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# **E-Team Employee Handbook**

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## Employment Information and Policies

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## **I. WELCOME FROM OUR MAYOR**

Welcome E-Team Employees!

In these challenging times there is nothing that provides me a greater sense of purpose than expressing an inspired, hopeful and achievable vision for the future of my hometown, which would be impossible to accomplish without an incredibly dedicated and capable workforce.

Thank you for joining our team at the City of Bellingham. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Mayor Seth Fleetwood  
City of Bellingham

## **II. GENERAL**

### **PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK**

In this handbook, you will find the City's policies that specifically apply to E-Team Employees. We provide explanations of your compensation and benefits, what treatment you should expect, and our expectations of you as an employee.

If you have questions about any items covered in this handbook, please contact your manager or your Human Resources representative.

### **USING THIS HANDBOOK**

- Throughout this handbook, “we” refers to the City as an employer. “You” refers to E-Team Employees.
- As explained above, this handbook may be altered from time to time at the discretion of the City. Be sure to check the electronic version posted on the City's Intranet for the latest edition.

## **III. WHO IS AN E-TEAM EMPLOYEE?**

You are an E-Team employee because you are generally considered a “confidential” employee. This means that your work requires you to handle labor relations matters, either directly or by providing assistance to those with direct responsibility for this work. Confidential employees are not subject to the jurisdiction of labor unions (“exempt” from union coverage – hence the “E” in E-Team).

### **CIVIL SERVICE DOES NOT COVER E-TEAM JOBS**

The Bellingham City Charter and/or City Council ordinance exclude E-Team Employees from Civil Service.

### **E-TEAM EMPLOYEES ARE “AT WILL” EMPLOYEES**

E-Team Employees serve at the discretion of the Mayor. The City may terminate your employment at any time for any lawful reason. Likewise, you may choose to leave your employment at any time.

## **IV. COMPENSATION**

### **OUR COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY**

The City applies the same compensation philosophy to all positions in the City. This means that the HR staff periodically review compensation trends for similar work in the City's recruitment market and recommend adjustments to the salary plans accordingly.

### **ADJUSTED HIRE DATE**

A key concept in administering your salary and benefits is your "Adjusted Hire Date".

- If you had an initial appointment to your E-Team position on the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 15th of the month, your Adjusted Hire Date is the first of that month.
- If you had an initial appointment to your E-Team position of the 16th through the 31st of the month, your Adjusted Hire Date is the first of the following month.

### **E-TEAM EMPLOYEE SALARY PLAN**

The City's annual budget describes the E-Team Employee compensation plan (Plan E). This is available on line at the City of Bellingham public web site for you to review.

Section 1: Elected Officials, Department Heads, and Administrators--Contains the positions of Mayor, Council Members, Municipal Court Judge, Department Heads and certain of the Mayor's executive management staff positions. The Mayor has discretion to hire in or move positions in Section 1 consistent with budgetary authorization.

Section 2: Uniformed Management Staff

Section 3: FLSA Non-Exempt, Non-Represented Employees

Section 4: FLSA Exempt, Non-Represented Employees

- **Hiring In:** Newly hired E-Team employees are placed at the appropriate step based on experience and education relative to the qualifications of the position they are being hired to perform. For more information, please see the City's Salary Administration Policy PER 07.05.02.
- **Step Movement:** You advance in your salary steps on the anniversaries of your Adjusted Hire Date.
- **Compression:** Effective 1/1/2018, E-Team employees shall be paid at a rate not less than 3 percent above the salary paid to directly reporting subordinates. In the event of such compression, the supervising employee shall receive a salary adjustment to ensure a 3 percent higher salary than the salary of the directly reporting employee. This salary adjustment shall only remain in effect during the period of time compression exists.

For Uniformed Fire and Police Management positions, compression calculations will be based on the highest paid subordinate employee one rank below the E-Team management position. For Uniformed Fire Management positions, compression shall be calculated based on subordinates' base salary, plus longevity, plus administrative premium. For Uniformed Police Management positions compression shall be calculated based on subordinates' base salary plus, longevity, plus education premium.

## HOW AM I PAID?

With the exception of certain part-time positions and FLSA non-exempt positions, we pay you on a salary basis, twice monthly--on or near (depending on holidays or weekends) the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month, the universal payday for City employees. The FLSA non-exempt positions and certain part time positions are paid on an hourly basis.

## OVERTIME

**NON-EXEMPT STATUS:** If you are in an administrative support staff position, overtime pay is required, per the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). You are required to receive 1.5x your regular hourly rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 in your workweek.

- "Hours worked" means the hours actually worked, and does not include paid time off, such as paid sick leave or vacation.
- A workweek is a fixed 7-day period, usually Sunday through Saturday.
- We pay the regular rate for any hours worked that are not beyond 40 hours in the workweek. For example, if you take a vacation day on Monday, and work 8 hours each day on Tuesday through Saturday, you would earn 48 hours at your regular rate, or "straight time" pay (or 8 hours of paid vacation and 40 hours of straight time). If you worked Monday through Saturday, you would receive 40 hours at regular rate, and 8 hours at 1.5x regular rate. You need to contact Payroll for proper timesheet coding.
- With supervisor approval, you may choose to bank compensatory time in lieu of overtime, at the rate of 1.5 hours for each hour worked over 40 hours in the workweek.
- **FLEXING TIME:** Your supervisor may allow you to flex your schedule to maintain your 40-hour work obligation. Otherwise, you will need to take paid leave for absences during the day which would otherwise reduce your paid work hours below 40 in the week.
- **MEAL AND REST TIME:** You are also required to take meal and rest break periods, per the Washington State Wage and Hour Act (see WAC 296-126-092). As a general rule, you need to take at least a 30-minute unpaid meal break and have two-10-minute paid rest periods in a standard 8-hour work day.

**EXEMPT STATUS:** If you are a manager, supervisor, or professional employee, you are most likely exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and Washington State Wage and Hour Act. You are paid a salary as compensation for doing your job and are not entitled to overtime pay.

- **FLEXING TIME:** Many E-Team employees who are exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act experience variations in work schedule due to work load demands, as well as requirements to attend meetings and events outside the normal work day. If you are one of these employees, we permit short absences during the day without docking leave banks as long as established principles of public accountability are maintained. If you are exempt and do not experience work load/schedule fluctuations, keep in mind that you can flex your schedule when you need to take part of the day off. Flexing maintains principles of public accountability for your work time obligation. If you cannot "flex", request paid leave time for absences during the normal workday

## ACTING PAY

You will be compensated in accordance with pay placement procedures if you are assigned to "act in capacity". This means you assume most or all the substantial responsibilities of a position with more responsibility than your own when the regular employee is on extended leave. Compensation will be at the rate of pay of the position you are acting in capacity of based on current pay placement procedures. This applies to extended leaves of 15 business days or more, unless otherwise approved the Mayor.

## **JOB AUDITS**

Human Resources provides a procedure and standards for reviewing positions to ensure the position is correctly classified and placed on the E-Team employees pay tables. You may personally initiate a request for job audit. Please refer to the *Job Audit/Reclassification Request Form*. To qualify for a job audit review, you must have had a significant and permanent change in your job duties and responsibilities since the last significant revision of the job description or last job audit review. Should HR determine that an increase in salary grade is appropriate; the results are effective the January 1<sup>st</sup> or July 1<sup>st</sup> following the request.

## **V. WORK SCHEDULE EXPECTATIONS**

Although most E-Team employees work a traditional 40-hour workweek, your work schedule may be flexible or on a fixed schedule, depending on the nature of your position. Regardless of your schedule, you are subject to the same standards of attendance and punctuality as all other City employees.

### **ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES**

We may require or allow alternative work schedules where

- It is in our business interest to do so, and/or,
- Serves a compelling need for the employee without compromising work obligations.

For example, if you hold a management position that includes supervisory “walk arounds” at night or on weekends, you may have a normal schedule of 2PM to 10PM or work Tuesday through Saturday. Some departments may allow you to have a normal work schedule of four ten-hour days.

### **TELECOMMUTING**

Refer to Policy **PER 01.00.07** for information regarding Telecommuting opportunities.

## **VI. POLICIES THAT APPLY TO E-TEAM EMPLOYEES**

### **UNIVERSAL POLICIES**

We issue certain policies that apply to all employees (universal), or to broad groups of employees such as all non-uniformed employees. You are subject to a policy when indicated under the scope statement of the policy. If the scope statement covers you, you are required to be familiar and comply with the policy.

We post draft policies for your comments on the City’s Staff Central Announcements. We encourage you to contact the policy developer if you have questions or to provide your thoughts, concerns, and suggestions.

## **VII. LEAVE BENEFITS**

We provide you with a rich and comprehensive benefits program. The leave information in this section is based on full time employment. If you are a regular part-time employee, you accrue leave benefits on a pro-rata basis of a full-time work schedule based on your normal work schedule.

Leave benefits for E-Team include:

- Paid holidays
- Paid vacation leave
- Paid sick leave and sick leave cash out
- Paid bereavement leave
- Paid Washington State Sick Leave (non-exempt staff only)
- Compensatory Time (non-exempt staff only)

### **PAID HOLIDAYS**

We provide E-Team Employees with twelve 8 hour (for full-time employees; pro-rated for part-time employees) paid holidays and one paid "Floating Holiday" each year. City Holidays are:

- January 1
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Day After
- Christmas Day plus one day before or after as designated by the City.

When a holiday falls on a weekend, we designate the normal workday closest to the holiday as your observed holiday.

You receive normal pay for your holiday as long as you have paid time in the pay period in which the holiday falls.

### **FLOATING HOLIDAY**

We provide you with one paid "Floating Holiday" each year. You must use your annual "Floating Holiday" by December 31.

We provide a "Floating Holiday" in your first year of employment only if your Adjusted Hire Date is October 1st or earlier. Otherwise, you receive your first floating holiday the next calendar year.

We do not carry forward unused floating holidays to the next calendar year, nor pay these off at separation or retirement. You forfeit your floating holiday in these circumstances.

## **SICK LEAVE**

### **Sick Leave on Hire:**

We provide you a sick leave bank at the time of hire:

Department Heads - 15 Days (120 hours)

All Other E-Team Employees - 5 Days (40 hours)

Amount of sick leave is pro-rated for part-time employees. The sick leave at the time of hire is part of the E-Team sick leave bank. Washington Paid Sick Leave (if eligible) is earned once you worked applicable hours.

**For information on how sick leave may be used and other related information, see the City's universal policy *Providing Paid Sick Leave Benefits – PER 07.01.04.***

**For information on how Washington Paid Sick leave may be used please refer to the City's universal policy *Providing Washington State Paid Sick Leave – PER 07.01.03***

What happens if I'm promoted into an E-Team position?

If you are promoted from a represented position into an E-Team position, your sick leave banks will be adjusted as follows:

- Promoted to Department Head: if you have worked for the City for less than 15 months, we will credit your sick leave account with enough hours to bring your accrued sick leave up to 15 days;
- Promoted to other E-Team position: if you've worked for the City for less than 5 months, we will credit your sick leave account with enough hours to bring your accrued sick leave up to 5 days (part-time employees will have sick leave banks pro-rated).

## **SICK LEAVE ACCRUAL**

- To accrue sick leave for the month, you must be in paid status for 120 hours (prorated for part-time) whether work hours or paid leave hours. Compassionate Leave is not considered paid status for purpose of leave accrual.

For E-Team exempt status employees, you accrue 8 hours of sick leave per month from your Adjusted Hire Date and have no waiting period for use of your sick leave, once accrued.

For E-Team non-exempt status employees, effective 1/1/2018, the City will provide paid state sick leave in accordance with the Washington State Sick Leave Law. Additional sick leave will be accrued at 8 hours per month MINUS the state sick leave accrual for the same month period, e.g., accrual of 3 hours of state sick leave will result in 5 hours of E-Team sick leave; accrual of 5 hours of state sick leave will result in 3 hours of E-Team sick leave. At the end of each calendar year, up to 40 hours of unused state sick leave will roll over to the following year. Any hours above 40 in the state sick leave bank will be removed. An equivalent number of hours that are removed will be placed into the E-Team sick leave bank. Sick leave accruals existing as of January 1, 2018 will be treated as E-Team sick leave.

You may accrue up to a maximum of 1040 hours of E-Team sick leave.

If you are a regular part-time employee, you accrue sick leave on a pro-rata basis of a full-time work schedule based on your normal work schedule.

## SICK LEAVE CASHOUT

Upon retirement, sick leave will be cashed out at 30% of an employee's accrued but unused sick leave. WA Paid Sick Leave is not eligible for cash out. The sick leave cash out will not exceed 312 hours. "**Retirement**" as applied here means when you separate from employment and are retirement eligible under the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems rules regardless of whether you plan to file with DRS for retirement benefits.

## VACATION LEAVE

We provide paid vacation leave accruals to E-Team employees on the following accrual schedule:

### DEPARTMENT HEADS

All Years of Service	Hours Accrued Per Month
From hire	20.00

### ALL OTHER E-TEAM EMPLOYEES

During the Following Years of Service	Hours Accrued Per Month
0 – 4 years	13.33
5 – 9 years	15.33
10 years and over	18.67

- **Earning Vacation:** You accrue vacation leave for each month in which you are in paid status for 120 hours (pro-rated for part-time) whether work hours or paid leave hours. Compassionate leave is not considered paid status for purpose of leave accrual.
- **Pro-Rata for Part-time Employees:** To accrue vacation leave for the month, you must be in paid status for 120 hours (prorated for part-time) whether work hours or paid leave hours. Compassionate Leave is not considered paid status for purpose of leave accrual.
- **Years of Service:** We determine your years of service by the number of months in which you have been in paid status for 15 days (120 hours) in the month. We determine years of service for part-time employees on a pro-rata of their work schedule.
- **Maximum Accrual:** You earn a maximum vacation accrual of two years. It is important to monitor your balance and keep your balance below the two-year maximum....” Use it or lose it!”
- **Use After Earned:** You may use vacation in the month immediately after earning the leave time.
- **Request in Advance:** You must request to take your vacation leave in advance, and have the approval from your supervisor. Department Heads determine and advise employees of advance time needed to review and approve or disapprove a leave request.

- **Vacation Cash Out:** Employees who have an accrued vacation balance of at least 80% of their maximum accrual may cash out up to 40 hours (but not less than 8) of their accrued vacation balance on October 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. The vacation accrual will be reduced by the amount of vacation leave cashed out.
- **Disposition of Vacation Bank on Separation:** We do not allow paid time “run-out” after the last day of work. Your last day worked will be your last day of employment and any remaining accrued vacation will be paid out. (PERS 1 state regulations and City procedures are different.)

## **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

We provide paid bereavement leave in the event of the death of an immediate family member to attend the funeral or to otherwise discharge obligations to the family as follows:

- Three (3) days off with pay for travel within 150 miles of Bellingham (one-way).
- Three (3) additional days with pay if it is necessary to travel a distance greater than 150 miles (one-way).

Immediate family members for the purpose of Bereavement Leave are defined as follows:

- Spouse (including any Washington State Registered Domestic Partner);
- Children or stepchildren of employee;
- Grandchildren of employee or spouse;
- Parents of employee or spouse;
- Siblings; and
- Grandparents of employee or spouse.

Other paid bereavement leave up to 1 day may be granted, at the discretion of the Department Head, for special circumstances when the relationship is outside the scope defined above.

## **OTHER LEAVES**

We provide various leaves under City Universal Policies

- *Compassionate Leave PER 07.01.08*
- *Family and Medical Leave PER 07.01.07*
- *Extended Medical Leave **Ensuring Income and Employment Security PER 07.01.15***
- *Jury Duty Leave:* We pay the jury service time that crosses your normal work schedule. You remit your jury pay to the City.
- *Military Leave PER 07.01.14*
- *Sabbatical Leave PER 07.01.02*

## VIII. HEALTH AND WELFARE

### HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS

**FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:** We provide medical, dental, and vision insurance coverage for you and your family. You share the cost of insurance as determined by the Bellingham City Council. The employee premium share cost of insurance is deducted pre-tax through payroll on semi-monthly basis. See *Medical Plan Summaries* for current premiums and employee share costs.

**FOR PART-TIME EMPLOYEES:** We provide medical, dental and vision coverage only for you. You may self-pay through pre-tax payroll deduction for your family's medical and vision insurance.

### WHEN IS MY HEALTH INSURANCE EFFECTIVE?

Your health insurance coverage is effective the first day of the month following your month of hire, unless otherwise prescribed in insurance underwriting rules.

### OPT OUT OF HEALTH INSURANCE

If you or your family members have coverage under another medical insurance plan, we provide a financial incentive to withdraw from City medical insurance. There are requirements for eligibility. See *Dual Coverage Opt Out Program*.

### FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT

We offer an opportunity to annually defer pre-tax income into flexible spending account to be used to pay uncovered health expenses and/or dependent/elder care costs. You must enroll annually during open enrollment. See *Flexible Benefits Program* for more information.

### LIFE INSURANCE

We provide you with fully-paid life insurance at two times your annual salary. We also provide you an accidental death and dismemberment policy.

- You need to name a beneficiary(ies) when you are first enrolled.
- Periodically, you need to review and update your beneficiary designation to make sure it continues as you wish.

### LONG TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE

We provide you with fully paid Long Term Disability Insurance with a 60% benefit and a 180-day waiting period. You are also covered by our *ENSURING INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT SECURITY policy – PER 07.01.15*, which coordinates with our Long-Term Disability Insurance program.

## IX. RETIREMENT

### PERS AND LEOFF

You are required to join one of the State of Washington pension systems that is appropriate for your position. These plans have different rules for vesting and retirement eligibility. All require both employee and employer contributions. Your initial hire date into regular public employment in a state or local government in Washington and the nature of your position (uniformed or non-uniformed) determines which retirement plan you enter. See the brochure for your plan or visit the Washington Department of Retirement Systems website at [www.drs.wa.gov](http://www.drs.wa.gov).

### OPTIONAL RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS

#### 401(a) PLAN

At your option, you may participate in a 401(a) retirement savings plan. This plan is portable to and from a private sector 401(K) plan, IRA's, and other tax-sheltered retirement plans. We provide up to 3% (of employee's base pay) matching contribution to your 401(a) account administered by Mission Square (formerly known as ICMA-RC). (Certain employees are "grand-fathered" and the City's matching funds are contributed to a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan alternative retirement savings option.)

To participate, you must enroll and choose your savings amount within 60 days of initial employment as an E-TEAM member. Once you choose to participate, *your choice is irrevocable*.

#### DEFERRED COMPENSATION SAVINGS PLAN

All regular employees have an opportunity to participate in a voluntary tax deferred retirement savings plan (457 deferred compensation). Employees choose to direct a portion of their salary, tax deferred, to a plan that provides a variety of investment options. This contribution is deducted on a regular basis from their payroll check. Employees choose how to invest their contribution (bonds, mutual funds, etc.). Your savings grow with their regularly scheduled payroll contributions and through the earnings on their tax deferred investment.

Please contact Human Resources for more information on companies that provide tax deferred investment options available to you.

## X. OTHER BENEFITS

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We provide you with various professional development opportunities to help you stay current and grow with your responsibilities. Providing these development opportunities is at the discretion of your department head.

We may pay for:

- City courses;
- Job required and/or closely job-related professional certification; or
- Registration, travel expense, and paid work hours for professional conferences and training.

**Tuition Assistance:** The City has a tuition assistance program for employees when the request meets certain criteria. This program is funded as the City's budget allows. Please contact Human Resources to ascertain whether the program is currently active.

We also may provide Sabbatical leaves, both paid and unpaid, when authorized.

## **XI. JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

We are committed to providing regular feedback and coaching to our employees on their work performance. To that end, E-Team employees participate in our formal performance appraisal program in harmony with our universal City policy PER 06.01.01 Completing Performance Appraisals.

## **XII. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

### **ETHICS**

As a public employee, you are bound by the same ethical standards as State employees. These standards are reflected in such universal policies as *Using City Property ADM 00.00.03*, *Conflict of Interest LEG 01.00.02*, *Using and Securing City Computers and Other Information Technology Resources ADM 07.00.11*, *Purchasing of Goods and Services FIN 08.00.01*, and other policies that ensure public employee accountability and the fair treatment of the public.

### **DISCIPLINE**

We hold employees accountable for good performance, compliance with City policy and the law, public service ethics, and other reasonable expectations in the workplace. You may be subject to corrective action, ranging from coaching to termination, as management finds appropriate.

## **XIII. ASSISTANCE**

We hold periodic meetings with our E-Team staff to consult, review new developments, and provide an opportunity to exchange information.

The HR Account Representative for your department can assist you with employment questions and issues. Please keep in touch throughout your career with the City.

## **XIV. DISCLAIMER**

The policies and information contained in this handbook are management directives and guidelines only and do not form a contract for employment of a specific duration, a contract governing the terms and conditions of employment, or any other type of contract. Nor do they constitute promises of specific treatment in specific situations and should not be relied upon as promises. They may be superseded, altered, revised, or waived in general or in regards to a particular provision at any time at the discretion of the City.