

NEPOTISM

Section 1. PURPOSE

The Bedford Regional Water Authority (“Authority”) has developed this policy to protect employees and the Authority from potential conflicts related to the employment of Relatives and Public Officials.

Section 2. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Romantic Relationship” is defined as mutual, ongoing and voluntary interactions between two partners that is characterized by specific expressions of affection and intimacy while not at work for the Authority.
- B. “Relative” is defined in this policy as a spouse, parent, parent-in-law, guardian, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, brother, or sister, as may be related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Individuals involved in a romantic relationship are also considered Relatives under this policy.
- C. “Public Official” means a person appointed or elected to any of the following governing bodies: the Bedford Regional Water Authority Board of Directors, the Bedford County Board of Supervisors, the Bedford Town Council, and the Western Virginia Water Authority Board of Directors.

Section 3. POLICY

- A. Applicants are required to disclose any Relatives and Public Official statuses on their application; failure to disclose such information may result in termination of the applicant employee upon discovery of the relationship.
- B. A Relative of a Director or Relative of any employee in the Human Resources Department is prohibited from working at the Authority. Relatives of other staff members of the Authority may be employed by the Authority as long as the position is not under or over the direct or indirect supervision of the Relative.
- C. Public Officials and their Relatives shall not be employed by the Authority in any capacity.
- D. If two (2) current employees become Relatives, the relationship must immediately be disclosed by each of the employees to their Manager and to Human Resources; Human Resources must then notify the Executive Director. Management will evaluate the situation to determine the best course of action, which could include one of the following:
 - a. no action necessary; or,
 - b. a transfer to another available position within the Authority; or,
 - c. termination.

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- E. In other instances where a conflict or the potential for conflict arises because of a relationship between employees, even if there is no line of supervision or reporting involved, the employees may be separated by reassignment or terminated from employment.
- F. If a current employee becomes a Relative of a Public Official, the employee must disclose this immediately to their Manager and to Human Resources; Human Resources must then notify the Executive Director. Management will evaluate the situation to determine the best course of action, which could include no action, a transfer to another available position within the Authority or, if necessary, termination.
- G. If an employee is elected or appointed as a Public Official, the employee must resign their position or they shall be terminated from the Authority no later than the date on which the Public Official takes office.
- H. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Executive Director and the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors.
 - 1. If an exception is granted for a romantic relationship, the employees involved in the relationship may not occupy positions within direct or indirect supervision of each other.
 - a. Employees in a romantic relationship must refrain from public workplace displays of affection and excessive personal conversation.
 - b. This policy applies to all employees without regard to the gender or sexual orientation of the individuals involved.

Section 4. REVISIONS

- A. This policy was approved and adopted by the Authority's Executive Director on February 26, 2013, effective July 1, 2013.
- B. This policy was modified as follows:
 - 1. Approved January 23, 2014, effective January 24, 2014: Policy revised to clarify the role of public officials.
 - 2. Approved December 17, 2019, effective December 18, 2019: Definition of relatives and public officials revised.
 - 3. Approved May 17, 2022, effective May 18, 2022:
 - a. Section 2. revised the definition of Relatives and added the definition of Romantic Relationship.
 - b. Section 3.B was added to prohibit hiring Relatives of Directors and the Human Resources Department
 - c. Section 3.C was added to allow to hire relatives of non-managerial staff.
 - d. Section 3.F was added to explain how conflict will be resolved.
 - e. Section 3.H was modified to clarify romantic relationships.