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Children in Workplace Policy, 4 Others, Now Effective

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By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Nov. 30, 2004) A new Metro policy regarding children in the workplace, along with revisions to four other policies affecting employees, took effect this month.

Children in the Workplace, [HR Policy 3-17](#), sets clear guidelines for when it's appropriate – "only in rare and unusual circumstances" – for an employee to bring a child to work. Noting that it's an employee's responsibility to make childcare arrangements, the policy says that when such arrangements falter, the employee should first look for alternatives.

In emergencies, and when alternatives are exhausted, an employee may submit a written request or phone his or her supervisor "and must receive prior supervisory approval before bringing a child/children to work." It's the employee's responsibility to supervise children in the workplace at all times.

Children are not allowed in such high-risk areas as bus and rail yards or construction zones. Those who are ill with infectious diseases can't be brought to work.

Metro-sponsored events, such as Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day, remain appropriate times for employees to bring children to work.

Appropriate Workplace Attire

The revised policy for Appropriate Workplace Attire, [HR Policy 4-4](#), follows CEO Roger Snoble's announcement earlier this year that employees may wear business casual clothes every day – not just on "casual Fridays."

While deleting the "casual Friday" reference, the policy says business casual dress "is for employees who do not have meetings with public officials or external clients." In that event, "employees are expected to dress appropriately for a formal business environment."

Questions?

If you have questions about these, or any, Human Resources policies, contact Bruce Moore at 922-2613.

Business casual attire is defined as "open-collar shirts, no ties, blouses, slacks, jeans, athletic shoes, all of moderate style, design and color." Social casual wear – tank tops, bare midriffs, clothing with offensive slogans, etc. – is not appropriate in the workplace, the revised policy says.

Department heads may increase the dress standards for their employees. Supervisors can make the determination whether an employee's attire is appropriate and can send the employee home to change, if necessary, on the employee's own time.

Fitness for Duty

The chief purpose of the revised Fitness for Duty policy, [HR Policy 3-18](#), is to ensure that employees "are able to perform the duties of their jobs at all times." Employees are responsible for notifying their supervisors if they are not fit for duty.

The Fitness for Duty policy sets forth the situations that routinely require medical exams as well as clarifying when a manager may work with Human Resources to require a medical exam based on behavior that indicates an employee may not be fit for duty.

Guidelines for the use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs by employees, which was formerly addressed in the Alcohol & Drug Policy, is now discussed in the revised policy.

The new guidelines require the treating doctor to assess whether the prescribed medications would impair employees in safety-sensitive jobs. The new forms are available at MyMetro.net.

Employee Assistance Program

Under the Employee Assistance Program, [HR Policy 7-3](#), Metro provides confidential, professional counseling by an outside counseling service for employees and their immediate families.

EAP is intended to help employees and family members cope with problems on the job, at school and at home in order to promote job effectiveness and productivity.

Problems covered by EAP include substance abuse and co-dependency, family and marital conflicts, difficulties at work, financial and legal difficulties, emotional and behavioral problems, and dependent care problems.

Metro offers up to three EAP visits per problem for each employee and immediate family members. On their own time, employees may contact the EAP counseling service, ComPsych, by calling 1-877-335-5327.

Reasonable Accommodation

Metro's Reasonable Accommodation policy, [HR Policy 3-12](#), strives to provide equal employment opportunity and accessibility in the workplace to individuals with disabilities.

The policy defines an individual with a disability as one who has "an existing physical or mental impairment limiting one or more major life activities such as walking, speaking, seeing, hearing, learning, performing manual tasks, breathing, caring for one's self, or working." It includes having a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.

The policy allows qualified job candidates to request reasonable accommodations during the selection process. It also sets up a Reasonable Accommodation Request (RAR) procedure for newly hired employees who are disabled, or for employees who become disabled on the job.

An RAR may be denied if the employee would not be able to perform the essential job duties with or without an accommodation. It also can be denied if the accommodation would be unduly costly, would significantly disrupt Metro operations, or would pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others, among other reasons.

The employee must request an RAR and is responsible for obtaining medical verification of the disability or impairment from a medical professional or rehabilitation counselor.

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