



PPG 818 – NEPOTISM AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

1. Under PPG 818, what kind of relationship must County employees disclose to their Departmental Human Resources Manager and/or designee?

Employees must disclose if they are aware of any current or pending working relationships (inclusive of County employees, Commissioners, external contractors, and volunteers) that would be in violation of this policy. In general, employees must report working assignments that place them in supervisor-subordinate, direct or indirect oversight, or auditing or approval roles with a relative or someone with whom they have a personal relationship.

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify their Departmental Human Resources Manager (DHRM) or designee in writing once they become aware of an assignment or reporting relationship that presents a conflict of interest, or when the personal or professional relationship with another employee changes and is now covered under this policy.

2. Are there any employment decisions involving a relative or personal relationship that employees should not participate in or influence?

Employees who have a personal relationship with a candidate or current staff member should not participate in employment decisions including, but not limited to, examinations, hiring, evaluations, transfers, reinstatements, promotions, and demotions. In addition, employees should not participate in investigations and/or disciplinary actions involving individuals with whom they have a personal relationship.

3. What are the restrictions to supervisory relationships among relatives or employees involved in personal relationships within the same chain of command?

Employees shall not directly supervise nor serve as intradepartmental or interdepartmental project leads to any relative or anyone with whom they have a personal relationship. Indirect supervision of a relative and/or anyone with whom they are involved in a personal relationship should also be avoided but can be assessed on a situational basis.

4. Are there any other restrictions regarding employment relationships among relatives and individuals involved in personal relationships?

Employees who are relatives and/or have personal relationships must not be assigned to positions of interrelated trust or authority which could impair the County's system of checks and balances. These include, but are not limited to, positions in certain work units that deal with approval and disbursement of monies or negotiable instruments, development and awarding of contracts, and maintenance and control of financial systems.

5. Can departments develop more stringent nepotism and personal relationship policy requirements?

Yes, departments may develop their own policy with more stringent policy requirements as long as the policy is in adherence to the minimum standards established by the County's *Nepotism and Personal Relationships* policy.

6. Do employees need to share past personal relationships with coworkers in the same department?

No. Employees are only required to disclose current personal relationships, with the exception of relationships from a previous marriage or domestic partnership, as outlined in the policy.

7. Are temporary department-designated living arrangements, such as firehouse rotations or assigned travel lodging, considered 'cohabitation'?

No, living arrangements established by the department for specific work assignments or temporary travel lodging are not considered cohabitation under this policy and do not need to be disclosed.

8. What actions can a department take if employees who are relatives and/or are involved in a personal relationship hold positions that present a conflict of interest?

If a situation arises (e.g., as a result of a new hire, rehire, transfer, promotion, reassignment, or reorganization) where employees are assigned to positions deemed inappropriate under this policy, the department head or their designee may transfer or reassign one of the individuals to the same or comparable item within the department, as permitted by relevant, existing authorities, such as Civil Service Rule 15 - *Assignment, Interdepartmental Transfer, and Change of Classification* and applicable MOUs.

Employees involved in an intradepartmental or interdepartmental project with a relative or other personal relationship may be reassigned to a different project.

9. Can exceptions to the policy be made?

Yes, exceptions to the policy must be requested and approved, in writing, by the department head or their designee. Approvals of such exemptions, as well as the department's plan to mitigate any conflicts of interest, should be filed in the employee's official personnel file.

10. When should the County's *Nepotism and Personal Relationships* policy be reviewed with employees?

The policy is to be provided to all employees when they are first hired and must be reviewed and acknowledged on an annual basis.

11. What happens when employees fail to comply with the County's *Nepotism and Personal Relationships* policy?

Failure to comply with the County's *Nepotism and Personal Relationships* policy may be cause for administrative action, which may include discipline up to and including discharge from County service.