



REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM
(RAILS)
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Approved by RAILS Board on:

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INTRODUCTION

RAILS Vision Statement

Thriving libraries are essential to all who learn, live, or work in Illinois.

RAILS Mission Statement

We Connect Libraries.

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with RAILS and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting your employment. You are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with all provisions of the handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by RAILS to benefit employees. One of our objectives is to provide a work environment that is conducive to both personal and professional growth.

The handbook cannot anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. From time to time, situations may arise that may necessitate a change in policies described in the handbook. RAILS therefore reserves the right to revise, supplement, deviate from, or rescind any policies or portion of the handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. We will notify you of such changes as they occur.

The handbook does not create a contract of employment. Rather, it describes RAILS' present policies and procedures, employee benefits, and general guidelines. This handbook does not guarantee continued employment or any fixed terms, conditions, or benefits related to your employment. Your employment and compensation can be terminated, with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time by you or at the option of RAILS. All agreements, whether oral or written, to the contrary will be considered null and void.

Federal, state, or local laws or regulations shall supersede these stated policies, until corrections can be published. Some of the subjects described here are covered in detail in official policy documents, e.g., benefit plans. You should refer to these documents for specific information, since the handbook only briefly summarizes RAILS policies, procedures, and benefits.

This handbook will be regularly reviewed by the RAILS Policy Committee and RAILS Administration.

Should there be any questions as to the interpretation of the policies or benefits listed in this handbook, the final explanation and resolution will be at the sole and absolute discretion of the management of RAILS, subject to federal, state, and local laws.

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS AND WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS

Equal Opportunity Employment

RAILS will provide equal opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment free from unlawful discrimination in accordance with applicable law. Such action shall include, but is not limited to initial consideration for employment; job placement and assignment of responsibilities; performance evaluation; promotion and advancement; compensation and fringe benefits; training and professional development opportunities; formulation and application of human resource policies and rules; facility and service accessibility; and discipline and termination.

RAILS is an equal employment opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment in a manner that violates applicable federal, state, and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment.

Any employee who believes this policy has been violated should report the situation to their immediate supervisor, Human Resources, or the Executive Director. All complaints in such matters will be held in confidence, thoroughly investigated, and remedied in accordance with applicable law. Please refer to the policy governing sexual and other types of harassment for more detailed information concerning RAILS' complaint procedures.

RAILS strongly encourages the use of its complaint process in this policy as necessary and assures its employees that RAILS will take no unlawful retaliation against any person participating in the complaint process. RAILS expressly prohibits any form of unlawful workplace harassment or retaliation in violation of applicable federal, state, or local law.

For more information about protections in equal employment, visit the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission website](https://www.eeoc.gov/).

Reasonable Accommodations - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as amended, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Illinois Human Rights Act, and any local law, RAILS will provide reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities in the workplace and for employees with sincerely held religious beliefs seeking accommodation, unless such accommodations would present an undue hardship for RAILS.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided as required by law and apply to all eligible applicants and employees. Reasonable accommodations will be provided throughout the employment process.

A qualified person with a disability is any individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job the individual has or wants, and does not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of themselves or other individuals in the workplace. A qualified person eligible for an accommodation may also include an employee who requires a workplace accommodation in order to practice their religion.

Contact the Human Resources Department for further clarification regarding RAILS' policy on reasonable accommodation or to request a reasonable accommodation in the workplace.

See Also

- [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) website](#)

Pregnancy Rights

Summary

The Illinois Human Rights Act prohibits unlawful discrimination based on pregnancy.

Eligibility

This policy protects employees as well as job applicants. This policy applies to all employees and job applicants affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or medical or common conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.

Coverage

Eligible applicants and employees are entitled to reasonable accommodation as required by law. Accommodations may vary by individual and from job to job.

Examples of Reasonable Accommodation

A reasonable accommodation is a reasonable modification or adjustment to the job application process or work environment, or to the manner or circumstances under which the position desired or held is customarily performed, that enables an applicant or employee affected by pregnancy to be considered for the position or to perform the essential functions of that position.

The employee is responsible for making the accommodation request. Listed below are examples of possible accommodation requests:

- More frequent or longer bathroom breaks;
- Breaks for increased water intake;
- Breaks for periodic rests;
- Private non-bathroom space for expressing breast milk and breastfeeding;
- Seating;
- Assistance with manual labor;
- Light duty;
- Temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position;
- The provision of an accessible worksite;
- Acquisition or modification of equipment;
- Job restructuring;
- A part-time or modified work schedule;
- Appropriate adjustment or modifications of examinations, training materials, or policies;
- Reassignment to a vacant position;
- Time off to recover from pregnancy, and
- Leave necessitated by pregnancy.

Medical Certification

If an employee is requesting a reasonable accommodation for pregnancy, childbirth or medical or common conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth, the employee and the relevant health-care provider must supply appropriate medical certification. This certification should include:

- The need or medical justification for the requested accommodation;
- A description of the reasonable accommodation request;
- The date the reasonable accommodation became medically advisable; and
- The probable duration of the reasonable accommodation.

An accommodation may be denied if the employee does not provide the necessary medical certification.

An employee may request paid or unpaid leave as a reasonable accommodation under this policy. All accommodation requests will be reviewed by RAILS in accordance with applicable law. The employee and employer shall engage in a timely, good faith, and meaningful exchange to determine effective reasonable accommodations. RAILS will not require an employee to take time off if another reasonable accommodation can be provided that will allow the employee to continue work.

RAILS prohibits any retaliation, harassment, or adverse action due to an individual's request for an accommodation under this policy or for reporting or participating in an investigation of unlawful discrimination under this policy.

For more information about the Illinois Human Rights Act, which prohibits pregnancy discrimination and the employer's obligation to accommodate pregnancy in the workplace, employees should reference the "Pregnancy Rights" in the workplace posting, which can be found with RAILS' other employment posters, on the [Illinois Department of Human Rights website](#).

Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment

RAILS is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, RAILS will not tolerate harassment of RAILS employees by anyone, including any supervisor, coworker, vendor, patron, contractor, or other regular visitor of RAILS.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status such as sex, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, pregnancy status, family responsibilities, reproductive health decisions or other legally protected group status. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Illinois Human Rights Act prohibit harassment.

RAILS will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

The conduct forbidden by this policy specifically includes, but is not limited to (a) epithets, slurs, negative stereotypes, or intimidating acts that are based on a person's protected status; and (b) written or graphic material circulated within or posted within the workplace that shows hostility toward a person because of protected status.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by any employee to another employee where:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for adverse employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include, but is not limited to:

- Uninvited sex-oriented verbal "kidding" or demeaning sexual innuendoes, leers, gestures, teasing, sexually explicit or obscene jokes, remarks, or questions of a sexual nature;
- Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
- Displaying sexually explicit objects, photographs, or drawings;
- Unwelcome touching, such as patting, pinching, or constant brushing against another's body; or

- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement of another employee, whether or not such suggestion or demand is accompanied by implicit or explicit threats concerning one's employment status or similar personal concerns.

Reporting

An employee may complain about harassment if the employee is subjected to consensual behavior between two or more other employees. Employees who believe that they have been subjected to sexual or other types of harassment or who have witnessed harassment should immediately notify the Executive Director or the Human Resources Director, who will ask the employee to document their complaint in writing to ensure accuracy throughout the investigation. If the Executive Director is the alleged harasser, then the complaint shall be submitted to the President of the RAILS Board of Directors. All complaints shall be investigated in accordance with the procedures contained herein.

RAILS shall promptly investigate all complaints. Reporting harassment or participating in an investigation will not reflect adversely upon an individual's status or affect future employment. Similarly, RAILS does not tolerate retaliation against an individual because the employee has (1) opposed conduct that the employee reasonably and in good faith believes to be unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment in employment, or discrimination in employment, or (2) because the employee has made a charge, filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing related to conduct prohibited under this policy. Any employee who retaliates against another for exercising their rights under this policy shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with RAILS' legal obligations and as necessary to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when prohibited conduct has occurred. While RAILS will endeavor to maintain confidentiality under this policy, a proper investigation requires informing the accused of the complaint, as well as others who may have information relevant to the investigation. A substantiated complaint against an employee will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The purpose of this policy is to establish prompt, thorough, and effective procedures for responding to every complaint and incident so that problems can be identified and remedied internally. However, an employee has the right to contact the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) about filing a formal complaint. An IDHR complaint must be filed within two years from the alleged incident(s). A complaint with the EEOC must be filed within 300 days. In addition, an appeal process is available through the Illinois Human Rights Commission, (IHRC) after IDHR has completed its investigation of the complaint. Employees may have a right to file a complaint on their own behalf either in circuit court or directly with the IHRC.

Administrative Contacts

Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR)

- Chicago: 312-814-6200 or 800-662-3942
- Chicago TTY: 866-740-3953
- Springfield: 217-785-5100
- Springfield TTY: 866-740-3953

Illinois Human Rights Commission (IHRC)

- Chicago: 312-814-6269
- Chicago TTY: 312-814-4760
- Springfield: 217-785-4350
- Springfield TTY: 217-557-1500

United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

- Chicago: 800-669-4000 Chicago TTY: 800-869-8001

Whistleblower Compliance

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee of RAILS who reports an activity that they consider to be illegal, unethical, or harmful to one or more of the parties specified in this policy. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities.

An example of an illegal, unethical, or harmful activity is a violation of federal, state, or local laws, rules, or regulations, or financial wrongdoing. If an employee has knowledge of or a concern about illegal or dishonest fraudulent activity, the employee is to file a report with the Executive Director or, if the report relates to the Executive Director, with the President or the Vice President of the RAILS Board, or with the Human Resources Director. The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas—maintaining confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, and to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense. A whistleblower may also waive confidentiality in writing. RAILS will not retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments, and threats of physical harm. Any whistleblower who believes they are being retaliated against must contact the Executive Director immediately, or, if the alleged retaliation involves the Executive Director, a whistleblower may contact the President or Vice President of the RAILS Board or the Human Resources Director. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

All reports of illegal, unethical, or harmful activities should be promptly submitted to the Executive Director for investigating and coordinating corrective action. In the event the Executive Director is the accused, reports of illegal and dishonest activities or retaliation should be promptly submitted to the President or Vice President of the RAILS Board or the Human Resources Director.

All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be recommended to the RAILS Board if warranted by the investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the Executive Director and Board will complete a final report with findings and outcomes. The Executive Director will notify the reporting individual(s) and all affected person(s) or parties of the investigation's final report.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Safety

Establishment and maintenance of a safe work environment are shared responsibilities of RAILS and employees at all levels of RAILS. RAILS will attempt to do everything within its control to ensure a safe environment and compliance with federal, state, and local safety regulations. Employees are expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all their work activities. Disregard for safety rules or procedures will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees have an obligation to immediately report any unsafe conditions to their immediate supervisor, and to the Executive Director. Not only supervisors, but employees at all levels of RAILS are expected to address unsafe conditions as promptly as possible. RAILS will not retaliate against an employee who comes forth with a safety recommendation or refuses to operate any equipment or work in an area they reasonably feel is unsafe. All accidents or incidents, especially those that result in injury, must be reported immediately to the immediate supervisor, regardless of how insignificant they may appear. If an immediate supervisor is not available, staff should report unsafe conditions to Human Resources. Such reports are necessary to comply with federal and state laws and initiate insurance and workers' compensation procedures. Failure to immediately report an accident or incident may result in discipline, up to and including termination. If an employee needs special assistance during an emergency, the employee should inform their immediate supervisor and/or Human Resources.

Workplace Security and Inspections

In order to safeguard employees and members of RAILS, along with the efficient operations of the organization, RAILS reserves the right to search any employee's office, desk, files, locker, or any other area or article on its premises which is the property of RAILS. Packages or other articles in the possession of employees or on the premises of RAILS may be subject to inspection if reasonable suspicion exists that the contents present health or safety concerns for RAILS, its employees, or members or that the contents impact the supervision, control or efficient operations of the workplace or evidence workplace misconduct.

Persons entering the premises who refuse to cooperate in an inspection conducted pursuant to this policy will not be permitted to enter the premises. Employees who refuse to cooperate in an inspection will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Workplace Violence

RAILS expressly prohibits any acts or threats of violence by any employee or former employee against any other employee in or about RAILS' facilities or elsewhere at any time. RAILS will not condone any acts or threats of violence against RAILS' employees or members on RAILS' premises at any time or while they are engaged in business with or on behalf of RAILS, on or off RAILS premises.

All employees are responsible for maintaining a workplace that is free from threatening behavior and violence. Accordingly, each employee has a duty to report any threat, instance of harassment or offensive conduct, or violent act observed or experienced at work. In addition, any employee who has a reason to believe that a violent act may be committed on the worksite or against an individual related to the business in any way must promptly report that belief or suspicion to the Executive Director, Human Resources, and their supervisor. If a report is not submitted in writing, the individual or party receiving the report will document the information submitted in a written report. No employee who in good faith either makes a report or participates in an investigation under this policy will experience retaliation of any kind.

RAILS is committed:

- To provide a safe and healthy work environment.
- To take prompt remedial action up to and including immediate termination, against any employee who engages in any threatening behavior or acts of violence or who uses any obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures.
- To take appropriate action when dealing with members, former employees, or visitors to RAILS' facilities who engage in threatening behavior or acts of violence. Such action may include notifying the police or other law enforcement personnel and prosecuting violators of this policy to the maximum extent of the law.
- To prohibit unauthorized firearms or other weapons onto RAILS premises. No RAILS employee shall possess, while on duty, or while in a RAILS vehicle, a firearm, ammunition, fireworks, or any explosive device or weapon likely or capable of causing harm to persons or property, except that employees authorized to carry concealed firearms under state or federal law may carry a concealed firearm on or about the employee's person within the employee's vehicle into a RAILS parking area and may store a firearm or ammunition concealed in a case within a locked vehicle or locked container out of plain view within the vehicle in the parking area, in the manner provided by the Firearm Concealed Carry Act, 430 ILCS 66/65(b). An employee may carry a concealed firearm in the immediate area surrounding the employee's vehicle within a parking lot area only for the limited purpose of storing or retrieving a firearm within the vehicle's trunk. For purposes of this subsection, "case" includes a glove compartment or console that completely encloses the concealed firearm or ammunition, the trunk of the vehicle, or a firearm carrying box, shipping box, or other container.

- To establish viable security measures to ensure that RAILS' facilities are safe and secure to the maximum extent possible and to properly handle access to RAILS facilities by the public, off-duty employees, and former employees.

Employees should immediately call 911 in the event an employee believes an immediate threat of harm exists.

Any employee who engages in violent, abusive, or threatening behavior, or who otherwise engages in disruptive, threatening, or abusive behavior, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Any employee who applies or obtains a protective or restraining order that lists RAILS premises as being protected areas should inform the Executive Director, Human Resources, and/or their immediate supervisor. RAILS will require the employee to furnish RAILS with a copy of the order. RAILS will comply with any protective order as required by law. Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation against an employee based on their order of protection status are strictly prohibited.

Smoke-Free Workplace

RAILS is committed to protecting the safety and welfare of its employees, clients, and visitors.

No smoking of any kind will be permitted in RAILS' vehicles, offices or within 15 feet of any entrance, exit, window, ventilation intake, office or work area, restroom, conference or classroom, break room or cafeteria and/or other common area. This policy specifically applies to the use of tobacco, smokeless tobacco, and/or herbal products as well as e-cigarettes.

Any employee who fails to comply with this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including written warnings, suspension, and possible termination for continued violations.

This policy applies equally to all employees, members, and visitors.

If you are working at a member site, you must comply with any smoking regulations of that facility.

Supervisors and managers are generally responsible for reporting no-smoking violations and enforcing the no-smoking rule. We encourage you to report violations of our smoke-free office policy to a supervisor/manager.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Purpose

RAILS has implemented this policy in response to overwhelming evidence that alcohol and drug abuse has a detrimental impact on employees' health, job performance, safety, and efficiency. Since RAILS employees operate and maintain RAILS programs, and equipment for use by members of the public and perform services that may have a direct effect on the health and safety of members of the public and fellow employees, RAILS wishes to ensure the health and safety of its patrons and employees.

This policy also expresses RAILS' desire to satisfy the requirements of the federal and state Drug Free Workplace Acts (41 U.S.C.A. § 701 et seq. and 30 ILCS 580/1 et seq.). In accordance with these statutes and concerns, RAILS has resolved to maintain a drug free workplace.

The purpose of this policy is to inform employees of RAILS' investigation, treatment and disciplinary policy relating to alcohol and drugs. As such, all RAILS employees will abide by its terms. As with all policies, this policy is subject to periodic addition, modification, or deletion.

Acts Prohibited

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance, including cannabis and alcohol, is prohibited on RAILS Property or while acting on behalf of RAILS.

Definitions

For purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

1. "Alcohol" means any substance containing any form of alcohol, including but not limited to: ethanol, methanol, and isopropanol.
2. "Cannabis" is defined as provided in the Cannabis Control Act (720 ILCS 550/1 et seq.) which provisions are specifically incorporated in this Policy by reference unless and until superseded by other state law or laws, including but not limited to the Cannabis Regulation and Taxation Act.
3. "Controlled Substance" means a controlled substance in schedules I through V of section 812 of Title 21 of the United States Code, which provisions are specifically incorporated in this Policy by reference.
4. "Criminal Drug Statute" means a criminal statute involving the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substance.
5. "Executive Director" is the Executive Director of RAILS.
6. "RAILS Property" means any building, facility, office, common area, open space, vehicle, parking lot, or other area owned, leased, managed, used, or controlled by RAILS. RAILS Property also includes property used by RAILS patrons while on RAILS sponsored events or property of others when presence thereon by RAILS employees is related to employment with RAILS.

7. "Drugs" mean Legal Drugs and controlled substances, including cannabis.
8. "Legal Drugs" mean prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs which have been obtained legally and are being used in the manner and for the purpose for which they were prescribed or manufactured, including as of January 1, 2020, cannabis as provided in the Cannabis Regulation and Taxation Act.
9. "Medical Facility" means any physician, laboratory, clinic, hospital, or other similar entity.
10. "Policy" means this Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy of RAILS.
11. "Possess" means to have either in or on an employee's person, personal effects, desk, files, or other similar area.
12. "Public Safety Responsibility" means a position in which the nature of an employee's duties is such that impaired perception, reaction time, or judgment may place a member or members of the public or other employees at risk of serious bodily harm or is responsible for the administration or enforcement of alcohol/drug policies.
13. "Under the Influence" means that the employee is affected by alcohol or drugs in any determinable manner. A determination of being under the influence can be established by, but is not limited to, any of the following: a professional opinion, a scientifically valid test, a layperson's opinion, or the statement of a witness.

Voluntary Treatment

It is the responsibility of each employee to seek assistance before alcohol or drug problems lead to disciplinary action. RAILS will not discipline an employee who voluntarily seeks treatment for a substance abuse problem if the employee is not in violation of RAILS' drug and alcohol policy or other rules of conduct at the time such assistance is sought. Seeking such assistance will not be a defense for violating the RAILS' drug and alcohol policy, nor will it excuse or limit the employee's obligation to meet RAILS' policies, rules of conduct, and standards including, but not limited to, those regarding attendance, job performance, and safe and sober behavior on the job. Employees who suffer from alcohol or drug abuse are encouraged to consult voluntarily with RAILS management and undergo appropriate medical treatment. Participation in such treatment will be at the employee's expense, although some of these expenses may be covered under the employee's group health plan. Please see Human Resources for details. RAILS management will attempt to keep such voluntary discussions and medical treatment confidential in accordance with this Policy.

Screening and Testing

RAILS may require any employee to be screened or tested following a workplace accident involving a possible violation of safety rules, during and after an employee's participation in an alcohol or drug counseling or rehabilitation program, or upon reasonable suspicion that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The screening or testing will be conducted by a medical facility selected by RAILS at RAILS' expense. The screening or testing may require an analysis of the employee's breath, urine and/or blood or such similar substance as the

medical facility may recommend. Employees who undergo alcohol or drug screening or testing will be given the opportunity, prior to the collection of a specimen or other testing, to disclose the use of legal drugs and to explain the circumstance of their use. If an initial test is positive, a second test will be conducted from the same sample. A confirmed positive drug and/or alcohol test may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

An employee may be required to sign a consent form requested by the Medical Facility conducting the screening or testing. Refusal to sign any requested consent form will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as deemed appropriate by RAILS, in its sole discretion, under the circumstances.

Treatment

If the medical facility recommends treatment, RAILS may, depending on the circumstances as determined in the sole discretion of RAILS, give the employee one opportunity to undergo treatment offered by a clinic or trained professional mutually acceptable to RAILS and employee.

Participation in such treatment will be at the employee's expense. The employee must enter the treatment program within ten (10) days from the time of recommendation of treatment. RAILS may reinstate the employee provided that the employee submits a statement issued by the medical facility certifying successful completion of the treatment program, that the employee is released to return to work, and that the employee agrees to all conditions of reinstatement as determined by RAILS, which may include, but is not limited to, future alcohol and/or drug testing.

Use of Legal Drugs

Any employee who operates or maintains a vehicle or machinery, handles hazardous materials or substances of any kind, or has public safety responsibility and who has taken a legal drug must report the use of such legal drug to their immediate supervisor if the legal drug may cause drowsiness or if it may alter judgment, perception, or reaction time. The burden is on the employee to ascertain from the employee's doctor or pharmacist whether the legal drug may have such a potential side effect. The information will be retained by RAILS in a confidential manner and will be disclosed only to persons who need to know. The employee's immediate supervisor, after conferring with the Director, will decide whether the employee may safely continue to perform the job while using the legal drug. Failure to declare the use of such legal drugs may be cause for discipline up to and including dismissal.

Notice of Convictions

Any employee who is convicted of violating any federal or state criminal drug statute must notify Human Resources within five (5) days of such conviction. For purposes of this notice requirement, a conviction includes a finding of guilt, a no contest plea, and/or an imposition of sentence by any judicial body for any violation of any criminal statute involving the unlawful manufacture, distribution, sale, dispensation, possession or use of any controlled substance or

cannabis. Failure to notify Human Resources may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Discipline/Penalties for Violation

1. An employee who reports to work or is found during working hours to be or to have been under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, or cannabis or who manufactures, possesses, uses, sells or dispenses alcohol, controlled substances, or cannabis while on RAILS property or while acting on behalf of RAILS, is convicted of a drug related crime, causes financial or physical damage to RAILS property, its employees or patrons as the result of alcohol or drug abuse, or fails to report the use of legal drugs in accordance with this Policy, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Staff may consume alcoholic beverages at appropriate off-premises RAILS functions; however, if employees choose to consume alcohol at such functions, they must do so responsibly and conduct themselves properly and professionally at all times. Failure to do so can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. In addition to or in the alternative, depending on the circumstances as determined by RAILS in its sole discretion, RAILS may require the employee to successfully complete an alcohol and/or drug assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by RAILS and by a federal, state, or local health, law enforcement or other appropriate agency. An employee who participates in a treatment program will be expected to meet job performance standards and comply with all rules established by RAILS. Participation in a treatment program will not protect the employee from disciplinary actions should job performance remain unsatisfactory.
2. In addition to the examples of misconduct that may subject an employee to disciplinary action contained in this Policy, RAILS will discipline an employee up to and including dismissal for the following: (1) if the employee refuses to submit to diagnosis, testing or screening upon request of RAILS pursuant to law and/or the provisions of this drug free workplace policy; (2) if the employee tampers in any way with the specimen given to the medical facility for purposes of alcohol or drug screening or testing; (3) if the medical facility recommends treatment and the employee refuses to undergo such treatment; (4) if, while undergoing treatment, the employee fails or refuses to follow the course of treatment; (5) if the employee, during the course of or following treatment, is again under the influence of alcohol or drugs in violation of this Policy; or, (6) if the employee fails to notify the Human Resources Director a conviction for violating any federal or state Criminal Drug Statute in accordance with the "Notice of Conviction" section of this policy.

Inspections

To assure that employees comply with the prohibition on manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing, or using alcohol, controlled substances, or cannabis, employees may be subject to inspection as follows:

1. Desks, files, vehicles, equipment and other containers and property owned or leased by RAILS and which an employee is permitted to use during employment with RAILS, are and remain the property of RAILS. Employees are not permitted to keep controlled substances, cannabis, or alcohol in or on such property. Any such property reasonably suspected of having or holding such substances is subject to search by RAILS.
2. Any refusal to submit to such an inspection will be treated as an act of insubordination and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Records

RAILS will maintain medical records relating to alcohol or drug abuse, diagnosis, and treatment confidentially and in a file separate from the regular personnel files. Records will be retained in accordance with State and federal law, and access will be limited to supervisors or managers on a need-to-know basis, based on the professional judgment of the Human Resources Director. The Human Resources Director will, in each circumstance, evaluate this Policy and considerations, including employee and workplace safety, prior to granting access to these employee records. RAILS will not disclose these records to persons outside of RAILS without the employee's consent unless disclosure of the records is necessary for legal or insurance purposes, including when a grievance, charge, claim, or other legal proceeding is initiated by or on behalf of an employee or applicant.

Identity Protection

Purpose

RAILS complies with the provisions of the Identity Protection Act (5 ILCS 179/1 *et seq.*).

Requirements

- A. All employees who have access to social security numbers in the course of performing their duties must be trained to protect the confidentiality of social security numbers. Training will include instructions on the proper handling of information that contains social security numbers from the time of collection through the destruction of the information.
- B. Only employees who are required to use or handle information or documents that contain social security numbers will have access to such information or documents.
- C. Social security numbers requested from an individual will be provided in a manner that makes the social security number easily redacted if required to be released as part of a public records request.
- D. When collecting a social security number, or upon request by the individual, a statement of the purpose or purposes for which the social security number is being collected and used must be provided.

Prohibited Activities

No employee may do any of the following:

- A. Publicly post or publicly display in any manner an individual's social security number. "Publicly post" or "publicly display" means to intentionally communicate or otherwise intentionally make available to the general public.
- B. Print an individual's social security number on any card required for the individual to access products or services.
- C. Encode or embed an individual's social security number in or on any cards or documents, including, but not limited to, using a barcode, chip, magnetic strip, RFID technology, or other technology.
- D. Require an individual to transmit their social security number over the Internet, unless the connection is secure or the social security number is encrypted.
- E. Print an individual's social security number on any materials that are mailed to the individual, through the U.S. Postal Service, any private mail service, email, or any similar method of delivery, unless state or federal law requires the social security number to be on the document to be mailed. Notwithstanding any provision in this section to the contrary, social security numbers may be included in applications and forms sent by mail, including, but not limited to, any material mailed in connection with the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Act, any material mailed in connection with any tax administered by the Department of Revenue, and documents sent as part of an application or enrollment process or to establish, amend, or terminate an account,

contract, or policy or to confirm the accuracy of the social security number. A social security number that may permissibly be mailed under this section may not be printed, in whole or in part, on a postcard or other mailer that does not require an envelope or be visible on an envelope without the envelope having been opened.

- F. Collect, use, or disclose a social security number from an individual, unless:
 - Required to do so under state or federal law, rules, or regulations, or the collection, use, or disclosure of the social security number is otherwise necessary for the performance of that agency's duties and responsibilities;
 - The need and purpose for the social security number is documented before collection of the social security number; and
 - The social security number collected is relevant to the documented need and purpose.
- G. Require an individual to use their social security number to access an Internet website.
- H. Use the social security number for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was collected.

The prohibitions listed immediately above do not apply in the following circumstances:

- A. The disclosure of social security numbers to agents, employees, contractors, or subcontractors of a governmental entity or disclosure by RAILS to another governmental entity or its agents, employees, contractors, or subcontractors if disclosure is necessary in order for the entity to perform its duties and responsibilities; and, if disclosing to a contractor or subcontractor, prior to such disclosure, RAILS first receives from the contractor or subcontractor a copy of the contractor or subcontractor's policy that sets forth how the requirements imposed under the Identity Protection Act will be achieved.
- B. The disclosure of social security numbers pursuant to a court order, warrant, or subpoena.
- C. The collection, use, or disclosure of social security numbers in order to ensure the safety of other employees.
- D. The collection, use, or disclosure of social security numbers for internal verification or administrative purposes.
- E. The collection or use of social security numbers to investigate or prevent fraud, to conduct background checks, to collect a debt, to obtain a credit report from a consumer reporting agency under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, to undertake any permissible purpose that is enumerated under the federal Gramm Leach Bliley Act, or to locate a missing person, a lost relative, or a person who is due a benefit, such as a pension benefit or an unclaimed property benefit.

Public Inspection and Copying of Documents

Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy to the contrary, all employees must comply with the provisions of any other state law with respect to allowing the public inspection and copying of information or documents containing all or any portion of an individual's social security number. This includes requests for information or documents under the Illinois

Freedom of Information Act. Employees must redact social security numbers before allowing the public inspection or copying of the information or documents.

[Applicability](#)

This policy does not apply to the collection, use, or disclosure of a social security number as required by state or federal law, rule, or regulation.

Communicable and Infectious Diseases

Purpose

This policy outlines specific steps that RAILS takes to safeguard employees' health and well-being during widespread outbreaks of infectious bacterial or viral diseases, while ensuring RAILS' ability to maintain essential operations and provide necessary services to the public. RAILS' decisions involving persons who have communicable or infectious diseases shall be based on current and well-informed medical judgments concerning the disease, the risks of transmitting the illness to others, the symptoms and special circumstances of each individual who has a communicable disease, and a careful weighing of the identified risks and the available alternative for responding to an employee with a communicable or infectious disease.

Infectious Disease Defined

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control, emerging infectious diseases are new infections resulting from changes or evolution of existing organisms, known infections spreading to new geographic areas or populations, previously unrecognized infections appearing in areas undergoing ecologic transformation, old infections that are reemerging as a result of antimicrobial resistance in known agents, or breakdowns in public health measures. Communicable/infectious diseases include, but are not limited to, measles, influenza, staph infections, Ebola virus, Zika virus, viral hepatitis-A (infectious hepatitis), viral hepatitis-B (serum hepatitis), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV infection), AIDS, AIDS- Related Complex (ARC), , Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), including COVID-19 and tuberculosis. RAILS may choose to broaden this definition within its best interest and in accordance with information received through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and local health departments.

Infectious Control Measures

RAILS will not discriminate against any job applicant or employee based on the individual having a communicable or infectious disease. Applicants and employees shall not be denied access to the workplace solely on the grounds that they have a communicable disease. However, RAILS reserves the right to exclude a person with a communicable disease from the workplace facilities, programs, and functions if the organization finds that, based on a medical determination and known methods of transmission, such restriction is necessary for the welfare of the person who has the communicable disease and/or the welfare of others within the workplace.

RAILS takes a number of steps to minimize, to the extent practicable, exposure to infectious diseases at the workplace. As appropriate, RAILS recommends measures that employees can take to protect themselves outside the workplace and encourages employees to discuss their specific needs with a physician or other appropriate health or wellness professional.

RAILS expects employees who contract an infectious disease or are exposed to infected family members or other persons to stay home and follow the advice of a medical professional. RAILS also expects these employees to notify HR or their supervisor as soon as possible of their exposure or illness.

RAILS approves the installation or use, wherever possible, of improved equipment or cleaning methods to guard against the spread of infection at the workplace.

RAILS-provided training addresses issues such as the availability of vaccines; symptoms, treatment, and appropriate medical care; steps to take if exposure is suspected; proper use of RAILS-provided personal protection equipment; and proper hygiene in the workplace and at home.

Remote Work

RAILS acknowledges that employees' access to and use of public services or transportation might be prohibited or curtailed by local, state, or federal authorities during an infectious disease outbreak. Employees also might be unable to access or leave buildings, and disruptions can occur in the delivery of goods or services. RAILS is prepared to continue key “bare bones” operations from a number of remote work locations, including essential employees' home offices.

Employee Leave and Pay

RAILS grants leave to employees who are absent because of an infectious disease that affects them or their family members. RAILS allows employees to use their accrued annual or sick leave if they become ill or need to take leave to care for a family member. Employees also can use unpaid family and medical leave for their illness or a family member's illness. These employees must notify HR or their supervisor as soon as possible of their need for family and medical leave. RAILS requires employees to take unpaid family and medical leave if they lack accrued annual or sick leave. Remote work may be available for employees with a communicable disease if their position offers the remote work option

Business Travel

RAILS makes all reasonable efforts to reduce the need for travel , for example, by using technology that allows employees to communicate or otherwise work electronically. In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, travel on RAILS’ behalf generally is limited to a select group of essential employees who have the required travel authorization from RAILS, and if necessary, outside authorities.

Compliance and Confidentiality

RAILS will comply with all applicable statutes and regulations that protect the privacy of persons who have a communicable disease. Every effort will be made to ensure procedurally sufficient safeguards to maintain the personal confidence about persons who have communicable diseases.

Additional procedures may be developed as necessary in adherence with the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and local health departments.

See Also

- Reasonable Accommodations - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), page 7
- Sick Leave, page 62
- Family and Medical Leave of Absence (FMLA), page 67
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\) website](#)
- [Illinois Department of Public Health \(IDPH\) website](#)

Inclement Weather

When making decisions about closing during serious weather situations, RAILS' priorities are ensuring continuity of staff safety and service to members. Generally, RAILS will not close during bad weather unless conditions are so extraordinarily adverse as to constitute a threat to human safety. The decision to close RAILS will be made by the Executive Director in consultation with the Associate Executive Director, the Delivery and Facilities Director, and the Director of Marketing & Communications.

In-Office Staff

If a RAILS building is closed, delivery service at that building will not operate. If a RAILS building is open, the Delivery Manager, with consultation from the Director of Facilities and Delivery, will decide if any routes at that location will be canceled due to weather conditions. The primary factor in deciding whether a route is canceled is the safety of RAILS delivery drivers. When routes are canceled or the RAILS building is closed by RAILS, affected staff will be paid at their normal rate. RAILS will contact all libraries affected by delivery route cancellations as soon as possible. When a building's closed day falls on a full-time employee's day off, the employee may take an alternative day off with supervisor approval.

Remote Staff

Should staff with the ability to work remotely be able to safely work through an inclement weather event, remote workers are still expected to work their regularly scheduled work hours. If a severe weather event disrupts their ability to work, employees should contact their supervisor and request either PLAW or vacation time to cover impacted hours. If the employee is unsure about the type of PTO to request, please contact Human Resources. If there is an emergency at a remote worker's site, such as a power outage, the remote worker will notify the supervisor as soon as possible. The remote worker may be reassigned to the primary work site or an alternate work site.

For Inclement Weather Procedures, see the [RAILS Staff Intranet](#).

Driver Safety

Business Use of Personal Vehicles

Employees may occasionally be required to use their personal vehicle for RAILS business purposes. Employees doing so will receive a mileage reimbursement at a rate to be determined by the RAILS Board of Directors, but not to exceed the allowance rate in effect under regulations promulgated pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 5707 (b)(2) (US Code - Government Organization and Employees). This reimbursement is to compensate for the cost of gasoline, oil, depreciation, insurance, and wear and tear. In addition, employees driving on RAILS' business may claim reimbursement for parking fees and tolls actually incurred. Employees will also be reimbursed for mileage to attend meetings, seminars, etc. when attendance is for RAILS' business purposes.

Employees who drive a vehicle on authorized RAILS' business must possess a valid driver's license and insurance coverage in accordance with Illinois law. Any change in status (such as suspension, revocation, limitations, etc.) must be reported immediately to an employee's direct supervisor and the Human Resources department.

Use of RAILS Vehicles

RAILS vehicles should be used for RAILS business only. Unauthorized use of a RAILS vehicle will be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Notwithstanding this limitation, in the event an emergency arises while a RAILS vehicle is in use, an employee may use the vehicle only to the extent required to respond to the emergency. When an emergency occurs that requires the use of a RAILS vehicle, the employee must contact their supervisor to inform them of their use of the vehicle, and the vehicle must be returned as soon as possible. In no event are non-employee drivers or passengers permitted inside a RAILS-owned vehicle except with the written permission of the Executive Director, Associate Executive Director, or their designee.

The use of RAILS vehicles for business purposes must follow the procedures established for scheduling and using RAILS vehicles. Use of RAILS vehicles should be the primary option for RAILS-related business travel.

Driver Qualifications

Employees may operate a RAILS-owned vehicle only if they:

- Are acting at the direction and with the explicit permission of RAILS,
- Are aged 21 or older,
- Hold a valid license for the class of vehicle in question, and
- Are otherwise qualified under federal and state regulations to drive the vehicle in question.

Disqualifying Driving Records

Employees whose essential job functions include driving RAILS-owned vehicles are subject to a Department of Motor Vehicles background check prior to beginning employment and annually, thereafter. RAILS reserves the right to run a motor vehicle report (MVR) on employees whose essential job functions don't include driving a RAILS vehicle but who have use of a RAILS vehicle while performing work on behalf of RAILS. Employees cannot operate RAILS-owned vehicles if their MVR report score is 12 or above. A score of 9.0 to 11.9 is considered to be marginal and will be a factor considered in a hiring decision, particularly for those whose position entails considerable driving of RAILS vehicles. RAILS expects the employee to notify their immediate supervisor (self-report) if and when they become aware that they have a disqualifying driving record that would impact their ability to operate a RAILS vehicle.

General Driving Requirements

While operating a personal or RAILS-owned vehicle on RAILS business, employees must:

- Observe applicable speed limits at all times;
- Obey all traffic rules and regulations;
- Drive defensively and anticipate driving hazards, such as bad weather and bad drivers; and
- Immediately report any accidents in which they are involved to the police and their supervisors.

Safety Belts

Drivers must ensure that safety belts are worn by drivers and passengers in all vehicles used for RAILS business. Lap belts must be properly secured in those vehicles equipped with automatic safety systems that require the lap portion of the belt to be manually secured.

Employees who discover an inoperable restraint system must promptly report the defect to the appropriate supervisor. RAILS-owned vehicles in which a safety belt is inoperable cannot be used until the safety belt is repaired.

Wireless Communications Devices Use

Employees cannot use wireless communications devices, including cell phones, tablets, and text messengers when driving RAILS-owned vehicles on RAILS business, except when

- the employee is reporting an emergency situation,
- the vehicle is parked on the shoulder of a roadway,
- the vehicle is stopped due to a traffic obstruction and is in neutral or park,
- the employee is using an electronic communication device that uses a single button to initiate or terminate a phone call, or
- the employee is using an electronic communication device in hands-free or voice-operated mode.

However, the use of a wireless communication device to (1) watch or stream videos, (2) participate in video conferencing (on applications such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams), or (3) access social media (such as Facebook or Instagram) is strictly prohibited while operating RAILS-

owned vehicles, regardless of whether the device is in hands-free or voice-operated mode. (625 ILCS 5/12-610.2)

Accidents

A printed card titled “In Case of Accident” must be kept in the glove compartment of each RAILS-owned vehicle. The card is intended to provide employees with easy access to guidance on what to do when accidents occur. In general, the following requirements apply:

- Employees must report traffic accidents immediately to the local police and then to their supervisors.
- Employees must not sign or make any statements regarding their responsibility or fault for a traffic accident that occurs while they are driving a RAILS-owned vehicle. Employees should avoid explaining or describing the accident to anyone except public safety personnel, their supervisor, or the claims adjuster or attorney for RAILS' insurance carrier.
- Employees must obtain names, addresses, phone numbers, insurance information, and license numbers of the other drivers involved in a traffic accident. Employees must also collect the contact information and the address and phone number of the responding police department.
- Employees must, when feasible, take photographs of the scene of a traffic accident involving a RAILS-owned vehicle, including any damage to the RAILS-owned vehicle or other vehicles involved in the accident.

All information collected under this policy must be promptly provided to the appropriate RAILS supervisor.

Safety & Tracking Equipment

A select number of RAILS-owned vehicles are equipped with tracking technology to monitor and improve driving safety.

Tracking equipment can be used to record vehicle speed and other data, and will only be actively monitored during RAILS business hours. In the event RAILS obtains data from a vehicle which indicates a failure to comply with this policy (including speeding or other unsafe driving practices), this data may be used to impose discipline consistent with this policy.

Discipline

Employees who drive negligently or fail to comply with this policy's safety requirements and self-reporting guidelines are subject to immediate discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Visitors

RAILS welcomes invited visits of short duration to its facilities by personal friends, children, or other relatives of staff at the employee's work site. Visitors unaccompanied by an employee should use the intercom at the main entrance to gain admittance by staff. All visitors, whether or not they are accompanied by a RAILS employee, should avoid behavior and activity that disrupts or interferes with the normal operation of RAILS or disturbs RAILS staff or other visitors. Prohibited activity includes, but is not limited to:

- Harassing RAILS staff or other visitors, including verbal or physical abuse or threats of abuse
- Entering a RAILS staff-only area
- Engaging in conduct or activity that violates federal, state, or local laws
- Carrying or using equipment that blocks walkways, stairwells, doors, or exits within the RAILS facility
- Recording in RAILS staff-only or other areas not open to the general public

Visitors are only allowed during normal business hours except with written authorization from the RAILS Executive Director or designee.

CONDUCT STANDARDS

Conduct and Work Rules

As integral members of RAILS' team, employees are expected to accept certain responsibilities, adhere to acceptable business principles in matters of personal conduct, and exhibit a high degree of personal integrity at all times.

This standard of conduct not only involves sincere respect for the rights and feelings of others but also requires that both in a business and personal setting, employees should refrain from the conduct prohibited in this policy as well as any other conduct that is harmful to employees, the public, or the organization. In addition to maintaining and enforcing this policy to protect the interests and safety of all employees and the organization, RAILS complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning employer/employee rights and obligations.

Employee conduct reflects on RAILS when an employee is at work and may also reflect on RAILS when an employee is not working. Employees are expected to observe the highest standards of professionalism at all times. The following is a list of behaviors that could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Be aware that this list is not intended to be all-inclusive, and that other behaviors may, at RAILS' discretion, also result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Establishment of these standards of conduct does not alter the employment-at-will relationship. Employees should seek further clarification from their supervisor on issues related to conduct if they do not understand a particular rule or are uncertain regarding a particular behavior.

Breaches of Conduct

- Falsifying an employment application, time sheet, expense report, personnel, or other documents or records of RAILS.
- Unauthorized possession of RAILS' or others' property.
- Possession, distribution, or use of weapons or explosives (including firearms), or violation of criminal laws on the premises of RAILS. (RAILS prohibits firearms in its buildings, even if the employee is licensed to carry.)
- Fighting and/or other disorderly conduct.
- Dishonesty, fraud, theft, or sabotage against RAILS or its employees.
- Threatening, intimidating, coercing, using abusive or vulgar language, or interfering with the performance of other employees of RAILS or its members.
- Insubordination or failure to perform reasonable duties that are assigned.
- Unauthorized use of material, time, equipment, or property of RAILS or a member.
- Damaging or destroying system or member property through careless or willful acts.

- Unlawful, immoral, indecent or otherwise clearly inappropriate conduct or behavior, either on or off the job, which is of such a nature that a reasonable person would conclude that it would have the effect of materially adversely affecting the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of their position, or their relationship with other employees, or the employee's or RAILS' reputation or good will in the community.
- Performance that does not meet the requirements for the position.
- Negligence in observing fire prevention and safety rules.
- Abuse or negligence of RAILS security or confidential materials.
- Installing unauthorized or illegal copies of software on a RAILS-owned computer. policy.
- Revealing any confidential information to any person who isn't authorized to receive it and who does not need to know it. For the definition of confidential information, please see the Confidentiality Policy.
- Repeated tardiness or absence; failure to report for work without a satisfactory reason; abuse of leave privileges.
- Violation of RAILS' Alcohol and Drug Abuse policy.
- Any behavior that results in an employee not performing their job.
- Engaging in such other practices as RAILS determines may be inconsistent with the ordinary and reasonable rules of conduct necessary for the welfare of RAILS, its employees, or its members.
- This policy is not intended to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other conditions of employment or to otherwise interfere with employees' rights under the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act, 5 ILCS 315/1. RAILS will not construe or enforce this policy in a way that limits such rights.

[See Also](#)

- Alcohol and Drug Abuse, page 19
- Confidentiality, page 39

Attendance

Consistent attendance and punctuality contribute to the success of RAILS' business operations. Attendance problems disrupt operations, lower productivity, and create a burden for other employees. All RAILS employees are expected to assume responsibility for their attendance and promptness. Poor attendance and/or punctuality will be reflected in an employee's performance review and subject to disciplinary action.

Absence

"Absence" is defined as the failure of an employee to report for work when they are scheduled to work. The two types of absences are defined as below:

- **Excused Absence:** Occurs when the employee provides at least 24 hours' notice, receives supervisor approval, and has enough PTO to cover the time off.
- **Unexcused Absence:** Any absence that does not meet the above criteria.

If an employee is unexpectedly sick, has an emergency, or is caring for immediate family in accordance with the sick leave policy, they must notify their supervisor within one hour of their scheduled start time whenever possible. If they are unable to call, someone else should notify their immediate supervisor or Human Resources on their behalf. Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the supervisor and Human Resources when determining whether an absence is excused.

Unexcused absences count as one occurrence for disciplinary purposes. Employees must use PTO for absences unless otherwise covered by company policy (e.g., FMLA, bereavement, jury duty).

Rules Concerning Attendance

- Inform RAILS in advance. When an employee knows in advance that they cannot avoid absence from work, the employee must contact their supervisor to make arrangements.
- Contact RAILS on the first day of the absence. If it is not feasible for an employee to make arrangements in advance for an absence, the employee must contact the supervisor or Human Resources as soon as possible. The employee is expected to provide a contact number where the employee can be reached, and if no confirmation of the message is received, a secondary supervisor or Human Resources must be contacted. The employee should be prepared to explain the reason for the absence and give an expected date of return to work. Employees must personally contact RAILS on a daily basis during all absences except those arranged in advance with RAILS. This procedure is in accordance with the PLAW and Sick Leave policies.
- RAILS may require that additional documentation be furnished.

- In instances of absence due to an employee's health, RAILS reserves the right to require that the employee obtain a doctor's report explaining the condition and the doctor's restriction that the employee does not work. Ordinarily, any absence due to illness over three consecutive days requires a report from the attending doctor. Where deemed appropriate, RAILS may delay its decision as to the employee's physical fitness to return to work until a doctor's report is submitted to RAILS.
- Except in extenuating circumstances, three consecutive days of absence without notice to RAILS constitutes job abandonment and results in the termination of an employee as a voluntary separation.

Confidentiality

All employees must safeguard confidential information obtained as a result of working for RAILS. This confidential information includes all information not generally known that could cause RAILS or any of its employees' injury, embarrassment, or loss of reputation or goodwill if this information is disclosed to the general public. This information may include, but is not necessarily limited to, personal information, patron information and/or technical information, trade secrets, and any material identified by RAILS as confidential.

Access to confidential information should be on a need-to-know basis and must be authorized by the RAILS Executive Director or Associate Executive Director. RAILS may seek all remedies available under the law for any threatened or actual unauthorized use or disclosure of confidential information. Any employee who is unsure about the confidentiality of any information should immediately seek the assistance of their immediate supervisor and/or Human Resources prior to disclosing such information.

Employees should use reasonable security measures with respect to confidential information, including but not limited to the following:

- Confidential information should not be disclosed to any third party except upon RAILS' prior written approval;
- No copies should be made of any confidential information except when necessary for RAILS business
- Employees may not use confidential information for their own benefit, nor for the benefit of any third party, without RAILS' prior written approval.

All confidential information shall remain the sole property of RAILS, and all copies must be returned to RAILS upon termination of employment or upon demand at any other time.

In some circumstances, there is immunity from liability for disclosure of a trade secret to the government or in a court filing:

- (1) Immunity. An individual shall not be held criminally or civilly liable under any federal or state trade secret law for the disclosure of a trade secret that—
 - (A) is made—
 - (i) in confidence to a federal, state, or local government official, either directly or indirectly, or to an attorney; and
 - (ii) solely for the purpose of reporting or investigating a suspected violation of law; or
 - (B) is made in a complaint or other document filed in a lawsuit or other proceeding, if such filing is made under seal.
- (2) Use of Trade Secret information in Anti-Retaliation Lawsuit. An individual who files a lawsuit for retaliation by an employer for reporting a suspected violation of law may

disclose the trade secret to the attorney of the individual and use the trade secret information in the court proceeding, if the individual—

- (A) files any document containing the trade secret under seal; and
- (B) does not disclose the trade secret, except pursuant to court order.

“Trade secret” means all forms and types of financial, business, scientific, technical, economic, or engineering information, including patterns, plans, compilations, program devices, formulas, designs, prototypes, methods, techniques, processes, procedures, programs, or codes, whether tangible or intangible, and whether or how stored, compiled, or memorialized physically, electronically, graphically, photographically, or in writing if—

- (A) RAILS has taken reasonable measures to keep such information secret; and
- (B) the information derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable through proper means by, another person who can obtain economic value from the disclosure or use of the information.

Outside Employment

As required by Administrative Code (Section 3030.255 Board of Directors Policies), no RAILS employee may accept outside employment that may cause a conflict of interest or infringe on official work time with RAILS. RAILS employees may hold outside employment as long as they can satisfactorily perform their RAILS duties and responsibilities, and the outside job is compatible with RAILS scheduling demands. All RAILS employees—including those with outside employment—are held to the same performance standards and scheduling expectations. In order to remain employed at RAILS, team members may be asked to leave an outside job if it is determined that such secondary employment is impacting their performance or ability to meet RAILS requirements, which may change over time.

No employee may have an outside job that creates a conflict of interest with RAILS. Examples of unacceptable secondary employment include jobs that result in:

- Unscheduled absences from RAILS.
- Unsatisfactory work performance.
- Using sick leave to fulfill secondary employment responsibilities.
- Working for a vendor that does business with RAILS.
- Exposing RAILS to public dispute or legal jeopardy.

Employees who have outside employment or who contemplate such employment must notify their RAILS supervisor and complete the Secondary Employment form provided by RAILS. This form will include the name of the employer, the nature of the proposed secondary employment duties, and the second job's work hours.

Based on available information, the RAILS Executive Director will determine if the proposed secondary employment may create or does create a conflict of interest.

Employees who accept secondary employment that is determined to be a conflict of interest, or who do not terminate secondary employment if a conflict of interest is at any time determined to exist, or who refuse to complete the Secondary Employment form, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

No Solicitation/No Distribution

In the interest of maintaining a proper business environment and preventing interference with work and inconvenience to others, employees may not distribute literature or printed materials of any kind, sell merchandise, solicit financial contributions, or solicit for any other cause during working time. “Working time” is the time when an employee is actively engaged in performing their job duties. Employees who are not on working time (e.g., those on lunch hour) may not solicit or distribute literature or printed material of any kind to employees who are on working time for any cause.

This policy is not intended to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other conditions of employment or to otherwise interfere with employees’ rights under the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act, 5 ILCS 315/1. RAILS will not construe or enforce this policy in a way that limits such rights.

Political Activities or Contributions

RAILS employees must not intentionally perform any of the following activities during a compensated time other than vacation or personal time off. Additionally, employees may never engage in any of these activities by intentionally using RAILS property and resources (such as telephones, cell phones, photocopiers, or computers) for the benefit of any campaign for elective office or any political organization:

“Political activity” means any activity in support of or in connection with any campaign for elective office or any political organization but does not include activities (i) relating to the support or opposition of any executive, legislative, or administrative action, (ii) relating to collective bargaining, or (iii) that are otherwise in furtherance of the person’s official duties.

- Prepare for, organize, or participate in any political meeting, political rally, political demonstration, or other political event. For example: Employees may not send an email to fellow workers during work hours encouraging them to attend a rally for a candidate for elective office. Nor may employees use a RAILS email account, at any time, to, for example, issue invitations to or advertise a political event to anyone.
- Solicit contributions, including but not limited to purchasing, selling, distributing, or receiving payment for tickets for any political fundraiser, political meeting, or other political event. For example: It is against RAILS policy for employees to collect contributions to fund a political event by placing a “donations” canister on their desktops at work.
- Solicit, plan the solicitation of, or prepare any document or report regarding anything of value intended as a campaign contribution.
- Plan, conduct, or participate in a public opinion poll in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes or for or against any referendum question.
- Survey or gather information from potential or actual voters in an election to determine probable vote outcome in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes, or for or against any referendum question. For example: It is against RAILS policy for employees, during their workday, to call potential voters on behalf of a political party to find out whom they might vote for in an upcoming election.
- Assist at the polls on Election Day on behalf of any political organization, candidate for elective office, or for or against any referendum question.
- Solicit votes on behalf of a candidate for elective office, political organization, or for or against any referendum question, or help in an effort to get voters to the polls.
- Participate in a vote recount or challenge to the outcome of any election on behalf of a candidate or political organization.

- Initiate, prepare, circulate, review, or file a petition on behalf of a candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.
- Make a contribution on behalf of any candidate for elective office or in connection with a campaign for elective office.
- Prepare or review responses to candidate questionnaires in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes.
- Distribute, prepare for distribution, or mail campaign literature, campaign signs, or other campaign material on behalf of any candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question. For example: It is unlawful for employees to use RAILS-owned photocopying machines to produce campaign flyers for a school board candidate.
- Campaign for an elective office or for or against any referendum question.
- Manage or work on a campaign for elective office or for or against any referendum question. For example: It is against RAILS policy for employees to use RAILS-provided telephones, even during an uncompensated lunch period or before or after their normal work hours, to work on someone's campaign for elective office.
- Serve as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a political party convention.

Lastly, a supervisor may not compel an employee to perform political activities at any time, including during any time off that is compensated (such as vacation, personal, or compensatory time off).

Political Contributions on RAILS Property

As a RAILS employee, you may not intentionally solicit, accept, offer, or make political campaign contributions on RAILS property. RAILS property includes buildings or portions thereof that are owned or exclusively leased by RAILS, as well as RAILS vehicles.

Prohibited Offer or Promise

RAILS employees, appointees, or officials may not promise anything of value related to the RAILS in consideration for a contribution to a political committee, political party, or other entity that has as one of its purposes the financial support of a candidate for elective office. In the context of a prohibited offer or promise related to a political contribution, anything of value includes but is not limited to

- Positions in RAILS;
- Promotions;
- Salary increases;
- Other employment benefits, including, but not limited to, modified compensation or benefit terms; compensated time off; or change of title, job duties, or location of office or employment. An employment benefit may also include favorable treatment in determining whether to bring any disciplinary or similar action or favorable treatment during the course of any disciplinary or similar action or other performance review;

- RAILS Board appointments;
- Favorable treatment in any official or regulatory matter;
- The award of any RAILS contract; and
- Action or inaction on any legislative or regulatory matter. *For example: It is against RAILS policy for an employee, appointee, or official to offer an action by a RAILS facility, or to offer someone a job or to offer an appointment to the RAILS board, or to offer the award of a contract, in exchange for a political campaign contribution.*

Penalties

An intentional violation of this Policy may be prosecuted as a Class A misdemeanor by an attorney for RAILS by filing a complaint in the appropriate circuit court charging such offense.

Additionally, an officer or employee who intentionally violates any provision of this Policy is subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Exclusion: This policy in no way restricts an employee's rights under Illinois or federal law with regard to protected union activity.

See Also

- [RAILS Website: Ethics Ordinance](#)

Personal Appearance

RAILS aims to maintain a professional environment that is inclusive and functional. Employees are expected to present themselves in a safe and appropriate manner for their specific role and work environment.

Functional Standards: Clothing must allow the employee to perform all job-related tasks safely (e.g., proper closed-toe footwear for delivery or facilities staff). Dress standards may vary day to day based on circumstances.

Hygiene: Employees should maintain personal hygiene that is conducive to a shared workspace.

Prohibited Attire: Clothing, accessories, visible tattoos, or other elements of personal appearance are prohibited when featuring language or images that support a candidate for elective office or a political organization, or are discriminatory, profane, or promote illegal activity.

Consistency: Requirements for dress and grooming will be applied uniformly to all employees regardless of race, gender identity, religion, disability, or other protected status. Employees that require an accommodation for religious, medical, or disability-related reasons should contact their supervisor.

If you are unsure if an item meets the functional needs of your role, please consult Human Resources or your supervisor for clarification.

Hiring of Relatives/Nepotism

The policy prevents improper working relationships by prohibiting employees from supervising others with whom they have a familial, cohabitant, or amorous relationship. It is the intent of the policy to avoid conflicts of interest, as well as situations that may impair objective judgment or bias.

Members of an employee's family or other conflicted relationship as stated above will be considered for employment on the basis of their qualifications. However, immediate family may not be hired, if employment would create actual or substantial interference with the business operations of RAILS or would violate Illinois law or applicable conflict of interest laws. A nepotism self-disclosure form is available from Human Resources.

Due to the potential for perceived or actual conflicts, such as favoritism or personal conflicts from outside the work environment, which can be carried into the daily working relationship, RAILS may hire relatives of persons currently employed only if:

- a) candidates for employment will not be working directly for or supervising a relative, and
- b) candidates for employment will not occupy a position in the same line of authority in which employees can initiate or participate in decisions involving a direct benefit to the relative. Such decisions include hiring, retention, transfer, promotion, wages, and leave requests.

The hiring supervisor is responsible for ensuring policy compliance. Department directors are responsible for monitoring changes in employee reporting relations after initial hire to ensure compliance with this policy. Employees are responsible for immediately reporting any changes to their supervisor.

If any employee, after employment or change in employment, enters into one of the above relationships, one of the affected individuals must seek a transfer or a change in the reporting relationship. Such changes must be approved by the RAILS Executive Director. If a decision cannot be made by the affected employees within 14 days of reporting, reassignment will be made at the direction of the Executive Director and the Human Resources Director.

This policy must also be considered when assigning, transferring, or promoting an employee.

Employees who marry or establish close personal relationships may continue employment as long as it does not violate this policy. If the conditions outlined above should occur, attempts may be made to find a suitable position within RAILS to which one of the employees can transfer. If accommodations of this nature are not feasible, the employees will be permitted to determine which of them will resign.

- Any relationship that interferes with the RAILS culture of teamwork, the harmonious work environment, or the productivity of employees will be addressed by applying the progressive discipline policy up to and including employment termination.
- Anyone employed in a managerial or supervisory role needs to heed the fact that personal relationships with employees who report to them may be perceived as favoritism, misuse of authority, or potentially, sexual harassment.
- Employees who disregard this policy will receive disciplinary actions up to and including employment termination.

Personal Relationships in the Workplace

Personal relationships in the workplace can create challenges for both employees and RAILS. When these relationships involve a manager or supervisor and an employee, the potential for conflicts of interest, favoritism, or perceived unfair treatment becomes more significant. Even when no direct reporting relationship exists, such relationships may still create concerns and, in some cases, could affect the employment status of one or both individuals involved. Personal relationships can include family members or romantic partners.

Further, failed personal relationships in the workplace can increase the risk of sexual harassment or discrimination complaints. To help prevent these issues, any manager or supervisor who, currently has, enters into, or intends to pursue, a close personal or romantic relationship with a current or newly hired, assigned, transferred, or promoted employee must immediately notify both their manager and the Director of Human Resources or designee. RAILS will then review the situation and determine what, if any, steps are necessary to manage potential conflicts and protect the integrity of the workplace.

Ethical Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth requirements RAILS will observe when acquiring and using software that meets the definition of “generative artificial intelligence.” RAILS recognizes that artificial intelligence is an emerging technology and will comply with all applicable statutes and regulations related to the use of artificial intelligence. Additional procedures may be developed as necessary in adherence with the recommendations and requirements of state, federal, and local law.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of RAILS.

Definition

Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI) is a class of computer software and systems, or functionality within systems, that use large language models, algorithms, deep-learning, and machine-learning models, and are capable of generating new content, including but not limited to text, images, video, and audio, based on patterns and structures of input data. These also include systems capable of ingesting input and translating that input into another form, such as text-to-code systems. While this policy document includes principles that apply to AI technologies generally, the policy statements apply only to generative AI systems.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Principles

Principles describe general codes of conduct that represent RAILS values and are aligned with our responsibilities to the members we serve. These principles serve to guide RAILS employees in their use of both generative and traditional AI technology. RAILS employees shall adhere to the principles and requirements outlined in this policy and will be held accountable for compliance with these commitments. It is important to emphasize service to our members and the public at the center of our work.

Innovation: RAILS recognizes that there is value in generative AI, but there are also risks, not all of which may be immediately apparent. We embrace responsible experimentation, where we emphasize control and understanding of these tools while we develop new uses in service of our strategic plan and mission.

Transparency: The purpose and use of AI systems should be proactively communicated and disclosed to the public. A system, its data sources, its operational model, and policies that govern its use should be understandable and documented.

Accountability: Roles and responsibilities govern the deployment and maintenance of systems, and human oversight ensures adherence to relevant laws and regulations.

Bias and Harm Reduction and Fairness: RAILS acknowledges that AI systems have the potential to perpetuate inequity and bias resulting in unintended harm. RAILS will evaluate AI systems through an equity lens for potential impacts such as discrimination and unintended harms arising from data, human, or algorithmic bias to the extent possible. Employees shall not use AI technologies to discriminate against any individual or group based on race, gender, age, religion, or other protected characteristics.

Privacy: RAILS values data privacy and understands the importance of protecting personal data. RAILS works to ensure that policies and standard operating procedures that reduce privacy risk are in place, and are applied to the AI system throughout development, testing, deployment, and use to the greatest extent possible. Personal and financial information shall not be collected and processed by AI systems unless there are reasonable assurances it will be treated with utmost confidentiality and security.

Security and Safety: Securing our data, systems, and infrastructure is important to RAILS. We will ensure AI systems are evaluated for confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and critical RAILS systems, through protection mechanisms to minimize security risks to the greatest extent possible, in alignment with governing policy and identified best practices.

Attribution, Accountability, and Transparency of Authorship

All images and videos created by Generative AI systems must be attributed to the appropriate Generative AI system. Wherever possible, attributions and citations should be embedded in the image or video.

If text generated by an AI system is used substantively in a final product, attribution to the relevant AI system is required.

If a significant amount of source code generated by an AI system is used in a final software product, or if any amount is used for an important or critical function, attribution to the appropriate AI system is required via comments in the source code and in the product documentation.

Departments shall interpret “substantive use” thresholds to be consistent with the principles outlined in this document as well as relevant intellectual property laws.

Non-compliance

The Director of Technology Services is responsible for compliance with this policy. Enforcement may be imposed in coordination with individual department directors and managers. Non-compliance may result in department leaders imposing disciplinary action, restriction of access, or more severe penalties up to and including termination of employment.

[Review](#)

This policy shall be reviewed annually. In addition, a detailed procedural document and regular training for staff on best practices for using AI should be regularly reviewed.

[See Also](#)

- Identity Protection, page 24
- Conduct and Work Rules, page 35
- Use of Electronic and Telephone Equipment, page 56
- Personnel Files, References, and Background Checks, page 107

Social Media Use

Definition

Social media is a form of electronic communication on websites or social networking or blogging platforms where users engage and interact with one another. Examples of social media platforms include but are not limited to My Library Is, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc.

Purpose

RAILS acknowledges that its employees have certain free speech rights to engage in personal social media communications, interactions, and activities. However, RAILS expects its employees to conduct themselves in a professional manner when engaging in social media activities, whether on-duty or off-duty, and not engage in conduct that may adversely affect the employee's job performance or the performance of other RAILS employees or reflect unfavorably on or impair RAILS' operations, reputation, or its mission or goals.

General Policy (On and Off Duty Activities)

The following applies to employee use of social media, whether those activities take place on-duty or off-duty:

- Employees are prohibited from disclosing confidential or sensitive information about RAILS via social media.
- Employees may not use social media to harass, threaten, libel or slander, bully, make statements that are maliciously false, or discriminate against coworkers, managers, clients, vendors or suppliers, any organizations associated or doing business with RAILS, or any members of the public, including users who post comments. RAILS' antiharassment and EEO policies apply to the use of social media in the workplace.
- Employees should respect all copyright and other intellectual property laws. For RAILS' protection, as well as your own, it is critical that you show proper respect for all the laws governing copyright, fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, trademarks and other intellectual property, including RAILS' own copyrights, trademarks, and brands.
- This policy is not intended, nor shall it be applied, to restrict employees from discussing their wages, hours, and working conditions with coworkers.

RAILS-Sponsored Social Media

RAILS-sponsored social media is used to convey information about products and services; advise members about service updates; obtain member feedback, exchange ideas or trade insights about service trends; reach out to potential new markets; provide marketing support to raise awareness of RAILS' services; issue or respond to breaking news; brainstorm with employees and members; and discuss activities and events.

- Only employees designated and authorized by RAILS may prepare content for or delete, edit, or otherwise modify content on RAILS-sponsored social media. Any employees who create such accounts or are provided access to such accounts do not obtain ownership rights to such accounts or any content contained in them. Employees who create or are provided access to RAILS-sponsored social media accounts must provide RAILS with all passwords and/or log-in information to such accounts immediately upon RAILS' request and must transfer "manager" or "owner" status (as defined by the particular social media site) upon RAILS' request.
- Designated employees are responsible for ensuring that the RAILS-sponsored social media conform to all applicable RAILS rules and guidelines. These employees are authorized to remove immediately and without advance warning any content and/or material that violates RAILS' EEO policy, antiharassment policy, or social media comment policy.
- Employees who want to post comments in response to content on RAILS-sponsored social media should identify themselves as employees.
- Non-exempt RAILS employees cannot work on RAILS-sponsored social media accounts outside of their designated work time.
- RAILS-sponsored social media accounts may be subject to the records retention requirements of the State and Local Records Act.

Personal Use of Social Media

- Employees who engage in personal social media activities and choose to identify themselves as employees of RAILS may not represent themselves as a spokesperson for RAILS.
- Employees with authority to speak on behalf of RAILS on particular matters who then post or comment on personal social media sites on topics within that authority should be aware that their posts and comments may be subject to the First Amendment. As a result, those employees must exercise caution in taking any negative action (such as deleting comments or blocking users) against those users who engage with the employee on their posts and comments that fall within the scope of their authority.
- Employees are discouraged from posting photographs of RAILS events or participants engaging in RAILS' activities on personal social media sites, unless they have received their supervisor's prior permission.
- Employees cannot advertise or sell RAILS products or services on personal social media sites.

No Expectation of Privacy

Employees should have no expectation of privacy while using RAILS equipment and facilities for any purpose, including the use of social media. RAILS reserves the right to monitor, review, and block content that violates RAILS' policies.

In addition, employees should be aware that their personal social media activities are not likely to be private and could be viewed by co-workers, supervisors, and members of the public.

Violations

RAILS will investigate and respond to all reports of violations of RAILS' policies. Employees are urged to report any violations of this policy to the Human Resources Director. A violation of this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Use of Electronic and Telephone Equipment

RAILS provides or contracts for the communication services and equipment necessary for the efficient conduct of business. All business equipment, electronic and telephone communications systems, and all communications and stored information transmitted, received, or contained in RAILS' information systems (on premises or cloud based) are RAILS' property and are to be used primarily for job- related purposes. To ensure the proper use of communications systems and business equipment, RAILS may monitor the use of these systems and equipment from time to time.

- Excessive personal use of electronic systems and the distribution of personal messages by employees is prohibited. Personal software or messages shall not be installed or stored on RAILS electronic equipment unless approved by the IT department. Employee personal use of RAILS equipment for outside business ventures or personal financial gain is prohibited. Likewise, employees are prohibited from bringing unauthorized electronic communications equipment to work to use with RAILS-provided electronic communications equipment and/or from accessing RAILS' systems with their devices without permission from the IT Department. Such prohibitions include but are not limited to any type of external computer drives (such as flash drives) to save information from computer drives, personal laptops, and other wireless communications devices. Using such unauthorized equipment with RAILS-provided electronic communications equipment and/or accessing RAILS' systems without permission is considered to be theft of RAILS' intellectual property.
- RAILS will, or reserves the right to, monitor the use of electronic systems and to review or inspect all material stored therein. No communications are guaranteed to be private or confidential.
- The use of personal passwords assigned to the employee on RAILS-provided platforms is not grounds for an employee to claim privacy rights in the electronic or communications systems. RAILS reserves the right to override individual passwords. Employees may be required to disclose passwords or codes to RAILS to allow access to the systems. Refusal to do so would constitute insubordination and could result in discipline, up to and including termination from employment.
- RAILS' prohibition against sexual, racial, and other forms of harassment is extended to include the use of electronic and telecommunications systems. Intimidating, harassing, vulgar, obscene, or threatening communications are strictly prohibited, as are sexually oriented messages or images and/or messages that otherwise interfere with the job performance of fellow coworkers. Employees who receive email or other information on their computers which they believe violate this policy should immediately report this activity to their supervisor.
- Privileged or confidential material, such as, but not limited to, attorney client communications, should not be shared with nonessential parties by email, faxes, etc.

- Employees should respect all copyright and other intellectual property laws. For RAILS' protection, as well as your own, it is critical that you show proper respect for all the laws governing copyright, fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, trademarks, and other intellectual property, including RAILS' own copyrights, trademarks, and brands.
- Employees must be aware that electronic messages that have been erased or deleted can be retrieved by IT experts and can be used against an employee or RAILS. Therefore, employees should use the electronic systems only in the appropriate manner. RAILS records are public information and subject to records retention laws and Freedom of Information Act requests.
- A violation of this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.
- When RAILS is made aware of illegal activities using RAILS equipment, RAILS will promptly report those activities to the proper authorities in accordance with the law.

Receipt of Fraudulent Email

Email scams, such as phishing and spoofing, often target employees by making it seem as if the emails are coming from internal managers or other trusted persons. RAILS scam-detection systems provide some protection. However, such emails may still not be detected and reach an employee.

Neither RAILS personnel nor official RAILS email accounts will ever request via email any employee to purchase anything on their behalf or to advance any employee's personal funds to an outside entity. In addition, neither RAILS personnel nor official RAILS email accounts will ever make requests for any personal information (other than directly through Human Resources), particularly pertaining to banking or credit card account numbers.

If you receive a suspicious email, please do the following:

1. Do not respond to the email. This tells the scammer that you have read the email and will only encourage additional solicitations. Report the email via the 'Report' feature listed when you right-click on an email in Outlook.
2. Forward the email to the IT help desk, noting that it is a scam email, and then delete it from your mailbox.
3. If you have any doubt as to the email's authenticity, carefully view the sender's email address. It will often have the alleged sender's name in it but an address different from the sender's true email address (for example, a fraudulent email purporting to be from a RAILS employee but without an email address ending in @railslibraries.org). If you still have doubts, ask the IT help desk for verification.

RAILS is not responsible for any losses or damages resulting from engaging with, responding to, or otherwise interacting with a fraudulent email or its sender. RAILS will not reimburse any employee losses incurred due to such fraudulent emails or other similar correspondence schemes.

Disciplinary Steps

Should performance, work habits, conduct, or demeanor become unsatisfactory in the judgment of RAILS, based on violations of any RAILS' policies, rules, or regulations, an employee may be subject to disciplinary actions as follows:

Offense	Disciplinary Action
First Offense	Verbal Warning
Second Offense	Written Warning
Third Offense	Disciplinary Suspension/Final Written Warning
Fourth Offense	Termination

All actions above will be documented in writing.

With respect to disciplinary steps, particularly for a third or fourth offense, RAILS will consider the length of time over which the violations occurred as well as their severity. If the first or second offenses occurred more than three years prior to the most recent offense, RAILS will begin a new set of actions.

RAILS is not required to go through the entire disciplinary action process. Discipline may begin at any step, including immediate termination (especially during the early stages of employment), dependent upon the severity of the incident. The progressive disciplinary steps and the failure to follow the steps in every situation do not in any way create a contractual right to continued employment.

Sometimes, RAILS will find it necessary to investigate the infraction for which an employee may face termination. In this case, RAILS may suspend the employee, with or without pay, pending the investigation. The objective of this suspension will be to determine if termination is the proper decision. Following the investigation, if RAILS decides not to terminate the employee, the employee will be reinstated with or without back pay, depending on the circumstances.

EMPLOYEE LEAVE

Vacation Leave

Because RAILS recognizes the importance of vacation leave in providing the opportunity for rest, recreation, and personal activities, RAILS grants paid vacation leave. The amount of vacation to which employees are entitled depends on their length of service as of their anniversary date.

Eligibility

Vacation leave is provided to all regular full-time employees and regular part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week on a consistent basis.

For record-keeping purposes, RAILS will issue employees' vacation days up front twice a year on January 1 and July 1. For example, if an employee is eligible for 15 days of vacation, they would receive 7.5 days (56.25 hours) on January 1, and then another 7.5 days on July 1. Vacation is received upon successful completion of the 60-day probationary period or transfer into an eligible position, as noted above. An employee may use their vacation leave at any point during the calendar year; however, vacation is actually granted on the dates specified above. An employee who works beyond the standard 37.5 hours on a consistent basis will receive additional vacation time based on their scheduled hours. For example, a 40-hour employee will receive 15 days/120.0 hours of vacation.

Vacation leave is prorated for new hires based on start date.

An employee who is on a leave of absence that exceeds four weeks (personal, family/medical, worker's compensation, etc.) will have their next vacation distribution prorated.

Vacation Rate

Length of service	Vacation Distribution: January 1 and July 1	Total Annual Vacation
0–less than 6 years	7.5 days/56.25 hours	15 days/112.5 hours
6 years	8.0 days/60.0 hours	16 days/120.0 hours
7 years	8.5 days/63.75 hours	17 days/127.5 hours
8 years	9.0 days/ 67.5 hours	18 days/135.0 hours
9 years	9.5 days/71.25 hours	19 days/142.5 hours
10 years or more	10.0 days/75 hours	20 days/150.0 hours

Part-Time Proration

Part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week on a consistent basis are eligible for prorated paid vacation, depending on the number of hours worked per week. For example, an employee who works 25 hours per week is eligible for the percentage of what a full-time employee is entitled to ($112.5 \text{ hours} \times (25/37.5) \text{ hours} = 75 \text{ hours}$) per year. Neither the scheduled number of days worked per week nor the scheduled hours per day worked are factors in determining the prorated vacation allowance.

Vacation Scheduling

It is each employee's responsibility to schedule and take all vacation received. Employees must receive the permission of their supervisor prior to scheduling and taking vacation leave.

Employees are encouraged to take their vacation in the calendar year of eligibility. However, employees may carry over to a new calendar year no more than 37.5 hours of vacation time as of December 30. Any additional hours over 37.5 will be lost, and the employee will not receive payment for these hours.

Upon termination of employment, employees will be paid for vacation benefits that have been received and unused at the employee's rate of pay at termination.

Sick Leave

Paid sick leave is provided for the exclusive purpose of allowing employees to take time off for medical reasons. Acceptable medical reasons include the employee's own or a qualifying family member's incapacitating or contagious illness or injury and necessary medical treatment or medically advised rest. Visits to doctors and dentists also are acceptable reasons for taking sick leave. Taking sick leave under false pretenses is a violation of trust that is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Eligibility

Sick leave is provided to all regular full-time employees and regular part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week on a consistent basis.

For record-keeping purposes, RAILS will issue employees' sick leave up front on January 1 of every calendar year. Sick leave allotment begins upon hire or transfer into an eligible position, as noted above. Sick leave is prorated for new hires based on start date.

Qualifying Family Member/Relationship

Qualifying family members are the employee's child (including stepchild or foster child), spouse, sibling, parent, parent-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, stepparent or domestic partner, and other members of your household. Members of your household include those who live with you as their permanent residence.

Sick Leave Allotment

Status	Annual Sick Leave
Full-time	90 hours
Part-time	Part-time employees who are scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week are eligible for prorated sick time hours. For example, an employee who works 22.5 hours per week is eligible for 54 hours of sick time ($22.5/37.5 * 90$)

Staff can accrue up to 90 days of sick leave (675 hours). Sick leave will not be paid out at the time of termination and shall be repaid by the employee in accordance with applicable law if the employee uses more than they have earned at time of termination.

Sick Bank

Hours that an employee accrues in excess of 90 days (675 hours) are deemed inactive and will be moved to a sick bank that is used for retirement service credit reporting purposes only. Once the hours are moved into the sick bank, an employee can no longer access those hours for use under the guidelines of this policy. Sick bank hours will only be reported to the employee pension fund for service credit. Sick bank accruals will not be paid out at the time of termination.

Notice of Absence

Employees who know in advance that they will be absent for health reasons must give their supervisor advance notice, including the probable start date and duration of the absence. If a sudden illness makes it impossible for an employee to request sick leave before the workday begins, the employee should notify the supervisor within one hour of the scheduled start time whenever possible. (Please see the Attendance Policy for more information).

Proof of Need for Absence

An employee using sick leave for more than three business days in a row will normally be required to produce a note from a health care practitioner. The note should certify that the employee was unable to work for health reasons and is fit to return to duty or that the employee's assistance was needed to care for a qualifying individual as defined in this manual. Employees may also be required to provide such a note when abuse of sick leave privileges is suspected and/or when RAILS has reason to believe that the employee may not be able to perform their essential job functions due to a health-related reason.

Confidentiality of Medical Information

All information about an employee's medical condition is confidential and will be kept in separate files. When an employee is absent for medical reasons, the employee's regular personnel file contains only the dates of the medical absence, not the medical reason(s) for the absence.

Paid Leave for All Workers (PLAW)

Personal leave is provided to all employees. For record-keeping purposes, RAILS will issue full-time employees and part-time employees working 20 hours or more per week personal leave up front on January 1 of every calendar year, as detailed below.

Part-time employees working less than 20 hours per week will receive personal leave on an accrual basis as detailed below. Personal leave allotment begins upon hire as noted above. Personal leave is prorated for new hires based on start date.

Status	Allotment Rate: January 1 Distribution of Annual Personal Leave
Full-time, Part-time (20 or more hours/week)	Full-time employees and part-time employees shall be provided in writing what their anticipated paid leave would be if they accrued at a rate of 1 hour of leave for every 40 hours worked up to a maximum of 40 hours of leave. This leave shall be available for immediate use on January 1 of each year. Should an employee work more hours than anticipated, the employee shall accrue additional hours of leave at the same rate up to a maximum of 40 hours total. RAILS will not diminish or recoup any time in the event that an employee works fewer hours than anticipated.
Part-time (fewer than 20 hours/week)	Part-time employees are eligible to accrue personal leave. RAILS will award paid leave time as employees earn it using the calendar year for the 12-month period. On January 1, employees start accruing one hour of paid leave time for every 40 hours worked. Once the individual employee reaches 40 hours of paid leave time, the employee will stop accruing during that calendar year.

Full-time employees and part-time employees working 20 hours or more per week: paid personal days must be taken by the end of the calendar year in which they are received, or they will be lost.

Part-time employees working fewer than 20 hours per week paid: personal leave shall roll over from year to year up to a maximum of 80 hours. Part-time employees shall only be allowed to use a maximum of 40 hours of paid leave in any 1 calendar year.

The paid personal day benefit is subject to the following additional rules:

1. To receive payment for personal leave, an employee should notify the supervisor prior to the day of absence, if possible, or satisfy the notification set forth in the Attendance policy.

2. Approval of a leave request shall be based on the operational needs of the Employer. The Employer may decline the leave if leave granted during a particular time period would significantly impact the operations of the Employer. Denials of a leave request will be made in writing.
3. Personal leave will not be paid out upon separation from employment. Should an employee be rehired within 12 months of separation, they will be credited with the leave they accrued but did not use. Notwithstanding any other section of this policy, this leave will be available for immediate use.
4. The Employer shall maintain records of at least 3 years of each employee's hours worked for each day in each workweek, the total paid leave that was earned based on the hours worked in the case of part-time employees, the paid leave used in each workweek, requests made for paid leave, written denials, and the remaining paid leave balance for each employee upon separation from employment.
5. At no time will the Employer attempt to recoup any excess used paid leave time from any employee upon separation from employment.

Holidays

RAILS observes the following holidays and will be closed:

1. New Year's Day
2. Martin Luther King Day
3. Memorial Day
4. Juneteenth
5. Independence Day
6. Labor Day
7. Thanksgiving
8. Christmas Eve
9. Christmas Day
10. New Year's Eve

Holidays falling on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. Holidays falling on a Sunday will be observed the following Monday. The current year dates upon which the above holidays are being observed are listed on the RAILS' webpage, under "About" and then "Holidays & Closings".

When a legal holiday falls on a full-time employee's day off, the employee may take an alternative day off, with supervisor approval, within the same pay period.

Full-time and part-time employees regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week on a consistent basis are entitled to receive holiday pay for the hours they would have been regularly scheduled to work on the holiday.

The following conditions apply to RAILS' holiday pay policy:

- Holiday pay will not be considered as time worked for the purpose of overtime calculations.
- Holiday pay is computed at an individual employee's base rate of pay for the scheduled day/holiday.
- Holidays will not be paid to employees on inactive status (any type of leave of absence or layoff status).
- Holidays falling within an approved scheduled vacation will be recorded as holiday pay.
- Holiday pay eligibility requires employees to work their scheduled shifts on the business day immediately preceding or following the holiday, except in cases where an approved, pre-scheduled PLAW and vacation time have been documented and authorized by the employee's supervisor. Staff experiencing an emergency should contact a supervisor or Human Resources for assistance.

Family and Medical Leave of Absence (FMLA)

This policy contains information consistent with and in addition to the information contained in the “Employee Rights Under the Family and Medical Leave Act” notice and is meant to provide additional information about RAILS’s specific policies and procedures under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). In the event of any conflict between the “Employee Rights” notice and this policy, the “Employee Rights” notice will prevail.

Basic Leave Entitlement

Employees may be eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid family/medical leave within a rolling 12-month period and be restored to the same or an equivalent position upon return, provided that the employee has worked for RAILS for at least 12 months and worked at least 1,250 hours in the last 12 months.

Reasons for Leave

If an employee is eligible, the employee may take family/medical leave for any of the following reasons:

(1) the birth of a child and in order to care for such child; (2) the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; (3) to care for a spouse, child or parent (“covered family member”) with a serious health condition; or (4) because of the employee’s own serious health condition that renders the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee’s position. Leave because of reasons one and two above must be completed within the 12-month period beginning on the date of birth or placement. In addition, both spouses employed by RAILS who request leave because of reasons one or two or to care for an ill parent may only take a combined aggregate total of 12 weeks leave for such purposes during any 12-month period.

Military Family Leave Entitlement

If an employee is eligible, the employee may use the 12-week FML entitlement to take military family leave. This leave may be used to address certain qualifying exigencies related to the covered active duty or call to covered active duty of a spouse, child, or parent. Qualifying exigencies may include (1) attending certain military events; (2) arranging for alternative childcare; (3) addressing certain financial and legal arrangements; (4) attending certain counseling sessions; (5) addressing issues related to short-notice deployment; (6) spending time with a covered family member who is resting and recuperating; (7) attending post-deployment briefings; and (8) for certain activities relating to the care of the military member’s parent who is incapable of self-care where those activities arise from the military member’s covered active duty.

An employee may also be eligible for up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. This single 12-month period begins with the first day the employee takes the leave. A covered service member includes: (1) a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform their duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy or is in outpatient status; or (2) is on the temporary disability retired list; or (3) a veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) at any time during the period of 5 years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment recuperation or therapy.

Employees may not be granted a FML leave to gain employment or work elsewhere, including self-employment. If an employee misrepresents facts in order to be granted an FMLA leave, the employee may be subject to immediate termination.

Notice of Leave

If the FML is foreseeable, the employee must give RAILS at least 30 days' notice in accordance with the usual procedure for requesting a leave of absence. When the need for leave is not foreseeable, the employee is expected to notify RAILS as soon as practicable and, absent unusual circumstances, in accordance with RAILS' attendance policy. The request must be specific in detail, give the reason(s) for requesting leave and the length of time the employee intends to be away.

Medical Certification—Leave for Employee's Own or a Covered Family Member's Serious Health Condition

If the employee is requesting leave because of the employee's own or a family member's serious health condition, the employee and the relevant health-care provider must supply appropriate medical certification. The medical certification must be provided within 15 days after it is requested, or as soon as reasonably possible under the circumstances. RAILS will also request periodic recertifications supporting the need for leave. If RAILS determines that certification is incomplete, it will provide a written notice indicating what additional information or clarification is required.

For an employee's own serious health condition, RAILS, at its expense, may require an examination by a second health-care provider designated by RAILS, if it reasonably doubts the medical certification you initially provide. If the second health-care provider's opinion conflicts with the original medical certification, RAILS, at its expense, may require a third, mutually agreeable health-care provider to conduct an examination and provide a final and binding opinion. RAILS may also require medical recertification periodically during the leave. Upon their return to work following a leave for their own illness employees will be required to present a

fitness for duty verification specifying that the employee is fit to perform the essential functions of the job.

Certification for a Qualifying Exigency

If the employee requests leave because of a qualifying exigency arising out of a covered family member's active duty or call to active duty, the employee must supply a copy of the covered military family member's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military indicating that the covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty (including the dates of the active duty service). RAILS may also request additional information pertaining to the leave.

Certification for Service Member Family Leave

If an employee requests leave because of the need to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness, RAILS may require the employee to supply certification completed by an authorized health-care provider of the covered service member. In addition, RAILS may also request additional information pertaining to the leave.

Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of a Veteran for Military Caregiver Leave

If an employee requests leave because of the need to care for a covered veteran with a serious injury or illness, RAILS may require the employee to supply certification completed by an authorized health-care provider of the covered veteran. In addition, RAILS may request additional information pertaining to the leave.

Use of Paid Leave

FML is unpaid leave. Short-term/long-term disability and/or workers compensation leave run concurrently with FML (where appropriate) and will not extend the leave period. Employees have the option of using paid leave (veve, vacation, PLAW, and sick) concurrently with FML. When using paid leave in conjunction with FML, employees must comply with the requirements of the applicable paid leave policy.

Benefits During Leave

During an approved FML, RAILS will maintain the employee's health benefits under the same conditions as if the employee remained actively employed. The employee is responsible for paying their share of health premiums regardless of whether or not they are using paid leave. To the extent an employee's FML is paid, the employee's portion of health insurance premiums will be deducted from the employee's salary. For unpaid FML, the employee's portion of health insurance premiums may be paid pursuant to a system voluntarily agreed to by RAILS and the employee. Other benefits, if any, such as vacation, sick leave, or personal days shall not accrue while an employee is on unpaid FML.

Intermittent Leave

Leave because of a serious health condition, to care for a service member with a serious injury or illness or because of a qualifying exigency may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of

time due to a single covered health condition) or on a reduced leave schedule (reducing the usual number of hours an employee works per workweek or workday) if necessary. If leave is unpaid, RAILS will reduce the employee's salary based on the amount of time actually worked. In addition, while the employee is on an intermittent or reduced scheduled leave, RAILS may temporarily transfer the employee to an available alternate position that better accommodates the recurring leave and that has equivalent pay and benefits. A fitness for duty certification will be required to return from an intermittent absence if reasonable safety concerns exist concerning the employee's ability to perform job duties.

Job Restoration

If the employee wishes to return to work at the expiration of the leave, the employee is entitled to return to the same position or to an equivalent position with equal pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment. If the employee takes leave because of their own serious health condition, the employee will be required to provide medical certification that the employee is fit to perform the essential functions of the job. Employees failing to provide the certification will not be permitted to resume work until it is provided.

Paid Family Leave (PFL)

RAILS will provide up to six weeks of paid family leave to eligible employees following the birth of an employee's child, surrogacy, placement of a child in connection to adoption or foster care, for their own serious illness or to care for a seriously ill family or other household member. This policy will run concurrently with FMLA benefit or leave time for which the employee requests and is eligible.

Eligibility

Full-time and part-time employees working 20 or more hours per week with one year of service are eligible for paid family leave. Temporary employees and interns are not eligible for this benefit.

Qualifying Criteria/Relationship

- Have given birth to a child.
- Utilized a surrogate to birth your child.
- Be a spouse or domestic partner of a person who has given birth to a child.
- Have adopted a child or been placed with a foster child (in either case, the child must be age 17 or younger).
- Be the child of a parent with a serious illness.
- Be the primary caregiver of a seriously ill family member or household member. "Family member" is defined as the employee's child (including stepchild or foster child), spouse, sibling, parent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, stepparent or domestic partner or members of your household include those who live with you as their permanent residence.
- A serious illness is one that would meet the eligibility requirements of the FMLA, regardless of whether the RAILS employee would be otherwise qualified for FMLA or intends to request FMLA leave related to their or their family member's illness. RAILS may request verification from the employee's or their family member's treating physician as to the need for the leave.

Amount, Time Frame and Duration of Paid Family Leave

Eligible employees will receive a maximum of six weeks of paid family leave per event or in total for more than one event in a 12-month period. The fact that a multiple birth, adoption or placement occurs (e.g., the birth of twins or adoption of siblings) does not increase the six-week total amount of paid family leave granted for that event. In the event that more than one birth, adoption, foster care placement, or parental or family illness event occurs within a 12-month time frame, the employee may submit a separate request for additional paid leave to the Executive Director for consideration. The Executive Director and/or designee will engage in an interactive process with the requesting employee.

- Paid family leave is compensated at 100 percent of the employee's regular, straight-time weekly pay for all full-time employees and part-time employees working 20 or more hours per week with one year of service. Employees will be paid on a biweekly basis on regularly scheduled pay dates.
- Approved paid family leave may be taken at any time during the six-month period immediately following the birth, adoption, placement of a child with the employee, or at any time during the employee's or family member's serious illness. The leave may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to a single covered health condition) or on a reduced leave schedule (reducing the usual number of hours an employee works per workweek or workday) if necessary.
- Paid family leave does not carry over from year to year, and employees are not eligible for payment of unused paid family leave upon separation of employment.

[Coordination with Other Policies](#)

Paid family leave taken under this policy will run concurrently with all other employee leave entitlements including FML (family and medical leave). Should the employee require additional leave after exhaustion of paid family leave, the employee must meet the requirements for use of those benefits at the time that they are requested.

RAILS will maintain all benefits for employees during the paid family leave period just as if they were taking any other paid time off, such as vacation, PLAW, or sick time.

[Requests for Paid Family Leave](#)

The employee will provide their supervisor and the Human Resources Director with notice of the request for leave at least 30 days prior to the proposed date of the leave (or if the leave was not foreseeable, as soon as possible). The employee must complete the necessary Human Resources forms (Paid Family Leave Request) and provide all documentation as required by the Human Resources department to substantiate the request.

Bereavement Leave

Employees will be granted up to three days of regularly scheduled work hours of paid bereavement leave due to the death of an immediate family member. “Immediate family member” is defined as the employee’s child (including stepchild or foster child), spouse or domestic partner, sibling, parent, parent-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, stepparent, and members of your household. Members of your household include those who live with you as their permanent residence. An employee who wishes to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify their supervisor and/or Human Resources as soon as possible.

Additional paid or unpaid time or leave for persons not covered in the definition of “immediate family member” may be allowed in some circumstances at the discretion of RAILS, or the employee may be permitted to use other available paid or unpaid time off.

Furthermore, an employee who has been employed by RAILS for at least 12 months and worked at least 1,250 hours in the last 12 months may be entitled to take up to two (2) weeks of time off for the death of an immediate family member in accordance with the Illinois Family Bereavement Leave Act. Three days of this time will be paid pursuant to this bereavement policy, and employees may use available paid leave hours or take unpaid time off for the remainder of the two-week period.

In addition, all employees eligible for leave under FMLA will be eligible for up to seven (7) days of unpaid bereavement leave that must be taken within sixty (60) days of receiving notification of the child's family member’s death or within sixty (60) days of the date on which an event listed under paragraph (d) below occurs in order to:

- (a) Attend the funeral or alternative to a funeral of a family member,
- (b) Make arrangements necessitated by the death of the family member, and/or
- (c) Grieve the death of a family member, and/or
- (d) Be absent from work due to (i) a miscarriage; (ii) an unsuccessful round of intrauterine insemination or of an assisted reproductive technology procedure; (iii) a failed adoption match or an adoption that is not finalized because it is contested by another party; (iv) a failed surrogacy agreement; (v) a diagnosis that negatively impacts pregnancy or fertility; or (vi) a stillbirth.

In certain circumstances, RAILS may require an employee seeking leave under this policy to reasonable documentation of the need for leave. Documentation may include a death certificate, a published obituary or written verification of death, burial or memorial services from a mortuary, funeral home, burial society, crematorium, religious institution, or government agency. For leave resulting from an event listed under reason (d) above, reasonable documentation is a form provided by the Illinois Department of Labor, filled out by a health care practitioner who has treated the employee or the employee's spouse or domestic partner or surrogate for an event listed under reason (d) above, or documentation from the

adoption or surrogacy organization the employee worked with related to an event listed under reason (d) above certifying the employee, spouse or domestic partner has experienced an event listed under reason (d) above. RAILS does not require the employee to identify which subcategory of event the leave pertains under reason (d) above as a condition of exercising rights under this Act.

Employees may be entitled to up to six (6) weeks of unpaid bereavement time in the event of more than one covered event during a twelve-month period or due to the loss of a child due to homicide or suicide under the Illinois Child Extended Bereavement Leave Act. “Child” means an employee’s son or daughter who is a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis.

Employees may use any accrued, unused paid time off to run concurrently with unpaid bereavement time. When returning from bereavement leave, employees are entitled to the position they held when the leave began. If that position has been filled or is no longer available, returning employees are entitled to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and responsibilities.

Retaliation of any kind is prohibited because an employee (1) exercises rights or attempts to exercise rights under this Policy or the Family Bereavement Leave Act, (2) opposes practices which the employee believes to be in violation of the Family Bereavement Leave Act, or (3) supports the exercise of rights of another under the Family Bereavement Leave Act.

Employees may raise any concerns about retaliation by following the reporting procedure set forth in the Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment policy.

[See Also](#)

- Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment, page 10
- Family and Medical Leave of Absence (FMLA), page 67

Illinois Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA)

Statement of Policy

Subject to the exceptions below, eligible employees may use unpaid victims' economic security and safety leave for up to 12 weeks in a 12-month period for any one or more of the following reasons:

- A. Seeking medical attention for, or recovering from, physical or psychological injuries caused by domestic violence, sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence to the employee or the employee's family or household member; or
- B. Obtaining services from a victim services organization for the employee or the employee's family or household member; or
- C. Obtaining psychological or other counseling for the employee or the employee's family or household member; or
- D. Participating in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocating, or taking other actions to increase the safety of the employee or the employee's family or household member from future domestic, sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence or ensure economic security; or
- E. Seeking legal assistance or remedies to ensure the health and safety of the employee or the employee's family or household member, including preparing for or participating in any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or derived from domestic violence, sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence;

Leave in the Event of the Death of a Victim

An employee shall be entitled to use a cumulative total of not more than 2 work weeks (10 work days) of unpaid leave for the purposes described below:

- A. Attending the funeral or alternative to a funeral or wake of a family or household member who is killed in a crime of violence;
- B. Making arrangements necessitated by the death of a family or household member who is killed in a crime of violence; or
- C. Grieving the death of a family or household member who is killed in a crime of violence

Leave taken under the above circumstances must be completed within 60 days after the date on which the employee receives notice of the death of the victim, and is subject to the following:

1. If an employee is also entitled to take unpaid bereavement leave under the Family Bereavement Leave Act as a result of the death of a victim, leave taken under this Policy for the purposes described in this section related to the death of the victim and leave taken under the Family Bereavement Leave Act shall be in addition to, and shall not diminish, the total amount of leave time an employee is otherwise entitled to under the "Statement of Policy," above.

2. If an employee is not entitled to unpaid Bereavement leave under the Family Bereavement Leave Act as a result of the death of a victim, leave taken under this Policy for the purposes described in this section related to the death of the victim shall be deducted from, and is not in addition to, the total amount of leave time an employee is otherwise entitled to under the “Statement of Policy,” above.
3. Leave taken for the purposes described in this section related to the death of a victim shall not otherwise limit or diminish the total amount of leave time an employee is entitled to take under this Policy.

Definitions

- A. “12-month period” means a rolling 12-month period measured forward from the date leave is taken and continuous with each additional leave day taken.
- B. “Family or household member” means a spouse, parent, son, daughter, other person related by blood or by present or prior marriage, other person who shares a relationship through a son or daughter, and persons jointly residing in the same household;
- C. “Parent” means the biological parent of an employee or an individual who stood in loco parentis to an employee when the employee was a child.
- D. “Son or daughter” means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis, who is under 18 years of age, or is 18 years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.
- E. “Domestic violence” means physical abuse, harassment, intimidation of a dependent, interference with personal liberty or willful deprivation, but does not include reasonable direction of a minor child by a parent or guardian.
- F. “Gender violence” means:
 - i. one or more acts of violence or aggressions satisfying the elements of any criminal offense under the laws of Illinois that are committed, at least in part, on the basis of a person’s actual or perceived sex or gender, regardless of whether the acts resulted in criminal charges, prosecution, or conviction;
 - ii. a physical instruction or physical invasion of a sexual nature under coercive conditions satisfying the elements of any criminal offense under the laws of Illinois, regardless of whether the intrusion or invasion resulted in criminal charges, prosecution, or conviction; or
 - iii. a threat of an act described in items (i) or (ii) above, causing a realistic apprehension that the individual who made the threat will commit the act.
- G. “Sexual violence” means sexual assault, as defined by the Illinois Criminal Code.

Coverage and Eligibility

Both full- and part-time employees are eligible to apply for this leave.

Intermittent or Reduced Leave

An employee may take leave intermittently (a few days or a few hours at a time) or on a reduced leave schedule.

Substitution of Time Off

An employee may elect to substitute accrued paid vacation, sick or personal time, or any other applicable paid time off for any part of victims' economic security and safety leave. Such substitution will not extend the employee's total allotment of time off under this policy.

Notice Requirement

An employee is required to give 48 hours' notice to RAILS in the event of a foreseeable leave. In unexpected or unforeseeable situations, an employee should provide as much notice as is practicable, usually verbal notice within one or two business days of when the need for leave becomes known.

Certification

- A. For leaves taken pursuant to this policy, the employee may be required to submit a certification demonstrating the need for the leave. The certification must be provided by the employee as soon as reasonably possible, but in most cases, within 15 days after requested.
- B. The certification requirement may be satisfied by the submission of a sworn statement from the employee and one of the following:
 - Documentation from a victim services organization, attorney, clergy, or medical or other professional from whom the employee or the family/household member has sought assistance in addressing domestic or sexual violence and/or its effects;
 - A police, court, or military record;
 - A death certificate, published obituary, or written verification of death, burial, or memorial services from a mortuary, funeral home, burial society, crematorium, religious institution, or government agency, documenting that a victim was killed in a crime of violence; or
 - Other corroborating evidence.
- C. All documentation related to the employee's need for the leave pursuant to this policy will be held in strict confidence and will only be disclosed as required/permitted by law.

Effect on Benefits

During an approved VESSA leave, RAILS will maintain employee health benefits, as if the employee continued to be actively employed. If paid leave is substituted for unpaid VESSA leave, RAILS will deduct the employee's portion of the health plan premium as a regular payroll deduction. If employee's leave is unpaid, they must pay the portion of the premium during the leave. The employee's group health-care coverage may cease if the premium payment is more than 30 days late. If the employee does not return to work at the end of the leave period, they

may be required to reimburse RAILS for the cost of the premiums paid by RAILS for maintaining coverage during the unpaid leave, unless the employee cannot return to work because of the continuation, recurrence, or onset of domestic or sexual violence or other circumstances beyond your control.

Job Protection

If the employee wishes to return to work at the expiration of the leave, the employee is entitled to return to the same position or to an equivalent position with equal pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. If the employee takes leave because of a medical condition, the employee is required to provide medical certification that they are fit to resume work. The employee may obtain a Return to Work Medical Certification form from the Human Resources department. Employees failing to provide the Return to Work Medical Certification Form will not be permitted to resume work until it is provided.

Reasonable Accommodations

RAILS supports the Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act and will attempt to provide reasonable accommodations for people who are entitled to protection under this Act in a timely fashion unless such accommodations would present an undue hardship for RAILS.

Reasonable accommodations can be requested by employees and may include adjustment to a job structure, workplace facility, or work requirement, transfer, reassignment, or modified schedule, leave, a changed telephone number or seating assignment, installation of a lock, implementation of a safety procedure or assistance in documenting domestic or sexual violence that occurs at the workplace or in work-related settings, or any other reasonable accommodation in response to actual or threatened domestic violence, sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence.

A qualified individual is an individual who, but for being a victim of domestic violence, sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence or with a family or household member who is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, can perform the essential functions of the employment position that such individual holds or desires.

Should you wish to request a reasonable accommodation pursuant to this policy, you should contact the Human Resources department.

Confidentiality

All information provided to RAILS pursuant to this Policy, including statements of an employee and any other documentation, record, or corroborating evidence, and the fact that an employee has requested or obtained an accommodation pursuant to this policy shall be retained in the strictest confidence by RAILS, except to the extent that disclosure is:

- A. Requested or consented to in writing by the employee; or
- B. Otherwise required by applicable federal or State law.

See Also

- [Illinois Department of Labor \(IDOL\) website](#)

Jury Duty

Updated/Edited copy of this policy provided in the packet.

Military Leave

Pursuant to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and the Illinois Service Member and Reemployment Rights Act (ISERRA), leaves of absence for military or reserve duty are granted to all employees of RAILS. Employees called to active military duty or to reserve or National Guard training, or volunteering for the same, should submit copies of their military orders to their supervisor as soon as practicable. Employees will be granted a military leave of absence for the period of military service in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Employees who are reservists or members of the National Guard are granted time off for required military training or equivalent orders.

Their eligibility for reinstatement after the completion of their military duty and/or training and their benefit continuation/eligibility issues are determined in accordance with applicable federal and state laws as outlined below.

For any member of the Illinois National Guard or any member of any branch of the Armed Forces Reserve who is placed on active-duty status, the rights and benefits of the employee shall have the following rights and benefits preserved and protected:

- a) the provision of insurance coverage and its automatic continuation immediately upon return to employment status with RAILS; and
- b) the right to any promotional, employment, contractual or salary benefits, or pension right, and benefits that accrued while the employee was on active-duty status.

An employee who is drafted or ordered into the military service shall be entitled to return to their former position at the current rate of pay with no loss in seniority and benefits, providing said employee returns to work within ninety (90) days of discharge from military service. Seniority shall accrue while in the service on active duty.

An individual returning from initial active training duty is entitled to reemployment if the following conditions have been met:

- The reservist was called for initial active-duty training for at least twelve (12) weeks and was called to active duty for at least ninety (90) days, and
- The reservist applies for reemployment within thirty-one (31) days after release from active duty for training after satisfactory service or from discharge from hospitalization from military injury, provided it is less than one year after the scheduled release from duty.

Employees granted a leave of absence for participation in training with the Army Reserves or National Guard need not apply for reemployment, but must report to work at the beginning of the next scheduled working period, unless prevented by circumstances beyond the employee's control. If the employee does not report to work, they may be subject to progressive discipline, but does not forfeit entitlement to reemployment.

Employees may elect, but are not required, to use any vacation or personal leave for any portion of the absence that is unpaid. Training leaves will not normally exceed two weeks per year, plus reasonable travel time. Pay for military and reserve duty leaves is determined in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. During leaves for annual training or equivalent orders, the employee shall continue to receive regular compensation as a RAILS employee, for up to thirty (30) workdays per calendar year. During leaves for active service, for up to sixty (60) workdays per calendar year of special or advanced training, and for any other training or duty required by the United States Armed Forces, the employee shall receive differential compensation (regular compensation minus the employee's base pay) for military activities. After three (3) years of consecutive leave, while performing voluntary active service, the employee's entitlement to differential compensation shall be terminated. Should the employee return to work for more than ninety (90) calendar days, the employee's right to differential compensation shall be reinstated.

Funeral Honors Detail Leave

Eligible employees, who have worked for RAILS for at least twelve (12) months and for at least 1,250 hours of service during the twelve (12) month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave and who are trained to participate in the funeral honors detail at the funeral of a veteran and also either a retired or active member of the armed forces of the United States or a member of a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States, including the Illinois National Guard; or an authorized provider, or a registered member of a nonprofit or other organization that is an authorized provider, including a member of a veterans service organization, will be compensated at their regular rate of pay up to eight (8) hours per calendar month, and up to forty (40) hours per calendar year, to serve in a funeral honors detail. All participating employees must provide reasonable advanced written notice and appropriate documentation to their supervisor prior to taking leave.

An employee who takes leave under this Policy may do so in lieu of, and without having exhausted, their vacation, personal, comp time, or any other leave that may be granted to the employee, including sick leave and disability leave.

Voting Leave

RAILS believes that it is the responsibility and duty of employees to exercise the privilege of voting in elections. In accordance with this philosophy, RAILS will grant its employees approved time off to vote if necessary due to work schedules.

All employees should be able to vote either before or after regularly assigned work hours. However, when this is not possible due to work schedules, an employee may be permitted two hours of paid leave to vote in a local, state or national election if the employee's working hours begin less than two hours after the opening of the polls and end less than two hours before the closing of the polls. If you need to take time off to vote, you should notify your supervisor of your plans no later than the day before the election. Time off for voting should be reported and coded appropriately on employees' timesheets. Proof of attendance at the polls may be required.

School Visitation Leave

RAILS recognizes that it benefits the parent/legal guardian, the children and the community when a parent/legal guardian is able to take time off from work to attend school conferences or behavioral or academic meetings of their children/dependents when such activities cannot be scheduled during nonworking hours. In accordance with the School Visitation Rights Act (820 ILCS 147), RAILS grants regular full-time and regular part-time employees who have been employed for at least six (6) months up to eight (8) hours of unpaid leave during any school year (August through July). Employees may use any available vacation/personal time for absences under this policy.

Notification Period

When possible, an employee must notify their immediate supervisor 3 days before taking this leave. Employees requesting this type of leave may be asked to provide supporting documentation from their child(ren)'s school administrator to the Human Resources department.

Employee Blood and Organ Donation Leave

Amount of Leave

Eligible full-time employees may take paid leave for up to two hours every 56 days to donate or to attempt to donate blood. Eligible full-time and part-time employees may take up to 10 days in any 12-month period to serve or attempt to serve as a living organ donor. For a part-time employee using leave under this policy, RAILS shall calculate the daily average pay the part-time employee received during their previous 2 months of employment and compensate the part-time employee in the amount of the daily average pay for the leave days used.

In order to return to work after blood donation, drivers must confirm fitness for duty as required under federal and state regulations.

Definitions

- A. **"Eligible Employee"** for blood donation means a full-time employee who has been employed for at least 6 months and who donates or attempts to donate blood as defined in Section B. For organ donation, an eligible employee means any employee (full-time and part-time) who has been employed for at least 6 months and who donates any biological tissue of the human body as defined in Section C.
- B. **"Blood Donation"** means the act of donating blood in accordance with the nationally recognized medical standards for blood donation eligibility of the community blood bank as operated by the American Red Cross, America's Blood Centers, the American Association of Blood Banks, or other blood bank.
- C. **"Organ Donation"** means the act of donating any biological tissue of the human body that may be donated by a living donor (other than blood), including but not limited to, the kidney, liver, lung, pancreas, intestine, bone, and skin or any subpart thereof.

Notice, Approval, and Verification Requirement

An employee is required to give reasonable notice to the organization in the event that the employee chooses to use leave under this policy. A request for leave under this policy must be in writing and must include the day the employee wishes to use the leave along with a written statement from the blood bank or medical/transplant facility indicating that the employee has an appointment on the day requested for leave to donate or attempt to donate blood or an organ.

Upon an employee's return from an approved leave, the employee will be required to submit a written statement from the blood bank or medical/transplant facility verifying that the employee kept the appointment.

General Leave of Absence

Occasionally, for personal or other reasons, you may need to apply for an unpaid personal leave of absence when you do not qualify for a leave under another RAILS' policy. Under these circumstances, you may qualify for a leave of absence. This leave of absence may be granted for 1 to 4 weeks.

You must apply in writing for a leave of absence and submit your request to your supervisor. Your request must include the reason for the leave, the date on which you wish the leave to begin, and the anticipated date of return to active employment with RAILS. The employee's supervisor will review the request and indicate approval or denial. Following the supervisor's review, the HR Director is responsible for providing official written approval of any granted general leave of absence.

The granting of a leave of absence, as well as the terms and conditions of the leave, are at the sole discretion of RAILS. While RAILS will make every effort to reinstate the employee to their previous position or status upon return, reinstatement is not guaranteed.

Failure to return from a leave of absence at the time agreed upon will normally result in immediate termination of employment.

Requests for an extension of a general leave of absence should be submitted in writing to your supervisor and then to Human Resources.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES

Employee Benefits

Eligible employees of RAILS are provided a wide range of benefits. Detailed descriptions of benefits are available from Human Resources.

In addition, all employees are covered by Social Security, workers compensation, and unemployment insurance as prescribed by law.

RAILS reserves the right to change or eliminate any benefits at any time in accordance with applicable law.

Introductory Period and Benefits Eligibility

Introductory employees are those within their first 60 days of employment. The Introductory Period is designed to help new employees become familiar with RAILS' culture, expectations, and resources, and to allow both the employee and RAILS to confirm the position is a mutual fit. During this time, RAILS will evaluate the employee's attendance, skills, performance, and conduct. An employee's introductory status may affect eligibility for some benefits—please see Human Resources for more information. Completion of the introductory period does not mean the employee has a permanent job and is not in any other way inconsistent with RAILS' employment at-will policy. RAILS reserves the right to extend or shorten the Introductory Period within its discretion.

Benefits During Probationary Period

- **Health Insurance:** Probationary employees are eligible for health benefits beginning on the first day of the month following their start date, in accordance with RAILS policy.
- **PLAW:** RAILS will issue probationary employees PLAW hours upfront on their first day of employment; however, usage may be subject to supervisor approval, in accordance with the Illinois Paid Leave for All Workers Act. (820 ILCS 192/1, et. seq.)

Vacation and Sick Leave

- Probationary employees are not eligible for vacation or sick leave hours until successful completion of the 60-day probationary period.

Upon completion of the probationary period, employees will transition to regular employment status and gain full access to vacation and sick leave benefits.

Vacation Payout

To recognize the unique nature of delivery positions, RAILS will provide an annual vacation payout benefit exclusively to delivery staff. Delivery staff members are required to work 100% in person and do not have the same flexibility to work remotely as administrative staff. This distinction is the basis for extending this benefit to delivery staff only.

Vacation Payout Provisions

- Eligible delivery staff may receive a payout of unused vacation time at the end of each calendar year.
- The maximum vacation payout is up to 37.5 hours per year.
- Payouts will be calculated based on the employee's regular hourly rate of pay as of the payout date.
- Vacation hours in excess of the 37.5-hour payout limit will not be carried over or paid out.
- Employees who opt out of the payout option will retain the ability to carry over up to 37.5 hours in accordance with the existing RAILS vacation carryover policy.
- Payment for unused vacation will be included in the first payroll of the following calendar year.
- All payouts will be considered taxable wages and subject to applicable federal, state, and local withholding and deductions.

Eligibility

- This benefit applies only to delivery staff, defined as employees whose job duties require them to be on-site and perform delivery operations. This includes both full-time employees and part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week on a consistent basis.
- Administrative staff are excluded from this benefit, as their job responsibilities allow for greater workplace flexibility.

Insurance

RAILS offers medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and disability insurance plans. Plan descriptions that explain coverage of many of the benefits in detail are available from Human Resources.

RAILS offers health insurance benefits to full-time and part-time employees. RAILS will pay the majority of the premium for employee-only coverage for full-time employees. Employees who are scheduled to work a minimum of 30 hours per week are eligible for full-time insurance benefits effective the first of the month following their date of hire. Part-time employees who are normally scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week are eligible for dental, vision, and life insurance benefits after one year of service, at their own expense. Family members may also be eligible to participate in the plan. Part-time employees scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week are not eligible for insurance benefits. Should an employee choose to participate in the plan, the employee's portion of the premium will automatically be deducted from the employee's paycheck. Premiums will be deducted across the first and second payrolls of each month. The Human Resources department will provide specific enrollment and plan information when an employee becomes eligible to participate.

Employee Assistance Program

RAILS is committed to supporting the wellbeing of its employees and their family members by offering confidential and voluntary services through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This program provides help with a range of personal and family challenges including financial, personal, mental and emotional health, substance use challenges, etc. Employees and their families are encouraged to utilize this valuable benefit to support both their personal wellbeing and professional success.

EAP counselors are available to meet with employees and their family members to assess a problem and develop a plan for resolution. The counselors may suggest a referral to an outside resource, such as a therapist, agency, physician, treatment facility, or other professional that would be appropriate to assist in resolving the problem or situation.

There is no charge for employees or their families to use the services of the EAP. The EAP counselors will make every effort to coordinate referrals for ongoing treatment with the employee's health insurance coverage as well as with their ability to pay.

Confidentiality

All personal information regarding an employee's participation in EAP is strictly confidential. No information will be shared with RAILS and is not recorded in an employee's personnel file unless required by law or when written consent is provided.

Staff are encouraged to contact Human Resources for more information.

See Also

- [RAILS Staff Intranet: Employee Assistance Program](#)

COBRA Benefits

The Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage for up to 18 months under RAILS' health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation; termination of employment; death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours; leave of absence; divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements. Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage after a qualifying event at RAILS' group rates, plus an administration fee for continuation coverage. RAILS provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when a qualifying event occurs. The notice contains important information about the rights and obligations of the employee and/or beneficiary(ies). Failure to comply in a timely manner with the notice may result in a loss of insurance coverage. It is imperative that each employee keep Human Resources apprised of the insurance status of their family life and age of dependents.

Retirement Plan

All RAILS employees, other than temporary employees, who are regularly scheduled to work twenty or more hours per week are enrolled in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. By statute, employees contribute 4.5% of their pre-tax wages or salaries to the fund. Employers contribute at annual specified contribution rates as determined by the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. Plan descriptions of this program are available from Human Resources.

RAILS has adopted a Pension Management Safeguards Policy, which is presented below:

RAILS will adhere to Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) guidelines and will not permit end-of-career payouts in a way to pad or “spike” pensions. For example, but not by way of limitation, RAILS shall not pay out accrued but unused vacation time prior to the actual date of employment termination and shall not increase an employee’s compensation or pay a retirement bonus timed to pad or “spike” an employee’s IMRF pension.

Notwithstanding any other policy or practice to the contrary, RAILS recognizes that compensation increases paid during the final years of employment with the purpose of increasing a participant’s pension beyond the limitations of section 7-116 of the Illinois Pension Code, as amended from time to time, are not compatible with good pension plan administration and may be one cause of pension plan underfunding. Therefore, all compensation increases authorized or granted to RAILS employees in their final years of employment as defined in the Pension Code will not exceed the limitations defined by that statute for the purpose of increasing a participant’s pension beyond the limitations of 7-116. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, payment of accrued but unused vacation, sick, or other benefit time prior to an employee’s actual date of retirement or separation, payment of a bonus at retirement, as well as granting a wage increase which exceeds the statutory limitations when not the result of a promotion or transfer to a new position.

Upon retirement from RAILS, an employee may be eligible to receive one month of additional IMRF service credit for each 20 days of accrued but unused sick leave, not to exceed one year (240 days) of additional service credit. Please visit [IMRF’s website](#) for more information.

Other Retirement and Benefit Programs

RAILS offers all employees regularly scheduled for 20 or more hours a week the opportunity to contribute, through payroll deductions, to a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, a Roth IRA account, Health Savings Account, and/or a Flexible Spending Account. Plan descriptions of these programs are available from Human Resources. For any benefits not offered by IMRF for eligible employees, RAILS does not provide additional contributions.

Employee Referral Incentive Program

For hard-to-fill openings, RAILS will offer the following rewards for employee referrals. Hard-to-fill roles are defined as job openings that have been posted and produce no quality candidates. The role(s) will be reposted on the RAILS job board, and the posting will clearly state the role is eligible for an employee referral. If a candidate is hired from an employee referral, the referring employee will have the option of choosing between vacation or personal time or a monetary reward. The payout will take place in two distributions; the first after the new hire's 90th day of service and the second after the new hire's 180th day of service.

Option 1—Time-off reward

Position Hired	Time-Off Reward
Full-Time Staff	7.5 hours
Part-Time Staff	1 day prorated

Option 2—Cash reward

Position Hired	Monetary Reward
Full-Time Staff	\$200
Part-Time Staff	\$100

Years of Service

RAILS values the service of our employees by recognizing years of service for certain benefits based upon continuous service as an employee of RAILS. Years of service continue to accrue during RAILS-approved leaves of absence.

Calculating Years of Service

- Service time starts with the date of hire as a regular employee and continues to accrue until employment is terminated.
- For RAILS staff hired on July 1, 2011, continuous service as an employee of the Alliance Library System, DuPage Library System, Metropolitan Library System, North Suburban Library System, and/or the Prairie Area Library System is counted towards RAILS years of service.
- The date of hire is used for allotment of vacation benefits, service awards, and other employment decisions where years of service should be given preference.
- Years of service end when employment is terminated. If an employee is rehired, years of service start over based upon the date of rehire into a regular position.
- If an employee reports any errors with their years of service, the employee's supervisor will work with Human Resources to resolve the issue promptly.

Years of Service Program

RAILS will recognize years of service by awarding a monetary payment to employees with at least 10 years of service. The service award will be paid to the employee each year after achieving 10 years of service, and the monetary award will increase in five (5) year increments as outlined below to encourage employee retention. Part-time employees working 20 or more hours per week will be eligible for a prorated award amount. An employee who changes between full-time and part-time or vice versa will be paid based on a years of service calculation. The award will be paid on the final pay date in June of every year that the program is in effect. The employee must be employed by RAILS at the time of payout to be eligible for the monetary payment.

1. 10 years—\$200
2. 15 years—\$250
3. 20 years—\$400
4. 25 years—\$450
5. 30 years—\$600
6. 35 years—\$650
7. 40 years—\$800
8. 45 years—\$850
9. 50 years or more—\$1,000

The years of service program will not change the employee's base wage, is subject to statutory deductions, and will only be categorized as a service award. Therefore, the monetary payment will not be used in any calculations associated with wage adjustments such as raises. The amounts listed above are the net amounts that will be issued to employees via check. (RAILS will gross up the awards in order for employees to receive the amounts listed above).

Birthday Recognition

RAILS will grant full-time and part-time (20 or more hours per week) employees with five (5)* or more years of service an additional personal day that must be used during the employee's birth month or it will be forfeited. This benefit will renew annually. If you terminate from RAILS prior to using this benefit, you will not be paid out for this day.

**Years of service based on seniority date in payroll system and employee handbook.*

Educational Benefits

The RAILS educational benefits program is contingent on annual funding.

Requirements for Approval

All staff applying for reimbursement for coursework that is a part of a degree program (certificate, associate, bachelors, and graduate) from an accredited institution must:

- Provide evidence of admission to the certificate/degree program.
- Submit an application to their supervisor and obtain approval for the class, with prior approval preferred, to be eligible for reimbursement.
- Be full-time, working 37.5 hours per week in order to receive the maximum allowable reimbursement.
- Be employed for at least one year prior to application for educational benefits. Benefits will not be applied retroactively to courses taken before one year of service.
- Have received a satisfactory performance review.
- Provide evidence that the class is related to the applicant's job or aligned to the needs of the organization or a required/core class as part of a certificate/degree program
- Understand that registering for a class does not ensure reimbursement under this program.

Reimbursement

- The amount of the reimbursement is contingent on the number of approved applicants.
- Incomplete classes will not be reimbursed.
- Reimbursement will not exceed 50% of the cost of class tuition.
- Reimbursement amounts will be prorated for part-time employees.
- The employee will not be reimbursed for a class that was previously reimbursed.
- Reimbursement related to mileage, commute, or any time spent outside of regular work will not be considered.
- Enrollment in classes or certificate/degree programs and tuition reimbursement by RAILS is not a guarantee of a job change, promotion, or salary increase.
- Reimbursement will be made to the employee after providing verification that they have successfully completed a class with a B average or above or earned a pass for a pass/fail class.

Termination/Resignation/Retirement

Educational benefits are only available for courses taken after completing one year of service; benefits will not be applied retroactively. If an employee is laid off by RAILS, no repayment will be due. Employees may be required to sign individual agreements in order to receive

reimbursement under this policy. If an employee is enrolled in a class approved for reimbursement and at any time during the class term, the employee resigns from RAILS or is terminated by RAILS, no reimbursement will occur.

Class Time

If the class is not offered outside the employee's normal working hours, work schedules may be modified with the approval of the employee's supervisor and the approval of the Executive Director. Time spent attending courses will not be compensated.

Tax Liability

It is possible, under Federal Law IRC 127, that an employee receiving reimbursement for a class may be subject to income tax and required to declare that reimbursement as income. For further information and the current maximum allowed, contact the Human Resources department.

Appeals

Appeals of denial may be made in writing to the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall have ultimate authority on approving, denying, or adjusting any tuition reimbursement requests.

Professional Development

Memberships and Dues

RAILS staff members participate in professional organizations and/or conferences to stay current in their skills, to identify trends affecting member libraries, and to develop knowledge and content for RAILS services.

RAILS will pay for one professional membership on a case-by-case basis, subject to the Executive Director's approval. RAILS employees are expected to use good judgment in the selection of professional memberships, and such memberships are expected to be used to the benefit of the employee's skills as they relate to RAILS. RAILS may pay for additional professional memberships when it is beneficial to RAILS. Executive Director approval is required.

RAILS will pay for one section or division in addition to general membership. RAILS also has organizational memberships in relevant organizations, which may provide benefits to individual employees, such as discounted fees for conferences, etc.

RAILS will also pay for one membership in a library-related professional organization for each board member. Membership in the Illinois Library Association is encouraged.

Conference/Workshops/Training Attendance

Conferences and training advance staff expertise by providing valuable opportunities to keep current on various tools necessary to perform day-to-day job responsibilities, to be knowledgeable of industry standards, to learn new tips and techniques, and to build an informed network of colleagues. This policy applies to multiple categories of training, such as conferences, seminars, workshops, and professional development.

When an employee attends a job-related conference, workshop, training class, etc., through RAILS, RAILS will allow the employee to count that time away from work as paid time, with their supervisor's advance approval. RAILS will pay nonexempt employees for travel time if it extends their normal commute time or workday in order for them to attend work-related conferences, provide emergency support, attend long-distance meetings, etc. The employee will be compensated for travel time in accordance with applicable law with their supervisor's advance approval. Employees should discuss pay rates with their supervisors.

When attending training or business directly from an employee's residence, no reimbursement will be made if the distance is less than the mileage of a normal commute to the workplace. If the distance is greater than the normal commute, reimbursement will be paid at the differential of the commute less than the mileage of a normal commute to the workplace.

Employees should make managers aware of their interest in a training opportunity or conference throughout the fiscal year. Ideally, requests should be communicated to the

immediate supervisor at the beginning of the calendar year to ensure that requests are incorporated into the upcoming fiscal year budget for the department.

Travel

RAILS will pay nonexempt employees for travel if it extends their normal commute time or workday in order for them to attend work-related conferences, provide emergency support, attend long-distance meetings, etc. The employee will be compensated for travel in accordance with applicable law, with their supervisor's advance approval.

RAILS recognizes that employees and RAILS Board of Director members may be required to travel for RAILS business from time to time. RAILS will reimburse full and part-time employees and RAILS Board of Director members for reasonable authorized expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties. All RAILS personnel and Board members are responsible for controlling travel and meeting expenses and are expected to exhibit good judgment, as well as to supply detailed receipts documenting expenses.

The purpose of this policy is to establish control of travel sufficient to prevent obligation of funds exceeding budget limitations and to hold travel to the minimum required for the efficient and economical conduct of the system's business. Whenever possible, RAILS business travel arrangements will be made using governmental entity discount rates.

There is no prohibition on a spouse and/or family member accompanying an employee or Board member on an official out-of-town trip that is eligible for reimbursement under this policy, provided that their presence does not detract from the performance of duty and all expenses attributable to the family member are paid by the employee by cost-allocating them from any receipts submitted for reimbursement.

There is no prohibition on a RAILS employee or Board member taking a vacation at the beginning or end of travel for RAILS business. In cases where vacation time is added to a business trip, any cost variance in airfare, car rental, lodging, and/or any other expenses related to personal travel must be clearly noted on receipts and eliminated from the Expense Reimbursement Form submitted for reimbursement.

If a RAILS employee or Board member is not able to attend a meeting for which RAILS has expended funds, then the individual will normally be required to reimburse RAILS, unless special circumstances exist and/or approval is obtained from the Executive Director.

Allowable Expenses

Ground Transportation

RAILS encourages the use of a RAILS-owned vehicle for transportation. If the use of a RAILS-owned vehicle is not possible, employees may use their own personal vehicle and request mileage reimbursement. For mileage expense reimbursements, RAILS follows the U.S. General Services Administration guidelines at <http://www.gsa.gov/>. These guidelines, upon entering a travel location, show maximum lodging rates (excluding taxes) and a daily meal and incidental expense amount for that location. Mileage will only be reimbursed for RAILS employees at the

number of miles originating from their assigned RAILS office or from their home, whichever is less. Mileage for RAILS board members will be reimbursed at the number of miles originating from their representative library or from their home, whichever is less.

If car rental is necessary or more cost-effective, all travelers are expected to rent intermediate sized cars or smaller unless special circumstances exist and prior approval from the Executive Director is obtained. Rental vehicles must be used for RAILS business only. Travelers must decline all fuel option pre-purchases and return the car with a full tank of gas or whatever amount is required to avoid a fuel charge. In addition, travelers are to decline all insurance options as this coverage is provided by RAILS for employees performing business travel. To be covered under the RAILS insurance policy, travelers must provide a copy of the RAILS auto insurance card to the rental company and be traveling solely on RAILS business. Rental vehicle usage is not eligible for mileage reimbursement, but other rental vehicle costs such as parking, tolls, and fuel are eligible for actual reimbursement. For rental vehicle expenses, RAILS requires employees to secure the lowest cost options that reasonably meet the required travel schedule.

Other types of ground transportation, such as rail, bus, or taxi, may be reimbursed if the costs and convenience justify their use, and their use is confined to RAILS business travel. Reasonable tips for taxi services are eligible for reimbursement.

Travelers may be reimbursed for the use of public transportation, ride share transportation such as Uber or Lyft, or taxi services to and from their homes to an airport or travel depot if driving their own vehicle and if the cost is less than the total cost of mileage and associated parking costs. Long-term parking must be used if a personal vehicle is used to travel to the airport, and the vehicle is to remain parked there during travel.

Airfare

For airfare expenses, RAILS will reimburse employees for the cost of a coach/economy airline ticket and baggage fees. Employees should secure the lowest cost option that reasonably meets the required travel schedule, and upgrades beyond coach/economy will not be reimbursed.

Meals

RAILS will reimburse actual and reasonable meal expenses when travel is required. A full day's meal and incidental expenses should not exceed the per diem amounts for the travel location as prescribed on the [U.S. General Services Administration website](#). This includes the reduction of meals and incidental expenses for the first and final days of travel.

In some cases, RAILS employees and board members may have shared meal expenses on a single receipt. If it is not possible or practical to request separate checks, the person responsible for payment for the group will be reimbursed upon providing a completed and signed expense reimbursement form accompanied by a detailed receipt with a list of employees and board members that dined with them. When possible, all alcoholic beverages should be placed on a separate check. Alcoholic beverage expenses are not eligible for reimbursement.

Expenses for meal delivery and transportation to meals may be reimbursed.

Tips for meals not to exceed 20% of the total bill will be reimbursed if documented.

Lodging

For lodging expenses, RAILS requires employees to secure lodging that offers a governmental rate where possible. Please note that RAILS employees are not State of Illinois employees, and are not eligible for State discounts, only a "governmental rate." Rates for lodging reimbursement should not exceed the actual cost of travel as determined by the General Services Administration for the travel location, unless pre-approved by the Executive Director. Any employee attending a conference or seminar may stay in accommodations arranged by the conference/seminar organizations and will be reimbursed for the conference lodging rates as negotiated for the event. When selecting hotels, the employees should choose hotels that are closest to the convention center or event and those offered up to the mid-price range. Luxury hotels at the top of the price range are to be avoided.

Rental lodging, such as Airbnb or VRBO, may be reimbursed if the costs and convenience justify their use. Employees must submit detailed receipts and a list of RAILS employees who shared the lodging. Any additional costs incurred for family members of employees staying in the lodging must be cost allocated out of any expense reimbursement requests.

Tips for cleaning staff will be reimbursed if reasonable (limited to \$5 per day) and documented.

Non-Allowable Expenses

- Alcoholic beverages
- Coat check
- Entertainment
- Repairs or towing of personal vehicles
- Late checkout and room guarantee charges (unless special circumstances exist and Executive Director approval is obtained)
- Parking tickets or other traffic tickets and charges associated with locksmith services
- Tips exceeding the limits mentioned above
- Travel insurance
- First class or business class airline tickets or upgrades
- Clothing and toiletry articles
- Expenses for family and friends traveling with employees

RAILS EMPLOYMENT

Employment Classifications

Each employee is designated as either nonexempt or exempt according to federal and state wage and hour laws. Nonexempt employees are entitled to overtime pay and are under the specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. Exempt employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws.

In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one other employment category:

Regular full-time employees are those who are not in a temporary or part-time status and who are regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 37.5 hours per week or more. Generally, they are eligible for the benefits in the RAILS benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

Regular part-time employees are those who work an average of less than 37.5 hours per week on a regular, authorized prearranged basis. Generally, they may be eligible for some of the benefits in the RAILS benefit package, in addition to those required by law, subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of the individual benefit program.

Temporary employees are those who work a 37.5 hour week or less over a designated, predetermined period of time, usually not to exceed six months. Temporary employees are not eligible for any of the benefits in the RAILS benefit package except those required by law.

The above classifications are for administrative use only. They do not alter the nature of the at-will employment relationship.

See Also

- Employee Benefits, page 87
- Insurance, page 90

Pay Periods and Procedures

Employees are paid biweekly (every two weeks). A pay period and payday schedule will be distributed at the beginning of each calendar year. If a payday falls on a holiday, the payday will be on the last prior workday. Direct deposit of funds is recommended, and employees are encouraged to receive payment via this option.

RAILS takes all reasonable steps to assure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday.

In the unlikely event that there is an error in the amount of pay, the employee should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of the Human Resources department so that corrections can be made as quickly as possible. Once legitimate underpayments are identified, they will be corrected in the next regular paycheck.

Overpayments will also be corrected in the next regular paycheck unless this presents a burden to the employee (where there is a substantial amount owed). In that case, RAILS will attempt to arrange a schedule of repayments with the employee to minimize the inconvenience to all involved.

Use of Benefit Time

Employees may not use benefit time (such as vacation, PLAW, or sick leave) in a manner that results in their total hours exceeding their weekly scheduled hours. If benefit time causes an employee's total hours to surpass their scheduled hours for the week, the excess benefit time will be adjusted accordingly to align with the employee's weekly schedule.

Managers and employees are responsible for monitoring benefit time usage to ensure compliance. Any necessary adjustments will be made through payroll processing.

Personnel Files, References, and Background Checks

Personnel Files

Employee personnel records are maintained in our Human Resources department. For purposes of this policy, a basic personnel file includes records related to performance and training as well as other records used for hiring, promotion, and disciplinary decisions. The basic personnel file does not include any reference checks, medical records, investigation files, or confidential records, which are kept in a separate confidential file.

Employees may request access to their basic personnel file. All requests for access to your basic personnel file must be provided in writing. Upon receipt of your written request, Human Resources will schedule an appointment for you to view your file during normal office hours. Employees are not permitted to remove any documents from the basic personnel file, but may provide a written response to any document in the personnel file. Written responses will be attached to the original document in the basic personnel file.

Employees may request copies of documents in their basic personnel file. Requests for copies must also be made in writing (For the purposes of this document, “email” equals “in writing”) to Human Resources.

References

RAILS must have a signed consent authorizing RAILS to release any information from the individual's personnel records to the specifically named organization. To be acceptable, this consent must indicate the general and specific types of information that can be released and release RAILS from all potential liability related to the authorized disclosure.

All requests for reference checks shall be referred to the Human Resources department to ensure uniformity and consistency. HR staff may consult with person(s) more familiar with the employee's work history.

RAILS will provide the following minimum information in response to a reference inquiry:

- Verification that the individual worked for RAILS as a full- or part-time employee and the period during which the individual was employed.
- Verification of the position or positions held by the individual during their tenure of employment.
- Salary information may be released only for purposes of loan applications.

Any references by RAILS employees about current or former RAILS employees should not be on RAILS letterhead and are to be viewed as personal references from the author, not necessarily the opinion of RAILS.

Government Requests for Information

The only exception to the above procedures applies to information requests received by RAILS from federal, state, or local authorities, including officials and authorized representatives of the courts, as well as law enforcement and other government agencies. This exception also applies to information requests related to civil or criminal litigation, including subpoenas, discovery requests, and other legal process served in connection with lawsuits or legal proceedings. RAILS normally honors all such requests and provides the information sought in the form requested by the agency or official. When RAILS is requested to provide information about an employee or former employee in response to a subpoena or other legal process, it normally informs or attempts to inform the individual about the disclosure. However, RAILS reserves the right to refrain from informing individuals of government information requests related to an ongoing investigation of criminal activity.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Personnel information may be given where allowed by law.

Background Checks

RAILS reserves the right to use a RAILS representative or third-party agency to conduct background checks. RAILS will notify applicants before conducting any reference or background checks. Employment with RAILS is contingent upon the successful completion of the background check process. Any offer of employment is conditional until the background check is completed and reviewed to ensure compliance with RAILS' hiring standards. Some roles require employment verification and reference checks. An additional background check may be required for a promotion.

Consumer Reporting Agency

For positions involving security responsibilities or significant financial accountability, RAILS reserves the right to request a consumer reporting agency to prepare an investigative consumer report on the applicant. Along with credit and employment history, such a report typically includes information about an individual's character, reputation, and mode of living, obtained through personal interviews with an applicant's neighbors, acquaintances, associates, and friends. RAILS must obtain an applicant's consent before requesting such a report. All federal and state credit reporting laws will be followed during the background check process, including the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).

If the results of a credit report are negative, RAILS will inform the applicant that it plans on taking adverse action, provide the applicant with a Statement of Consumer Rights from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) before adverse action, provide the applicant the opportunity to review a copy of their credit report, and advise the applicant of their rights to dispute inaccurate information. Applicants should be granted a reasonable time to contest the information (approximately 3-5 days).

Inaccurate or Fraudulent Information

RAILS will eliminate from further consideration for employment any applicant who provides false, misleading, or willfully deceptive information on their job application or resume or during an interview. Employees hired based on false information discovered after employment begins are subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

Overtime/Timekeeping

Every effort is made to allocate overtime work fairly and to the best interest of everyone. When overtime is necessary, employees will be notified as far in advance as possible. Employees are expected to work overtime if additional work effort is required to serve our members.

Overtime is paid only after a nonexempt employee has worked more than forty (40) hours during the workweek. All overtime is paid at one and one-half the employee's regular hourly rate. Nonexempt employees must have supervisor authorization before working overtime. Working unauthorized overtime is prohibited and may be disciplined up to and including termination. All employees must complete weekly time sheets. The time sheet is an employee's time record, and it is important. It is the basis of the employee's pay record.

Falsification of this record or failure to accurately and/or complete in a timely manner the record is subject to discipline up to and including termination, or may delay the employee's paycheck until the next pay period.

Compensatory Time

Eligible employees are nonexempt employees who are subject to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Exempt employees under the terms of the FLSA are not eligible employees.

Accrual of Compensatory Time

For each hour of overtime worked by an eligible employee in a given workweek for which the employee elects to accrue compensatory time, one and one-half (1.5) hours of compensatory time shall accrue. Eligible employees may accrue not more than 22.5 hours of compensatory time, computed as one and one-half hours of compensatory time for not more than 15 hours of overtime work. Eligible employees may roll-over a maximum of 22.5 hours of compensatory time to the next year, and will not continue to accrue additional hours until the compensatory time balance falls below 22.5 hours.

Use

An eligible employee who has accrued compensatory time shall be allowed to use said time within a reasonable period following accrual, so long as the operations of RAILS are not unduly disrupted, preferably within the current or subsequent pay period. Compensatory time shall not be counted as hours worked in the period in which such hours are used. No more than 22.5 hours of compensatory time may be taken consecutively and must be scheduled with the approval of the immediate supervisor.

Payment on Termination

An eligible employee who is terminated, and who has accrued compensatory time, shall be monetarily reimbursed for such accrued compensatory time at a rate not less than the average rate of pay for the preceding three years, or the final regular rate of pay, whichever is higher.

Records

Records shall be maintained to evidence the overtime hours worked by each eligible employee in a given workweek, if any, and the number of hours of compensatory time accrued by each eligible employee, if any.

Monetary Reimbursement in Lieu of Compensatory Time

Nothing herein shall prohibit RAILS, at RAILS' option, of freely substituting payment via monetary reimbursement, in whole or in part, for compensatory time off; and an overtime payment monetarily reimbursed does not affect subsequent granting of compensatory time in future workweeks or work periods. Monetary reimbursements to an employee for accrued compensatory time may be made at any time except that on termination, such payment shall be made pursuant to this policy. No employee shall otherwise have the right to receive, upon request, monetary reimbursement in lieu of accrued compensatory time.

Transitional Duty Program

The Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) is committed to providing employees with available, reasonable opportunities to maintain career and employment status and benefits. To that end, we have developed a Transitional Duty Program for employees who have sustained injuries arising out of and in the course of their employment with their respective work-related injury. We feel that a Transitional Duty Program is mutually beneficial and may aid in the employee's recovery.

Purpose

The purpose of the Transitional Duty Program is to provide a temporary modified work assignment to the employees with injuries arising in the course of their employment with RAILS when feasible, available, and applicable. The feasibility of Transitional Duty will be determined in the sole discretion of RAILS.

Objectives

- To return occupationally injured employees to work as soon as possible provided there is not a probability of re-injury or aggravation of an injury to themselves, and the return to work does not directly or indirectly adversely jeopardize the safety of others or is otherwise potentially detrimental to RAILS.
- To minimize financial hardship and emotional stress to the employee who has sustained an occupational injury.
- To assist employees in returning to work at a level close to their pre-injury earnings and productivity.

Basic Program Requirements

1. Information Gathering

An employee with an occupational injury must promptly notify Human Resources of any and all changes or modifications to the employee's work restrictions. Human Resources will, with the employee's cooperation, obtain a list of duties the employee is capable of performing and any of the employee's physical limitations. Human Resources may ask an employee entitled to receive disability payments under the Act or currently on Transitional Duty to undergo a medical examination for the purpose of determining the nature, extent, and probable duration of the injury. This examination by a duly qualified medical practitioner or surgeon selected by RAILS or by RAILS's Third-Party Administrators will be coordinated at a time and place reasonably convenient to the employee.

2. Creation of Assignment

RAILS Human Resources will provide the employee's immediate supervisor with a Physical Evaluation Form. The immediate supervisor will work with the department

director or manager in assigning Transitional Duty to the employee, if possible or applicable. In some cases, departments may not have any available Modified Duty tasks.

3. Time Limits and Compensation

Transitional Duty assignments will not create a new job, but instead will incorporate or modify an existing position on a temporary basis.

A time limit will be established on a case-by-case basis for the length of time that Transitional Duty will be made available. This time limit shall be subject to review and revision at the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

RAILS will compensate an employee on Transitional Duty at the employee's regular pay rate.

4. Notification

RAILS Human Resources will provide the employee with written notification of the Transitional Duty assignment which includes a description of the position, its physical requirements, and the date the employee is expected to report to the assignment.

5. Compliance

An employee who declines a Transitional Duty position, which is within the limitations, as determined by the treating physician or qualified independent physician, may be subject to disciplinary action and possible dismissal. The employee may also lose eligibility for workers compensation temporary total disability benefits.

6. Review and Modification of Assignment

All Transitional Duty assignments are subject to continuing review of the existing medical restrictions of the employee. RAILS departments will continue to develop and coordinate appropriate duty assignments with Human Resources and immediate supervisor.

Hours of Work and Meal/Break Periods

Department supervisors shall determine and establish a daily and weekly schedule of normal work hours necessary to provide services. The schedule may be temporarily changed in order to meet emergency or other defined needs as outlined in other policies. It is the personal responsibility of each employee to be at their workstation and fully prepared to begin work at the time the scheduled work hours begin. Employees are not permitted to alter work hours without the permission of the supervisor.

Altering work hours includes arriving early and then leaving early and/or arriving late and staying late. Employees are not authorized to trade hours without the permission of the supervisor.

An employee who works 7.5 continuous hours or more shall be provided an unpaid meal period of at least 30 minutes and two 15-minute paid breaks. Employees may schedule their own meal/break periods as long as meal/break periods are staggered to ensure department coverage. Breaks are not permitted at either the beginning or end of the workday to offset arrival and departure times. An employee who works in excess of 7.5 continuous hours must take an additional unpaid meal break of at least 30 minutes for every additional 4.5 continuous hours worked. Meal time does not include reasonable time spent using the restroom facilities. RAILS compensates rest or break time as work time but not unpaid meal periods.

The meal period must be taken no later than five hours after beginning work. Employees must be completely relieved of all duties during their meal break. If a non-exempt employee is required to perform any work during this time, the meal period will be considered compensable. Employees on rest or meal breaks cannot interfere with employees who are working.

Nursing Employees and Lactation Room

Lactation

Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) complies with all federal and applicable state laws concerning pumping or nursing employees and supports employees who want to express and store breast milk during working hours.

Break Time for Lactation Purposes

Employees can take reasonable paid break periods during the workday to express breast milk. Such employees can take breaks each time they need to express milk beginning from the date of the nursing child's birth and for up to one year. Requests for additional unpaid time after one year may be given consideration.

Employees can use their meal and break times for lactation purposes and will be compensated at their regular rate of pay. If employees need break time to express milk in addition to their scheduled break and mealtimes, they should inform their supervisor(s) and Human Resources. Employees will not be required to use paid leave during break time used for nursing.

Private Room

For the convenience and privacy of nursing employees, RAILS provides a private space with functioning locks, in close proximity to the work area, other than a toilet stall. Questions should be directed to Human Resources.

Remote Work

RAILS has established a remote work policy with the recognition that remote work can contribute to organizational objectives and employee well-being. These guidelines offer direction for remote work and management.

Purpose

Remote work offers employees more opportunities for work-life balance when it is advantageous to both RAILS and the employee. A remote work policy helps employees balance the demands of their work and personal lives. Remote work can also be an effective workplace strategy when the work can be accomplished remotely. Remote work is always considered in balance with how the work is best accomplished, it is not an employee right.

An employee's compensation, benefits, work status, and work responsibilities will not change due to participation in the remote work program. Remote working employees must comply with all organizational rules, policies, and procedures.

Eligibility

The opportunity to remote work must be approved by the employee's supervisor, who is ultimately responsible for decisions to continue, modify, or discontinue the opportunity, following appropriate notification (a minimum of two weeks' notice) to the employee. The decision to allow an employee to work remotely will be made in consultation with Human Resources.

RAILS recognizes the difference between regularly occurring remote work and remote work that may happen on a very intermittent or emergency basis due to factors outside of the control of the organization. Every effort will be made to give notice to employees in case a pivot to remote work is required.

Selection of employees to participate in the RAILS remote work program shall be based on specific, written, work-related criteria including:

- Assessing the scope of the work
- Employee responsibilities and job functions
- Need for, and nature of, interaction with other staff and external customers
- Need for specialized equipment
- Operational needs and/or availability of other qualified employees on site
- Employee job performance (performance criteria will be based on formal written infractions issued to an employee that result in disciplinary action)

To be considered for remote working, an employee must be able to communicate effectively, work independently, and demonstrate excellent productivity and time management. The

resources that an employee needs to do their job must be easily transportable or available electronically.

Eligibility and suitability of employees to participate in the remote work program will vary among departments, depending on the function and responsibilities of the employee.

Remote working is not an alternative to child or elder care and, when applicable, the employee must make appropriate arrangements for dependent care.

[Application Process](#)

Remote workers will be required to sign a Remote Work Agreement and complete associated documentation.

Remote work arrangements will be on a trial basis for the first three months and may be discontinued or modified at any time at the request of either the remote worker or RAILS. If a remote work arrangement is discontinued by RAILS, every effort will be made to provide notice to the employee. However, there may be instances where no notice is possible. Likewise, if an employee elects to discontinue a remote work arrangement, the employee should provide notice to their supervisor. RAILS may need to provide temporary accommodations for an employee discontinuing remote work until a more permanent accommodation can be provided.

[Schedules and Hours](#)

Remote work hours may be different from office work hours; however, remote workers and their supervisors must agree on designated work hours. A regular schedule must be established by the remote worker and approved by their supervisor. Employees are expected to work scheduled hours that include the core hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. The amount of time the remote worker is expected to work per day or per pay period will not change due to participation in the remote work program. Remote hourly workers should get advance permission in writing from their supervisor before working any hours beyond their designated work hours or changing or “flexing” their work hours.

Staff may be required to work in the office upon hire, even if coworkers in similar roles have an approved remote schedule.

Employees must communicate with their supervisor about any travel concurrent with remote work. RAILS employees are expected to maintain a regular residence within the state of Illinois unless an agreement has been reached in writing with their supervisor and Human Resources. Approvals for out-of-state residency of RAILS employees will be handled on a case-by case basis. Remote workers must keep their supervisor and Human Resources notified of any changes to their home/remote contact information.

Supervisors retain the right to require a remote worker to return to the office on a regularly scheduled remote workday should work situations warrant such an action. If a remote worker is frequently required to return to the office during regularly scheduled remote workdays, the

supervisor may re-evaluate the compatibility of the remote worker's job responsibilities with respect to remote working, or the specific remote work schedule. Other performance standards and expectations for remote work may be set by the remote worker's supervisor.

Remote workers are required to account for all time worked in accordance with RAILS' current timekeeping policies. It is the remote worker's responsibility to submit an accurate accounting of hours worked in a timely manner. If a remote worker is sick while working at home or uses other time off, the remote worker must report hours actually worked on their timesheet and use relevant paid leave for the remainder of the hours. RAILS policy will be followed for all absences. Remote workers are responsible for keeping and submitting accurate records of their work hours.

Workspace

Remote workers must have an appropriate work area in their home/remote work location that considers ergonomics, equipment, workspace, noise, and interruption factors. The remote worker's off-site workspace should provide an adequate work area, lighting, power, temperature control, ventilation, and a reliable internet connection (minimum speed of 10MBs download and 1MBs upload per person using the internet). Additional requirements may vary, depending on the nature of the work and the equipment needed to perform the work.

Injuries sustained by the employee in conjunction with their regular work duties during the approved work schedule and in the remote worker's designated work location may be covered by RAILS workers' compensation insurance.

The designated work location must meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety rules for the workplace, including smoke detectors; working fire extinguisher; clear, unobstructed exits; removal of hazards that could cause falls; adequate electrical circuitry; and appropriate furniture. Employees are expected to maintain their remote workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. Remote workers are responsible for notifying RAILS of any work-related injuries immediately or as soon as practicable, and generally within 24 hours of sustaining the injury. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by household members or visitors to his or her home worksite.

Homeowner's insurance and any changes in rates or coverage are the responsibility of the employee. RAILS provides remote workers with a telecommuting monthly stipend, which is intended to reimburse the employee for remote working expenses incurred, particularly those related to technology. Any increase in the remote worker's home utility and internet costs is the responsibility of the employee.

Federal and state statutory abstracts will be posted at the remote worker's RAILS office location and on the RAILS intranet in lieu of posting them in the employee's home/remote office. Remote workers should review these notices while on RAILS premises.

Remote workers should consult their attorneys, tax advisors, or accountants regarding any legal or tax implications attendant to working at their home or alternative site.

Equipment and Supplies

Remote workers may use RAILS-owned equipment at their off-site workspace with the prior approval of their supervisor, provided that the equipment will be used for RAILS work only and will not impede the work of employees working at the RAILS office.

RAILS will supply the employee with one laptop, up to two monitors, and one docking station, along with any necessary peripheral equipment. Additional keyboards and mice are available on request. Equipment supplied by RAILS is to be used for business purposes only. In some cases, remote workers may use their own equipment, with prior authorization from RAILS, provided that no cost is incurred by RAILS and other RAILS procedures are followed. The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within their home for work purposes, including determining whether any or all equipment will be relocated to their off-site workspace.

Office supplies will be provided by RAILS and should be obtained during the remote worker's in-office work period. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally available in the office will not be reimbursed. Remote workers are responsible for all supplies, equipment, and/or materials provided by RAILS. All items remain property of RAILS and may not be used for personal or other than RAILS use. Employees will not be reimbursed for any expenses associated with work supplies or equipment without prior authorization from RAILS. RAILS reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time.

Remote workers must take appropriate action to protect organization-provided equipment from damage or theft. RAILS equipment must be returned to RAILS when an employee terminates or discontinues the remote work arrangement. In some cases, remote workers may use their own equipment provided that no cost is incurred by RAILS. Repair and maintenance of employee-owned equipment is the responsibility of the remote worker. RAILS accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment.

Employee Access and Availability

Remote workers must be available by phone, chat, and/or email during scheduled hours, except for their scheduled lunch period, breaks, or for work functions when they may be unavailable during a period of time. Regular clear communication with supervisors is key for access and availability. Supervisors may establish that employees are required to check for messages within a certain period (e.g., at least once every two hours).

Security and Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of the remote worker to take all precautions necessary to secure confidential information and to prevent unauthorized access. The remote worker is required to observe all office security practices when working outside RAILS' office to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of information. Steps to ensure the protection of proprietary information

include, but are not limited to, use of locked file cabinets and desks; regular password maintenance; and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment. The Virtual Private Network (VPN) used by RAILS staff to access files remotely provides security for the transfer of files to and from the shared network.

Income Tax

It will be the remote worker's responsibility to determine any income tax implications of maintaining a home office area. RAILS will not provide tax guidance nor will RAILS assume any additional tax liabilities. Employees are encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional to discuss income tax implications.

Evaluation

Remote workers will be required to participate in all studies, surveys, training, inquiries, reports, and analyses relating to this program. No employee will be terminated on the basis of working remotely.

Failure to comply with the Terms and Conditions of the Remote Work Policy may be cause for disciplinary action and/or termination of the agreement.

Performance Reviews

The RAILS management philosophy is that regular discussions between supervisors and staff will help ensure that all staff performance will be excellent. Regular discussions about project work, goal achievement and any job challenges are expected of all RAILS staff. Official performance evaluations are scheduled annually on the employee's start date anniversary. In the case of performance problems, more frequent reviews may be conducted.

Salary Adjustments

Salary adjustments are considered separately from performance reviews and are generally determined annually during the budget process. The budget, which contains these salary increases, is then approved by the RAILS board before the increases are granted.

Complaint Reporting Process

RAILS encourages employees to discuss issues openly with their supervisor or Human Resources. Additionally, RAILS encourages employees who have complaints arising from their employment to try to resolve the problem with the person(s) involved. If the employee is not able to resolve the issue, or for any reason, the employee may choose to use the complaint reporting procedure to address problems that may occur in the workplace. If an employee has a complaint, problem or situation that needs to be addressed, employee may use the following procedure:

- The employee may discuss the situation with their supervisor as soon as possible. The employee should give the supervisor an opportunity to review and then get back to the employee. The supervisor will meet with the employee and give a response within five working days of discussing the complaint with the employee. In most cases, the problem can, and should be resolved with a frank and open discussion between employees and their immediate supervisors.
- If the employee is not satisfied with the supervisor's response or feels the problem is not resolved, the employee can present the problem in writing to the Human Resources Director as soon as possible. The employee should give the Human Resources Director an opportunity to investigate the situation and get back to the employee in writing within five working days, unless such investigation requires a longer period of time.
- If the employee is still not satisfied that the problem is resolved, the employee can present the problem in writing to the Executive Director. The employee should give the Executive Director an opportunity to review the situation and get back to the employee in writing within 10 working days, unless an investigation requires a longer period of time.

See Also

- Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment, page 10

Termination of Employment

All employment relationships with RAILS are on an at-will basis. Thus, although RAILS hopes that the employee relationship is long-term and mutually rewarding, RAILS reserves the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time.

Employees desiring to terminate their employment relationship with RAILS are urged to notify RAILS at least two weeks in advance of their intended termination. Such notice preferably should be given in writing to the employee's supervisor. Proper notice generally allows RAILS sufficient time to calculate all accrued overtime and vacation payout (if applicable), as well as any other amounts to which the employee may be entitled, so that these can be included in the final paycheck.

Exit interviews with Human Resources are normally scheduled for outgoing employees after the notice of intent to terminate is received. The purposes of this interview are to review eligibility for benefit continuation and conversion, to ensure that all necessary forms are completed, to collect all RAILS' property that may be in the employee's possession (e.g., keys), and to provide employees with an opportunity to discuss their job-related experiences.

Employees who terminate their employment relationship with RAILS are welcome to reapply for employment with RAILS in the future. If rehired, such employees will not be credited for any previous service with RAILS.

See Also

- COBRA Benefits, page 92
- Retirement Plan, page 93
- Other Retirement and Benefit Programs, page 94

GLOSSARY OF TERMS (INCOMPLETE)

Term	Definition
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
Excused absence	Occurs when the employee provides at least 24 hours' notice, receives supervisor approval, and has enough PTO to cover the time off
FMLA	Family and Medical Leave of Absence
Immediate family member	The employee's child (including stepchild or foster child), spouse or domestic partner, sibling, parent, parent-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, stepparent, and members of your household
Members of your household	Members of your household include those who live with you as their permanent residence
PLAW	RAILS' paid personal leave under the Illinois Paid Leave for All Workers Act
RAILS Property	Any building, facility, office, common area, open space, vehicle, parking lot, or other area owned, leased, managed, used or controlled by RAILS. RAILS Property also includes property used by RAILS patrons while on RAILS sponsored events or property of others when presence thereon by RAILS employees is related to employment with RAILS
VESSA	Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act
Whistleblower	An employee of RAILS who reports an activity that they consider to be illegal, unethical, or harmful to one or more of the parties specified in this policy
Working time	The time when an employee is actively engaged in performing their job duties