

Working for the State of Vermont

A Guide for
New Employees

The Vermont Department of Personnel publishes this Guide. It is intended to provide general information related to State employment as described in our State statutes, Federal law, our collective bargaining agreements, Rules and Regulations for Personnel Administration and the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual as they may apply to classified service. This information is not intended as a replacement for any of those source documents, and in the event of any discrepancy, the information contained in the source document shall apply.



This document will be made available, upon request, in a form (such as Braille, large print and audiocassette) usable by individuals with disabilities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
WELCOME TO VERMONT STATE GOVERNMENT	2
GENERAL INFORMATION	2
Vermont State Government	
Merit System	
Collective Bargaining -- VSEA Membership	
Agency Fee	
Personnel Officers	
State Government Telephone and E-Mail Directory	
Department of Personnel's Web Site	
Public Relations and Courtesy	
JOB RELATED INFORMATION	5
Probation Period	
Hours of Work	
Absenteeism	
Classification	
Promotion	
Transfer	
Performance Evaluation	
Progressive Discipline	
Changes in Status	
Reporting of Accidents on the Job	
Employee Conduct	
Resignation	
Personnel Records	
Confidentiality	
Reduction in Force	
POLICIES & PROCEDURES	10
Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual	
Discrimination	
Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action	
Harassment	
Sexual Harassment	
Political Activity	
Americans with Disabilities Act and Reasonable Accommodation	
Smoke Free Workplace	
Bloodborne Pathogens	

Drug Free Workplace
Solicitation
Employment of Relatives
Grievance Procedure
Travel Regulations
Internet and E-Mail
Official Stationery
Bulletin Boards
Photocopier Use
Telephone Use
Other Equipment and Supplies

COMPENSATION 15

State Pay Plan
Paydays
Pay Deductions
Overtime
Shift/Weekend Differential
Higher Assignment Pay
Call-in Pay
Merit Increases.

BENEFITS 17

Medical, Dental, Life Insurance
Flexible Spending Accounts
Social Security
Leave Provisions
Personal Leave
Supervisory Personal Leave
Holidays
Off Payroll and Leave of Absence
Career Development Leave
Parental/Family Leave
Court and Jury Duty
Vermont State Employees Credit Union
Deferred Compensation
Retirement
Child and Elder Care
Professional and Career Development Opportunities
Tuition Reimbursement Program
Employee Assistance Program

ALPHABETICAL SUBJECT INDEX 27

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to help new employees quickly and successfully make the transition to Vermont State Government. It briefly outlines many things you'll need to know and is based upon the questions, suggestions, and recommendations of many state employees. It is not intended to be complete compendium of the rights and responsibilities of state employees.

This handbook describes the management philosophy of Vermont State Government, many of the general rules, the basics of personnel management, and information about important non-state organizations, e.g., the Vermont State Employees' Association, Inc. and the Vermont State Employees' Credit Union, in which you may wish to participate.

Most of the material in this handbook is based on law, regulation, administrative procedures and collective bargaining agreements between the State and the Vermont State Employees' Association, Inc., which provide the guidelines for personnel management in Vermont State Government. Where appropriate, a primary reference is given to indicate where you will find more detailed information.

A number of state agencies also have an agency-specific employee handbook. You should ask your personnel officer if your agency has such a guide.

We welcome your suggestions and ideas for improving the usefulness of the handbook. Written comments or e-mails should be addressed to:

Employee Handbook
Office of the Commissioner
Department of Personnel
110 State Street, Drawer 20
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-3001
kjoeckel@per.state.vt.us

WELCOME TO VERMONT STATE GOVERNMENT

Welcome to employment with the state of Vermont!

You have joined an organization that serves thousands of Vermonters every day in many ways. While our employees have joined us for a variety of reasons, one thing is certain: Vermont state government is comprised of people who care. They care about the quality of the jobs they do and the people they serve. It can be difficult work and sometimes frustrating, but the rewards are immeasurable. The job you do makes a positive difference for the citizens of Vermont.

GENERAL INFORMATION

VERMONT STATE GOVERNMENT

State government is divided into three distinct branches: legislative, executive and judicial. The laws governing the state are enacted by the legislature, implemented by the executive branch and interpreted by the judicial branch of state government.

Legislative Branch

The legislature, which meets in regular session every year, is composed of two bodies: the House of Representatives with 150 members and the Senate with 30 members. Representatives and senators are elected to two-year terms. The legislature enacts the laws that govern the state. Laws so enacted must be approved by the governor. The legislature may override a governor's veto by a two-thirds vote of both houses.

Judicial Branch

The judicial power of the state is vested in the Supreme Court, Superior Court, and such other courts as may be provided by law. The Supreme Court consists of one chief justice and four associate justices, who are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the legislature for six-year terms.

Executive Branch

The elected officials of the executive branch are the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Auditor of Accounts and Attorney General. Each official is elected to office for a term of two years. The governor functions as the chief executive officer overseeing all administrative departments of the executive branch.

The executive branch of Vermont State Government employs approximately 8,100 people. It is organized into five major agencies, each having several departments -- the largest is the Agency of Human Services with over 3,000 employees. Other agencies include the Agency of Transportation (approximately 1,300 employees), the Agency of Natural Resources (approximately 600 employees), the Agency of Administration

(approximately 800 employees) and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (approximately 100 employees). In addition, approximately 2,300 people work within 30 other departments and offices that exist outside the agency structure, with sizes ranging from a few people to more than 300.

The lines of authority within an executive branch agency or department start with an agency secretary or department commissioner, who is appointed by and responsible to the Governor, and who is responsible for the overall operation of an agency or department. The secretary or commissioner may be assisted by a deputy. A department is generally comprised of divisions each headed by a director. The divisions, in turn, are typically divided into sections headed by chiefs and may be further divided into units headed by supervisors.

For a copy of the organization chart, please contact the Secretary of Administration's office at 802-828-3320.

MERIT SYSTEM

As an employee of the State of Vermont, you are working under a "merit system" of personnel administration. The rules and regulations that govern the state's practices as an employer have the full force and effect of law, and some of their most important features are described in this handbook. If you want to read the source documents, consult your personnel officer.

The merit system law (3 V.S.A. § 327(b)) provides, among other things, a fair foundation for recruitment, selection and advancement of employees based on their relative ability, knowledge, and skills. Discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, or political affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, age, or other non-merit factors is prohibited (for other nondiscrimination provisions see "Discrimination", p. 12).

Vacant positions are filled by selection from a list of eligible applicants who meet specific published eligibility criteria; then compete by means of examination which may be written, performance, oral presentation, a rating of past experience and training, or some combination of these. Once hired, an individual must successfully complete a probation period, usually lasting six months, in order to gain status as a permanent state employee.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING – UNION MEMBERSHIP

The State Employees' Labor Relations Act (3 VSA §902, *et. seq.*) provides the basis for collective bargaining between the state and its employees. Labor contracts are negotiated between the state and the Vermont State Employees' Association, Inc. (VSEA). The VSEA represents and is the certified bargaining agent for members of the Non-Management, Supervisory, Corrections and State Police Bargaining Units.

Membership in the VSEA is open to all employees who wish to join, except where expressly excluded by statute or by order of the Vermont Labor Relations Board.

AGENCY FEE

Most new employees hired into a classified, bargaining unit position are covered by the Agency Fee provisions of the collective bargaining agreements. This fee is an automatic payroll deduction from eligible employees who choose not to become members of the VSEA. The fee is used to defray the costs incurred by the VSEA in fulfilling its duty to represent all bargaining unit employees. Your Department and/or the VSEA should provide you with more written information on this subject. The fee cannot exceed 85% of the amount payable as VSEA membership dues and will normally begin to be deducted with the employee's second pay check.

PERSONNEL OFFICERS

Each state department has a designated personnel officer, who assists employees in most personnel issues. Make sure you know how to contact your personnel officer, who will be an important source of information for you. A list is available at <http://www.vermontpersonnel.org/employee/hrstaff.cfm>

STATE GOVERNMENT TELEPHONE AND E-MAIL DIRECTORY

The Department of Buildings and General Services produces the Vermont State Government Telephone and E-Mail Directory. See your personnel officer or business manager for a copy of this valuable resource. You will also find this directory on the State of Vermont's Web page (www.vermont.gov).

DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL'S WEB SITE

The Department of Personnel maintains a website that provides access to a vast variety of information important to state employees, including recent news and information, a complete on-line version of the Personnel Policies & Procedures manual, the current collective bargaining agreements, pay charts, job specifications, the Cyprian Learning Center course offerings and much more. You can find the site at www.vermont.gov

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COURTESY

Is public service our job! When you interact with the public, you represent all of state government and its employees. Your willingness to be courteous and helpful reflects on all employees. Remember, you may be the only contact a customer may have with state services.

JOB RELATED INFORMATION

PROBATION PERIOD

Every new classified employee is required to serve an original probation period, usually lasting six months. The original probationary period is a working test period and if satisfactorily completed, you will become a permanent state employee entitled to all the benefits pertaining to your status.

Performance that is less than satisfactory could result in termination, or extension of the probation period for up to an additional six months at the option of your supervisor. Probationary employees are often provided with written evaluations before completion of the probation period.

If you have any questions about your probationary period, please contact your supervisor or personnel officer.

HOURS OF WORK

The state of Vermont provides many important services to the public, and each employee has a necessary part in the performance of those services, individually and in cooperation with others. Therefore, it is required that you report promptly for work each day, observe the assigned times for lunch periods, and continue work until the end of your regularly scheduled workday. Your supervisor is responsible for seeing that work rules are observed.

The standard workweek for most state employees is 40 hours. Day shift hours are generally from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday with 45 minutes for lunch.

Your hours may be different, and if so, your supervisor will advise you accordingly. If it is necessary that your work schedule be changed because of workload demands, you will be given required advance notice except in emergencies. Information on flexible work schedules can be obtained from your personnel officer.

ABSENTEEISM

It is essential that employees report to work on time and remain at work as scheduled. However, it is understood that occasional illnesses and emergencies may arise. If you cannot come to work, will be late, or must leave early, notify your supervisor as soon as you can. If you are going to be late for work or absent for the full shift, you should call your supervisor before the shift begins. Many agencies have specific procedures for calling in when you are going to be absent. Be sure you are aware of them. An employee who is absent for five consecutive workdays and fails to notify management

will be considered to have voluntarily quit. Refer to the current State/VSEA bargaining agreements for details.

CLASSIFICATION

Jobs within the State's classified service are grouped into job classes based on the similarity of their responsibilities and duties. There are approximately 1,500 different job classes in State government.

Each job class is assigned to one of the pay grades (5-32) of the classified pay plan. The assignment of a job class to a pay grade is determined by a "point-factor" system of job evaluation. Each job class is reviewed to determine the level of duties and responsibilities and the knowledge, skill and ability it takes to perform the job. The job class is then assigned a point value, compared to other jobs, and assigned to a pay grade.

Classified positions are either permanent full-time, permanent part-time, or limited service. A limited service position is one which, when established, is expected to last more than one year, but less than three years. Employees in such positions (usually with a specially funded project) have all the benefits of permanent classified employees except tenure.

PROMOTION

State employees who have successfully completed an original probation period may apply for vacant positions above their current pay grade. You must apply for specific positions under recruitment through the Department of Personnel or the designated personnel officer if recruitment for the position has been decentralized or is within your agency. You must meet the minimum qualifications for the position and pass any required examination because you are a state employee.

When certain conditions are met, promotions can be made by administrative action. Sometimes the position itself is changed to a different classification at a higher pay grade (we call this reallocation) with a resulting pay increase for the incumbent of that position.

Normally when a permanent employee is promoted to a "higher-level" job, s/he will be given the salary increase prescribed by the current labor contract, or receive a salary not less than step two of the new pay grade, whichever is greater. There are several exceptions to this, and if you have any questions about it, please contact your personnel officer.

Employees in an original probation period are only eligible for promotion to a higher pay grade position by competing through the open-competitive process. Promotions during original probation result in a new original probationary period of six months from the date of the new appointment.

TRANSFER

State employees who have successfully completed an original probationary period and apply for positions under recruitment that are at (or below) their current pay grade will have status as a "transfer". You must apply for a specific position under recruitment (the Department of Personnel does not maintain a general "transfer list" of people who wish to transfer to another position), and meet the minimum qualifications of the job class. Generally, no examination is required. If qualified, you will be considered a "transfer" and as such will be referred to any vacancies non-competitively (i.e., the certification rule does not apply, see Personnel Policy number 4.10, Certification Rule). Your personnel officer has specific instructions about this process.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Each employee's job performance is normally evaluated in writing by one's immediate supervisor on an annual basis. The results of the evaluation are discussed with the employee, and a copy of the completed form is given to the employee.

This is a formal opportunity for supervisor and employee to get together and discuss the job, identify ways to increase the employee's effectiveness and potential for promotion, and discuss career development issues. The Department of Personnel publishes a *Guide to the State Performance Management System* for supervisors, which is available through your personnel officer or can be found on the Department of Personnel's website at www.vermont.gov. It can help you understand this process.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

As an employee of the state of Vermont, you are expected to meet reasonable standards for work performance, attendance, and personal conduct.

The State/VSEA collective bargaining agreements establish guidelines for progressive discipline and corrective performance action if problems arise. It is the intent of the state to be fair and firm in dealing with disciplinary issues or less than satisfactory performance.

Original probationary employees may be disciplined, dismissed, or laid off at the discretion of management without regard to the provisions of the labor contract and with no right to the grievance process.

CHANGES IN STATUS

It is important to remember that you are responsible to initiate changes in your employee records. See your personnel officer to obtain the proper form(s) and information on where to submit it if you wish to have your tax withholding deductions changed; add or delete dependents, or change insurance coverage, including updating life insurance beneficiaries; or change your name or address.

Beneficiary changes for retirement and deferred compensation are handled through the Retirement Office of the State Treasurer, 133 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont. Their phone number is 802-828-2305. You may also visit the website at: www.tre.state.vt.us

REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS ON THE JOB

Safety is everyone's job. In spite of all precautions, however, accidents can happen. Any employee who is injured on the job (including travel on official business) must report the injury to his/her supervisor or personnel officer within 72 hours.

Employees are covered under Workers' Compensation Insurance. It helps affected employees to receive proper medical treatment and provides income assistance through the recovery period.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

Section 3.01 of the Rules & Regulations for Personnel Administration (found in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual) contains a number of common sense regulations about employee conduct. Some of the obvious requirements are that you devote your duty hours to your work, and that you not have another job that is in conflict with your state job. There are also specific prohibitions against using your position to secure favors for yourself or others, personal use of state equipment or resources, soliciting or receiving gifts, including honoraria, and disclosing confidential information or using it for personal gain. Misconduct or neglect of duty, insubordination, conviction of a felony or conduct which places in jeopardy the life or health of a co-worker or a person under the employee's care are also prohibited conduct. You should also familiarize yourself with any department-specific work rules that may exist.

RESIGNATION

An employee who resigns must give at least two weeks' notice in order to protect his/her rights under the state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements. Such notice should be in writing and state the reasons for resignation. Once a resignation has been submitted, whether orally or in writing, it may not be withdrawn without the consent of the appointing authority.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

It is important to have current information in your personnel records maintained by your department. Be sure to notify your personnel officer of changes in address, telephone number, and name. Forms to change retirement, life insurance and income tax status may be obtained from your personnel officer.

The current state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements give an employee access to most of the material placed in his or her personnel file.

Public records statutes indicate that certain personal information contained in personnel files (such as personal financial information, home address, etc.) is normally considered confidential. Employee wage information, department, work location, title, and type of employment, however, is public information and will be disclosed on request.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees are not allowed to disclose confidential information obtained through the normal course of their employment, except as authorized or required by law. Employees may not use any such information for personal gain or benefit. If you have any questions about whether particular information is confidential, you should discuss it with your supervisor or personnel officer before disclosing it.

REDUCTION IN FORCE

In unusual circumstances it may be necessary to reduce the number of classified positions. When the decision is made that filled positions are to be eliminated, the employee(s) to be affected will be determined by a procedure in the State/VSEA collective bargaining agreements (see the Reduction in Force article in the current state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements). The state of Vermont is committed to making every effort to assist affected employees to obtain other employment with the state.

If transfer to another position is not possible and layoff occurs, permanent status employees retain certain re-employment rights which are specified in the labor contract and which are designed to find other suitable employment with the state of Vermont for laid-off employees.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

The state of Vermont Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual is a useful reference document and includes detailed guidelines for consistent personnel practices to be observed by both the state and individual employees.

A copy of the Policies and Procedures Manual is provided to all agency secretaries, commissioners, department heads, personnel officers and managers. If you need a copy of a state policy, contact your personnel officer. In addition, a complete on-line version is available on the Department of Personnel's web page: www.vermontpersonnel.org

The following descriptions summarize the key provisions of specific policies that are important for all state employees to understand. You are encouraged to review the actual policies and get additional information or clarification from your personnel officer as needed.

DISCRIMINATION

All agencies, departments and offices of Vermont State Government are subject to the anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity provisions and principles of state and federal laws, Personnel Rules and Regulations and the state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements. Discrimination against any person is prohibited in connection with recruitment, examination, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action because of race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, place of birth, or any other non-merit factor prohibited by law. Discrimination grievance and appeal procedures for both applicants and employees are available in the Rules and Regulations for Personnel Administration and in the grievance procedure in the current state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements. Policy 3.3 addresses Discrimination Complaints. Your agency may have additional policies and procedures for these purposes. You should confer with your personnel officer if you have questions.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The state of Vermont is committed to offering equal employment opportunities in accordance with state and federal law. That means that the state strives to ensure that decisions affecting hiring, promotions, and conditions of employment are not affected by illegal discrimination. The state is also committed to practicing Affirmative Action, which is acting to identify and eliminate barriers to fair hiring and promotional decisions. To that end, the Governor's Workforce Equity and Diversity Council has created an Affirmative Action Plan for all of state government, and agencies and departments of State government are working on individual plans. Questions about EEO and Affirmative Action should be directed to your agency or department EEO Officer.

HARASSMENT

The state of Vermont is committed to a working environment free of discrimination and harassment, in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect. It is our policy to prohibit any employee from harassing another employee. Harassment includes racial or ethnic slurs and other verbal, visual, or physical abuse relating to a person's race, color, religion, creed, ancestry, sex, marital status, age, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The state of Vermont is opposed to and prohibits sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment violates an individual's basic civil rights, undermines the integrity of the work place, and adversely affects workers and clients alike. Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination on the basis of sex and is, therefore, prohibited in the work place by both state and federal law as well as the state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements. It is also unlawful to retaliate against an employee for filing a complaint of sexual harassment or for cooperating in an investigation of sexual harassment.

Policy 3.1 outlines the state's sexual harassment policy and complaint procedures in detail.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Generally speaking, you may run for and hold public office in the community in which you reside, and campaign for and hold elective office in political clubs and organizations. You may also actively campaign during non-work hours for candidates for public office in partisan and non-partisan elections, and also be a candidate for paid partisan political office at the state or national level as long as your candidacy is not in conflict with the federal law, or Section 3.02 of the Rules and Regulations for Personnel Administration. However, you may not command or solicit from any other employee direct or indirect participation in any political activity or enforce or solicit contributions for any political party, organization, or candidate. In addition, you may not use any official authority for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the nomination or election of any candidate for public office. Of course, you do retain your right to vote and to express freely your opinion on political subjects.

If you work in one of the many agencies or departments receiving federal funds, you may also be subject to the provisions of the federal political activity law, 5 U.S.C. 1502, which contains additional restrictions. These restrictions are often referred to as the Hatch Act and may limit your ability to be a candidate for public office in a partisan election. If you have questions about this policy, contact either your personnel officer or the Employee Relations Division of the Department of Personnel, 828-3642.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT & REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

The state of Vermont endorses the mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) that prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of disability.

Consistent with the ADA and Vermont's Fair Employment Practices Act, it is the policy of the state of Vermont to provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified employee or applicant with a disability, unless such accommodation would cause an undue hardship. The obligation to make reasonable accommodation applies to all aspects of employment, including the application process. Policy 3.2 outlines the state's reasonable accommodation procedures.

SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE

It is the policy of the state of Vermont to provide a smoke-free work environment for its employees. Toward that goal, there are both statewide and local smoking committees who determine policies and procedures for the designation of smoking and non-smoking areas throughout the State offices. You should acquaint yourself with these regulations at your work site. Your supervisor can provide you with this information. The Statewide Smoking Policy is 17.4.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

It is the policy of the state of Vermont to limit all occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials since any exposure could result in transmission of Bloodborne pathogens that could lead to disease or death. The Bloodborne Pathogens Policy is 17.5.

Each agency/department shall make the hepatitis B vaccine and vaccination series available at no cost to employees who are reasonably expected to be at risk of occupational exposure.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

As an employer, the state of Vermont is responsible for maintaining safe, efficient working conditions for its employees by providing a drug-free workplace. An employee who is under the influence of certain drug on the job may pose serious safety and health risks not only to the user but also to co-workers and the general public at large. Therefore, State employees shall not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession or use of controlled substances (drugs) on the job or any State work site.

The state of Vermont's detailed policy on drug free workplace is Policy 17.3

SOLICITATION

No employee is allowed to engage in solicitation of other employees during their working time. The purpose this policy, #11.6, is to maintain an orderly working atmosphere and to avoid work interruptions and possibly security breaches.

EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES

While the state of Vermont welcomes employment applications from relatives of its employees, it is our policy not to employ direct relatives in the same department, or in the same network of supervision. Details are provided in Policy Number 5.2, Conflict of Interest Arising from Employment.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

This procedure is also extended to non-bargaining unit employees by statute. It is in everyone's interest to resolve problems at the lowest possible level. Sometimes, however, problems cannot be resolved informally. The current state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements outline a formal grievance procedure normally used to resolve these issues.

TRAVEL REGULATIONS

The state of Vermont has detailed written regulations governing approval of any reimbursement of actual expenses incurred in travel on official business (see Agency of Administration Bulletin 3.4 as well as the current state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements). It is the responsibility of each employee to be familiar with and comply with those rules.

Agency of Administration Bulletin 3.4 provides important information about the approval process for travel, forms and instructions for submitting travel and expense accounts, designation of official station, and liability insurance. Any questions concerning interpretation of those regulations should be directed to your supervisor or personnel officer.

INTERNET AND E-MAIL

Internet services and e-mail capabilities are intended to be a resource to facilitate the work of State government. Policy Number 11.7, Electronic Communications and Internet Use, provides detailed guidance to help employees understand appropriate and acceptable use.

OFFICIAL STATIONERY

Employees are not to use official stationery, letterheads, or memoranda for personal correspondence. Envelopes, labels, and other materials imprinted with the postal indicia are to be used only for official State mail. Other use is not permissible, even with postage stamps affixed.

BULLETIN BOARDS

Bulletin boards are for the posting of job opportunities, official postings and VSEA notices. Employees may be allowed to post other notices only with the express approval of management.

PHOTOCOPIER USE

Photocopiers should only be used for official business. However, if you must occasionally make a photocopy for your personal use, you will be expected to reimburse your department in accordance with its policies.

TELEPHONE USE

Telephone service is provided for official business. Personal calls may only be made and accepted when absolutely necessary, and they should be made as brief as possible. Employees are required to reimburse their department for non-work-related toll calls made on State phones.

OTHER EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

While our policies on the use of the internet and e-mail, telephones and photocopiers are ones that deserve special mention, no employee should use equipment or supplies of the State for personal use or for any uses other than that which serves the public interest, as approved by management.

COMPENSATION

STATE PAY PLAN

All classified positions are assigned to pay grades 5 to 32 in the pay plan (also see classification, page 6). Each pay grade contains 15 “steps” between the minimum (step 1) and the maximum (step 15) amount specified for each grade. Step advancement is based on satisfactory work performance and the amount of time on each step.

<http://www.vermontpersonnel.org/employee/paychart.cfm>

PAYDAYS

The state of Vermont pays employees every two weeks. Checks are issued on every other Thursday. Exceptions will occur if the pay date falls on a holiday, in which case the pay date will be Wednesday. Pay periods will always end on Saturday of each pay week.

You will receive either a statement with your check or notice of direct deposit which will indicate the number of hours worked, gross pay, net pay, and deductions for insurance, tax withholdings, deferred compensation, credit union payments, union dues or agency fee, retirement and voluntary charitable contributions. A notice of leave time earned and used together with the balances of sick, annual, compensatory and personal leave in hours is also reported on each statement.

Since you are paid for work performed during the previous pay period, there is a delay between the time worked and when it is paid. For a new employee, this may mean you will not receive a paycheck until your fourth week of employment. This may cause a hardship for some employees and the State will accept a request for special payment for part of the wages due after the second week of employment.

If you have questions regarding your paycheck or payroll deductions, contact your personnel officer or the Department of Personnel's Payroll Division 802-828-2314.

PAY DEDUCTIONS

Federal and state income taxes and Social Security are automatically withheld from your paycheck. These deductions are required by law. Shortly after the end of the calendar year, a W-2 form will be sent to you showing the amount of each tax withheld from your salary during the past year. The amount withheld for federal and state income taxes will depend on your salary and the number of allowances you claim on your W-4 form. Agency fee is not discretionary and will be deducted if you are covered. (Refer to Agency Fee on page 4.) Other deductions must be specifically authorized by you, including health insurance, life insurance, flexible spending account, U.S. Savings Bonds, Credit Union, our deferred compensation program, VSEA dues and VSEA-Sponsored insurance programs, or State Employees' Combined Charitable Appeal

(SECCA). It is important to note that you must authorize these latter deductions in writing. Forms are available from your personnel officer. It is also up to you to give written instructions if you wish the deductions stopped or changed or wish to change beneficiaries for certain benefits.

OVERTIME

On occasion, it may be necessary to work overtime. Overtime must be approved in advance by your supervisor. If you have any questions about overtime, please consult the current state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements for details or discuss the subject with your supervisor or personnel officer.

SHIFT/WEEKEND DIFFERENTIAL

An hourly shift differential is provided in the current state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements for employees whose regularly assigned shift includes at least two hours between 6:00 p.m. and midnight or between midnight and 6:00 a.m. Some employees may also be eligible for weekend differential for qualifying weekend work.

HIGHER ASSIGNMENT PAY

An employee who, for a short period of time (usually at least five consecutive workdays), is required to perform the duties of a higher-level position when the incumbent is absent, may be entitled to additional pay, as defined by the current state/VSEA collective bargaining agreement.

CALL IN PAY

The current state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements provide for extra "call-in" pay for most employees who are unexpectedly called in by their supervisor and required to return to work outside of their normally scheduled shift

MERIT INCREASES

In addition to the periodic step increases in each assigned pay grade (discussed above under state Pay Plan) employees who continually and substantially exceed their job requirements may be eligible to receive a meritorious step adjustment, a cash bonus, paid time off, or some other form of special recognition in accordance with their department's reward and recognition program.

BENEFITS

MEDICAL INSURANCE, DENTAL INSURANCE, LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS

The state of Vermont and the Vermont State Employees' Association have worked very closely together to design health plan options to offer to State employees and retirees. The goal is to continue to provide quality health care coverage and maintain a comprehensive choice of plans for you and your family.

The "TotalChoice" option is an indemnity plan that has an annual deductible. Once the deductible is met, most payments are made at 80%. This option offers free choice of medical providers. The "SelectCare Point of Service" option is a managed care plan with no annual deductible and small copays if you use a "network" provider. The "HealthGuard Preferred Provider Organization" option is similar to the TotalChoice option. However, your deductible and coinsurance levels are based on whether you use an in-network or out-of-network provider. The "SafetyNet" plan is the "catastrophic" option. It has a high deductible and lower reimbursement rates which are offset by a lower premium.

In most cases, medical coverage is effective after 30 days of continuous employment. However, employees have up to 60 days from their date of hire to enroll. Once enrolled, you may only switch plans during the annual Open Enrollment period in November, unless you move out of the SelectCare network area. The state contributes 80% of the cost of the premium.

The Dental Assistance plan helps pay for most common dental procedures. Coverage is automatic and starts after six months of continuous employment. The state pays the entire premium for this coverage for employees and dependents.

The State also offers an optional Life Insurance and Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD+D) plan. The Life Insurance and AD+D benefits are each two times your salary. Premium rates are very low and the state contributes 75% of the cost for employees only.

Employees who are not eligible to join the Vermont State Employees' Association are covered by a Long-Term Disability plan. This plan provides income replacement in the event of a non-occupational disability while employed. Workers' Compensation covers occupational disabilities for all employees.

More detailed information on these plans is provided to each new employee during the new employee orientation. Questions concerning enrollment, coverage, claim filing or other matters should be directed to your personnel officer.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *To join one of the medical plans and/or the life insurance plan, you must enroll within 60 days of your date of hire. No enrollment is required for the Dental plan.*

FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS

This program allows you to pay for dependent care (e.g., childcare or elder care) and certain unreimbursed health care expenses with “pre-tax” dollars, which may lower your taxable income. See your personnel officer for details and enrollment forms.

SOCIAL SECURITY

All employees are subject to the provisions of the Federal Insurance Contributions Act, better known as Social Security. The State of Vermont, as your employer, matches on a dollar-for-dollar basis the payments you make into the federal system. Employees with questions should contact their local Social Security office for information.

LEAVE PROVISIONS

General Information

There are two general categories of leave: paid and unpaid. Examples of paid leave include holidays, annual leave (vacation), sick leave, personal leave, and court leave. Examples of unpaid leave include unauthorized absences, and leave for personal reasons and leave to accept an appointed position.

Absence from duty during working hours without approval of the supervisor is absence without leave is unpaid, and may also be subject for disciplinary action. Retroactive approval of the supervisor may be granted if warranted by unusual conditions.

Annual leave

The purpose of annual leave is to provide employees with the opportunity to have periodic, scheduled rest and relaxation. It must be requested and approved by your supervisor as far in advance of your absence as possible.

If you are a new State employee, you are able to accrue and use annual leave after the first six months of employment. At that time you will be credited with annual leave, based on the number of completed full payroll periods of service (generally 48 hours). From then on, you earn annual leave each pay period unless you were on unpaid leave for 20 hours or more during the pay period. This 20-hour test is be pro-rated for part-time employees.

The accrual rate of annual leave increases over time during your employment. There is a limit on the number of annual leave hours that may be accrued. Except for approved educational and military leave, or service with VISTA or Peace Corps, time on unpaid leave of absences is not included in figuring rates of accrual.

Annual leave credits may be used only after they have been earned. Classified part-time employees earn credits in the same manner as full-time employees but they are pro-rated in proportion to their work schedule. A holiday falling on a workday when a classified employee is on leave is not charged against an employee's leave balance.

When you leave State service you will be paid up to 160 hours of unused annual leave accrual in a lump sum, provided that you have given two weeks advance notice prior to resignation. Upon retirement you would be paid all unused annual leave accrual.

Sick Leave

Sick leave is provided for classified employees so that you may be absent from duty with pay in the event of personal or family illness or injury. If you or an immediate family member is sick or injured and you will not be coming to work, you must make every effort to notify your supervisor at the earliest opportunity; if possible, prior to the start of the workday.

Sick leave is earned and reported in a manner similar to annual leave, with two notable exceptions. First, when you begin work as a new State employee, you are immediately credited with 48 hours of sick leave, which may be used as necessary. No additional hours will be credited until the end of the first complete pay period following completion of six months of service. Accrual rates increase the longer you are employed. There is no limit on the amount of sick leave that may be accrued.

Use of sick leave is permitted when you are unable to work because of illness, injury, or quarantine for contagious diseases, or for medical or dental appointments that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside work hours. It may also be authorized for limited periods because of serious illness or death in the immediate family. Immediate family includes parent, spouse, child, brother, sister, parent-in law, grandparent, grandchild or any person residing with the employee.

When you leave State employment, all your sick leave will lapse, unless you are separated due to Reduction in Force. See the current State/VSEA collective bargaining agreements or contact your personnel officer for specific details.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Non-management employees, who are not in original probationary status, can earn 10 hours of personal leave each fiscal three-month period. To earn this personal leave, the employee must not have used sick leave beyond eight (8) hours, and must not have been off payroll or on any type of leave of absence without pay or suspension without pay for the period.

Personal leave can not be paid in cash, converted to other forms of leave, or accumulated from fiscal year to fiscal year, except that any personal leave earned during the last three-month period of a fiscal year may be used in the next three-month period but not

thereafter. No employee shall be entitled to earn more than 40 hours per fiscal year. Personal leave accrual and eligibility criteria are pro-rated, as appropriate, for part-time employees.

SUPERVISORY PERSONAL LEAVE

Supervisory bargaining unit employees have a different personal leave benefit. Consult the current supervisory unit collective bargaining agreement for details.

HOLIDAYS

Employees are generally granted time off with pay on legal holidays as listed below. Employees in certain jobs may be required to work some holidays. If so, they may be compensated with equivalent time off or cash payment as provided in the labor contracts. In most cases, holidays that fall on Saturday are observed on the preceding Friday, and holidays that fall on Sunday are observed on the following Monday. Employees on paid sick or annual leave during a holiday do not forfeit a vacation or sick leave day. A classified employee who is suspended or on unauthorized leave for any portion of the day before or after a day observed as a holiday and who does not work on the day observed as a holiday shall not be eligible to receive holiday compensation.

STATE HOLIDAYS

State offices observe the following legal holidays.

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King's Birthday	3 rd Monday in January
Washington's Birthday	3 rd Monday in February
Town Meeting Day	1 st Tuesday in March
Memorial Day	May 30
Independence Day	July 4
Bennington Battle Day	August 16
Labor Day	1 st Monday in September
Veterans' Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	4 th Thursday in November
Christmas Day	December 25

The following day is a "floating" holiday. This means that State offices remain open and employees who are assigned to work that day, or who have that day as a regularly scheduled day off, will receive compensatory time off at straight time rates.

Columbus Day	2 nd Monday in October
--------------	-----------------------------------

In addition, subject to the operating needs of any department or agency, leave without loss of pay may be granted for the day after Thanksgiving.

OFF PAYROLL AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

There are a variety of provisions under by the contract, policies, and laws that apply to circumstances when employees must be absent from work and the use of annual, personal, or sick leave benefits does not apply. These provisions are summarized below. Employees should contact their personnel officer for specific details and information concerning these benefits.

Medical Leave of Absence

A request for an unpaid leave of absence resulting from medical reasons will be granted to an employee (not on original probation) if she or he has less than 15 days of sick or annual leave credits or does not wish to use accumulated annual leave.

Request for the leave of absence must be submitted in writing to your supervisor. Include the reason for the leave, the starting date, and the anticipated date of return. The department may require a doctor's certificate for medical leave of absence. The labor contract may permit unpaid leaves of absence for other reasons too

Off-Payroll Leave

When a person has no leave credits and has to be absent for short periods (no more than a full pay period), unpaid "off-payroll" status may be approved. There can be a loss of benefits (e.g., sick leave, annual leave, personal leave accrual; other benefits can be affected as well) associated with being off payroll or on a leave of absence. Unpaid absences that are greater than a full payroll period must be requested as leaves of absence.

Military Leave

Classified employees who enlist in the Armed Forces are given military leave without pay. Subject to certain limitations, on completion of military service (unless voluntarily extended), the individual will be returned to his/her old job, if the position still exists in that department. There are additional details you'll want to check with your personnel officer if this particular issue affects you.

If you are required to report for military training before completion of your original probationary period, you will not be eligible for leave with pay, and may be off payroll for the period of training. There are additional provisions for military leave without pay. You should refer to the Military Leave Article in the current State/VSEA collective bargaining agreements for further details.

Reserve and National Guard personnel are also eligible for up to eleven paid military leave days in each Federal fiscal year (October 1 – September 30).

Educational Leave

An educational leave of absence, with or without pay, for up to two years, may be approved in certain instances. Consult the educational leave article in the current state/VSEA collective bargaining agreements for further details.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEAVE

Departments may send classified employees to seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. See your personnel officer for further information.

PARENTAL/FAMILY LEAVE

Employees who require time off because of their own serious illness, or that of an immediate family member, or for the birth or adoption of a child (whether the employee is male or female) may have a right to such time off under federal and state laws, or the collective bargaining agreements between the state of Vermont and the Vermont State Employees' Association, Inc. The right to such leaves depends on length of service and the type of employment. The circumstances under which such leaves may be taken and the extent of the rights are described by the statutes and the appropriate contract provisions. In certain instances Parental and/or Family leave may be taken on an intermittent or reduced work schedule basis. Short-term, unpaid, family leave may also be taken for partial workdays under specific circumstances outlined in state statute. Employees should contact their personnel officer for specific details and information concerning these benefits.

COURT AND JURY DUTY

Classified employees are given the time necessary to perform jury duty, and the State expects its employees to serve when summoned unless unusual circumstances prevent it. Prompt notice of a summons to appear for jury duty must be given to the supervisor.

Any payments received for mileage or other travel expenses paid by the courts belongs to the employee. It does not have to be reported to your personnel officer.

If an employee receives a subpoena or summons to be a witness in a court case, the supervisor must be informed at once. Any witness fees, if received, must be reported to your personnel officer.

An employee may request, and shall be granted, annual leave or compensatory time off to appear as a defendant or plaintiff in civil or criminal actions not related to work.

VERMONT STATE EMPLOYEES' CREDIT UNION

State of Vermont employees and members of their families may join the Vermont State Employees' Credit Union as soon as they begin employment. The many advantages of

the credit union are detailed in a separate pamphlet. The credit union phone number is (802) 371-5160 or toll-free (800) 371-5160.

DEFERRED COMPENSATION

Through a Deferred Compensation Plan, you can postpone receipt of a portion of your income and receive its value at a later date, usually at retirement. You enter into a salary reduction agreement with your employer, and the amount of salary deferred is not considered income for federal income tax purposes until its value is received. At that time, it will be taxable as ordinary income.

Payment of taxes will be deferred on both the amounts deferred and the earnings from its investment. Therefore, it is possible for you to accumulate a larger sum than would have been the case if you had invested after-tax dollars. When you do receive the value of your deferred compensation -- probably after retirement -- it is possible that you will be in a lower income tax bracket.

To enroll: First decide how much of your income you can afford to set aside. The Revenue Act of 1978 permits you to defer as much as 25% of gross compensation from public employment, not to exceed \$11,000 per year (this figure is indexed for inflation). The amounts you defer are withheld from your regular paychecks and are not considered as current income for federal income tax purposes.

If you find it desirable to increase the amount of your deferred compensation contributions, you may do so subject to the maximum limitation permitted under current tax laws. If necessary, you may reduce or stop your contributions at any time.

For more information about the state's Deferred Compensation Plan, contact 802-828-2305. Or visit the website at: www.tre.state.vt.us

RETIREMENT

In addition to Social Security, State employees have a defined benefit retirement program, with mandatory contributions. In general terms, the program provides a retirement income which is computed based on your final average salary and your credited years of service when you retire.

Exempt employees have the option of choosing either the defined benefit program or a defined contribution plan. A defined contribution plan allows you to select from several investment vehicles to which you may direct your mandatory individual retirement contribution along with a contribution by the state of Vermont. This defined contribution plan increases your investment responsibility, and provides portability for more mobile employees as you will retain your account whether you continue employment with the state of Vermont until retirement or not.

Any retirement-related questions should be addressed to the Retirement Division of the Treasurer's Office. The telephone number is 802-828-2305 or toll free in Vermont 800-642-3191.

CHILD AND ELDER CARE

The current state/VSEA Child Care/Elder Care Committee supports a number of child and elder care initiatives throughout the state. To help meet the need for quality child care for state employees, there are two major initiatives: the child care direct reimbursement program and the child care resource and referral program.

To assist State employees with elder care needs, there is an elder care resource and referral program. This program provides information about available services in the state of Vermont as well as out-of-state services through their network of Councils on Aging across the United States.

Please call the state/VSEA Child Care/Elder Care Committee for more information about these services -- toll-free (800) 287-8322 or check the Department of Personnel's web page at: www.vermontpersonnel.org

PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The state of Vermont offers numerous training and development programs designed to provide employees with the skills and information they need to do their current jobs and prepare for future opportunities. Through the Department of Personnel, Workforce Planning and Employment Services Group, located at the Cyprian Learning Center in Waterbury, offers core developmental programs for:

- Managers -- Vermont Public Manager Program
- Supervisors -- Supervisors Development Program

Other training and development services available to individual employees and their departments include:

- **Open Enrollment Courses** for improving job skills, understanding State government functions, creating more effective organizations, and promoting personal growth and wellness.
- **Custom Designed Training** to address the needs of specific work groups.
- **Consulting Services** such as meeting facilitation, department restructuring assistance, team development, and organizational assessment.
- **Career Development Services** including individual career advisement, courses and workshops, and career development information and resources.
- **Resource Library** containing books and videos on a wide variety of individual and organizational development topics.
- **Fully-Equipped Training and Meeting Facility** available for use by State departments.

The Cyprian Learning Center's catalog is published twice a year on-line, at the Department of Personnel's website at: www.vermontpersonnel.org or contact the staff at Cyprian Learning Center at 802-241-1114, or e-mail: CLC@per.state.vt.us

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

The Tuition Reimbursement Program was established to provide financial support to permanent full and part-time State employees who have completed their original probation. Tuition Reimbursement covers:

- post secondary and graduate level courses at accredited educational institutions.
- up to 80% of tuition costs for up to twelve credits in a fiscal year, but no more than eight credits in a six-month period.

The process for Tuition Reimbursement is:

- obtain an application from your personnel officer or from the Department of Personnel's website: www.vermontpersonnel.org
- obtain the required signatures in your department,
- submit the completed application, during the application period specified via US Mail to:
Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator
Department of Personnel
110 State Street, Drawer 20
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-3001
- submit passing grades following course completion.

For more information, please contact your personnel officer or the Department of Personnel Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator at 828-1337.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary, confidential counseling program designed to help employees and members of their immediate families with personal problems such as family or marital difficulties, problems with alcohol or drugs, emotional illness, or financial or legal worries. This is a free service, offering up to five sessions of counseling for you and your family. If more than five sessions are needed, costs are generally covered through group medical plans.

It is the responsibility of the employee to seek assistance from the EAP before personal problems lead to disciplinary or corrective action. A supervisor, manager, appointing authority or personnel officer may recommend that the employee seek counseling from the EAP.

An employee's decision to seek assistance from the EAP or a treatment program is totally confidential. In addition, medical treatment and referral records pertaining to EAP screening or counseling are protected as confidential.

The EAP program offers confidential assistance by calling 888-834-2830, toll-free, 24 hours a day.

ALPHABETICAL SUBJECT INDEX

Absenteeism.....	5
ADA and Reasonable Accommodation	12
Agency Fee	4
Bloodborne Pathogens	12
Bulletin Boards	14
Call-in Pay	16
Career Development Leave.....	24
Changes in Status.....	7
Child and Elder Care.....	24
Classification.....	6
Collective Bargaining -- Union Membership.	3
Confidentiality	9
Court and Jury Duty.....	22
Deferred Compensation	23
Department of Personnel's Web Site	4
Discrimination.....	10
Drug-Free Workplace	12
EEO/Affirmative Action.....	10
Employee Assistance Program	25
Employee Conduct.....	8
Employment of Relatives.....	13
Flexible Spending Accounts	18
Grievance Procedure.....	13
Harassment.....	11
Higher Assignment Pay	16
Holidays	20
Hours of Work	5
Internet and E-Mail.....	13
Leave Provisions	18
Medical, Dental, Life	17
Merit Increases.....	16
Merit System.....	3
Off Payroll and Leave of Absence.....	21
Official Stationery.....	14
Other Equipment and Supplies	14
Overtime	16
Parental/Family Leave	22
Pay Deductions	15
Paydays	15
Performance Evaluation.....	7
Personal Leave	19
Personnel Officers.....	4
Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual	10

Personnel Records.....	8
Photocopier Use	14
Political Activity	11
Probation Period.....	5
Professional and Career Development Opportunities.....	24
Progressive Discipline	7
Promotion.....	6
Public Relations and Courtesy	4
Reduction in Force.....	9
Reporting of Accidents on the Job.....	8
Resignation	8
Retirement.....	23
Sexual Harassment.....	11
Shift/Weekend Differential.....	16
Smoke Free Workplace.....	12
Social Security	18
Solicitation	13
State Government Telephone and E-Mail Directory	4
State Pay Plan	15
Supervisory Personal Leave.....	20
Telephone Use	14
Transfer	7
Travel Regulations.....	13
Tuition Reimbursement Program.....	25
Vermont State Employees Credit Union.....	22
Vermont State Government	2