



Date: 08/21/06

## Employment of Relatives and Consensual Relationships

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### I. Purpose

This policy establishes City employment standards for the hiring and supervision of family members and/or relatives and addresses consensual relationships in the workplace.

The City discourages consensual relationships (as defined) between a supervisor or manager and his/her subordinate. Such a relationship poses a risk of a creating a conflict of interest and/or appearance of impropriety that may impair the integrity of employment decisions. Such a relationship may also subject both the City and supervisor or manager to the risk of liability.

### II. Policy

No employee shall appoint, employ or participate in a hiring decision involving any person who is a family member or relative (as defined), nor use his or her position to influence another City employee to hire a family member or relative.

The City will not discriminate in its employment and personnel actions with respect to its applicants and employees on the basis of marital status.

Notwithstanding this policy, the City retains the right to:

- (1) Not appoint a person to a position in the same department when his or her relationship to another employee is likely to create an adverse impact on supervision, safety, security or morale, or involves a likely conflict of interest.
- (2) Take appropriate steps to ensure appropriate working relationships among family members and/or relatives, including married persons.
- (3) Not place one party to a relationship under the direct or indirect supervision of the other party of a relationship.
- (4) Disqualify one party to a relationship for a position privy to confidential personnel matters who has a family member or relative already in the City's employment when the relationship is likely to compromise confidential information.
- (5) Effect a transfer of one or both parties in the relationship in the event the City learns of an occurrence described above.

A consensual relationship between co-workers should not create an adverse impact on supervision, safety, security or morale, or a conflict of interest. When a consensual relationship does create an adverse effect the Department Director has the responsibility to correct the adverse effects.

While the City discourages such relationships, should a supervisor or manager develop a consensual relationship with a subordinate under his/her supervision, it is the supervisor's or manager's responsibility to inform the Department Director of this relationship. The Department Director has the responsibility to correct the adverse effects in these situations when they occur.

The City Manager shall have the authority and responsibility for determining if such a potential for adverse impact exists or does not exist.

**III. Definition**

"Family member" or "relative" shall include the following:

Parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, nieces, nephews, uncles, aunts.

Husband, wife, stepparent, stepchild, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law.

Guardianship relationship and adoptive parent/child relationships.

Domestic Partner: Individual registered with the City of Petaluma and or State of California.

Persons cohabiting in a romantic and/or sexual relationship.

"Consensual relationship" shall mean a relationship of persons cohabiting in a romantic and/or sexual relationship.

"Relationship" shall mean a relationship with a family member (as defined) or a consensual relationship (as defined).

"Supervision" shall mean:

Responsible for the employee's performance appraisal and/or

Responsible for low level discipline (oral and or documented oral counseling) and/or

Responsible for responding to, or adjusting an employee grievance and/or accountable for employee's time (e.g. schedule and or time sheet approval).

Approved:

Michael A. Bierman  
Michael A. Bierman, City Manager

8-14-06  
Date

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Revised: