

# **Town of Boxborough, MA**

## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**



The information set forth in this Handbook is not intended to create a contract nor should it be interpreted or construed as creating any contractual obligations between the Town of Boxborough and any of its employees.

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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to your employment with the Town of Boxborough. We hope you find Boxborough a friendly and rewarding place to work. As a Town employee you have the opportunity to make a significant and positive contribution to our community.

The primary obligation of all Town Departments and offices is to provide efficient and courteous service to the citizens of the Town as well as those conducting business with the Town. As a Town employee, you play a vital role in providing these services. Whether in person, on the telephone, or in written correspondence, you represent the Town.

This Employee Handbook is written for employees of the Town. Its purpose is to familiarize you with your responsibilities, conditions, and benefits of employment.

The information in this Handbook is a summary and is provided for informational purposes only. The content is periodically reviewed and may change at any time, with or without notice. This Handbook does not create any contractual rights and is not a guarantee of any kind. In cases of conflict between this Handbook and the Personnel Administration Plan or any applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement, the latter will take precedence. If any provision of this Handbook conflicts with the law, the law will prevail. It is important to note that Town employees are employed "at will," unless their employment is governed by an applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement or individual contract that expressly states otherwise. As an "at will employee," you or the Town may terminate employment at any time, with or without notice, and for any reason, unless prohibited by law. No representative of the Town, except the Town Administrator, Select Board, and Library Board of Trustees, has the authority to enter into an individual contract with an employee that in any way modifies the "at will" employment relationship. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact your supervisor or the Assistant Town Administrator.

An electronic copy of this Handbook, along with the referenced policies and guideline documents, the Personnel Administration Plan, and applicable Collective Bargaining Agreements, is available on the Town's website: [www.boxborough-ma.gov](http://www.boxborough-ma.gov). If you need a paper copy of the Handbook or any referenced policy or guidance document, please request one from your supervisor or the Assistant Town Administrator and a paper copy will be provided. Please note that these documents are subject to change and updates might only be made to the electronic version on the Town's website. Employees should not rely on printed paper versions of such documents, as they may not be current and may not reflect all applicable changes.

Contact information for the Town's administrative staff, including the Town Administrator and Assistant Town Administrator, is available on the Town's website. Information regarding the Town's boards, including the Personnel Board, can also be found there.

Lastly, please be aware that this Handbook is not a substitute for more detailed benefit plan documents. If there are any conflicts between this Handbook and any plan document, the plan document will take precedence.

## **COMMUNITY PROFILE**

The Town of Boxborough encompasses an area of 10.39 square miles and, as of 2022, has a population of approximately 5,500. The Town operates under an Open Town Meeting form of government and is governed by a five-member elected Select Board. Day-to-day operations are overseen by the Town Administrator, who reports directly to the Select Board. The Fire, Police, and Public Works Departments are led by their respective department heads, who report to the Town Administrator. Library personnel are managed by the Library Director, who reports directly to the Library Board of Trustees.

The Police and Fire Departments are staffed by professionals at all times and provide the Town's public safety services, including an ambulance service.

Annual Town Meeting begins on the second Monday in May and the Town election is held on the third Tuesday in May.

## **PERSONNEL BOARD**

The Personnel Administration Plan is administered by the Personnel Board. The Personnel Board consists of up to five unpaid members who must be residents in the Town of Boxborough. Each member is appointed by the Select Board for a three-year term.

The duties of the Personnel Board generally include:

- Administration of the Personnel Administrative Plan;
- Advising the Select Board, Library Trustees, and Town Administrator on personnel matters;
- Making recommendations to the Town on across-the-board cost-of-living adjustments for non-union employees;
- Participating in certain assigned employee appeal panels, as needed; and
- Maintaining a Position Classification Plan for the Town.

## **PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION PLAN**

The Personnel Administration Plan, available on the Town's website, documents the policies and procedures that make up the Personnel Bylaw for the Town of Boxborough. The Personnel Administration Plan applies to all employees unless there is a conflicting provision in an applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement or individual contract with an employee. This Employee Handbook is a companion document to the Personnel Administration Plan. The following topics are covered in the Personnel Administration Plan, or the appropriate Union Collective Bargaining Agreement, and are not repeated here.

- Definitions of Employee Categories and Work Periods
- Administration (including maintenance of Personnel Records)
- The Position Classification Plan
- The Pay Plan
- Hours of Work and Overtime
- Other Forms of Pay
- Holidays
- Vacations
- Leaves of Absence (including Sick Leave, Sick Leave Bank, FMLA etc.)
- Benefits
- Layoffs
- Disciplinary Actions and Dismissal
- Resolution of Complaints/Grievance Procedures
- Compensation for Positions
- Performance Reviews
- Management Rights

Employees should review the Personnel Administration Plan, the relevant Collective Bargaining Agreement applicable to their employment, if any, or any applicable individual contract, to ensure a full understanding of these topics and how they apply to them.

## **STANDALONE POLICIES AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS**

In addition to the policies and procedures set forth in the Town's Personnel Administrative Plan and in this Handbook, the Town has certain standalone policies and guidance documents. Those standalone policies and guidance documents can be found for review on the Town's website. If an employee requires a physical copy of

any of these policies or guidance documents, they should contact their supervisor or the Assistant Town Administrator. Such policies and guidance documents include, but are not limited to, the following:

**Policies:**

- Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace Policy
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Policy
- Anti-Discrimination and Harassment, including Sexual Harassment Policy
- Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Policy
- Electronic Communications Policy
- Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy
- Hiring Policy
- Mobile Devices Use and Safety Policy
- Pregnant Workers Fairness Act Policy
- Prevention of Violence in the Workplace Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Verification of Employment and Incoming Reference Checks

**Guidance Documents:**

- Open Door and Supervisor Communication Guidelines
- Family and Medical Leave Act Guidance Document
- Domestic Violence Leave Guidance Document

Please note that the Town may modify or eliminate policies and guidance documents at any time, with or without notice. Since these documents are subject to change, updates might only be made to the electronic version that is posted to the Town's website. Employees should not rely on printed paper versions of these documents, as they may not be current or reflect all applicable changes. If you are viewing an electronic version of this Handbook online, you can access and review each document by clicking on its title, which will take you directly to the document on the Town's website.

## **NEW EMPLOYEE INFORMATION**

The Town is committed to providing new employees with all necessary information at the start of their employment, including details about benefits, payroll, and other administrative items. Generally, the Town will schedule an orientation for new employees to complete essential onboarding paperwork, learn about their new role, and receive answers to any questions they may have. If any employee needs additional information or clarification at any time, they are encouraged to reach out to their department head, the Town Treasurer/Collector, or the Assistant Town Administrator for assistance. Although not exhaustive, new employees should expect to receive the following information.

- **EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFITS ORIENTATION**

To help orient employees and explain available employment benefits, the Town Treasurer/Collector, Assistant Town Administrator, or their designee will meet with each new employee to explain available fringe benefits, and to answer any questions.

At this orientation session, employees will be notified about identification documents needed for completion of payroll, insurance, and other forms.

- **PRE-EMPLOYMENT PHYSICAL**

Certain positions, including but not limited to Police Officers, Department of Public Works employees, and full-time Firefighters/EMTs, require satisfactory completion of an occupational physical examination before starting job duties.

For positions that mandate pre-employment physicals, the employee must undergo a physical examination by a Town-designated physician prior to their first day of work. The Town will cover the cost of this physical. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the examining physician completes the "Physical Exam Form," which must be submitted to the applicable department head before the employee begins work. The completed form must indicate that the employee is physically able to perform the essential functions of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation.

- **PAY PERIOD**

The Town's current "pay period" for payroll purposes is a fourteen-day period that begins on Thursday at 12:00 AM and ends two weeks later on Wednesday at midnight. Effective January 1, 2026, the start date for the pay period will begin on Sunday at 12:00 AM and ends two weeks later on Saturday at midnight. Non-exempt employees are required to accurately record their hours worked, including their time of arrival at their work location (or time of departure for a remote site), time out for lunch, time back from lunch, and departure time at the end of the day from their work location.

An employee's normal workday may vary. All overtime or compensatory time must be approved in advance and prior to undertaking to work those hours. Please refer to the Personnel Administration Plan or applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement for additional information.

- **DIRECT DEPOSIT**

The Town of Boxborough directly deposits employee paychecks into the bank of their choice. This benefit provides convenience and may save on monthly service fees, depending on the bank. Employees may choose to receive their payroll advice (i.e., pay stub) electronically or in paper form.

- **APPOINTMENT AND SWEARING IN**

If the employee's position requires an appointment by the Select Board and subsequent swearing in by the Town Clerk, the employee is responsible for meeting with the Town Clerk to be sworn in before starting work.

- **PERFORMANCE REVIEWS AND SALARY STEPS**

The Town's Personnel Administration Plan, applicable Collective Bargaining Agreements, and certain individual Employment Contracts provide information regarding performance reviews and salary step adjustments. For any questions about this process, please consult your department head or the Assistant Town Administrator.

## **BENEFITS**

The Town seeks to provide comprehensive and competitive benefits to its employees and their families. For more information about available benefits, please refer to the applicable plan documents or governing regulations/laws or contact the Assistant Town Administrator. Additional information regarding benefits can also be found on the Town's website: [www.boxborough-ma.gov](http://www.boxborough-ma.gov).

In the event there is any conflict between the information provided here and with the applicable plan documents or governing regulations/law, such plan documents and regulations/law will take precedence. Below is a summary of the benefits currently offered to employees. Please note that these benefits are subject to change.

- **Health Insurance**

The Town of Boxborough offers health insurance to eligible employees.

- **ELIGIBILITY FOR HEALTH CARE BENEFITS**

MGL Chapter 32B, Section 7, states: "Any person in the service of a governmental unit... who receives compensation for such service whether such person be employed, appointed or elected by popular vote, provided the duties of such person require no less than twenty hours, regularly, in the service of the governmental unit during the regular work week of permanent or temporary employment, and provided, further that no seasonal

employee or emergency employees shall be included; except that persons elected by popular vote may be considered eligible employees during the entire term for which they are elected regardless of the number of hours devoted to the service of the governmental unit. A determination by the appropriate public authority that a person is eligible for participation in the plan of insurance shall be final...”

Paid elected officials must work at least twenty hours per week in order to receive health insurance benefits; unpaid elected officials are not eligible to receive insurance benefits.

No employee shall be placed on the Town’s Insurance Plan until the Town Administrator has determined the employee’s eligibility according to the Town’s Policy Requirements and MGL Chapter 32B.

- **ENROLLMENT**

As a benefit to its employees, the Town currently pays 75% of the monthly premium for eligible employees enrolled in a health insurance plan provided by the Town. The remaining 25% of the monthly premium is paid by the employee deducted on a pre-tax basis via payroll deductions. These percentages may differ per applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement or individual Employment Contract. Detailed information regarding available plan(s) (including coverage limits, deductibles, etc.) and premiums will be provided to employees when they are hired, annually, and upon request.

New employees may enroll in the Town’s health insurance plan within 30 days of their employment start date. After the initial benefit election, changes may only be made during the annual open enrollment period, except in certain circumstances outlined below. The Town’s annual open enrollment period usually takes place in May.

Enrollment changes may be made outside the annual open enrollment period in accordance with applicable plans and laws, typically at the following times:

- When a person is added to an employee’s family, including a new spouse, newborn, or newly adopted child; and
- In the event of a loss of insurance coverage through a spouse’s plan due to the spouse losing their job. Please note a voluntary separation is generally not considered an emergency for this exception.

In accordance with currently applicable law, children of employees are eligible to be covered by their parent or guardian’s health insurance plan until their twenty-sixth birthday.

- **Dental and Vision Insurance**

The Town of Boxborough currently offers voluntary dental and vision plans that are 100% employee-funded. The Town does not make contributions towards the cost of dental or vision insurance. New employees may enroll in the Town’s dental and vision insurance plans within 30 days of their employment start date.

- **Flexible Spending and Dependent Care Accounts**

The Town of Boxborough provides optional pre-tax Flexible Spending and Dependent Care accounts as employee benefits. Upon enrollment, members receive cards that can be used at doctor’s offices, pharmacies, and other eligible locations. An employee portal is also available for members to track their balances online.

- **Flexible Spending Account** (July 1 – June 30) – A medical flexible spending account allows the employee to set aside pre-tax dollars to pay for eligible medical expenses for themselves and identified dependents that are not fully covered by insurance or reimbursed by other sources. The annual contribution maximum is based on the plan’s design. Once the employer’s open enrollment period is over, the employee’s annual election is irrevocable for that plan year.
- **Dependent Care Spending Account** (July 1 – June 30) – A dependent care flexible spending account allows the employee to set aside pre-tax dollars to pay for expenses of an eligible dependent that are necessary so that you and, if married, your spouse can work, such as daycare and other dependent care expenses not claimed under the dependent care tax credit or reimbursed by other sources.

Dependents may include children and adults who are incapable of taking care of themselves. Once the employer's open enrollment period is over, the employee's annual election is irrevocable for that plan year.

- **On-The-Job Injury And Workers' Compensation**

The Town maintains Workers' Compensation insurance as a benefit for its employees. This insurance covers lost income and medical expenses associated with an employee's work-related injury in accordance with the Massachusetts Workers' Compensation statute.

Employees are required to report any on-the-job injury to their supervisor or Department Head within 24 hours.

The Town is committed to making reasonable accommodations, when possible, by assigning employees with medical restrictions to temporary transitional duty positions. The objective is to help reintegrate the injured employees into their regular job as their medical condition improves.

According to the Massachusetts Workers' Compensation statute, injured employees are not eligible to receive income benefits until they have been disabled for five days. During this five-day waiting period, the injured employee does not receive regular pay but can choose to use sick or vacation time. Time away from work due to a work-related accident is considered a leave of absence under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), provided the employee is eligible for FMLA leave.

Employment is subject to review consistent with applicable law, including after 26 weeks.

Employees who are injured on the job and are unable to work must continue to pay their contributions for benefits, including health insurance (if they are enrolled in a health insurance plan). The Treasurer/Tax Collector will provide a statement indicating the cost of these benefits, including group health insurance. Employees should make checks for their share of the insurance payable to Town of Boxborough.

The Town's insurance provider covers police officers, firefighters, and EMTs under a specific Police and Fire Accident policy.

- **Long-Term Disability Insurance**

The Town provides employees who work 30 hours or more per week with the opportunity to obtain Long-Term Disability Insurance at a reduced cost. The plan currently offered by the Town via its insurance provider typically covers 60% of the employee's salary, up to \$5,000 per month, and becomes effective after a 90-day waiting period. The insurance covers accidents and injuries that occur both on or off the job. However, if the injury is work-related, this insurance coordinates with any other disability or worker's compensation payments. If this coverage is selected by the Employee, the Town pays 50% of the cost of this insurance while the employee pays the remaining 50%. The premium amount is based on the employee's salary. Employees must complete an election form to enroll in this benefit. More detailed information is available from the Town Treasurer/Collector.

- **Sick Leave Bank**

After six months of employment, employees may participate in a Sick Leave Bank maintained by the Town as an employee benefit. This bank is designed to augment employees' sick leave benefits in the event of catastrophic or long-term illness or accident. Employees represented by a bargaining unit may apply and enroll in the Sick Leave Bank only if it is included in the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement. More information about the Sick Leave Bank, its administration, and employee eligibility can be found in the Personnel Administrative Plan.



- **Life Insurance**

All employees have the option to enroll in the Town's life insurance plan, which offers a \$10,000 death benefit. The Town currently pays 50% of the premium, while the employee pays the remaining 50%.

- **Retirement Plan**

All Town employees who regularly work 20 hours or more per week must enroll in the Middlesex Retirement System. If an employee is part of this system, they do not pay FICA, but they do pay for Medicare. New employees currently contribute 9% of their weekly salary into this retirement plan. Additionally, employees earning over \$30,000 per year must contribute an additional 2% on the amount of their earnings exceeding \$30,000. Employees who are members of another Retirement System with no break in service may be eligible to maintain their current contribution percentage.

Former state or municipal employees are typically eligible to transfer their previous retirement funds to the Middlesex Retirement System. If an employee previously withdrew retirement funds, they may typically repay the money (with interest) to gain creditable years of service. Additional information explaining the rules and regulations of this system are available from the Town Treasurer/Collector's Office.

- **Deferred Compensation Plan**

Part-time employees working on an intermittent basis will be enrolled in a Section 457 Tax Deferred Compensation Plan. This plan serves as an alternate to FICA and is mandatory. A 7.5% deduction will be taken from the employee's pay and deposited in a self-directed investment account. Employees may opt to contribute a larger percentage each payroll period, up to the maximum allowed by federal laws.

Full-time employees have the option to enroll in the Section 457 Tax Deferred Compensation Plan. They can choose the percentage of their salary to be deducted each payroll period and select the risk group(s) for their investments. Federal laws stipulate an annual maximum dollar amount that full-time employees may contribute to the plan. For additional information, including the current maximum contribution amount allowed and information regarding the available risk group(s), please consult the Town Treasurer/Collector's Office.

The Town does not contribute to this plan for either part-time or full-time employees. The Town does pay the annual account fees to the plan's administrator, as well as a general administration fee per quarter.

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

Another benefit funded by the Town to support its employees is a comprehensive Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This program offers confidential, short-term counseling, and referral services to all employees, their spouses, and dependent children. Significantly, initial support services provided as part of the EAP may be provided free of charge.

Employees and eligible family members are entitled to counseling sessions with an EAP clinician. Counseling sessions may be offered both in-person and remotely/telephonically. Often, these counseling sessions are sufficient to resolve the issue. If additional services beyond the EAP are needed, the counselor may refer the employee to an appropriate resource. Medical insurance may cover any costs for additional services.

The EAP can assist with various issues, including marital problems, parenting challenges, substance use, emotional distress, and more. It is a confidential program and all matters discussed with an EAP counselor remain private.

Employees and household members may also receive a consultation with a network attorney for legal matters, excluding job-related legal issues. Additionally, after an initial consultation, employees may receive a discount for further services provided by a network attorney in connection with such legal matters. Common issues include divorce, child custody, car accidents, contractual or consumer disputes, real estate, landlord-tenant issues, and insurance disputes.

Moreover, employees and their household members may also receive a consultation with a financial advisor. Typical financial issues include credit card debt, financial planning, retirement consultation, college planning, and tax advice.

For more information on EAP, including contact information, please visit the Town's website: [www.boxborough-ma.gov](http://www.boxborough-ma.gov).

## **EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT**

Many individuals interact with Town employees and will form lasting impressions of Boxborough based on the way they are treated and the employees' attitudes toward their work. Positive attitudes are also important among employees. A pleasant demeanor, a conscientious approach to work, and respect for colleagues will benefit both staff and the Town.

Employees are expected to devote their full time and abilities to their jobs during working hours, conduct themselves in a manner that reflects credit on themselves and the Town, adhere to Town rules, and work cooperatively with others.

The Town actively strives to respect the rights of all citizens and employees. Therefore, employees are expected to be respectful toward others, conduct themselves professionally, and honor all confidentiality requirements.

To help guide employees during their employment, a summary of certain expectations and procedures is outlined below. Employees should review and are expected to comply with these expectations and procedures, along with the standalone policies and guidance documents, the Personnel Administration Plan, and any applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement. If you have any questions about a policy or procedure, please contact your department head or the Assistant Town Administrator.

- **ATTENDANCE/ MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

When an employee is unable to report to work due to illness, they are expected to promptly notify their department head or designee. If an employee cannot make this notification immediately, they should do so as soon as it is practical.

Consistent with applicable law, the Town may require an employee to undergo an examination by the Town's physician, in addition to the employee's own physician, before returning to work after an injury or illness that may interfere with job performance.

- **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

At times, severe weather conditions may lead to the closure of Town offices before the start of the workday. The decision will be made by the appropriate department head and communicated to employees via email, telephone, the Town's website, the Town Hall phone greeting, or text message. If the decision is made to close the facility where the employee works, the employee will be paid for the hours they would have normally worked that day.

If weather conditions affect an employee's transportation and delay the employee's arrival, the employee is expected to notify the department head as soon as it is practical to do so.

If weather conditions make it advisable for the Town to close offices early, the department head will designate the official closing time. Employees will be paid for the hours they would have normally worked on that day.

If an employee chooses not to report to work due to inclement weather on days when the office remains open, then the employee must promptly notify the department head. The employee will be required to use a personal day, vacation day or unpaid time off, as appropriate.

- **NO SMOKING POLICY**

The Town strives to create and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for all its employees. Therefore, in accordance with state law and Town bylaw, smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes, is strictly prohibited in all Town buildings, except in designated areas during scheduled breaks.

- **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**

The Town of Boxborough believes that the use of illegal or controlled substances or the use of alcohol in the workplace is harmful, unless prescribed by a physician and used safely according to the physician's orders. Consequently, the Town prohibits the possession, sale, distribution, and use of such substances by its employees in the workplace. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No employee shall accept, or agree to accept, either directly or indirectly, any favor, gift, loan, fee, service, or any item of value, in any form whatsoever, from any organization or individual, if it could appear to influence the employee in performing their assigned duties. However, this does not prevent employees from accepting awards or recognition for exceptional community or government service.

No employee shall grant, in the course of their duties, any improper favor, service, or item of value to any organization or individual if it is intended to, or gives the appearance of, rewarding or influencing that organization or individual.

Employees may not conduct any business in their official capacity with any business entity in which the employee is an officer, director, agent, or member, or in which the employee holds a controlling interest.

Employees may not make or have personal investments in any enterprise that will create a material conflict between their private interest and the public interest.

Final determination of any conflict or prohibition will be made by the Select Board or Library Trustees.

All employees must acknowledge annually, in writing or via email, the receipt of Conflict of Interest materials from the Town Clerk. Additionally, every two years, they are required to complete online state ethics training provided by the state Ethics Commission. Additional information regarding the state's online ethics training can be found on the Town's website: [www.boxborough-ma.gov](http://www.boxborough-ma.gov).

- **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Employees are permitted to engage in outside employment at the discretion of the appropriate department head, and, in some cases, the Select Board or Library Trustees. However, written approval must be obtained before starting any outside employment. This also applies to new employees who are already engaged in outside work.

Employees may not engage in outside employment that:

- interferes with their ability to perform their job duties effectively;
- creates a conflict of interest, or
- could potentially subject the Town to public criticism or embarrassment.

If it is determined that outside employment is detrimental to the Town, the employee will receive written notification from the appropriate department head. The employee may then be given the option to resign either from the Town position or from their outside job.

The Town will not be liable for any occupational illness or injury related to outside employment.

- **CONFIDENTIAL AND/OR PRIVILEGED INFORMATION**

Employees often or occasionally deal with plans and programs of significant public interest and may be privy to certain confidential or privileged information. Employees must not use any of this information for personal financial gain or to provide financial advantages to friends or acquaintances. If any employee has an outside financial interest that may be affected by Town projects or activities, they must report the situation immediately to their department head. Each employee is responsible for ensuring that information is only released if it is appropriate for public access. Improper use of confidential or privileged information, particularly for private gain, may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

- **TOWN EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES**

Employees are strictly prohibited from using Town equipment for anything other than official activities.

Those provided with Town equipment, such as tools, vehicles, materials, and uniforms, are expected to take reasonable care in its use and to follow all safety guidelines while performing their duties.

Personal use of Town vehicles, materials, supplies, tools or equipment is not allowed. Violations of this policy may result in termination, prosecution, or other disciplinary actions. Employees authorized to drive Town vehicles must read and sign the policies and procedures regarding vehicle use annually. All operators of Town vehicles and related equipment must possess a valid and appropriate Massachusetts operator's license and must inform their department head of any changes in their licensure status. Suspension or revocation of an employee's operator license may lead to demotion or termination for employees who drive Town vehicles or operate equipment.

- **SEAT BELT AND MOBILE DEVICES USE WHILE DRIVING**

Massachusetts law mandates the use of seat belts. Employees operating or riding in vehicles equipped with seat belts must use them at all times. While driving, employees must also follow applicable state laws regarding mobile and hands-free devices.

- **COMMUNICATIONS**

The electronic communication systems, including hardware, software, and networking capabilities, supplied by the Town to its employees are its property and should be used exclusively for work-related purposes, except as outlined herein. Incidental and occasional personal use of the Town's computer systems is permitted, but this permission should not be abused nor interfere with work performance. The Town considers all materials generated, transmitted, or stored on these systems to be its sole property and reserves the right to audit these systems and their contents at any time without prior notice.

Employees must not display sexually explicit images, send sexually explicit messages or cartoons or transmit emails that contain pejorative or derogatory language or images relating to race, color, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, sex, or disability. Additionally, employees are strictly prohibited from downloading offensive or pornographic materials from the Internet. Violations may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are prohibited from using Town telephone facilities for personal calls if such calls interfere with their work duties, incur additional costs for the Town, or disrupt the use of the facilities for official business. Any personal calls should be urgent, infrequent, and of short duration.

Employees are also not allowed to use their work address for receiving personal mail.

Use of Town stationery or postage for personal mail is prohibited.

Further information regarding electronic communications may be found in the Electronic Communications Policy, which is available on the Town's website: [www.boxborough-ma.gov](http://www.boxborough-ma.gov).

- **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

The Town makes efforts to keep its premises secure; however, employees should take precautions to keep personal valuables out of sight and locked away. The Town is not responsible for any personal property or valuables brought into the premises.

- **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

Violence or the threat of violence by an employee or anyone else will not be tolerated. The Town enforces this policy to reduce the risk of personal injury and damage to property.

Any threatening actions or communication from an employee or third party must be reported immediately to a supervisor, department head, the Select Board, or Library Trustees, as appropriate. Reports of threats will be kept

confidential to the extent possible. If an employee feels threatened with immediate harm, they should call 911. Employees must not engage in physical or verbal confrontation with potentially violent individuals.

Further information regarding the Town's expectations may be found in the Policy on Prevention of Violence in the Workplace, which is available on the Town's website: [www.boxborough-ma.gov](http://www.boxborough-ma.gov).

## RETIRING OR TERMINATING EMPLOYMENT

Although the Town hopes that all its employment relationships will be successful and, when possible, long-term, it recognizes that various life and professional circumstances may lead some employees to separate from their positions. In order to facilitate an orderly transition of a departing employee's duties and responsibilities, the Town requests that an employee who voluntarily resigns provide at least two weeks' written notice. The Town reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to shorten this notice period and/or to provide pay in lieu of the employee working during the notice period. Below is information that departing employees may find helpful.

- **AT WILL EMPLOYMENT**

Employment with the Town of Boxborough is at will, unless stated otherwise in an applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement or individual contract. This means that both the employee and the Town have the right to terminate employment, with or without cause, at any time.

- **UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

Employees who separate from the Town may be eligible for unemployment benefits. Employees do not contribute to the cost of this program. Unemployment compensation is administered by the state, which also determines eligibility. Information regarding unemployment benefits will be provided to separating employees.

- **HEALTH INSURANCE**

When an employee leaves employment with the Town of Boxborough, they typically have the option to remain on the Town's group health plan under the COBRA (Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) law, by agreeing to pay 100% of the premium. There are statutory time limits for electing COBRA, so timely action by the employee is required. Information regarding COBRA will be provided to separating employees.

- **UNUSED VACATION TIME**

Employees who separate from employment with the Town will be compensated for any accrued but unused vacation time as of their date of separation.

- **UNUSED SICK TIME**

Upon termination, employees are **not** compensated for any unused sick time.

- **RETIRING**

If an employee is retiring and is eligible to receive retirement benefits under the Middlesex Retirement System, they should meet with the Town Treasurer/Collector in order to:

- Obtain information about retirement options and procedures;
- Complete required paperwork; and
- Learn about retiree health insurance.

To get additional information about retirement plans and eligibility, employees should review the "Middlesex Retirement System" booklet. Links to this booklet can be found on the Town's website: [www.boxborough-ma.gov](http://www.boxborough-ma.gov).

- **SEPARATING EMPLOYEES WORKING LESS THAN 20 HOURS PER WEEK**

Upon termination or retirement, employees working less than 20 hours per week may withdraw their deferred compensation contribution by obtaining the signature of the Town Treasurer/Collector or other designated Town Official. Under certain circumstances, the employee may have to wait one year before receiving those funds.

- TOWN EQUIPMENT

Upon termination or retirement, employees must promptly return any Town equipment in their possession. This equipment may include, but is not limited to, vehicles, computers, materials, supplies, tools, and keys.

- EXIT INTERVIEWS

Town Officials and/or members of the Personnel Board may offer an exit interview to those leaving Town employment. These interviews can provide valuable insights for the Town and remaining employees, and serve as a final opportunity for departing employees to contribute to the community. Employees are encouraged to participate thoughtfully.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby confirm that I have read the Town of Boxborough Employee Handbook, the standalone Policies and Guidance Documents referenced herein, the Personnel Administration Plan, and, if applicable, the \_\_\_\_\_ Union Contract.

I understand that the Employee Handbook, the standalone Policies and Guidance Documents, and the Personnel Administration Plan do not constitute employment contracts. Any oral or written statements to the contrary are unauthorized and specifically disavowed. Employees have the right to voluntarily leave their employment at any time, and the Town reserves the right to terminate employees at any time, with or without cause, unless expressly stated otherwise in an applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement or individual contract. In addition, employees are not guaranteed employment for any specific duration, unless expressly stated otherwise in an applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement or individual contract. I understand that the contents of the Employee Handbook, the standalone Policies and Guidance Documents, and the Personnel Administration Plan, as well as the benefits described therein may be modified or eliminated at any time at the sole discretion of the Town.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copy of this page to Personnel file on \_\_\_\_\_

Date

Copy of this page to the Finance Director on \_\_\_\_\_

Date