

# Hanover Consumer Cooperative Society, Inc.

# Employee Handbook



## Table of Contents

| <i>Topic</i>  | <i>Page</i> |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Welcome to the Co-op</b>                             | <b>1</b>    |
| <b><u>Who We Are</u></b>                                | <b>2</b>    |
| Ends Global – The Results We Aim to Create in the World | 2           |
| Our Mission   | 3           |
| The Cooperative Principles                              | 3           |
| Definition  | 3           |
| Values  | 3           |
| Principles  | 4           |
| <b><u>Where We Come From</u></b>                        | <b>5</b>    |
| <b><u>How Do I Fit In?</u></b>                          | <b>6</b>    |
| Co-op Organization                                      | 6           |
| What Do I Need to Do?                                   | 6           |
| Guidelines for Outstanding Customer Service             | 7           |
| Open Book Management                                    | 9           |
| Work Areas  | 9           |
| Smoking Policy  | 9           |
| Employee Purchases                                      | 10          |
| <b><u>Employment</u></b>                                | <b>10</b>   |
| Equal Opportunity Employer                              | 10          |
| Definition of Employment Status                         | 10          |
| Employment of Relatives                                 | 11          |
| Employment of Minors                                    | 11          |
| Orientation Period For New Employees                    | 11          |
| Personnel Records                                       | 11          |
| Phone and Intercom Etiquette                            | 12          |
| Personal Appearance                                     | 12          |
| Safety  | 12          |
| Hygiene   | 13          |
| Eating in Customer Areas                                | 13          |
| Hours of Work: Time Records                             | 13          |
| Natural Disasters                                       | 13          |
| Lunch and Rest Periods                                  | 14          |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Your Job Description                                 | 14        |
| Performance Appraisals                               | 14        |
| Promotions/Transfers; Job Posting                    | 14        |
| Resignation  | 15        |
| Exit Interviews                                      | 15        |
| Rehiring of Former Employees                         | 15        |
| Outside Employment                                   | 15        |
| <b><u>Wage and Salary</u></b>                        | <b>16</b> |
| General Wage and Salary Policy                       | 16        |
| Overtime Pay   | 16        |
| Payroll Deductions                                   | 16        |
| Paydays  | 17        |
| Time Clock   | 17        |
| Pay Advances   | 17        |
| Expense Reimbursement                                | 18        |
| Employee Charges                                     | 18        |
| Transfers  | 18        |
| <b><u>Benefits</u></b>                               | <b>18</b> |
| Group Insurance                                      | 18        |
| Health and Dental Insurance                          | 18        |
| Section 125  | 19        |
| Life Insurance, Accidental Death and Short Term      | 19        |
| Statutory Federal and State Insurances               | 19        |
| Retirement   | 19        |
| Time Benefits  | 19        |
| Termination  | 20        |
| Other Paid Time Off                                  | 20        |
| Unpaid Time Off                                      | 21        |
| Employee Assistance Program                          | 21        |
| Education Assistance                                 | 21        |
| Other Benefits                                       | 22        |
| <b><u>Employee Communication and Development</u></b> | <b>22</b> |
| Department Log Books                                 | 22        |
| Our Internal and Member Newsletters                  | 22        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Bulletin Boards                          | 22        |
| Meetings                                 | 22        |
| Staff Education                          | 23        |
| Grievance and Concerns                   | 23        |
| Staff Suggestions                        | 23        |
| Media Relations                          | 23        |
| Photography                              | 23        |
| Research Projects                        | 24        |
| <b><u>Employee Safety and Health</u></b> | <b>24</b> |
| Safety Committee                         | 24        |
| Fire Emergencies                         | 24        |
| Medical Emergencies                      | 25        |
| Customer Injuries                        | 25        |
| Employee Health and Safety               | 25        |
| Employee Injuries and Illness            | 26        |
| <b><u>Standards of Conduct</u></b>       | <b>27</b> |
| Civility                                 | 28        |
| Grievance Process                        | 28        |
| Conflict of Interest                     | 29        |
| Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment  | 29        |
| What is Harassment?                      | 29        |
| Attendance Standards                     | 31        |
| Absence Without Notice                   | 31        |
| Solicitation and Distribution            | 32        |
| Staff Information                        | 32        |
| Alcohol and Drugs                        | 32        |
| Confidentiality                          | 32        |
| Dress and Personal Appearance            | 33        |
| Cell Phone Policy                        | 33        |
| Computer Hardware/Software Security      | 33        |
| Telephone/Voice Mail/ E-mail Use         | 33        |
| Parking                                  | 34        |
| Use of Co-op Vehicles                    | 34        |
| Sustainability                           | 35        |

## Welcome to the Co-op

Thank you for joining us at the Co-op. For those of you who are new to the Co-op, we hope our experience here together will be a mutually beneficial one. With you, we will continue to build an organization that is a positive influence on our members and our community at large.

We are pleased to provide you with this handbook. It is designed to outline our personnel practices and policies, and should provide answers to most of your questions about how we do things and what benefits we offer. It will serve as a guideline for the Co-op's responsibilities to you and your responsibilities to the Co-op. If anything is unclear, please discuss your questions with your supervisor or with someone from Human Resources, or with me.

You are responsible for reading and understanding this handbook. Your adherence to Co-op policies will be among the factors considered in your formal and informal performance evaluations. In addition to clarifying responsibilities, we hope this handbook also conveys the Co-op's interest in the well being of all who work here.

This handbook is not a contract, because the policies and information contained in it may change from time to time as the economy changes, as our market dictates, or as we become aware of ways to improve our operations and methods. The Human Resources Department and your supervisor will make every effort to keep you informed of changes, through suitable lines of communication, which may include postings on our bulletin boards, notices sent directly to you, verbal notice from your supervisor and/or through our regular employee newsletter, *The Communicator*.

The Co-op is committed to providing a positive, cooperative workplace, with challenges as well as opportunities for growth and development.

I extend to you my best wishes for a rewarding experience at the Co-op.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Appleby', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Terry Appleby  
General Manager

## Who We Are

We are a member-owned, not-for-profit business dedicated to the principle that, by working together and pooling our resources, we can provide ourselves and our community with goods and services at fair prices.

The Hanover Consumer Cooperative Society, Inc. operates the Co-op Food Stores, the Co-op Community Market, the Co-op Commissary Kitchen, and the Co-op Service Center. These businesses are organized as buying agents for our members, not as selling agents for wholesalers or manufacturers.

## Ends Global – The Results We Aim to Create in the World

The Hanover Consumer Cooperative Society exists to provide cooperative commerce for the greater good of our members and community.

We discern seven distinct groups comprising “our members and community” as follows:

1. Co-op members
2. Non-member customers
3. Co-op staff and their families
4. Local suppliers
5. Local community
6. Larger cooperative community
7. Past and future generations of Hanover Co-op members



Because of the Hanover Consumer Cooperative Society:

1. The Upper Valley will have a retail source of food that is affordable, healthy, grown and/or processed locally to the fullest extent possible.
2. There will be economic value returned to the community via charitable contributions, outreach projects, patronage refunds to member and other avenues.
3. Customers and staff will be better educated about food issues and, as a result, make healthier choices.
4. There will be vibrant cooperative sector in the economy, both nationally and regionally, and a local community educated in the value of cooperative principles and enterprises.
5. The cooperative’s bioregion will have a vibrant local agricultural community and that community will, in turn, have a reliable retail market for its products.
6. There will be a major source of employment in the community that provides personal satisfaction to employees, livable wages and financial security for employees and their families.
7. There will be a thriving business organization that protects and restores the environment.

## **Our Mission**

The Co-op serves its community and contributes to the quality of life in the Upper Valley by:

- Providing the Upper Valley's best selection of high-quality goods and services at fair prices;
- Delivering outstanding customer service through a friendly, knowledgeable staff;
- Serving our community as a responsible corporate citizen and trustworthy resource on nutrition, consumer, and environmental issues; and
- Promoting the cooperative principles and spirit.

The Co-op's **business philosophy** is to:

- Manage the business as a cooperative enterprise involving members, employees, and the communities it serves;
- Commit itself to honest pricing, high ethical standards, and sound financial management;
- Provide equal opportunity, fair compensation, and a safe, supportive work environment;
- Practice corporate good citizenship and participate in community affairs; and
- Promote cooperation within the Co-op and join with others to support cooperation worldwide.

## **The Cooperative Principles**

In 1844, the first successful cooperative was established in Rochdale, England. The principles which guided that cooperative have been adopted by cooperatives worldwide. In 1995, the most recent version of the cooperative principles was developed by the International Cooperative Alliance. They express the core values common to all kinds of cooperatives, including ours.

### **Definition**

A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

### **Values**

Cooperatives are based on values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

## **Cooperative Principles:**

### **1. Open and voluntary membership**

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

### **2. Democratic member control**

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members who actively participate in setting policy and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (*one member, one vote*) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

### **3. Member economic participation**

Members contribute equitably to and democratically control the capital of the cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as condition of membership. Members allocate for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative (*possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible*); making distributions to members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

### **4. Autonomy and independence**

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with or raise capital from other organizations, including governments or external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

### **5. Education, training and information**

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public—particularly young people and opinion leaders—about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

### **6. Cooperation among cooperatives**

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

### **7. Concern for community**

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Where We Come From

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, families were looking for ways to save money on food. The Hanover Consumers' Club was formed in January of 1936, buying fresh oranges, limes, and grapefruit for members at wholesale prices.

The buying club incorporated a year later as the Hanover Consumer Cooperative Society, Inc. It grew from the basement of a member's home to various basement stores on Main Street in Hanover. Eight years after its founding, it went above ground and began expanding its product selection.



In 1963, the Co-op moved to new quarters on Park Street in Hanover in what was then a modern, full-service food market. Renovations in 1986 and 1994 expanded and transformed the Hanover store. The Park Street Service Center was added in 1985, and the Lyme Road Service Center in 1995. In 1999, we converted the Lyme Road facility to the Co-op Community Food Market.



In October 1997, the Co-op opened its second food store, located at Centerra Marketplace in Lebanon.

By the summer of 2000, preparation of hot and cold foods for our Prepared Foods Departments moved into its own facility in Wilder, Vermont, which we call our Commissary Kitchen.

In 2008 the Co-op replaced the original Community Market with a beautiful new green-design building three times the size of the original and eliminated the gas pumps.



The Co-op has come a long way since 1936, from the 17 original members to more than 30,000 members. In addition to high-quality products and services, the Co-op offers many programs that celebrate and inform our community. These include continuously updated information about nutrition, food, and food production issues; support

of local producers; opportunities for recycling; active anti-hunger programs; community outreach through lectures and presentations; and a giving program.

In 2001, the Co-op's Board established the Hanover Cooperative Community Fund (HCCF), a charitable foundation that supports local non-profits. These activities represent the "triple bottom line" of financial stability, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility that drives the Co-op's business decisions.



[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## How Do I Fit In?

### Co-op Organization

The Co-op is owned by its members. They, in turn, elect the Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for the long-range direction of the Co-op, planning for the future, and for expressing the values that guide our business. The Board ensures the successful operation of the business by hiring the General Manager and directing him or her through a process called Policy Governance. The General Manager then hires all other employees.

The Co-op is an open book organization which values, and expects, the input and participation of all staff in accomplishing the Ends defined by the Board of Directors.

You are the face of the Co-op to our members, customers, and vendors. Each interaction is an opportunity to influence positively how a member of the community feels about the Co-op. Each interaction is an opportunity to inform customers about membership and inform members about Co-op events, activities, and services.

### What Do I Need to Do?

**Take advantage of the Co-op's training opportunities on the job.** Review the materials that are part of your orientation. Read the customer service manual and learn what is expected of all staff regarding internal and external customer service. Ask questions. Participate in employee drop-ins and department huddles and learn more about how your Co-op operates.

**Look for the “teachable moment” with a customer to:**

- encourage membership
- explain how a cooperative business is different
- encourage suggestions and comments
- explain governance, services, and activities
- remind people to vote in Co-op elections

**Consider becoming a member.** When you become a member, you are providing the Co-op with capital to run the business – and you become an owner with a vote. Membership is encouraged but not required of employees.

To become a member, you must purchase ten shares at \$5 each. You can purchase those shares in one of three ways:

- Purchase all ten shares for a total of \$50.
- Purchase three shares of stock for \$15, which allows you to vote in elections and on issues brought before the membership. You then earn the balance of shares through patronage refunds.
- Pay nothing and have your patronage refund invested in shares until you reach the required ten shares. You will not be able to vote until you own at least three shares.

The value of the share does not increase nor decrease, nor does it pay dividends.

## **Guidelines for Giving Outstanding Customer Service**

Any business can provide goods and services. Not every business goes “the extra mile” to give excellent customer service. And that is what makes the difference between our business and others with the same goods and services. Living out cooperative principles on a day-to-day basis means giving extraordinary, and often creative, attention to our customers.

### **Attention to Customers**

Which of the following should distract you from helping a customer?

1. Discussions with other staff members
2. Discussions with your supervisor
3. Stocking or arranging displays
4. A page over the intercom
5. Talking with a sales representative or vendor
6. A personal phone call or visit from a friend
7. Discussion with the store manager or general manager
8. None of the above



The correct answer is “none of the above.” Few things should come between you and the fastest available service to the customer.

### **Personal Conversations**

Remember that conversations with co-workers are usually within hearing distance of our customers. Personal conversations between staff are a barrier to quality customer service. Inappropriate topics or profanities may seriously offend a customer.

Customers enjoy the good-natured banter among staff that goes with working together. Just be aware of how you might be perceived by someone who doesn’t know you well.

### **Getting to Know Our Customers**

We attract many kinds of shoppers with different interests and needs. We can make a lasting impression by remembering customers’ names and their particular concerns.

### **Responding to Customers**

Everything you do (non-verbal as well as verbal) in the presence of customers is perceived as a message to the customer, whether you mean it or not. When you make eye contact, smile and ask, “Are you finding what you need?” you are creating an atmosphere of helpfulness without being intrusive.

### **Informing Customers**

Informing customers about products and services means being well informed yourself, if not about the product, about where you can get information. If you can’t answer a question right

away accurately, take the customer's name and telephone number and make sure the appropriate person follows up with an answer.

### **Being “Right”**

Remember not to push your personal opinions and beliefs on customers. Our philosophy is one of informing and educating customers about alternatives and allowing them to make their own choices.

When a customer brings a problem to you, use active listening techniques (below) to avoid the impression that you are “right” and the customer is “wrong.”

### **Asking for Help**

We're a team. Each service department—such as checkout, deli, or meat—has a standard for customer flow. If you notice that customers are getting impatient in line or the number of customers waiting exceeds your standard, check with a supervisor from another department for help.

### **Product Guarantee and Breakage**

Customers returning merchandise will receive a prompt and courteous refund, exchange, or credit at the Service Desk. We allow customers to return something they are dissatisfied with, and we do not argue about giving them their money back.

Customer satisfaction is our goal.

Customers are never charged for an item they have broken while on the premises, even in the parking lot. If a customer breaks something, reassure him or her right away so the customer is not embarrassed, and offer to get a replacement, while making sure that the mess is cleaned up promptly. This is when teamwork is especially helpful.

### **Dissatisfied Customers and Active Listening**

It is inevitable you will encounter an unhappy or rude customer. Most complaints revolve around unmet expectations or perceived rudeness or indifference on the part of the staff.

Use your best judgment to resolve a problem, and use active listening techniques. These techniques will help you to not take personally what a customer says, and will help you be more successful:

- Restate what a customer says to make sure you have understood him or her correctly.
- Apologize: “I’m sorry that this happened.”
- Stay open to new ways of looking at the situation.
- Do not jump to conclusions.
- Listen to the meaning of the words the customer is using.
- Avoid defensiveness and preconceptions.

- Do not make excuses.
- Ask what the customer wants, propose a solution, and reach an agreement. Seek a solution yourself.
- If you need help or more information, call a supervisor.
- Do not make the customer repeat the whole problem over again. Explain the problem to the other staff member yourself.

A customer who has had a problem successfully resolved will be a more loyal customer in the long run. Research bears this out: 96 percent of unhappy customers never complain—they just don't come back. And they may pass their story to 13 other people who will pass it on to others. When you regard your customer complaints as an opportunity to improve our systems, you are thinking creatively.

For complete information, see the customer service manual, "Meeting Customer Service Expectations at the Co-op."

### **Open Book Management**

Open Book Management is a business practice at the Co-op. Open Book Management is a business philosophy based on the idea that employees will work for the betterment of the organization if they understand how the business is run, they are allowed to have a hand in how that happens, and they have a stake in the outcome -- that is, if they are treated like owners. Above all, Open Book Management is based on sharing information about the business and sharing in the results of success. You will have opportunities to learn about Open Book Management and to participate in department huddles and games which teach staff about our business.



### **Internal Customers**

Remember, your co-workers are often your "internal customers," and you are expected to practice the same principles and techniques of excellent service listed above.

### **Work Areas**

You are responsible for keeping your work area neat and clean. Passageways in and around your workspace should be uncluttered.

Employee lounges are public spaces and must be kept neat. Please clean up after yourself. Customers form an impression of us from our public areas, and cleanliness is essential to a positive image.

### **Smoking**

All Co-op properties are tobacco and smoke free. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises or in parking lots, adjacent sidewalks and driveways.



The Co-op will support an employee interested in attending a smoking cessation program and will reimburse the cost upon completion of that program. Please see someone in Human Resources for details. [Return to Table of Contents](#)

## **Employee Purchases**

Employees must pay for items purchased before consuming them. Cash register receipts should also be saved in case there is a question about payment.

Employees who take items and consume them before paying may be subject to disciplinary actions, including termination.

## **Employment**

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Equal Opportunity Employer**

The Hanover Consumer Co-op is committed to extending opportunity to everyone in our community and maintains a policy of nondiscrimination with employees and applicants for employment. No aspect of employment with us will be influenced in any manner by race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute. Further, the Co-op reasonably accommodates persons with mental or physical disabilities as long as the accommodation doesn't cause the Co-op undue hardship.

### **Definition of Employment Status**

The following terms will be used to describe the classification of employees and their employment status:

#### **Exempt**

Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and applicable state law and who are exempt from overtime pay requirements.

#### **Non-Exempt**

Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA and state exemption tests and who are paid at time and a half of their regular rate of pay for hours worked in excess of forty hours per week.

#### **Full-time**

Employees scheduled to work 32 hours or more per week.

#### **Part-time**

Employees scheduled to work less than 32 hours per week. Those employees working fewer than 20 hours per week are ineligible for most company benefits, however they qualify for vacation pay and holiday pay on a prorated basis. (See benefits section for further details.)

Retirement plans are based on hours worked.

#### **Temporary**

Employees who are hired for a pre-established period that usually does not exceed 6 months and are subject to the availability of work as well as acceptable performance and conduct - generally during peak workloads or for vacation coverage. They may work a full-time or part-time schedule. They are ineligible for

most benefits. However, at the discretion of the Co-op, some temporaries may be granted holiday pay.

### **Employment of Relatives**

We have no general prohibition against hiring relatives or significant others. However, while we will accept and consider applications for employment from relatives, close family members such as parents, grandparents, children, spouses, brothers, sisters, or in-laws generally will not be hired or transferred where they directly or indirectly supervise or are supervised by another close family member.

Furthermore, such relatives generally will not be placed in positions where they work with, or have access to sensitive information regarding, a close family member or where there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

### **Employment of Minors**

Generally, regular employees must be 18 years of age or older to handle certain equipment. Occasionally, we hire students who are 15, 16, or 17 years old, but the Human Resources Director must approve this in advance. A minor who is 16 or 17 must have a note from a parent or guardian giving permission to work at the Co-op. A youth under 16 must have a minor's work permit issued by his/her school district.

### **Orientation Period**

All employees are considered temporary for the first 90 days. The orientation period involves frequent feedback and evaluation of performance. You are expected to:

- Complete necessary forms with Human Resources
- Familiarize yourself with this manual and your job description
- Participate in your department's training program
- Complete customer service training

Upon satisfactory completion of the orientation period, you will have an opportunity for self-evaluation and will receive a written evaluation by your supervisor. If there are any absences during this time, the orientation period will be extended. If you do not meet standards of performance at the end of the usual orientation period, that time may be extended or employment may be terminated.

All employees, regardless of classification, status, or length of service, are expected to meet and maintain company standards for job performance and behavior.

### **Personnel Records**

Important events in each employee's history with the Co-op will be recorded and kept in the employee's personnel file. Regular performance reviews, change of status records, commendations, corrective action warnings, and educational attainment records are examples of records maintained.

Your personnel file is available for your inspection in the Human Resources Department. Contact your supervisor or the Human Resources Department to make an appointment.

You are responsible for notifying the Human Resources Department of changes in address, telephone number, and/or family status (births, marriage, death, divorce, legal separation, etc.) that may affect income tax status and group insurance. This responsibility includes employees on leaves of absence.

### **Phone and Intercom Etiquette**



Answer the phone in a friendly, relaxed voice, identifying yourself and asking how you can help. If you put a customer on hold, it is your responsibility to see that they get through promptly to someone who can help. The hold will ring back to you after 60 seconds. Ask the caller if he or she would like to leave a message on voice mail. If not, take a message with as complete information as possible. When you page, remember that customers are listening, too.

Work with your department manager to determine the best way to handle a ringing phone in your department when you are working with another customer face-to-face.

### **Personal Appearance**

Cleanliness and neatness represent a proper concern for handling food and merchandise in a sanitary manner. The Co-op provides jackets and aprons for those who provide direct customer service on the main sales floor of the stores. Some departments may require a uniform or certain items of clothing. Employees should wear their nametag when at work.

When choosing clothing with words or pictures, consider our most conservative customers. Styles should not be offensive in any way. It is inappropriate to wear shorts, tank tops, sandals, caps (unless required by the department as part of the department's standard for dress), exposed undershirts, or torn clothing. Avoid bare shoulders and bare midriffs.

Personal grooming is important, and employees should make sure their hair is clean, combed and neat. Long hair should be restrained around ready-to-eat food. Sideburns, mustaches and beards should be neat. Unkempt hair is not acceptable.

### **Safety**

Please be aware of safety when you choose clothing for work. Loose or tattered clothing or long, loose hair may present a hazard by getting caught in equipment. Shoes should be closed for foot protection.

If your supervisor, using the above guidelines, considers your appearance to be unacceptable, you may be asked to leave and return properly dressed. You will not be paid for the time off to change clothing.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Hygiene**

It is essential to maintain the highest standards of personal hygiene. Hands must be washed immediately after using the restroom, handling garbage, or smoking, as well as periodically during your shift. Employees must follow the Food Safety Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) found in each department.

### **Eating in Customer Areas**

We do not eat or drink in front of customers, in any customer areas, or while handling or preparing food. You may eat in designated areas such as lounges, back room eating areas, outdoor picnic tables, or other areas approved by the store manager.

### **Hours of Work – Time Records**

Our normal workweek consists of forty hours, and we are open seven days a week. See your supervisor for your schedule. Hours may be different for the Co-op's various sites.

From time to time, your supervisor may need to change your schedule to meet needs. Notice will be given as far in advance as possible. Overtime is usually viewed as an opportunity for extra earnings. We will try to distribute overtime equitably. At times, when we cannot find a volunteer for overtime, employees may be required to work additional hours on an "as-needed basis."



Our workweek is calculated from Sunday to Saturday, and your paycheck will be available to you by the Wednesday after your workweek. (Note: We have a direct deposit option for your paycheck.)

Your time record is a legal record of the hours you are at work, and your paycheck is based on the time recorded. Each employee is responsible for clocking in and out. Your supervisor will make any necessary corrections on your time sheet. Generally, overtime should be approved in advance by your supervisor, when possible.

Time records are the property of the Co-op. If you must leave work early for any reason, notify your supervisor. (See "Attendance Standards and Absence without Notice.")

Any day that you report for scheduled work but are not needed, you will be paid for two (2) hours at your hourly rate. This provision does not apply when interruptions of Co-op operations are beyond the Co-op's control, and you have been advised of the interruption.

### **Natural Disasters**

If the store management decides to close early, due to natural disasters such as a snowstorm or flood, you will be paid for those hours you were scheduled to work.

If weather conditions merit, the supervisor on duty will release employees upon request. Under these circumstances, if you decide to leave early when the Co-op stays open, your time will be unpaid.

If the Co-op does not open, your time will be unpaid. If the Co-op does not open at all on a given day because of a natural disaster, employees are not paid.

### **Lunch and Rest Periods**

Lunch and rest periods, especially for those who are serving our customers in public areas, are scheduled by your supervisor. There is normally a ten (10)-minute paid break in the mid-morning and mid-afternoon. We urge you to be prompt in returning to work, as your co-workers are depending on you.

Anyone scheduled for over five (5) hours in a day will be assured a lunch period. Unpaid lunch periods may be scheduled for an hour or a half-hour.

However, a few positions, because of the nature of the work and the demands of customer service, may be allowed to periodically take rest breaks and lunch “on the clock” with the approval of their supervisor and Human Resources. There is a form to be filled out for these times.

### **Your Job Description**

We use job descriptions to aid in staffing, wage and salary administration, and training. They also help staff and supervisors communicate about job responsibilities. However, job descriptions are only guidelines and can normally be expected to change over time. Additional duties taken on temporarily will not affect your pay rate. However, if you take on additional duties over a prolonged period, it is appropriate for your supervisor, with the Management Team, to review the pay range of those duties in relation to your pay rate for a possible adjustment.

In addition, other duties may include service to the Co-op as a whole, rather than just to your department. Such duties might include work for service on a committee, or participation at meetings or training sessions.

### **Performance Appraisals**

Normally, you will participate in a performance appraisal process with your supervisor on or near the end of your third month of employment. Thereafter, you will participate in the performance appraisal process four times a year.



The performance appraisal process gives you and your supervisor an opportunity to talk about your past performance in relation to the goals you both have set and in relation to your job description. This time is an opportunity for self-evaluation, considering both your strengths and desired areas of improvement. The process emphasizes the

development of plans for the future and how your supervisor can support you in reaching your goals for continuous improvement. Your conversation should summarize both formal and informal performance discussions held throughout the review period.

### **Promotions/Transfers – Job Posting**

We have a policy of promoting or transferring from within whenever practical, to fill open positions. We strive to promote or transfer the most capable and experienced individual, based on demonstrated ability to assure greater responsibility. At the same time, we may need to recruit and hire outside the company to attract the most qualified individual for a particular opening.

We post current job openings on our bulletin boards at the same time we notify outside recruiting sources. We allow five business days following posting in which staff members can

apply for positions by submitting an internal application to Human Resources. After that time all staff will be considered on an equal basis with outside candidates. Employees generally may apply for posted jobs after 3 months of employment. On an exception basis, the General Manager may, in consultation with the Board, use an abbreviated recruiting process, if it were determined that it would benefit the Co-op as a business. (For example, when there is an opportunity to hire an exceptionally qualified person or other unique situations defined by the Management Team.)

### **Resignation**

If you decide to leave the company, please advise your supervisor or Human Resources Director at least two weeks prior to your date of departure so that an orderly transition can be made. This process includes turning in company property, completing required forms, and having an exit interview. During the two-week notice period, personal time may not be used.

### **Exit Interviews**

In most cases, when you leave the Co-op, you will have an exit interview with the Human Resources Department at a time that is mutually convenient. During this exit interview, any final benefit designations are reviewed and your reasons for leaving are explored. The Co-op appreciates your constructive feedback to make the Co-op an increasingly better place to work.

### **Rehiring of Former Employees**

The Co-op will consider the job application of a former employee provided that person left the Co-op voluntarily, and was not terminated “for cause” (that is, for reason).

Any employee rehired within sixty (60) calendar days of termination will have time benefits and all other benefits reinstated at no less than the rates that were in effect at the time of termination, prorated on the number of regularly scheduled hours at rehire.

After 60 days, a returning employee will be treated as a first-time employee with exception of retirement plans, which carry a set formula for interruptions of service.

### **Outside Employment**

We require that if you do have other employment, you discuss that employment and its requirements on your time with your supervisor. In the spirit of cooperation with other cooperative businesses, the Co-op may allow arrangements for work, which includes other cooperatives. However, it may not permit working for other directly competing businesses in the area.

Only when outside employment conflicts with your employment at the Co-op, will the Co-op ask you to restrict your activities outside of your regular work schedule. Areas of conflict include interference with your availability to come to work, and to adequately perform work at your scheduled hours, or a conflict of interest (real or perceived) resulting from work at another business in the same industry.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## **Wage and Salary**

### **General Wage and Salary Policy**

At the Co-op, we recognize that individual and team effort and performance contribute to our success. We strive to provide a compensation program which includes wages that are competitive with similar service businesses in the Upper Valley. Our compensation plan establishes a wage and salary range for each position based on a number of factors such as:

- Required knowledge and ability
- Variety and scope of responsibilities
- Physical and mental demands

Our wage and salary policy provides for progression within the range established for each position. Normally, your wage or salary rate will be reviewed once a year; more frequent reviews may occur based on extraordinary circumstances.

Some positions have a number of levels reflecting increasing knowledge, task responsibility, and supervisory skills. Employees who are promoted to the next level have the opportunity to earn an increase when they advance. Your performance and position in the range for the job are key factors in your salary adjustment.

### **Overtime Pay**

Any overtime pay for non-exempt (hourly) employees must be authorized in advance by your supervisor whenever possible.

Non-exempt employees will be paid time-and-one-half for hours worked in excess of forty hours in one week. Overtime is calculated on "hours actually worked" in that week. Sick, personal or vacation time is not included in the calculation.

Examples:

1. An employee who takes 5 hours of sick time, and works 38 hours will be paid for 43 straight hours.
2. An employee who takes 8 hours of sick time and works 41 hours in the week will be paid one hour at time-and-a-half, and 48 hours at straight time.

### **Payroll Deductions**

Each payday, certain deductions will be taken from your paycheck to comply with federal and state laws. Deductions will be made for the following:

- Federal and State Income Tax Withholding
- Social Security
- Other items designated by the employee

Deductions are summarized on the payroll check stub and may include tax withholdings mentioned above, employee paid portion of health and dental insurance premiums, 401(k) pre-tax savings payments, authorized charges, and direct deposits.

The Co-op will comply with court orders to withhold pay (such as garnishments, levies, and child support payments). In these circumstances we will ensure that employees are notified.

You will be supplied with your wage and tax statement (W-2) form by January 31 each year. This statement summarizes your income and deductions for the year.

If you have any questions regarding this please contact Human Resources or Payroll.

### **Paydays**

The payroll week runs from Sunday through Saturday. Employees are paid every Wednesday for all time worked the prior week through the proceeding Sunday.



As a service to employees, the Co-op offers **direct deposit** of your paycheck into the bank accounts of your choice (limit: 3 accounts). If you choose this option, your pay will be released from our payroll account to your bank Monday afternoon. Generally funds will be posted to your account within 24 hours; however, due to bank transfers, that is not guaranteed. If you are concerned about posting to your account, please verify with your bank.

If you choose not to have direct deposit, you may arrange to receive your check from your supervisor, the Accounting Department, or have it mailed to your home. Staff members who wish to have someone else pick up their paycheck must provide a written statement authorizing such. You may sign a

release for an indefinite period of time.

### **Time Clock**

Hourly employees are required to “punch in and out” daily at the time clock. Forgetting to record your time is costly to the Co-op. Falsification of time records is grounds for disciplinary action including termination.

It is the responsibility of any staff person working in more than one location to punch in and out at each location.

### **Pay Advances**

Regular, full-time employees who experience financial difficulties and have worked for the Co-op for at least one year may request a pay advance from their supervisor. Pay advances are limited to one per calendar year per employee. Your supervisor, a Human Resource staff member, and Accounting will review each case. Employees may request that all or part of one week’s paycheck will be paid to them early by submitting their request in writing to and obtaining approval from their supervisor.

When you are taking a vacation, you may request in writing an advance for the vacation time you will be away. Staff may also request to receive payment in lieu of time off. The time must be **accrued**, and the staff member must complete the appropriate form. The individual’s manager and a member of the Compensation Committee must approve the payment.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## **Expense Reimbursement**

It is the policy of the Co-op to reimburse employees for all necessary and usual expenses incurred during the conduct of Co-op affairs. Prior approval from your supervisor is required. Travel expenses will not be reimbursed when the Co-op provides transportation and the employee elects to choose other means of transportation.

## **Employee Charges**

Employees who are Co-op members may open a Member Charge Account in order to charge purchases. These are paid in full each month.

## **Transfers**

A transfer from one department and position to another may affect your compensation depending on the range of the position you are transferring to. Your hourly rate will be adjusted to reflect the range of your new position and the experience you bring to that position.

## **Benefits**

The Co-op provides benefits for its eligible staff. Below are brief descriptions of these benefits. You will receive materials during your orientation program describing these in more detail.

### **Group Insurance**

Each employee is responsible for signing up for benefits in a timely manner. Failure to do so will result in having to wait for the next open enrollment period in order to participate in the insurance programs. Likewise, the employee is responsible for submitting claims and resolving any problems that may occur with any insurance coverage or claims processing directly with each insurance company.

### **Health and Dental Insurance**

The Co-op offers health and dental insurance to regular full-time employees. The coverage begins the first of the month after eligibility begins.

When you are covered under the plans, you will receive an identification card and certificate describing coverage and responsibilities under the plans.

In general, our health and dental plans encourage prevention of health problems. We encourage smoking cessation by providing financial support for completed smoking cessation programs.

“**Section 125**” is that portion of the Internal Revenue Code which allows employees to pay for medical and dental premiums with pre-tax dollars. Election of coverage may only be made once a year and cannot change unless there is a “major lifestyle change” as defined by the IRS. In addition, employees may set aside money on a pre-tax basis for specific un-reimbursed medical/dental expenses as well as dependent care expenses. Please see the Summary Plan Description for further details.

## **Life Insurance, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, and Short Term Disability**

Life insurance equal to one year of earnings is available to full time employees. Certain accident situations may fall under the Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage. Disability from illness or injury is covered for 26 weeks or less, at 50% of your wage (not to exceed \$500 per week). Partial disability coverage allows an individual to return to work on a part-time basis during the recovery process after being fully disabled.

## **Statutory Federal and State Insurances**

The Co-op provides coverage for all employees under New Hampshire Unemployment Insurance and Workers' Compensation. The Co-op also contributes by law to Social Security on behalf of every employee. The required percentage is deducted from your paycheck and the Co-op matches your contribution.

## **Retirement**

The Co-op encourages retirement planning and offers a combination **Progress Sharing and 401(k) plan**. The 401(k) allows you to save on a pre-tax basis. You become eligible for the 401(k) approximately at the beginning of the first quarter following six months of employment, provided you meet the hours requirement (500 hours per year). You must have attained age 21 to participate in this program. Meetings are held quarterly to introduce new participants to the plan and to explain the investment options.

The Progress Sharing Plan is provided to employees who have worked one year or more. In this plan, the Co-op contributes on behalf of the employee. Employees are fully vested when they enter the Progress Sharing Plan. The board decides yearly about an allocation to the Progress Sharing Plan. Those funds allocated are divided among eligible employees in the form of investments. Please refer to the Summary Plan Description for details.

These two plans combine a powerful retirement planning tool for employees. You will be notified of eligibility for the plans and encouraged to attend a meeting.

## **Time Benefits**

After three months of employment you are eligible to use personal or vacation time. Personal days are used to cover short periods away from work as well as sickness. Full-time employees accrue (earn) 10 personal days per year, and accrue 10 vacation days. The accrual rate is based on a 40-hour week. Employees working fewer than 40 hours a week, but at least 20 hours, receive pro-rated vacation hours.

On the fifth anniversary of employment, the vacation accrual rate increases to 15 days, and on the 10th anniversary, this accrual rate increases to 20 vacation days per year.

You may carry over 80 hours of vacation into the next calendar year, and 120 hours of personal time into the next calendar year. Excess hours will be forfeited if not used.

Time benefits must be requested on the appropriate form and submitted to your supervisor. When scheduling paid time off, please do so as much in advance as possible. It is helpful to let your supervisor know four (4) weeks in advance of a planned vacation.

**Note:** Personal days are provided to allow employees to attend special events, or to mark celebrations as well as to cover sickness. All accrued personal days must be used prior to

access to short-term disability benefits. Personal/sick days are not paid out at termination. **Use of personal/sick time is not permitted during termination notice period.** Unused vacation only will be paid out with the departing employee's last paycheck.

The Co-op also provides six (6) **paid holidays** for full time employees. The stores and other locations are closed on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Full-time employees are paid for these days.

The Co-op also closes on Easter. Those who are normally scheduled to work on Sunday will have the option of making up the time or not, according to business need. If you choose to make up the time, contact your supervisor for rescheduling, if possible.

If a holiday occurs during your vacation or on a day off, you will be paid for the holiday.

### **Termination**

When you leave the Co-op you will be paid for any unused vacation time, but *not* personal time. Sick or Personal time is not to be used during the two-week termination notice period.

### **Other Paid Time Off**

Paid time off is available for Bereavement, Jury Duty, and Voting.

#### **Bereavement**

Up to 3 days as needed are available in the event of a death in your immediate family. "Immediate family" is defined as: spouse, sibling, domestic partner, children or stepchildren, parents, step-parents, step siblings, parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, niece, nephew, aunt or uncle, and these relatives-in-law.

#### **Jury Duty**

The Co-op will reimburse you for the difference between your jury pay and your regular pay for up to two (2) weeks.

#### **Voting**

The Co-op encourages participation in the voting process. Your supervisor will work with you to arrange your schedule in order for you to vote in local and national elections. Please talk with your supervisor at least three days in advance of elections to arrange your schedule.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Unpaid Time Off**

#### **Family Leave**

Eligible employees may be granted up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year for newborn or newly adopted children; a serious health condition of a child, spouse, or dependent; or the employee's own serious health condition. To be eligible you must have been employed for at least 12 months and met the hour requirements. For more information, contact Human Resources.

### **Personal Leave of Absence**

Up to six (6) months may be granted for a personal leave of absence at the discretion of the General Manager, in consultation with your supervisor. Factors which will govern the decision are department work requirements, your performance history, and other unavoidable circumstances which may require long absences. In a recurrent situation, the personal leave of absence must be reviewed each time it is requested.

While no loss of seniority occurs during an approved personal leave of absence, there are other factors to consider such as benefit continuations, reinstatements, and approval process.

### **Military Leave**

Leave is granted in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994, in the case of Reservist activation. Reservists would then be on the payroll of the U.S. Military. In the case of reserve training, two weeks may be combined with paid vacation time.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

When personal issues begin to interfere with your effectiveness and satisfaction at work, sometimes it is helpful to have someone to talk with who is familiar with community resources and who can help you think through problems.

The Co-op has contracted with a provider to deliver counseling services to employees and their families regarding a wide variety of topics such as financial problems, marital difficulties, substance abuse, family issues, etc.

Three (3) free visits with experienced professionals are available to all employees during any calendar year. Use of this service is totally confidential. You may also use this service to work with your supervisor for an improved work relationship.

### **Education Assistance**

In addition to training and development specific to the job, we support development of the whole person. Our education assistance program is designed to help you with the financial requirement to pursue courses and education programs, which will enhance business skills in general.

Regular employees may apply for tuition reimbursement for up to 75% of tuition costs of a course taken at a recognized institution (there is a maximum limit; please see Human Resources for details). There are requirements for pre-approval and successful completion of the course. Please see your supervisor or Human Resources for more information.

### **Other Benefits**

- Scholarships
- Opportunities to attend in-house cooking classes free of charge
- Discounts at local businesses
- Service pins in recognition of years of service

- Paid hours when you give blood at a local community drawing
- Library card for Howe Library available to Co-op Staff
- Employee Charge Accounts
- Employee Promissory notes for Co-op-provided vehicle repair
- Internal Employee Newsletter
- Paycheck options for direct deposit

The Co-op has the sole discretion to add, delete, or change benefits.

## **Employee Communication and Development**

### **Department Log Books**

Most departments will have a logbook for exchange of information, procedure, and policy changes. It is your responsibility to remain informed by reading the log at the beginning of your shift.

### **Our Internal & Member Newsletters**

Our internal newsletter, *The Communicator*, is published monthly. Everyone is welcome to contribute. You may want to put in a “classified ad.” You may want to share a good story or thank someone publicly for doing a favor. If you have items to go in the *Communicator*, please contact the Communications Director. Also check our member newsletter, the *Co-op News*, for articles of general interest and information on member meetings.

### **Bulletin Boards**

Announcements, job postings, schedules, photos, and opportunities of all kinds are posted on bulletin boards in our employee gathering areas at all Co-op sites (lounges and at time clocks). Be sure to check the bulletin boards regularly.

### **Meetings**

Meetings are held throughout the Co-op for employees to share information, voice concerns, and give input. Departments generally hold regular meetings. Minutes of Department Head meetings are posted on our bulletin boards, as are the minutes for the Board of Directors meetings. Benefit information meetings and some training and development meetings are mandatory. There are also committee meetings, such as the Safety or Food Safety Committees.

You will be paid your regular hourly rate to attend meetings. Please check for proper “punch-in” procedures at the time clock for meetings and training. If you cannot attend a meeting, your supervisor must excuse you in advance.

### **Staff Education**

Staff education is an ongoing process. There are internal opportunities such as Customer Service Training, Supervisory Training, or ServSafe Certification as well as food-based trainings held in the employee lounges on a regular basis. Training to acquire specialized skills or knowledge may also be arranged. Talk with your supervisor and Human Resources to

find out about programs, conferences, workshops, and courses either through an outside or home study program. See also “Education Assistance” in the Benefits Section for information on financial aid for business-related courses.

### **Grievance and Concerns**

Under normal conditions, if you have a job-related problem, question, or complaint, you should discuss it with your supervisor as soon as possible. The simplest, quickest, and most satisfactory solution will often be reached at this level.

If the discussion with your supervisor does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction, you may then present your complaint, orally or in writing, to the next higher level of management. If the matter is still not resolved satisfactorily, you may present your complaint in writing to the Human Resources Director. If you are then still unsatisfied, a written complaint may go to the General Manager who will render a final decision on the matter after appropriate investigation.

### **Staff Suggestions**

We encourage you to suggest methods to improve quality and efficiency at the Co-op. You can talk with your supervisor. You can write out your ideas and submit them to your supervisor or any senior manager. Use enough detail so that the system or procedure you are referring to can be evaluated effectively.

### **Media Relations**

In order to ensure that Co-op communications are consistent and complete, all media inquiries regarding any aspect of Co-op business must be referred to the General Manager or the Communications Department. This includes, but is not limited to, inquiries regarding Co-op finances, policies, operations, products and product recalls, vendors, regulatory compliance, personnel, member services, community services, consumer trends, market developments, etc.

The General Manager, the Communications Director, and the Education Director are authorized to represent the Co-op to the media. If they are not immediately available, write them a note asking them to contact the media representative.

Employees may not grant interviews on any aspect of Co-op business without prior approval of the General Manager, Communications Director, or Education Director.

### **Photography**

The Co-op does not allow photography in the Food Stores by outside parties without prior authorization. Any request to take photographs in the store must be referred to the General Manager, Communications Director, Education Director, or the appropriate Food Store Manager.

Authorized individuals are instructed to pick up a “Guest” badge at the Service Desk before they begin taking pictures. If you see someone taking photographs in one of the stores without authorization, please alert the Store Manager or Manager on Duty.

## **Research Projects**

Occasionally the Co-op is contacted by students who wish to use the Co-op Food Stores or Service Centers as a case study for coursework or to survey Co-op customers.

In order to ensure clear expectations between the Co-op and the researcher(s), adequate control of information made public through studies of this kind, and respectful treatment of Co-op employees and customers, all such requests should be referred to the Communications Director, Education Director, or the General Manager.

As in the case of media relations, employees may not grant interviews to researchers on any aspect of Co-op business without prior approval of the General Manager, Communications Director or Education Director. [Return to Table of Contents](#)

## **Employee Safety and Health**

At the Co-op we want to provide safe working conditions for all our employees. We observe the safety laws of the governments within whose jurisdictions we operate. No one will knowingly be required to work in any unsafe manner. Safety is every employee's responsibility, and all employees are expected to do everything reasonable and necessary to keep the company a safe place to work. If you have a safety concern, talk with your supervisor. If it is a Co-op-wide issue, you and your supervisor should contact the chairperson of the Safety Committee.

### **Safety Committee**

In accordance with the NH Department of Labor, the Co-op promotes employee safety through a Joint Management/Labor Safety Committee. Employees elect employee members each year. These members work with management to ensure safe working conditions and to promote various safety programs. The group also helps complete the biannual Safety Program report to the State. If you are interested in serving on the Safety Committee, please see your supervisor or a member of the Safety Committee.

General safety rules are posted on bulletin boards in each department, and you are expected to become familiar with them and observe them. You are also responsible for knowing your department's specific standards, which include standards for safety. (See Standards of Conduct, Section 7.)

### **Fire Emergencies**

#### **In Case of Emergency Dial 9-911.**

The building where you work has an emergency procedure to follow in the event of a fire or disaster. **Emergency procedures can be found at the Service Desk and the Front End.** Procedures include:

- Escape routes
- Emergency telephone lists
- What to do in a power failure
- What to do for suspected shoplifting

- What to do during a robbery

Look for **fire extinguishers** near exits, kitchen areas, and receiving. Exits and areas around fire extinguishers must be kept clear at all times.

We also have staff members trained in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid, use of the AED, and fire fighting.

### **Medical Emergencies**

No matter how insignificant an on-the-job injury may seem when it occurs, notify your supervisor or someone in the Human Resources Department immediately.

**IF a staff member or customer becomes ill or unconscious, call 911 immediately** and advise the dispatcher of the nature of the injury or illness. It is important to report whether the individual is conscious or unconscious. Ask another staff member to meet the ambulance attendants and bring them directly to the injured or ill staff member. Arrange for additional staff to route customers away from the area of the medical emergency.

### **Customer Injuries**

Customer Accident Reports can be found at the Service Desk. This should be filled out with the customer present while also getting their comments and obtaining their signature. The manager in charge for the day should be notified and should make sure that the relevant form is filled out correctly.

### **Employee Health and Safety**

- Wash hair and bathe daily.
- Wear clean clothing. Cover with appropriate aprons, coats, etc.
- Wear close-toed shoes.
- Keep nails short and clean. No fingernail polish or artificial nails allowed when handling food.
- Do not touch hair, clothes, or skin, especially sores, cuts, or infections, when handling food.
- Cover all cuts and sores with bandages and plastic gloves. Keep bandages clean and dry to prevent leakage from the wound.
- Remove all rings (except plain wedding band), bracelets, and watches while preparing food.
- Restrain long hair.

Employees with any of the following should not handle food:

- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Upset stomach, nausea, or vomiting

- Sore throat or sinus infection
- Coughing or sneezing
- Dizziness

Employees should feel comfortable telling their supervisor that they do not feel well. If they hide an illness to avoid losing pay or for fear of a negative reaction, they may spread a disease even when they show no outward sign of disease.

## **Employee Injuries and Illness**

### **Injuries**

Proper steps should be taken to ensure the safety of all employees. Work-related injury forms can be found at the Service Desk or in Human Resources. All injuries should be reported to the manager in charge for the day and proper forms must be filled out within 24 hours.

### **Life-Threatening Illness**

We are committed to providing equal opportunity to all employees, including those who have a life-threatening illness (cancer, AIDS, cardio-pulmonary diseases, etc.). We are also committed to providing a safe work environment that meets or exceeds state and federal regulations. Consequently, employees who have a life-threatening illness will be treated like other employees as long as they meet performance standards, and as long as medical and other evidence indicated that their condition is not a threat to themselves or others.

We believe that an employee with a life-threatening illness, as with other health-related matters, has a right to keep this information private and confidential. We ask all employees to treat employees with a life-threatening illness with compassion and understanding.

A number of community resources are available for those who are ill, or live or work with someone who becomes terminally ill. To find out more, call our Employee Assistance Program number or talk with someone in Human Resources.

### **Return to Work**

If you are on disability or medical disability leave of absence, you must return to work when your physician or a company-appointed physician determines that you are able to resume normal duties. We require your physician's release before reinstatement to the active payroll. If you wish to extend your leave beyond this point, you must apply for a personal leave of absence.

A physician's release may also be required when returning to work from sick leave or other, short-term, medically related absences. Your supervisor will advise you of this requirement, which depends on case-by-case circumstances.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## **Standards of Conduct**

At the Co-op we expect certain standards of conduct. We take a constructive approach to disciplinary matters. We believe that staff members wish to do well and appreciate clear

feedback and guidance in improving their behavior toward others and their performance on the job.

Sometimes corrective action is appropriate, based on:

- The seriousness of the infraction
- The past record of the employee
- The circumstances surrounding the matter.

Although there is no way to identify every possible violation of standards of conduct, the following is a **partial** list of infractions that will result in corrective action:

- **Falsifying** employment application, time record, or personnel or other Co-op documents or records.
- **Unauthorized possession** of Co-op property, gambling, carrying weapons or explosives, or violating criminal laws on Co-op premises.
- **Fighting**, throwing things, horseplay, practical jokes or other disorderly conduct which may endanger the well-being of any person on Co-op premises.
- Acts of **dishonesty**, fraud, theft, or sabotage.
- Behaving in an uncivil manner.
- **Threatening**, intimidating, coercing, using abusive or vulgar language, or interfering with the performance of other employees.
- **Insubordination** or refusal to comply with instructions or failure to perform reasonable duties, which are assigned.
- **Unauthorized use** of Co-op material, time, equipment, or property.
- **Damaging** or destroying Co-op property due to careless or willful acts.
- Conduct which, the Co-op feels, **reflects adversely** on the employee or the Co-op.
- **Performance** which, in the Co-op's opinion, does not meet the requirements of the position.
- **Negligence** in observing fire prevention and safety rules.
- Engaging in such other practices as the Co-op determines may be inconsistent with the ordinary and reasonable **rules of conduct** necessary to the welfare of the Co-op, its employees, or members.
- **Withholding information** essential to the well-being of the staff and the business.
- **Other circumstances** for which the Co-op feels that corrective action is warranted.

The above list is intended to be representative of the types of activities which may result in disciplinary action. It is not intended to be comprehensive and does not alter the employment-at-will relationship between the employee and the Co-op. **Additional standards of conduct are described in the sections below.**

When there is an indication that standards of conduct have been violated, the Co-op reserves the right to **search employee personal effects** such as lunch boxes, purses, tool boxes, desks, lockers, etc., on company premises. Common practice is to have the employee present at the time personal effects are searched.

### **Civility**

It is expected that all employees will treat each other, as well as our members and customers, in a civil manner at all times. This means being polite, courteous, respectful, and aware of others' needs. Employees should be kind and considerate in their dealings with others while being truthful and attentive. The Co-op's excellent customer service depends on each individual's contribution to maintaining a civil workplace. Gross incivility, or repeated instances of uncivil behavior, will result in disciplinary action.

### **Grievance Process**

We understand that at times concerns or problems may arise in the course of employment. We hope individuals will try to reconcile differences on an individual basis. Should this not be possible, to resolve a problem quickly and fairly, the Co-op has developed a grievance procedure using the following steps.

If you have a problem or concern, notify your supervisor or manager as quickly as possible. This is usually the simplest and quickest solution. Most situations are resolved at this time.

If your concern is not resolved to your satisfaction, or cannot be resolved by your manager, you should take it to the next level of management. In keeping with the Cooperative ethical values of social responsibility and caring for others, we ask that you are honest and open in your efforts to seek a satisfactory resolution. If a grievance is based on rumors it is unlikely to be resolved.

If the issue is not resolved at the second step, you should contact the Human Resources Director in writing. In collaboration with appropriate management team members (Store Managers, Director of Finance, Director of Communication, IT Director, Director of Education & Member Services, Director of Human Resources and Director of Operations) a solution will be sought.

If you are still unsatisfied, the written complaint may go to the General Manager who will render a final decision on the matter after further investigation.

### **Conflict of Interest**

We expect our staff and management to conduct business according to the highest ethical standards of conduct. Employees are expected to devote their best efforts to the interests of the company and the conduct of its affairs.

Business dealings that represent, or *appear to represent*, a conflict between the interests of the Co-op and an employee are unacceptable. The Co-op recognizes the right of employees to engage in activities outside their employment which are of a private nature and unrelated to our business. However, full disclosure is expected to assess and prevent potential conflicts of interest from arising. This includes, but is not limited to, gifts, incentives, and inducements to buy product. Our staff works as agents of our members and not as agents of our vendors.

Contact your supervisor or the Human Resources Director or General Manager if you have questions regarding a possible conflict of interest inside or outside work.

### **Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment**

We are committed to developing and utilizing the unique talents and contributions of all of our employees. We respect our employees and all people while appreciating the diversity of their similarities and differences.

The Co-op intends to provide a work environment that is pleasant, healthful, and free from intimidation, hostility, and other offenses, which might interfere with work. Harassment of any sort—verbal, physical, sexual, or other—will not be tolerated.

### **What is Harassment?**

Harassment takes many forms. It may be, but is not limited to, words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, physical conduct, or violence. Harassment is not necessarily sexual in nature. It applies to gender, race, color, religion, national origin, handicap, age, sexual preference, marital, or veteran status; which are protected by law from harassment and discrimination.

Sexual harassment may include unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal and physical contact of a sexual nature, when such conduct creates:

1. A hostile and intimidating environment which prevents an individual from effectively performing duties of his/her position, or
2. When such conduct is made a condition of employment, or might affect decisions affecting career, salary, or performance reviews. These may be implied or stated.

**Off duty:** Off-duty conduct which falls within the above definition is also considered harassment. Any person attending a Co-op-sponsored event or community function on behalf of the Co-op or on Co-op business, is responsible for their behavior, and the harassment policies apply regardless of whether the individual is on or off duty. Any individual who makes unwelcome advances, threatens, or in any way harasses another employee is personally liable for such actions and their consequences.

### **Responsibility of Co-op and Staff**

As a Co-op staff member you are responsible for keeping our work environment free of harassment. An employee who becomes aware of an incident of harassment, either witnessing it or hearing of it, must report it to his/her Supervisor, Manager, Store Manager, Human Resources Director, any Management Team member, or the General Manager. When the Co-op learns of an instance where harassment might exist, it will take prompt and appropriate action whether or not the individual experiencing the harassment wants the company to do so.

If you observe harassing behavior by individuals who are not staff members, you are also obligated to report such behavior, as indicated above.

### **Reporting: What You Should Do**

The first thing anyone who feels they are being harassed should do is to let the offending person or persons know that such conduct is offensive and must stop. You may enlist the aid

of your supervisor in doing this. If the communication is ineffective or you do not wish to communicate directly with the individual, report the incident immediately to your supervisor or any of the individuals listed above. You should be as specific as possible about the date, time, witnesses, and details of the behavior.

### **Helpful Information**

What was said or done? Who was involved and when did the incident occur? Where? Did anyone observe? What did you do? What was the response when the alleged harasser was confronted?

**Respecting diversity** is not a joke. Co-op staff who have offended the wrong person on diversity issues have been dismissed, received warnings, and, in some cases, have been taken to court because of a lawsuit from someone they thought they were “just having fun” with.

- Your prejudices are your own. However, the expression of prejudice on the job is not acceptable.
- Respect for diversity applies to your fellow staff, customers, and vendors; at work and when you are participating in an event sponsored by, or in the name of, the Co-op (e.g. the employee banquet or going to a conference or product show)
- Likewise, if you feel you are being discriminated against or harassed on the job, you have a right to know what you can do about it.

### **Appropriate Investigation and Disciplinary Action Will be Taken**

In normal course, the Human Resources Director or another designee will coordinate the investigation. Due regard will be given to the privacy of everyone involved. However, if harassment is determined to have occurred, action will be taken which may reveal identities of individuals.

An employee found to have harassed a staff member or any other person will be subject to severe disciplinary action including possible termination. Any person who maliciously and recklessly falsely accuses any individual will face disciplinary consequences.

The Co-op will inform the involved parties of the results of the investigation. While disciplinary action will be taken for an individual found to have committed harassment, the details are not generally shared with others. The Co-op will take appropriate action to correct the situation.

The Co-op will not retaliate against any staff member who makes a good-faith report of alleged harassment, even if the employee was in error.

## **Attendance Standards**

Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to the operation of any business. Your reliability impacts the effectiveness and the morale of your co-workers and is a consideration in your performance evaluations. Excessive absences or lateness, whatever the cause, constitute a basis for disciplinary action. If you are unable to report to work for any reason, if you will arrive late, or must leave early, notify your supervisor or, in his/her absence, the Store Manager, before starting time.

If you will be **more than ten (10) minutes late**, you are expected to call in to the supervisor on duty. The Co-op phone number is (603) 643-2667.

## **Absence Without Notice**

For us to operate the Co-op effectively, we ask that you keep us informed of your status when you are off work because of illness or accident. We ask that you call your supervisor daily while off work due to short-term illness or accident so that we may plan for coverage.

If you must leave work for any reason before the end of the day, you must inform your supervisor.

If you are absent without reporting two (2) or more times in a six (6) month period, you may be considered to have resigned. If you fail to notify us after three (3) days of consecutive absence, we will presume you have resigned, and you will be removed from payroll.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## **Solicitation and Distribution**

Soliciting by one employee of another, or collecting from one employee by another, is prohibited while *either* employee is on *working time* unless that solicitation is approved by a member of the Management Team. Distribution of literature and circulation of petitions during work time or in work areas at *any* time is also prohibited.

Trespassing, soliciting, or distributing literature by anyone outside the Co-op is prohibited on Co-op premises without permission by a designated representative of the Education Department or the General Manager.

## **Staff Information**

Staff members may not give out names, addresses, and phone numbers or references concerning other staff members. Please refer all such requests to a member of the Human Resources Department or the Management Team.

## **Alcohol and Drugs**

The Co-op recognizes that alcohol and drug abuse in the work place has become a major concern. The object of our alcohol and drug policy is to provide a safe and healthy work place for all employees, to comply with federal and state health and safety regulations, and to prevent accidents.

The unauthorized use, possession, sale, transfer, purchase, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or other intoxicants, such as alcohol, by employees at any time on Co-op premises or while on Co-op business or during your regular working hours is prohibited.

Employees must not report for duty or be on Co-op property while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or any illegally obtained drug, or have in their possession while on Co-op property any illegally obtained drug, narcotic, or other illegal substance.

We reserve the right to ask employees who appear to be intoxicated or under the influence of a substance to be tested for alcohol or other substances. The employee will be taken to a testing facility and will then be taken home. If test results are positive, or if testing is refused, disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, will be initiated.

Those who voluntarily seek rehabilitation for alcohol or drug problems will be supported by our benefits and leave policies. Any employee experiencing problems resulting from drug, narcotic, or alcohol abuse or dependency should contact his or her supervisor or the Human Resources Department. Counseling is to be kept confidential and is to have no influence on performance appraisals. Job performance alone, not the fact that an employee seeks counseling, is to be the basis of all performance appraisals.

## **Confidentiality**

During the course of your employment here you will be working with our customers, member lists, business systems, future plans, research data, and other information that we consider confidential. Maintaining this confidentiality is important to our competitive position in our industries and ultimately, to our ability to achieve financial success, and provide employment stability. Protect this information by safeguarding it when in use, filing it properly when not in use, and discuss it only with those who have a legitimate business need to know. No

unauthorized copies of any material (*current or old*) may be distributed to anyone including members. If you have any questions, check with a member of the Management Team.

### **Personal Appearance**

Cleanliness and neatness represent a proper concern for handling food and merchandise in a sanitary manner and shows respect for our customers. The Co-op provides jackets and aprons for those who provide direct customer service on the main sales floor of the stores. Some departments may require a uniform, or have certain other restrictions. Employees should wear their nametag when at work and clip it in a place where it is easily visible by others.

When choosing clothing with words or pictures, be conservative. Clothing should not be offensive in any way, including words, graphics and style. Shorts, tank tops, sandals, caps (unless required by the department as part of the department's standard for dress), exposed undershirts, or torn clothing are not permitted. Bare shoulders, bare midriffs, and exposed cleavage are unacceptable. If your supervisor feels you are dressed inappropriately for the workplace, you may be asked to go home and change, or you may be asked to wear a jacket or smock. Shoes must be closed-toed for safety; open-toed shoes are not permitted. These guidelines apply to all Co-op locations.

Personal grooming is important, and employees should make sure their hair is clean, combed, and neat; unkempt hair is not acceptable. Long hair must be restrained around ready-to-eat food; sideburns, beards, and mustaches should be neat and short. Beard restraints may be required for food safety reasons.

Employees are expected to maintain an appearance that is businesslike, neat, and clean, as determined by the requirements of the work area. In some circumstances you may be asked to cover tattoos or remove a piece of body jewelry while at work. Dress and appearance should never be offensive.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

While they are very convenient to use, cell phones can disrupt the workplace. They can be an irritant and/or distraction interrupting customer service. Therefore personal cell phones should be reserved for use by employees while on their breaks or lunch period. The phones should not be used in the departments for calls or texting. Cell phones should be turned off when an employee is working in his/her department.

An employee who is expecting an urgent call should instruct the caller to use the Co-op's main number and have the Service Desk page the employee when the call comes in. Alternatively, the call may be put through to the employee's department using the Co-op's telephone system.

Some employees may have jobs, which require cell phone use, (MIS, Delivery Drivers, etc.) The Co-op will supply the cell phones for business use to those individuals whose jobs necessitate them.



### **Computer Hardware/Software Security**

Co-op equipment, including computer hardware and software, are valuable assets. They must be used for company business only. You may not copy or use company purchased/leased software contrary to the provisions of the contract. From time to time, especially when you are on vacation, business trips, and leaves of absence, your supervisor, manager, or another employee may access your computer files to ensure service to our members and attend to other business needs. You should not expect information left on your computer or files to be totally private.

### **Telephone/Voice Mail /E-mail Use**

The Co-op's telephones, voice mail, and e-mail are to be used for business purposes in serving the interests of our customers and in the course of normal company operations. Inappropriate uses of the Co-op's e-mail system will result in disciplinary action. The following activities are deemed inappropriate uses of the Co-op's systems and services:

- Use of e-mail for illegal or unlawful purposes, including but not limited to: obscenity, libel, slander, fraud, defamation, harassment, soliciting for illegal pyramid schemes, and computer tampering.
- Use of e-mail in any way that violates Co-op policies.
- Excessive personal use of the Co-op's e-mail resources.

The e-mail systems and services used at the Co-op are owned by the Co-op and are therefore its property. This gives the Co-op the right to monitor any and all e-mail traffic passing through its e-mail system. In addition, backup copies of e-mail messages may exist despite end-user deletion.

Keep in mind that all e-mail messages sent outside of the Co-op become the property of the receiver. A good rule is to not communicate anything that you wouldn't feel comfortable with being made public.

Internet use is intended for Co-op business. The Internet may not be used for illegal or unlawful purposes as described above for e-mail. Similarly it may not be used in any manner that violates company policies. Personal use of the Internet should be limited.

Failure to follow the above guidelines may result in disciplinary or legal action.

Answer all telephone calls promptly and courteously. On occasion, personal calls may be necessary, but we ask your cooperation in limiting them to emergencies or essential personal business and in keeping them brief. Cell phones should be used on your own time and not in work areas.

The Co-op has invested in our Voice Mail system for efficiency and to better service our customers. Please check voice mail in your department at least twice a day. Learn how to use this system by reading the voice mail information sheet, talking with the Office Manager, or asking your supervisor.

From time to time, especially when you are on vacation, business trips, and leaves of absence, your supervisor, manager, or another employee may listen to your voice mail messages or look at your e-mail to ensure service to our customers and attend to other business needs. Although you designate a code number to receive your messages, you should not expect

messages left on your voice mail to be totally private. However, you may change your access code upon your return if you wish.

### **Parking**

We must make sure that our customers come first, with as much parking as possible available to them.

For the Hanover Store, the Service Center, and the Community Market, you are required to park off-site.

At the Lebanon Store at Centerra, there is designated employee parking area to the far right, beyond the bank.

### **Use of Co-op Vehicles**

The Co-op's vehicles are to be used for Co-op business activities including catering and other deliveries. You must obtain permission from the Store Manager to use the vehicles to travel to meetings, conferences, training, and other purposes. The vehicles may not be used for personal reasons. You represent the Co-op when driving our vehicles and are expected to drive courteously. You must have a valid driver's license. The Co-op policy is that all staff wear seatbelts when in the Co-op vehicles or on Co-op business in private vehicles. Co-op vehicles are not to be used for carrying unauthorized passengers. Smoking in any Co-op vehicle is strictly prohibited.

### **Sustainability**

The Co-op Ends Policy states that we will be a “thriving business entity that protects and restores the environment.” As such, all staff are required to follow environmental best practices when at work. These best practices are currently communicated via signage, staff trainings, and a handful of Operations policies. A Standard Operating Procedure for Environmental Sustainability is in progress.

Basic expectations are:

Waste avoidance by minimizing shrink and by diverting waste from landfill whenever possible through reuse, recycling, Willing Hands, Food for Ag, or composting. Staff should keep electronic information electronic whenever possible and default to double-sided printing when printing is required.

Energy and Water efficiency by turning off lights, equipment, and water faucets when not in use (as long as it is safe to do so), and reporting maintenance issues in a timely fashion including leaking faucets, faulty heating or cooling, refrigeration problems, damaged walk-in cooler doors, etc. Work orders should be submitted via the Service Desks.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



Food Stores • Commissary Kitchen  
• Service Center • Community Food Market

*Hanover and Lebanon, NH • Wilder, VT*