

January 29, 2015

Honorable Mayor Bailey, Members of the City Council, Interim City Manager McDougal and Interim Assistant City Manager Badgett

As an employee for the City of Riverside, I believe it is my responsibility to be aware of the various policies and procedures that have been adopted by the organization. In fact, under the "How to Use the Employee Handbook Website" section of the Human Resources Department website, the following statement is made (referencing the Employee Handbook):

One of an employee's first responsibilities is to be familiar with its contents.

Over the weekend, I had the opportunity to comprehensively review the Employee Handbook that is online. I was horrified to learn the document is littered with errors, incorrect statements, and policy guidance that is in direct conflict with the City's adopted policies and procedures. While I certainly can't point out all of the errors and inconsistencies, please allow me a moment to identify some of the more obvious issues with the document:

- The document indicates the City has over 2,600 employees. While this is a minor point, it is factually inaccurate and portrays incorrect information to our employees. It is also embarrassing that the Human Resources Department doesn't know the correct number of employees in the organization.
- The document indicates that New Employee Orientation is held monthly. When I was hired, I was informed I needed to wait two months before New Employee Orientation would be held due to lack of attendance. If this isn't offered monthly, it shouldn't portray that it is.
- The document indicates that the City follows merit system principals. This is incorrect for non-classified appointments.
- The document states that the City has an Employment Complaint and Appeal Procedure. To file a complaint, employees are directed to pick up forms from the 2nd floor at City Hall. After visiting the 2nd floor at City Hall, I was unable to locate the forms. Perhaps this is because the Human Resources Department is now located on the 5th floor of City Hall.
- The dress code policy identified in the Employee Handbook does not match the official Dress Code policy (IV-2). Specifically, there is conflicting information regarding the wearing of skirts. Am I allowed to wear a skirt or not?
- The Use of City Vehicle for Breaks is inconsistent with the official City Policy.
- The section on Outside Employment is inconsistent with the official City Policy.

- The Employee Handbook states that direct deposit is required for all new employees. This is inconsistent with California law which requires employee consent for direct deposit.
- The Workers' Compensation division is identified as part of the Finance Division of the City Manager's Office. This is incorrect. According to the Human Resources Department website, Workers' Compensation is part of the Human Resources Department.
- The Sick Leave provision of the Employee Handbook fails to mention that sick leave can be used to care for a domestic partner while the policy indicates this is acceptable. Does the Employee Handbook conflict with the law?
- The FMLA section of the Employee Handbook fails to mention Military Caregiver leave, which is identified in the City's policy.
- The Educational Reimbursement Program section of the Employee Handbook states that employees are required to complete a probationary period before they are eligible for this benefit. The policy states that employees are eligible as of their effective hire date. Which is correct?
- The Rideshare Program Coordinator is identified as Chris Durham. After calling the identified number, it became evident that Chris Durham is not an employee of that Department and not responsible for the Rideshare Program.
- Under Recognized Employee Organizations, the address for Service Employees International Union is identified as 4336 Market Street. This is factually incorrect.

The errors identified above are not comprehensive of all of the issues with the employee handbook. Instead, these are the errors that I could easily identify in my initial read of the handbook and City policies available on the internet.

I am confused, perplexed and troubled by these issues in the Employee Handbook. If employees are held to be responsible for knowing the contents of the handbook, it is imperative that the contents are accurate and up to date. I simply do not understand how the Human Resources Director, an attorney by trade, can allow this to occur. I would hope that the Human Resources Director will make immediate revisions/corrections to the handbook and also devise a plan to ensure the handbook is regularly updated to reflect changes in the law or policy. Once the handbook has been corrected, it should be distributed to all employees and succinctly identify all the changes that have been made so that employees can become familiar with the new content. It is unfortunate that I, as an employee of the organization, have to identify these issues and hope that change occurs. I trust that you will ensure prompt remedial action occurs.