Employee & Volunteer Handbook

Arrowbear Park

County Water District

2026

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Welcome to the Arrowbear Park County Water District family.

Whether you work in the field, the office, or serve as part of the Arrowbear Lake Fire Department, your efforts protect and sustain this mountain community every day. Our District is small but mighty, we provide clean drinking water, safe sewer service, and dependable fire protection for our customers and visitors alike.

This handbook is here to guide you through the essentials of working for a public agency. It's written in plain language, so you can read it easily after a long shift or a busy workday. If something isn't clear, ask, we're a team, and communication is part of what keeps our District strong.

Thank you for your service, your dedication, and your care for Arrowbear Lake. What you do truly matters.

— Chris Dumas, General Manager
Arrowbear Park County Water District

Board of Directors Approval

This Arrowbear Park County Water District Employee & Volunteer Handbook (2026) was reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors of the Arrowbear Park County Water District at a duly noticed public meeting.

Adopted and Effective this *20th day of August 2026*

Board Member	Title	Signature
Terisa Bonito	Board President	_____

Contents

Handbook Section	Contents	Pages
Section 1 – About the District	**Who We Are and How We're Governed - District Services - District Administration and Supervision – District Flow Chart - Employees and Volunteers - Mission, Vision, and Core Values - Ethics and Public Trust - Policy Changes and Updates**	4–6
Section 2 – Working for the District	**Purpose and Applicability - Employment Relationships (Employees & Volunteers) - Orientation and Onboarding - Training and Development - Probationary Period -Transparency and Public Service - Professional Expectations**	7–10
Section 3 – Job Classifications & Roles	**Why Classifications Matter - Employment Categories - Job Descriptions - Fire Department Roles - Administration Roles - Field Operations Roles - Chain of Command - Training - Personnel Files – Promotions and Advancement**	11–14
Section 4 – Work Hours, Pay & Scheduling	**Work Hours and Schedules - Meal and Rest Breaks -Compensation Authority - Pay Periods and Time Reporting - Overtime and Compensatory Time - Standby / On-Call Duty - Shift Swaps and Coverage - Weather and Emergency Operations - Volunteer Firefighter Call Response - Payroll Deductions**	15–18
Section 5 – Benefits, Leave & Time Off	**Overview of Benefits - Health and Medical Coverage - Retirement (CalPERS) - Holidays - Vacation Leave - Sick Leave - Family, Medical, and Disability Leave - Bereavement Leave - Jury Duty - Military Leave - Unpaid Leave of Absence - Workers' Compensation - Wellness and Employee Assistance**	19–23
Section 6 – Standards of Conduct	**Professional Conduct - Use of District Property and Equipment - Attendance and Reliability - Conflict of Interest and Ethical Conduct - Confidentiality and Public Information - Outside Employment - Nepotism and Personal Relationships - Uniforms, Safety Equipment, and Appearance - Substance-Free Workplace - Social Media and Public Communication -Public Trust and Accountability**	24–27
Section 7 – Respectful & Safe Workplace	**Equal Employment Opportunity - Equal Pay and Fair Pay Practices - Harassment and Discrimination - Sexual Harassment - Reporting and Investigation Procedures - Workplace Violence Prevention - Bullying and Intimidation - Whistleblower Protection - Reasonable Accommodation - Lactation Accommodation - Retaliation Prohibited - General Concerns and Escalation**	28–32
Section 8 – Health, Safety & Environmental Protection	**Safety Responsibilities - Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) - Reporting Injuries and Hazards - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Heat Illness Prevention - Indoor Air Quality and Wildfire Smoke - Smoking and Vaping - Hazard Communication - Environmental Protection - Emergency Preparedness**	33–36
Section 9 – Technology & District Property	**General Use Principles - Vehicles and Driving - Facilities and Tools - Computers, Phones, and Electronic Systems - Acceptable and Unacceptable Use - Email and Public Records - Phones and Radios - Social Media and Public Image - Confidential Information - Issued Equipment and Uniforms - Monitoring and Privacy**	37–39
Section 10 – Discipline, Performance & Separation	**Performance Expectations - Performance Evaluations - Progressive Discipline - Pre-Disciplinary Due Process (Skelly) - Appeals -Recognition and Reinforcement - Resignation and Retirement - Exit Interviews - Layoff or Reduction in Force - Separation of Volunteers - Final Pay and Benefits - Rehire Eligibility**	40–45
Section 11 – Acknowledgment & Resources	**Employee & Volunteer Acknowledgment - Key District Contacts - Reporting Resources and Hotlines**	46–47

SECTION 1 – ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Who We Are and How We're Governed
Arrowbear Park County Water District (APCWD) was formed in 1953 through voter approval and certified by the California Secretary of State pursuant to the County Water District Law (Water Code §30000 et seq.). The District remains an independent, locally governed special district serving the Arrowbear Lake mountain community.

APCWD provides water, sewer, and fire protection services under authority granted by the California Water Code. Unlike many small mountain districts, APCWD produces all of its own drinking water supply and operates as a self-sufficient water provider, maintaining local control over water production, storage, and distribution.

The District was originally authorized to exercise additional powers under the Water Code, including recreational and sanitation services. While those authorities remain part of the District's statutory framework, the District currently focuses its operations on water production and distribution, sewer collection, and fire protection services.

APCWD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors elected by the residents of Arrowbear Lake. Acting collectively at duly noticed public meetings, the Board serves as the District's legislative and policy-setting body.

District Services
The District provides the following services:

> **Water Service** – Delivering safe, reliable drinking water to Arrowbear residents, businesses and other water districts.
>
> **Sewer Service** – Maintaining sewer collection systems and ensuring wastewater is properly conveyed for treatment.
>
> **Fire Protection and Emergency Response** – Provided through the Arrowbear Lake Fire Department, staffed primarily by dedicated volunteers and funded primarily through property tax revenue, with administrative support from the District.

Board of Directors – Role and Responsibilities
The Board acts collectively at properly noticed public meetings. Individual Board members do not have authority to direct staff, make operational decisions, or act on behalf of the District outside of Board action.

The Board's responsibilities include:

- Establishing District policy and long-term strategic direction.
- Adopting the annual budget, rates, and fees.
- Approving contracts, agreements, and capital projects.

- Adopting rules, regulations, and policies that guide District operations.
- Acting as a legislative and policy-setting body that governs by majority vote at duly noticed meetings.

District Administration and Supervision

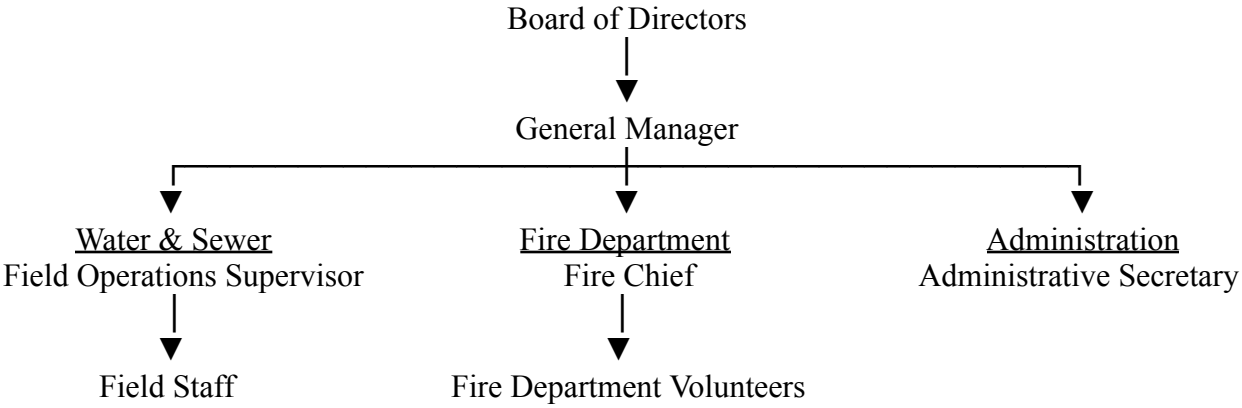
General Manager -The General Manager serves as the District's Executive Officer, responsible for implementing Board policy and overseeing all day-to-day operations, staff management, and administration of District services.

Fire Chief -The Fire Chief, appointed by the General Manager, leads the Arrowbear Lake Fire Department and manages fire suppression, emergency medical services, training, and community emergency response programs under the District's authority.

Field Operations Supervisor -The Field Operations Supervisor oversees the District's water and sewer systems and manages daily field operations, maintenance, and regulatory compliance.

Administrative Secretary - The Administrative Secretary provides administrative, clerical, and customer service support for District operations, governance, and public interaction, and serves as the Board Secretary.

District Flow Chart



Employees and Volunteers

All employees and volunteers represent the District when performing assigned duties or responding to incidents on behalf of APCWD. Everyone is expected to act professionally and in accordance with District policies, procedures, and safety standards.

Our Mission

The mission of the Arrowbear Park County Water District is to provide the highest quality water, sewer, and fire protection services to the community of Arrowbear Lake in the most economical and efficient manner possible. Our goal is to accomplish our mission with the highest standards

of integrity, ethics, accountability, and transparency. As public servants we pledge to provide prompt and courteous service to the community we serve.

Our Vision

A self-sufficient mountain community supported by modern infrastructure, protected natural resources, and well-trained personnel committed to service, safety, and stewardship.

Our Core Values

Integrity – We act honestly, ethically, and transparently.

Service – We take pride in serving the community and supporting one another.

Safety – We are committed to the safety of coworkers, volunteers, and neighbors.

Accountability – We use public resources responsibly and take ownership of our actions.

Teamwork – We work together across water, sewer, and fire services as one District.

Stewardship – We protect local water resources, care for the environment, and prepare for emergencies with long-term sustainability in mind.

Our Commitment to the Community

Every employee and volunteer represents the District through their actions and decisions, whether maintaining infrastructure, responding to emergencies, or assisting customers. We are committed to professional service, environmental responsibility, and community trust.

Ethics and Public Trust

As a public agency, the Arrowbear Park County Water District operates with high standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability. All employees and volunteers are expected to avoid conflicts of interest, comply with gift limitations, and act in the public's best interest at all times.

Policy Changes and Updates

The District's policies, procedures, and this handbook may be amended or replaced by the Board of Directors as necessary to meet operational, legal, or organizational needs. Employees and volunteers will be notified of changes within a reasonable time, and continued employment or service after notice constitutes acknowledgment and compliance.

This handbook provides general guidance only and does not create a contract of employment or limit the District's authority to manage its operations in accordance with Board action and applicable law. In the event of any conflict between this handbook and adopted Board policies, resolutions, ordinances, or applicable law, the controlling authority shall prevail.

SECTION 2 – WORKING FOR THE DISTRICT

Purpose of This Section
This section explains what it means to be an employee or volunteer with the Arrowbear Park County Water District, how the working relationship is structured, and the values that guide how we treat one another. No matter where you serve, in the field, the office, or on a fire crew, this section explains how the District handles fairness, accountability and professional conduct.

Who This Handbook Applies To
This handbook applies to:

All District employees, full-time, part-time, temporary, and seasonal.

All Volunteer members of the Arrowbear Lake Fire Department.

It also provides general guidance for other individuals who may perform services under contract or mutual-aid agreements, although contractors and partner agencies operate under separate agreements.

Our Employment Relationship
Working for the Arrowbear Park County Water District means working for a public agency, not a private company. Every employee and volunteer is part of a team that serves the residents of Arrowbear Lake and operates under State and Federal laws that govern public employment, safety, and ethics.

Regular-*and Part-Time Employees* (For Cause):
Regular full-time *and Part-Time* employees who have successfully completed their probationary period may be disciplined or separated only for cause, in accordance with Board-adopted personnel policies, applicable District resolutions, and state and federal law.

This for-cause status arises from formal action of the Board of Directors and not from this handbook itself. This handbook summarizes applicable procedures but does not create, expand, or modify any vested employment rights beyond those established by Board policy or law.

Temporary Employees (At Will):
Seasonal, and temporary employees serve at will, meaning their employment may be ended by either the employee or the District at any time, with or without cause or notice, consistent with applicable law.

Volunteer Service:
Members of the Arrowbear Lake Fire Department serve as volunteers appointed by the Fire Chief. Volunteers are not employees and do not have employment status,

compensation rights, or property interests in continued services. However, volunteers are covered by many of the same safety, conduct, and liability protections while performing authorized duties. Volunteer status may be ended or changed as needed for operational or safety reasons.

New Employee and Volunteer Orientation

The District provides every new employee and volunteer with a structured orientation to ensure safety, readiness, and understanding of District policies and values. Orientation is tailored to the person's role, whether in administration, field operations, or fire protection, and follows requirements established in District policies and State law.

Administrative Orientation

All new hires and volunteers begin with administrative orientation designed to familiarize them with District operations and required documentation.
During this phase, participants will:

- Complete all required forms (employment eligibility, tax forms, acknowledgments, and emergency contacts).
- Receive copies of the Employee & Volunteer Handbook.
- Review expectations for conduct, confidentiality, and safety.
- Be introduced to the District's mission, departments, and chain of command.
- Learn timekeeping procedures, pay schedules, communication systems, and attendance expectations.

New employees may also complete pre-employment requirements such as background checks or medical screenings, consistent with applicable law and District policy.

District Safety and Operational Training

Before performing any independent work, new employees and volunteers must complete basic safety orientation in accordance with the District's Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP**)**. Supervisors document all training and ensure new staff are competent in required skills before assignment.

This training includes:

- Hazard recognition, safe work practices, and emergency procedures.
- Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and safe operation of District tools and vehicles.
- Procedures for reporting injuries, hazards, or unsafe conditions.

- Orientation to the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and coordination under the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).

Field Operations Orientation
Field personnel receive additional instruction specific to the District's water and sewer systems, including but not limited to:

- Facility tours of wells, tanks, and lift stations.
- Safe work procedures for confined spaces, trenching, and chemical handling.
- Operation of valves, hydrants, and emergency generators.

Fire Department Orientation
New volunteer firefighters participate in a structured orientation program that includes but is not limited to:

- An introduction to the Arrowbear Lake Fire Department organization, values, and command structure.
- Issuance of District ID, uniforms, and protective gear.
- Completion of required probationary firefighter training and certifications, such as:
    - Firefighter safety and PPE use.
    - SCBA use and respiratory protection.
    - Bloodborne pathogens and communicable disease prevention.
    - FEMA IS-100, IS-700, and IS-800 courses.
    - Harassment prevention and HIPAA compliance.
    - Workplace violence and hazard recognition.
- Practical training at the Fire Station and live drills under supervision before participating in emergency response.

Probationary Period
All new employees and volunteers serve a probationary period during which performance, attendance, training progress, and adherence to District standards are evaluated. Formal performance reviews are typically conducted at three (3) and six (6) months for new employees.

Volunteer Fire Department members serve a twelve (12) month probationary period upon initial appointment and upon promotion to a higher classification. During this period, members are

evaluated through ongoing training assessments, performance during drills and incidents, and a formal review by the Fire Chief at or near the conclusion of probation.

Successful completion of probation indicates that the individual has met minimum performance and training expectations and may be confirmed in regular employment or volunteer status, subject to approval by the General Manager or Fire Chief, as applicable.

Ongoing Development
Training at the District is continuous and practical. Employees and volunteers receive periodic instruction in safety, emergency response, and inter-department coordination to maintain readiness and uphold the District's mission of public service.

Transparency and Public Service
Every staff member and volunteer contributes to the District's reputation for honesty and accountability.

As a public agency, Arrowbear Park County Water District operates under laws designed to promote transparency and fairness:

- The Brown Act requires open and public meetings of the Board of Directors.
- The California Public Records Act allows public access to most District records.
- The Political Reform Act governs conflict-of-interest disclosures by certain employees and officials.

Our Commitment to Professional Conduct
Every District employee and volunteer represents the community. Courtesy, reliability, and professionalism are expected in every interaction, whether responding to a service call, speaking with a customer, or working alongside partner agencies.

We treat each other with respect, follow lawful and ethical instructions, and maintain the trust that comes with public service.

SECTION 3 – JOB CLASSIFICATIONS & ROLES

Purpose of This Section
Everyone who works or volunteers for the District plays a specific role in keeping our systems and community safe. This section explains how the District organizes those roles, how they connect, and how you can grow within them.

How Positions Are Structured
The District uses job classifications to group positions with similar duties, responsibilities, and qualifications. These classifications ensure consistency and fairness across all departments.

Each classification has:

- A title (for example, *Utility Worker I*, *Administrative Secretary*, or *Fire Captain*).
- A general description of duties.
- Required licenses, experience or certifications.
- A pay range approved by the Board of Directors.

Regular, Part-Time, Temporary Employment & Volunteers

Regular Employees: Work full-time in ongoing positions and are eligible for District benefits. Employment continues in accordance with District policies, applicable laws, and Board direction.

Part-Time Employees: Work a limited schedule as determined by the District. Employment continues in accordance with District policies, applicable laws, and Board direction. Only eligible for benefits where legally required or approved by the Board.

Temporary or Seasonal Employees: Assist with special projects or high-demand periods such as summer repairs or wildfire season. These positions are also at-will and do not earn long-term benefits unless specifically stated by the Board.

Volunteers:
Volunteer members serve in appointed, non-compensated roles in support of the Arrowbear Lake Fire Department. Volunteers are not employees and do not receive employee benefits unless specifically authorized by law or Board action. Volunteers serve at the discretion of the Fire Chief and are subject to applicable District policies and departmental standards.

Job Descriptions

Each position with the District has a written job description that outlines the general duties, responsibilities, and expectations of the role. Job descriptions are used to support recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and organizational planning.

Job descriptions are maintained separately from this handbook and may be reviewed and updated by the District as duties evolve, operational needs change, or certifications or legal requirements are modified. Employees may request a copy of job descriptions at any time.

Fire Department

The Arrowbear Lake Fire Department is staffed primarily by volunteer members appointed by the Fire Chief. Volunteers are held to the same standards of conduct and safety as employees.

Volunteer classifications may include:

Firefighter Trainee / Probationary Firefighter – learning fundamental fire and EMS skills.

Firefighter / Engineer – qualified to operate fire apparatus and perform suppression, rescue, and EMS duties.

Captain – supervises crew members and manages station readiness.

Battalion Chief – oversee operations, training, may fill in for Fire Chief.

Fire Chief – oversee operations, training, and administrative coordination with the General Manager.

Administration

Administrative functions support governance, finance, regulatory compliance, and customer service. Positions may include:

General Manager – Executive officer responsible for overall District operations, policy implementation, and Board support.

Administrative Secretary I/II/III – Provides administrative support, records management, customer service, and Board coordination.

Account Clerk I / II – Performs billing, payroll support, accounts payable/receivable, and financial recordkeeping.

Field Operations
Field Operations staff maintain and operate the District's water production, distribution, and sewer collection systems. Positions may include:

Field Operations Supervisor – Oversees daily field activities, maintenance, and regulatory compliance.

Service Person I / II / III – Performs system maintenance, repairs, inspections, and emergency response for water and sewer systems.

Utility Worker – Entry level laborer.

Supervision and Chain of Command
Every employee and volunteer report through a defined chain of command to maintain accountability and safety. If you're unsure who to go to with a question or problem, ask your immediate supervisor first. Communication up the chain keeps information accurate and decisions consistent.

- Water/Sewer and administrative staff report to their supervisor or General Manager.
- Fire Department volunteers report through their Fire Captain who reports to the Fire Chief, who reports to the General Manager.
- The General Manager reports to the Board of Directors.

Training
Training time is recorded according to District policy and may qualify for compensation or stipends when authorized.

The District encourages professional growth. Examples include:

- Field staff may attend certification courses in water treatment, distribution, or backflow prevention.
- Office staff may train in accounting, records management, or emergency communications.
- Fire volunteers participate in ongoing drills, EMS refreshers, and leadership development.

Personnel Files

The District maintains a personnel file for each employee and volunteer that may include, but is not limited to, employment records, performance evaluations, disciplinary documentation, and other materials related to employment.

Employees may review their personnel file upon written request, in accordance with California law. Inspection will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time during normal business hours. Employees may receive a copy of documents contained in their personnel file as permitted by law.

Certain records may be excluded from inspection, including confidential references, records relating to active investigations, or materials otherwise exempt from disclosure under applicable law.

Promotions and Advancement

Promotions and advancements may occur as operational needs, organizational structure, and staffing requirements allow. Promotion eligibility, qualifications, and selection processes are established by District policy, departmental procedures, or applicable employment agreements.

Advancement is not guaranteed and does not occur automatically based on length of service. Final promotion decisions are made by the General Manager or Fire Chief, as applicable, in accordance with District authority and Board-adopted policies.

SECTION 4 – WORK HOURS, PAY & SCHEDULING

Purpose of This Section
This section explains how work hours are arranged, how pay or stipends are calculated, and how time is recorded. It's written so every employee or volunteer -office, field, or fire- understands how scheduling, overtime, and on-call duties work in real life.

Work Hours and Schedules
The District's work hours, schedules, and workweek arrangements are established and may be modified by the General Manager based on operational, staffing, service, or emergency needs. Work schedules may vary by department, position, assignment, or season and are subject to change. Supervisors will communicate schedule changes as early as practical, and employees are responsible for confirming changes that may affect coverage, overtime eligibility, or compensation.

Regular Employees:
Full-time employees are generally scheduled to work a full-time assignment as determined by the General Manager. This may include traditional schedules (such as five eight-hour days) or alternative work schedules, including but not limited to four ten-hour days (4/10), staggered start times, or other arrangements as operationally appropriate.

Part-Time and Temporary Employees:
Hours are assigned based on District needs and may vary from week to week.

Volunteer Fire Personnel:
Volunteer members participate in training, call response, and standby duties as scheduled by the Fire Chief. Required training hours and participation standards are established by the Fire Department and reviewed periodically.

Meal and Rest Breaks

- Employees who work more than five (5) hours in a workday will be provided with the opportunity to take an uninterrupted, unpaid 30-minute meal period near the midpoint of the shift.
- The District's responsibility is to make meal periods available and to relieve employees of duty during the meal period, except where a meal period is lawfully waived. The District prohibits supervisors from discouraging or impeding legally required meal or rest periods. Employees are responsible for taking their meal periods as provided and for accurately recording them.
- Employees who work more than ten (10) hours on a workday will be provided the opportunity for a second meal period, unless lawfully waived.

- When operational or emergency conditions interfere with a meal period, employees must notify their supervisor so the situation can be addressed in accordance with applicable wage and hour requirements.

- Rest Breaks: Employees are generally authorized and permitted to take paid rest periods in accordance with California law, based on the length of the workday. Rest periods should be taken near the middle of each work period when reasonable and scheduled so as not to disrupt operations or customer service.

- Rest periods are counted as time worked and do not need to be recorded. Employees are expected to take rest periods as authorized and to coordinate timing with their supervisor to ensure adequate coverage.

- Meal and rest period requirements for employees do not apply in the same manner to volunteer emergency responders. Reasonable opportunities for rest, hydration, and nourishment will be provided when operationally feasible.

Compensation Authority

All District employees are compensated in accordance with the Board-approved Salary Range Schedule in effect at the time of payment. Salary ranges and classifications are adopted by the Board of Directors through the annual budget process or other formal Board action and may be amended from time to time. Volunteers are not employees and are not paid wages; however, volunteer stipends or reimbursements, if any, are established and approved by the Board of Directors through separate Board action or policy. Nothing in this handbook creates a guarantee of a specific rate of pay, step placement, or future increase.

Pay Periods and Time Reporting

District employees are paid on a bi-weekly schedule in accordance with applicable wage and hour laws. Volunteer Fire Department members are not employees and do not receive wages; authorized stipends or reimbursements, if any, are issued in accordance with District policy and do not create an employment relationship.

Employees and volunteers must accurately complete and submit required time records for each pay period. Falsifying or failing to submit time records is a serious policy violation.

Recording Volunteer Time

Fire volunteers must document training and response hours as required by the Fire Department. Accurate logs help track eligibility for stipends, certifications, and workers'-comp coverage.

Overtime and Comp Time

Overtime Eligibility:
Non-exempt employees earn overtime for hours worked beyond 40 hours in a week or, hours worked beyond the 8 or 10 hour scheduled workday.
Overtime must be pre-approved by a supervisor except in true emergencies.

Minimum Call-Out Pay:
Employees who are called out after regular working hours receive overtime compensation for the actual time worked, subject to a minimum of one (1) hour.

Comp Time:
Eligible employees may elect compensatory time off at one and one-half (1.5) hours for each overtime hour worked, subject to approval. Comp time balances are capped at forty (40) hours and are paid at the employee's regular rate when used or paid out.

Standby / On-Call Duty
Certain positions require rotating on-call responsibility.

Water and Sewer Staff:
Employees assigned standby duty receive one hour of overtime pay for each day they are on call, whether they are called out or not. If they are called out, overtime rules apply for the actual time worked.

Fire Department Volunteers:
Volunteers who participate in standby coverage or scheduled station duty receive a stipend as determined by the Fire Chief and approved by the Board. This stipend recognizes their availability and readiness but is not considered hourly pay.

Scheduling:
Standby and volunteer duty schedules are posted in advance and generally rotate among qualified personnel. Employees and volunteers are expected to respond promptly when called and must remain fit for duty while on standby.

Shift Swaps and Coverage
Employees may swap shifts with prior approval from their supervisor if coverage remains adequate and no overtime results. This is outlined in the "On-Call SOP". Volunteers may coordinate coverage through the Fire Chief or duty officer, following department procedure.

Weather and Emergency Operations
The District provides essential public-safety services and is expected to operate during most weather events. Because water, sewer, and fire protection services are critical to the community, full closures are uncommon. The safety of employees, volunteers, and the public remains a priority, while maintaining continuity of essential services.

Reporting During Severe Weather

Employees and volunteers are expected to make reasonable efforts to report to work safely during inclement weather or hazardous conditions. If weather, road conditions, or other hazards prevent safe travel, the employee or volunteer must notify their supervisor or duty officer as soon as practicable.

District Closures, Delays, and Modified Operations
When conditions warrant, the General Manager may authorize delayed opening, early release, modified operations, or temporary facility closure. Notification will be communicated by phone or other reasonable means.

During any closure or modified operation, essential personnel, including on-call field staff, operators, or fire response personnel, may still be required to report for duty or remain on assignment when conditions allow and operational needs require.

Pay and Leave During Weather Events
When the General Manager authorizes a District closure, affected employees will be paid for their scheduled hours at their regular rate unless otherwise directed due to operational or emergency needs.

If the District remains open and an employee is unable to report to work due to weather or hazardous conditions, the absence may be charged to accrued vacation or other available leave, or at the General Manager's discretion, approved to be made up at a later time, subject to operational requirements.

Emergency Operations and Staffing
During snowstorms, wildfires, declared emergencies, or other critical events, the District may activate emergency operations or modified staffing plans. Employees and volunteers may be reassigned, required to remain on duty, or scheduled for extended or alternate shifts as necessary to protect public health, safety, and infrastructure.

Volunteer Firefighter Call Response
Volunteer firefighters who are also District employees may respond to emergencies during working hours with supervisor approval, ensuring essential District functions remain covered. Time spent on authorized responses will be paid or credited in accordance with District policy and CalPERS rules.

Payroll Deductions
Standard deductions include federal and state taxes, Social Security, CalPERS retirement, and employee-authorized benefits or garnishments. Questions about deductions should be directed at Administrative staff.

SECTION 5 – BENEFITS, LEAVE & TIME OFF

Purpose of This Section
This section explains what benefits the District provides to support your health, financial security, and work-life balance. Benefits differ for full-time, part-time, and volunteer members.

Health and Medical Coverage
The District participates in the CalPERS Health Benefits Program, which provides medical insurance for eligible employees and their dependents.

Eligibility:
Regular full-time employees are eligible for medical coverage as determined by the District, subject to planning requirements and administrative processing. Coverage may begin on the employee's date of hire, the first day of the month following hire, or another date approved by the District. Part-time employees may qualify for prorated contributions depending on average hours worked.

Premiums:
The District contributes toward the monthly premium based on Board-approved amounts. Employees pay the difference (if any) through payroll deduction.

Dental:
The District also provides dental coverage for eligible full-time employees. Details of coverage levels, copays, and claim procedures are available from Administrative Staff.

Waiving Coverage:
Employees with other qualifying coverage may waive District medical coverage by providing proof of other insurance.

Retirement – CalPERS
The District participates in the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS).

Classic Members: Employees with prior CalPERS membership (or reciprocal service with another CalPERS agency) who have not had a break in service exceeding six (6) months are enrolled under the applicable "classic" formula.

PEPRA Members: Employees without qualifying prior membership are enrolled under the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA) formula applicable to their classification, including miscellaneous or safety membership as determined by CalPERS eligibility rules.

Contributions: Employees contribute the required member share as established by law. The District contributes the employer share based on the current CalPERS rate schedule.

Retiree Health: Retirees may be eligible for continued District medical coverage in accordance with Board-approved policy and CalPERS PEMHCA rules.

Resources: Employees may contact CalPERS directly for benefit estimates, service credit questions, or retirement planning information.

Holidays
The District observes paid holidays as approved by the Board of Directors. Employees assigned to essential services may be required to work on designated holidays in order to maintain operational coverage.

Holiday scheduling, observance, and compensation are administered in accordance with Board direction and applicable District policy. The current list of recognized holidays is maintained by administrative staff and is available upon request.

Vacation Leave
Vacation time must be approved in advance to ensure adequate coverage. Unused vacation may be carried forward, up to a maximum of 240 hours. Employees are encouraged to take vacation each year for rest and wellness.

Regular full-time employees accrue vacation leave based on length of service:

Years of Continuous Full-Time Service	Days per Year	Hours per Year	Notes / Use Rules
0 – 1 year	5 days	40 hours	May use after 6 months of full-time service (GM may authorize earlier).
2 – 5 years	10 days	80 hours	Accrues each pay period; requires GM approval to schedule.
6 – 10 years	15 days	120 hours	May be taken all at once or in parts; must be scheduled in advance.
11 years +	+1 day per year of service beyond 10 years (see cap)	+8 hours per year (see cap)	Continues to accrue one additional day per year up to a maximum of 30 days (240 hours).

Sick Leave
Sick leave provides income protection when you're unable to work due to illness, injury, medical appointments, or care of a qualifying family member.

- Full-time employees accrue 8 hours of sick leave per month.
- Unused sick leave is carried forward with a limit of 2080 hours.
- Upon retirement, accrued sick leave may be applied toward CalPERS service credit, consistent with law.
- Abuse or misuse of sick leave may result in disciplinary action.

Family, Medical, and Disability Leave

The District provides leave in accordance with federal and state laws to support employees during major life events such as serious health conditions, pregnancy, or family caregiving needs. This section explains who qualifies, when leave may be taken, and how to request it.

Eligibility (Who Qualifies)

FMLA / CFRA (Family and Medical Leave Act/California Family Rights Act):
Employees are eligible if they have worked for the District for at least 12 months and have completed 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before the leave begins.

Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL):
All employees are eligible upon hire; no minimum length of service is required.

Disability Leave (Non-FMLA / Non-PDL):
Regular employees who are medically unable to perform their duties and are not eligible for FMLA or PDL, or have exhausted such leave, may request medical leave supported by documentation from a licensed healthcare provider.

Reasons for Leave (When It Applies)
Employees may take leave for:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child.
- To care for a spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent with a serious health condition.
- The employee's own serious health condition that prevents them from performing essential job duties.
- A qualifying military exigency or to care for an injured service member.
- Pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

Length of Leave and Interaction of Laws

Type of Leave	Maximum Duration	Health Insurance Continuation	Runs Concurrently With
FMLA / CFRA	Up to 12 workweeks in a 12-month period	Yes – District continues coverage under same terms	PDL (FMLA only)
Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL)	Up to 4 months (approx. 17⅓ weeks)	Yes – District continues coverage under same terms	FMLA (if eligible)
Disability Leave (Non-FMLA/PDL)	Up to 90 calendar days (extendable with approval)	May continue if employee pays their share	None

Employees who take PDL first may be entitled to an additional 12 weeks of CFRA leave afterward for baby bonding, potentially totaling nearly seven months of protected leave.

Pay and Use of Accrued Leave

FMLA, CFRA, and PDL leave are generally unpaid; however, employees may use available sick leave and/or vacation to remain in paid status, and the District may require concurrent use of available paid leave as permitted by law.

While on approved leave, employees continue earning retirement service credit as required by law. Whether vacation or sick leave continues to build up during unpaid leave depends on District policy and applicable laws.

Requesting Leave (How to Apply)

Advance Notice: Employees should submit written notice at least 30 days in advance when the need is foreseeable (e.g., scheduled surgery, expected birth).

Unforeseeable Leave: Notify the General Manager or designee as soon as practicable if advance notice isn't possible.

Medical Certification: The District may require certification verifying the serious health condition and expected duration of leave.

Updates: Employees must inform the District if their return date changes or if they need additional leave.

Benefits and Reinstatement

- During approved leave, the District will maintain group health insurance on the same terms as active employment. Employees must continue paying their normal share of premiums.
- Upon returning from approved leave, employees are reinstated to the same or a comparable position, consistent with law.
- If an employee cannot return to work after exhausting all protected leave, the District will evaluate possible reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA).

Coordination with Other Benefits

Workers' Compensation: If an employee is injured on the job and eligible for Workers' Compensation, that leave may run concurrently with FMLA if the criteria are met.

Short-Term Disability: Employees receiving state disability benefits or paid family leave must still provide notice to the District to coordinate benefits properly.

Bereavement Leave
Employees may be granted up to three days of paid leave per qualifying event for the death of one or more immediate family members. Additional unpaid or vacation time may be approved at the General Manager's discretion.

Immediate family member means the employee's:

- **Spouse or registered domestic partner.**
- **Child** (biological, adopted, step, or foster)
- **Parent** (including stepparent or legal guardian).
- **Sibling.**
- **Grandparent or grandchild.**
- **Parent-in-law.**
- **Any person residing in the employee's household** for whom the employee has primary care responsibilities.

Jury Duty
The District supports civic duty. Employees summoned for jury service will receive full pay for up to five days per year, provided jury fees (excluding mileage) are remitted to the District.

Military Leave
Employees serving in the U.S. Armed Forces or California National Guard are entitled to leave of absence and reinstatement rights under federal and state law. Employees should notify the District as soon as possible and provide a copy of military orders.

Unpaid Leave of Absence
The General Manager may approve unpaid leave for personal, educational, or family reasons when it serves both the employee's and District's interests. Employees must use accrued leave balances before unpaid leave begins unless otherwise approved.

Workers' Compensation
All employees and volunteers are covered under the District's workers' compensation insurance for job-related injuries or illnesses. Report any injury immediately to a supervisor, even if minor. Prompt reporting protects your rights and ensures proper medical care.

Wellness and Employee Assistance
The District encourages a healthy work-life balance. Employees and volunteers experiencing stress, personal hardship, or family challenges may contact the General Manager or supervisor for confidential referral to support resources or counseling services.

SECTION 6 – STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Purpose of This Section
Public service is built on trust. Everyone who works or volunteers for the District represents the community. The way we act, speak, and treat others directly affects how the public views Arrowbear Park County Water District. This section explains our expectations for professional, respectful, and ethical behavior.

Professional Conduct
Profanity, disrespect, or disruptive behavior toward coworkers, volunteers supervisors, or the public is not acceptable. If conflict arises, handle it calmly and professionally, or ask a supervisor to assist in resolving it.

Every employee and volunteer is expected to:

- Be courteous and respectful in all interactions with coworkers, customers, and the public.
- Perform duties safely, efficiently, and to the best of their ability.
- Follow lawful directions from supervisors and cooperate as part of a team.
- Protect the District's reputation through honesty, reliability, and professionalism.

Use of District Property and Equipment
District vehicles, tools, radios, phones, and computers are provided for work purposes. Employees and volunteers are responsible for their proper care and use. Personal use of District computers, email, or internet access should be limited to brief, appropriate activities during breaks.

- Use District property safely and only for official business unless specifically approved.
- Report damaged, unsafe, or malfunctioning equipment immediately.
- Keep work areas, vehicles, and shared spaces clean and orderly.
- District vehicles must not be used for personal errands, except for brief stops approved by a supervisor while on duty.

Attendance and Reliability
Reliable attendance is critical to maintaining safe and effective operations. Employees and volunteers are expected to report to work on time and ready for duty. If you are unable to report, notify your supervisor or duty officer as early as possible, preferably before your scheduled start time. Repeated tardiness, absenteeism, or leaving work without permission will lead to corrective action.

Conflict of Interest, Gifts, and Ethical Conduct
Arrowbear Park County Water District employees and volunteers serve the public and must always place the District's interests above personal or private interests. A conflict of interest

exists when personal, financial, or outside interests could influence, or appear to influence, District decisions, actions, or use of resources.

Employees and volunteers must not:

- Participate in decisions in which they have a financial interest.
- Use District time, property, or information for personal gain.
- Accept gifts, favors, meals, discounts, or benefits that could influence, or appear to influence, District business.
- Allow outside employment or activities to interfere with District duties or create divided loyalty.

Gifts and Favors
Acceptance of gifts or benefits from contractors, vendors, customers, developers, or other parties doing business with or regulated by the District is strictly limited by state law and District policy. Employees and volunteers may not accept cash or cash equivalents and must not accept anything of value that could influence, or appear to influence, official actions. Modest promotional items or refreshments of nominal value may be acceptable if permitted by law. Employees and volunteers are responsible for complying with applicable gift restrictions and disclosure requirements, including those enforced by the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC). If you are not sure if you can accept a gift, ask the General Manager.

Giving Gifts or Benefits
Employees and volunteers may not give gifts, favors, meals, discounts, or other benefits for the purpose of influencing, or appearing to influence, official actions, business relationships, inspections, approvals, enforcement decisions, or preferential treatment. District funds, property, or resources may not be used for gifts or gratuities except where expressly authorized by District policy, Board action, or applicable law.

Disclosure and Guidance
Employees and designated officials may be required to file Statements of Economic Interests pursuant to the Political Reform Act (Government Code §81000 et seq.). Employees with questions regarding gift limits or disclosure obligations must consult the General Manager before engaging in the activity.

Violations
Failure to comply with conflict-of-interest or gift laws or District policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination or removal from volunteer service and may be referred to outside enforcement agencies when required by law.

Confidentiality and Public Information
District employees and volunteers often have access to sensitive information, including customer data, personnel records, and emergency response details. This information must not be shared or discussed outside of authorized District purposes. Medical and patient information obtained through Fire Department or emergency medical activities is confidential and must be protected in accordance with applicable privacy laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). All public records requests must be referred to the General Manager or designee for proper handling under the California Public Records Act.

Outside Employment
Outside employment must be approved in writing by the General Manager. Approval may be denied or revoked if outside employment creates a conflict of interest, interferes with District duties, or otherwise impacts District operations.

Employees who wish to hold another job must ensure it does not:

- Interfere with District duties, schedules, or performance.
- Create a real or perceived conflict of interest.
- Use District property, time, or resources for outside work.

Nepotism and Personal Relationships
Employment decisions are based on merit and operational needs. Employees may not be involved in employment decisions affecting family members or close personal relationships and must disclose potential conflicts. The District may reassign duties as needed to avoid actual or perceived conflicts, consistent with policy and law.

Uniforms, Safety Equipment, and Personal Appearance
The District provides and requires appropriate uniforms, safety equipment, and protective clothing to promote safety, operational effectiveness, and a professional public image.

Employees and volunteers must wear required personal protective equipment (PPE) and District-approved attire appropriate to their assigned duties. PPE and uniforms are provided in accordance with District policy and applicable Cal/OSHA standards and remain District property.

Fire Department personnel must comply with Fire Department uniform and protective clothing requirements, including structural and wildland PPE, station wear, and identification standards. Field personnel must wear District-approved work attire and required safety footwear while performing assigned duties, except when impractical during emergency response. Administrative personnel are expected to maintain a professional appearance and wear District-issued identification or logo apparel when representing the District.

All issued clothing, footwear, and safety equipment must be properly maintained in a clean, professional, and serviceable condition. The General Manager, and the Fire Chief for Fire Department personnel, have authority to interpret and enforce these standards.

Substance-Free Workplace

The District is committed to a drug and alcohol-free workplace. Employees and volunteers may not be impaired while on duty or performing District business, including operating vehicles or safety-sensitive equipment. Consistent with California law, the District does not take adverse action based solely on the presence of non-psychoactive cannabis metabolites. Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol, drugs, or misused prescription medication on District property, in District vehicles, or while representing the District is prohibited. Employees and volunteers using prescribed medication that may affect performance must confidentially inform their supervisor. Violations may result in discipline or dismissal.

Use of Social Media and Public Communication

Employees and volunteers may not speak on behalf of the District unless authorized by the General Manager. When using personal social media, avoid posting confidential information or comments that could reflect negatively on the District. Remember that even personal posts can be viewed as representing the organization.

Public Trust and Accountability

As a public agency, the District operates with transparency and accountability. All employees and volunteers share responsibility for complying with District policies, applicable laws, and ethical standards described in this section. Conduct that undermines the public's trust, including fraud, theft, dishonesty, or misuse of District resources will result in disciplinary action and referral for legal investigation when appropriate.

SECTION 7 – RESPECTFUL & SAFE WORKPLACE

Purpose of This Section
Everyone deserves to work and volunteer in an environment that is safe, professional, and respectful. The District is committed to maintaining a workplace free from harassment, discrimination, intimidation, and violence of any kind. This section explains your rights, responsibilities, and how to report problems without fear of retaliation.

Equal Employment Opportunity
The District provides equal opportunity to employees and volunteers. The District prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in employment and in volunteer service.

For employees, this policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, discipline, compensation, and benefits.

For volunteers, this policy applies to recruitment, selection, training, assignments, and participation in District programs and activities. Nothing in this policy is intended to create an employment relationship with volunteers or provide employment related rights, wages, or benefits.

Decisions affecting employees and volunteers are based on qualifications, performance, conduct, and District needs, and not on characteristics protected by law.

Protected classes under California's Fair Employment and Housing Act and applicable federal law include race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, military or veteran status, and any other status protected by law.

Equal Pay and Fair Pay Practices

The District is committed to fair and equitable compensation practices and complies with all applicable federal and California equal pay and fair pay laws. Employees performing substantially similar work are compensated without regard to sex, gender, race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics, except as permitted by law based on legitimate factors such as seniority, merit, education, training, experience, or business necessity.

Employees have the right to discuss or inquire about their wages and are protected from retaliation for doing so. Any employee who believes they have experienced unequal pay or wage-related retaliation is encouraged to report the concern to the General Manager or through the reporting options outlined in this handbook.

Harassment & Discrimination
Harassment is unwelcome conduct based on any protected characteristic that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
Examples include:

- Derogatory comments, jokes, or slurs.

- Displaying offensive images or materials.
- Unwanted touching or advances.
- Retaliation for rejecting advances or reporting concerns.

Supervisors and employees alike must help maintain a professional atmosphere.
Harassment by anyone; coworker, supervisor, customer, contractor, or volunteer is strictly prohibited.

Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual advances, requests for favors, or any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that affects working conditions or creates a hostile environment. Both men and women can be victims or offenders. Examples include inappropriate comments, suggestive emails, unwanted physical contact, or displaying sexual images. California law requires regular anti-harassment training for supervisors and all employees; the District provides this training and tracks completion.

Reporting Harassment or Discrimination
If you experience or witness harassment, discrimination, or retaliation:

- Speak up early. Tell the person to stop if you feel comfortable doing so.
- Report it immediately to your supervisor, the General Manager, or any supervisor you trust.
- If the concern involves the General Manager, or if you are not comfortable reporting internally, you may report the matter to the President of the Board of Directors or another Board officer, who will ensure the concern is addressed appropriately.
- If you prefer, you may contact the California Civil Rights Department (CRD**)** or the U.S. EEOC directly.

All complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and impartially to the extent possible. The District will:

- Designate a qualified investigator.
- Document interviews, findings, and corrective action.
- Maintain confidentiality to the extent permitted by law; and
- Take appropriate remedial action where misconduct is substantiated.

Retaliation against any individual for reporting or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Workplace Violence Prevention
Under Senate Bill 553 (2024), the District maintains a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan (WVPP) to protect all employees and volunteers. The WVPP is reviewed at least annually, after any violent incident, and when workplace conditions change. Records of workplace violence incidents will be maintained for no less than five (5) years and will be made available to employees and Cal/OSHA upon request, as required by law.

Safety, Security, and Violence Prevention
Arrowbear Park County Water District is committed to a safe, secure, and respectful work environment. Every employee, volunteer, contractor, and visitor has the right to be free from threats, intimidation, or violence.

Zero Tolerance:
Any act or threat of physical violence, intimidation, harassment, or possession of dangerous weapons on District property or during District business is strictly prohibited.

Reporting:
Employees and volunteers are expected to promptly report any threats, suspicious behavior, or violent incidents to their supervisor or the General Manager. Reports may also be made anonymously. If the concern involves the General Manager, or if the individual is not comfortable reporting through management, reports may be made directly to the Board President or other Board officer. The District prohibits retaliation for good faith reporting of safety concerns.

Response:
In an emergency, employees and volunteers should immediately contact 911, then notify their supervisor or the General Manager. The District follows a "Run – Hide – Fight" response model when violence is imminent and coordinates fully with law enforcement and local emergency services.

Incident Review and Documentation:
All reports of workplace violence are investigated promptly. The District maintains written documentation of incidents, findings, and any corrective or preventive measures taken, consistent with the District's Emergency Response Plan and applicable personnel policies.

Post-Incident Support:
Employees and volunteers involved in or witnessing violent incidents will be offered debriefing opportunities and, where appropriate, counseling resources or employee assistance referrals.

Restraining Orders:
Employees and volunteers who have active restraining orders that may affect the workplace are encouraged to share a copy with the General Manager so the District can take reasonable steps to ensure safety.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- The General Manager oversees program compliance, response coordination, and annual review of the Workplace Violence Prevention Plan (WVPP).
- Supervisors ensure that employees and volunteers receive annual training, understand reporting procedures, and maintain a safe physical workspace.
- Employees and Volunteers are responsible for staying alert to warning signs and reporting concerns immediately.

Coordination with Emergency Plans:
The WVPP is part of the District's broader safety framework, which includes the Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) and the Emergency Operations Plan. All employees and volunteers will receive periodic training and updates as part of ongoing safety education.

Bullying and Intimidation
Even when not illegal, repeated rude, hostile, or intimidating behavior undermines teamwork and morale. The District expects everyone to treat others with courtesy, listen respectfully, and resolve disagreements constructively.

Whistleblower Protection
Employees and volunteers are encouraged to report suspected fraud, misuse of funds, unsafe conditions, or violations of law or policy. Reports can be made to the General Manager or any Board Director. No one who reports a concern in good faith will suffer retaliation, harassment, or disciplinary action.

Reasonable Accommodation
The District complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and FEHA. Employees and volunteers who need reasonable accommodation for a medical condition or disability should notify the General Manager or Fire Chief as soon as possible. The District will engage in an interactive process to determine effective accommodations.

Lactation Accommodation
Employees and volunteers are entitled to reasonable break time and a private location (not a restroom) for expressing breast milk. The District will provide a clean, secure space with access to power and refrigeration when requested.

Retaliation Prohibited
Retaliation is prohibited. Retaliation includes punishing or treating someone differently because they reported a concern or misconduct, participated in an investigation, or exercised their legal rights in good faith. Any employee or volunteer who engages in retaliation may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment or removal from volunteer service.

If You Need Help
You are never alone in addressing a workplace concern.
For assistance, you may contact:

- Your Supervisor or the General Manager, first line for most concerns.
- Board President or other Board officer, if the concern involves the General Manager or if you are not comfortable reporting through management.
- California Civil Rights Department (CRD): 1-800-884-1684 / calcivilrights.ca.gov
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): 1-800-669-4000 / eeoc.gov
- Cal/OSHA District Office (for safety or workplace violence issues)

General Employee Concerns & Grievances

The District encourages employees and volunteers to raise workplace concerns promptly so they may be addressed informally and efficiently whenever possible. Concerns that do not involve harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or workplace violence may include, but are not limited to, scheduling issues, workload concerns, policy clarification requests, or questions regarding working conditions.

Employees are encouraged to follow this general process:

1. **Initial Discussion** - Employees should first raise their concern with their immediate supervisor, when appropriate. Fire Department personnel shall follow the established chain of command for operational and personnel matters, except where otherwise required by law or specifically stated in this handbook.
2. **Escalation** - If the concern is not resolved, or if the employee is uncomfortable raising the issue with their supervisor, the concern may be brought directly to the General Manager.
3. **Board Contact** - If the concern involves the General Manager, or if the employee believes the concern cannot be addressed through management, the employee may submit the concern directly to the Board President or other Board officer.

This process is intended to provide a reasonable opportunity for concerns to be heard. It does not create formal grievance or appeal right, does not alter the District's disciplinary authority, and does not replace reporting procedures required by law for harassment, discrimination, retaliation, whistleblower complaints, or safety-related issues.

Employees and volunteers will not be retaliated against for raising good-faith concern under this section.

SECTION 8 – HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Purpose of This Section
The District's top priority is that every employee and volunteer goes home safe and healthy at the end of each day. We work around water, sewage, electricity, machinery, vehicles, and in environments with wildfire, smoke, and snow, all of which require awareness, training, and teamwork. This section summarizes your safety responsibilities and the District's commitment to compliance with Cal/OSHA, environmental regulations, and our Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP).

Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)
The District maintains an IIPP as required by Cal/OSHA Title 8, Section 3203.
This written program outlines procedures for identifying hazards, correcting unsafe conditions, and training employees. Each employee and volunteer is expected to follow safe work procedures, report hazards immediately, and participate in safety meetings and drills.

Key parts of the IIPP include:

Responsibility: Supervisors are responsible for enforcing safety practices and ensuring compliance.

Hazard Identification: Regular inspections of wells, tanks, hydrants, fire apparatus, and offices are performed to identify potential hazards.

Accident Investigation: All injuries, incidents, and near misses must be reported and reviewed so we can prevent recurrence.

Training: Safety training is provided during onboarding and whenever new hazards or procedures are introduced.

Recordkeeping: The District maintains Cal/OSHA Form 300 logs and inspection records in compliance with state law.

Reporting Injuries or Unsafe Conditions
Timely reporting ensures workers' compensation coverage and helps prevent future injuries.

If you are injured: Notify your supervisor immediately, no matter how minor it seems. You will be given a DWC-1 claim form and referred for medical care if needed.

In case of workplace injury: Call the 24-hour Nurses Hotline: 1-877-518-6711

If you see something unsafe: Report it to your supervisor or the General Manager as soon as possible. The District will correct hazards promptly and document the action taken.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
Employees and volunteers must use District-provided safety gear appropriate to the task:

- Hard hats, gloves, safety glasses, and reflective vests for field work.
- SCBA, turnout gear, and medical PPE for fire and EMS operations.
- Hearing, respiratory, or fall protection when required.
  PPE must be worn, cared for, and replaced when damaged or expired.

Heat Illness Prevention
Working outdoors in summer months poses serious heat hazards. Employees and Volunteers must immediately report any signs of heat illness, for themselves or coworkers to a supervisor.

The District follows Cal/OSHA's Heat Illness Prevention Standard (8 CCR §3395**)**:

Water: Potable drinking water must always be available.

Shade: Shaded areas will be provided when temperatures exceed 80°F.

Rest Breaks: Employees should take cool-down breaks when feeling overheated.

Training: Staff are trained to recognize and respond to symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Indoor Heat & Air Quality
When indoor work areas exceed 82°F or become poorly ventilated, the District will take steps to improve conditions through fans, cooling, or adjusted work practices. Air filters are maintained regularly to reduce smoke, dust, and allergens. During wildfire events, administrative staff may be temporarily relocated or allowed remote work if safe operation becomes compromised.

Wildfire Smoke Exposure
Because the District provides essential public-safety services, certain critical operations, including maintaining water supply, system pressure, and fire protection infrastructure, may need to continue during wildfire smoke events when suspension of work is not feasible. This section applies to employees and volunteers performing District duties. In these situations, the District will implement practicable protective measures such as respiratory protection, modified work practices, reduced exposure time, and enhanced supervision. Supervisors will monitor air quality and direct operations in compliance with applicable Cal/OSHA requirements. Under Cal/OSHA Section 5141.1, the District monitors air quality during wildfire smoke events and implements protective measures to reduce exposure:

- **AQI 151–500:** N95 or equivalent respiratory protection will be made available and use is encouraged.
- **AQI above 500:** The District will evaluate suspending, modifying, or relocating work activities when feasible.

Smoking and Vaping
Smoking, vaping, and similar inhaled substances are prohibited in District buildings, vehicles, enclosed workspaces, and any location where they create a safety, fire, or health hazard. Employees and volunteers must comply with applicable laws and District safety requirements while on duty or using District property. Volunteers must comply with Fire Department Tobacco/Nicotine/Inhaled Products policy.

Hazard Communication (HazCom)
The District complies with Cal/OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (8 CCR §5194). Employees and volunteers who work with chemicals must be trained to read Safety Data Sheets (SDS), recognize labels and hazard symbols, and follow proper storage and disposal procedures. Copies of SDS sheets are kept in designated binders at District facilities and on fire apparatus.

Environmental Protection
The District's work directly impacts local natural resources. Employees and volunteers must:

- Prevent fuel, oil, or chemical spills.
- Avoid washing vehicles or draining tanks near storm drains or waterways.
- Handle and dispose of hazardous materials per approved SOPs.
- Report any environmental releases immediately to a supervisor.

Emergency Preparedness
The District maintains an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that outlines response actions for wildfires, earthquakes, hazardous materials, and utility failures. All employees and volunteers are expected to:

- Know how to evacuate safely.
- Participate in annual drills.
- Keep emergency contact information current.
- Remain available during declared local emergencies if assigned as essential personnel.

Employee Responsibility
Safety is everyone's job. Each employee and volunteer must:

- Work safely and encourage others to do the same.
- Use protective gear correctly.
- Report hazards and injuries promptly.
- Stop and ask for help if unsure how to perform a task safely.

The District's goal is zero injuries, zero damage, and zero shortcuts.

SECTION 9 – TECHNOLOGY & DISTRICT PROPERTY

Purpose of This Section
District property and technology systems are essential tools for delivering public services safely and efficiently. This section explains how to use, protect, and care for those resources, from vehicles and radios to computers and mobile devices.

General Principles
District equipment is provided for business purposes. Employees and volunteers are responsible for using District property safely, appropriately, and for authorized purposes. Normal wear, accidental damage, or breakage that occurs in the course of assigned duties is considered a cost of District operations and will not require personal reimbursement. Incidents such as vehicle accidents occurring within the scope of assigned duties are generally handled through District insurance and applicable law. If damage results from intentional misuse or clearly unauthorized use, the District may take appropriate corrective action consistent with policy.

Vehicles and Driving
District vehicles and fire apparatus are provided for official District duties. Employees and volunteers who operate District vehicles and mobile equipment (including backhoes, skid steers, and similar machinery) are responsible for safe, lawful, and professional operation at all times.

Employees and volunteers operating District vehicles must:

- Hold a valid California driver's license appropriate for the vehicle being operated.
- Follow all traffic laws and District safety rules.
- Conduct pre-trip inspections and promptly report mechanical or safety concerns.
- Wear seat belts at all times.
- Refrain from texting, calling, or using handheld devices while driving.
- Operate District vehicles only for authorized District business.

Minor personal stops during duty travel may be permitted with supervisor approval when they do not interfere with operations. Any accident, collision, or damage involving a District vehicle must be reported immediately, regardless of severity.

Driving Eligibility
Employees and volunteers who operate District vehicles must maintain a valid driver's license and remain eligible for coverage under the District's vehicle insurance requirements. Loss, suspension, or restriction of driving privileges, or failure to meet insurance eligibility requirements, may affect an individual's ability to perform essential duties and may result in reassignment, suspension, or separation from employment or volunteer service, consistent with operational needs and applicable law.

District Facilities and Tools
Each supervisor is responsible for ensuring equipment assigned to their department is maintained and inventoried regularly.

Employees and volunteers are expected to keep all District property clean, organized, and secure:

- Store tools, hoses, PPE, and materials properly after each use.
- Lock facilities and vehicles when unattended.
- Report lost keys, access cards, or equipment immediately.
- Do not remove District property for personal use without written authorization.

Computers, Phones, and Electronic Systems
District electronic resources are provided for District business purposes. Employees and volunteers are not required to monitor or respond to communications outside normal working hours/or shifts unless expressly assigned as part of their position or during designated on-call periods.

Acceptable Use

- Use these systems professionally and only for legitimate District purposes.
- Limited personal use is acceptable during breaks if it does not interfere with work or consume significant resources.
- All data, messages, and files created or stored on District systems are District property and may be accessed or reviewed as needed for business or legal purposes.

Unacceptable Use
Employees and volunteers may not:

- Access, download, or distribute offensive, discriminatory, or illegal material.
- Use District systems for private business, political activity, or outside employment.
- Share passwords or allow unauthorized access to District accounts.
- Use personal devices to store or transmit confidential District information without authorization.

Email and Internet Conduct
Email is a public record under the California Public Records Act. Use good judgment in every written communication, assuming any message could become public. Avoid gossip, personal disputes, or unprofessional tone in written correspondence. Official communication with the public or other agencies should reflect the District's professionalism and neutrality.

Phones and Radios

- District phones and two-way radios are provided for operational communication.
- Keep calls brief and work-related during duty hours.
- Do not use radios for personal conversation or non-essential chatter.
- During emergencies, radio traffic must remain clear for operational command.

Social Media and Public Image

Employees and volunteers must not speak on behalf of the District unless authorized by the General Manager. When using personal social media, avoid posting confidential information, photos of emergency scenes, or commentary that could reflect negatively on the District or Fire Department. The public often associates your personal presence with the organization; professionalism matters both on and off duty.

Protecting Confidential Information

District data, customer records, and internal communications are confidential. Employees and volunteers must not disclose or remove sensitive information without authorization. Lost or stolen electronic devices must be reported immediately so security measures can be taken.

Issued Equipment and Uniforms

Uniforms, safety gear, radios, keys, and identification badges remain District property. These items must be returned in good condition at the end of employment or volunteer service. Misuse or loss due to negligence may result in deduction or replacement cost as permitted by law.

Monitoring and Privacy

To protect the integrity of public systems, the District reserves the right to monitor use of its technology, vehicles, and facilities. Employees and volunteers should have no expectation of privacy when using District property, email, or internet access.

SECTION 10 – DISCIPLINE, PERFORMANCE & SEPARATION

Purpose of This Section
The goal of discipline at Arrowbear Park County Water District is to correct problems, not to punish. Everyone makes mistakes; what matters is that we learn, improve, and maintain the public's trust. This section explains how the District manages performance, handles misconduct, and ensures all separations are fair and consistent with District policy.

Performance Expectations
Every employee and volunteer is expected to:

- Perform assigned duties safely, effectively, and courteously.
- Follow District policies, safety procedures, and lawful instructions.
- Maintain regular attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate honestly and respectfully with coworkers and the public.

Supervisors provide feedback throughout the year and will conduct formal evaluations at least annually or as required by policy.

Performance Evaluations
The District conducts annual performance evaluations for regular employees. Evaluations are intended to provide feedback on job performance, clarify expectations, support professional development, and document performance over time.

Performance evaluations are conducted by supervisors and management in accordance with District practices and may consider factors such as job knowledge, quality of work, reliability, initiative, teamwork, and compliance with District policies and procedures.

Completion of a performance evaluation does not guarantee a pay adjustment, promotion, or other change in compensation. Any compensation adjustments, including merit-based increases, are subject to Board approval, budget availability, and applicable District policy.

Progressive Discipline
When performance or behavior does not meet standards, the District uses a progressive discipline approach designed to encourage correction.

Steps may include:

1. **Verbal Counseling** – Informal discussion about the issue, with coaching and clear expectations for improvement.
2. **Written Warning** – Documentation of the issue, improvement plan, and consequences if not corrected.

3. **Final Warning or Suspension** – Formal notice that continued issues may lead to termination.
4. **Termination (For-Cause)** – Employment may be ended only for just cause after investigation, documentation, and the opportunity to respond.

Progressive discipline is intended as a corrective framework and is not mandatory in every case. The District reserves the right to bypass any step where the severity of misconduct, safety concerns, dishonesty, harassment, violence, or other serious violations warrant immediate action, up to and including termination.

Representation and Pre-Disciplinary Due Process (Skelly Hearing)
Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary action against a regular full-time employee that results in suspension without pay, demotion, or dismissal, the District will provide the employee with pre-disciplinary due process consistent with Skelly v. State Personnel Board (1975) 15 Cal.3d 194.

The pre-disciplinary process will include:

1. Written Notice of Proposed Discipline, including:

    - The proposed disciplinary action.
    - The specific reasons for the proposed action.
    - A summary of the facts supporting the proposed discipline; and
    - Identification of the policies, rules, or standards allegedly violated.

2. Access to Materials, upon request, including copies of documents relied upon in recommending discipline, except where disclosure is prohibited by law.

3. Opportunity to Respond, allowing the employee a reasonable opportunity to respond orally and/or in writing to the proposed discipline before a neutral management representative.

The Skelly hearing is not a formal evidentiary hearing and does not require adherence to technical rules of evidence. Its purpose is to provide the employee with an opportunity to present their side of the matter before a final disciplinary decision is made.

After considering the employee's response, the District will issue a written notice of final discipline, if any, which shall include information regarding post-disciplinary appeal rights, if applicable.

The General Manager reviews all proposed suspensions and terminations to ensure fairness and compliance with policy.

Post-Disciplinary Appeal:

Regular full-time employees who are suspended without pay, demoted, or dismissed may appeal the final disciplinary decision in accordance with Board-adopted personnel policies.

The appeal process, timelines, and scope of review are governed by those policies and applicable law. The Board of Directors or its designated hearing officer will issue a final written decision.

Documentation
All disciplinary actions are documented and placed in the employee's personnel file. Employees may attach written comments or rebuttals to any disciplinary record within a reasonable timeframe. Records of corrective action may be removed or noted as resolved after a period of sustained improvement.

Recognition and Reinforcement
The District values proactive recognition. Employees and volunteers who demonstrate strong performance, teamwork, and initiative may receive commendations, letters of appreciation, or other acknowledgment. Acknowledging success is an important part of maintaining morale and accountability. Incentives are non-monetary unless specifically approved by the Board.

Resignation and Retirement
Employees who choose to resign should give at least two weeks' written notice to allow for scheduling and transition. Exiting employees must return all District property, keys, and uniforms and may request an exit meeting with the General Manager. Employees planning to retire should notify the District as early as possible to coordinate with CalPERS and ensure a smooth transition.

Exit Interviews
Employees and volunteers who separate from employment may be offered the opportunity to participate in an exit interview or exit meeting. Participation in an exit interview is voluntary and is intended solely to provide employees with an opportunity to share feedback regarding their work experience, working conditions, or suggestions for improvement. Exit interviews are not disciplinary in nature, are not required, and do not affect final pay, benefits, or eligibility for reemployment. Information shared during an exit interview may be reviewed by management for operational or organizational improvement purposes, but participation or non-participation will not result in retaliation or adverse action.

Layoff or Reduction in Force
If budget or operational changes require staff reductions, the District will make every effort to:

- Provide reasonable notice,
- Retain qualified employees with the longest service, and
- Offer reemployment opportunities if positions reopen.

Layoffs will be approved by the Board of Directors and conducted in accordance with District policy and applicable law.

Separation of Volunteers
Volunteer service with the Arrowbear Lake Fire Department may end:

- At the request of the volunteer,
- When participation or performance standards are not met, or
- For conduct inconsistent with District policy or safety requirements. Whenever possible, the District will offer coaching and an opportunity to correct issues before separation.
- At the discretion of the Fire Chief, in consultation with the General Manager, when continued volunteer service is not in the best interest of the District or Fire Department.

Final Pay and Benefits
Employees who separate from employment will receive final pay in accordance with California Labor Code timelines:

Final Pay – Employees
Employees who separate from District employment will receive final wages in accordance with applicable California Labor Code requirements.

Voluntary Resignation:
If an employee provides at least seventy-two (72) hours' notice, final wages will be paid on the employee's last day of work. If less than seventy-two (72) hours' notice is provided, final wages will be paid within seventy-two (72) hours of the District's receipt of notice of resignation.

Involuntary Separation (Termination, Layoff, or Dismissal):
Final wages will be paid at the time of separation, consistent with California law.

Final wages include all earned and unpaid regular wages and any accrued and unused vacation or compensatory time required to be paid under District policy. Accrued sick leave is not paid out at separation, except as required by law or grandfathered District benefit.

Volunteer Stipends at Separation
Volunteers are not employees and do not receive wages. Volunteer stipends, if any, are not wages and are issued in accordance with District procedures. Upon voluntary separation from volunteer service, authorized stipends owed, if any, will be processed within seventy-two (72) hours after the District receives notice of resignation and required documentation, or sooner when administratively feasible. Volunteer service does not create an entitlement to continued service or immediate payment of stipends.

Benefits at Separation

Vacation / Compensatory Time:
Accrued and unused vacation or compensatory time will be paid out to employees at their final rate of pay in accordance with District policy.

Sick Leave:
Eligible retirees may convert unused sick leave to CalPERS service credit in accordance with CalPERS rules and District policy. Accrued sick leave is not paid out at separation, except for employees with a grandfathered sick leave payout under prior District policy or agreement. Grandfathered payouts are limited to the amounts and terms previously granted and do not apply to employees hired on or after 8/21/25.

Health and Other Benefits:
Benefit coverage ends in accordance with plan rules and applicable law. Any retiree health benefits, if offered, are governed by Board-approved plans and CalPERS requirements and may change over time.

Rehire Eligibility
Former employees and volunteers who left in good standing may be considered for rehire. Those terminated for cause or who resigned in lieu of termination are generally not eligible unless approved by the General Manager and Board.

Closing Message

Thank you for serving the Arrowbear community.
This District depends on dedicated people who work hard, stay safe, and care about their neighbors. Whether you're repairing a pipeline, processing billing, or responding to a fire call, what you do matters.

Together, we keep Arrowbear safe, sustainable, and independent.

Chris Dumas, General Manager

Arrowbear Park County Water District Key District Contacts

General Manager
Chris Dumas
Arrowbear Park County Water District
Office: (909) 721-4793
Email: Apcwdmail@gmail.com

Administrative Office
Courtney Arredondo
Billing, payroll, and HR questions
Office: (909) 867-2704
Email: info@arrowbearwater.org

Field Operations Supervisor
Jason Weber
Arrowbear Park County Water District
Office: (909) 893-5798
Apcwd3@gmail.com
For water, sewer, or maintenance concerns

Fire Chief – Arrowbear Lake Fire Department
Ryan Brewart
Arrowbear Lake Fire Department
Cell: (909) 909-7247
R.brewart@ablfd.org
For volunteer, training, or emergency operations

Reporting Resources and Hotlines

If you believe workplace laws, ethics, or safety rules have been violated, or if you ever feel unsafe, you may contact any of the following without fear of retaliation:

Topic	Contact / Agency	Phone / Website
Harassment, discrimination, retaliation	California Civil Rights Department (CRD)	(800) 884-1684 / calcivilrights.ca.gov
Federal equal employment rights	EEOC	(800) 669-4000 / eeoc.gov
Workplace safety, heat, and injury reporting	Cal/OSHA	(833) 579-0927 / dir.ca.gov/dosh
Workers' compensation claims	District Administration	(909) 867-2704
Fraud, misuse of funds, or ethics concerns	General Manager or any Board Director	N/A
Violence or immediate danger	**911**	N/A

SECTION 11 – ACKNOWLEDGMENT & RESOURCES

Purpose of This Section
This final section confirms that you've received, read, and understand the Arrowbear Park County Water District Employee Handbook. It also lists important contacts and resources to help you find information or report concerns.

Employee & Volunteer Acknowledgment Form
I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Arrowbear Park County Water District Employee Handbook (2026).
I understand that:

1. This handbook summarizes key District policies, benefits, and expectations.
2. It is not a contract and may be amended by the Board of Directors.
3. It is my responsibility to read, understand, and follow these policies.
4. I may contact my supervisor or the General Manager with any questions.

I also understand that failure to comply with District policies or safety procedures may result in corrective action, up to and including termination or removal from volunteer service.

Employee/Volunteer Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Position/Department _____

This signed page will be placed in your personnel or volunteer file.