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California Department of Fish and Wildlife Standards of Conduct

This document sets forth expectations regarding work habits and general office guidelines for all California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) employees. These expectations apply equally to all CDFW employees. Managers/supervisors (herein referred to as supervisors) are required to hold all employees accountable for adhering to all CDFW policies, procedures, and these Standards of Conduct.

Professionalism

- Courteous and Respectful Workplace: CDFW strives to maintain a respectful, safe, and healthy work environment. All employees are expected to act in a consistent manner to create and support a courteous and respectful workplace. Employees must comply with all [Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) policies](#). Employees are required to report any violations of discrimination, harassment, workplace violence, and bullying to their supervisor or directly to the [Civil Rights Office \(CRO\)](#).

Deputy Directors, Branch Chiefs, Regional Managers, and supervisors set the tone from the top and must encourage employees to act in a courteous and respectful manner consistent with all CDFW's policies. As mandatory reporters under California's anti-harassment and anti-discrimination laws, Deputy Directors, Branch Chiefs, Regional Managers, and supervisors must immediately report any potential violation of [EEO policies](#) to [CRO](#) and the Human Resources Office (HRO) so the appropriate action can be taken.

Employees may file a complaint directly with [CRO](#) or other state and federal agencies as identified in the applicable [EEO policy](#). Retaliation for filing a complaint or cooperating with an investigation is prohibited and could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- Professional Attire: Employees must represent the department in a manner that conveys a high level of professionalism. Dress and appearance must be appropriate for the work being performed and the environment in which the work is performed. Shoes must be worn at all times. Certain casual attire (e.g., beachwear, overly revealing, or workout apparel) is not appropriate for interaction with the public or in CDFW workplaces. Employees must exercise good judgement in this regard.

Employees are expected to maintain personal hygiene appropriate for their work environment including the need to work with others and engage with the public. Apparel bearing any image, words, or logos must be consistent with all [EEO policies](#). Additionally, employees required to wear a uniform must adhere to all established standards outlined in the HR [12901 Uniforms and Protective Gear Policy](#).

Employees may be required to use leave credits or dock (unpaid leave) if asked to leave work and return to work appropriately dressed.

- Profanity: The workplace must always remain professional and respectful. The use of profanity, swearing or any vulgar, insulting, abusive, or crude language is not permitted in any CDFW work setting, including field locations such as hatchery grounds. Profanity, even when not directed at an individual, can be offensive, create an uncomfortable work environment, and may violate [EEO policies](#).

Communication

- Voicemail: Employees must listen to voicemails throughout the day, carefully review the message to determine if action is required, and respond within 48 business hours.
- Email: Employees must review incoming emails throughout the day. Both work and non-work-related emails may be received. Spam and junk email may carry viruses which can be very dangerous to your computer and may compromise CDFW's databases and electronic systems. The following rules apply to all electronic correspondence:
 - Read emails promptly, determine whether a response or follow-up is needed, and respond within 48 business hours unless a different documented expectation is applicable. If you cannot provide an immediate response, acknowledge receipt and let the sender know you are working on their inquiry.
 - Respond to all electronic meeting requests within 24 business hours.

- Open attachments only if they are from a known and trusted source and are work related documents, otherwise report them as “Phishing” and immediately delete them.
- Use good email etiquette, take initiative, be proactive, and be responsive in all electronic communication.

For readability purposes, all emails must contain a signature block that adheres to the following guidelines:

- Blue or black color font
- Sans Serif font type (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Century Gothic)
- Minimum 11-point font size
- Plain stationery with white background
- No non-CDFW related pictures or quotes
- Pronouns are optional. Follow the guidance found on <https://pronouns.org/how>.

Employees must activate an “Out-of-Office” notification when scheduled to be out of the office. The automatic reply must include your expected date of return, and the name and contact information for people to contact during your absence. Additional information about any personal circumstances is prohibited (e.g., taking time off to have surgery, spending the day with my children, going on a picnic).

- External Inquiries: Employees must notify their supervisor before responding to inquiries received from the Legislature, non-departmental attorneys, or any external agency that does not relate to their normal job duties. All contacts from media outlets must be referred to the Office of Communication, Education, and Outreach (OCEO).

General Guidelines

- Desks, Workspace, Computer Files, and File Cabinets: All desks, workspaces, computer files, and file cabinets are state property, and are subject to access by co-workers and/or a supervisor at any time, such as when searching for work documents or being utilized as a hoteling station. Employees must keep their cubicle and/or hoteling station clean, organized, and free of clutter. Those using a hoteling station must also ensure that anything left in the workspace supports a shared, professional environment and does not interfere with other employees who may use the station.

Personal items must not interfere with or obstruct the work area or violate any CDFW policy. Keep personal items safe by ensuring they are locked up. Liquid-filled containers and cups should not be stationed near state equipment. This is intended to minimize potential damage to equipment.

When conducting video conferencing (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom), your work area must be presentable and work appropriate.

When away from your desk for any length of time, including when teleworking, secure all documents containing privileged, confidential, or sensitive information in a locked drawer or file cabinet. This includes documents with Personal Identifiable Information (PII) (e.g., social security numbers, bank account information).

- Kitchen (if applicable): Keep the kitchen area clean by washing your dishes immediately after use, throwing out old/expired food from the refrigerator, and wiping down the microwave after use. Do not leave dirty dishes in the sink, as this creates a health hazard and may prevent others from using the sink.
- Non-Work-Related Conversations/Visits: When engaging in non-work-related conversations, please do so during your scheduled break/lunch times. When socializing, the volume of the conversation must be kept low enough to not disrupt nearby employees. This includes singing, humming, and any other non-work-related noises.
- Children and Pets in the Workplace: Children are not permitted in the workplace except for brief, infrequent, and planned visits that limit disruptions to the workplace. The workplace is not a substitute for childcare. When childcare is unavailable and with supervisor approval, employees may use leave credits or approved dock (unpaid leave) to take time off work. Employees may also visit the [Employee Assistance Program website](#) to find emergency care.

Pets are not permitted in the workplace. Unlike pets, service animals may be permitted with an approved Reasonable Accommodation (R/A). Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request an R/A for a service animal contact the Employee Wellness Services Unit at EWS@Wildlife.ca.gov.

Note: Animals used for official state business, such as law enforcement canines and scientific dogs, do not fall under this section.

- State Equipment: Personal use of state equipment, including but not limited to computers, laptops, fax machines, copy machines, printers, and state phones must be minimal and not add to state costs. Employees are to use their personal cell phones when making personal calls. If personal calls are received during working hours, they must be kept to a minimum and be brief. Anything more than minimal use and/or any use that results in additional costs to CDFW, is considered abuse and the employee may be required to reimburse CDFW and could be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- Personal Electronic Devices: The use of personal electronic devices should be limited and avoided when possible. This includes but is not limited to personal cell phones, tablets, laptops, and desktop computers, for conducting state business. Personal cell phones should remain on silent or vibrate mode during work hours. Refrain from making or answering personal calls using the speaker feature while in the office.

Any devices with streaming video capability are not to be used for entertainment purposes during work time. Personal music players are permitted; however, ear buds must be used. The music must be kept at a volume that will not interfere with your ability to hear incoming calls, perform your work, or interact with other staff members.

- Confidentiality: Employees are required to handle confidential, sensitive, and PII with great sensitivity. This includes all verbal and written communications. All employees have an ethical and legal responsibility to always protect confidential information. Employees with questions or concerns about what is or is not confidential, should discuss them with their supervisor.

When participating in video conferences/meetings (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom), employees must ensure that confidential information is not visible to anyone who is not authorized to view it. Additionally, employees should wear headphones while on video calls in their cubicle to avoid distracting co-workers and to help protect confidential information.

- Meeting Participation: When invited to a meeting, arrive on time. Respect your time commitments and those of others. If you are unable to attend a meeting on time, notify the participants as soon as possible to provide your estimated time of arrival, or ask to reschedule.

- Gratuities: Employees must never solicit or accept gratuities. If a “thank you” gift is received, employees must notify their supervisor. If it is determined by the supervisor that it cannot be returned to the sender, then it is to be shared with other staff members or displayed for all to see. If asked how one may show their gratitude, suggest a letter of appreciation.
- Work Schedules: Employees are expected to work with their supervisors to set work schedules consistent with CDFW’s operating hours, and in accordance with all applicable [Memorandum of Understandings](#), laws, and regulations.

Health and Safety

- Safety and Security: Employees must maintain a safe workplace and take action when they identify a hazard. Any hazard or potential hazard must be reported to a supervisor immediately, and the area should be secured, if possible. All non-public entrance doors must remain closed after entry or exit, and access may not be granted to unauthorized individuals. Cardkeys may only be used by their assigned holder; using someone else’s cardkey to open a secure door is prohibited.
- Fragrances: Some employees may be sensitive to chemicals and may react to different products with widely varying degrees of severity. Employees are encouraged to refrain from using fragranced products (e.g., perfume, cologne, after-shave, hand lotion) while in the office. Special sensitivities will be communicated to employees by management and additional safeguards may be put in place, when appropriate.

IMPORTANT

In instances where a CDFW program maintains its own written expectations or guidelines, such as those outlined in Office Guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), or other governing documents, the program-specific directives shall serve as the authoritative standard. Employees are required to review and comply with all applicable program guidelines in addition to the Standards of Conduct.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



My signature below acknowledges that I have received and reviewed CDFW's *Standards of Conduct*. Furthermore, I understand that any employee who violates CDFW's *Standards of Conduct* may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employee's Name (Print)

Division/Region/Branch

Employee's Signature

Date