



## EMPLOYEE RIGHTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Houston Public works is one team with one purpose: Together we create a strong foundation for Houston to thrive. This includes ALL employees. We encourage everyone to voice any suggestions or concerns with their supervisor or email [publicworks@houstontx.gov](mailto:publicworks@houstontx.gov).

### RIGHTS & RESOURCES

#### WHERE DO I FIND POLICIES & PROCEDURES?

Policies & procedures for both Houston Public Works and the City of Houston are on the Employee Portal [www.insidehoustonpublicworks.org/hpw-policies-procedures](http://www.insidehoustonpublicworks.org/hpw-policies-procedures)

#### WHERE DO I FIND INFORMATION ON EMPLOYEE BENEFITS?

The City of Houston's Employee Guidebook provides information on benefits and describes employee responsibilities [http://houstontx.gov/hr/e\\_relations/employee\\_guidebook.html](http://houstontx.gov/hr/e_relations/employee_guidebook.html)

#### WHERE DO I FIND INFORMATION ON EMPLOYEE RIGHTS?

The City of Houston provides employee rights & responsibilities during new employee orientation, [https://houstontx.gov/lcd/pdfs/Employee\\_Rights\\_and\\_Responsibilities.pdf](https://houstontx.gov/lcd/pdfs/Employee_Rights_and_Responsibilities.pdf)

#### WHAT IS THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides free and confidential assessment and referrals or counseling to help resolve personal and/or work problems. Internal counselors are available at 832.393.6510 or 855.378.7485 (24 hours a day / 7 days a week)

#### WHAT IS THE EMPLOYEE CONCERNS RESOLUTION PROGRAM?

The Employee Concerns Resolution Program (ECRP) can help employees resolve:

- Supervisor conflicts
- Employee performance evaluations with an overall rating of "acceptable" or above
- Work assignment or other issues

[www.insidehoustonpublicworks.org/sites/g/files/nwywnm306/files/documents/005-policy-3-36.pdf](http://www.insidehoustonpublicworks.org/sites/g/files/nwywnm306/files/documents/005-policy-3-36.pdf)

#### WHAT IS THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL?

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigates allegations of employee misconduct, workplace violence, and even allegations of wage theft by City contractors and subcontractors. To contact the OIG, call 832.394.5100. The OIG is located at 900 Bagby, 4th Floor, Houston, TX 77002.

#### WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS AN EMPLOYEE?

Houston Public Works Code of Conduct ([policy No. 3-47](#)) says, "Employees receiving an order will obey the order to the best of their ability. If it appears to be in conflict with policy or previous orders, employees will respectfully communicate with the supervisor, request clarification and follow the supervisor's direction to the best of their ability. Matters that are still unclear may be reported to the next level in the chain of command."

### EVALUATIONS & PROMOTIONS

#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS?

The Houston Employee Assessment & Review Process (HEAR Plan) benefits employees by creating clear, transparent expectations on:

- goals in the current job position
- recognition of positive performance
- performance issues or concerns
- career growth and qualifications for promotion
- overall performance (quarterly or semiannually)

<http://houstontx.gov/hr/cohear.html>

### **HOW CAN I BE CONSIDERED FOR ANOTHER POSITION?**

To be considered for a promotion, transfer, reclassification or voluntary demotion in Public Works or another City of Houston Department, you must complete and submit an online application for the position. [www.houstontx.gov/hr/careers.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/hr/careers.html)

For information on Public Works (non-executive) hiring policy visit:

[www.insidehoustonpublicworks.org/sites/g/files/nwywnm306/files/documents/005-ap3-19\\_hiring\\_non\\_executive\\_supervisors\\_04092020\\_0.pdf](http://www.insidehoustonpublicworks.org/sites/g/files/nwywnm306/files/documents/005-ap3-19_hiring_non_executive_supervisors_04092020_0.pdf)

## **SAFETY & WORK CONDITIONS**

### **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT?**

Service Line Directors are responsible for establishing a safe work environment and employees are responsible for working safely and reporting unsafe conditions to their supervisor or Human Resources [www.houstontx.gov/adminpolicies/2-21.pdf](http://www.houstontx.gov/adminpolicies/2-21.pdf)

### **Human Resources Contacts**

Houston Water	Ronilla Ernest	832.395.2018	713.817.7855 (cell)
All Other Service Lines	Floyd Smith	832.393.6155	832.633.0398 (cell)

### **WHAT DO I DO WITH AN UNSAFE VEHICLE?**

Employees should always perform a pre-trip inspection. If the City vehicle is unsafe or malfunctions while driving, they should notify their supervisor. Supervisors should not allow a driver to operate an unsafe City vehicle, use a City vehicle for other than its designed purpose, or issue directives that may cause the driver or passengers to violate the Motor Vehicle Assignment and Use policy.

[www.houstontx.gov/adminpolicies/2-2.pdf](http://www.houstontx.gov/adminpolicies/2-2.pdf)

## **GRIEVANCES & TERMINATIONS**

### **WHAT ARE GRIEVABLE ISSUES?**

The City of Houston's agreement with the HOPE AFSCME Local 123, defines grievable issues as:

- non-selection for a promotion to a referred position
- hazardous working conditions (outside the nature of the job)
- employee performance evaluations with an overall rating of less than "meets expectations",
- failure to receive a performance evaluation (if delayed more than six months)
- failure to be paid overtime, comp time or bilingual pay (if eligible)
- positive correction action level II
- decision making leave

### **CAN MY SUPERVISOR TERMINATE MY EMPLOYMENT?**

For civil service protected employees, supervisors may recommend indefinite suspension which must be approved by the chain of command with a final decision from the Civil Service Commission. This does not apply to probationary employees. An employee may appeal an indefinite suspension.

[www.houstontx.gov/adminpolicies/3-7.pdf](http://www.houstontx.gov/adminpolicies/3-7.pdf)

**WHAT CAN I DO IF I FEEL RETALIATION FOR A COMPLAINT?**

A City employee or a former employee who believes the City has taken an adverse personnel action against him in retaliation for a prior complaint may file a Whistleblower Complaint with the Office of the Inspector General. [www.houstontx.gov/execorders/1-39.pdf](http://www.houstontx.gov/execorders/1-39.pdf)

**WHO DO I CONTACT FOR DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT AT WORK?**

The City of Houston is committed to providing a work environment that is free from discrimination and harassment and Houston Public Works has ZERO tolerance for such behavior. Employees may report prohibited conduct to the Office of Inspector General or the Designated Departmental Representatives for Public Works, Robert Salek, 832.395.5456. The City also has a sexual harassment hotline 832.393.7200. [www.houstontx.gov/execorders/1-50.pdf](http://www.houstontx.gov/execorders/1-50.pdf)

**WHO SHOULD I CONTACT WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

Please contact Public Works Chief Operating Officer, Eric Dargan (Eric.Dargan@houstontx.gov).