



Town of Berlin

Personnel Guide

Table of Contents

Town of Berlin Personnel Guide	3
Standards of Conduct	3
Performance Reviews	4
Gifts & Contributions	4
Confidentiality	4
Sexual Harassment	4
Equal Employment Opportunity	5
Safety	5
Probationary Period	5
Medical Examinations	5
Problem Resolution	5
Retirement	6
Holidays	7
Vacation Leave	8
Sick Leave	8
Miscellaneous Leaves	8
Health & Life Insurance	9
Deferred Compensation Plan	9
Payroll/Payday	9
Personnel Records	10
Smoking	10

Town of Berlin Personnel Guide

This section of your Employee Handbook is provided in order to give an outline of various benefits available to an employee. Each of these notes are covered in further detail in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Section. We have also made use of this section to provide a review of various pieces of information relating to conduct.

The Town of Berlin is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Many policies address the employee's individual rights. We also place emphasis on standards of conduct, which must be maintained by all employees. These standards assist in making sure that your rights are protected as individuals.

Standards of Conduct

Town employees are prohibited from engaging in any conduct, which could reflect unfavorably upon the Town service. Employees are expected to keep in mind that they are public employees and accordingly, conduct themselves in a manner which in no way discredits the Town, public officials or fellow employees. You are now in the Town's service and one of its representatives. We hope that you are proud of this fact. It must be remembered that the public is your employer and has a right to express its opinion of the services provided.

Use or possession of illegal narcotics and alcohol in the workplace or while on duty is prohibited. Employees violating this policy will be discharged immediately.

Employees shall avoid any action, which might result in or create the impression of using public office for private gain, giving preferential treatment to any person, or losing complete impartiality in conducting Town business.

Please see Chapter 9 of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Section for more information. Remember that ignorance is not a valid explanation for violating the rules and regulations.

Performance Reviews

Yearly performance reviews are mandated for all employees. Supervisors may give performance reviews on a more frequent schedule if they desire. All pay increases are subject to satisfactory performance of duties.

Gifts & Contributions

Employees are prohibited from soliciting or accepting any gift, gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan or any other item of monetary value from any person who is seeking to obtain business with the Town, or from any person within or outside the Town employment whose interest may be affected by the employee's performance or non-performance of official duties. Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 268A addresses this issue in detail. The State and the Town takes this issue seriously. Violators face potential prosecution under the law.

Confidentiality

The Town of Berlin has contact with many organizations including state, county and federal governments, private businesses and citizens. In many cases the Town is dealing with issues that are of a confidential and sensitive nature. Employees must be cautious not to disclose confidential information, which could lead to legal and financial repercussions for the Town, poor public relations and/or bad employee morale. If you have any questions, in regards to confidential matters, see your supervisor before discussing or releasing information. Improper disclosure of confidential matters could be subject to disciplinary action.

Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of Town of Berlin that employees should be able to work in an environment free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment. The Town maintains a policy prohibiting all types of harassment, including sexual harassment. The Town of Berlin is committed to protecting all rights of employees. Please see the separate policy on Sexual Harassment.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Town of Berlin has a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, age, sex, religion, physical handicap or national origin. The Town is an equal opportunity employer. All employment activity is conducted in a manner as to assure equal opportunity for all.

Safety

The Town of Berlin is very concerned with maintaining a safe working environment. The Town will provide and maintain safe working conditions for all employees. Employees may be required to wear and use safety equipment and clothing for their own protection. Employees must observe all safety rules, operating procedures, and safety practices; use personal protective equipment; report unsafe areas, conditions, or other safety problems; and report all accidents promptly to the appropriate supervisor.

The Town maintains workers compensation insurance for all employees except police and fire. Police officers and firefighters are entitled to benefits under the "Injured on Duty" program.

Probationary Period

An employee appointed to a regular position is required to serve a ninety- (90) day probationary period. This probationary period is a trial-period, which must be satisfactorily completed prior to obtaining permanent status. During the probationary period, an employee may be terminated without hearing for failure to properly perform the assigned duties of the position.

Medical Examinations

Every appointment to a regular position is based upon the successful completion of an occupational related medical exam. A practicing physician of the Town's choice performs the exam. The cost of the exam shall be borne by the Town. The exam is used to determine if the employee is physically capable of performing the duties of the position.

Problem Resolution

It is the policy of the Town of Berlin to provide an effective and acceptable means for employees to bring problems and complaints concerning their well being at work to the

attention of their supervisors. When the employee feels aggrieved, he or she shall be allowed to follow the procedure outlined in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Section with freedom from reprisal. However, this procedure does not confer the right upon anyone to make slanderous or libelous statements, or to take any other actions otherwise prohibited by law. Employees are encouraged to bring any problems or complaints to their respective supervisor or appointing authority regarding work or other day-to-day relations with the town.

Retirement

The Berlin contributory retirement system is organized and operated by the Worcester County Retirement System in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 32. The retirement system provides pension benefits to members who reach retirement age, or who are forced to retire because of disability under certain conditions. Benefits are also available to the surviving beneficiaries, spouse and/or dependents under a variety of retirement options. Town employees do not participate in the Federal Social Security System. Those employees not eligible for Worcester County Retirement System shall participate in the PEBSCO Deferred Compensation Plan, so as to comply with Federal Law in regards to retirement contributions.

Membership is limited to permanent employees working a minimum of 20 hours per week or an aggregate of 1040 hours per year. Employees who commenced employment since December 31, 1983 contribute eight (8) percent of their gross salary to the retirement system. Contributions are made by means of payroll deductions from gross pay. (Employees who commenced employment with the Town prior to January 1, 1975 contribute 5% of their gross pay; employees who commenced employment with the Town between January 1, 1975 and December 31, 1983 contribute 7% of their gross pay) The total amount of the employee's deductions over the course of his/her employment is placed in an interest bearing account until he/she is eligible to retire. Those employees earning more than \$30,000 and who commenced employment after December 31, 1978, shall be further assessed an additional two (2) percent of their salary above \$30,000. This additional assessment allows an employee to receive more than \$30,000 in retirement benefits if they qualify.

To receive a pension, an employee must be age 55 and must have 10 years of creditable service.

The formula, which calculates the employee's retirement allowance, includes three elements:

- + the employee's age at retirement;
- + the average allowable regular compensation the employee has received for three consecutive years in which the employee's salary was or will be the highest;
- + the employee's total years and full months of creditable service includes any allowable military service.

Employees who plan to retire should be in touch with the Treasurer's office, to ensure

that all required forms are completed to eliminate any unnecessary delay in the processing of paperwork by the Worcester County Retirement System. All questions relative to the retirement system should be referred to the Treasurer's office in the Town of Berlin or the Worcester County Retirement System (508) 798-7725.

Holidays

The Town shall recognize the following holidays on the day on which the Commonwealth of Massachusetts legally observes them. All benefit eligible employees shall be entitled. On these days employees, without loss of pay, shall be excused from all duty except in cases where the appointing authority determines that the employee is required to maintain essential Town services:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Patriot's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Vacation Leave

The Town provides vacation leave for all benefit eligible employees. Annual vacation may be taken as earned, but in no event prior to employment in Town service of least six months.

Vacation leave schedules are as follows:

1 year of service	1 week per year
2 years of service	2 weeks per year
7 years of service	3 weeks per year
15 years of service	4 weeks per year
20 years of service	5 weeks per year

Sick Leave

All benefit eligible employees who have completed the six-month probationary employment period shall be entitled to 10 days of sick leave per year.

Miscellaneous Leaves

The Town of Berlin has provisions for other type leaves such as Bereavement, Jury Duty, and Military Leave. Further details on these forms of leaves may be found in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Section.

Health & Life Insurance

The Town provides health insurance in conformance with Chapter 32B of the Massachusetts General Laws to benefit eligible employees. The insurance is not mandatory. Employees may elect to not take the insurance. The Town pays 75% of the premium. The employee may opt to join the plan within 30 days of the date of employment. Any eligible employee refusing health insurance through the Town shall sign a waiver of coverage. The purpose of Group health Insurance is to provide the employee and his/her family with protection against non-occupational illness or injury.

The Town provides life and accidental death insurance to benefit eligible employees. The premium payment shall be shared by the Town and the employee.

Deferred Compensation Plan

The Town provides employees the opportunity to participate in a deferred compensation plan. The Town contracts with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the Copeland deferred compensation plan. This plan is similar in nature to an IRA or a Keough Plan for the private sector. In essence, an employee may contribute tax-deferred money to a retirement plan. This allows you to deduct contributions from your pay prior to any federal or state tax calculations. It is then returned to you, after you retire, when your income tax bracket would be lower. The Town has a representative assigned by PEBSCO who will meet with any employee to explain the plan. The contact person's name and phone number can be obtained by contacting the Treasurer's Office.

Payroll/Payday

Payday is on Thursday. Checks are released to department supervisors, or their designee, after 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday. Direct Deposit is also offered. Checks can be obtained from your supervisor and not the Treasurer's Office. If there is an error or question with your check, contact the Town Treasurer and your supervisor immediately. DO NOT cash the check. The Town will provide a corrected version, which can be cashed.

Personnel Records

Employees may have access to their personnel file by contacting their supervisor. Files are kept in each department with the employee's master file being maintained by the Treasurer's Office. An employee should immediately notify his/her supervisor and the Treasurer of any change in name, address, phone number, emergency notification number and other relevant data. The Treasurer's office must be notified of changes in marital status and dependents for tax withholding and insurance purposes.

Smoking

The Town maintains a no smoking policy for all buildings. **The Massachusetts Smoke-free Workplace Law** (MGL chapter 270, section 22, [“An Act to Improve the Public Health in the Commonwealth”](#)), effective 07/05/2004, prohibits smoking in workplaces, including private offices, taxis, restaurants and bars in order to protect employees and the public from secondhand smoke. This law amends the 1988 Massachusetts Clean Indoor Air Law.

Secondhand smoke, also known as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), is the combination of smoke exhaled by a smoker and smoke from a burning cigarette, cigar or pipe. This combination is dangerous for both the smoker and the nonsmoker. Secondhand smoke contains a mixture of more than 4,000 chemicals, more than 50 of which are cancer-causing agents (carcinogens).