

Chapter 5 – COUNTY OPERATIONS

Sec. 5-1 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year for the County shall be a period commencing January 1 of each year and ending December 31 of each year.

(Code 1979, § 2-66; Res. No. R-2007-41, 6-20-2007)

Sec. 5-2 Claims

No claim or bill shall be submitted to the County Board until such claim or bill has been submitted first to the Finance Director. Each Board member shall be provided with a list of the monthly claims, and it shall not be necessary for the claims to be read. The Finance Office is authorized to pay claims on the normal monthly pay dates in months when the County Board does not meet. Such paid claims shall be submitted to the County Board for review at its next meeting.

(Res No. R2010-50, 9-15-2010; Res. No. R2012-37, 5-16-2012)

Sec. 5-3 County Litigation

Pursuant to Illinois law and DeKalb County Ordinance O2019-27, the DeKalb County Board's Executive Committee shall be entrusted with the authority to enter into settlement or compromise agreements and to otherwise control the initiation and/or appeal of litigation on behalf of the County of DeKalb, Illinois.

When the DeKalb County State's Attorney's Office determines it is necessary to consult with an/or advise the DeKalb County Board as to threatened and/or pending litigation, it shall do so by advising the DeKalb County Board's Executive Committee, or the full DeKalb County Board itself, as is deemed necessary or desirable.

The DeKalb County Board's Executive Committee shall, in its discretion, be permitted to refer any litigation's initiation, settlement, compromise, and/or appeal to the full County Board for its consideration.

Nothing within this Section is to be interpreted as a restriction or limitation on the DeKalb County State's Attorney or the DeKalb County Sheriff to initiate, defend, settle, compromise, appeal or otherwise control litigation as is otherwise authorized and/or mandated by Illinois law. (Further reference Section 2-19-A2)

(Ord. No. 2019-27, 3-20-2019 [PDF](#))

Sec. 5-4 Residency Requirement

County Department Heads who are appointed by Resolution by the County Board are required to live in DeKalb County within eighteen (18) months of their first day of employment (work). This requirement may only be waived or modified by action of the County Board. Failure of a Department Head to comply with this requirement is grounds for dismissal, but dismissal is subject to formal action by the County Board. Employees hired before March 1, 2018 are "grandfathered" and this provision does not apply.

(Ord. No. 2018-03, 2-21-2018 [PDF](#))

Sec. 5-5 Filling Departmental Staff Vacancies

When a staff vacancy exists in a Department where the County board appoints the Department Head, before those vacancies can be filled, the over-sight Standing Committee must first approve that the need exists for this position. The Department Head will provide six-month status updates to the Standing Committee during the vacancy period. The Finance Committee, as provided for in Section 2-41 (A) (1), may impose additional conditions on filling vacancies based on budgetary concerns. Each Standing Committee, if requested by a Department Head, may approve a list of "critical employees" for whom the above approval process would then not apply when a vacancy occurs.

(Ord. No. 2018-03, 2-21-2018 [PDF](#))

Sec. 5-6 Government Vehicle Operation Policy

- A. *Policy.* The operation of vehicles is indispensable in conducting County business, and the way in which each vehicle is handled directly affects the production of County departments. First, the safety of our employees is our primary concern. Second, vehicular collisions are potentially the most costly losses we can incur when the summation of property damage, bodily injury, fatalities, and liability suits is considered. Such costs can mount to proportions that will adversely affect every department in efforts to accomplish its mission and maintain good public relations.
- B. *Coverage.* This policy applies to all departments of County government headed by appointed officials or those headed by Elected Officials who have chosen to adopt these policies. This policy shall be in addition to any existing policies previously put in place by the various departments of the County.
- C. *Responsibilities/procedure.*
1. Department Heads and Elected Officials who have adopted these policies shall:
 - a. Once these policies have been adopted, ensure departmental compliance by monitoring internal implementation procedures and periodically checking on employee compliance.
 - b. Notify all employees of the existence of these policies and the potential disciplinary actions that may be taken against those employees who show a disregard for these policies.
 - c. Assure that all County-owned vehicles are maintained adequately for safe operations.
 - d. Establish periodic inspections of County-owned vehicles for safety discrepancies, malfunctions, signs of abuse, unreported damage and cleanliness. If repairs are necessary, such repairs shall be made as soon as possible.
 - e. Support the County's on-line driving training program and require all covered drivers to complete it.
 2. Supervisors, having direct authority over employees, shall:
 - a. Ensure that employees do not drive any County vehicle unless they have valid State of Illinois driver's licenses, are familiar with state laws and this policy, and for employees whose primary duty is driving shall be required to have a valid license of the proper class.
 - b. Ensure that only authorized personnel be allowed to operate County vehicles, special purpose vehicles and trucks.
 1. An employee shall not be certified as authorized to operate a special purpose vehicle until he/she has satisfactorily demonstrated his/her complete familiarity with its functions. The employee shall thoroughly understand the manufacturer's operating instructions, vehicle limitations, and emergency procedures and be able to successfully pass an operator's checkout test to the satisfaction of the supervisor.
 2. These procedures shall be accomplished for each type of special purpose vehicle and truck the operator is required to operate.
 - c. Ensure that unsafe vehicles are not driven until safety discrepancies have been corrected.
 - d. Ensure that all employees are briefed and understand that the use of seat belts while driving or riding in a County vehicle is mandatory.
 3. Employees are required to follow defensive driving practices, which are established for the protection of themselves, their fellow employees and the citizens of the County. Every driver of a County-owned vehicle and every County employee who routinely (average of once per week or more) operates their own vehicle on County business must pass the on-line course within six months of the effective date of this policy. Course cost will be paid by the tort fund. Department Heads may mandate that all drivers that drive on County business pass the on-line course.

Following the effective date of this policy, new hires will be expected to pass the on-line course prior to completion of their probation period. Employees shall also:

- a. Inspect the vehicle which he/she is about to drive in accordance with the following:
 1. If there is evidence of accident damage, the employee shall report it to his/her supervisor before driving. Otherwise he/she could be charged for the accident he/she didn't have.
 2. If the vehicle is found to be unsafe, the employee shall report it before driving and request another vehicle.
 3. Vehicles having steering or braking defects shall not be driven. They shall be towed to a garage and repaired before being returned to service.
 - b. Report to the supervisor in writing all defects noted during the trip.
 - c. Wear seat belts at all times while driving, requiring passengers to do same.
 - d. Call police in the jurisdiction responsible to investigate all collisions involving County vehicles and report details to immediate supervisor (or other supervisor if immediate is not available) as soon as possible.
 - e. Employees operating a vehicle in service to the County shall follow these operating rules:
 1. Removal of any equipment from a County-owned vehicle without written permission of the immediate supervisor and/or the Department Head is prohibited.
 2. Operating any vehicle on County business while impaired in any way is a violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge for a first offense. Impairment includes any physical, mental or emotional state or condition naturally or artificially induced that would lessen the ability of the driver to safely operate the motor vehicle.
 3. No alcoholic beverage (whether opened or unopened), narcotics, firearm or explosive material may be transported in a vehicle being utilized for County business purposes unless designated as part of the driver's responsibility.
 4. County vehicles shall not be parked in front of or in parking areas associated with taverns or liquor stores unless employee is on official County business with said establishment. (Restaurants serving liquor are not included in this prohibition.)
 5. Each driver who operates his/her personal vehicle in service to the County must present his/her supervisor with a valid certification of insurance and renewals of it. Each driver must provide initial proof of a valid State of Illinois driver's license and notify their supervisor immediately of the loss, revocation or suspension of those driving privileges.
 6. Modification of any vehicle or of any equipment in a County-owned vehicle without written permission of the immediate supervisor and/or the Department Head is prohibited.
 7. Employees who operate a County vehicle shall restrict use of the vehicle to official County business and incidental personal use.
4. The County Finance Office shall:
- a. Maintain and administer an aggressive program for County employees that seeks to reduce vehicular collisions and liability claims against the County.
 - b. Provide access to an on-line driving course for County employees. Departments will be responsible for maintaining compliance records and making sure employees complete training on a timely basis.
 - c. Recommend safety equipment requirements and specifications for purchasing new vehicles.
 - d. Maintain a database of driver's licenses of County employees who drive in service to the County and periodically spot check that drivers are maintaining a valid license.
 - e. Maintain complete records on County collisions, property damage, and liability claims.
5. Take-home policy. The decision regarding assignment of County vehicles to employees, and the

subsequent decision to allow the vehicles to be driven to and from work each day, shall be left to the discretion of the Department Head.

- a. County-owned vehicles parked at employee's homes shall be locked and secured.
 - b. On-street parking should be avoided to the extent possible. County vehicles should be parked and stored in the safest possible manner at all times.
6. Accident reporting requirements. Any accident involving a County-owned, rented or leased vehicle or privately owned vehicle used in service to the County shall be reported as follows:
- a. Summon medical care for any injured parties.
 - b. Notify appropriate law enforcement authorities.
 - c. Notify employee's immediate supervisor.
 - d. The supervisor shall be responsible for initiating the departmental investigation of the accident, completing all required reports and recommending any follow-up preventative actions.
7. Personally owned vehicles used in service to the County.
- a. The County's self-insurance program provides for excess liability coverage, but does not cover physical damage to an employee's personal vehicle. For excess liability coverage to apply, the accident must be determined by the Finance Office to have occurred during the course and scope of the employee's work duties.
 - b. An employee's personal automobile insurance policy is primary to any County coverage. Employees who use personally owned vehicles for County business might wish to confirm with their insurance carrier that their personal automobile insurance policy provides coverage for this use.
8. Reporting requirements. All vehicle operators are required to notify their immediate supervisor immediately of any temporary or permanent suspension, revocation or loss of driving privileges. Such reports shall be forwarded to the Finance Office by the applicable department. Employees who become ineligible to drive, and whose job requires them to do so, are subject to reassignment or discharge at the sole discretion of the employer.

(Res. No. R2012-47, 6-20-2012; Ord. No. 2013-01, 2-20-2013)

Sec. 5-7 Use of Sycamore Campus Grounds

- A. *Use of the interior of courthouse complex facilities.* It shall be the policy of the County Board that all non-governmental use of the interior of the buildings in the courthouse complex shall be discontinued effective with the adoption of this policy.
- B. *Use of the exterior facilities of the courthouse complex.* It shall be the policy of the County Board that all non-governmental use, including signs, of the exterior facilities of the courthouse complex, including grounds and parking lots, shall be discontinued effective with the date of adoption of this policy.

Those groups currently utilizing the exterior facilities of the courthouse complex shall be allowed to continue with the written consent of the County public building commission. Specifically, those groups are: Sycamore Lions Club for utilization during the one-week period of the annual Sycamore Pumpkin Festival; the Kishwaukee Valley Art League for one weekend in June to conduct the annual Art Festival; and the VietNow Organization on the evening preceding each Veteran's Day to conduct an overnight vigil.

Those groups utilizing the exterior facilities complex named above will be required to enter into written agreements with the County and shall assume all liability for damage to persons and/or property.

- C. *Flying of flags.* All questions concerning the flying of flags at the County Courthouse, including flying flags at half-staff and flying of specialty or organizational flags shall be referred to the Presiding Judge.

- D. *Skateboarding, Rollerskating, Roller Blades and Similar Activities Prohibited on County-Owned Properties.* It shall be unlawful and subject to punishment in accordance with Section 70-33 of this chapter for any person utilizing or riding upon any skateboard, rollerskates, roller blades or any similar device to ride or move about on public property owned by the County located within the City of Sycamore. These properties include the County Courthouse, the County Public Safety Building, and the County Administration Building.
1. Rollerskates and roller blades shall mean any footwear or device which may be attached to the foot to which wheels are attached, including wheels that are "in line" and where such wheels may be used to aid the wearer in moving or propulsion.
 2. Skateboard shall mean a board of any material which has wheels attached to it and which, if propelled or moved by human, gravitational or mechanical power, and to which there is not fixed any device or mechanism to turn or control the wheels.
 3. Any violation of this article is deemed an infraction, punishable by a fine of \$25.00. A second and all subsequent violations of this article shall be punishable by a fine of \$50.00.
 4. Any device designated, intended and used solely for the transportation of infants, the handicapped or incapacitated persons, and devices designed, intended and used for the transportation of materials in and out of the public buildings, shall be exempt from this article.

(Res. of 3-19-1997; Ord. No. 1997-17, § 2, 9-17-1997)

Sec. 5-8 Department Credit Cards

The purpose of this section is to allow departments to purchase goods and services directly from vendors when those items are needed, but it is not expedient, practical, or desirable to have either a check or cash available when payment is demanded.

1. The Finance Office will select a company to use to obtain the necessary credit cards and establish a line of credit with that company. Consideration will be given a company who can meet the general purchasing needs of the various County departments and the billing and payment requirements of the County.
2. Each Department Head will determine how many cards are needed for their department and which employees will be allowed to use them. All employees issued a credit card must sign an acknowledgment form recognizing their responsibility to comply with the County's policy regarding credit cards.
3. The Finance Office will establish appropriate credit limits for each card, recognizing that individual cards may vary with the types of goods and services which are anticipated to be acquired.
4. The use of this card is restricted for the County government to acquire goods and services which are appropriate for the conduct of the County's business.
5. Each Department Head is responsible for the use of the cards by their department. The Department Head is responsible to make sure that any charges are authorized County expenditures and that adequate monies are available within the department's approved budget.
6. No personal expenditures are allowed by employees with the credit cards, even if the intent is to repay the County at a future point.
7. Credit card bills submitted to the Finance Office for payment must include supporting documentation, such as receipts and invoices, which clearly show what goods and services were purchased using the credit card.

(Res. of 3-15-2000)

Sec. 5-9 Internet Usage Policy

- A. The County provides internet access to employees for their use to transact County business.
- B. Department Heads may request, in writing, for individual employees to have access to the internet through the County's system, certifying that said employee has a business need for access.
- C. Authorized employees may access the internet for their own use, during hours that are outside of the normal County work day. Typically, this would be before 8:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, plus weekends, when the volume of business transactions will be significantly reduced.
- D. The County may choose to restrict access to various internet sites. Absent specific blocking of a site, employees are expected to refrain from accessing sites which would be considered offensive by community standards, except where such access is necessary for the execution of County business.
- E. The County will not monitor individual internet usage as a routine matter. There may be a need for the County to occasionally review individual internet usage in a specific area.
- F. Employees that access the internet must be aware that the hardware and software utilized for the internet access has the ability to log all County internet activity, including linked sites.
- G. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit law enforcement officials from examining any internet usage in the course of an on-going investigation of civil or criminal activity. The County reserves the right to disclose any internet activity to law enforcement officials, but will notify the State's Attorney's Office prior to any investigation being initiated.
- H. When accessing the internet, employees are expected to use anti-virus software on their workstations and particular caution for computer viruses should be exercised if files are downloaded.
- I. Any conduct that violates this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- J. The County reserves the right to change this policy at any time, with such prior notice, if any, as may be reasonable under the circumstances.
- K. No one shall receive authorized access to the internet until he or she has received, reviewed, and agreed, in writing, to comply with this policy. Such documentation shall be retained in the employee's personnel file.

(Res. of 3-18-1998; Ord. No. 2013-01, 2-20-2013)

Sec. 5-10 E-mail Usage Policy

- A. The County provides e-mail (electronic mail) to employees for their use to transact County business.
- B. The County recognizes that employees have substantial interest in, and reasonable expectations of, privacy with regard to the e-mail messages they send or receive. However, the County can make no guarantees that absolute privacy of e-mail messages will be experienced.
- C. Time spent on e-mail messages, which are personal, is expected to be either incidental in nature, or confined to time periods which are not a part of the employee's paid work hours.
- D. Employees are expected to refrain from sending, or encouraging the receipt of, messages for which the content would be considered offensive by community standards, except where such messages are necessary for the execution of County business.
- E. The County reserves the right to access and disclose the contents of e-mail messages, but will do so only when it has a legitimate business need, or when the urgency of the need is sufficiently strong to offset the County's commitment to honor the employee's interest in privacy.
- F. The County will not monitor e-mail messages as a routine matter. There may be a need, however, for the County to occasionally review e-mail content for a specific reason.
- G. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit law enforcement officials from examining any e-mail messages in the course of an on-going internal investigation of civil or criminal activity for alleged use or misuse by a County employee. The County reserves the right to disclose any e-mail messages to law enforcement officials, but will notify the State's Attorney's Office prior to any investigation being initiated.

- H. In case of termination or extended absence, work-related e-mail messages may be forwarded to the most appropriate employee.
- I. The unauthorized viewing and/or retrieval of another person's e-mail messages, and other forms of electronic snooping, are prohibited.
- J. The State's Attorney, the County Administrator, and the Finance Director, will review any request for access to the contents of e-mail messages. In the absence of one of those individuals, the Information Management Office Director may be substituted. Such requests must be approved in advance by a majority, and any access undertaken without such approval, is a breach of County policy for which there may be disciplinary action.
- K. Any conduct which violates this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- L. The County reserves the right to change this policy at any time, with such prior notice, if any, as may be reasonable under the circumstances.
- M. No one shall receive authorized access to the e-mail system until he or she has received, reviewed, and agreed, in writing, to comply with this policy. Such documentation shall be retained in the employee's personnel file.

(Res. of 3-18-1998; Res. of 1-17-2001; Ord. No. 2013-01, 2-20-2013; Ord. No. 2018-51, 11-21-2018 )