

## **Professionalism, Courtesy and Respect in the Workplace #103**

### **Professionalism in the Workplace**

From its origins, Davis County has grown to become one of the largest employers in Northern Utah. With this growth has come organizational redefinition in every department and every workgroup in the county. These organizational changes have brought about a need to continually, thoughtfully think about how Davis County employees interact with each other, with citizens and with community groups.

Davis County is committed to the highest standards of professional conduct – both in terms of how we interact with each other and with the citizens we serve. It is our mission to exemplify professional standards of conduct and professional standards of performance in all we do. The following information is provided to bring clarity to these professional objectives and expectations.

Professionalism is defined, in part, as the basic tenets of civility and respect for others. The *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines professionalism as: “The skill, good judgment and polite behavior that is expected from a person who is trained to do a job well.” The qualities of professional behavior in the workplace include, but are not limited to: a good attitude, dignity, a focus on work skills, good sense, self-discipline, civility and respect for others. These are the qualities Davis County employees are expected to exhibit.

In contrast, the qualities of unprofessional behavior in the workplace include, but are not limited to: gossiping, rudeness, incivility, insolence, carelessness, lack of effort, incompetence and neglect of duties. These are qualities in the workplace Davis County employees shall not exhibit and which will constitute a violation of this policy.

### **Courteous and Respectful Behavior**

Davis County is committed to creating a culture of respect and civility which creates a healthy, safe and caring work environment for all employees. Incivility and disrespect in the workplace are a barrier to effective communication, performance and organizational outcomes.

All employees will demonstrate the highest level of courteous and respectful behavior in all dealings with coworkers, supervisors, direct reports and the public – customers and citizens. Employees will conduct themselves in a manner that will not disrupt the workplace, undermine the authority of management, impair close working relationships, offend the public, offend customers or otherwise impede the effective operation of Davis County government.

Acceptable and healthy workplace behaviors are any behaviors that promote respect, positivity and civility in our workplace. They include, but are not limited to:

- Using respectful, supportive, and encouraging language in all interactions, no matter the subject of conversation
- Expressing appreciation when someone does something correctly and in a timely manner

- Addressing disagreements in an appropriate manner and without the use of offensive, abusive or disrespectful language or actions
- Handling differences of opinion privately and discreetly

Disrespectful and inappropriate behavior deals with a broad range of behaviors including, but not limited to:

- Unprofessional behavior
- Rudeness
- Yelling or shouting
- Intimidation or bullying
- Written (including email or social networking) or verbal comments, gestures, actions, behaviors or jokes that are degrading, embarrassing, offensive, demeaning or insulting
- Deliberate exclusion of an employee from relevant work activities or decision-making
- Decision-making influenced by factors which have no work-related purpose
- Attempting to discredit an employee by spreading false information about him/her
- Engaging in abusive, inappropriately loud, combative, aggressive, or threatening language or behavior
- Subjecting others to ridicule or gossip or otherwise undermining an employee's morale or workplace relationships

These behaviors can be subtle or overt. The behavior may be a single event or may involve a continuing series of incidents. Inappropriate behavior may involve the abuse of authority or position. Disrespectful behavior may be unintended or deliberately directed at another individual. In any case, the impact on that individual and/or the work environment can be addressed.

### **Employee Responsibility**

All employees have a responsibility to act in good faith and be active participants in contributing to the creation and enhancement of a community culture of respect, inclusion, civility, dignity and understanding of the people with whom they work.

Employees can contribute to achieving a work environment which does not tolerate unprofessional behavior at work. Employees should report what they see in the workplace as it relates to behaviors defined as unacceptable; employees are in a far better position to know what is happening with peers and co-workers.

### **Management Responsibility**

Supervisors have a responsibility to create and maintain a positive and productive work environment. Supervisors, employees in positions of authority and workplace representatives have a responsibility to ensure healthy and appropriate behaviors are being exhibited at all times and that complaints to the contrary are addressed speedily. This includes dealing with inappropriate behavior of, or towards, co-workers, contractors, volunteers, visitors or others. Supervisors are accountable for identifying and addressing issues in a timely and fair manner. This involves coaching and counselling their employees

and, if appropriate in the circumstances, taking disciplinary action. A supervisor's area of responsibility includes any matter that involves, impacts or could potentially impact the workplace.

Supervisors will:

- Provide a good example by treating all with courtesy and respect
- Promote awareness of the policy and complaint procedures
- Be attentive for signs of inappropriate behaviors at work through observing, seeking information, and taking action to resolve the behavior before it escalates
- Deal sensitively with employees involved in a complaint, whether as complainant, witness or alleged aggressor
- Ensure an employee making a complaint is not victimized for doing so, and seek resolution of such behavior if it occurs
- Monitor and follow up on the situation after a complaint is made so as to prevent recurrence of the behavior.