



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**Employee  
Handbook**  
*October 2000*

**Welcome to DENR!**

**A Message to DENR Employees**

The Division of Human Resources has developed this handbook as a reference to assist you in learning about rights, benefits and responsibilities related to employment at The Department of Environment & Natural Resources. Although the handbook should answer most of your questions, it is not meant to be the final word on Department policies and procedures. If you have specific questions, please either ask your supervisor, the division personnel representative, or contact the Division of Human Resources located at 512 North Salisbury Street, (919)715-4500.

Please Retain this handbook as a reference. Updates will be sent to employees as needed. You are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities available to develop both personally and professionally.

**The Department of Environment & Natural Resources= Mission Statement**

To provide leadership, education and advocacy for the responsible stewardship of North Carolina=s environment and natural resources.

**The Department of Environment & Natural Resources= Statement of Vision**

North Carolina=s abundant natural resources, healthy environment, and vibrant economy make it the best place to live, work and visit.

**Human Resource=s Mission Statement**

To provide comprehensive human resource services, while balancing clients needs and departmental goals. Our goal is to be customer focused, providing quality services for applicants, employees, and management. Human Resources is responsible for all personnel management functions within the department to ensure the compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations to promote a quality workforce of permanent and temporary employees. Human Resources offers services in nine program areas:

**Benefits**

**Classification & Pay**

**Employee Relations**

**Employment/ Merit-based Selection & Recruitment**

**Partnership**

**Safety & Health**

**Salary Administration**

**Staff Development & Training**

**Workforce Compliance**

**Workers= Compensation**

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## **ORIENTATION**

Upon your acceptance of employment you should receive a New Employees= Benefits Orientation within thirty days from your date of hire, and a departmental orientation within ninety days from your date of hire. The New Employees= Benefits Orientation is conducted by your division representative. The Departmental Orientation is conducted by various facilitators in the department.

## **SPA Role**

As a SPA employee, you are subject to the Personnel Act of North Carolina. This affords you certain rights and benefits under state law. SPA employees work in all types of roles to support DENR=s mission.

## **Divisional Personnel Representative/Representative**

Each division selects an individual to act as a liaison with the Division of Human Resources. These representatives can answer questions and provide information on matters relating to staff personnel management. If you have not met your representative ask your supervisor to arrange an introduction.

## **Human Resources= Policies and Procedures Manual**

Manuals containing updated Department policies and procedures are kept via the web site or by Personnel Representatives and supervisors in location for convenient personal use.

## **WORK SCHEDULE**

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The standard workweek for State Government is 40 hours consisting of five eight-hour work days. Most employees= workdays are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday, with one hour for lunch. The lunch period may be scheduled within the normal working hours to meet the needs of the employee and the working unit.

If the work load allows and working conditions warrant, divisions may grant one 15-minute paid break during any work period for four consecutive hours. Breaks are a privilege and may not be added to meal periods, used to shorten the workday, or taken in conjunction with any type of leave.

Some agencies, including DENR, use a variable or flexible schedule, that gives an employee the opportunity, with management approval, to choose his or her work day and hours. However, variable schedules in no way should diminish the level of service to the public or the ability of the unit to complete tasks. Any change in an employee=s schedule must be approved by his /her supervisor.

If you work a schedule that you believe may require, **Shift Premium, Call-Back, or Holiday Premium Pay** please contact your personnel representative or Human Resources for clarification of the pay policy.

## **PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

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The probationary period is part of the hiring process. It is an Aon-the-job-trial≅ or valuation period lasting from 3-9 months. In this way, supervisors observe new employees in their work, help them learn their new duties, and determine if they are well suited for the particular job.

Your supervisor will look at your progress often during this period. When you demonstrate that your work progress has been satisfactory and the decision is made to continue your employment, you will be given permanent status.

## **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

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ENR is committed to providing each employee a fulfilling work experience with the opportunity to expand professional skills. ENR=s Managing Quality Performance Program, MQP, is designed to meet the needs of the employee as well as the employer, and is also consistent with the goals and policies of the Office of State Personnel.

ENR=s performance management system, MQP, consists of three basic parts:

1. Job Analysis and Work Planning
2. Performance Management
3. Evaluation

The MQP policy stresses that supervisors work closely with their employees to help them improve their work performance. This is a shared process where supervisors and employees plan work and review work performance results together.

You and your supervisor will meet to develop your work plan and performance expectations. Your work plan will show not only what is to be done, but how it is to be measured and tracked. The two of you should discuss your work progress often.

Sometimes things happen that change your work duties; this could mean that your work plan may need to be changed, too. If so, you and your supervisor will meet and make the changes that are needed.

At least twice a year your supervisor will have a performance review meeting with you. The two of you will discuss your overall performance, including successes and problems. You will also talk about your potential for growth and needs for personal development. In addition to an annual formal review, supervisors are required to conduct an interim review at the midpoint of the performance appraisal cycle, and more frequently if the employee or supervisor so desires.

Work Plans are confidential documents filed separately from the personnel file; they are kept for a period of three years.

Questions regarding the Performance Management System should be directed to your supervisor, Human Resources Representative, or ENR-Human Resources staff.

## **PERSONNEL FILE**

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Each employee has an official personnel file which is maintained in his/her Division personnel section. Administration divisions employees' files are maintained in the departmental Human Resources Division. You may examine the entire file except for the following:

1. Pre-employment letters of reference;
2. The recommendation sheet used during interviewing; and
3. Information concerning a medical disability, mental or physical, that a doctor would not give to a patient.

If you object to any material in your file on the grounds that it is inaccurate or misleading, you may add your own statement to your file if necessary. You should follow your the grievance procedure to make additions to your file. You may appeal to the State Personnel Commission if you are not satisfied with the agency's final decision.

Certain items of your personnel file are also open to public inspection. This provision applies to State employees, former State employees, or applicants for employment. The following information on each employee will be maintained and is available for public inspection:

1. Name;
2. Age;
3. Date of original employment;
4. Current position title;
5. Current salary;
6. Date and amount of most recent change in salary;
7. Date of most recent promotion, demotion, transfer, suspension, separation or an other change in position; and
8. The agency and location to which the employee is currently assigned.

## **PAYDAY**

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Payday is normally on the last working day of each month except for employees in temporary positions. Most employees will receive their first paycheck on the last day of the first full month worked.

North Carolina prefers to pay State workers through direct deposit. Employees usually receive paychecks directly for the first one or two months in which they work. Thereafter, paychecks are automatically deposited in the employee's financial account. Employees must designate a bank, credit union, or other financial institution of their choice, and then complete a direct deposit authorization so that their money will be automatically deposited to their account. Employees may change the financial institution deposit destination at any time, but must notify the Payroll section through their division's Human Resources Representative by 8:30 a.m. on the first day of the month in which the employee wishes to make a change. The employee will always receive a payroll stub that shows salary and any deductions from the paycheck.

To avoid a delay in your last paycheck, you must submit your final leave sheet to your supervisor by the payroll deadline of the month in which you are planning to resign, take leave without pay, or retire. Overdrawn leave or any amount due to the State will cause a delay. A separate check will be issued for any unused vacation leave that you have accumulated.

## **REQUIRED DEDUCTIONS**

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By law, federal and state taxes, Social Security, and state retirement are deducted from each employee's paycheck. Other deductions which will be made from a paycheck include absences from work not covered by authorized leave credits, past due taxes as determined by the courts, bankruptcy payments, and personal debts to the State.

Employees may choose to have other recurring expenses payroll deducted. Included in this are deductions for parking, the State Employees= Combined campaign, health care deductions for the coverage of family members, health maintenance organizations, dues, deposits to a savings account for the State Employees= Credit Union, loan repayments to the Credit Union, deductions for the N.C. Deferred Compensation program and 401(k) Supplemental of North Carolina, optional insurance products, and U.S. Savings Bonds. Employees should contact their division Human Resources Representative for information on obtaining forms for any the above purposes.

## **SALARY DETERMINANTS**

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Your starting salary is determined by the your division based upon your position classification, your education, your experience, equity with of other employee in comparable positions, and the Department=s ability to pay. The management of the Department works with the Office of State Personnel to establish a fair salary based upon these factors, but the Office of State Personnel has the final determination.

## **SALARY SCHEDULE**

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State employees are paid according to a salary schedule established by the Office of State Personnel. The salary schedule consists of 46 salary grades, with a hiring rate and the minimum, midpoint, and maximum salaries listed for each grade. After an employee achieves permanent status, his or her salary will fall between the minimum, midpoint, and maximum salaries listed for each grade. A copy of the State=s salary schedule is included at the end of this handbook.

## **LEGISLATIVE PAY INCREASES**

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Each year, the N.C. Legislature determines the amount of a pay increase, if any, that State employees should receive. The General Assembly looks at many factors in making these determinations,

including the amount of revenues on hand, other demands for State dollars and changes in the cost of living. In most years a cost-of-living increase is awarded effective July 1 for all State employees. Although increases are given most years, in some years employees have received no pay increase, and in other years the increase has come on a date other than July 1.

## **PERFORMANCE PAY**

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The 1989 General Assembly reestablished performance pay using the Performance Management System. Permanent full-time or part-time (20 hours or more per week) employees whose work is evaluated as above good may be eligible to receive a performance pay increase if such funds are approved by the Legislature.

Eligibility requirements can change from year to year.

## **REPORTING TO WORK**

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**Absences** -Your job is important and suffers when you are absent. When circumstances prevent you from reporting on time or when you must be absent, notify your supervisor immediately. Most supervisors request that they be notified no later than 8:30 a.m. Check with your supervisor as to his or her preference. Failure to so notify could be ground for disciplinary actions.

**Inclement Weather** - Normally no television or radio announcements are made about the closing of State offices. All state offices are open on snowy days. If an employee has transportation problems due to weather, he or she may use vacation leave or may possibly make up the time lost. The request to make up time lost must be approved by the supervisor, but should not result in overtime. If you are subject to overtime, you must make up time during a week when there is a holiday or when you have taken leave time. You cannot physically work more than 40 hours in a week making up time if you are subject to the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

**Flex - time** - Flex-time schedules are designed to provide employees with options in scheduling the start and end of their workday. Flex-schedules, when possible and by management approval, give the employees the opportunity to choose work hours beginning prior to 8:00 a.m. and ending later than 5:00 p.m.

## **SECONDARY/DUAL EMPLOYMENT**

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The employment responsibilities to the State are primary for any employee working full-time; any other employment, including self-employment, in which that person chooses to engage is secondary. Secondary employment is a job outside of State Government such as a cashier at a grocery store, sales clerk or gift wrapper at a department store, etc.

Dual employment is working with or for another State Agency such as a teaching position at night at a college or university. Secondary/Dual employment will not be permitted when it would:

1. Create either directly or indirectly a conflict of interest with the primary employment; or
2. Impair in any way the employee's ability to perform all expected duties, to make decisions and carry out the responsibilities of the position.

An employee employed in a secondary or dual capacity must complete a "Request for Approval of

Secondary/Dual Employment" form, submit it to his or her supervisor, and receive approval prior to beginning any secondary/dual employment. An employee who is now engaged in secondary/dual employment but does not have approval must obtain approval in order to continue that secondary/dual employment.

Secondary/Dual employment forms are available from your division=s Human Resources Representative. Secondary/Dual employment must be reviewed only if there is a significant change in the other job. Requests for approval of secondary/dual employment will be treated confidentially for all purposes other than review and action by appropriate persons.

An employee may not use working hours for the performance of any tasks or responsibilities related to secondary/dual employment.

## **SAFETY AND HEALTH**

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Part of NCDENR=s mission is to insure the safety and well being of all North Carolinians, especially our employees. Likewise, each employee is to place safety and health requirements as first importance in the performance of their work duties for the State of North Carolina. The protection of fellow employees and the public is a shared responsibility of every employee.

Most personal protective equipment required by the North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) is supplied to you at no cost. Your supervisor will discuss with you any items of protective equipment which are required which you will be expected to use.

Because of varied work environments, specific safety instructions will be the responsibility of your supervisor. To address any safety or health concerns during your tenure with NCDENR feel free to contact your Division Safety Officer, NCDENR Safety Committee members or the Department Safety Officer, at 715-4522

When accidents happen it is important to notify your supervisor and inform him or her of any injuries on the job as soon as possible.

## **WORKERS COMPENSATION**

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All North Carolina State Government employees are covered under the State Government Workers' Compensation Program. It covers full-time employees, part-time employees and temporary employees. If you experience an on-the-job injury, it is your responsibility to report it to your supervisor immediately. The supervisor must file notice of injury within 5 days of knowledge of injury.

## **USE OF STATE EQUIPMENT**

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Improper use of State property and equipment is prohibited by law. Equipment such as computers, photocopiers, State cars, and State Telecommunications Network (long-distance) is not to be used for personal, civic, political, charitable, or other such purposes. Improper use can result in disciplinary action up to or including dismissal. Likewise, all office supplies are for office use. Personal use of the telephone should be kept to a minimum.

## **TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

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Local calls are accessed by dialing A9" before the number. State government calls in Raleigh are accessed by dialing A3" or A5" and then the 4-digit number. Long distance calls are accessed by dialing A8" followed by the area code and the number. The State is charged at a discount rate for each long distance call made using A8". This line is for work related calls only. Employees must use personal credit or calling cards when making personal long distance calls. Use of the A8" line for personal calls can result in dismissal.

## **IDENTIFICATION CARDS**

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Employees are urged to obtain identification cards/badges as soon as possible. Your personnel representatives can provide information on where, when and how to obtain identification cards.

## **PARKING**

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Parking in Downtown Raleigh is very limited. Parking for NCDENR in Raleigh is coordinated through General Services. Contact the Parking Services Coordinator at 715-3869 for information concerning parking availability and receiving an assigned space. Employees should be observant not to park in a State Government Lot that has assigned /rented spaces without prior authorization. Their cars will be towed!

Alternative forms of transportation are encouraged due to the limited availability of parking. CAT, Capital Area Transit, TTA, Triangle Transit Authority, and other bus lines have made special arrangements to provide transportation services for State employees working in downtown Raleigh such as reduced rates and vanpools. For specific information regarding service availability, access, and cost please contact the Parking Services Coordinator at 715-3869.

If you work outside the downtown Raleigh area please see your human resources representative for parking availability and alternate transportation services.

## **HOLIDAYS**

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NCDENR employees receive the same number of paid holidays as other state employees. Many employees request vacation leave for periods around holidays. Because Divisions must continue to operate during this time, it may not be possible to grant leave to everyone who applies. However, the management of the Division will do its best to accommodate requests for leave. In order to receive full consideration for their leave requests, employees are encouraged to apply for such leave as early as possible. Listed below are the holidays which are usually observed by state employees:

- New Year=s Day
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.=s Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran=s Day
- Thanksgiving (two days )
- Christmas (two or three days)

If both days preceding and following Christmas day are scheduled workdays, three days will be observed. Likewise, when a holiday falls on Saturday, the Friday before will be the day off. When a holiday falls on Sunday the following Monday will be taken as the normal holiday.

Good Friday and Christmas are regarded as religious holidays. An employee wishing to observe different religious holidays may request a holiday exchange under which the employee would perform work on a holiday observed by the State in exchange for a day off to accommodate the employee. Such requests will be approved if arrangements can be made for employees to work. If, however, no work can be made available on these days because of logistical reasons (offices closed to the public, no supervision available, no security available, etc.), agency administrators should arrange work schedules so that an employee may take vacation leave when requested for other such religious observances.

## VACATION LEAVE

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Vacation leave may be used for vacations, personal reasons, medical appointments, and absences due to bad weather. Employees have the choice of using either vacation or sick leave for personal illness or illness in the immediate family. In any case, vacation leave must be approved by your supervisor. Vacation Leave accrual rates are based upon an employee's total State service.

### Hours of vacation leave earned by years of Service

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Yearly</u>
Less than 2	7 hrs. 50 mins.	94
2 -< 5	9 hrs. 10 mins.	110
5 -< 10	11 hrs. 10 mins.	134
10-< 15	13 hrs. 10 mins.	158
15-< 20	15 hrs. 10 mins.	182
20+	17 hrs. 10 mins.	206

Vacation leave may be accumulated without any applicable maximum until December 31 of each calendar year. On December 31 any employee with more than 240 hours of accrued vacation leave will have the excess converted to sick leave. Accrual for part-time employees will be prorated from the full-time leave earning rate above.

If an employee leaves state employment, he or she will be paid for accumulated vacation leave up to 240 hours. If an employee dies, a lump sum payment for leave up to 240 hours is made to the estate.

## SICK LEAVE

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Full-time permanent, probationary, and trainee employees are granted eight hours sick leave per month (12 days per year).

Sick leave may be accumulated indefinitely without maximum. Upon retirement, accumulated sick leave days are changed into retirement credits. Twenty sick leave days or a portion thereof equals one month's service.

Sick leave can be used for:

- X Medical appointments;
- X Illness in the immediate family; Actual disability connected with childbearing; and or
- X Death in the immediate family (amount of time is left to the discretion of the employee and his or her supervisor).
- X Your own sickness

## **OTHER LEAVE**

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State government provides several leave options in addition to sick and vacation leave. They include:

**Military Leave** with pay not to exceed 120 hours (15 days) each federal fiscal year is granted to members of reserve components of the United States Armed Forces when members are ordered to duty for annual training or other purposes. Limited leave with pay is also provided for emergency active State duty.

**Civil Leave** with pay will be granted to serve jury duty. This will not be charged against your leave time. You will be entitled to any jurors= pay received, and your regular State salary for the period. If you attend court as a part of your job, no leave is required. If you are subpoenaed as a witness (except as a plaintiff or defendant), you may be given leave with pay. Any fees received must be turned into the department or you may use vacation leave and keep any fees received.

If you choose to take civil leave, you should submit your subpoena with your leave request.

**Parental Leave** without pay up to a maximum of six months may be granted to either the natural parent of a newborn infant or the parents of the newly adopted child less than five years of age. The natural mother may use sick leave for the actual period of temporary disability caused or contributed to by pregnancy and childbirth. Further, the natural mother or father may be granted leave without pay for all of the time away from work not covered by earned leave either because she has exhausted all earned leave or prefers to retain her vacation leave. A doctor=s statement verifying the actual period of temporary disability is required. The employee and management will work together to determine what limitations, if any will be placed on the employment prior to childbirth, based on doctors= advice.

**Family Medical Leave** Family Medical Leave (FML) up to twelve weeks must be granted to a permanent, probationary, or temporary full-time or part-time eligible employee for birth and care for a newborn, care for an adopted child (proof is required), care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition or for a personal serious health condition. Paid and unpaid leave is part of the 12 work weeks allowed under FML policy. This includes leave taken under Voluntary Shared Leave.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE LEAVE POLICY**

The Community Service Leave Policy became effective **July 1, 2000**. The purpose of the Community Service Leave Policy is to give state employees an opportunity to support schools, communities, citizens and non-profit organizations by engaging in volunteer service. This policy replaces the Child Involvement Leave, Community Involvement Leave and Volunteer Participation Leave Policies and can be used in one of two ways:

- To meet with a teacher concerning the employee's child, attend a function sponsored by the school in which the employee's child is participating, perform school-approved volunteer work or perform a service for a community service organization. Employees are credited with **twelve (12) hours** of

time (prorated for part time employees) from 7/1/00 through 12/31/00. This is in addition to any unused Child Involvement Leave that the employee has remaining. New employees will be credited with this leave upon employment prorated at two hours per month for the remainder of the calendar year. Effective January 1, 2001, **24 hours** each calendar year will be credited to employees.

- For tutoring/mentoring in public schools an employee can receive up to **36 hours** of leave. This option allows one hour per week up to a maximum of 36 hours while school is in session. Any additional time spent traveling in addition to the one hour must be accounted for with other leave.

**Note:** If an employee chooses to change options during the calendar year, the maximum hours that may be granted is the maximum allowed under the new option chosen minus the amount already used.

Timesheets will be revised to reflect the Community Service Leave Policy.

This is a brief summary of the Community Service Leave Policy. You may view the policy in its entirety at the Office of State Personnel's website: [www.osp.state.nc.us/manuals/2000/c-serve.pdf](http://www.osp.state.nc.us/manuals/2000/c-serve.pdf).

**If you have any questions or need clarification please contact your personnel representative or Carole Polenz, Division of Human Resources, at (919) 715-4519.**

**State Employees= Association Leave** gives officers of the State Employees Association of North Carolina leave with pay to attend official functions of the Employees Association Delegates to the annual state convention may also receive leave with pay to attend that function. Leave for these activities should be requested as far in advance as possible.

**Leave Without Pay** may be granted for illness or disability, for educational opportunities, for parental leave as discussed earlier, or for other reasons deemed justified by the Department. Anyone interested in applying for leave without pay should apply in writing to his or her immediate supervisor. Short periods of LWOP may be granted also under special conditions, i.e., employees that have exceeded available vacation and sick leave will be docked on a month for month basis unless an advancement has been approved by the Division. However, under no conditions can LWOP status be carried forward from one calendar year to another.

**Voluntary Shared Leave** may be available when either an employee, or a member of the employee's immediate family, has an unexpected catastrophic medical condition. The employee must exhaust all available earned leave before using any donated leave. When such a situation occurs and the employee is approved for voluntary shared leave by the Department, other employees may volunteer to give some of their vacation leave to that employee-without-pay and relieve some of the financial burden associated with such illness. Sick and/or vacation leave can be donated to an immediate family member. For more information on applying for or donating to the Shared Leave program contact your supervisor or Human Resources Representative.

## Longevity

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After employees have completed 10 years of qualifying service, he or she will receive longevity pay. This is an annual payment based on a percentage of your salary. The amounts are:

	<u>Longevity Pay Rate</u>
10 but less than 15 years	1.50%
15 but less than 20 years	2.25%
20 but less than 25 years	3.25%
25 or more	4.50%

Longevity is paid each year during the same pay period following the employee's total state service date. Employees should be reminded to list all prior service on his or her state application form in order to receive credit for that time.

Employment with the county Agricultural Extension Service; Community College System and the Public School system of North Carolina, local mental health, public health, social services, General Assembly, and employment with other agencies listed in the State Personnel Manual, Section 7, page 43, are counted toward total state service. Temporary time does not count toward total state service. Longevity is not considered a part of annual base pay for classification and pay purposes. Those previously employed with Wake County government maybe eligible.

## **RETIREMENT**

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Employees must complete an enrollment application to join the Retirement System. This application is a legal document and must be notarized. Permanent employee working at least 75% time become members of the System on the date of hire/employment. Employees' share of the cost is 6%, which is automatically deducted from the paycheck. The 6% is tax sheltered for federal and state income taxes. It is deducted from your paycheck before taxes. The State currently contributes 9.63% for each employee.

Employees are entitled to a benefit at a later date if he or she left the System, for any reason, at any age, after completing five years of creditable service, provided he or she did not withdraw his or her contributions. This right to a benefit is called "being vested." Employees may apply for vested payments to begin at age 60.

Employees who leave the System before becoming vested can only receive a refund of their contributions. Death Benefit: The estates of employees who die while in active service (while being paid salary) after one year as a contributing member will receive a single lump sum payment. The payment equals the highest 12 months' salary in a row during the 24 months before death, subject to a minimum payment of \$25,000 and a maximum payment of \$50,000. There is no age limit as long as the employee is currently on the payroll.

There are several types of service which can be purchased to add to creditable service (withdrawn accounts, temporary service, part-time service, federal government service, and others). Forms are available from the division Human Resources Representatives. The Retirement System will figure the cost of the service being purchased. Employees are not obligated to purchase even after getting an estimate from the Retirement System.

Any employee who leaves the System for any reason other than retirement or death, may either receive a refund of his or her contributions plus a small percentage of interest if he or she has five years of service, or may leave his or her contributions in the System and keep all the creditable service earned to that date.

To receive a refund, employees must complete an application form (Form 5) to be filed with the Retirement System. None of the retirement benefits received from the System is subject to NC income tax. Employees should file a change of an address on a Form 2C if he or she moves. Employees may change beneficiaries at any time. This is also done on a Form 2C. All forms with the Retirement System must be notarized, as they are all legal documents. Employees should keep their copies of these forms with their important papers.

Any questions regarding Retirement should be directed to the Retirement System. Also, all employees will receive a Retirement Benefits Book in their orientation packets.

## **Retirement Planning**

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Human Resources Division offers these workshops periodically throughout the year. Employees are notified of the dates for the workshops. If an employee is interested in attending one of these workshops, he or she should notify the division Human Resources Representative.

## **Employee Relations**

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State employees have many rights and privileges. These are designed to protect the employee and enrich the employee's work and family environments.

**WORKPLACE HARASSMENT-** The policy of DENR is that no state employee may engage in speech or conduct that is defined as unlawful workplace harassment. All state employees are guaranteed the right to work in an environment free from unlawful workplace harassment and retaliation.

Incidents of harassment should be reported to your direct supervisor and/or the Office of Human Resources (919) 715-4500.

**GRIEVANCE POLICY-** The Department has adopted the State Personnel Commission's Employee Grievance Policy. The goals of the policy are (1) to assist managers in the procedures which implement the state policy within ENR; (2) to assist employees who have filed or are considering filing a grievance; and (3) to ensure that employees understand not only their appeal rights, but also the limitations of their appeal rights.

Employees may obtain a copy of the ENR Grievance Policy from his/her division Human Resources Representative or an Employee Relations Specialist in the departmental Human Resources Division.

**INCENTIVE BONUS PROGRAM-**All permanent, temporary, or part-time employees are eligible to submit suggestions for improving operations and services. If an employee's idea is adopted, the employee could be awarded money and/or extra time off from work.

To submit a suggestion, contact your Human Resources Representative for an official suggestion form, or contact the North Carolina State Employee Suggestion System at the following address: North Carolina Department of Administration

116 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27603  
(919) -733-2566

**EMPLOYEES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)** -The purpose of this program is to:

- (1) identify problems as early as possible;

- (2) encourage employees to seek help; and
- (3) refer employees to the service(s) that can help most.

Employees and their families are encouraged to use the service voluntarily. Although EAP was designed as a self-referral program, supervisors may talk to employees about this program and suggest that employees call the EAP office if there is a decline in work performance or a change in work habits.

Assistance is provided in strict confidence by professional counselors. No information about an employee's personal problem will be given to anyone, including the employee's supervisor, without the employee's written consent. Also, nothing about an employee's personal problem will be put in the employee's personnel file.

Employees are not charged leave for the initial appointment and there is no cost for the first counseling session, which is called an initial assessment. This session takes 1 to 2 hours.

Employees may contact the EAP office directly if desired. In Raleigh: 733-9545 Toll-free: 1-800-543-732 or an Employee Relations Specialist in the Human Resources Division, at (919) 715-4502.

**EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT-** There are services and programs available to enable employees to develop and advance to their fullest potential.

**Educational Assistance** - The program is provided to assist employees in developing or improving skills or qualifications directly related to their present job or field of work in State service. Full-time or part-time employees who have gained permanent status are eligible for this program. Trainees may be determined as eligible by their supervisor after satisfactory performance for a period of not less than three months.

Any accredited high school, business school, community college, technical institute, college, university, correspondence school or other educational source approved by the Office of State Personnel is eligible for selection.

The determination by management of whether to provide assistance to take a specific course, is based on the principle - "deemed beneficial to both the employee and the agency." An approved course should be taken on the employee's own time. Where feasible, supervisors are encouraged to adjust the employee's work schedule to accomplish this. Eligible employees may receive reimbursement, upon completion of course work, for 100% of required academic costs not to exceed the maximum amount charged by the UNC System. Academic cost includes tuition, registration fees and course/lab fees normally charged to all enrolled students.

An individual employee may receive assistance for a maximum of four (4) semester courses, or six (6) quarter courses per fiscal year. Assistance will not be granted for transportation costs, graduation fees, examination fees, textbooks and supplies. Employees must complete a PD-136, Application for Educational Assistance, submit to their supervisor, and receive approval prior to starting a course in order to be eligible for educational assistance.

## **SEPARATION**

### **Notice**

The Departments of Environment & Natural Resources requests written notice of resignation at least two weeks in advance of the anticipated date of separation. The employee's **last day of physical work** is the day of separation. Any unused vacation leave will be included in their final pay.

### **Involuntary Separation**

There are other forms of separation such as: Separation due to unavailability when leave is exhausted, Voluntary Resignation Without Notice, Dismissal, Separation due to Reduction in Force(lay off), Retirement. For specific details on each policy please contact your Division Personnel Representative or Human Resources.

### **Effect on Leave**

A separating employee receives lump sum payment for accumulated **vacation leave** not exceeding 240 hours in the paycheck of the next month following the separation date. The number is prorated for employees who work less than full-time. There is no payment for unused **sick leave**. An employee=s sick leave balance, however, will be reinstated if the individual returns to state service within five years of separation. If an employee transfers within the state system, sick and vacation leave is transferred.

### **Unemployment Benefits**

The Department of Environment & Natural Resources is covered by the Unemployment Insurance Act. An individual leaving employment with the Department may apply for benefits. The Employment Security commission determines eligibility.

### **What Happens to Your Benefits?**

Please contact your Personnel Representative to discuss continuation of your benefits beyond separation.

### **Exit Interview Program**

The exit interview program is designed to elicit information vital to preserving and promoting positive work environments. The exit interview provides management with a separating employee=s perspective of human resources management activities within a division. All employees should attend an exit interview. The interview should be scheduled by the employee=s supervisor or the divisional personnel representative. Employees should consider this as an opportunity to recommend changes that might make the Department a better place to work.

