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### VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

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CVCOG seeks to provide a safe workplace for all of its employees and visitors. To ensure a safe workplace and to reduce the risk of violence, all employees should review and understand all provisions of this workplace violence policy.

**Prohibited Conduct:** CVCOG does not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against employees. Employees are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities.

The following list, while not all inclusive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited:

- Causing physical injury to another person;
- Making threatening remarks;
- Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury in another person, or subjects another person to emotional distress;
- Intentionally damaging employer property or property of another employee;
- Use of any weapon, illegal or legal, while on CVCOG property or while on CVCOG business;
- Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or domestic violence.

**Reporting Procedure:** Any potentially dangerous situation must be reported **immediately** to a supervisor or HR. Reports can be made anonymously; all reported incidents will be investigated. Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be handled appropriately and information will be disclosed to others only on a need-to-know basis. All parties involved in a situation will be counseled and the results of investigations will be discussed with them. CVCOG will actively intervene at any indication of a possibly hostile or violent situation.

#### **Risk Reduction Measures**

**Hiring:** CVCOG takes reasonable measures to review candidates' backgrounds and conduct background investigations so as to reduce the risk of hiring individuals with a history of violent behavior.

**Safety:** CVCOG conducts inspections of the premises to evaluate and determine any vulnerability to workplace violence or other hazards. If you become aware of any dangerous situations or areas notify any manager immediately. Any necessary corrective action will be taken to reduce risk.

**Individual Situations:** While we do not expect employees to be skilled at identifying potentially dangerous persons, employees are expected to exercise good judgment and to inform any member of management if any employee exhibits behavior which could be a sign of a potentially dangerous situation. Such behavior includes:

- Discussing weapons or bringing them to the workplace;
- Displaying overt signs of extreme stress, resentment, hostility, or anger;
- Making threatening remarks;
- Sudden or significant deterioration of performance;
- Displaying irrational or inappropriate behavior;
- Cordial and ethical relationships improve our business, and our feeling towards each other. At no time will fighting, altercations, or verbal altercations be tolerated.

**Employees at Risk:** CVCOG will identify, roles, or positions which have been determined to be at risk for becoming victims of violence because of the nature of their job or because they are subject to harassment, violence, or threats from a non-employee. Management will design a plan with at-risk employees to prepare for possible emergency situations.

**Enforcement:** Threats, threatening conduct, or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Any employee determined to have committed such acts is in violation of CVCOG policy. Non-

employees engaged in violent acts on the employer's premises may be removed immediately or reported to the proper authorities and fully prosecuted.

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## ARRESTS AND INCARCERATIONS

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CVCOG reserves the right to respond to any employee being arrested and/or incarcerated as it sees fit. Employees are required to report the information and appropriate details to their supervisor regarding any arrest or incarceration as soon as possible following the incident. Depending on the offense and potential negative impact on CVCOG/CVT's operations and position in the community, CVCOG reserves the right to apply the disciplinary process up to and including suspension during the incarcerated time period or during an investigation and termination. If a resulting guilty charge or verdict does not meet CVCOG or awarding agency background requirements, CVCOG will immediately process a termination.

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## INSUBORDINATION

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Insubordination includes the following behaviors: willfully disobeying one's supervisor; showing disregard for instructions that are reasonable management directives; actions that could have a negative impact on our productivity and service to our clients; or abusive conduct or language toward a supervisor or other member of management. Insubordination will not be tolerated.

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## CONFLICT OF CONSCIENCE

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You may have religious or other personal beliefs and convictions that may put you in conflict with our business purposes and policies. If you feel such a condition might exist, you are encouraged to inform your supervisor or other member of management in order to it with you and seek a resolution if possible. Regardless of your held beliefs, all CVCOG/CVT policies must still be followed.

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## CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLIENT INFORMATION

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All CVT personnel must maintain effective safeguards to ensure confidentiality of client information.

*The following rules apply to ALL clients:*

- Personal information relating to any client may not be revealed under any circumstances. Examples of personal information include a client's age, medical condition, income, address, phone number, Social Security number, etc. Consider *any client information* to be confidential, no matter where you obtained it and never give out any employee information to riders.
- An example of accidentally revealing client information is announcing over the radio that you have just picked up your "Medicaid client ". Even if there are no other clients on board, remember that other operators with clients, as well as other CVCOG or CVT staff can hear your radio transmissions. Never discuss client status over the radio! Use the telephone instead.
- Client status in any program may not be revealed. Due to the various locations out of which CVT operates, you may become aware of client status in non-CVT-related programs. Examples of this type of information are Meals for the Elderly participation, enrollment Medicaid, Medicare or any other social welfare program, or any other client information seen or overheard while at your office.

The safest rule of thumb: Don't discuss clients with anyone!

*See CVCOG's Duty of Loyalty and Privacy Policy for additional information about confidentiality.*

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## DUTY OF LOYALTY

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CVCOG has valid ethical and business reasons to expect and require duty of loyalty from our employees. Employees' duty of loyalty includes maintaining confidentiality both during and after their employment with CVCOG and always making decisions, acting and behaving in a manner conducive with the values and ethics CVCOG strives to maintain.

Employees can neither use nor disclose confidential or proprietary information they have obtained as a result of working for CVCOG. This confidentiality applies both during and after employment with CVCOG/CVT.

Current employees may not gather confidential information with the goal of disclosing that information after their employment with CVCOG has terminated. An employee is also prohibited from diverting business opportunities that would otherwise benefit CVCOG. Employees are expected to aggressively continue to pursue business opportunities for CVCOG with both current and potential clients.

The revelation or use of any confidential product information, data on decisions, plans, or any other information which might be contrary to the interest of CVCOG (not in conflict with the Freedom of Information Act or Open Information Act) without prior authorization, is prohibited. The misuse, unauthorized access to, or mishandling of confidential information, particularly personnel information, is strictly prohibited.

CVCOG will pursue all remedies against any employee (current or former) who violated this confidentiality. In addition, CVCOG will seek remedy from this employee's future employer who caused or allowed such a violation to occur.

*See the CVCOG Privacy Policy for additional information regarding confidentiality.*

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## FALSIFICATION OF RECORDS / FACTS

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Falsification includes knowingly not stating the truth; knowingly not stating the truth fully; knowingly providing incorrect information to members of the public, CVCOG staff, board members or stake holders; knowingly entering or submitting incorrect information on time sheets or other CVCOG, local, State or Federal required forms; omission of important details; and deceptive statements. Such behavior will not be tolerated.

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## FOOD PREPARATION AND STORAGE

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An employee who prepares, eats, or stores food on CVCOG/CVT property is responsible for cleaning the area immediately after preparation and/or eating. Additionally, any food stored needs to be kept in a sealed container to help protect against pests.

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## GAMBLING

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CVCOG prohibits most forms of gambling in the workplace, including professional or organized gambling activities. Where federal, state and local gambling laws allow, the company may allow exceptions to this policy for CVCOG sponsored events supporting a charitable or other fundraising cause. Employees must seek the approval of the Executive Director prior to engaging in any gambling activities. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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## PERSONAL APPEARANCE, HYGIENE AND DRESS

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CVCOG strives to maintain a workplace environment that functions well and is free from unnecessary distractions and annoyances. As part of that effort, CVT requires employees to maintain a neat and clean appearance that is appropriate for the workplace setting and for the work being performed. To that end, the Department Director may determine and enforce guidelines for workplace-appropriate attire and grooming & hygiene for their areas; guidelines may limit natural or artificial scents that could be distracting or annoying to others.

Supervisors should communicate any department-specific workplace attire and grooming/hygiene guidelines to staff members during new-hire orientation and evaluation periods. Any questions about the department's guidelines for attire should be discussed with the immediate supervisor.

Any staff member who does not meet the attire or grooming/hygiene standards will be subject to corrective action and may be asked to leave the premises to change clothing or tend to their hygiene. Hourly paid staff members will not be compensated for any work time missed because of failure to comply with designated workplace attire and grooming/hygiene standards.

In compliance with Federal and State Laws, medical accommodations will be provided with appropriate medical documentation.

Regardless of the specific dress code, each employee shall be neatly and appropriately dressed as specified for their particular job. All dress and appearance will be in good taste and utilize good judgment. No dress or personal appearance will be provocative or in bad taste. Your Department Director, HR, and the Executive Director of CVCOG will be the interpreters of what is defined as provocative attire and what attire is in bad taste.

Without unduly restricting individual's tastes, the following personal appearance guidelines & dress code should be adhered to at all times:

- Shoes must provide safe, secure footing, and offer protection against hazards
- *Note: For safety reasons, the Maintenance / Greyhound Area is a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Area. As such, all persons entering that area are required to have closed toed shoes.*
- All staff shall be required to wear an easily identifiable company name tag
- Mustaches, beards and otherwise any other facial hair must be clean, well-trimmed, and neat
- Hairstyles are expected to be in good taste and presented appropriate professional appearance
- Offensive body odor and poor personal hygiene is not professionally acceptable
- Perfume, cologne, and aftershave lotion should be used moderately or avoided altogether, as some individuals may be sensitive to strong fragrances

### **Transit Office Staff Dress Code:**

- Business casual wear
- Blue jeans are allowed but must not have rips, tears, or holes that expose skin and must maintain a professional appearance
- Tank tops, spaghetti straps, tube or halter tops are not allowed
- Leggings are not allowed

*The Department Director and Executive Director have discretion on how the above-mentioned policy will be interpreted and are the only ones that can authorize attire outside of the aforementioned guidelines.*

In accordance with local, state, & federal laws, failure to return any CVT issued items could result in deductions from the employee's final paycheck. Refer to Termination of Employment section of this handbook for more details.

*See Operator Section for Dress Code & Wear Guidelines*

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## PERSONAL TELEPHONE CALLS AND CELLULAR PHONE USAGE

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It is understood that personal calls are occasionally necessary; however, use of telephones for local personal calls/texting/e-mailing/web surfing or any other smart phone option is permitted only if the number and length of "calls" are kept to a minimum. The Executive Director of CVCOG will be the sole interpreter of "minimum" and violation of phone privileges may result in loss of telephone use for personal reasons.

**Personal cellular phones:** While at work, you are to exercise the same discretion in using personal cellular phones as you do for CVCOG phones. Regardless of the phone used, excessive personal calls/e-mailing/texting/web surfing or any other smart phone function during the workday interfere with employee productivity and are distracting to your co-workers. CVCOG encourages a reasonable standard of limiting personal calls/e-mailing/texting/web surfing or any other smart phone function. We ask that you make personal calls/e-mailing/texting/web surfing or any other smart phone function on non-work time when possible, and that you make sure that your family and friends are aware of this CVCOG policy.

CVCOG is not liable for the loss, damage, or theft of personal cellular phones brought into the workplace.

**Business use of personal cell phones:** CVT will provide a monthly reimbursement for any authorized employees who are regularly required to use their own personal cell phone in relationship to business calls. The rate shall be determined before every fiscal year by the Transit Director and the new rate amount will be provided to employees. Reimbursements for less than the allowable amount, will be reimbursed only the lower amount. Employees are responsible for ensuring that supervisors have the most current cell phone number. Employees are responsible for ensuring that dispatch and supervisors have the most current cell phone number.

To receive the cell phone reimbursement, employees are required to: complete the Expense Reimbursement form in its entirety; include a copy of the month's statement (from the cell phone provider) with the employee's name & phone number associated; sign the form and have it signed by your immediate supervisor; and must be submitted no later than the last day of the month in which you are seeking reimbursement. If the employee's name is not listed on the cell phone bill, then no reimbursement will be granted. Supervisors will not be reminding employees to submit the reimbursement forms and it is the employee's responsibility to submit all requests within the allotted time to be eligible for reimbursement. *CVT may opt of this or any other reimbursement at any time.*

**Driving safety and cell phone use:** State and local laws regarding cell phone use must be followed while on duty. No use or operation of electronic equipment, such as a cellular phone or tablet, is allowed while operating any CVT vehicle. The only exception is for supervisors and above. For urgent matters, supervisors and above may utilize the hands-free option in the vehicle. In the event of an emergency, operators should pull over along the side of the road in a safe place before interacting with any electronic device. If your job responsibilities include regular or occasional driving, and you have been issued a cell phone for business use, again, you are expected to refrain from using the cell phone while driving. **Safety comes before all other concerns.** If your job responsibilities do not specifically include driving as an essential function, and you are issued a cell phone for business use, you are expected to abide by the provisions above. **Under no circumstances are you allowed to place yourself or others at risk to fulfill business needs.**

*Employees who are charged with traffic violations as a result of cell phone use while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from this behavior.*

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## PERSONAL USE OF CVT PROVIDED CELLULAR PHONES

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If job or business needs require that you have immediate telephone access, you may be given a temporary cell phone. To protect you from incurring a tax liability for the personal use of this equipment, business cell phones are to be used for business reasons only. Otherwise, you must keep a precise log of your personal use of the cell phone and are liable for any taxes related to non-business use of the cell phone.

If you are issued a business cell phone or other equipment by CVT, you are expected to guard the equipment from loss, damage or theft. Upon resignation or termination of employment, or at any time at our request, you may be asked to produce the phone or other equipment for inspection or return. If you are unable to present the phone or other equipment in good working condition within the specified reasonable time period, you may be required to bear the cost of repair or replacement.

Employees who separate from employment with outstanding debts for equipment or other unauthorized charges will be considered to have left employment on unsatisfactory terms and may be subject to legal action for recovery of the loss.

Open access to CVCOG information technology resources is a privilege subject to appropriate use. Violation of any of the policies contained in the CVCOG - Information Technology User Guide will be reported to IT, HR, and the appropriate Program Director or Manager. IT reviews and thoroughly investigates all complaints and instances of unacceptable use brought to its attention.

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## CLIENT AND GUEST RELATIONS

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**Customer Service Philosophy:** Because of our mission, we recognize that all clients, internal and external, are vital to the success of our business. As such, all employees are expected to utilize these principles to govern interactions with persons contacted during the workday:

- Focus on the situation, issue, or behavior, not the person
- Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others
- Maintain constructive relationships with everyone, coworkers, supervisors, directors, managers and clients
- Take initiative to make things better
- Lead by example

No matter what we do at CVT, we are all "**Transit Ambassadors.**" As Transit Ambassadors, we are all expected to understand that service is everybody's business as we:

- Recognize our role in customer service - internal and external
- Help deliver customer service in any way we can
- Think ahead - contribute to customer service today for the long term
- Use our skills and knowledge to make the difference

We know that these fundamentals will help us deliver the best possible service for all our clients:

- Establish our credibility as a professional
- Take aim at the problem or situation, not the person
- Develop a positive relationship with everyone
- Provide "value added" service
- Leave each situation with a positive result where possible

When we encounter complaints, we will view them as opportunities to:

- Listen to the full complaint and check for understanding
- Keep voice and manner calm and receptive
- Thank the clients for bringing the situation to our attention
- Explain what action can be taken to handle this situation
- Act, where necessary, to avoid a future occurrence

**Employee Responsibility** - Employees are expected to:

- Work cooperatively with all CVT staff, vendors, the public and any other persons with whom they come in contact during the course of employment.
- Handle all job responsibilities in a manner that meets organizational standards.
- Discuss any concerns about any aspect of employment with their supervisor.
- Accept responsibility for all work, including errors, without blaming others.
- Give feedback to help create a positive work climate.

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## SUGGESTIONS AND CLIENT FEEDBACK

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We constantly strive to improve our products and services. We welcome input from our clients that can result in improvement. CVCOG encourages feedback that you think will allow us to improve and increase our services to the Concho Valley.

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## VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

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It is understood that occasionally personal visits are necessary; however, such personal visits are permitted only if the number and length of the visits are kept to a minimum. Visitors must also check out upon departure from the facility. Former employees are permitted, with approval of the Executive Director, and must have an employee escort with them at all times.

Volunteers, while having the privilege of not having to sign in, must still be monitored. As such, volunteers who come in for a specific event will need to stay with that event. Should they need to see other staff members, they must be announced and escorted as other guests.

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## CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE

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If bringing a child to work with the employee is unavoidable, the employee must first contact his or her supervisor as soon as possible to discuss the situation and obtain permission to have the child at CVCOG with the employee while working. Such occasions should be very unusual and very infrequent. Factors that supervisors may consider are: the age of the child, how long the child needs to be present, the work environment in the employee's area, and any possible disruption to the employee's and co-workers' work. Children with an illness should not come to work with the employee.

A child brought to the workplace, in unavoidable situations, will be the responsibility of the employee and must be accompanied and remain under the direct supervision of the parent at all times.

This policy has been designed to minimize potential liability to CVCOG, risk of harm to children and decreased employee productivity due to distractions and disruptions.

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## POLITICAL ACTIVITY

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Employees of CVCOG are encouraged to vote and to exercise other prerogatives of citizenship consistent with state and federal law and these policies.

An employee **may not**:

- Use his or her official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of an election or nomination for office.
- Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise a local or state officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for a political purpose.

No CVCOG/CVT owned property, vehicle, building, and/or office may be used for displaying campaign materials (including bus wraps) or for conducting any partisan political activity. See the Certifications and Assurances for Federal Transit Administration's Grants and Cooperative Agreements for more information.

Any CVT employee who is subject to the provisions of the Federal Hatch Act may not be a candidate for elective office in a partisan election. (A partisan election is an election in which candidates are to be nominated or elected to represent a party whose candidates for presidential electors received votes in the last preceding election in which presidential electors were selected). CVT employees are subject to this additional Hatch Act restriction if their principal employment is in connection with an activity which is financed in whole or in part by loans or grants made by the federal government.

An employee's political activity or affiliation, not in violation of this section, shall not be considered in determining his or her compensation, eligibility for promotion or demotion, work assignment, leave or travel request, or in applying any other employment practices to the employee.

CVCOG follows Government Code Chapter 556 Political Activities by Certain Public Entities and Individuals. Violation of this policy could put CVCOG, its funding, and employees at risk and will not be tolerated.

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## RESTRICTING PRODUCTIVITY/OUTPUT

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CVCOG strives to be good stewards of its funding and always maintain high levels of efficiency where productivity and client services are concerned. Employees may not engage in any activity that restricts our productivity, output of services to our clients, or general work productivity. Examples of activities that could interfere with productivity/output include, but are not limited to, excessive cell phone usage, conversations with co-workers, social media or internet browsing (not related to work), smoke or snack breaks, and napping. Employees should also not allow personal troubles to interfere with their job responsibilities as this could also affect their productivity.

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## SOLICITATION

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Solicitation is prohibited in CVCOG public areas; including client service areas, lounges for clients and sales areas. Additionally, we do not allow solicitation during work time. Generally, we frown on solicitation in the workplace.

CVCOG prohibits the solicitation, distribution and posting of materials on or at CVCOG property by any employee or non-employee, except as may be permitted by this policy. The sole exceptions to this policy are charitable and community activities supported by the Executive Director and CVCOG-sponsored programs related to CVCOG products and services.

Non-employees may not solicit employees or distribute literature of any kind on CVCOG premises at any time.

Employees may not distribute literature of any kind during work times, or in any work area at any time, except in connection with a CVCOG-sponsored event. The posting of materials or electronic announcements are permitted with approval from Executive Director.

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## UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE

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It is CVCOG'S belief that when you came to work here you wanted to be a productive member of the CVCOG team. As mentioned in the "Policies" section of this Handbook, you will receive feedback on your performance periodically. CVCOG will not tolerate unacceptable performance.

Unacceptable performance includes but is not limited to, repeated or similar mistakes, carelessness in performance or decision making, poor performance in general, not meeting minimum job standards & expectations, diminishing morale with a poor attitude, and perpetuating gossip or rumors. Engaging in behaviors that have a negative impact on COG employees, stakeholders, or members of the public is also considered to be unacceptable performance. Violation of this policy will not be tolerated and could result in disciplinary action.

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## NON-COMPETE COVENANTS

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Certain individuals may occupy positions of a particularly sensitive nature for the success of CVCOG. These positions will be familiar with sensitive data about our client's business, possess critical information about our operations/plans and be difficult to replace or affect our competitive position. Individuals in these positions may be required to enter into a separate, personal, and non-compete covenant that is not a part of this Handbook and general policies.

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## TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

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There are two primary ways to end the employment relationship.

- Voluntary Termination: you, the employee, terminate the employment relationship by submitting a resignation, an intention to cease work, or behave in a way interpreted to have resigned or quit work.
- Involuntary Termination: the employer terminates the relationship.

As a reminder, employment is by mutual consent. We are an employment-at-will employer. Therefore, an employee is free to resign at any time and the employer is free to terminate an employee at any time, with or without cause.

**Notification of Termination:** Written and advance notice of 2-4 weeks is the preferred resignation method. This allows us time to find a suitable replacement and work out a smooth transition. CVCOG reserves the right to waive your advance notice and take your resignation effective immediately if it is more beneficial to CVCOG or the employee or if CVCOG thinks there is any threat to our security or operations.

**Exit Interview:** You and your supervisor may be asked to complete an exit interview. An exit interview helps CVCOG to obtain information that may be useful in improving employee relations and provide a rehire status that may or may not be used for future employment opportunities with CVCOG. This notification will also allow us to give you information on the pension plan, benefit end dates, Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) and will help expedite your final check.

**Reduction in Force:** An employee may be separated when his or her position is abolished, or when there is either a lack of funds or a lack of work. When reductions in force are necessary, decisions on individual separations will be made after considering (1) the relative importance of each position to the organization, (2) the performance record of each employee, (3) qualifications of the employee for remaining positions with the Council, and (4) the employee's length of service. Prior to separation, employees may apply for other CVCOG positions for which they may be qualified; applying does not guarantee an employee will be selected per CVCOG's hiring process.

Upon termination, whether voluntary or involuntary, any CVT issued uniforms, keys, devices, equipment, etc. should be returned to your supervisor or someone in CVT Management. Items should be returned at the time of termination but no later than one (1) business day. In accordance with local, state, & federal laws, failure to return any CVT issued items could result in deductions from the employee's final paycheck.

*See Vacation Leave and Sick Leave Policies in the Benefits Section of the CVCOG handbook for details regarding leave balances upon termination of employment.*

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## RETIREMENT

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If you plan to retire, please notify HR so you can be provided with information regarding the Texas Counties and Districts Retirement System (TCDRS) as well as general information regarding retirement.

Employees will retire on a voluntary basis, and will not be asked by members of CVCOG to retire at a particular time. Upon retirement, there will be no expectation to return to your previous position or any other position with CVCOG. Once an employee has retired and withdrawn money or has begun to receive monthly payments from TCDRS, said employee is not eligible for rehire for 3 full calendar months. There will be no exceptions.

*For more information, see TCDRS under the Benefits Section.*

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## ACCESS TO PERSONNEL RECORDS

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All employees of CVCOG are allowed reasonable access to their individual personnel files. Although personnel files are the property of CVCOG, you may see your own file by making an appointment with HR during normal working hours.

Since personnel files are the property of CVCOG, you will be allowed to review your own file only while in the presence of your supervisor, manager or HR. In order to comply, provide HR at least a 24-hour notice to ensure HR availability to address any potential questions, concerns, or other issues. Although you have access to review your personnel file, you may not alter, modify, change, delete, remove, or mark on, any of the material in your file.

It is to our mutual benefit to see that personnel files are kept current and accurate. You are required to let us know if there are any changes to your official name, address, marital status, telephone number, and other contact information, emergency contact information, and any changes regarding your dependents. Keeping your information up to date prevents errors regarding your benefits and tax records, and lets us know how to contact you in case of an emergency,

Lastly, information in your personnel file will only be released by legally required release orders, such as a court order, or by your specific written permission.

## PAY

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### PAY POLICIES

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CVCOG uses a Pay Period in Reserve Policy. Any work performed during the 1<sup>st</sup> thru the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month will be paid on the last of the month. Work performed from the 16<sup>th</sup> thru the last day of the month will be paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month. If the 15<sup>th</sup> or last day of the month falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday, employees will receive pay checks the business day preceding said day. Direct Deposit is the preferred method for an employee to receive their compensation. For employees receiving a paper check, they are required to deposit or cash said check within 30 days of receipt of check. This is in order to maintain compliance with funding agency requirements.

Certain deductions from your pay will automatically and routinely be withheld. These withholdings include FICA (for temporary and seasonal employees who do not qualify for participation in the retirement system), retirement (for all other employees who do qualify for participation in the retirement system), Medicare, deferred compensation, and Federal income tax. Other payments that may be deducted from your pay are United Way, and any legally required garnishments such as child support payments and IRS bankruptcy or student loan garnishments. Elected benefit deductions are on a semi-monthly schedule. See the Benefits section of the CVCOG Handbook for more information. Other deductions may be approved by you and CVCOG, if required.

Employees are responsible for submitting all time sheets, missed punch requests, and leave requests through our electronic Time Reporting System (TRS) accurately and in a timely fashion. Failure to do so may result in delayed pay, as well as denial of compensation for leave taken without proper documentation or approval. Employees will have 3 business days after a pay period to electronically submit time sheets. When time sheets are submitted without correct information or missing hours, and they are NOT submitted within the 3-day grace period, there will be one pay period delay on the incorrect hours. You will receive the remainder of your paycheck as scheduled.

Included in the 3-day grace period is approval on all sick, vacation and bereavement leave. If there is an extenuating circumstance, an employee will be granted a one pay period grace period to have leave requests submitted electronically. If the one pay period grace period has ended, leave will not be paid out and those hours will remain on your balance.

CVCOG'S pay policies do not allow advances on your potential pay.

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### CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES

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**Regular Full Time:** An employee who works an average 30-40-hour workweek on a regularly-scheduled basis.

**Regular Part Time:** An employee who works an average of less than 30 hours a workweek, either on a regularly-scheduled basis or on an irregular basis.

**Temporary:** An employee who is hired for a specific, limited purpose to work on a non-regular basis that is less than 12 months.

**Seasonal:** An employee who is hired for a specific, limited purpose for less than 6 months and generally beginning around the same time of the calendar year.

Every position is classified as either exempt or non-exempt. An **exempt** (salaried) position is usually of a managerial, administrative or professional nature, and is exempt from overtime calculation and payments. A

**non-exempt** (hourly) position is usually of a clerical, technical, or service nature, and is eligible for overtime. Overtime pay is explained in the Pay Policy.

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## NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEE TIME AND PAY

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According to Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulations, an employee classified as non-exempt (or paid hourly) is entitled to overtime pay and is usually of a clerical, technical, or service nature. Overtime shall include all time actually worked for CVCOG in excess of 40 hours in any workweek. Vacation, sick, holiday, or other leave are not hours worked and are not counted when determining overtime. There may be times when overtime will be mandatory in order to ensure fully operational CVT-program for full-time and part-time employees. If and when this happens, supervisors will diligently attempt to notify employees as soon as possible, however these occurrences may have little to no notice.

According to the provisions of the FLSA, overtime hours are paid at one-and one-half times your base pay, or will be recorded as “comp time” (compensatory time). Comp time is time off, with pay, at a rate of one and one-half (1 ½) times the amount of overtime worked. CVCOG will work with supervisors and directors to determine whether to payout the overtime or to classify it as comp time. Overtime hours must be approved **in advance** by your supervisor. Unapproved overtime is not allowed. It is understood and agreed that all employees may be required to work additional time in excess of our normally scheduled hours based on operational or service need.

**Comp Time:** With the exception of emergency or extenuating circumstances, comp time must be used within the pay period earned or the next pay period. The maximum amount of unused comp time an employee shall be allowed to accrue will not exceed 40 hours. Accrued comp time should be used first by employees to cover absences from work for sick or vacation time. Once accrued comp time is exhausted, any remaining absence will be charged to sick leave or vacation, as appropriate. CVCOG shall have the right to require employees to use earned comp time at the convenience of their department or CVCOG.

CVCOG retains the right to “buy back” all or part of an employee’s unused comp time by paying the employee for that time at the employee’s current overtime rate of one and one-half the employee’s regular hourly rate of pay. This “buy back” will be used to return an employee’s comp time accrual below the maximum of 40 hours; whenever CVCOG management deems it in the best interest of CVCOG; or as required by the FLSA, upon termination of the employee.

**Meal Breaks:** You are not allowed to be working during your meal time. Make sure you are away from your work area and not working while eating your meal. Due to the nature of their jobs, some employees do not receive a separate lunch break, such as some CVT operators and Head Start staff who eat with the children. The pay of CVT and Head Start employees makes provision for their meal breaks.

All records for payments of wages are important documents. You will be asked to complete certain paperwork involving your pay: We expect accurate and timely completion of this paperwork to help us maintain payroll records that are required by law. Your help and compliance are appreciated.

CVCOG is an equal pay employer. CVCOG does not discriminate in amounts of pay, or in the application of our pay policies, based on a person's protected status such as race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, disability status, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected group status.

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## EXEMPT EMPLOYEE PAY

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An exempt (or salaried) position is exempt from overtime pay provisions and is usually of a managerial, administrative or professional nature. In accordance with Fair Labor Standards Act regulations, exempt employees who are paid on a salaried basis may not have their pay reduced for variations in the quantity or quality of work performed. CVCOG follows the following regulations when processing payroll.

Exempt employees normally must receive their full salary for any week in which they perform any work, without regard to the number of days or hours worked. However, exempt employees need not be paid for any workweek in which they perform NO work at all for the organization.

Deductions from pay cannot be made as a result of absences due to the circumstances listed below. These improper pay deductions are specifically prohibited by CVCOG, regardless of the circumstances. Managers or supervisors violating this policy will be subject to investigation of their pay practices and appropriate corrective action will be taken.

- Jury duty (Please note: documentation will be required.)
- Attendance as a witness in a court of law or other legal hearing (Please note: documentation will be required.)
- Temporary military leave (Please note: documentation will be required.)
- Absences caused by CVCOG.
- Absences caused by the operating requirements of CVCOG.
- Partial-day amounts other than those specifically discussed below.

The few exceptions to the requirement to pay exempt employees on a salaried basis are listed below. In these cases, deductions may be permissible as long as they are consistent with other CVCOG policies and practices:

- Absences of one or more full days, for personal reasons other than sickness or disability, such as leave of absence without pay (partial days must be paid).
- Absences of one or more full days due to sickness or disability.
- Fees received by the employee for jury or witness duty or military leave may be applied to offset the pay otherwise due to the employee for the week. However, no payroll deductions can be made for failure to work for these reasons.
- Penalties imposed by infractions of safety rules of major significance.
- Unpaid disciplinary suspensions of one or more full days in accordance with CVCOG'S disciplinary policies.
- Deductions for the first and last week of employment, when only part of the week is worked by the employee, as long as this practice is consistently applied to all exempt employees in the same circumstances.
- Deductions for unpaid leave taken in accordance with a legitimate absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

In order to comply with Federal, State, Local, and awarding agency requirements, CVCOG employees classified as exempt will meet the following requirements:

- Exempt employees are paid using a "daily rate" basis determined by an employee's annual salary
- Exempt employees are required to complete personnel activity reports (time sheets) that document worked hours in order to submit charges to Federal or State awards.

These personnel activity reports, as per the Uniform Grant Management Standards, will meet the following standards:

- Reflect an after-the-fact distribution of the actual activity of each employee

- Account for the total activity for which each employee is compensated
- Coincide with each pay period
- Be signed by the employee and the supervisory official having firsthand knowledge of the work performed by the employee
- Budget estimates and other distribution percentages determined before the services are performed to do not qualify as support for charges to Federal or State awards
- Salaries and wages of employees used in meeting cost sharing or matching requirements of Federal or State awards will be supported in the same manner as those claimed as allowable costs under Federal or State awards

Employees must account for a minimum of 8 hours a day or 40 hours per work week total activity. Any available accrued leave must be applied if the 8-hour day or 40-hour week is not met. CVCOG will always follow DOL regulations in determining if an exempt employee’s pay needs to be adjusted based on full days or weeks with no worked hours. Applying or exhausting leave balances will occur before deductions are considered for employees who miss full days or weeks.

In times of federally declared natural disasters, Federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) allow for salaried exempt employees who are performing job duties which are out of the scope of their regular job descriptions to be compensated for time in excess of their normal work hours. CVCOG will allow for these expenses as well, to the extent that agencies such as FEMA reimburses the expenses, and all time will be tracked separate and apart from normal timesheets.

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### PROCESS FOR COMPLAINTS REGARDING PAY

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If you believe that your pay has been reduced improperly, please contact your supervisor or the Payroll Department immediately to request an investigation. You will be asked to specify, in writing, the circumstances of the pay deduction, and whether it has occurred on other occasions. We will review pay records and interview the supervisor or manager, and payroll representatives handling the payroll, to determine if the allegation is correct. If the deduction was in fact improper, you will be reimbursed as promptly as possible (but in no case longer than one pay period from the identification of the problem).

The individual(s) responsible for the error will be investigated further to determine if this was an isolated incident or a pattern of conduct that requires further action on the part of CVCOG. If warranted, the responsible person(s) will be held accountable for the error(s), consistent with CVCOG disciplinary policy. The resolution of the situation will be documented (including your confirmation that the situation has been resolved) and kept with your payroll records.

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### RECORDING OF WORK AND NON-WORK TIME

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You will be shown how to record your work time accurately. CVCOG uses different methods for accurately recording time worked throughout the various programs. Depending on where you work, you may be required to accurately record your actual time worked by one of the following methods: time clock or electronic time sheet on a computer or tablet. In some areas, exempt employees may also be required to record their actual work time.

It is very important that you record your time in and out as shown to you. Your pay is based on the hours you work. We are required by law to maintain accurate records of when you work. Should a mistake occur when using any of our time recording methods, let your immediate supervisor know about it immediately, and submit the proper electronic documentation.

Time worked and/or not worked must be recorded accurately and legally. Non-exempt employees should not be checking, sending or responding to emails, or performing other work duties outside of their regularly scheduled work week. Circumstances in which an hourly employee must check, send, or respond to work emails, or perform other duties will do so only at the request or approval of their immediate supervisor. In the event an employee needs to take such action, the employee is responsible for recording this time in TRS in 15-minute increments.

Employees who fall under the punch system must clock in and out at the beginning and end of every shift. Lunch breaks also require a punch in and punch out. Punch errors should be non-existent or very limited and will be required to have a valid reason for supervisor approval. Excessive punch errors may result in disciplinary action.

Also, please remember that once you are clocked in you are to be productive. Supervisors are free to use discretion in disciplinary actions when employees have various, albeit repeated, offenses to the timekeeping policy or procedure.

Failure to report time accurately, knowingly reporting incorrect time worked, or punching in for another employee is a violation of CVCOG's Falsification or Records/Facts Policy for additional information. Any questions about whether your time is being accurately recorded and reported for pay purposes should be directed immediately to your supervisor, Department Director, payroll and finance staff.

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#### INCENTIVE PAY

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When appropriate, and when budgets allow, Department Directors may provide incentive compensation to CVCOG employees based on cost reduction, efficient performance, suggestion awards, safety awards or program improvement plans, per 2CFR Part 200.430. All incentives must be determined then approved by the Executive Director. Employees will receive details prior to the distribution of said incentive compensation and provide written acknowledgment of receipt of incentive requirements.

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#### BAD WEATHER AND UNEXPECTED OR EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

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In the event of a time of crisis, such as a natural disaster, pandemic, or any other socially disruptive event, the Executive Director has the authority to enact Unexpected or Extraordinary Circumstances (UEC) conditions. During UEC conditions, the Executive Director is authorized to issue UEC leave in accordance with local, state, and federal laws and requirements.

In the event of closures or reduced staff during UEC conditions, all employees should remain available in the event they must report to work and/or work from home. UEC leave will not be given to employees that are not available for work when CVT is operating. During UEC conditions, the following positions are deemed essential core functions:

- Board Executive Leadership
- Executive Director
- Finance (selected employees)
- Human Resources (selected employees)
- Information Technology
- Maintenance/ Facility staff
- Program Directors
- CVT Operations Staff
- Other staff as required based on operational need

## BENEFITS

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CVCOG offers a variety of mandated benefits in addition to many elective benefits. CVCOG follows all current Affordable Care Act (ACA) regulations on the benefits CVCOG offers to its employees. Benefits, the laws and regulations that impact benefits administration and the desirability of specific benefits change from time to time. It is important to remember that all of the following benefits are subject to change, modification, amendment or elimination. Benefit costs will vary year to year. Specific employer and employee costs can be located in the benefit manual provided to employees every year during open enrollment.

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### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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Full time CVCOG employees, per ACA regulations, are eligible for medical, dental, vision, MASA, and life insurance coverage on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month immediately following 60 days of employment. All coverage is optional to the eligible employee, and acceptance or request for coverage has no bearing on future employment status, promotions, pay, or termination decisions.

CVCOG follows ACA requirements on determining classification of employees regarding full time or part time status. Part time employees are not eligible for medical, dental, vision, or life insurance. If in question, CVCOG uses the ACA approved look back method of 12 months to determine if an employee meets full time status requirements which would make the employee eligible for coverage.

CVCOG also offers a Pension and 457 plans that does not require the same 60 day waiting period mentioned above. *See Deferred Compensation section for more information.*

Deductions for benefits will occur on a semi-monthly schedule beginning the first check of the month an employee is eligible. Employees will need to register for benefits with HR prior to the month an employee is eligible. Only benefit deductions that have been selected and approved by the employee will be deducted from their semi-monthly pay checks.

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### HOLIDAYS

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In order to align CVT with transit industry standards and operational needs, as well as to provide reliable services, some holidays will not be observed. The following **will** be observed by CVT:

- New Year's Day – January 1
- Memorial Day – Last Monday in May
- Juneteenth – June 19
- Independence Day – July 4th
- Labor Day – First Monday in September
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

The day after Thanksgiving will operate on a normal schedule for all services.

Christmas Eve – All divisions will operate on a modified schedule. (If this falls on a Sunday, then no service will be provided.)

**\*\*Medicaid services will be provided, per our contractual obligations, and employees being required to work on an above-mentioned holiday will be paid at one and one-half (1 ½) time for all hours worked.**

Some CVT departments may have policies in place that do not affect areas of operation and, as a result, may experience a variance in their holiday schedule. These departments will be determined by the Department Director.

Full time CVT employees will receive 8 hours on an established holiday. Part time employees will receive a set number of hours determined by the Department Director. The Department Director will determine these hours prior to the start of the fiscal year and disseminate this information to their employees. Seasonal /Temporary employees will not be paid for the holiday. If an official holiday falls within your scheduled vacation, you will be granted the holiday and not charged for a day of vacation.

See below for additional information regarding holidays:

- An employee who is absent without approval on the workday immediately preceding or following a holiday will not be paid for the holiday
- Employees who work on a holiday will only get paid for the number of hours worked unless the time worked does not meet the number of holiday hours they would have received, if not working. (*Example: If a full-time employee works 6 hours, they will only be given 2 hours of holiday pay*)
- Non-exempt employees get paid time and a half for worked hours on a holiday; employees must have approval from their supervisor to work on a holiday
- Whenever an approved holiday falls on a day in which the employee is normally scheduled be off, the employee will not be paid for the holiday
- Seasonal or Temporary employees will not be paid for the holiday
- Employees on approved FMLA will be paid for the holiday
- Employees on Worker's Compensation Leave will not be paid for the holiday

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## LEAVE

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All time off (other than FMLA leave) taken by CVCOG employees must be submitted electronically for supervisor approval via TRS. Supervisors and Departments Directors are responsible for keeping track of time off requests from their employees to ensure proper department coverage. Leave requests can be made up to one year in advance. Employees are responsible for ensuring they have adequate leave accrued to accommodate their requests.

Employees will not be allowed to use leave when they are out for an extended period, and are receiving long-term disability income.

Employees who work 40 hours within the workweek, or more, will not enter leave time & this will be treated similar to flex time. *Example: If an employee out on vacation leave for 8 hours on Monday and makes up these 8 hours on Saturday, the employee would not enter 8 hours of vacation leave on that Monday. Actual hours worked will be entered on the days worked.*

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## VACATION LEAVE

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You become eligible to use vacation leave when you complete 180 days of service. Vacation leave will not be paid to any employee upon separation during the 180-day waiting period. After completion of the 180-day waiting period, vacation leave accrued will be credited to a regular full time employee's vacation leave time account on the first available pay period immediately following the 180-day waiting period.

All eligible employees earn vacation leave on all regular time (overtime hours are not used to calculate leave) as follows:

<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Vacation Leave Earned</u>
1- 2 years:	3.847% per hour worked (approx. 10 days per year)
3-9 years:	5.770% per hour worked (approx. 15 days per year)
10 years or longer:	6.920% per hour worked (approx. 18 days per year)

**NOTE:** Part time, Temporary, and Seasonal employees do not accrue vacation leave time.

You are encouraged to use your accrued vacation leave each year as it is earned. You may take earned vacation leave in increments of 15 minutes. A request for leave is not a guarantee of approval and is subject to review by the supervisor, Department Director, HR and Executive Director.

You are encouraged to **schedule your vacations and request vacation leave well in advance**. Vacation scheduling must accommodate CVCOG'S work schedules. If there is a conflict in vacation schedules involving two or more employees, employees are granted their preference on a "first come, first served" basis. If two requests are received at approximately the same time and cover the same requested vacation period, the employees will be granted their preference at the discretion of the Department Director. If the desired leave schedules conflict with CVCOG requirements, CVCOG'S requirements will be given first consideration.

If you submit a request for leave and an event occurs that prevents you from taking your requested leave, notify your supervisor within 48 hours of requested leave date so they may make suitable arrangements in regards to staffing and coverage.

#### **Vacation Leave Carryover**

Unused vacation leave can be carried over to the next fiscal year. The maximum allowable accumulation of unused vacation leave is the number of hours which you would accumulate in 1 full year at your current accrual rate. Employees with 1-2 years of service will have an 80-hour maximum carryover. Employees with 3-9 years of service will have a 120-hour maximum carryover. Employees with 10 years or higher will have a 144-hour maximum carry over. Each September 30, any vacation leave balance in excess of the maximum is cleared and reduced down to the maximum allowed carryover amount.

Upon departure from the service of CVCOG, unused vacation leave is forfeited when an employee is involuntarily terminated. Employees who are laid off for economic reasons, or who supply an adequate two-week notice, will be paid for accrued but unused vacation leave. The rate of pay will be determined by your salary rate in effect at the time of separation.

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### SICK LEAVE

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You become eligible to use sick leave when you complete 180 days of service. Sick leave will not be paid to any employee upon separation during or before the 180-day waiting period. After completion of the 180-day waiting period, sick leave accrued will be credited to a regular full time employee's sick leave time account on the first available pay period immediately following the 180-day waiting period.

All eligible employees earn sick leave on all regular time (overtime hours are not used to calculate leave) as follows:

**4.615% per hour worked** (approx. 12 days a year for full time employees)

**NOTE:** Part time, Temporary, and Seasonal employees do not accrue sick leave time.

You may use accrued sick leave if you are absent from work due to:

- Personal illness or physical or mental incapacity;
- Medical, dental, or optical examinations or treatments; or
  - Actual travel time to and from qualified appointments
- Medical quarantine resulting from exposure to a contagious disease.
- Illness, examination, treatment or quarantine of a member of your immediate family who requires your personal care and attention. For this purpose, immediate family is defined as:
  - spouse
  - child(ren)
  - parents
  - siblings
  - or anyone who permanently resides in your household

No advance of unearned sick leave benefits will be made for any reason. Sick leave may be carried over from one fiscal year to the next. However, no employee may carry forward more than 480 hours at the end of a fiscal year.

**Notification Requirements:** You must obtain approval from your supervisor and Department Director at least three days in advance for sick leave for non-emergency medical, dental, or optical appointments. For all other use of sick leave, unless emergency conditions exist, you must communicate with your supervisor and/or other member of management DIRECTLY not less than 1 hour before you are scheduled to begin work. You must also call your supervisor and/or manager on each subsequent day you will be out on sick leave unless other arrangements are made. You should speak directly with your supervisor or Department Director whenever possible. Failure to provide the required notice may result in your being placed on leave without pay (LWOP) status and may be considered a policy violation. You are expected to return to work as soon as the circumstances of your sick leave have been resolved.

**Medical Statement:** Sick leave lasting two (2) full days or longer may require you to furnish written verification by a physician of the existence of a medical condition which prevents you from reporting for work, or allows you to return to work. Your failure to provide such verification when requested may be considered a policy violation.

If an employee is out on sick leave for two (2) or more full days within a calendar month, either consecutively or individually, written verification by a physician of the existence of a medical condition which prevents you from reporting for work, or allows you to return to work may be required.

**Chronic Conditions/FMLA:** Any employee requiring two (2) weeks or longer of sick leave will be required to apply for and use FMLA. If an employee has a chronic condition that requires them to be out for several days of the year, they may be required to provide documentation for absences. An employee may also qualify and request to utilize FMLA for absences. Please see HR for more information.

**Exhaustion of Sick Leave:** If you have exhausted your earned sick leave benefits, you will be required to use accumulated vacation leave or may request LWOP. No advance of unearned sick leave benefits will be made for any reason. No pay shall be received for accrued and unused sick leave during employment.

**Illness While on Vacation Leave (Vacation):** If illness or physical incapacity occurs during your vacation leave, accrued sick leave may be granted to cover the period of illness or incapacity and the charge against vacation

leave reduced accordingly. Application for such substitution must be supported by a medical certificate or other acceptable evidence if requested.

**Cancellation Upon Termination:** Accrued and unused sick leave is forfeited upon termination of employment without compensation.

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## FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

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The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks (or 480 hours) of unpaid leave in the event of a serious health condition affecting the employee or the employee's immediate family (defined as a spouse, children, or parents), or for the birth or adoption of a child. CVCOG tracks all FMLA on a rolling year. A rolling year is defined as a 12-month period measured backward from the date the employee takes FMLA leave. The leave may be taken in one consecutive period of time, intermittently, or via reduced schedule, as needed.

All FMLA requests will go to HR immediately. From date of notification, CVCOG has 7 days to provide employee with proper paperwork. The employee then has 15 days from receipt of paperwork to return to HR in order to receive a designation notice to inform the employee if the leave was approved.

Eligible employees must:

- have worked for a total of 12 months;
- have worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months;
- And have worked where at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

"Key" employees, defined as a "highly compensated employee" may be affected by other stipulations in the Family and Medical Leave Act, which will be addressed as the situations arise.

Unless an emergency situation occurs, you are required to inform CVCOG at least thirty (30) days in advance of your intended leave date. We will need to discuss continuation of your health and/or dental insurance benefits during your absence. CVCOG will continue to pay for the employer portion of your benefits. You will be responsible for the employee portion of insurance premiums while on leave regardless if your FMLA is covered by accrued vacation or sick leave. This includes but is not limited to medical, dental, vision, and life insurance. Please contact the Payroll Department to make payment arrangements. Failure to do so could result in cancellation of insurance.

As allowed under FMLA, employees are required to use their accumulated sick and vacation leave concurrently with their FMLA leave. Employees that have exhausted their accrued leave or do not have a sufficient amount of leave accrued to cover approved FMLA time off, will be on LWOP but will still be covered under FMLA regulations.

CVT employees are required to give all of their CVT supplies and equipment to their supervisor, or other member of management, before going out on leave. If circumstances do not allow time for this, employees are expected to bring or make arrangements to bring in these items as soon as possible. Items to be turned in include, but are not limited to: CVT vehicles, laptops, tablets, fuel cards, keys, key cards, ID cards, etc.

Upon return to work, CVCOG will attempt to place you in the same or equivalent job you had when your leave began. Medical release documentation will be required, informing CVCOG that you are clear to return to work. If a doctor provides a release of "light duty", CVCOG will accommodate this request if such a position or work is available. CVCOG will not create a special position or role to accommodate "light duty". If "light duty" is not available, an employee will not be able to return to work until a full medical release is obtained. Each

department has different levels of physicality required; therefore, each “light duty” request will be determined based on position and department need.

An employee that has exhausted their 12 weeks (or 480 hours) of FMLA, and still has not returned to work, will be placed on a leave of absence. This Leave of Absence will not exceed 30 days beyond the exhaustion of FMLA. If the employee is still not able to return to work at the end of their FMLA, and Leave of Absence, CVCOG will move forward with a termination.

In accordance with provisions of the National Defense Authorization Act and its amendments to the requirements of the Family and Medical Leave Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, FMLA may be extended for up to 26 workweeks of unpaid leave, during a single 12-month period, for qualifying emergencies arising out of the fact that an employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty in the Armed Forces or for employees who are caregivers for a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of who is a seriously injured service member. Up to 12 of the 26 weeks may be for an FMLA-qualifying reason other than military caregiver leave. *For example, if an employee uses 10 weeks of FMLA leave for his or her own serious health condition during the single 12-month period, the employee has up to 16 weeks of FMLA leave left for military caregiver leave.*

PLEASE CONTACT HR WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR AS SOON AS YOU BELIEVE YOU MAY HAVE FMLA ELIGIBLE LEAVE.

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### BEREAVEMENT/ EMERGENCY LEAVE

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CVCOG will allow all full-time employees up to 40 hours of paid Bereavement or Emergency leave per fiscal year.

Employees may not take more than three (3) consecutive days of Bereavement per occurrence, unless approved by your director or Executive Director. CVCOG will try to accommodate and approve all requests, however, there is no guarantee of approval, nor should a request for Bereavement leave come with the expectation of approval. Bereavement leave in excess of the five days per calendar year will be accommodated by vacation leave.

Emergency Leave is STRICTLY for emergency purposes and is only available for use, when all other leave has been depleted. The length of time granted for Emergency Leave must be approved by your Department Director and the Executive Director and will be dependent upon the circumstances. Emergency Leave will not be granted as an alternative when an employee has exhausted all other leave options. The event must be deemed a true emergency by the Executive Director, who has sole discretion.

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### MILITARY LEAVE

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CVCOG encourages members of the National Guard and military reservists to fulfill their training requirements and obligations upon assignment for duty. CVCOG adheres to the provisions allowing fulfillment of those obligations. (Members of the National Guard and military reservists will be required to use available vacation leave time while training or on duty.)

If you are required to be away for military duty, please let us know of your intention to return to work, based on the following:

- If you will be away for 1-30 days, you should return to work on your next regularly scheduled work day;
- If you will be away for 31-180 days, please let us know within 14 days;
- If you will be away for more than 180 days, we require notification of your intent to return to work within 90 days of finishing your service commitment.

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## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

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The Executive Director may grant additional time off without pay to regular full-time employees. This leave is only to be used when no other leave is appropriate, when an employee does not qualify for FMLA or has exhausted FMLA (*See FMLA section for more information*). The length of time granted as Leave of Absence must be approved by your Department Director and the Executive Director in advance and will depend on the circumstances.

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## JURY DUTY

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CVCOG supports you in your civic duty of fulfilling your obligations to our community. If you receive notice of jury duty, you will be allowed time off from work to do so. However, if you should not actually be serving jury duty, you are to report back to work. Please notify your supervisor immediately upon receiving a summons. Exempt and Non-Exempt employees will have their pay continue for the duration of their service and we allow you to keep any pay you may receive for jury duty. You will need to provide your Department Director proof of your jury duty requirement.

Should you be required to serve longer than a week, you need to talk with us about your job duties and work coverage. CVCOG may need to adjust the schedule and duties of the affected department to be sure that our clients are well-served and our workflow continues productively.

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## VOTING RIGHTS

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We all have the opportunity to vote in elections to register our preference for candidates and other issues. Ordinarily, voting polls are open early enough and stay open late enough to allow us to vote. Additionally, early voting with absentee status is also an option. However, if our hours of operation cause a problem with your access to voting, please bring this to CVCOG attention immediately so that we can work out a solution to the problem.

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## SOCIAL SECURITY

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CVCOG participates in the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) in lieu of participating in the Social Security System. However, seasonal and temporary employees do not qualify to participate in the TCDRS System. Therefore, those categories of employees participate in Social Security. Your status will be relayed to you at your employee orientation. Also, employees who were hired on or after March 1, 1986 are required by federal law to be covered by the Medicare tax.

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## TEXAS COUNTY AND DISTRICT RETIREMENT SYSTEM

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CVCOG is very proud to be a member of the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS). The TCDRS system is a statewide system created in 1967; it has more than 830 participating counties and districts.

A requirement of our TCDRS membership is that all eligible employees enroll immediately into the TCDRS Plan at the organization's elected rate. There is no waiting period for TCDRS and deductions begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> pay check. Employees do not have an option to opt out of the TCDRS Plan, as all employees are required to contribute to the TCDRS Plan; a stipulation of CVCOG's membership.

Regular full time and part time employees contribute 7% of their respective compensation. (Temporary or seasonal employees do not qualify to participate in TCDRS therefore they participate in Social Security). CVCOG

currently matches that amount at a rate of 250%, after vestment. However, it is important to note that one or both of these percentage rates may be changed in the future. Under the TCDRS rules employees may not contribute more than the established rate.

CVCOG adopted the 10-year vesting with 3 retirement qualifications:

- Age 60 (with vesting) – employee must be 60 years of age and have 10 years of service
- Rule of 80- service years plus age equals or exceeds 80
- At any age- 30 years of service any age

For more information, please contact HR or visit the "Member Benefits Guide" available to all employees at [www.tcdrs.org](http://www.tcdrs.org).

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## DEFERRED COMPENSATION

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In addition to our TCDRS Pension Plan, CVCOG provides an optional 457 plan, also known as a deferred compensation plan for its employees. There is no waiting period for the 457 plan, and full-time employees may elect to begin deductions at the time of their choosing. Employees may elect to have a portion of their salaries deferred (not to exceed limits set by Federal law) and placed in one of several investment accounts offered by the trustee. Voluntary contributions to the plan are withheld from employees' paychecks and deposited with the trustee by CVCOG. Participants direct the investment of funds in their accounts and receive periodic Statements from the trustee. For information on enrollment, contact HR.

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## HEALTH SERVICES

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If you become ill at work, or somehow injure yourself while at work, CVCOG must know about it so we can help you. CVCOG will be glad to assist you in getting proper medical attention. Contact your supervisor, any member of management, Department Director; if they are unavailable, HR, and immediately notify them of any illness or injury that happens at work.

CVCOG may be required by law to maintain a record of your illness/injury on the job. It is important for us to help you and, at the same time, to document the facts involved in your illness or injury. These records will be maintained confidentially in a file separate from your personnel file.

The Council encourages employees to return to work as soon as they are able to do so. An employee returning to work may be required to submit a physician's release to return to work. As determined by the Executive Director, at CVCOG's expense, an employee may be required to submit to examination by an independent physician.

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## WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE

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Employees of the CVCOG are covered by workers' compensation. This insurance provides medical expense and salary continuation coverage to employees who receive a bona fide, on-the-job, work-related injury or illness. It is required that you notify CVCOG immediately upon receiving a work-related injury to ensure you are properly taken care of and that proper procedures are followed.

Coordinating with HR is important because CVCOG'S Worker's Compensation Insurance Company maintains a list of eligible health care providers that must be used by employees in non-emergency situations. They also provide prescription services for any medicine that must be purchased for a work-related injury or illness.

If you should get injured while conducting business for CVCOG, whether on or off premise, immediately notify your supervisor and obtain a 1<sup>st</sup> Report of Injury Form. (If it is an emergency, seek medical treatment immediately.) Once you have filled out the 1<sup>st</sup> Report of Injury, you may choose to go and visit one of the approved physicians. If you feel your injury does not require a physician visit, you are not required, but must return to work. If you go to a physician, they will provide you with information regarding being able to return to work, or having to take time off. Whichever is the case, you must provide documentation to either return to work or be out.

If you must miss work due to a work-related injury, our insurance provider, TML, will be in contact with you and let you know what steps to take next. Worker's Compensation Insurance may provide Temporary Income Benefits (TIBs) to an employee who misses more than eight (8) work days due to a work-related injury. In the interim, an employee will use accumulated sick leave, vacation leave or take LWOP; once the employee meets the 8-day threshold and begins TIB, they will not be allowed or required to utilize any accrued leave.

Employees out for 2 weeks or longer due to a Worker's Compensation Injury will be required to apply for and use FMLA. All FMLA requirements must be met during this time, including paying employee's paying their portion of insurance premiums and updating HR every two weeks.

We will need to discuss continuation of your health and/or dental insurance benefits during your absence. You will be responsible for your portion of insurance premiums while on leave. This includes but is not limited to medical, dental, vision, and life insurance. Please contact the Payroll Department to make payment arrangements. Failure to do so could result in cancellation of insurance.

Before returning to work, employees who have been out due to a work-related injury or illness will be required to provide a full release from their doctor. If a doctor provides a release of "light duty", CVCOG will accommodate this request if such a position or work is available. CVCOG will not create a special position or role to accommodate "light duty". If "light duty" is not available, an employee will not be able to return to work until a full medical release is obtained. Each department has different levels of physicality required; therefore, each "light duty" request will be determined based on position and department need.

At any time, you can contact the representative from TML or HR for more information.

*Department of Insurance, Division of Worker's Compensation - Notice to Employees:*

*You may elect to retain your common law right of action if, no later than five days after you begin employment or within five days after receiving written notice from the employer that the employer has obtained coverage, you notify your employer in writing that you wish to retain your common law right to recover damages for personal injury. If you elect to retain your common law right of action, you cannot obtain worker's compensation income or medical benefits if you are injured.*

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## CONTINUATION OF GROUP INSURANCE (COBRA)

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The federal Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) allows certain individuals the option of continuing their group health and/or dental insurance coverage beyond the date on which it would otherwise end, normally at the termination of employment, at the individuals' full expense, under specified conditions. An insurance certificate from CVCOG'S group insurance carrier is issued to every employee at the time of employment, which explains continuation of benefit options under CVCOG'S carrier at the time the employee is hired. Any revisions to group insurance coverage are outlined in subsequent insurance certificates distributed to each employee at the time the coverage revision is effective.

At termination, insurance carriers are notified which causes an automatic trigger to mail out COBRA information. In order to qualify for continued coverage, specific deadlines for application must be met, and full premiums must be paid in a timely manner by the employee and/or the applicable spouse or child.

Each covered employee is responsible for notifying CVCOG of any change in family status such as separation from employment, divorce, birth of a child, or a child becoming eligible or ineligible for dependent coverage. If the change causes the employee or a covered dependent to become ineligible for CVCOG-supplemented group insurance, CVCOG or its designee will provide an Insurance Coverage Continuation Form to be completed by the appropriate person(s).

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## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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Employees of the CVCOG are covered under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Insurance Program. This program provides payments for unemployed workers in certain circumstances. Texas Workforce Commission Unemployment Benefits Website will provide more information.

# POLICIES

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## WORKING HOURS

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The official work week for CVCOG is a seven-day period beginning at 12:01 a.m. on Sunday morning and ending at mid-night on the following Saturday. Generally, working hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with one hour for lunch (12 noon to 1:00 p.m.), for a total of 40 hours per workweek. Due to the nature of their job requirements some CVCOG departments have varying work hours and lunch breaks (i.e., CVT operators may not have a set number of hours scheduled each week). General working hours may also be affected by various employment positions and special events such as noon and/or evening meetings, training, conferences, holidays, etc.

Each employee is scheduled for definite hours of work, with the exception of temporary and seasonal. These will be communicated to you before your scheduled time of work. Adjustments to the general hours of operation may be made by your supervisor and/or the Department Director, in order to better serve member governments or the public.

All CVT employees are required to inform CVT management of availability with the proper CVT Availability Notification form and abide by their set availability. Employees needing to make changes regarding availability must be reported to CVT management. This request to make changes must be reported immediately, but no less than 2 weeks prior to the change, on a new Availability Notification form and will need approval by management. Once employees have gotten approval for these changes, employees are expected to maintain this availability for a minimum of 30 days. Failure to comply with your set availability may result in an unexcused absence and / or result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE

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In keeping with the modern work setting and, in an effort, to provide an environment most conducive toward productivity while also providing CVCOG employees the flexibility to balance life and work commitments, CVCOG has implemented the option of a "flex" schedule. The following factors set the parameters for the Flex Schedule Policy.

### **Eligibility:**

- Not all positions will be eligible for the flex schedule arrangement. This is not a critique of any particular position or person; rather it is the realization that the business of CVCOG must continue and, as such, some employees and their positions are not suited for a flex schedule arrangement. Your Department Director will notify you of the availability of this option.
- CVCOG's requirement to provide service to our clients supersedes the flex schedule option. As such, the Department Director will determine if the flex schedule option is workable within their department.
- Each schedule is approved on a case-by-case basis and request for a flex schedule does not guarantee approval.
- While it is not required that flexible work schedules be uniformly available to all positions in a department, supervisors are responsible for ensuring the fair and equitable administration to eligible employees.

### **Requesting a Flexible Work Schedule:**

- If an employee wishes consideration for a flexible work schedule, he/she must submit the request in writing to the supervisor, using the Flexible Work Schedule Request Form. The supervisor will review the request and advise the employee of final determination.

- All original Flexible Work Schedule requests must be submitted to the HR Director for review. Final approval will be provided by the Executive Director.
- Forms are available from the CVCOG team site and from your supervisor/director.

**Guidelines:**

- Adequate supervisory contact and/or employee accountability must be maintained.
- No work schedule shall be implemented that results in a full-time employee working less than 40 hours during the work week or does not provide the employee with at least a 30-minute unpaid meal break each day.
- Flexible work schedules must be agreed to in advance by the supervisor and the employee, must be in writing and must remain in effect until the written agreement is amended or terminates.
- During weeks where the employee is scheduled for travel and/or training for one or more days during a pay period, it is recommended that the flexible work schedule be suspended and that participants revert to a traditional eight-hour schedule. However, if the travel or training is for a short duration, the schedule can be altered to change the non-work day for that pay period. Advance notice of the change in work schedule is not required under this situation.
- The flex schedule arrangement DOES NOT supersede, supplant, replace, alter or change any of the other policies currently required by law or policy. For example, you will still be required to submit timesheets, you will still report time accurately, accrue no unauthorized overtime, also FMLA, ADA, FLSA etc. laws must still be adhered to.
- During weeks where there is a CVCOG approved Holiday, the flexible schedule will be suspended and the employee will revert to a traditional eight-hour schedule.
- The policy is for a “flex” schedule and NOT a “floating” schedule. In other words, whatever schedule you and your Department Director arrange will be set. The schedule may not be altered by you to adapt to a week-by-week issue. As an example, you are on a Monday thru Thursday, 10-hour schedule but you get sick on Tuesday, the employee is not allowed to arbitrarily switch their schedule and substitute Friday for the Tuesday in an effort to save their sick time, unless prior Department Director approval has been obtained.
- Sick/Vacation/Bereavement Leave taken during a flex schedule work day will be taken at a rate equivalent to the flex schedule work day. As an example, an employee on a Monday thru Thursday, 10-hour schedule gets sick one of those days, that employee has to take 10 hours of sick leave.
- The CVCOG reserves the right to suspend, cancel or amend the Flexible Work Schedule at any time. Supervisors have the right to cancel or suspend use of flexible work schedules at any time and to return an employee to his or her standard schedule if the employee’s schedule does not allow the department to operate effectively and efficiently.

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**TELEWORK OR REMOTE WORK**

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Teleworking or working remotely is a way for CVCOG to provide an additional flexible work option, when appropriate. This option can be beneficial as a regular arrangement, or in the event of an emergency or crisis. Teleworking or remote working may be suitable for some employees and roles, but not for others. Teleworking or remote work is designated at the discretion of the Department Director based on the operational needs and requirements of their specific department.

**Eligibility:**

- Employee’s participation as a teleworker is entirely voluntary and is available only to eligible employees, at CVCOG’s sole discretion
- Not all positions will be eligible to telework or work remotely. This is not a critique of any particular position or person; rather it is the realization that some positions that require an individual to physically be in their office or designated workspace. Your Department Director can clarify what category your

position falls.

- CVCOG's requirement to provide service to our clients supersedes the Telework and Remote Work Policy. As such, the Department Director will determine if teleworking or remote work workable within their department. The Department Director and the employee(s) will then determine details of the arrangement which will be submitted to HR and the Executive Director for final approval.
- Each request is approved on a case-by-case basis and a request to telework or work remotely does not guarantee approval.
- While it is not required that teleworking or working remotely be uniformly available to all positions in a department, supervisors are responsible for ensuring the fair and equitable administration to eligible employees.

#### **Requesting to Telework or Work Remotely:**

- If an employee wishes consideration to telecommute or work remotely, he/she must submit the request in writing to the supervisor. The Department Director will review the request and advise the employee to complete CVCOG's Teleworker Agreement. Final approval must be obtained by the Executive Director before implementation.
- All original teleworking that lasts beyond 2 weeks must be submitted to the HR Director for review. Final approval will be provided by the Executive Director.

#### **Guidelines:**

- Participation in the program may be ended at any time, with or without cause, upon reasonable notice and in writing, to the other party
- Teleworking and remote work options may be for long periods of time or used as a temporary solution to certain issues
- Work hours are not expected to change during the telework/remote work program and employees are still expected to follow all leave policies
- Teleworking is not a substitute for dependent care and will not be available during their set schedule to provide dependent care
- Employees must work with their Department Director and IT to ensure they have all required equipment and supplies
- Employees are responsible for the care of all CVCOG equipment in their possession. Lost, stolen or damaged equipment is the responsibility of the employee
- Employees are responsible for keeping any files, passwords and computer access secure
- Employees are encouraged to only connect through known secure connections and reliable sources.
- Employees are required to utilize the VPN set up by IT
- If an employee is ill, it is highly recommended that the employee utilizes their sick leave and focus on their health. In some situations where immediate attention is required or when dealing with an urgent task, solely determined by the Department Director, employees may be authorized to work from home when they are ill.
- While teleworking or working remotely, employees continue to have high performance expectations that include meeting deadlines and performing with a high degree of accuracy
- Employees must remain in contact with their supervisors and be readily available to respond to all forms of communication
- If a teleworking or remote work request is approved but the employee's work begins to suffer, or performance issues arise, the director has the authority to rescind approval and require the employee to return to the office
- Employees are still obligated to comply with all of CVCOG's policies, procedures, instructions and the Telework/Remote Work Agreement and, violation of any of these, may result in preclusion from teleworking and any applicable disciplinary action

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## ATTENDANCE

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You are expected to be at work each day and be punctual in reporting for work, keeping appointments, and meeting schedules for completion of work. If you expect to be late for, or absent from work, you must communicate the expected tardiness or absence to your supervisor and/or CVT Management. All CVT staff are expected to report absence / tardiness as soon as possible but no later than 1 hour before the time you are scheduled to begin work, unless emergency conditions exist. Staff may communicate absences / tardiness via phone message, text message, or other method that has been approved by your supervisor. You must receive a response indicating your supervisor, or other member of management, is aware of this absence / tardiness.

Failure to report to work within the required period may result in leave without pay for the absence. Due to the nature of our work, it is vital to have full communication between you and your supervisor.

If an employee begins to show a pattern of **excessive** absenteeism, regardless if accrued leave or LWOP is used, and regardless if multiple forms of physician/provider documentation are provided, the disproportionate absenteeism and the affect it has on the overall CVT operation will be addressed with the employee.

Excessive absenteeism strains CVT operations, interferes with efficiency, and disrupts productivity. The Director of Transportation will ultimately determine what is considered excessive. CVT will follow all local, state, and federal regulations regarding mandated leaves; however, if there is a chronic medical issue, employees should visit with HR about the FMLA policy and process in Benefits section of this handbook.

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## UNEXCUSED ABSENCES FROM WORK

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An **unauthorized absence** is one in which an employee is absent from regular duty without permission of a supervisor. Employees are not paid for unauthorized absences and such absences are not permitted.

If an employee has been absent for three (3) days, **without notification**, CVCOG ordinarily has the right to process a termination of that employee. When an employee has three (3) **consecutive** days of absences, the effective date of the termination will be the date of the third absence. If not consecutive, the termination will be effective on the date of the third unexcused absence. Any such termination is considered *voluntary* and an abandonment of the job.

If an employee fails to return from an approved leave of absence within a period of three (3) consecutive days of the scheduled date of return **without notification**, CVCOG ordinarily has the right to process a termination of that employee, effective the date the employee was scheduled to return from the leave of absence. Any such termination is considered voluntary and an abandonment of the job.

Please remember that non-compliance with our attendance expectations has a direct impact on other members of our team.

Again, please be advised that if you are absent for three (3) consecutive days without contacting your supervisor, your actions will be interpreted as quitting work without notice, abandoning your job, and your employment may be terminated immediately.

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## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

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If you have a relationship with a fellow employee, no display of affection, touching, massaging, etc., is allowed on premises. Work performance is not to be affected. This policy also includes e-mails, faxes and other electronic communications of offensive or pornographic materials. Employees must notify their immediate

supervisor and or HR of inter-work relationships. Relationships amongst supervisors and subordinates are highly discouraged.

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## SECURITY

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For your protection and the protection of our clients and visitors, CVCOG has designated security measures. The first and most prominent of these security measures is the issuance of identification badges. These badges identify the individuals who are permitted on premises. Guests, clients, and contractors may be issued temporary badges and/or key Fobs when necessary. See the full ID Badge policy for more information.

All CVT employees are required to be constantly aware of the possibility of security concerns, suspicious or dangerous terroristic activity. Suspicious activity is characterized by a combination of actions that appear strange, inconsistent or out of the ordinary for regular work environment.

Signs of suspicious behavior or activity include;

- **People who are:**
  - In an unauthorized or restricted area
  - In the wrong place or appear lost
  - Loitering, staring or watching employees and clients
  - Quickly exiting an area after abandoning a package
  - Taking photos of equipment and secure areas
  - Carrying a weapon or suspected weapon (See Open Carry policy)
  - Cars, trucks, motorcycles and bikes parked or standing in out-of-place or strange locations, overloaded or sagging vehicles.
  
- **Responding to and Identifying Suspicious People**
  - ONLY approach someone if you are comfortable doing so.
  
- **Lend assistance and calmly ask**
  - For an ID or badge
  - Who they are there to see
  - If you can escort them out of the area
  
- **Avoid**
  - Approaching threatening or dangerous persons
  - Being aggressive, confrontational, abusing or offensive
  - Detaining or holding a person by any means

### **Report**

Employees should contact their supervisor, operations management, or dispatch if suspicious persons are observed near parked vehicles. Try to obtain the license number as well as the make and color of the vehicle before contacting a supervisor, operations management, or dispatch.

Your awareness of any unusual or strange action or behavior exhibited by another person is an important part of our security measures.

In order to protect yourself and others it is necessary to follow strictly all our security procedures. Breaking any of these rules could endanger business, other people and yourself. This is a **personal responsibility** of each employee. Should it become necessary to conduct a search of the premises for any reason, you will be expected to cooperate to the fullest extent with all parts of the search procedure.

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## INTERNET CONDUCT AND USE

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The Internet is provided to employees for the benefit of our organization and our employees; it allows employees to connect to information resources around the world. CVCOG maintains a separate Information Technology Policy & User Guide that contains all relevant computer and internet use guidance. All CVCOG staff should be familiar with the policies and must comply with them.

*See the complete IT Policy and User Guide, located on our CVCOG Team Site, for further questions, or seek guidance from your supervisor or HR.*

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

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CVCOG recognizes the important role social media plays in distributing information to the public, clients, board members, and stakeholders. CVCOG carries out many services for the Concho Valley, and we want you to be proud to share your work with friends, family and the public. The way you do so is at your sole discretion. However, social media has the potential to cause problems by interfering with an employee's productivity, creating a harassing environment, harming the reputation of CVCOG or its clients. Whenever you mention CVCOG, or the work you do, on any social media outlet you must adhere to our confidentiality policy but also stay within the following guidelines;

- Anytime you mention CVCOG make sure all comments and opinions are advertised to be your own voice and not to be interpreted as being a representative of CVCOG
- Never speak derogatorily about any fellow employees or CVCOG itself
- Never mention personal information about clients, employees or other agencies CVCOG works with
- Never comment on settled or on-going legal issues.
- Refrain from posting any content that can be perceived as harassment based on a person's protected status such as race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, disability status, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other protected group
- Social media activities should not interfere with your duties at work, limit use to breaks or lunch hour (CVCOG reserves the right to monitor its facilities to ensure compliance with this restriction)

**Business Use of Social Media:** CVCOG expects that all employees use good judgment as well as maintain a high level of professionalism, along with following guidelines;

- The Executive Director must approve all CVCOG social media sites before implementation
- Only authorized staff or hired public relations professional will be allowed to create, edit, post or modify to CVCOG social media outlets
- Departments wishing to have content posted on any CVCOG social media outlet should submit their request to HR or the Executive Director following the Social Media Procedures
- Always use proper grammar and correct spelling
- Only use family appropriate photos and refrain from using profane, sexually explicit, harassing or discriminatory images
- Mistakes or incorrect information must be corrected immediately along with an apology for the error

CVCOG reserves the right to restrict, remove or deny content that is deemed or perceived to be in violation of this policy. CVCOG employees should immediately bring to the attention of management staff any inappropriate content.

Failure to abide by these guidelines will not be tolerated.

Please see the complete Social Media Procedure, located on our CVCOG Team Site, for further questions, or seek guidance from your supervisor or HR.

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## CVCOG COMMUNIQUES & MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS

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The following is our guide to information and relationships with the outside media:

- Advertisements for newspapers, radio, television, trade journals, magazines, brochures, trade association bulletins, and so forth: All advertisements must comply with official CVCOG formats and specifications and must only be placed through CVCOG-approved advertising agencies. These advertisements must be approved in writing by the Executive Director.
- Requests for in-office photographs, videotape footage, and so forth must be previously approved in writing by the Executive Director.
- Requests for sponsorships from civic, professional community and/or other groups must be approved in writing by the Executive Director.
- In the case of matters dealing directly within the scope of an employee's program expertise, the Executive Director and Department Director allow employees to speak on program events or matters that are informational in nature, with advanced notice. This allowance is for standard and normal interviews dealing with non-contentious or non-divisive program issues. The Executive Director and Departmental Director reserve the right to withdraw this privilege without notice.
- Other than as allowed above, news articles, inquiries, questions, interviews, editorials, research papers and/or other comments about CVCOG, its business and its employees are to be handled solely and personally by the Executive Director. No other person in CVCOG, unless specifically authorized by the Executive Director, is permitted, authorized or allowed to represent CVCOG to the media, newspaper, magazines, radio-television stations or other similar media organizations.
- Requests for endorsements from machinery, equipment, product vendors, and consultants are not allowed.

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## ID BADGE

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The ID Badge is the property of CVCOG.

- CVCOG governs the use of the ID Badge
- The ID Badge is nontransferable, and lending the badge to anyone else for any purpose may result in disciplinary action.
- Must be worn at all times when at work.
- Must be clearly visible.
- Must not be covered in any way by outside stickers, pins or buttons.
- Must not be misused, altered or copied.
- You may receive one new badge every calendar year, if needed. If you require more than one replacement in a calendar year, you will be monetarily responsible for the replacements.
- Stolen cards will be replaced with the submission of a completed police report. If no report is furnished, the card will be replaced as listed under "lost or damaged".
- Cards replaced due to name changes, job transfers or other similar occurrences will be replaced at no charge.
- Upon termination, ID Badges will be returned to CVCOG, failure to do so could result in monetary responsibility on the departing employee.

All employees will have their picture taken and be issued an ID badge, blue sleeve and given the choice of a lanyard, clip or magnet to secure their badge to their clothing. If an employee has a personal preference for a different method of attaching their ID it will be allowed as long as it does not interfere or cover any portion of the ID badge, is in good taste, and is approved by both the Executive Director and Department Director.

All volunteers will also be issued a badge. They will be issued a green sleeve and given their choice of attachment method. They follow all other protocol regarding the ID badge.

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## KEY CARD / FOB

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Key cards/Fobs are for security purposes, they grant access to specific facilities for employees. Not every employee will receive a key card and or a key. If you receive a key or key card, you must abide by the following:

- The Key Cards /Fobs are the property of CVCOG.
- The Key Card /Fob is nontransferable, and lending the Key Card to anyone else for any purpose is not permitted.
- The Key Cards/Fobs use a proximity sensor to the readers located at the doors providing access to the building. They are not magnetic strip cards and will not have to be removed from the sleeve.
- Sliding the Key Card/Fob across the face of the card reader will disable the lock (indicator light will turn green) and the employee may enter without ever having to remove the card from the sleeve.
- After hours, all central office employees will access the building thru the door located on the east side of the building. This door is the designated "Employee Entrance". If an employee is accessing the building during regular business hours, they may enter thru the front entrance.
- Upon entering and exiting a CVCOG/CVT building, it is the responsibility of each central office employee to ensure that the door closes behind them.
- Upon entering and exiting, do not allow others to enter with or behind you unless you are aware that they are a current CVCOG/CVT employee. Ask to see their ID badge if you are not certain.
- At no time is an unattended door to be "propped open". Additionally, if an employee finds an unattended door propped open, it is their responsibility to remove the object and ensure the door closes correctly. The employee should then report the incident to their Departmental Director at the next available opportunity.
- An unattended door is defined as a door outside of the clear vision of an employee and the employee not being clearly visible from that door.
- Abuse, neglect, employee performance, or other work issues may result in an employee losing the privilege to access the building outside of normal business hours.
- Lost, damaged or stolen Key Cards must be immediately reported to either HR or IT so that the individual Key Card may be disabled. Employees may also be required to notify their Department Director according to Departmental requirements.
- CVCOG will pay for the replacement of one lost or damaged Key Card/Fob. If the employee loses or damages the new card/Fob, it will be replaced at the cost to the employee of \$10.00.
- Stolen cards will be replaced with the submission of a completed police report. If no report is furnished, the card will be replaced as listed under "lost or damaged".
- Upon termination, the Key Card must be returned to CVCOG, failure to do so could result in monetary responsibility on the departing employee.

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## USE OF COMPANY VEHICLES

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Any employee that may be required to operate a CVT vehicle during their employment must be authorized by CVT to do so. The employee is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is in full operational condition before each use. The employee must fill out a vehicle condition report (VCR) noting any problems or damage to the vehicle

before and after each use. Should the vehicle be returned with damage, the VCR will be used as documentation of the vehicle condition prior to use by the employee. Employees are required to follow all local, state, and federal laws in regards to operating a vehicle in addition to any CVT driving policies.

All damaged property should be reported immediately regardless of how the damage occurred. Any employee found to have neglected or misused CVT property may be subject to disciplinary action. If an operator damages a CVT vehicle in a single vehicle collision, due to negligence or inattention, he/she may be suspended, pending an investigation, without pay. Suspensions will be based on the severity of damage, which will be determined by management. CVT reserves the right to require the employee to pay all or part of the cost of repairs to replace the property if the damage caused was due to their neglect or misuse.

Due to the nature of their job, certain employees may have to be on-call for emergencies that occur after hours. The Department Director may authorize these staff to keep CVT vehicles parked at their home outside of normal business hours. Use of the CVT vehicle must be for business purposes only. Failure to follow these guidelines, may result in this privilege being revoked.

CVT employees should be aware that CVT vehicles are always in view of the public and CVT employees should practice good stewardship regarding use of CVT vehicles. Personal use of CVT vehicles should be limited to use when on approved CVT travel or when a situation arises that requires approval from the Department Director or Executive Director. Use of CVT vehicles for unauthorized personal use is subject to disciplinary action.

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### DENIAL OF PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE

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Federal law states that a client cannot be denied service simply because he or she has an appearance that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience employees or another person. A client cannot be denied services because he or she engages in behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience employees or other persons. A client can be denied services only if he or she engages in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal conduct (or otherwise stated in the Passenger Code of Conduct). You must contact your Operations Supervisor and General Manager to make official ruling.

Operators **MUST** immediately notify a supervisor of a problem client. The supervisor will make a determination regarding removal of the client from your vehicle. You should also complete an Incident Report, to be turned in to the CVT office in San Angelo. Documentation is important in building a case against the client you are having trouble with. Unless the client poses an immediate threat to safety, the decision to refuse service cannot be made by you on your route.

## OTHER WORKPLACE ISSUES

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### EMPLOYEE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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There are numerous ways we try to communicate and keep our employees informed about activities and information:

CVCOG's bulletin boards located in the employee breakroom contain information important to everyone. (Please note that the bulletin boards are property of CVCOG and information placed on them is subject to our policies and approval.) Notices and other information on the bulletin boards are updated continually, and you will want to check them frequently.

Throughout the year we may issue newsletters with information for you. Newsletters contain information about employees, CVCOG, and other specific issues.

Employee meetings are another way we keep you informed. Employee meetings provide you the opportunity to ask questions or make comments that you may not have addressed previously.

Your supervisor and Department Director are also a continual source of information. You are encouraged to speak with them freely and enlist his or her assistance with getting you information important to your job and employment at CVCOG.

Finally, we occasionally send out emails and memos about new issues, decisions and events. These are valuable, quick sources of help and information.

### MONITORING EMPLOYEE ACTIVITY

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CVCOG employees should be aware that all employee activity is subject to monitoring and there should be no expectation of privacy. CVCOG reserves the right to monitor communications and activity during the work time and at other periods when your actions may reflect on CVCOG practices, procedures and image.

Working premises include the following areas: regular work areas break areas, hallways, parking lots, passage ways, work rooms, shops, production areas, warehouses, and CVCOG vehicles or vehicles rented or leased.

Please be advised that CVCOG has the right to search all premises. This includes lockers, desks, storage areas, and CVCOG/CVT vehicles (owned, leased or rented). Employees using CVCOG/CVT-provided equipment and furnishing, such as computers, desks and lockers, may have them searched. If you have provided your own locking device for CVCOG-provided equipment, you must provide CVCOG with the combination, password, or other means of access so that we can enter the area as needed.

CVCOG may monitor the following activities: fax transmissions, telephone communications, and all Internet and email communications. In addition, we may use cameras and video monitoring to oversee activities at our locations.

You will be informed of the communication devices you have authority to use. Only authorized employees may use any CVCOG communications devices.

The receipt and/or transmission of illegal or pornographic communications are forbidden. Pornographic and any other illicit or illegal activity on the premises is forbidden.

*See CVCOG's IT Policy and User Guide for additional information.*

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## RECORDING DEVICES IN THE WORKPLACE

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CVCOG prohibits employee use of personal cameras, camera phones, tape recorders, smart watches or other recording devices in the workplace as a preventative step we believe necessary to secure employee privacy, trade secrets and other business information. Recording devices that are permitted include ones owned and operated by CVCOG/CVT (i.e., cameras and video recording equipment installed in CVCOG/CVT buildings & vehicles).

It is a violation of our policy for an employee to use personal recording devices such as cameras or video recorders without permission of CVCOG. You are also prohibited from arranging for others, including non-employees, to engage in any recording of conversations, phone calls or other activities in our workplace.

Authorization to record an event or proceeding may be granted when a specific business purpose will be served by the use of such a device and when its use will not violate employee privacy. In such a case, all parties to the meeting or conversation that is to be recorded must be informed at its outset that it will be monitored, transcribed, intercepted, or recorded.

You are allowed to bring a recording device that will NOT be used for recording into the workplace, such as a cell phone with a built-in camera. CVCOG may revoke this permission at any time for any reason; at which point you will be given a reasonable opportunity to remove the equipment from the premises.

You should regard this policy as an explicit statement that CVCOG does not permit the recording of any meetings or discussions without prior authorization, as discussed above. Please contact your Department Director if you have any questions about this policy.

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## RESTRICTED ITEMS

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In order to provide as much protection as possible for our employees and property, certain restricted items will be issued only to those employees whose responsibilities require them.

Examples of restricted items include: security keys, office or room keys, file, desk and cabinet keys, CVCOG-sponsored credit cards, telephone credit cards, and policy and procedures manuals.

All restricted items will be controlled and issued by the proper agent of CVCOG. If you receive restricted items, you may be asked to sign a form indicating that you have received the particular items and understand that they are the property of CVCOG. Duplication of any restricted item (for example, copying a key) is prohibited.

Loss, damage or theft of any restricted item should be reported to the issuing party as soon as the loss, damage or theft is discovered. You may be charged a fee or be asked to replace any lost, damaged or stolen restricted item. Upon leaving employment for any reason, all restricted items must be returned prior to final processing.

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## PATENTS, COPYRIGHTS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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CVCOG may occasionally develop certain patents, copyrights and/or intellectual materials which are the property of CVCOG, regardless of whether they were developed by external consultants or internally by compensated employees of CVCOG.

Additionally, any intellectual property, inventions and electronic property developed or generated while one is in the pay or employ of, or is otherwise reimbursed by CVCOG, is the property of CVCOG.

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## TRAVEL

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On July 25, 2001 the Concho Valley CVCOG's Executive Committee elected to follow the state travel policies. The Travel Policies will be provided to you as a separate document not included in this handbook. Please seek out the complete Travel Policy on CVCOG Team Website. All Concho Valley CVCOG staff should be familiar with the policy and must comply with it in order to have travel expenses paid or reimbursed.

*Please seek out the complete Travel Policy on the CVCOG Team Website.*

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## WHISTLEBLOWERS

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A whistleblower is an employee who reports an issue or activity in the workplace that he/she believes to be illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent. A whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities. Examples of illegal or dishonest activities include violations of federal, state or local laws; billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered; and fraudulent financial reporting.

If you feel you have knowledge of an illegal or dishonest or fraudulent issue in our workplace, please contact one of the following: your immediate supervisor, your Department Director, the Human Resource Manager, the Director of Finance, Executive Director, or any member of the Executive Committee.

We ask that you be as certain as possible about the allegation. Any employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to disciplinary action.

All reports of illegal and dishonest activities will promptly be submitted to the Executive Director and/or Executive Committee, who are responsible for investigating and coordinating corrective action.

Whistleblowers are protected in two ways:

- Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed in order to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, or to provide accused individuals their legal right to defense.
- CVCOG does not retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, poor work assignments or threats of physical harm. Any whistleblower who believes he/she is being retaliated against must contact his/her immediate supervisor, Department Director, the Human Resource Manager, the Director of Finance, Executive Director, or any member of the Executive Committee immediately. The right of a whistleblower to protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any proven personal wrongdoing.

Employees with any questions regarding this policy should contact HR, the Director of Finance, or the Executive Director.

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## RETALIATION

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Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) protects employees from retaliation from their employer. CVCOG strives to maintain a work environment free of retaliation. FLSA States that it is a violation for any person to "discharge or in any other manner discriminate against any employee because such employee has filed any complaint or

instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to this ACT, or has testified or is about to testify in any such proceeding, or has served or is about to serve on an industry committee.”

CVCOG employees, supervisors, managers, and directors may not punish any employee for making discrimination or harassment claims or for participating in a CVCOG investigation. This policy extends out to any employee making any type of complaint towards or against their supervisor or other CVCOG team member.

Retaliation is any negative action that affects one’s job. Observable examples include, but are not limited to, termination, demotion, unreasonable reduction in work, unreasonable addition of work, and reduction in salary. More subtle signs of retaliation can include, but are not limited to, sabotaging a coworker, unreasonable demands, making life difficult for another employee, exclusion (includes emails, events, and meetings), forgetting to return messages, or refusing to speak directly to the employee.

**It is clearly the position of CVCOG to not condone, authorize or tolerate retaliation.** A thorough investigation on these charges will be made quickly. CVCOG will act quickly and decisively on charges of retaliation.

# HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND BULLYING

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## HARASSMENT / DISCRIMINATION

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**It is clearly the position of CVCOG to not condone, authorize or tolerate harassment.** CVCOG is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of harassment and discrimination of employees by anyone, including supervisors, co-workers, clients, vendors or employees.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on a person's protected status such as race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, disability status, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected group. This policy includes e-mails, faxes and other electronic communications of offensive/pornographic materials. CVCOG will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Each employee has an obligation to **immediately** report an occurrence of harassment. Your obligation is to let us know about your belief that harassment has occurred. Employees may submit their information to any Director, HR or Executive Director. Submissions may be verbal, but are strongly encouraged to be in written format. Employees may also submit information anonymously, if this makes them more comfortable. An employee is not required to follow the chain of command on any type of harassment allegations. You are **strongly encouraged** to personally (verbally or in writing) inform the person causing the offensive action that you want it stopped.

Managers and supervisors are required to **immediately** report to their Department Director, HR or the Executive Director all reports or observations of harassing behavior regardless if the employee wants the information reported up the chain of command. Managers and Supervisors have an obligation to protect all employees by allowing CVCOG opportunity to thoroughly investigate all claims and take proper action. Failure of a supervisor or manager to report claims of sexual harassment will not be tolerated.

CVCOG policy is to investigate all such complaints thoroughly and promptly. An investigation of these charges will be made quickly and CVCOG will act swiftly and decisively on charges of harassment. To the fullest extent practicable, CVCOG will keep complaints and the terms of their resolution confidential. If an investigation confirms that harassment has occurred, CVCOG will take corrective action, following the Disciplinary Procedure.

Harassment and Discrimination are protected acts against retaliation. *See CVCOG Retaliation Policy for more information.*

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## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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**It is clearly the position of CVCOG to not condone, authorize or tolerate sexual harassment.** CVCOG is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of sexual harassment. of employees by anyone, including supervisors, co-workers, clients, vendors or employees of CVCOG.

Sexual harassment is defined as:

Unwelcome sexual conduct that is a term or condition of employment, when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment...and unwelcome sexual conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's job performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment even if it leads to no tangible or economic job consequences.

There are two types of sexual harassment. "**Quid pro quo**" sexual harassment occurs when an employee/agent of management makes the "submission to or rejection of such conduct" by them as a "basis for employment decisions affecting" the employee. **This type of authority and action is not given to any supervisor, Department Director, Executive Director or agent of CVCOG.** Examples of quid pro quo sexual harassment are:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee is used as a basis for employment decisions; or
- conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

The second type of sexual harassment is called "**hostile environment.**" Hostile environment occurs when the unwelcome sexual conduct creates an "intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment." This can be verbal or physical conduct that ridicules or shows hostility or aversion to an individual because of sex or gender that:

- has the purpose of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; or
- has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or otherwise adversely affects employment opportunities.

Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- slurs, negative stereotyping, threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to sex or gender;
- written, offensive, graphic material/pictures that ridicules or shows hostility or aversion to an individual because of sex or gender.

Each employee has an obligation to **immediately** report an occurrence of sexual harassment. Your obligation is to let CVCOG know about your belief that sexual harassment has occurred. Also, you are **strongly encouraged** to personally (verbally or in writing) inform the person causing the offensive action that you want it stopped.

Managers and supervisors are required to **immediately** report to their Department Director, HR or the Executive Director all reports or observations of harassing behavior regardless if the employee wants the information reported up the chain of command. Managers and Supervisors have an obligation to protect all employees by allowing CVCOG opportunity to thoroughly investigate all claims and take proper action. Failure of a supervisor or manager to report claims of sexual harassment will not be tolerated.

CVCOG policy is to investigate all such complaints thoroughly and promptly. An investigation of these charges will be made quickly, and CVCOG will act swiftly and decisively on charges of sexual harassment. To the fullest extent practicable, CVCOG will keep complaints and the terms of their resolution confidential. If an investigation confirms that sexual harassment has occurred, CVCOG will take corrective action, following the Disciplinary Procedure.

Sexual harassment is protected acts against retaliation. *See CVCOG Retaliation Policy for more information.*

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## BULLYING

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**It is clearly the position of CVCOG to not condone, authorize or tolerate bullying.** CVCOG is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of bullying of employees by anyone, including supervisors, co-workers, clients, vendors or employees of CVCOG.

Per Texas law, bullying is described as the following:

- engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on CVCOG property, CVCOG sponsored activity, in a vehicle operated by CVCOG; that has or will have the effect of physically harming an employee, damaging an employee's property, or placing an employee in reasonable fear of harm to the employee or of damage to the employee's property
- sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive work environment for the employee
- exploits an imbalance of power between the employee perpetrator and the employee victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct
- interferes with an employee's daily tasks or substantially disrupts the operation of the organization

Each employee has an obligation to **immediately** report an occurrence of bullying. Your obligation is to let CVCOG know about your belief that bullying has occurred. Also, you are **strongly encouraged** to personally (verbally or in writing) inform the person causing the offensive action that you want it stopped.

Managers and supervisors are required to **immediately** report to their Department Director, HR, or the Executive Director all reports or observations of bullying behavior regardless if the employee wants the information reported up the chain of command. Managers and Supervisors have an obligation to protect all employees by allowing CVCOG opportunity to thoroughly investigate all claims and take proper action. Failure of a supervisor or manager to report claims of sexual harassment will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

CVCOG policy is to investigate all such complaints thoroughly and promptly. An investigation of these charges will be made quickly and CVCOG will act swiftly and decisively on charges of bullying. To the fullest extent practicable, CVCOG will keep complaints and the terms of their resolution confidential. If an investigation confirms that bullying has occurred, CVCOG will take corrective action, following the Disciplinary Procedure.

Bullying is protected acts against retaliation. *See CVCOG Retaliation Policy for more information.*

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## HIV/AIDS DISCRIMINATION

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CVCOG does not discriminate against any employee or applicant afflicted with the HIV virus or AIDS. We will make reasonable efforts to accommodate any individual afflicted with the HIV virus or AIDS, while at the same time ensuring the health and safety of our other employees.

CVCOG does not require that any of its employees or applicants be tested for the HIV virus or AIDS. Any individual who suspects exposure to the HIV virus or AIDS is encouraged to submit to voluntary testing. Should an individual receive a positive test result, CVCOG encourages, but does not require, consultation with our designated management representative.

All information regarding any individual afflicted with the HIV virus or AIDS is strictly confidential, and will be disclosed to HR or the Executive Director only. Any improper disclosure regarding any individual afflicted with the HIV virus or AIDS by individual's supervisor, Department Director or other management representative is a violation of CVCOG's confidentiality policy.

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## EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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CVCOG does not discriminate on the basis of a person's protected status such as race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, disability status, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected group status.

Decisions about employment and job opportunities are based on workforce compatibility, principle of business necessity, applicant skill, education, experience, credentials, and training. CVCOG seeks to place the best-qualified person in all Council of Government positions. The Executive Director is responsible for reviewing and authorizes all job postings prior to the posting of the job opening.

CVCOG has an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy and Affirmative Action (AA) Plan which ensure that it follows all local, state, and federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. CVCOG'S EEO Policy and EEO Officer's contact information are posted in conspicuous places in all CVCOG facilities and are also available on CVCOG's Team Website.

The actions of every employee are important to achieving CVCOG's EEO Plan's objectives. Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee found to be deliberately obstructing implementation of the plan or participating in any discriminatory behaviors. Every supervisor is critically important to program success and should be familiar with EEO policies and procedures.

**Reasonable Accommodation** - In order to provide individuals with disabilities equal access to all employment opportunities, CVCOG is committed to comply with ADA requirement and provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees or applicants with disabilities, unless to do so would cause undue hardship. "An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment." ([www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)).

Candidates and employees are considered in relation to the ability to perform the essential elements of the job. We seek to make reasonable accommodations, for applicants and employees as requested and in compliance with Federal and State laws regarding a barrier-free workplace for all employees and provide a safe, accessible, and comfortable work environment.

If you require a reasonable accommodation, please contact HR to begin the process. Requests can be made orally or in writing and will be reviewed within two (2) business days. Employees will be contacted within ten (10) business days to retrieve additional information and verify that the accommodation would be effective and not cause due hardship. If a disability is not already known, or clearly visible, CVCOG may request medical information from a certified health professional. During this investigative time, a temporary accommodation may be proposed or granted. A final determination or request for additional information will be made within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the initial request. If an accommodation is denied, an employee may appeal to the Executive Director and use the Problem-Solving Procedure or any other means dictated by Federal, State or Local laws.

**Religious Discrimination and Accommodation** - CVCOG respects the religious beliefs and practices of all its employees and will make, upon request, an accommodation for such religious observances when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship.

An employee whose religious beliefs or practices conflicts with his/her job, work schedule, or with CVCOG's policy or practice on dress and appearance, or with other aspects of employment and who seeks a religious accommodation must submit a written request for the accommodation to his/her immediate supervisor. The

written request will include the type of religious conflict that exists and the employee's suggested accommodation.

The immediate supervisor, in conjunction with HR, will evaluate the request considering whether a work conflict exists due to a sincerely held religious belief or practice and whether an accommodation is available which is reasonable and which would not create an undue hardship on CVCOG's business. An accommodation may be a change in job, using paid leave or leave without pay, allowing an exception to the dress and appearance code which does not impact safety or uniform requirements, or for other aspects of employment.

The supervisor and employee will meet to discuss the request and decision on an accommodation. If the employee accepts the proposed religious accommodation, the immediate supervisor will implement the decision. If the employee rejects the proposed accommodation, he/she may appeal to HR and use the Problem-Solving Procedure.

*See the CVCOG Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy and Affirmative Action (AA) Plan for more information.*

## CVT PROGRAMS

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### ADA (AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT) PARA-TRANSIT TRANSPORTATION

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CVT is pleased to provide ADA Para-Transit Transportation services for those who qualify. These services are designed for qualified individuals with mobility impairments who are unable to use the Fixed Route Service. Our Para-Transit Service is a demand response, advance reservation, shared-ride, curb-to-curb service within three-quarters of a mile of a fixed-route, during the same days and hours of operation as the fixed route.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles are available to assist in transporting persons with disabilities. These vehicles are equipped with modern technology wheelchair lifts and ramps that are capable of handling the more modern mobility devices. Mobility devices and wheelchairs up to a width of 32 inches with a combined weight of the chair, client, accessories and belongings up to a maximum weight of 800 pounds are permissible and can access the current vehicles belonging to CVT. For those clients requiring assistance, the operator will assist clients to and from the most outside door of a building. The operators are not permitted to enter any building or facility.

An ADA Para-Transit application form will be used to determine the eligibility for CVT Para-Transit Service. The information is confidential and only shared with agencies involved with CVT's eligibility determination process. It will not be provided to any other person or agency except as provided by the Texas Open Records Act. For more information on Para-Transit Services or to obtain a client application.

*For more information regarding ADA, please see CVT's approved ADA Policy.*

### NON-EMERGENT MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (MTP)

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Transportation to a location that provides health or dental services is provided within local and rural areas, as well as to adjacent counties and areas outside the counties.

- CVT Transit operators must be able to provide transportation to authorized NEMTP clients for medical or dental appointments Monday through Saturday during the hours approved by MTP.
- CVT makes special arrangements as necessary to meet contract obligations for any trips scheduled outside of normal operating hours. Keep your clients informed of your regular scheduled hours, so that your clients are able to schedule their appointments during your normal working hours as much as possible.
- In the event that you are unable to transport a client that has been approved for NEMTP transportation, you must contact our office so that we can make necessary arrangements to transport the client. To Persuade or influence any client to change their schedule to fit the operator schedule in any way is prohibited.
- When destination-to-destination service has been arranged, CVT operators must make sure that eligible clients are picked up at the originating location and dropped off at the destination location. Operators are to wait for the client according to contractual requirements beyond the scheduled pick-up time. If the client has failed to appear by the end of the required wait time, the operator should declare a "no-show" for the service. The operator must note the no-show on the log, and also advise Dispatch personnel of the no-show, so that Dispatch can send the appropriate paperwork in to NEMTP. In the case of a Medicaid client, all CVT operators must obtain the client's signature for services. If the client is unable to provide a signature, the operator should sign on the client's behalf and then initial it to so indicate and the reason the client cannot sign.
- CVT performs record checks to verify that an operator has not received citations for more than 2 moving violations either on or off the job during the previous 12 months. At the request of MTP

representative(s), CVT furnishes verification of Texas Department of Safety records for employees during the contract period.

- CVT requires that all operators use seat belts in any motor vehicle that is equipped with seat belts and therefore subject to the Texas seat belt law. Operators should also encourage clients and attendants to also wear seat belts but they are not **required** to do so.
- CVT requires that operators refrain from the use of tobacco, including E cigarettes products while occupying or operating CVT vehicles.
- Any suspected abuse or neglect of a child or of an adult who is being transported by NEMTP must be reported immediately to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. 1-800-252-5400
- CVT operators must maintain effective safeguards to ensure client confidentiality. CVT operators are not allowed to reveal to the public the identity of any current or former NEMTP client without the client's express consent. Such consent must be written, signed by the client, and dated, using MTP's form for Authorization to Furnish Information.
- Operators may not ask client for payment of transportation services rendered to NEMTP clients or attendants.

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## VIDEO EVENT RECORDING

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All CVT Vehicles are equipped with a Video Event Recorder (VER) in order to ensure that vehicles are operated with due regard for the welfare of the public and CVT. The VER is designed to improve documentation and training related to vehicle operations by identifying areas in need of improvement and increasing safety. When the VER is activated to save an event, it records incidences such as crashes, erratic and potentially unsafe driving. To provide a safe work environment, captured events will be used to support the following areas:

- Recognition of hazardous and unsafe roadways, client locations, and conditions
- Identification and cause of unreported damage
- Determination of responsibility and preventability for collisions involving CVT vehicles
- improvement and training efforts
- Identification of operators exhibiting exemplary driving behavior
- Identification of operators' safety policy violations and unsafe driving habits

Events that meet CVT criteria will be triggered by the VER as requiring "Face to Face Coaching" (coaching event) with the operator of the vehicle and the supervisor to discuss the event (coaching session). At the discretion of the supervisor and CVT management, follow ups, disciplinary action, and or terminations may be required based on the severity of behaviors exhibited during the event. Examples that may cause further action include, but are not limited to:

- Violations of traffic laws
- Distracted driving
- Aggressive driving
- Avoidable near collisions
- Avoidable collisions

In the event of any accident, all vehicle operators are required to follow current CVT accident polices along with the following these the VER guidelines:

- All events recorded during a collision require notification of the VER Administrator at which point a supervisor or CVT management will retrieve data from the VER data base from the event
- Data found will be used as a tool in investing any claims related issues, as well as policy violations
- The collision will be reviewed to determine if it was preventable or non-preventable

- To avoid the risk of impeding collection of data, do not authorize towing of a CVT vehicle without specific instruction from CVT management

Employees shall not tamper with, or allow others to tamper with the VER or its components. The intentional damage or tampering of the VER is a CVT policy violation and will be treated as falsification of CVT records and is subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

## CVT PROCEDURES

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*CVT procedures are subject to change through the year as regulations, laws, staffing, or requirements dictate. All CVT employees will seek out and follow the most current procedures available.*

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### INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN

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In the event of inclement weather, CVT Management Director of Transportation, or in the absence of the Director of Transportation, the Assistant Director of Transportation) will make an assessment of the area road conditions. A decision to delay or cancel a route is based on the information obtained from the local highway department, and/or the police department. The decision regarding postponement or cancellation of service will be made no later than 5:30 AM. If no announcement from the Director of Transportation or the Assistant Director of Transportation is made by 6:00 AM, all staff will report as normal.

If road conditions are deemed too hazardous for safe travel, CVT Management will contact local media & supervisors. Supervisors will then advise CVT staff of the decision to delay or cancel service. CVT Rural service will be determined by the Director of Transportation, or in the absence of the Director of Transportation, the Assistant Director of Transportation, based on an assessment of road conditions and recommendations of the Texas Dept of Transportation Road Conditions: 800-452-9292, or the Department of Public Safety. Lead Operators in the rural areas will also provide an assessment to the Director of Transportation or Assistant Director of Transportation of road conditions in their respective areas by 5:15AM. Decisions will be made based on our geographic staffing boundaries of North (Sterling and Coke Counties), South (Schleicher & Sutton Counties), East (Concho, McCulloch, Menard, & Kimble counties), and West (Reagan, Irion, & Crockett Counties). Tom Green Rural will be made separately based on San Angelo Fixed Route and Demand Response services.

Medicaid and extended trips will be on a case-by-case basis and based on current Medicaid Contractor requirements, though the safety of the operator and client will prevail in any and all decisions.

Due to the nature of our business, some employees will be designated as **Essential Staff** or **Non-Essential Staff**. **Essential Staff** will be required to report to work at their normal time or at a delayed time as directed by the Director of Transportation or, in the absence of the Director of Transportation, the Assistant Director of Transportation.

**Essential Staff includes:** the Director of Transportation, the Assistant Director of Transportation, all Operations staff, all Building/Maintenance staff, operators, & dispatchers.

**Non-Essential Staff includes:** all Office Administration staff.

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### FUEL CARD PROCEDURE

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Certain CVT employees may be issued a Fuel Card due to the nature of their job duties & responsibilities. Cardholders will need to see the CVT Finance Manager in order to sign a Fuel Card Agreement before the card is issued. Usage is only for CVT vehicles and will be monitored.

For more information on the Fuel Card Procedure, or use of the Fuel Card, please visit CVT's Finance Manager or Director of Transportation.

## SAFETY ANNEX

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To assist in providing a safe and healthful work environment for employees, clients, and visitors, CVT has established a workplace safety program. This program is a top priority for CVT. The Director of Transportation, Assistant Director of Transportation, Operations Safety Managers, Safety Training and Compliance Specialist, and Transit Supervisors in the Operations Department, are each responsible for implementing, administering, monitoring, and evaluating the safety program for their respective departments. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

CVT provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, memos, or other written communications. Employees and supervisors receive periodic workplace safety training. The training covers potential safety and health hazards and safe work practices and CVT to eliminate or minimize hazards.

Some of the best safety improvement ideas come from employees. Those with ideas, concerns, or suggestions for improved safety in the workplace are encouraged to raise them with their supervisor, or with another supervisor or manager. Reports and concerns about workplace safety issues may be made anonymously if the employee wishes. All reports can be made without fear of reprisal.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations; may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are required to report any injury suffered during work hours, at the time of occurrence, to their supervisor on the day of occurrence. In addition, the appropriate form(s) must be filled-out completely and submitted to the immediate supervisor before the end of the workday.

It is the responsibility of the employee to report any (off the job) personal moving violations to the company within 48 hours.

*See Reporting Procedure*

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### SAFETY GUIDELINES

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It is the responsibility of each employee to see that that all tasks are conducted in a safe and efficient manner, complying with all local, state and federal safety and health regulations, program-standards, and with any special safety concerns identified by CVCOG. Although many safety regulations are consistent throughout each department and program, it is your responsibility to identify and familiarize yourself with the safety plan and procedures for your working area.

It is also your responsibility to complete an "Accident and Incident Report" for each safety and health infraction that occurred or that you witnessed. Failure to report such an infraction may result in employee disciplinary action.

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### GENERAL OFFICE SAFETY

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**Workstations:** Workstations are designed to reduce excessive bending and stretching but good housekeeping is essential. Never store items under your desk, never store items on top of cupboards, and never leave desk and/or filing cabinet drawers open.

**Chairs and desks:** Chairs should provide good lower back support and are adjustable so that knees and hips are level. Chairs on castors must have 5 legs and, if your desk is too high, compensate by raising the seat height of your chair. Never stand on the chair to reach anything, particular if the chair has wheels or is of the swivel kind.

**Stacking and storage:** Light objects should be stored on top and heavy objects in the bottom, this includes in filing cabinets. Boxes, files and other heavy articles must not be stacked on top of cabinets, cupboards or window sills. Passages should be kept clear and firefighting equipment unobstructed.

**Electrical safeguarding:** Loose-lying cables can cause a tripping hazard an even electrocution. It can also cause people to get hooked on cables and pull expensive equipment from tables.

- **Plugs** – No unauthorized person may tamper with any electrical appliance or distribution board. Sockets should not be overloaded. When plugging in multiple cords, use a plug bar with surge protection, or ask if an additional point could be installed (when possible). If a machine or an electric cable becomes warm to the touch, it must be disconnected and reported without delay.
- **Cables** – Cable and extension cords should not be run unprotected beneath carpeting nor should they span walkways without being secured in an encapsulation device. Always carry out your own visual inspections of plugs and leads and look out for: physical damage to the cable; damage to the plugs; improper connections to the plug. Report any issues so that they can be repaired as necessary. Always switch off equipment before unplugging and before cleaning.

**Heat generating equipment:** Heat generating equipment, like electrical equipment, can be very safe if used and maintained correctly. However, improper care, storage, or placement of any type of equipment that generates heat can cause a fire, bodily injury, or even death.

While some heat-generating equipment may be allowed on CVCOG/CVT property, safety is very important when using them. Safe practices for heat-generating equipment include: not storing anything within 30" of electrical panels; plug equipment into the outlet directly; only use heaters equipped with tip-over protection; turn-off all items when not in use; and do not leave equipment unattended.

Types of permitted heat generating equipment include: coffee pot, cooling fans, heaters, microwave, mug warmer; toaster oven; plug-in air fresheners and other electrical equipment

**Accident Reporting:** If you should get injured while conducting business for CVCOG, whether on or off premise, immediately report this to your supervisor and obtain a 1<sup>st</sup> Report of Injury Form. Report all injuries on duty to your supervisor and HR on the same day. The Chief Safety Officer (CSO) or, in the absence of the CSO, the Safety, Training & Compliance Specialist will also be notified.

**Slips, trips and falls:** To prevent slips, trips and falls, remember the following: do not allow cabling to create a tripping hazard, clear up spillages and pick up objects that fall quickly, do not block passageways, keep office areas clean, keep stacking and storage areas safe. Also be on the lookout for worn or loose carpets and broken stair tread edges, chipped, floorboards and tiles and watch where you walk. Ensure shoes to not cause hazard.

**Office machines: Learn how to operate them safely before using. Keep** loose clothing, jewelry, long flowing hair, as well as, hands and fingers clear of paper inlet at the shredder. Switch the machine off before trying to clear a blockage.

**First aid box:** Make sure you know where the box is & contact the Facilities Manager if it needs to be restocked.

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## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

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Employees who are confronted by or who encounter an armed or dangerous person should not attempt to challenge or disarm the individual. Employees should remain calm, make constant eye contact and talk to the individual. If a supervisor or Department Director can be safely notified of the need for assistance without endangering the safety of the employee or others, such notice should be given. Otherwise, you should cooperate and follow any instructions given by the armed or dangerous individual.

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## FIRE SAFETY

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Anyone who receives information or observes an emergency situation should immediately call 911.

In this building, occupants will be notified of emergencies by fire alarm and paging system.

### Occupants will:

- Know at least two exits from the building.
- Be familiar with the evacuation routes throughout the whole facility.
- To report a fire or emergency, call 911. Give the company name and address. State exactly what is burning, or what is smoking or what smells like a fire to you. Then notify the front desk at extension 221 and she/he will activate the building notification system.
- When notified to evacuate, do so in a calm and orderly fashion:
  - walk, don't run
  - keep conversation level down
  - close all doors behind you
  - assist others in need of assistance

**The designated assembly area is Adult Literacy Council – 59 E. 6<sup>th</sup> St San Angelo, TX 76903**

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## BOMB THREAT PROCEDURE

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To ensure a safe and orderly response in the event of a bomb threat, be familiar with all evacuation procedures. In the event of a bomb threat, the area should be immediately evacuated to the designated assembly area at the Adult Literacy Council (**59 E 6<sup>th</sup> St San Angelo, TX 76903**) unless directed otherwise by law enforcement.

If you receive a bomb threat via phone:

- Record as much information regarding the call and caller as you are able to write down safely.
- Try to notify a co-worker, supervisor, or manager without alerting the caller.
- If you are able to notify a co-worker, supervisor or manager, they should contact 911 and follow all instructions.
- Evacuate as soon as you are safely able to do so.
- Report all information documented during the call to the authorities as soon as possible.
- Follow all law enforcement direction.

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## SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES / SUBSTANCES

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### Suspicious Packages

Suspicious packages are those that are:

- Left or intentionally place in an out-of-the-way location

- Matched something described in a threat or has a threatening note attached
- An abandoned item or container, may have visible wires, batteries, a clock or timer
- Includes a bag, box or package emitting an odor, mist, or oily liquid

#### Responses

- DO NOT use a radio or cell phone if you suspect an explosive device
- Make immediate notification to location personnel, Dispatch or Supervisor
- DO NOT touch, move or cover the object
- If there is immediate danger, remain calm and evacuate yourself and clients
- DO NOT re-enter once evacuated
- Await instruction from Police or Dispatch

#### Suspicious Substances

Signs of suspicious substances include:

- An unexplainable or pungent odor
- A suspicious package emitting a vapor or odor
- Abandoned or out-of-place aerosol or manual spray device(s)
- Two or more people experiencing difficulty breathing, uncontrollable coughing, collapse, nausea, blurred vision or disorientation

#### Responses

- DO NOT touch, move or cover the substance or object
- Remain calm and evaluate yourself and clients
- Avoid contamination by isolating and securing the area
- Attempt to move people uphill and upwind from the area
- Report the situation to Dispatch, Supervisor or emergency personnel immediately

#### Security Incident Management

- Remain calm
- Protect yourself and others-if necessary, evacuate the area
- Report-gather information and make notification
- Follow CVT protocols and policies
- Don't take risks that could harm yourself or others
- Enlist the help of other employees
- Try to control the crowd-keep people clear of the incident or affected area
- Identify yourself to arriving responders – keep you ID card visible
- Identify witness to police
- Assist responders as directed
- DO NOT answer questions from the media or strangers

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### IN CASE OF ROBBERY

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Any business that handles money or other valuables is, unfortunately, vulnerable to robbery. In case of robbery, the **first and foremost rule** is to **obey any directions the robber gives you**. If you are approached by a person who intends to rob CVCOG, let them have the money or any item they are requesting! **Do not put yourself in danger by trying to prevent the robbery.**

Try to remain calm, alert, and observant. Notice as many things about the person (or persons) as possible so you can tell the police what the person was wearing, the size and build of the person, or anything about the person that seems unique (such as the person's voice or speech pattern, or mannerisms).

To repeat – **cooperate with a robber**. Do not endanger yourself by aggravating the robber or trying to stop the robbery. **Your life is more important to us than any amount of money.**

#### **After a robbery**

- Stop the bus; do not try to handle the situation with the bus in motion;
- Call the dispatcher;
- Reassure and assist the clients;
- Do not move the vehicle until instructed by Supervisor or Police
- Distribute and collect courtesy cards;
- Exchange information with police;
- Write down a description of the robber;
- Note the direction the robber took upon leaving.

#### **Assaulted during a robbery**

- From the operator's seat, defend yourself until the attack stops; Operators may not leave the 's seat to pursue or attack the assailant(s)
- Encourage the attacker to escape;
- Encourage clients to receive medical attention.

#### **Self-Defense**

By law, anyone can defend themselves or their property from threatened violence or injury through the use of force—provided the force used is no more than is necessary to carry out that defense. Operators may not become the aggressor, if the assailant leaves the scene or stops the assault, Operators may not further engage that person or persons. Operators involved in an assault who then become the aggressor will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

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## ACTIVE SHOOTER

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In the unlikely event of an active shooter, all employees should be prepared on how they will respond for different situations. CVCOG advises employees to follow the Department of Homeland Security's recommendations.

1. Evacuate: If there is an escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow the instructions of any police officers
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe

2. Hide out: If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter’s view
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed or locked door)
- Not trap or restrict your options for movement

To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:

- Lock the door
- Blockade the door with heavy furniture

If the active shooter is nearby:

- Lock the door
- Silence your cell phone or pager
- Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions)
- Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks)
- Remain quiet

If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:

- Remain calm
- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter’s location
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen

3. Take action against the active shooter: As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and or incapacitate the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him or her
- Throwing items and improvising weapons
- Yelling
- Committing to your actions

For more information, please visit the [dhs.gov](http://dhs.gov). The above steps have been taken from [dhs.gov](http://dhs.gov) from “Active Shooter: How to Respond”.

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## PARKING/PARKING LOT SAFETY

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CVCOG provides reasonable parking for our employees. The handicapped parking places and the first-row parking spaces nearest the front door are all reserved for guests and business visitors. Please do not park in the first row of parking spaces. The remaining rows of parking spaces are for our employees. Please, take advantage of this area to maximize convenience for our guests and business visitors.

For the safety of clients and employees, the parking lot speed limit is 10 MPH. Always look before backing out of a spot, and watch for others who are trying to back out as well.

CVCOG assumes no liability or responsibility for damage or theft to your vehicle while it is parked on Council of Government premises.

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## SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURE

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### **Tornado Safety**

Thinking and planning ahead can significantly reduce dangers of a tornado. It is important that those in your department discuss and develop a tornado emergency plan for your area.

- Take notice of the environment, building, and rooms where you spend much of your time.
- Identify the best areas to take protective cover during a tornado as well as the possible exits from the building.
- Have a flashlight; a battery powered radio and spare batteries in case the power is off.
- Have a first aid kit available. Know who in your department is certified in First Aid and CPR.

### **Tornado Watch**

Tornado Watch Tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms. Watch the sky and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.

### **Tornado Warning**

A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately. Be alert to changing weather conditions.

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information.
- Look for approaching storms

Look for the following danger signs:

- Dark, often greenish sky
- Large hail
- A large, dark, low-lying (particularly if rotating)
- A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly rotating)
- Loud roar, similar to a freight train

In the event of a tornado, employees should follow these steps:

**Step 1:** You will hear an announcement that severe weather is approaching and will be instructed to stop whatever you are doing and proceed to the nearest SAFE ZONE.

**Step 2:** Immediately STOP whatever you are doing and quickly get to **THE NEAREST SAFE ZONE**. \* *If you have a client, visitor, or class during that time please make sure those individuals are also escorted to a safe zone.* **SAFE ZONE** signs have been posted in various places around the building which have been designated as the safest places for this type of emergency.

**Step 3:** Get down low with your head against the wall and use your arms to protect your head or neck. \* *In a real situation, if you're unable to get out of your office, you can also get under a sturdy desk.*

**Step 4:** Remain in that place until you hear an "ALL CLEAR" announcement. After the "All Clear" has been given, you may return to your work area & resume your duties.

The designated SAFE ZONES are clearly marked by signage throughout the building so please take time to walk through our facility and familiarize yourself with these areas. We would also like to encourage staff to keep a ***whistle and flashlight*** in your desk drawer, within easy reach, in case of this type of situation.

# CVT OPERATOR'S GUIDE & PROCEDURES

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## GENERAL RULES

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The purpose of the "CVT Operator's Guide and Procedures" section of the Handbook is to clarify duties and responsibilities by defining rules and procedures, explaining what is expected of all Operators and detailing how these duties are to be performed. The guidelines contained herein are to supplement the Concho Valley Council of Government (CVCOG) Handbook for CVT Employees. Each operator must become familiar with the contents of this CVT by the completion of the initial training. Everyone's job is easier when all Operators follow the same rules and procedures. The clients we serve also benefit because they can count on consistent application of the rules and procedures from all Operators.

### **Clarification of Procedures**

If an Operator has a question on a particular item in this guide, or if a procedure requires further clarification, please request assistance from your supervisor or other member of management.

## ADDITIONAL ORDERS AND INSTUCTIONS

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### **Notices and Special Instructions**

The rules and operating guidelines in this CVT may be changed through notices and special instructions that will be made available in writing to all CVT personnel. The company bulletin board must be examined daily for special instructions. Whenever an employee has been off duty for any reason, upon return, the bulletin board should be checked and a supervisor should be contacted for clarification on policy changes. All policies, guidelines, rules, and procedures are periodically reviewed and evaluated, and are subject to change at CVT's discretion. CVT reserves the right at any time to amend, revoke, replace or suspend any or all of the policies and procedures contained within this Operator's Guide.

### **Situations not covered**

Whenever situations arise which are not covered by procedures in this guide, sound judgment should be used by the Operator. Many situations will occur which will require an instantaneous response. Knowledge of the contents of this guide, along with assistance from Dispatch, supervisor, or other member of management, will get an Operator through most of the situations they will face. When Operators handle a unique case, let a Transportation Supervisor know, as soon as possible, how the situation was handled.

## UPDATING PERSONAL INFORMATION

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### **Notification of address change and personal information**

Operators must notify CVT immediately of any changes in their address or telephone number. Failure to notify CVT of such changes can result in unnecessary delays in emergency information being transmitted to the Operator.

### **Emergency contact home telephone number or cellular telephone number**

All CVT Operators are required to have an in-service home telephone or a cellular telephone number on file with where they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If the lack of an in-service home telephone number or cellular number is due to financial hardship, the Operator must notify their supervisor or other member of management. On a case-by-case basis, the Authority will work with the individual Operator to develop emergency contact ability.

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## REPORTING FOR DUTY

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### Reporting to dispatch

Operators must report for duty at or shortly before their scheduled report time and may not clock in more than seven (7) minutes early. Operators must be fit for duty when reporting to work and throughout their shift. (*See Fit for Duty Policy*)

Operators are to take buses only assigned to them by Dispatcher, Supervisor or other member of management. Contact the Manager on Duty immediately if you have changed buses.

### Changing Assignments

Operators must not change their scheduled hours, assignments or duties unless authorized to do so by a supervisor or other member of Operations.

### Transit Operators Dress Code

- CVT issued uniform shirt. Provided by CVT & issued completion of New Operator Training
- White, gray, or black undershirt (if employee is wearing an undershirt)
- Navy blue or black cotton or blended slacks (CVT employee purchase with no reimbursements)
- Black closed toed shoes, or boots, that are nonslip
- Shorts are acceptable in Navy blue or black (but not denim)
- Leggings are not allowed
- High Visibility Safety Vest
- Belt or Suspenders must be worn (exceptions may be granted on an individual basis by the Department Director)
- Optional CVT Issued ball cap or other headwear. Only company issued hats will be permitted during work hours. *In the event that CVT does not have available headwear, solid black or navy headwear may be permitted.*

*Note: Headwear is defined as a winter hat or toboggan (also referred to as a “beanie”).*

*Any winter hats or “beanies” must be solid black or navy. These can be blank or have the CVT logo.*

All uniformed CVT employees are to immediately report any uniforms, or other issued items, that are in poor condition to receive a replacement. If it is found that the CVT employee does not take quality care of his or her uniform, CVT reserves the right to request the employee pay for a replacement.

### Wear Guidelines

- All CVT operators s will wear a uniform that is in good condition and free from tears, rips or other distasteful appearance
- Uniforms are to be free from wrinkles and pressed to provide a professional appearance
- Operators must have the ID badge visible at all times
- Operators must have their shirt tucked in at all times (exceptions may be granted on an individual basis by the Department Director)
- Operators **must** have the following items on their person at all times: Medical Examiner’s Card, License, Goodfellow Air Force Base pass (if issued one), seatbelt cutter, CPR/First Aid Certification Card, and any other CVT issued equipment.
- CVT issued backpacks should kept on or by operators while on duty.

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## FIT FOR DUTY

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CVT is committed to maintaining a safe work environment. It is widely recognized that being impaired by drugs, alcohol, medications, stress, fatigue, or other causes while on the job poses serious safety and health risks, not only for the employee but for all those who work with or otherwise come in contact with that employee.

Operators are expected to report to work Fit for Duty and remain Fit for Duty at all times while engaged in CVT business and/or on CVT premises. Prior to the start of each shift, operators will be evaluated to ensure that they have the capacity, and are free of impairment that could hinder their ability, to competently and safely perform the duties of their position, and do not pose a safety risk.

Operators must inform their supervisor immediately if they feel they are not Fit for Duty. When an off-duty operator is called in to perform work for CVT and they are not Fit for Duty for any reason, they must refuse to come in.

If an operator is observed to be in an unsafe or harmful condition, including but not limited to reporting to work impaired or otherwise not Fit for Duty, then a report will be made to the supervisor on duty as soon as possible. The supervisor receiving the report must investigate the reported unsafe condition and must ensure that any necessary corrective action is taken without delay. Operators are required to cooperate fully with any investigation which could include reasonable suspicion testing. A refusal to cooperate constitutes a violation with this policy and is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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## OPERATOR DISQUALIFICATION

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A CVT operator will be disqualified from driving any CVT vehicle for, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- Testing positive for the presence of alcohol, or for failing to submit a sample to the testing facility.
- Driving company with an invalid 's licenses.
- Testing positive for the presence of drugs or other controlled substances, or for failing to submit a sample to the testing facility.
- Intentionally leaving the scene of a motor vehicle accident while driving for CVT, even if not involved in the accident.
- Use of a CVT vehicle or equipment in the commission of a felony.
- Transportation of unauthorized hazardous material in a CVT vehicle.
- Use of a CVT vehicle or equipment for personal reasons while clients is in the vehicle.
- Conviction of 2 traffic violations in separate instances in any vehicle within a 12- month period.
- Any other reason that may demonstrate that the operator is not capable of safely and legally operating a CVT vehicle.
- Three preventable accidents within a 36-month period.

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## OPERATOR CONDUCT

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### **General**

CVT expects Operators to be courteous and treat fellow employees and clients with respect. Words or acts of hostility, verbal or physical abuse towards any of its clients, officials, agents, employees, or CVT staff will not be tolerated. As employees providing a public service, each of us has the obligation to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting the public trust. Every client is to be treated with the utmost respect even in difficult and adversarial situations. As a representative of CVT, Operators should conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.

## Training

Transit Operators will receive Assistance Safety & Sensitivity (P.A.S.S.) training to become a P.A.S.S. certified operator within the first two weeks of employment. This, along with intensive hands-on training with operator trainers, ensures that every operator starts with all of the tools necessary to succeed in providing safe, friendly, & reliable services.

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## OPERATOR REPORTS POLICY

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CVT operators have an obligation to fill out all information on required reports set forth by CVT, DOT, FTA and any other Federal or State Agency. Every piece of paperwork is considered a legal document and should not have any parts that are not filled in. At no time is it permissible to use white-out or to scratch out data. If there is an error, simply make the correction next to the incorrect data or signature and initial the correction.

At the end of the day the operator will follow these procedures:

- Operator completes the VCR with all areas filled out. Reports must be legible because information is transferred to other documents.
- CVT Supervisor will review the information to make sure the VCR is complete. If errors are found, reports will be returned to the operator for corrections.

**Supervisor Responsibilities:** Supervisors are responsible for operator' accountability on reporting VCR's, Manifests, and Medicaid Rider Logs. Failure to follow the established procedures may result in disciplinary action.

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## OBSERVANCE OF SCHEDULES & ROUTES

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Operators are expected to follow schedules and routes at all times and follow the guidelines listed below:

- Operating ahead of the schedule will result in a violation; however, in the event an Operator finds that they are ahead of schedule, be prepared to wait out your time and then contact radio dispatch. When waiting out your time, make sure the bus is at a safe location and not blocking traffic and that the four-way flashers are operational and on.
- At transfer points, the Operator may wait three (3) minutes past their departure time to accommodate clients trying to make connections.
- Operators are not allowed to intentionally run behind schedule.
- Operators must not operate off route. operate off route even for short distances, unless directed or authorized to do so by Dispatch, a Supervisor, CVT Operations staff, or Emergency Personnel.
- Operator are not to cut a route short. If a fire, accident, or other blockage occurs, an announcement must be made to the clients both on board and those boarding. Operators will operate the entire route as scheduled from destination to destination, even if no clients are on board.

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## OPERATOR COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

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- Operators **MUST** respond to dispatch or supervisor by radio, cell phone, tablet, etc. as soon as it is safe to do so. If a communication device is not working properly, contact your supervisor immediately. Do not tamper with the device.
- Radio traffic is monitored not only by the City of San Angelo, but also by the public, via scanners.

- Please be reminded that all radio communication systems are under the jurisdiction of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). All CVT operators are governed by the FCC's operating rules. Violation of these rules is a federal offense for which penalties may be invoked.
- CVT operators must always identify themselves when using the frequency to communicate with Transit base stations and/or Transit operators. Begin your transmission by pressing the "Transmission" button and wait for a beep before speaking. Identify your vehicle by the mobile unit number or the designated base station you are transmitting from. If called operator is required to respond to called.
- No transmission may be made when the channel is already in use, except in an emergency situation.
- Repairs or adjustments to transmission systems are to be performed by CVT's district office in San Angelo. If equipment appears to be operating improperly, discontinue its use, and report the difficulty to the CVT director immediately.
- It is in violation of federal law to willfully damage or permit another to damage a CVT radio.
- CVT operators are expressly prohibited from transmitting any unnecessary, unidentified or personal communication, or utter any obscene, indecent, profane or otherwise inappropriate language via radio.
- Under no circumstance shall a client communicate on a CVT radio to dispatch or otherwise.

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## FARES COLLECTION PROCEDURE

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Operators should NOT handle cash if the bus is equipped with a fare box. All buses should be equipped with a fare box but, in the event that a fare box is not available, cash controls for fares collections are as follows:

- Employees who handle cash are NOT permitted to exchange checks for currency in order to make change for each other.
- Employees who handle cash are NOT permitted to cash checks for themselves or for co-workers.
- Employees who handle cash are NOT permitted to replace any portion of a deposit with a personal check.
- Under NO circumstances is any CVT employee or operator permitted to use any fares collected to pay for any Transit-related item or services. The CVT has a zero-tolerance policy in effect for non-compliance with the above controls, and for any other form of theft of CVT revenue or other assets.
- Employees who handle cash are NOT permitted to borrow from fares to pay for personal items.
- Employees are NOT to put money from fares collected in backpacks.
- Employees who handle cash are NOT permitted to visit their personal vehicles before returning fare cash to safe.

### **School Fares and Student ID Cards**

Students may ride at the reduced student fare. To qualify, students must show a valid school ID card. Students 12 years of age and younger are not required to show ID.

### **Disagreement about Fares**

Operators should make a reasonable effort to collect the correct fare. If a disagreement with a client concerning the correct fare or the validity of a transfer occurs, operators should report problems to supervisor staff.

Operators may not be confrontational. Client and operator safety while providing excellent customer service is the first priority.

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## VEHICLE OPERATION

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Particularly for CVT operators, safety is a constant concern. Client safety is as much of a challenge for the experienced operator, as it is for the relatively inexperienced operator who knows there is still so much to learn about his or her fragile cargo, especially for those clients who may be frail, elderly, and/or mobility-impaired. Many accidents can be prevented; however, the list below can help reduce the occurrence of operator related accidents.

### **Inspect your vehicle**

Do not neglect the simple but important precaution of checking your vehicle before you drive it. Emergency equipment includes a first aid kit, triangular reflectors, cones or flares, and a fire extinguisher. If the fire extinguisher does not indicate a safe charge level, it must be recharged. Operators are responsible for maintaining an AMR kit at all times. If you use any part of the kit, notify your supervisor to receive additional supplies along with completing an incident report on usage.

*See VCR Procedure for additional information*

### **Checking and Reporting Pre-Existing Damage to Equipment**

The Vehicle Condition Report (VCR) must be completed accurately. Any items found defective during the vehicle inspection are to be reported in the Defects section on this card. Items requiring maintenance attention are to be marked on Vehicle Condition Report.

Any defect that would put a vehicle out of service must be reported to Dispatch immediately and the vehicle must not be operated until authorized by Dispatch. Items which would put a vehicle out of service until repairs can be made are:

- Service Brakes
- Parking Brakes
- Steering Mechanism
- Lighting devices (headlights, taillights, flashers, turn signals)
- Tires (bald, cut, etc.)
- Horn
- Windshield Wipers
- Mirrors
- Wheels and Rims (bent or broken)
- Emergency equipment (fire extinguisher, triangles)
- Wheelchair lift
- Defroster
- Seatbelt
- Air Pressure

Any delay in pullout time that may cause a delay of service is to be reported to Dispatch immediately. Dispatch must be notified of any interior or exterior damage not previously reported, before pulling the vehicle out of the yard. Damage must be reported on the Vehicle Condition Report, both pre-existing and any that occurs during the shift.

Dispatch is to be notified before departure on route if cooling/heating systems are non-functioning.

When relieved on route by another Operator, the relief Operator must be informed of all defects. Defects that occur during operation must be reported on the Defect Card. In the event the defective item is an item which would put the vehicle out of service, Dispatch must be immediately informed.

Operators must accept a bus exchange recommended by dispatch or other operations management staff. Failure to comply with these instructions may lead to disciplinary action.

### **Tampering with CVT Vehicles**

Operators must not tamper or alter normal settings of equipment such as steering wheels, heat and cold valves (those which require maintenance adjustment), retarders, governors, wheel chair securement devices or doors, fare boxes and door mechanisms. Operators must not adjust or alter the normal position or operation of any part of CVT equipment.

Operators who attach unauthorized hooks, clips or wires, boards under seats, or any other foreign object to their assigned vehicle may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. When found, an Operator must report that information on the Vehicle Condition Report stating the conditions in detail.

### **Air Pressure**

Air pressure must be built to manufacturing specifications before the bus is moved. If the air pressure fails to build to the required pressure, Dispatch is to be notified immediately.

### **Testing Service Brakes and Parking Brakes**

A complete brake test, which includes testing of service and parking brakes must be performed before leaving the yard. Soft and defective brakes are to be reported to Dispatch immediately. Except in an emergency caused by failure of foot brakes, the Operator must bring the bus to a complete stop before setting the parking brakes.

### **Testing and Use of Lights**

Headlights, clearance lamps and taillights are to be used at all times. All interior lights in the client seating area must be turned on after sunset. It is not necessary to use interior lights during pullout, pull-in and deadhead trips.

All light circuits are to be tested one hour before sunset to allow time for replacement before use of lights is required. High beam headlights are not to be used when following a vehicle at a distance of less than 300 feet. They are not to be used when approaching an oncoming vehicle at a distance of less than 500 feet. During daylight hours, high beam headlights are to be used only in an emergency.

### **Gauges**

Operators must monitor and observe all gauges and indicator lights at frequent intervals to be certain that they are functioning properly. It is prohibited for gauges and indicator lights to be obstructed from view in any way or at any time.

### **“Under Control” Operation of a Vehicle**

A vehicle that is operated “Under Control” is one that can be stopped safely with normal application of the brakes. Bus Operators must be able to control the speed and direction of their bus, at all times. The Operator of a vehicle that is not “Under Control” will be considered a “reckless operator.” Reckless operation of a vehicle may jeopardize a Commercial Operator’s license and job.

While a vehicle is in motion, Operators must drive with both hands on the wheel. Operators may not conduct any transaction that would require the removal of both hands from the steering wheel. Further, Operators may not engage in any activity that could in any way interfere with the proper observation of traffic or the safe operation of the vehicle.

**Mirrors**

All mirrors must be properly adjusted at all times.

**Turns**

When making a right or left turn, Operators must use caution to avoid an accident or incident. When making a right turn, the bus must be positioned so that no other moving vehicle can operate between the right side of the bus and the curb.

**Curves and Dips**

Speed must be reduced sufficiently to avoid any discomfort to clients and any damage to equipment when driving through curves and dips in the roadway.

During bad weather, heavy traffic and dangerous road conditions, safety comes before the need to keep on schedule.

**Traffic Signals**

All vehicles must approach intersections governed by traffic signals at a rate of speed that permits the vehicle to come to a stop with normal application of the brakes. The bus should be stopped before the crosswalk.

Vehicles waiting at a signal are not to start until the signal turns green. Operators must not enter an intersection on an amber "caution" light. Buses stopped behind the limit line or crosswalk may not leave that position until the light turns green.

**Intersections**

At a far-side stop, the bus must clear the intersection and the crosswalk. An Operator must not enter an intersection if the bus will be unable to clear it before the signal changes.

**Check/Stop/Engine Lights**

If the check engine light or stop engine light is activated the bus is to be driven as soon as possible, to the next available safe location. The Operator is to immediately advise Dispatch of the trouble and wait for instructions.

**Pushing and Towing**

Pushing and towing of a CVT bus by any vehicle is forbidden unless authorized by maintenance personnel. Clients must be requested to exit the vehicle before it is pushed or towed. No bus shall be pushed or towed with clients on board.

**Brake Application**

Foot brakes must be applied whenever clients are boarding or alighting. The foot brake must be used when a bus is standing without the parking brake in use.

Whenever the Operator leaves his/her seat, the parking brake must be set and the shift lever placed in the park position.

**Following your trip**

After your trip, make an entry on your **VCR** and take follow-up action for any item that needs repair or adjustment. Be particularly watchful of changes in brake pedal travel or the amount of brake pressure required in normal stopping, as well as any changes in steering performance.

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## VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

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You must actively participate in an effective vehicle maintenance plan. There are 4 major components of a good maintenance plan which includes:

- Checklist Reporting: Daily Vehicle Condition Report (VCR) performed by the operator every day
- Performance Monitoring: Performed by the operator every day
- Maintenance Scheduling: Performed by the operator and Road Supervisor within 500 miles of the required interval
- Operations Analysis: Performed by the operator, Road Supervisor and Operations Manager at least monthly.

There are important benefits resulting from your conscientious completion of pre-trip and post-trip inspections. First, you protect yourself and your client by ensuring that the vehicle is in a good state of repair before you begin your daily schedule. This also includes cleaning the vehicle at designated times.

Next, you make a record of any changes in vehicle performance that may indicate an adjustment or minor repair is needed. Adjustments and minor repairs can be made quickly and inexpensively, and they prevent major breakdowns (which are expensive and can take a long time to fix).

And finally, you provide an evaluation of the maintenance plan, as well as of the quality of maintenance received. If notations or warnings of changes in performance entered on the VCR are not followed up, it may indicate poor supervision in the Transit department. Repeated repairs of the same condition could indicate a problem with the maintenance itself.

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## VEHICLE CONDITION REPORT (VCR)

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The VCR is a vital tool and must be completed every day and should only take 15 minutes to complete. All CVT operators are required to complete a pre-trip inspection before taking the vehicle out on the road. A post-trip inspection is also to be completed at the end of the day to document any unsatisfactory performance or any malfunctions or discrepancies in vehicle equipment. These inspections are logged on the VCR. Failure to conduct pre and post trip inspections increases the likely hood of a breakdown on the road.

If any vehicular problem is noted, it serves to remind the operators and/or the supervisor that repairs are required. Additionally, the VCR provides evidence of the inspection history; which may be important in the event of a vehicle accident and may protect the operators and CVT from prosecution.

Each vehicle will be assigned a VCR booklet that will remain on the bus at all times. Each booklet has a main copy and two additional carbon copies (yellow and pink). The white copy will be detached and turned into dispatch on a daily basis. The yellow copy will be detached and turned into your immediate supervisor for maintenance purposes. The pink copy is not to be detached and will stay in the booklet at all times.

Federal guidelines require documentation (VCR) to remain in the vehicle for at least 30 days. In the event that the VCR booklet is running low or getting near the end, inform your immediate supervisor so that replacement may be readily available.

The equipment and vehicle performance checks on your pre-trip inspection are vital to the safe operations of your vehicle. If faulty equipment is taken out on the road, a breakdown or accident could occur so report it to your supervisor and/or to the operations manager immediately. CVT's maintenance program depends on accurate and timely documentation of defects or discrepancies in vehicle performance or

equipment. Your written comments concerning vehicle performance or equipment service as a reminder to other operators, dispatch, and supervisors that repairs are required.

It is your responsibility to see that any malfunction or discrepancy in vehicle operation or equipment is corrected as soon as possible and to immediately report any continuing unsatisfactory condition to the operations manager, assistant Director of Transportation or Assistant Director of Transportation.

If anything should go wrong with your vehicle during your daily run, be sure to report it to your supervisor, operations manager, and/or assistant general manager so that it can be repaired before the next trip. Make note of any malfunction in vehicle operation or equipment on your VCR and ensure that it is corrected as soon as possible.

Ultimately, if you have any doubt or are not satisfied with the condition of your vehicle's performance or equipment, check with your supervisor **before** taking the vehicle on the road.

*See Vehicle Operating for additional information.*

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## PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

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A good preventative maintenance plan is a vital tool in keeping CVT costs down and is something **you** decide to do to prevent a vehicle breakdown. Even more important, you decide when to do it. It is the operator's responsibility to keep assigned vehicles in compliance with Federal standards.

When a breakdown occurs, you have no control over timing. Preventative maintenance gives you control over when and what maintenance is performed. In addition to preventing a vehicle breakdown, preventative maintenance improves reliability of our transit system, reduces cost of repairs, and enhances safety.

NOTE: All supervisors, in conjunction with, operators assigned a bus/vehicle are responsible for maintaining their respective bus/vehicle. This includes but is not limited to:

- Preventative maintenance (oil changes) every 5000 miles, plus or minus 10% (500 miles)
- Good housekeeping (i.e., checking throughout the interior of the bus/vehicle to ensure there is no trash or debris on the seats or the floors). A neat vehicle is a safe vehicle.
- Keeping the exterior of the vehicle as clean as possible. A clean vehicle projects a professional image.

### **Vehicles and Assignments**

Operators must use the vehicle assigned them unless there is a valid safety defect as verified by the Maintenance Department and the change is authorized by operations staff. Refusal to drive an assigned vehicle constitutes insubordination and will lead to disciplinary action.

Dispatch is authorized to make operational changes when necessary. Operators are to inform Dispatch as soon as possible when a detour may become necessary. Operators may not detour without prior permission from Dispatch or Supervisor. In the event that a detour is unavoidable, operators should notify dispatch as soon as it is safely possible to do so.

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## SCHEDULES & TRANSFERS

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- The Operator must ensure that all client stops are made safely; without incurring damage to the bus, or causing injury or discomfort to clients

- Unless directed by Dispatch/Supervisory personnel, Operators may not purposefully pass up clients who wish to board and are at or near the bus stop
- Passing up clients – Operators must not pass up clients waiting for service at designated stops, unless conditions are unsafe
- Challenging the fare – A reasonable effort must be made to collect the proper fare in a courteous manner. In case of a dispute, do not pursue the matter, allow the client to alight the bus or take a seat. When safe to do so, notify Dispatch or Supervisor. The operator must never put him or herself at risk to collect a fare

### **Operator to Maintain Schedules**

Operators are responsible for maintaining their schedule routes / trip. Intentional delay of schedule will result in disciplinary action. Every effort should be made to maintain a constant speed between stops in order to operate more smoothly and safely.

Operators should have an accurate knowledge of the scheduled running times, time points, and routes for providing clients with information. At time point and transfer points, Operators must not arrive more than one minute ahead of schedule unless otherwise instructed. Operators shall never leave a time point prior to the posted time, as this causes undue burden on clients who are using the published schedule. Leaving a time point early is considered a missed run and is prohibited. Unauthorized running ahead of schedule will result in disciplinary action.

### **Transfer Areas**

Buses must always be stopped in the appropriate transfer area. If the area is occupied, the Operator may not leave the bus unattended until he/she has pulled into the correct transfer area. Clients need to exit buses during transfer times. Operators must ensure that their bus is in park gear position and parking brake applied before leaving clients unattended.

When stopped outside an occupied zone, the bus must be clear of street obstructions, driveways, crosswalks, etc., and must be halted in such a position so as not to create an accident hazard.

### **During Transfers**

Operators are required to check the bus for lost articles and sleeping clients during transfers. If a client is unable to exit the vehicle, the Operator must immediately notify their supervisor or other operations staff.

The following procedure must be carried out when returning a bus to the yard and before operators clock out:

- Park vehicle in the designated area
- Turn vehicle wheels to proper grade
- Turn off all accessories, fans, a/c, heat, and lights
- Shift the transmission to the park position
- Set parking brake
- Shut down the engine
- Close all windows and doors
- Lock all doors
- Pick up trash around operator's area
- Take all personal belongings

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## VEHICLE OPERATION & DRIVING BEHAVIOR

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### Safe Driving Behavior

Operators should always ensure they are operating the vehicle safely. The following guidelines should be followed while operating a CVT vehicle:

- Know and regularly practice defensive driving techniques. Defensive driving is driving to prevent accidents in spite of adverse conditions and the incorrect actions of others.

Concentrate on driving at all times. A good operator dismisses his or her worries or anger when he or she enters the vehicle. Do not permit anything to divert your attention while operating any CVT vehicle. Activities that distract you from your primary duty while the vehicle is in motion could lead to an accident. Examples of distractions while the vehicle is in motion are: collecting fares or donations, making change for a fare or donation, assisting clients and adjusting equipment.

- Be aware of hazard locations along the route(s) such as blind locations or intersections; low overhanging tree branches or building entrances; rough streets or pot holes; trees, poles, signs, and fire hydrants too close to the curb; road construction areas; etc.
- Follow all Local, state and Federal Laws
- Always drive-defensively and never assume other operators are following laws or that they will give you the right of way.
- Start, stop and turn slowly in an effort to give the client the safest, most comfortable ride possible.
- Never move a vehicle with the doors open. The doors should not be opened until the step wells are clear of clients and the vehicle is completely stopped.
- Constantly keep the eyes moving right, left and straight ahead in an effort to spot potentially hazardous situations.
- Avoid driving with one hand. In the event the dispatcher should relay instructions that need to be written down, the operator should wait until he or she can safely stop the vehicle before writing.
- Never press for the right-of-way.
- Limit the vehicle speed so there is clear space and time for an emergency stop especially during periods when poor visibility and weather conditions exist.
- Be familiar with the perception/reaction distance involved in vehicle operation. It takes 3/4 second from the time an operator sees the danger until he or she applies the brake.
- Be aware of the time and distance involved in stopping the vehicle after the brake has been applied. Stopping distance for vehicles increases as the weight increases. The larger the vehicle and the larger the number of clients being transported, the greater the actual stopping distance will be. The operator should use the four second rule to prevent rear-end collisions and the need to stop suddenly. (The operator should spot a stationary object ahead and begin counting one-one thousand, two-one thousand, three-one thousand, four-one thousand as the vehicle directly in front passes the object. The operator is following at a safe distance if his or her vehicle does not pass the object before the count of four.)
- Be aware that even slight illness, extreme fatigue and certain prescription and over-the-counter drugs may slow their reaction time and affect their ability to judge distances, speed, and driving conditions. An operator should make allowances in his or her driving habits under these circumstances.
- Maintain scheduled time while driving at a safe and careful speed. A vehicle must not be operated in a way that would endanger the safety of persons or property. It is prohibited to operate a vehicle at a speed great than the legal or restricted speed limit.
- Wear seat belts at all times.

### Report Unsafe Conditions and Practices

Your active interest and cooperation in conducting your work activities in a manner that poses no danger to others is vital to the success of CVT's safety program. It is the responsibility of each operator and dispatcher to

observe all safety rules and practices while working in accordance with established safety procedures. If you are aware of any unsafe conditions or practices, please report it immediately to your supervisor.

### **Mechanical Breakdown**

During mechanical breakdowns, Operators are required to immediately report the problem, location, direction and bus number to Dispatch. Once reported, instructions from Dispatch are to be followed and the vehicle must remain at the reported location unless directed otherwise

### **Stopping in Obstructed Areas**

When it is impossible to pull the bus safely to the curb because of obstructions, stop the bus parallel to the curb and at least four feet away.

In areas where the grade slope of the street causes the bus to lean, the bus must be driven far enough away from the side of the street to avoid hitting poles, trees or other obstructions.

### **Hazards**

Immediate hazards such as low wires, overhanging trees, branches, etc., must be reported to Dispatch as quickly as possible. Striking tree limbs or other obstructions which cause damage to any vehicle may be considered an accident. *Please refer to CVT Accident Policy.*

### **Proper Use of Four-way Flasher System**

The four-way flasher system must be used while loading and off-loading clients, in emergency situations, at railroad crossings and when making relief stops. This applies to all loading zones.

### **Pedestrians**

Vehicles must always yield to pedestrians. In the event that the pedestrian signals the Operator to proceed, the Operator is not to proceed but to remain standing until the pedestrian is in the clear. Operators may not give hand signals to pedestrians or to other users of the street indicating that they may proceed.

### **Stopping for School Bus**

Operators of any vehicle must not pass a school bus from either direction when children are boarding or exiting or the school bus flasher lights are engaged. All vehicles are required to stop and wait for the school bus lights to stop flashing before proceeding. This procedure must be followed unless the roadway is divided and the school bus is stopped on the other side of the divider, or an intersection is controlled by a traffic officer or an official traffic signal. Passing a school bus that is boarding or alighting when the red flashers are activated is grounds for immediate termination.

### **Funeral Processions**

It is unlawful to drive through, or otherwise interrupt a funeral procession.

### **Railroad Crossings**

The last 100 feet before a railroad crossing are to be approached at a controlled rate of speed not to exceed 15 miles per hour with four-way flashers on. When approaching any railroad crossing the Operator shall bring the bus to a complete stop in the right-hand or curb lane traffic. The Operator must be able to see the tracks clearly in both directions. Such stops will be made within 50 feet and not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail of the crossing. The Operator shall not drive over the crossing until he or she has opened the operator's window and client front door and looked both directions along the track for the approach of any train.

If gates protect the crossing, the stop must be made at a location that will not interfere with the crossing gates when they are lowered. The Operator must not go through, around or under any lowered railroad-crossing gate. The Operator must not raise, or attempt to raise, a railroad crossing gate for any reason.

Exception to the complete stop requirement is allowed when the crossing is protected by police officer or railroad personnel who are on duty directing traffic.

In the event that a bus becomes stalled on the tracks, the Operator shall immediately request and assist clients to alight to a place of safety. The Operator will then notify Dispatch to call the railroad and make every reasonable effort, under the existing conditions, to stop trains approaching from either direction.

### **Road Construction**

When operating a bus in a construction zone, Operators must use caution, reduce speed, and be prepared to stop.

### **Approaching Deep Water**

Operators must use caution when approaching deep water. Buses may not be operated through water over ten inches deep or above the axle.

### **Try to forget that your vehicle has a reverse gear:**

Yes, this sounds odd, but it is not odd when you remind yourself that backing up any vehicle- particularly a van or bus - is one of most dangerous things you can do. Try to plan ahead and avoid getting into a position where you must back up. In those few situations when backing your vehicle is absolutely necessary, advance planning can keep you from backing into traffic. For instance, if you must use head-on parking, backing into an empty slot is preferable to backing out into passing traffic. In every instance when backing up cannot be avoided, put the vehicle in "Park" and walk around to carefully check the area behind and around your vehicle before attempting to back up. If possible, enlist the aid of another person to "spot" or guide you. Remember that, no matter how many precautions you take, you remain responsible if something goes wrong.

### **U-Turns**

Never perform U-turn. Vehicles have too many blind spots and it is highly likely that this could result in a collision.

### **Intersections**

When approaching an intersection controlled by a traffic signal (stop sign), approach the device be prepared to make a safe, smooth stop. **DO NOT RUN A RED LIGHT. COME TO A COMPLETE STOP AT ALL TIMES.**

### **Stop Signs**

- **Do not obstruct traffic at intersections.** Avoid entering an intersection (except when making a turn) unless there is adequate space on the opposite side of the intersection to accommodate the vehicle, so that crossing traffic will not be blocked. When making a **left turn**, come to a complete stop behind the stop line and the pedestrian crosswalk or stop sign until on-coming traffic clears in order to make the turn safely.

### **Stopping to Unload a Client**

Vehicles are expected to maintain a minimum speed on highways. When your vehicle stops, it becomes an obstruction to traffic and you may be held legally liable for accidents that happen to other operators who are trying to avoid your vehicle. If you must stop your bus, move completely to a safe shoulder or, even better, find an intersecting road and pull off the highway entirely. **Do not stop your vehicle on a highway to unload a client.**

### **Railroad Crossings**

All CVT busses are required to **stop at all railroad crossings**. Stop, Look and Listen by opening the door.

### **Height clearings**

Always be aware of height clearings

### **Parking**

Do not park too close to the curb. This can cause unnecessary wear to the tires. Please allow at least 2 inches between the curb and the vehicle tires.

### **Unattended vehicle**

It is a violation and safety hazard to leave a vehicle unattended while the vehicle is running or there are clients aboard the vehicle.

### **Backing**

Buses must not be backed unless there is no alternative. If backing is necessary, Operators must make certain that the movement can be made safely. Employees must use extreme caution when backing a vehicle. If possible, another employee should be asked to monitor the rear of the bus during the back-up movement. Employees should use the Get out and Look (GOAL) SOP when backing.

### **Tire Care**

Buses must be operated so that tires do not strike the curb, sharp or large objects, or any other object that could damage the tires. If tire damage occurs by striking an object, the Operator must note it on the Vehicle Condition Report.

The Dispatcher is to be notified immediately whenever low air pressure occurs in the tires of any vehicle.

Operators who deliberately cause tire damage will be charged with a preventable accident.

### **Driving on COG/CVT Property**

Employees must be alert and aware whenever they are maneuvering equipment on CVCOG/ CVT property. Employees may not exceed the limit of 10 miles per hour when operating any vehicle.

### **Clean Vehicles**

It is the responsibility of the Operator to make certain the interior of the bus is clean before pulling out. Operators must keep the interior of the bus free of trash at all times. If the bus becomes soiled to the point where it could cause damage to the clothing or discomfort to the client, notify supervisor or manager. Buses must be cleaned; operator must remove trash and excessive debris before the Operator is relieved or when the bus is parked. At the end of the shift, buses need to be sanitized, trash must be removed, and seats need to be wiped down. Supervisors will ensure vehicles are in good condition before the Operator will be relieved.

### **Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning**

All windows are to remain closed when air condition systems are in use.

It is important to remember that some buses may require as much as 30 minutes or more before a noticeable cooling or warming effect occurs.

Dispatch should be notified of any defects once all reasonable efforts are made to correctly set heating or cooling systems. If at all possible, dispatch notification of defects should occur before departure on route or as soon as possible after departure.

### **Using Controls Smoothly and Efficiently**

The controls of vehicles must be handled in a smooth and efficient manner at all times. This includes proper acceleration and proper application of the brakes, both of which are essential to safe and desirable operation.

## Shutting Down the Bus

At the end of the shift or day, operators need to follow the steps listed below to shut down the bus:

- Apply the parking brake
- Shift the transmission into neutral
- Using the door control handle, open the entrance (front) door (do not open the rear door for the purpose of exiting the bus)
- Move the door air lever (dump valve) to the “RELEASE” position Note: Do not reach thru the operator’s window to close the doors with the door handle
- Leave the bus through the front door
- Manually, with your hand close the entrance doors after you leave the bus. If you are at a layover, relief, or recovery point for five (5) minutes or more and there is no one onboard the bus, shut the bus down using the following procedure
- Note: Prior to shutting down your bus notify Dispatch that you are shutting down the bus.
- Apply the parking brake
- Shift the transmission into neutral • Kneel the bus.
- Turn off all electrical accessories
- Allow the engine to idle for a few minutes
- Using the door control handle, open the entrance (front) door (do not open the rear door for the purpose of exiting the bus)
- Move the door air lever (dump valve) to the “RELEASE” position Note: Do not reach thru the operator’s window to close the doors with the door handle
- Using the ignition select switch, select “OFF” and verify that the engine is turned off
- Leave the bus through the entrance (front) door
- Manually, with your hands close the entrance doors after you leave the bus.

## Food and Drinks

Operators are not allowed to consume food or drink beverages in the operator’s area (seat), while the bus is in motion.

## End of Shift

Operators who are at the end of their shift (Demand Response) or day (Fixed Route) and being relieved by another operator are responsible for checking out with your supervisor or other operations supervisor / manager.

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## CLIENT RELATIONS

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### General

Operators are to be considerate and courteous in speech and manner at all times while serving CVT clients. Operators must make every effort to de-escalate any confrontation with clients or potential clients. Operators may not instigate confrontations with clients, pedestrians or operators of other vehicles.

### Client Complaints

All clients are reviewed by supervisory staff to determine validity. When the investigation reveals that a complaint is valid, the Operator may be subject to disciplinary action.

### Conversations with Clients

Operators should be courteous and maintain a cheerful and helpful attitude at all times; however, Operators are should avoid unnecessary conversations with clients when the bus is in motion. This will decrease the potential for accidents by insuring the Operator’s attention to the road.

It is important to assist clients to understand how to use the bus services but all questions should be answered briefly and politely. An Operator must not allow his/her attention to be taken from the traffic and the safe operation of the vehicle. Operators who are having an issue with a client shall call for a supervisor to meet them.

### **Providing Information to Clients**

Operators should be familiar with the areas in which they operator the bus. This will allow them to be helpful and informative when clients request information. Whenever an Operator is unsure of the answer, it should be suggested politely that the client call for route information and be given the telephone number. Under no circumstances is an Operator permitted to knowingly give incorrect information to a client.

### **Beverages and Food on Board – Clients**

Occasionally, clients will attempt to board a bus with open food or beverages in hand. When this happens, the Operator should politely ask them to discard the items or wait for the next scheduled bus. Food and beverages that are in secured should be allowed as long as they remain secured. Allowing these clients on board creates problems with sticky seats, messy floors, etc., causing discomfort to other clients. If the client insists on bringing open food or beverages on board, Dispatch should be notified immediately.

No client may bring any open alcoholic beverage containers on board any CVT vehicle at any time. Containers must be discarded outside the CVT vehicle before the client can be boarded.

### **Lost and Found Articles**

Articles found on the street, in the buses, or on company property must be turned in promptly. It is preferable that they be turned in on the day found, unless otherwise instructed. It will be the responsibility of the Operator to turn over lost items to Dispatch or member of management, unless otherwise directed, upon completion of their run.

Operators shall make no attempt by telephone or in person to contact the person whose property may have been found. Operators shall not use the radio system to communicate lost and found items to other buses or dispatch as to maintain the safety of the lost item.

### **Playing Radios – Clients / Operators**

Playing radios on CVT vehicles is prohibited. The Operator should direct the client to stop playing the radio. If the client insists on playing the radio, Dispatch should be contacted immediately.

### **Baggage and Packages**

Clients are only permitted to carry on board ordinary hand baggage and small packages and articles that will not inconvenience other clients. Hand carried articles must not interfere with the entrance, exit free use of the aisles, or in any way hinder the safe operation of the bus. Operators must not assume responsibility for articles or baggage.

The following articles may not be brought on board the bus at any time:

- Glass and sharp objects not properly sheathed protected
- Oversize bundles and packages; (Oversized packages are those that block isles and/or impede the safe loading or off-loading of clients
- Fishing poles
- Explosives
- Corrosives (i.e., batteries)
- Inflammables
- Any other dangerous articles likely to endanger the safety of clients

## **Firearms**

CVT does not allow unlawfully carried handguns, weapons, or any other items intended for use as a weapon in or on any CVT facility or vehicle.

## **Bicycles on CVT Vehicles**

- CVT transports only single-seat, two-wheeled, non-fueled bicycles on its vehicles. Oversized, tandem or fueled bicycles (including motorbikes and mopeds) and trailers are not permitted on any vehicle, and bicycles with solid wheels are not allowed in bike racks on CVT buses
- Limited bicycle storage is available on CVT vehicles. CVT encourages cyclists to consider parking their bicycles in racks rather than taking them on the vehicle
- For safety reasons, the operator will not leave the bus to assist with the loading or unloading of bicycles
- Bicycle racks can only carry two bikes at a time and are to be available on a first-come, first-served basis
- Bicycle storage at CVT park and rides and facilities is available free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis
- Bicycles may be loaded or unloaded from any CVT stop or transfer point at any time
- The effects of bicycle loading and unloading will be assessed periodically to determine if changes should be made to maintain or improve transit operations and safety of cyclists
- CVT allows bicycles on its vehicles with the following limitations:
  - Any number of folding bicycles is allowed inside any CVT vehicle at any time.
  - Storing bicycles in the priority seating areas for elderly and disabled riders on any vehicle is prohibited.

## **Bicycles at CVT Transit Facilities**

- Bicycle racks at CVT Transit facilities are available free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis
- Where bicycle racks are not available, bicycles must be not restricting pathways and exits
- Bicycles may be parked at CVT facilities for no more than 72 hours, after which they may be removed
- Bicycles may be parked at CVT facilities for no more than 72 hours, after which they may be removed

## **Detaining Clients**

An Operator may not attempt to keep clients from leaving the bus unless it is to protect them until it is safe for them to leave. The safety of clients and the Operator is the primary concern. An Operator must never attempt to detain lawbreakers.

## **Removal of Clients**

The Operator must call dispatch when a client needs to be removed from the bus. The dispatcher will dispatch a supervisor or the local police department and in the meantime:

- While waiting at the location the operator must open both doors so that if the client wants to exit the bus, he/she may. The safety of the other clients and the Operator is a primary consideration. It is also important to consider the safety of the client being removed. If the client remains on the bus, he/she must not be removed until a supervisor or local law enforcement is on location
- Whenever an Operator observes or hears clients behaving destructively or offensively, the client should be requested to stop the offending behavior. If the client does not respond to this request, the client should be requested to leave the bus. However, the Operator must use good judgment. If an Operator believes that a situation could become a safety threat, he/she should not say anything to the offensive client
- If it is possible to obtain assistance from an Operation's Supervisor or law enforcement officer without placing anyone in jeopardy, the Operator should attempt such aid

- Clients are never to be left in unsafe or uninhabited areas. Small children, the elderly or disabled must not be removed. These clients should be turned over to the custody of a police officer or a supervisor. Clients are not to be removed forcibly
- An Operator must complete an incident report whenever a client is requested to leave the bus.

### **Refusing Transportation to Potential Clients**

Operators must first contact dispatch when refusing transportation to any individual or group of individuals who are behaving offensively or who could imperil the safety and/or comfort of other clients.

If an Operator refuses service to a potential client, the refusal must be accomplished as discreetly and quickly as possible. Dispatch is to be notified and an incident report submitted at the end of the shift. This practice is in the Operator's best interest and will assist Transit staff in answering questions from the public and the client.

Clients who are on the trespassed list may be denied boarding and a supervisor notified so that proper actions can be taken.

### **Trespassed Clients**

If that person is at a bus stop or platform...and is the only person boarding, DO NOT STOP. NOTIFY DISPATCH USING YOUR LOCATION, DISPATCH IS TO NOTIFY POLICE.

### **Threats of Violence**

Violence on the bus, at bus stops or transfer stations may include: verbal abuse, physical assault between clients and sexual harassment.

Make eye contact and greet client in order to watch for clients who may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol; angry and respond angrily when greeted. These clients could potentially become aggressive. Operators are not to provoke clients at any time.

### **Client becoming aggressive or violent**

- Stop the bus
- Ask the person to stop the violence
- Call the dispatcher
- Encourage the person to escape by opening the doors
- Have the person removed from the bus even if they have stopped their violent behavior

If the person stops the violent behavior, continue on your route, but be sure Dispatch has notified the police and they will meet you and remove the person from the bus.

### **Hijacking**

In a hostage situation, Operators must remain calm and make every effort to keep clients calm.

CVT Operators are directed to follow these steps if a hostage situation occurs;

- Remain calm
- Do not upset abductors
- Do not try to be a hero
- Follow the captors' instructions;
- Do not speak unless spoken to
- Accept your situation
- Observe everything carefully
- Do not turn your back on your captors

- If clients with disabilities are on board, attempt to explain the situation to them
- Avoid physical resistance; you have little chance of success in resisting
- If permitted to speak on the telephone for any reason follow the abductor's instructions
- Be patient and remember that time is in your favor

### Firearm Discharge

If you believe a firearm is being fired at the bus or rocks are being thrown at the bus—do not stop;

- Have your clients get down below window level
- Keep the bus moving out of the range of danger
- When it is safe, stop the bus and check for injuries;
- Call Dispatch for law enforcement;

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## WHEEL CHAIR LIFTS/RAMP AND LIFT/RAMP EQUIPMENT

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The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) allows clients to access a vehicle using a wheelchair lift/ramp if they are not able to board the vehicle normally. While providing equal access to public transportation for all, please be aware at all times that this presents potential safety hazards.

The process of loading and unloading a wheelchair client on and off the platform of a wheelchair lift has the potential for being the most hazardous portion of any trip. The loading and unloading of clients using wheelchairs on a lift platform involves a complex interaction between the operator, the client, the client's wheelchair, the lift equipment, and at times additional factors such as other clients, people, vehicles, distracting events and inclement weather. As an operator you must be aware of these interactions and carefully: follow the following safety precautions to ensure that an accident does not occur. Failure to do so may result in serious bodily injury to you or your client, and/or property damage. Before using the wheelchair, lift or handling a client in a wheelchair, it is very important that you familiarize yourself with Emergency Operating Instructions, posted in your vehicle's wheelchair lift Owner's Manual or Service Manual, or the emergency manual operation procedures posted on the wheelchair lift on your vehicle.

Bring vehicle to a full stop, out of the flow of oncoming and through traffic. **Do not attempt to deploy the lift if you cannot do so in an area with no oncoming traffic.** Once you are in a safe location, set the parking brake (the lift will not operate if the parking brake is not set) and turn on the emergency flashers.

- Always secure the safety of the immediate lift area, using an orange safety cone or the set of (3) triangle reflectors in your vehicle.
- Open lift door(s) and secure the door(s) open.
- Make sure there are no obstructions and that everyone is clear of the lift before operating.
- Observe location so that you are not loading or unloading clients on soiled, wet, muddy or an otherwise unsafe surface.
- Never allow anyone other than yourself to operate the wheelchair lift.
- Check the grips on the push handles of the wheelchair. If they are loose, you could lose control of the wheelchair. Also, always treat the wheelchair as if the brakes do not work. If you must leave a client in a wheelchair unattended, block the wheels to keep the wheelchair from rolling.
- Never allow the wheelchair client to push himself/herself on or off the lift platform without your assistance. You are the operator and the professional. You are in control.
- Under any circumstance, never allow a client/bystander to assist with the wheelchair lift/ramp equipment.

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## LOADING CLIENTS

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- Allowing wheelchair clients to stand on the lift/ramp while the lift is in operation may result in serious bodily injury. Offer the client the option of riding the lift in the wheelchair or a folding chair. Explain to the client that you want to ensure their safety. The client can then transfer to a seat on the vehicle.
- An operator should never ride the lift or accompany a client on the lift for any reason. Assist the client from a safe position outside or inside the vehicle.
- Take extra precautions when transporting a client in a three-wheeled mobility aid, which is not as stable as a wheelchair. Although the ADA allows clients to access a vehicle using a three-wheeled mobility aid, most three-wheeled mobility aids are not designed for transport and operators should use the proper equipment to secure these mobility aids. Whenever possible encourage the client to use a wheelchair designed for safe transport on the lift. Offer the client the option of riding the lift in a wheelchair and then transfer to a seat on the vehicle. If an individual in a wheelchair is not willing or unable to transfer to a seat, and the device is not able to be secured safely, you will need to contact your supervisor or other management staff for guidance. When in doubt, contact your supervisor or manager.
- Unfold the platform by pressing the "Unfold" switch on the hand-held control.
- Press the "Down" switch until the entire platform reaches ground level. The platform should rest evenly on the ground when fully lowered on a flat surface.
- Load the wheelchair facing outward. Your client should be facing away from the vehicle. Lock the wheelchair brakes and buckle the client restraint belt. Make sure that the wheelchair is centered on the lift platform and ensure that the client's arms are on the armrests, with hands on his/her lap.
- Stand outside your vehicle and to the side of the wheelchair lift, facing the client. Hold the wheelchair with one hand and operate the lift controls with the other hand. Reassure your client.
- Press the "Up" switch on the hand-held control until the platform reaches the floor level of your vehicle and stops. Check that the outboard roll stop is functioning properly and is in the Up (vertical) position.
- If you do not have an operator's aid, or the wheelchair client in a wheelchair does not have an attendant, reassure the client and board your vehicle. Release the wheelchair brakes and maneuver the wheelchair off the lift and into your vehicle. Turn your client around so that he or she is now facing forward. Remove the footrests if necessary.
- Secure the wheelchair with the 4-point tie-down system provided.
- Secure the client in a wheelchair with the shoulder harness and lap belt provided.
- Exit the vehicle. Using the hand-held control, press the "Fold" switch until the platform stops (fully loaded). Close door(s) and lock.

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## UNLOADING A CLIENT

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- Never let a wheelchair client stand on the lift. Offer the client the option of riding on the lift in the wheelchair or a folding chair.
- Unfold the platform by pressing the "Unfold" switch on the hand-held control.
- Check that the outboard roll stop is functioning properly and is in the Up (vertical) Position.
- Release the wheelchair from the 4-point tie-down system and release the client's shoulder harness and lap belt. Turn the client around in the vehicle and unload the wheelchair facing outward. The client should be facing away from the vehicle. Replace the wheelchair footrests if necessary. Lock the wheelchair brakes and fasten the client restraint belt.
- Make sure that the wheelchair is centered on the lift platform and ensure that the client's arms are on the armrests, with hands on his/her lap.
- If you do not have an operator's aid, or the wheelchair client does not have an attendant, reassure the client. Exit the vehicle and stand to the side of the wheelchair lift. Hold on to the wheelchair with one hand and operate the lift control with the other hand
- Press the "Down" switch on the hand-held control until the entire platform reaches ground level. The platform should be resting evenly on the ground when fully lowered on a flat surface.

- Unbuckle the client restraint belt and unlock the wheelchair brakes. Assist the client to a ramp or other safe landing area.
- Raise the platform by pressing the "Up" switch on the hand-held control until the lift platform reaches the floor level of the vehicle and stops. Fold the lift platform by pressing the "Fold" switch until the platform stops (fully loaded).
- When loading a motorized wheelchair or scooter, the rider must turn off the motorized component so that it does not accidentally accelerate while loading or unloading on the lift.

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## ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

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**NOTE - These procedures are to be followed by the operator of any CVT vehicle involved in any accident, no matter how minor the accident.**

First, REMAIN CALM. Speak to your clients in a firm, reassuring voice. They will take their cue from your behavior. If you seem unshaken and in control of the situation your clients are less likely to panic and will be easier to manage. As the operator you are responsible for the safety of your clients.

- Evacuation: As an operator you have an important responsibility for the welfare and safety of your clients. You must be prepared to provide evacuation assistance to all clients.
- The evacuation decision: If you smell smoke, see smoke or smell gasoline or diesel fumes, evacuate the vehicle immediately. Do not assume it is NOT an emergency. Evacuate all ambulatory clients first.
- Find out if anyone has been injured
- Secure the vehicle immediately to protect your clients.
- Turn to your client and check to see that everyone is all right.
- Look up and down the aisle to see if there are any unconscious or seriously injured clients.
- Look for bleeding, broken limbs, vomiting, or poor breathing.
- ***First aid should be administered only if you are certified, and sure of what you are doing.***
- Look for other signs of injury, such as confusion, disorientation, or inability to answer your questions. This could indicate serious head trauma, or shock.
- Do not leave your vehicle to check for any other injuries until you are certain that there are no serious injuries aboard your vehicle.
- Call the police. No exceptions. (Regardless of the amount of damage, you will need a police report of the incident.)
- Provide information such as the exact location of the accident, number of vehicles involved, whether there are any injuries, and whether fire, police, or ambulance assistance is required.
- At the safest and appropriate time, call your dispatcher and or supervisor to provide information such as the exact location of the accident, number of vehicles involved, whether there are any injuries, or whether fire, police, or ambulance assistance is required. A CVT employee may be sent to photograph the scene.
- Do not move your vehicle unless instructed to do so by a safety official or CVT management, or if the vehicle's position is in danger of causing more injury.
- If your vehicle is in the way of traffic, evacuate your vehicle immediately. Find a safe location for your client. Tell your client to stay together at the safe location. If necessary, ask a client to assist you with this.
- Check for possible fuel leakage.
- Do not use an emergency flare, or allow anyone to smoke, until you are sure there is no risk of fire. Once your clients are safe, and any immediate emergency response is in progress, exchange information with the operator of the other vehicle(s).
- Provide your name, your license number, and the information on the vehicle automobile insurance card.

- Obtain from the other vehicle the names and addresses of the operator and any clients, and the other vehicle's automobile insurance carrier, phone number and do not discuss the accident with anyone except the proper authorities. Answer questions asked by officials but do not volunteer information.
- Do not discuss fault, and do not admit guilt.
- Do not leave the scene of the accident until told to do so by the officer or CVT supervisor. After the accident, you will need to document what happened. Start taking notes as soon as possible. You will be required to explain in detail all the circumstances relating to the accident. Were the people in the other vehicle acting strangely? Was there anything unusual about the scene, or the vehicles involved? Did you notice any liquor or beer bottles or cans in or near the other vehicle? If so, be sure to write it down in your notes.
- OPERATORS ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT ACCIDENT AT THE SCENE OF THE INCIDENT. Do not leave location of accident without permission of Supervisor.

### **At Scene of Accident**

The following procedure is to be observed at the scene of accidents:

- Note the time and exact location.
- Determine if there are client injuries by asking, "Are you alright?" or "Is anyone injured?" In case of injuries, protect the injured party but do not attempt to move them.
- Do not volunteer ambulance service or ask if an ambulance is needed unless it is obvious that such service is necessary. However, if the injured person requests an ambulance on his/her own initiative, the request must be granted immediately by calling Dispatch, who will summon the ambulance. If an ambulance is called, note the time of arrival, name of ambulance service, and the unit number. Note the badge number of any police officer at the accident scene
- Protect the scene and prevent further injuries by placing reflective markers
- If the accident involves another vehicle, obtain the name and address of Operator, owner and other occupants of the vehicle involved. Note the Operator's license number and insurance company
- Obtain the make, color, model and year of the vehicle, the license number and state, extent of damage
- Pass out Courtesy Cards to bystanders and other persons who may have seen the accident. Write "non-clients" on the cards given to bystanders
- Make note of the number of clients on board and distribute courtesy Cards. Use the seating chart located in the accident kit to indicate the location of each client. Use names on the seating chart to indicate which client was seated in which location
- Call or radio Dispatch for further instruction

### **Providing Identification at Scene of Accident**

At the time of the accident, the Operator should supply only their name, company, and vehicle number to the other party involved:

If required, the Operator is to show his/her license to allow the other party to take any pertinent information. Whenever a law enforcement officer requests any of the above information, including employee's home address, it is to be given.

### **Assistance at Scene of Accident**

In an accident, properly identified CVT employees should render all possible assistance to the Operator involved.

When personal injury is evident, the vehicle must not be moved until Dispatch is notified. The Operator must follow order issued by authorized supervisory personnel or a police officer.

### **Striking an Unattended Vehicle**

The Operator of any bus that collides with any unattended vehicle shall immediately notify Dispatch and await a supervisor to arrive at the scene.

### **Requests for Information about an Accident**

No information about an accident is to be discussed with anyone without first receiving permission from the Director of Transportation. All requests for such information and receipt of a subpoena or summons are to be reported to the Safety Manger immediately.

### **Confidential Information**

The mechanical condition of equipment is not to be discussed with anyone other than transit supervisory personnel and the mechanics who are repairing the equipment. Information regarding mechanical condition is to be considered confidential and is not to be discussed within hearing of bystanders or clients.

### **Preventable Accidents**

Operators may be subject to progressive disciplinary action for preventable/chargeable accidents. Criteria used in deciding preventability are based on guidelines established by the National Safety Council in its article, "Determining Operator Responsibility for Accidents." Decisions are made following a review of the Operator's report, police report, insurance claim report and all other available information including:

- Exact time and place of the accident
- Point of impact
- Distance and path vehicle(s) traveled before and after the accident
- Estimated speed(s) of the vehicle(s)
- Condition of vehicle(s)
- Personal information about Operator(s)
- Damage to vehicle(s) involved
- Number and extent of injuries
- Estimated cost of accident
- Primary cause of accident
- Secondary cause of accident

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## ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

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Fill out the Accident Report Form in full located in every CVT vehicle. (If you do not have the appropriate form in the vehicle, you normally drive, you should obtain one and see that it is always kept in the vehicle.) You will also need to follow the process listed in the Workers' Compensation Insurance section of this handbook.

You may be required to submit immediately to a drug and alcohol test, either under TX DOT regulation or under CVT's authority, as determined by the CVT Chief Safety Officer or Compliance Department staff, or other CVT supervisor. You may also be required to take a remedial operator training course, regardless of the cause of the accident.

If you are contacted by an attorney or other official after the accident, refer the person back to the proper CVT person.

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## CLIENT ILLNESS OR INJURY

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The first thing to do in the event of a client's illness or injury is to secure your vehicle. Find a safe place to pull completely off the road, out of traffic, and turn your emergency flashers on. Try to stop the bus in a

location where medical personnel can respond. When this is done, try to determine the nature or severity of the client's condition.

### Medical Emergencies

- Determine if the client needs medical attention. Information about a client's illness can be obtained from the client, if he or she is conscious and able to talk; from a friend of the clients who may also be riding on your vehicle; or from other clients who may have observed what happened. You can determine from your own observations whether or not the client is conscious, whether the client is breathing properly, whether the client has vomited, or other signs of illness or injury.
- Do not attempt to diagnose the client's illness.
- Let the client make the final decision to refuse medical attention.
- If the person is unconscious, check the client's wrist and neck for any medical warning device.
- Administer first aid if needed and you are trained to do so.

### Requests for Assistance

As soon as you have assessed the situation, determine if there is a need to request for police assistance, ambulance service, or for any help, call 911 or contact Dispatch and advise them of the situation. Give as much information as possible including, your location, the nature of the illness, the physical state of the sick client, and if possible, the name of the client. The **Dispatch Office must be notified immediately of any medical issues** that arise on your vehicle, no matter how insignificant the issue may seem. A supervisor will be dispatched to the scene to assist. Keep the client as comfortable as possible by: using a coat or blanket to keep the client warm, loosening restrictive clothing, or opening a window for fresh air. **Do NOT give the person any medication:** You are not a doctor, nor do you know the person's medical history.

### Unconscious Clients

- Ask if anyone knows the person
- Check the person for medical alert information
- Call dispatch for medical assistance
- Secure the person's belongings

### While waiting for emergency assistance:

- Make the person comfortable
- Keep the person warm
- Reassure the person that medical assistance is on the way
- Administer first aid in accordance with company policy and training
- Let clients know the reason for the delay
- Distribute and collect courtesy cards
- Thank the clients for their patience
- Inform them of alternative options for transportation

### Injured Clients

If a client claims injury after falling on the bus because of a sudden movement or a hard stop, follow the guidelines below:

Take each claim of injury seriously

- Call Dispatch to report the incident immediately
- Ask the Dispatch for medical assistance if needed
- Complete an incident or accident report as directed by your supervisor. Operators must always report and document each incident, no matter how minor. Report incidents, which occurs on or off the bus, even if medical attention is refused.

## **Other Medical Conditions**

Although there are countless conditions that may cause illness, the most common are motion sickness, seizures, and heart attacks or strokes.

### **Motion sickness**

Motion sickness is not uncommon among vehicle client. Symptoms of motion sickness include nausea, clamminess, pallor, profuse sweating, hyperventilation, and claustrophobia. Unless there are unusual symptoms, motion sickness is not generally serious. To make the client more comfortable, you may need to seat the client on the first seat on the right side of the vehicle, next to the window. If the client wants fresh air, open the window next to the client, or assist the client out of the vehicle. Have the client take slow deep breaths. Call the Dispatch Office.

### **Seizure**

You may have a client who suffers a **seizure**. Seizures are generally related to epilepsy, but can be caused by other conditions. Partial Seizures are minor and ordinarily do not require any action on your part. Symptoms include a dazed facial expression for a brief period of time, and a brief lapse of concentration. If you believe a client suffered a petit mal seizure while on board your vehicle, notify the Dispatch Office even if no intervention was required. A grand mal seizure is more serious, and involves a greater risk of injury to both the person having the seizure and other clients on board your vehicle. Symptoms may include disorientation, convulsions and loss of consciousness. Remove any sharp objects in the client's vicinity and try to cushion the client's head with a jacket, blanket or pillow. The seizure should last only 2-3 minutes; if it lasts longer than 5 minutes, notify the Dispatch Office and request medical assistance. When the seizure is over, the client is likely to be disoriented, embarrassed, and possibly very tired. Be sure to notify the dispatch office immediately of any seizure that occurs.

### **Heart Attack**

Although **heart attacks** and **strokes** are two different conditions, they frequently have similar symptoms. Disorientation, pains in the chest or arm, pale or clammy skin, and difficulty breathing are all signs that point to a serious problem. Although the client may deny that their health may be in jeopardy, you need to play it safe. **Contact the dispatcher for help immediately.** Have the client relax in a comfortable position and rest quietly. Keep other clients from crowding around. Watch the client closely until help arrives. If the client loses consciousness or appears to stop breathing, **administer CPR** until assistance arrives.

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