**SECTION: PAY AND COMPENSATION**

**POLICY:** Meal Breaks **EFFECTIVE DATE:** insert date adopted

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide employees with a designated time to take meal breaks during the workday. Meal breaks are essential for promoting employee well-being and productivity, ensuring that employees have adequate time to rest and recharge during their work shifts.

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. Meal Break: A scheduled break, typically between 30 minutes and one hour, provided to employees for the purpose of consuming food and resting during their work shift.
2. Relieved of Duties: A period when employees are free from work responsibilities and are not expected to perform work-related tasks during their meal break.
3. Designated Break Areas: Areas within or around the workplace where employees are permitted to take their meal breaks.
4. Off-Site Meal Break: A meal break taken away from the worksite, subject to the supervisor's approval.

**APPLICABILITY:**

This policy applies to all employees who are scheduled for work shifts that are of sufficient duration to warrant a meal break. It does not apply to employees in roles where continuous service is required, or where operational needs dictate an exception to this policy.

**POLICY:**

1. Meal Break Period:
	1. A meal break, typically lasting between 30 minutes to one hour, is granted to employees based on the length of their shifts.
	2. Employees are not considered to be working during their meal periods if they are completely relieved of all their job duties.
2. Meal Break During Radio/Phone Duty:
	1. Employees who are required to carry a radio or a phone during their meal breaks are still considered to be relieved of duties, provided they are not actively responding to calls or performing work tasks during the break.
	2. Employees must be available for emergencies but are not expected to perform regular job duties during the meal break period.
3. Meal Break Scheduling:
	1. Supervisors are responsible for scheduling meal breaks based on the operational needs of the department or team.
	2. Supervisors should make reasonable efforts to ensure meal breaks are scheduled in a way that maintains adequate coverage for work operations.
4. Designated Break Areas and Off-Site Breaks:
	1. Employees taking off-site breaks should return to work on time and in accordance with departmental policies.
5. Storage and Consumption of Food and Beverages:
	1. Personal food and beverages should be stored in appropriate locations such as break rooms, refrigerators, or designated kitchen areas.
	2. Employees should consume food and beverages in designated break areas to maintain a clean and safe work environment.
	3. Eating or drinking at workstations or in areas not designated for meals is discouraged unless permitted by the department.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Scheduling Meal Breaks:
	1. Supervisors will work with employees to schedule meal breaks based on shift duration and department needs.
	2. Employees should request changes to their scheduled meal breaks in advance, when possible, to ensure proper coverage during peak operational periods.
2. Meal Break Communication:
	1. Employees should communicate their meal break preferences or special needs to their supervisor in a timely manner to ensure accommodation can be made.
	2. If employees are required to work through their meal break due to urgent operational needs, supervisors should provide a reasonable alternative break period at a later time.
	3. Supervisors will determine whether an off-site meal break is feasible based on work coverage and operational requirements.
3. Monitoring and Compliance:
	1. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring employees adhere to the designated meal break policies, including the proper use of break areas and the appropriate storage of food and beverages.
	2. Employees who fail to follow the guidelines may be subject to corrective action, depending on the nature of the violation.