

# **Employee Handbook**

**EAST CENTRAL COLORADO RESOURCE CONSERVATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT, INC.**

**Approved by Executive Council**

**February, 2010**

# EAST CENTRAL COLORADO RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT, INC.

## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to East Central Colorado Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D), Inc.

The East Central Colorado Resource Conservation and Development Area concept was proposed in October 1969 and formally authorized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1976. The area concept provides service to five counties in East Central Colorado covering 6,226,160 acres; geographically known as the 'High Plains'. The Council was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the state of Colorado in June, 1977 and received a 501.c.3 exemption from the Internal Revenue Service in January 1978.

The background of the RC&D program begins with congressional authorization through the U.S. Food and Agriculture Act of 1962. This act authorized RC&D areas to be formed with the U.S. Secretary of the Department of Agriculture charged with the responsibility for the RC&D program under Public Law 97-98, 16 U.S.C. 3451-3461.

The purpose of the RC&D program is to accelerate the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources to improve the general level of economic activity, and to enhance the environment and standard of living in authorized RC&D areas. The RC&D program was created on the assumption that local citizens, primarily in rural areas, with coordinated assistance provided through USDA, could develop and carry out an action-oriented plan for social, economic and environmental betterment of their communities.

The East Central Colorado RC&D council is organized to serve the needs of our communities by looking for ways to improve the environment, economic activity, and quality of life in the five-county region through conservation, development, and utilization of natural and human resources. The East Central Colorado RC&D area includes Cheyenne, Elbert, rural El Paso, Kit Carson, and Lincoln counties. Sponsors of East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. pay voluntary annual dues to support the administrative position and includes support from counties, towns, conservation districts, schools, local organizations, and individuals located within the service area.

The program work within the East Central Colorado RC&D area is governed by a ten member executive council made up of local volunteers who are citizens from the area. Two representatives per county are selected to govern the RC&D area. The Council is required to develop an area plan which gathers community input describing the long range objectives and goals for the area. An annual plan of work is created each year to outline specific activities to be accomplished. The executive council establishes the East Central Colorado RC&D mission and policies, working in partnership with the USDA RC&D coordinator and council staff to achieve results.

As a staff member of East Central Colorado RC&D organization, you will have an opportunity to learn, contribute and grow professionally. East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. recognizes the importance of each employee's contribution to the organization's success. These contributions are most effective when all staff members work together as

a team. Because of our charitable mission and our public support, we believe that East Central Colorado RC&D's employees have a special responsibility to adhere to the highest standards of ethics and professionalism in representing East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. to carry out the organization mission.

## II. PURPOSE OF THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

This handbook describes the principal employee benefit programs, work rules, and additional benefits available to East Central Colorado RC&D Council employees and to provide employees with information about policies and procedures. This handbook is not intended to constitute an employment contract.

This Employee Handbook is intended to serve as a guideline, describing the basic personnel policies and practices ordinarily applied by East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. The policies in this Employee Handbook are not promises and this Handbook does not create contractual rights nor should the employee construe its contents as a contract. Only the East Central Colorado RC&D Chairperson has the authority to enter into any employment contracts, and that must be in writing. It is within council discretion to change policies, procedures and practices. Similarly, although consistency is a high priority of the council, policies, procedures and/or practices may be altered from time to time to meet the needs of the organization or individual employees, and to comply with legal requirements.

Each employee will receive a copy of this Employee Handbook. After you have read this Handbook, you must sign a receipt acknowledging that you have read and understood its contents. We welcome you as a new member of the East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. staff and hope that your stay with us will be a mutually pleasant, and rewarding experience.

### III. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

#### A. Disability and Equal Employment

##### 1. Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. is firmly committed to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal and state legislation designed to ensure equal employment opportunities to persons with disabilities. East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in regard to all employment practices or terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. Consistent with this policy and applicable law, East Central Colorado RC & D, Inc. will make reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of qualified applicants or employees, unless to do so would cause an undue hardship on the operation of its business.

##### 2. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

East Central Colorado RC & D, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (amended in 1991) prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, disability, matriculation and political affiliation. East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. is committed to the rights of its employees. If the employee believes that he/she has been subject to discriminatory harassment by a co-worker, supervisor, volunteer, client or vendor, or by anyone else during the course of your employment, please report your concerns immediately to your supervisor. Retaliation against an employee by any person under East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. control for opposing such harassment, for filing a bona fide complaint of discriminatory harassment, or for providing information in good faith regarding another employee's complaint will not be tolerated.

#### B. Hiring and Recruitment

##### 1. Immigration Policy

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. is in compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 which requires that every newly hired employee complete an I-9 Form and verify his/her identity and eligibility to work in the United States. As a condition of employment, each new employee must properly complete, sign and date the first section of the Immigration and Naturalization Service Form I-9, Appendix A. Substantiating documentation must be presented to the supervisor before an employee begins working at East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc.. The supervisor will verify documentation, sign and date the I-9 form.

## 2. Employment at Will

The policies contained in this Employee Handbook do not create any contract of employment, nor do they constitute the terms of an implied agreement with East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc.. An employment having no specified term may be terminated at the will of either the employer or the employee on notice to the other. The employee has the right to end the employment relationship when he/she feels it to be in his/her overall best interest to do so, provided two weeks notice is given to his/her supervisor. However, employees engaged in gross misconduct or dishonesty may be dismissed without notice and will not be entitled to any pay or benefits after the last day worked.

Upon hire the employee will provide a W-4 form, Appendix B, and Employee, and contact information form, Appendix C.

## 3. Background Check and Drivers Record

The East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. may require a background check and driving records check as a condition of employment.

## 4. Position Description

The employee will receive a position description from East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. at the time of hire. Appendix J.

## C. Employee Classification, Tour of Duty, Time and Attendance, Orientation, and Probationary Period

### 1. Classification Of Employees and Other Workers

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. may hire employees as needed, and as funding allows, or East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. may contract for staff services as needed. Full-time and/or part-time employees, regular or temporary employees, may be hired.

#### a. Full-Time Employees

Full-time staff works a regularly scheduled 40 hour week and may be paid a salary or hourly wage, depending upon job duties and responsibilities. These employees may be “exempt” as defined below. These employees may be regular or temporary employees.

#### b. Part-Time Employees

Part-time employees generally work less than 40 hours per week. These employees may be “exempt” as defined below. These employees may be regular or temporary employees.

c. Regular Employees

Regular employees are hired with the understanding that their employment will continue for an undetermined amount of time. There is no set termination date set for a regular employee.

d. Temporary Employees

Temporary employees are hired with the understanding that their employment will not continue beyond a stated date or beyond completion of a specified project(s).

e. Independent Contractors and Consultants

Independent contractors and consultants are non-employees who are paid on a fee-for-service basis to perform certain specified services. Contractors and consultants are not eligible for any benefits listed in this Employee Handbook.

f. Volunteers

Volunteers are people who provide services to East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. without financial compensation, other than reimbursement of authorized expenses. Volunteers are not considered employees of East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc.

g. Exempt/Non-Exempt Employees

When hired, employees will be told whether their position is “exempt” (meaning, among other things, exempt from the overtime pay requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act) or “non-exempt” (meaning covered by the overtime requirements). Generally speaking, exempt employees are those whose jobs are primarily executive, administrative, or professional in nature, as defined by federal regulations, and who are paid on a salary basis, again as defined by federal regulations. Generally speaking, non-exempt employees are those whose job duties are directed by someone else and are primarily routine in nature.

Exempt Employees and Overtime

The primary work requires either advanced knowledge customarily acquired by specialized study or originality and creativity. Employees must use discretion and independent judgment. Employees’ work must be intellectual and varied, not standardized. No more than 20 percent of employees’ workweek can be spent in non-exempt tasks.

Exempt employees are responsible for working as many hours as necessary to get the job done, but may check with their supervisors to arrange for

compensatory time, which may be granted when, in the supervisor's discretion, it is appropriate and circumstances permit.

### Non-Exempt Employees & Overtime

If you are non-exempt, you will be paid overtime, at the rate of one and one half times your regular hourly rate of pay, for any hours worked beyond 40 hours in a given work week. However, non-exempt employees must obtain advance permission from their supervisor before working more than 40 hours in a work week.

For overtime purposes, the work week begins Saturday at 12:01 a.m. and ends Sunday at midnight, as indicated on the provided time sheets. Only those hours that are actually worked by the employee will be considered "hours worked" in computing whether overtime is due and, if so, how much. Scheduled and unscheduled absences and time off for holidays, vacation, sickness, jury duty, bereavement leave or military leave, or for other reasons, will not count as hours worked for this purpose.

## 2. Work Time and Attendance

### a. Work/Office Hours

When the employee is hired, he/she will be advised of the hours he/she is expected to work. All hours and days of work are subject to change and modification. The regular, full-time work day is 8 hours a day with ½ hour unpaid lunch period. East Central Colorado RC&D has established its normal office hours between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. mountain standard time, Monday through Friday.

The employee and supervisor will establish a regular "tour of duty" defining the officially prescribed days and hours within the administrative workweek that are scheduled in advance and during which an employee is required to be on duty. The tour of duty is subject to the basic work week requirements of San Juan RC&D and supervisory approval.

### b. Time and Attendance

All employees (including exempt, non-exempt, full-time, part-time, and temporary) are responsible for completing and submitting time sheets. See Appendix D & E for forms. If you are unaware of the procedures for doing so, please ask your supervisor. All employees are required to document sign in and sign out times daily on timesheets (morning arrival, and evening departure). Promptness in reporting to work is expected.

c. Work Breaks

Work breaks are provided from work to relax and refresh you. You may take up to two paid work breaks of 15 minutes each, one in the forenoon and one in the afternoon. Breaks may not be accumulated if you don't take one, nor can they be used for coming to work late or leaving early.

d. Meal Breaks

You are required to take an unpaid lunch break of at least 30 minutes during the workday if you work more than six hours. Lunch breaks should be scheduled between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. However, a change in time zones or other unexpected occurrence (i.e. phone calls and/or office visits by RC&D customers/clients/partners which extend into the lunch hour) may require the employee to take a lunch break outside of the normal lunch break schedule.

e. Attendance at Meetings and Conferences

The nature of the organization's business will, from time to time, require that staff members attend meetings and conferences outside the office. When such sessions occur during normal working hours, no special provisions are made except that individuals are reimbursed for expenses as outlined in the travel policy. When such sessions extend to time beyond normal working hours, the following guidelines pertain:

Exempt and Nonexempt Employees

In compliance with Colorado Department of Labor regulation:

- The following types of travel time are not considered work time for which an employee must be compensated:
  - 1) Ordinary travel from home to work.
  - 2) Time spent as a passenger on an airplane, train, bus, or automobile outside of regular working hours (regular work hours are those typically worked by an employee on work days).
  - 3) Activities that are merely incidental use of an employer-provided vehicle for commuting home to work.

- The following types of travel time are considered work time for which an employee must be compensated:
  - 1) Travel during regular work hours.
  - 2) Travel on non-work days during regular work hours (regular work hours are those typically worked by an employee on work days).
  - 3) Travel time from job site to job site or from office to job site
  - 4) The driver of a vehicle is working at anytime when required to travel by the employer.
  - 5) One-day assignments performed at the employer's request (regardless of driver or passenger status).

### 3. Employee Orientation

It is the responsibility of the hiring Supervisor to orient new employees to East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. including, but not limited to:

- Providing the employee their own workspace, this may include a computer, phone, fax, desk, and supplies.
- Introducing employee to co-workers.
- Giving the employee a copy of this Employee Handbook.
- Giving the employee keys they will need. These keys are not to be copied and are expected back when employment ends. See Appendix F, Borrower's Equipment Checkout / Return Form..
- Getting the employee started on assignments related to his/her position.

### 4. Employee Probationary Period and Evaluation

All regular full-time employees undergo a three month probationary period to assess their ability, potential, and future with East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. It is at the discretion of East Central Colorado RC&D council to extend this probationary period. The East Central Colorado RC&D council has sole discretion during this period, a probationary employee may be disciplined or have his or her employment terminated. During this period, the employee has the opportunity to determine whether or not East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. is the place for her/him. Completion of the probationary period should not be construed as creating a regular employment relationship.

An initial performance review shall be conducted by the employee's supervisor at the conclusion of the probationary period. Thereafter, an annual performance review shall be scheduled. The performance review shall include overall job expectations and performance, adherence to this Employee Handbook, and specific suggestions for improvement. See Appendix G.

## IV. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

### A. Compensation

#### 1. Pay Procedures

Employees are paid every two weeks. Pay checks are issued on the Friday following the last pay period. An electronic deposit is the normal method of scheduled payments. See Appendix H. East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. does not make cash advances or loans to employees.

Any discrepancies or questions about your pay should be raised immediately with your supervisor. Although the organization makes every effort to be accurate, mistakes may occur. Please bring any such error to the immediate attention of your supervisor for correction.

Your compensation is determined by the Council. Every effort is made to pay employees fairly in accordance with job responsibilities and the employee's experience, skills and productivity and within the financial capabilities of the organization. Deductions are made only for benefits required by law.

#### 2. Expense Reimbursements

Employees must obtain the advance consent of their supervisor before incurring expenses for which they will seek reimbursement. **Approved expenses must be documented, with original receipts attached, and submitted within 30 days of the date on which they were incurred.** Expenses held longer than 30 days may not be reimbursed unless unusual circumstances caused the delay in seeking reimbursement.

#### 3. Tuition Reimbursement

To further develop staff skills, East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. may, at the discretion of the Council, pay a portion of the tuition for such classes if funds are available, and if:

- The employee has been a regular employee for at least 3 months.
- The course(s) selected are directly related to the employee's job and/or a specific East Central Colorado RC&D project.
- The employee interested in taking a class has submitted a course description and cost information.
- The employee's performance in the class and/or training is satisfactory.

Employees may attend classes and/or training during the workday at the discretion of the Council Chairman.

## B. Benefits

### 1. Employee Benefits—General

Fringe benefits are the part of your income that you never see in your paycheck. Yet they, like all other types of fringe benefits, represent compensation over and above the dollars you actually receive for a day's work.

### 2. Benefits Required by Law

#### a. Unemployment Insurance

A 501.c.3 organization is not required by state law to participate in the state unemployment program, and cannot unless it employs four full-time people. As such, East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. does not pay any state unemployment insurance premiums. This benefit is designed to pay unemployment compensation to employees who lose their job for reasons other than: (1) misconduct or (2) voluntary resignation.

#### b. Social Security/Medicare

For each employee, East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. pays matching funds for Social Security and Medicare.

#### c. Worker's Compensation

All employees are covered under the applicable Worker's Compensation Act Insurance which is paid in total by East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. To be eligible for worker's compensation benefits, an employee has to incur accidental injury in the course of and arising out of employment. It is designed to:

- Pay medical expenses for an on-the-job injury or illness.
- Pay a portion of the employee's lost wages.

If you are injured on the job, no matter how slight, you must seek medical attention and immediately report the accident or injury to your supervisor. Further, a report must be prepared in writing, signed by your supervisor and submitted within 24 hours after the accident or injury occurred.

Generally, lost wages are paid for compensable injuries by the insurance company at a percentage of the employee's average earnings commencing shortly after the date of disability.

Some personnel, although undertaking work for East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. are not employees, but are independent contractors. Those individuals are not covered by Worker's Compensation and must provide their own insurance coverage with proof by presenting an insurance certificate if they employ additional personnel.

Generally, an independent contractor is a person who contracts to complete a specific project for another business for a set price. The independent contractor must be: (1) free from control and direction over the means and method of performing work; and (2) customarily engaged in an independent trade, occupation, profession or business related to the work being performed. While a business and an independent contractor may help establish independence in a written document, the actual facts will determine whether a particular worker qualifies as an independent contractor. If the independent contractor has employees, workers' compensation insurance for the employees must be obtained.

### 3. Voluntary Benefits

#### a. Paid Holidays

East Central Colorado RC&D observes the following 7 holidays, plus any other days which the Board of Directors may so designate:

- New Year's Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be observed.

When a holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday shall be observed.

Full-time employees are paid for each observed holiday. Part-time employees are entitled to be paid for only those designated holidays on which they would ordinarily work, according to their regular, approved schedules.

#### b. Personal Leave

Unpaid personal leave may be granted to regular employees at the discretion of the East Central Colorado RC&D Council. Unpaid personal leave can be used for any purpose such as vacation, illness, and family care.

Leave of over one day will be requested and approved in writing by the supervisor prior to use.

c. Other Leave

Sick Leave

Paid sick leave is not provided by East Central Colorado RC&D.

Family and Medical Leave

Paid family and Medical Leave are not provided by East Central Colorado RC&D.

Advanced Sick Leave

Advanced Sick Leave is not provided by East Central Colorado RC&D.

Maternity Leave

Maternity Leave is not provided by East Central Colorado RC&D.

Leave for Parental and Family Responsibilities

Paid leave for parental and family responsibilities are not provided by East Central Colorado RC&D.

d. Leave Without Pay

Leave without pay can be granted to an employee if it is for the benefit of East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. and for the welfare of the employee. All requests for leave without pay require prior approval from the employee's supervisor.

e. Absence Without Leave

All employees having a regularly scheduled tour of duty are to be charged with absence without leave when absence from duty is unauthorized. Employees who are absent from duty without authorization and whose absence is not approved retroactively by leave without pay, place themselves in an absence-without-official-leave status. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

f. Jury Duty and Witness Leave

Court leave for jury duty is granted with leave without pay.

If an employee of East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. is summoned or assigned by the RC&D Council to testify in an official capacity, or to produce official records at a judicial proceeding, the time may be accounted for as regularly scheduled work hours.

If asked to witness or produce records, and serving in an official capacity, RC&D employees must consult with his/her supervisor and the RC&D Council concerning instructions about the employee's appearance in the legal action and the acceptance of fees and allowances for appearing as a witness. Any fees paid a witness serving in an official capacity on behalf of the RC&D must be submitted to East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc..

In addition, written approval from the East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. Chairman is required before an employee can produce official records for a judicial proceeding.

If an employee is summoned to testify in a nonofficial capacity in a judicial proceeding, the employee's absence must be charged to leave without pay.

g. Military Leave

Employees absent on their annual two week Reserve or National Guard duty shall be considered on leave without pay.

An employee called up to active duty is allowed an unpaid leave of absence to meet his/her military responsibilities. Upon honorable discharge from active duty, the employee will be allowed 30 days to apply for reinstatement to his/her former job. The employee will be reinstated to the same job formerly held, with the same duties, same level of pay benefits and seniority had he/she not been on active military duty.

h. Administrative Leave

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. employees are allowed leave without pay when inclement weather prevents them from getting to work, or they may work from home, if work is suitable for telecommuting, when roads are closed due to dangerous driving conditions.

i. Registration and Voting

Employees may be administratively excused from duty to vote if the polls are not open at least 3 hours before or after an employee's regular hours of duty. If an employee's voting place is beyond normal commuting distance and vote by absentee ballot is not permitted, the employee may be granted sufficient time off to make the trip to the polls to vote. Time off in excess of 1 day is to be charged to leave without pay. Employees are to ascertain the hours during which polls are open in their voting jurisdiction and notify their supervisor to approve administrative leave in advance of requesting approval of voting leave.

j. Blood Donation

An employee making a donation of blood for which there will not be compensation can be excused from work with charge to leave without pay for a period not to exceed 4 hours (not including the time needed for the donation) for the purpose of subsequent rest and recuperation. Compensated blood donors are required to take leave without pay for period of absence required for that purpose.

k. Life, Disability, Health, Dental, and Optometry Insurance

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. does not provide life insurance, disability insurance, health insurance, dental insurance or optometry insurance to the employee.

l. Retirement Plan

A retirement plan is not provided by East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc.

## V. TRAVEL POLICY

Each elected or appointed director, employee, representative, or agent of East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. shall be paid an allowance for meals, lodging, and mileage while engaged in the discharge of duty away from his/her normal working and living residence. The rates are determined by the Council of East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. and can only be changed by them. An individual claiming travel must be away from his/her normal place of employment and residence a minimum of four (4) hours to receive any reimbursement.

Reasonable travel, meal, and accommodation costs while attending meetings and conferences on RC&D business will be paid, as provided for in the annual budget. For expenditures over the budgeted amount, the employee must present a request for payment to the RC&D Council, prior to incurring the expense. A travel voucher must be submitted covering each occurrence to receive payment.

All lodging is reimbursed at actual cost up to the maximum approved. Single room rate only – when accompanied on a East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. authorized trip by a spouse, the individual should have the hotel/motel certify the room rate for a single person so only the appropriate amount can be charged to the Council.

Only RC&D Council members, officers, employees, or other members officially representing East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. may be reimbursed those expenses which are provided in this policy. The expenses of spouses or other dependents cannot be paid from Council funds.

### In-State Travel

1. Maximum reimbursements for meals and lodging are as defined by the Council and displayed in Appendix I. Rate changes will be considered when the USDA NRCS changes rates. The Handbook will not be amended every time travel rates are changed.
2. Claims may not be made for meals which are included as part of a registration fee for a conference, seminar, or other meeting. If a meal is included in a registration fee, the applicable quarter allowance cannot be claimed for the meal.
3. Employees required to use their own automobiles on RC&D business may be paid mileage at an approved rate determined by resolution of the council and as stated on the travel voucher. RC&D employees must have approval to claim mileage, mileage reimbursement will not be a regular occurrence. Employees must consult with their supervisor and complete an “Authorization to Drive Government Vehicle” form prior to driving government vehicles. Occasionally, a government vehicle may be available when the duty is related to an NRCS activity and the RC & D employee is a registered Earth Team volunteer.

Employees must plan for mileage reimbursement in the annual budgeting process, and budgeted amounts must be approved by the RC&D Council prior to reimbursement.

A. Out-of-State Travel

1. Maximum reimbursements for meals and lodging are as defined by the Council.
2. When, for reasons of personal preference or convenience, an individual uses a personal motor vehicle for out-of-state travel, reimbursement will be limited to the lesser amount of either the air fare rate or mileage. Where more than one public officer, employee, representative, or agent travel in the same car while engaged upon official duty, no more than one mileage claim shall be made, such claim to be made by the owner or lessee of the vehicle.
3. If registration fees cover any meals, those meals provided must be deducted as stated in item 2 under In-State travel.
4. Airfare rates must be obtained at the most economical rate possible. However, economics should not be the only factor taken into consideration. Value of time should also be a consideration.

OTHER:

Employees may occasionally incur other travel expenses for training programs, meetings, or conferences. Such expenses may be in the form of registration fees, and/or travel other than by automobile. Allowances are made for registration fees to training and/or conference events, and are established within the annual budgeting process.

Reimbursements of such fees are subject to these provisions. In most cases, registrations for training and/or conferences are paid directly by East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc.

Training events and conference attendance for the upcoming year should be anticipated early on and requests presented to the RC&D Council at the annual business meeting when discussing the annual budget. East Central Colorado RC&D recognizes that training and conference opportunities will come up which are not budgeted for. Requests to such events should be made on a case by case basis.

## **VI. JOB PERFORMANCE AND CONDUCT**

### **A. Job Performance and Conduct as an Employee**

Generally, performance reviews of employees will be conducted on an annual basis, although usually a new employee will be reviewed at the end of the first three months, six months, twelve months and then on an annual basis thereafter.

Performance reviews are intended to identify both those aspects of the job which are being performed well and those aspects that need attention. They are also a formal opportunity for an employee to express any concerns about the job or about employment at East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. All employees are strongly encouraged to express any concerns or questions throughout the year.

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. expects employees to perform their duties competently and reliably, and to conduct themselves in a professional, ethical, and responsible manner that reflects well upon East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc., that promotes a spirit of cooperation and teamwork among employees, and that is respectful of the clients, volunteers, and members of the public with whom there is interaction. Failure to do so may lead to corrective action.

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. encourages all of its council members and employees to adopt the following characteristics:

- Be aware of your personal appearance and grooming.
- Be conscious of your language, courtesy, manners, and conduct with other employees.
- Exhibit a noticeable sense of commitment to quality and client satisfaction.
- Absorb every available source of nonprofit knowledge on and off the job.
- Demonstrate a sense of “professional pride” in your work habits.
- Be an ambassador of the services of East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc.

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. asks each employee to take personal pride in his/her work. Each employee is expected to put in a full day’s work so that maximum productivity is achieved—high quality work completed in sufficient quantity with minimum errors and lost time. Productivity is directly related to East Central Colorado RC&D organizations ability to provide employee job security, pay increases, and advancement.

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. is proud of its reputation for integrity and for the good business ethics of its employees. Any employee who deliberately makes any untruthful or misleading statement, omission, or falsification so as to jeopardize the reputation or legal position of East Central Colorado RC&D will be subject to corrective action.

Negative, abusive, profane or obscene language will not be tolerated on East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. premises or while conducting East Central Colorado RC&D official business. Verbal and/or physical threats against management, East Central

Colorado RC&D Council members, clients, fellow employees, or assisting partners, could subject the offending employee to termination as well as legal actions.

## B. Corrective Discipline

If corrective discipline is warranted, the following list of actions may occur:

- Formal Verbal Warning
- Written Warning
- Suspension Without Pay
- Termination

These actions may be taken in the order listed, although this order is not mandatory and the decision may be made at the discretion of the employee's immediate supervisor. All warnings, verbal or written, should be documented.

## C. Sexual/Personal Harassment Policy

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. is committed to an environment for our employees that is free of sexual harassment. All employees should expect to work in an atmosphere free of unwanted sexual overtures or any unwelcome behavior which is personally offensive, which debilitates morale, or which otherwise interferes with working effectiveness. East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. will not tolerate situations wherein an employee is made to feel that submission to such advances is a term or condition of employment or where reaction to such treatment is used as a basis for decisions affecting the individual's employment. Offensive comments, innuendoes, jokes and sexually oriented kidding are regarded as forms of sexual harassment.

If an employee or individual feels that he/she has suffered unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, or repeated offensive comments, contact the Chair of the East Central Colorado RC&D Council.

No form of retaliation is permitted for filing bona fide charges of illegal discrimination or harassment. Should such allegations prove groundless, however, disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant.

The procedure for reporting and dealing with this very sensitive issue is as follows:

1. If a person's behavior makes an individual uncomfortable, the employee should feel free to immediately advise the person that, in the employee's opinion, the behavior is inappropriate and that the employee would like it to stop.
2. If the employee is not comfortable discussing the issue with the person, or if the person fails to respect an employee's request, the employee should report the incident to the Chair of the East Central Colorado RC&D Council.
3. In all instances, a prompt, thorough, fair investigation will take place, giving careful consideration to protect the rights and dignity of all people involved. The

East Central Colorado RC&D chair will take those steps it feels necessary to resolve the problem which may include verbal or written reprimand, suspension or termination. No retaliation of any kind will occur because an employee has in good faith reported an incident of suspected sexual harassment. The council chair or other person to whom the complaint was made will work to establish mutually agreed upon safeguards against retaliation while attempting to mediate any sexual harassment complaint.

#### D. Computer Policy

Any employee that will have access to the USDA Network will complete the necessary application and requirements of the USDA-NRCS IT Security Program. Appendix J. An employee will obtain a USDA password and will use only their own that password for computer access.

Use of USDA or East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. computer equipment to access inappropriate sites will result in discipline or termination. Site such as (but not limited to) pornographic or gambling sites are specifically restricted. Computer activities will be monitored by USDA-Computer Network remotely.

## VII. EMPLOYEE APPEALS (Grievance Procedures)

The purpose of the employee appeal procedure is to provide a means for employees to resolve their work place concerns with management. All regular and temporary employees of East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. may file a grievance under this section.

### A. Complaint Resolution

For working relationships within the East Central Colorado RC&D area to remain effective, efforts should be made to resolve misunderstandings and conflicts before serious problems develop.

If a situation does not seem to be resolving itself, you are encouraged to discuss it with the other individual(s) involved. If that discussion does not resolve the situation, you are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Chair East Central Colorado RC & D Council and the RC&D Coordinator . Normally, you will receive a response concerning the situation within five working days.

If an employee is unsatisfied with the result of discussion with the Chair, he/she may submit his/her concern in writing to the East Central Colorado RC & D Council. The Council will advise you of its decision within 20 working days; this decision shall be final.

East Central Colorado RC&D Inc., does not tolerate any retaliation against any employees for following this complaint resolution process. However, the process should also not be construed as limiting or delaying the East Central Colorado RC&D councils' right to take disciplinary action (up to and including termination) against any employee if the council determines that such action is appropriate.

### B. Timing for Appeals

In order to qualify for processing under this section, an appeal must be filed no later than 30 calendar days after the date on which the aggrieved condition commenced.

#### Step One:

Any employee who is eligible may present a written or verbal appeal to the East Central Colorado RC&D Chair for discussion. The RC&D Chair shall have five working days in which to respond to the relief requested. Should the RC&D chair fail to respond within this time limit or if the employee finds the response unsatisfactory, the appeal may be produced (in writing) by clearly stating the policy allegedly misapplied, and the relief requested. The appeal should be submitted to the RC&D Chair within five working days from the time the first step answer was due or was given. The RC&D Chair should respond in writing within five working days of receipt and if the RC&D Chair fails to respond within this time, or if the employee finds the response unsatisfactory, the employee may proceed to Step Two.

Step Two:

The employee may submit an appeal to the East Central RC&D entire Council, if Step One has not resolved the issue. The full Council shall convene a meeting wherein statements shall be taken from the appealing employee and the RC&D Coordinator, as applicable, either separately or jointly at the discretion of the Council. The Council may also request statements from other individuals with knowledge of the issue. The Council may refuse to grant the employee's request for appeal when the issues involved are minor in nature, or involve evaluations or judgments by management unless they appear to be contrary to policy, malicious, or vindictive. The Council shall have 20 working days in which to respond to the employee in writing concerning the relief requested. If the Council fails to respond within this time limit, the employee may petition the chair of the Council. Failure on the part of the employee to petition the Chair of the Council within thirty days of the result of Step Two shall result in the appeal being waived.

Step Three:

The Chair of the Council shall convene a meeting with the aggrieved employee and the RC&D Coordinator, as applicable, either separately or jointly at the discretion of the chair. The chair may convene an Executive Committee meeting and within 15 working days shall respond to the grievance in writing with the final decision. In all instances, a thorough and fair investigation will take place, giving careful consideration to the rights and dignity of the people involved. The chair will report the grievance and the result at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The greatest asset East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. will ever have is satisfied clients. If we are to receive positive feedback from partners and citizens, each of us must appreciate the fact that satisfying the client is our number one priority. It sits at the very core of East Central Colorado's ability to thrive and prosper.

A significant factor in delivering client satisfaction evolves around the quality of the service we offer. For East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc., service is our product. It is a product that each of us must deliver day-in and day-out. Even if we do not deal directly with the client on a regular basis, our efforts do make a difference. It is part of everyone's job to deliver a quality service product, whether it is face-to-face or behind the scenes.

The quality of the service we offer cannot be separated from the quality of the provider. This means that each of us individually holds the key to East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. in reaching the pinnacle of client satisfaction. If we try our very best to provide better service today than we did yesterday, we will have made great strides in ensuring a future as an organization and as the East Central Colorado RC&D Council.

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. commits time and dollars each year to attract new sponsors and pursue grant funds. Each council member and employee must contribute to the effort to satisfy loyal sponsors. Remember that the impression we leave on our sponsors and citizens is an advertisement, good or bad. Whenever a service is provided by council and/or employees we either improve the client's perception of East Central Colorado RC&D or diminish it.

This Employee Handbook has been prepared with the intent of anticipating many questions the employee may have. If, after reading this Handbook, you have unanswered questions, you are encouraged to discuss them with your supervisor. The supervisor will answer the question or get the answer for you.

East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. has the right to make and enforce new rules and to enforce, change, abolish, or modify existing rules, East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. policies, procedures, or benefits applicable to employees as may be deemed necessary or advisable. Thank you for taking time to read and study this Employee Handbook.

Employee Signature

I have read the Employee Handbook that was approved and adopted at the Feb 11, 2010, East Central Colorado Resource Conservation and Development Council Inc. regular Board meeting. I understand that I may approach my supervisor with questions about employment issues as the issues arise.

Employee Handbook Effective Date: February 11, 2010. Edits are approved as necessary.

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Employee Signature

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Date

- Appendix A - Immigration and Naturalization Service Form I-9  
(insert current I-9 aka OMB No. 1615-0047 from internet)
- Appendix B – W-9 form (insert current form from internet)
- Appendix C – Employee Contact Information Form
- Appendix D - Regular Employee Time Sheet Form (Insert from Excel: RC&D/Employee Information/Reg Empl timesheet Ex D of Handbook)
- Appendix E - Temporary Employee Time Sheet Form (Insert from Excel: RC&D/Employee Information/Temp Empl timesheet Ex E of Handbook)
- Appendix F - Borrower's Equipment Checkout / Return Form
- Appendix G - Staff Performance Evaluation
- Appendix H - Payroll Direct Deposit Employee Authorization Form
- Appendix I - Travel Reimbursement Rates
- Appendix J - USDA-NRCS IT Security Program (Insert from internet:  
OMB No. 3206-4035 (SF – 85),  
SF – 87 (two sets),  
OMB No. 3206-0182 (OF– 306),  
OMB No. 3206-0219 (OF – 612/SF – 171),  
NRCS-IRM-02,  
NRCS-IRM-03, and  
Fair Credit Release)

**APPENDIX C**

**Employee Contact Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current as of date:** \_\_\_\_\_

When you move please update this form for East Central Colorado RC&D, Inc. and payroll records.

**APPENDIX F**

**BORROWER'S EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT / RETURN FORM**

Equipment checked out by an employee must be returned at the end of employment, otherwise, the employee's last check will be held until the equipment is returned.

Borrower's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	Date Checked Out & Borrower's Initials	Date Returned & Borrower's Initials
Office keys	_____	_____
Vehicle keys	_____	_____
Other:		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**APPENDIX G**

EAST CENTRAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT, INC. (ECCRC D)

**Staff Performance Evaluation**

**Instructions:**

Both the employee and her/his supervisor are to complete this evaluation form for the annual performance review. The employee is to complete the form as a self-assessment; the supervisor is to complete the form to evaluate the employee's performance. The completed form will be included in the employee's personnel file. When the form is used for a probationary employee, no employee self-assessment is performed.

Name of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

This position is \_\_\_ exempt or \_\_\_ non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Check appropriate category:

\_\_\_ Annual Performance Appraisal (Period covered: \_\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_ Three Month Introductory Review

\_\_\_ Other periodic review, i.e. mid-season, or exit  
(explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

**SECTION A: APPRAISAL OF ANNUAL OBJECTIVES, JOB DUTIES & OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

— Employee and supervisor assess employee's performance based on annual objectives and job duties as defined in employee's job description and annual objectives. Any other accomplishments not addressed in annual objectives or job duties should also be included. Consult with your supervisor regarding whether to write about each objective separately or to do a summary of all objectives combined. Regardless of the format used, focus on highlights of accomplishments and performance results rather than a detailed summary of the work done during the appraisal period.

1. EMPLOYEE'S SELF-ASSESSMENT (narrative listed by objective):

2. SUPERVISOR'S ASSESSMENT:

**SECTION B: PERFORMANCE STANDARDS ASSESSMENT** – In addition to meeting annual objectives and fulfilling job duties, SJRC&D assesses performance on standard performance items.

The Rating Scale for performance is as follows:

- B - Below expectations
- M - Met expectations
- E - Exceeded expectations

Place an “x” under the appropriate rating

	Employee's Assessment			Supervisor's Assessment		
	B	M	E	B	M	E
<p><b>ALL STAFF:</b> <i>The standards in this section apply to all employees regardless of position. Using Below, Met or Exceeded, employees rate their own performance; supervisor's then record their assessment.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Knowledge of job:</i> The extent to which the employee has mastered all the duties of the position.</li> <li>2. <i>Quality of Work:</i> The degree to which the accuracy, comprehensiveness, timeliness and organization of work performed are such that supervisory review is not required.</li> <li>3. <i>Quantity of Work:</i> Amount of work completed in a specified time period.</li> <li>4. <i>Cooperation:</i> Ability to work with and relate to other staff, and to accept supervision.</li> <li>5. <i>Adaptability:</i> Ability to adjust to changes in the work situation and to handle pressure.</li> <li>6. <i>Initiative:</i> The extent to which the employee demonstrates a willingness and enthusiasm to perform the job, and the ability to use creativity and imagination in finding ways to complete the assigned work.</li> <li>7. <i>Attendance and punctuality:</i> The degree to which the employee reports to work regularly and on-time, and conforms to office hours.</li> <li>8. <i>Verbal communications skills:</i> The ability of the employee to express self verbally includes telephone contact abilities and degree of helpfulness and courtesy toward the callers, visitors, and co-workers.</li> </ol>						<b>E</b>

<p>9. <i>Written communication skills:</i> The extent to which the employee’s written work is well organized, grammatically correct, and does not require revision by the supervisor.</p>						
<p>10. <i>Computer/clerical skills:</i> The degree of proficiency in using the computer and using assigned software, accuracy of phone messages, proofreading of work, maintaining files, and other clerical tasks.</p>						

**SECTION C: PERFORMANCE STRENGTHENING** – *Based on the assessments in Sections A and B, supervisor and employee identify areas targeted for strengthening performance and recommend appropriate training and skills development objectives. Comment on any performance standard rated as “Below” in Section B and include specific examples of the deficient actions, the impact on the program or staff, and suggestions for improvement.*

1. EMPLOYEE’S RECOMMENDATIONS:

2. SUPERVISOR’S RECOMMENDATIONS:

**OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING CHECKLIST** – Supervisor should use the following

performance rating checklist for guidance in determining an appropriate performance rating.

Both employee and supervisor(s) must sign and date the cover page prior to submitting for

processing. Overall rating of Below or Exceeds will be discussed and given in consultation with

ECCRCD, Inc.

**TO THE SUPERVISOR:** Ultimately overall performance will be classified into one of three categories: Exceeded Expectations, Met Expectations or Below Expectations. Review the criteria for each performance rating and determine the one that most accurately reflects the employee’s overall performance for the year or introductory period. Place a checkmark by the assigned performance rating and preview each corresponding statement to confirm that most or all criteria have been met to support the accuracy of your rating. Comments on the appraisal form must support the rating.

\_\_\_ **B – Below Expectations:** Performance results were below the high standards of ECCRCD, Inc.

\_\_\_ Although the employee may have met some key duties and objectives, the employee did not accomplish some of them in a timely manner and/or work did not meet quality and/or quantity standards.

\_\_\_ The employee could not be relied upon to meet priorities consistently without on-going attention and checking, and/or the employee's approach was inconsistent with ECCRCD values and/or did not comply with policies and procedures.

\_\_\_ Overall performance fell short of ECCRCD standards in one or more areas that are critical to success.

\_\_\_ Weaknesses or deficiencies indicate the need for prompt corrective action.

\_\_\_ **M – Met Expectations:** Performance results met ECCRCD high standards.

\_\_\_ The employee accomplished key objectives, possibly exceeding in some, and fulfilled job duties.

\_\_\_ Performance reflected the high level of competence expected of our staff.

\_\_\_ Time was used effectively and productively; deadlines were consistently met.

\_\_\_ Work style was consistent with stated RC&D values and complies with policies and procedures.

\_\_\_ Performance at this level shows no serious weaknesses or deficiencies in any key area. The employee acknowledged any identified deficiencies and efforts were made by the employee to improve.

\_\_\_ There may be room for improvement, but employee's overall performance satisfies ECCRCD high standards.

\_\_\_ **E – Exceeded Expectations:** Performance results exceeded ECCRCD high standards.

\_\_\_ The employee exceeded key objectives and fulfilled job duties in an exemplary fashion.

\_\_\_ Exhibited no weaknesses or deficiencies in any key area.

\_\_\_ The employee demonstrated full and complete mastery of the job, yet took initiative to improve and to assume additional responsibility.

\_\_\_ Work style exemplifies ECCRCD values and complies with policies and procedures.

\_\_\_ Overall, the employee can be relied on to achieve desired results with distinction and excellence.

OTHER COMMENTS:

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Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature does not necessarily mean that the employee agrees with the evaluation, but rather indicates that s/he has read the form and has discussed the evaluation with the supervisor.

Signature of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX H**

**PAYROLL DIRECT DEPOSIT  
EMPLOYEE AUTHORIZATION FORM**

*Please print legibly*

I hereby authorize East Central Colorado Conservation & Development, Inc. and the financial institution(s) named below to remit the following amounts to my accounts (this includes my authorization to you to reverse any entries made in error or because company funds are not available). This authorization will remain in effect until company receives written notice from me.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: Checking Savings (circle one)

Routing Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Location/Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Deposit Amount: Entire Check \_\_\_\_\_ Partial Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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ATTACH VOIDED CHECK. We must have actual voided check(s) in order to process your request.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **TRAVEL RATES**

#### **PER DIEM RATES**

The per diem rates will be as established by the US General Services Administration and will automatically change when the USGSA rate changes without new board approval. The first and last day will be paid at a ½ day rate no matter what time travel starts and stops.

#### **MILEAGE RATE**

The mileage rate will be as established by the USGSA and will automatically change when the USGSA rate changes without new board approval.

#### **LODGING RATES**

Actual expense and approved prior to the lodging.

**Receipts required for all reimbursements.**