

NEMR COMPANY POLICY MANUAL

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NEMR COMPANY POLICY MANUAL

FORWARD

- A. Experience has shown that any business functions more effectively and harmoniously when its basic structure, objectives, policies and plans are known and understood by all associated persons. In view of this fact the contents of this manual have been prepared as a guide to better knowledge and understanding of the Cooperative's purposes, organization, policies and how it functions.
- B. This manual has been designed for reference use by the Board of Directors, the General Manager, and each employee of the Cooperative as an aid to maintain a team of willing, thinking articulate people to efficiently carry out the various functions of the Cooperative.
- C. The subject matter of a manual of this type must naturally be flexible and subject to revision from time to time to keep abreast of every changing situation and condition.
- D. Each employee is to acquaint himself/herself with the Cooperative's policy and to conduct himself/herself according to the policies and procedures developed and adopted by NEMR.
- E. Each employee will be provided a copy of NEMR's policies to read. The employee will need to read, sign and date each page at the bottom. The copy will be kept by management, accessible on request by each employee at any time.

PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

- A. NEMR is a RUS-financed organization created for the purpose of giving our subscribers the best possible telecommunication service at the lowest possible cost, consistent with good business practices. NEMR's mission is to deliver cutting-edge fiber services to seamlessly connect customers for an exceptional experience.
- B. The business affairs of the Cooperative are administered by an 8-member Board of Directors. These Directors are selected by the members of the Cooperative. The Directors elect their own officers consisting of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- A. The directors are responsible for establishing general objectives and major policies, program planning, borrowing of money, letting of contracts, carrying out provisions of loan contracts, general financial control, selecting and hiring a General Manager and Legal Counsel, determining organizational structure, confirming management decisions on major items, defining authority and responsibility delegated by the General Manager, and reviewing results.
- B. In order to expedite the carrying out of these functions, the committees deemed necessary will be appointed from time to time. The committees will handle all matters falling under their jurisdiction, including preliminary investigations and negotiations. The committees are not empowered to take final action unless authority to do so is delegated by the entire Board on specific matters, in addition to the permanent committees; the President will appoint special committees as deemed necessary. The prime purpose of these committees is to study problems and make recommendations to the Board for final determination.

BOARD MEETINGS

- A. The Board of Directors shall meet regularly on the 3rd Monday of each month of the year. Special meetings may be called by the President of the Board or the General Manager, as set forth in the By-Laws of the Cooperative. The General Manager shall attend all meetings if available and/or otherwise directed.
- B. Once per year, the Board of Directors will hold an Annual Meeting of the members.

C. Minutes of all regular and special Board Meetings shall be kept according to the recommendations provided by the RUS. All business matters, decisions, and motions must be a matter of record in the minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting. In the absence of the Secretary, an acting secretary will be appointed. Any action by the Board shall be supported unanimously by the Board in any discussion with other members of the Cooperative.

BOARD MEETING –VISITORS TO MEETINGS

A. Visitors may attend the meeting of the Board of Directors when they have business to discuss with the Board or when invited. Visitors must first contact the Business Office at Green City and state the nature of their business. Visitors at Board Meetings may be asked to leave if the Board does not feel their presence to be in the best interests of the Cooperative. The Board reserves the right to hold executive meetings without guests. The Board reserves the right to limit members representing a group of special interest to no more than three.

COMPANY POLICIES, PROCEDURES, RULES AND REGULATIONS

A. Authority. These policies, procedures, rules and regulations are established pursuant to and in conformation with the authority granted to the Board of Directors by the members of the NEMR, pursuant to Article IV, Section 1 of the By-Laws of NEMR.

B. Purpose. The purpose of these rules is to formulate sound personnel policies designed to promote efficiency and economy, develop and maintain morale, and establish equitable, non-discriminatory standards for the classification, treatment, and compensation of NEMR employees.

C. Intent. The provisions of these policies and procedures shall not be inconsistent with, but complementary to, related state and federal regulations, rules of the Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC) as well as the Bargaining Agreement between NEMR and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers of America. Provisions which may become invalid due to subsequent passage or interpretations of related legislation, court rulings or bargaining agreements, shall be modified without harm to the remaining provisions.

COMPANY POLICY ADMINISTRATION

A. Responsibility. The implementation and administration of Company Policies shall be the responsibility of the General Manager, as delegated to the Department Heads and Supervisors. The responsibilities of the Department Heads and Supervisors shall be the administration, the improvement and coordination of activities related to these policies (labor-management, relations, safety, etc.) and such other activities as required by the General Manager.

B. Department Rules. At the discretion of the General Manager, individual Department Heads may establish specialized, operational guidelines that are consistent with the general provisions of these Company Policies.

C. Management Rights. Specific areas of responsibility shall be reserved to Management if the services mission of the Cooperative is to function effectively, and if rules and regulations are to be administered fairly, consistently, equitably and without discrimination. The Management of the Cooperative shall, within the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement:

1. Determine the nature, scope and definition of the Cooperative organization including: Classification selection, number, retention, promotion, reorganization, transfer, deployment, assignment, layoff, recall and scheduling of employees.
2. Determine the methods, means, tools and equipment; including the right to contract and sub-contract existing and future work, if such does not result in lay-off or part timing of existing employees;
3. Direct employees;
4. Discipline, suspend, demote, and/or discharge employees in accordance with the policies of the Cooperative;
5. Require as a part of normal employee development, that employees take appropriate, related training, either on or off duty, in order to fulfill the responsibility of the position;

6. Take the necessary measures to maintain optimum productivity in operations;
7. Determine the necessity for and assignment of overtime in compliance with appropriate related, legislation and/or court rulings, and in accordance with policies of the Cooperative;
8. Determine the scope, priority, and amount of budget allocations.

ADJUSTMENT OF CHARGES

A. In adjustment of charges for over-billing by the Telephone Company, a refund of the full amount over-billed will be made when such amount can be determined, subject to management approval. When the period during which over-billing has been effective cannot be fixed or the exact amount of over-billing determined from available records, the maximum refund will not exceed an estimated amount equal to such over-billing for a period of three years.

B. All other claims against the Cooperative shall be investigated by the Management. The General Manager shall periodically furnish the Board with details on claims both paid and unpaid.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

A. It shall be the policy of NEMR to prohibit discrimination against an individual because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or age, in regard to any term, condition or privilege of employment.

B. Such terms, conditions and privileges which shall be free of discrimination are as follows:

1. Recruitment, advertising, and/or application procedures;
2. Hiring upgrading, promotion, award of tenure, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, right of return from layoff and rehiring;
3. Rates of pay or any other form of compensation and charges in compensation;
4. Job assignments, job classifications, organizational structures, position description, lines of progression
5. Leaves of absence, sick leave or any other leave;
6. Fringe benefits available by virtue of employment, whether administered by NEMR;
7. Selection and financial support for training, including apprenticeships, professional meetings, conferences and other related activities, and selection for leaves of absence to pursue training;
8. Activities covered by NEMR, including social and recreational programs; and
9. Any other term, condition or privilege of employment.

ASSISTANCE TO OTHER SYSTEMS IN EMERGENCIES

A. All available equipment and competent personnel of the Cooperative shall be offered to other telephone companies who experience major breakdowns of service constituting a public emergency, in each case a charge will be made against the other company involved. The charge will include labor paid plus fifty percent (50%) to cover overhead. Truck expense on pickups at the IRS rate per mile. Digging equipment shall be charged at the normal per foot cost in the area involved. All expenses of room and board of personnel involved shall be paid by the company requesting assistance.

AUDIT OF BOOKS

A. The books and records of the Cooperative shall be audited annually by a Certified Public Accountant familiar with telephone utility accounting, as recommended and required by the RUS. The employment of the CPA shall be on an annual basis, as a responsibility of the Board of Directors and subject to RUS approval.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

A. In addition to the authority prescribed to the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Board according to the Articles of Incorporation or By-Laws of the Cooperative, the following authorizations are made:

1. Checks drawn in the name of the Cooperative in payment of its financial obligations shall be signed by any of the following: General Manager, Controller, Staff Accountant or Plant Superintendent of the Cooperative and co-signed by one of the above or by one other designated employee or director.
2. The General Manager shall have the authority to transfer funds between the accounts of the Cooperative himself/herself or may authorize the Controller or Staff Accountant to do so.
3. Management shall have the authority to enter into contracts on behalf of the cooperative's ordinary course of business and to do all other acts and things which he/she may consider necessary or conducive to the interest of the Cooperative.

BONDS AND INSURANCE

A. The Cooperative shall always carry the minimum insurance and bond coverage required by the RUS. The insurance coverage should be reviewed annually by the General Manager.

REMOTE WORK

A. An employee may request, or a Department Head may initiate a discussion about a remote work arrangement. Eligibility to work remotely on a consistent or routine basis is contingent on job responsibilities (rather than job title), type of position (supervisory or public-facing), work habits, and work schedule. Employees may also request a short-term remote working arrangement for special circumstances. Moreover, jobs acceptable for remote work are those that can be performed without diminishing the quality of work or the level of services provided [including office coverage], and without disrupting productivity. This does not apply to introductory/probationary, seasonal or temporary employees. See separate remote work policy.

CELL PHONE USAGE

A. The Company allows employees to bring their personal cell phones to work. We expect employees to keep personal conversations to a minimum. While occasional, brief personal calls are acceptable. Excessive personal calls, text, etc., during the workday, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to other employees. Personal Cell Phones should only be used during scheduled breaks or lunch periods. To ensure the effectiveness of a meeting, employees are asked to leave all cell phones at their desk. On the unusual occasion of an emergency or anticipated emergency that requires immediate attention, the cell phone may be carried to the meeting on vibrate mode.

B. Cell phone use is prohibited while driving a company vehicle.

C. Company shall determine a monthly reimbursement for Company use of personal cell phone.

COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE

A. All construction employees who drive Company owned vehicles are required by law to have a valid commercial driver's license (hereinafter referred to as C.D.L.)

B. The Cooperative shall reimburse eligible employees for the cost of a C.D.L., except the cost of obtaining a hardship driving permit after suspension or revocation will be exempt from this requirement.

C. If any eligible employee should have their C.D.L. or any other class license suspended, revoked, or invalidated for any reason, they shall notify their supervisor immediately.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. Employees of the Company may from time to time during their normal course of work obtain information or documents which, if disclosed to unauthorized personnel, could be damaging to the Company or its customers. Information or documents not generally available to the public, such as but not limited to disconnect lists, confidential price lists, contracts, agreements, financial statements, reports, litigation, trade secrets or other information of a sensitive nature are not to be released to any person whatsoever. Any person, employee or customer requesting information of this nature shall be instructed to speak to the General Manager of the Company.
- B. If an employee of the Company has requested information which may be considered confidential, the employee shall consult with the General Manager prior to releasing this information.
- C. Failure to abide by the confidentiality policy will result in disciplinary process.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- A. No employee shall engage in gainful employment, supplementary to Company employment, in the activity areas of sales, operations, maintenance, repair, design, construction or installation of customer-owned or leased equipment.
- B. Gainful employment includes personal work effort, direction or training of other persons or consultative advice for any form of remuneration for services rendered.
- C. Any advice by an employee for the intended purpose of discouraging any potential or actual customer from utilizing the service offerings of the Company, will be considered an act of serious disloyalty.
- D. Exceptions to this policy may be made by the General Manager if, in his/her opinion, the gainful employment to be performed will not compete with or adversely affect the Telephone Company.
- E. Failure to abide by the conflict-of-interest policy will result in disciplinary process.

DISASTER SAFETY

- A. All workers are to observe all normal safety rules in addition to other safety and precautionary practices in order to safeguard the lives and well-being of themselves, their fellow workers and the general public. This shall be first and foremost in company requirements when dealing with a disaster.

EARTHQUAKES, TORNADOES AND VIOLENT STORMS

1. Office employees are to remain inside the office while severe lightning and windstorms persist.
2. When tornadoes are suspected to be within the area, office workers will proceed to the safe room and remain there until the storm subsides. Plant employees working outside should seek shelter in a low place, or if possible, in a basement or other more suitable shelter.
3. After the storms have passed employees are to assess all communications services, and contact the General Manager, if available, or in his/her absence the Plant Superintendent or Controller. In their absence the senior employee will oversee assessment of damage, restoral of service and aiding in the public safety of the community.
4. The primary responsibility will be to assess first what safety hazards, gas, electricity etc., are a danger within the area.
5. The second responsibility will be to assist any injured or trapped individuals.
6. The third responsibility is to restore service to as many businesses and homes as quickly as possible.

SHOULD A VIOLENT INTRUDER ENTER THE BUSINESS OFFICE

1. An attempt should be made to calm the individual down. If it becomes evident the individual is becoming violent; all office personnel should escort visitors and retire from the building to the shop building behind the office. After entering the shop building, all outside doors are to be locked, while one designated individual dial 911 for help.
2. All employees are to remain in the shop area until an officer of the law informs them it is safe to emerge from the building.

ODD LETTERS OR LETTERS CONTAINING SUSPICIOUS LOOKING SUBSTANCES

1. Any employee who during his or her day opens regular mail, bills or other packaged material needs to be observant as to the nature of the envelope, or parcels they are processing.
2. If they notice any out of the ordinary features of a piece of mail or package, a supervisor should be contacted immediately.
3. Should a letter or parcel be opened and foreign and/or suspicious looking powder or other substance appear to be present, the employee should:
 - a. Gently lay the suspicious piece of mail or package down.
 - b. Inform a supervisor and have him prepare to evacuate the building.
 - c. Go directly to the bathroom and wash your hands with anti-bacterial soap.
 - d. Walk calmly from the building.
 - e. Call or have a fellow employee call 911 and report the discovery.
 - f. Get instructions from the authorities as to how to proceed from that point.
4. Any other hazardous material should be handled in the same manner if a discovery is made of contamination.
5. The Plant Superintendent should be notified immediately upon discovery of an industry related hazardous material contamination, or a related problem.

COMPUTER CATASTROPHE

1. In the event a computer catastrophe occurs, the Network Manager or his/her designee should be contacted immediately. If they cannot be reached, the General Manager, Controller or Plant Superintendent should be contacted in that order.
2. Steps to be taken to bring the system back to perfect working order.
 - a. Access damage to hardware and software.
 - b. Contact all affected hardware and software companies to facilitate hardware deliveries overnight and facilitate the use of exterior software companies to begin reinstalling software as needed.
 - c. System must be checked to be sure all software and hardware items can cause no damage or loss of data from files before proceeding with Step 4.
 - d. Obtain back up data storage from an exterior location and begin loading files.

DISCHARGE RULES COVERING TERMINATION FOR CAUSE

A. The seriousness of an offense will often vary with the circumstances prevailing at the time it occurred and the motives which prompted it. All factors must be considered when determining the appropriate action to take in a situation. The

violation set forth in this section may be considered as just cause for suspension or discharge. The list of offenses listed below does not propose to be all inclusive.

B. Any disciplinary action taken shall be documented and explained to the employee.

C. All Department Heads and Supervisors have the authority and the responsibility to enforce the policies and procedures established by the Company (and to administer all disciplinary actions including termination of employee for just cause under their supervision).

1. Violation of a criminal law or the commission of any offense involving moral turpitude. Included among such offenses are the carrying of prohibited weapons, fighting or attempting bodily injury to another (provided that an employee shall not be penalized for defending himself when improperly attacked), stealing, making fraudulent records, malicious mischief resulting in the injury or destruction of property of other employees or the Company, cruelty to animals or any conduct which violates the common decency or morality of the community, with the support and general agreement of the General Manager.

2. Intentional or reckless violation of any established safety rules which may cause injury to an employee or fellow employees.

3. Refusing to give testimony or giving false information when accidents are being investigated or giving false statements when application for employment is made.

4. Insubordination (including refusal or failure to perform work assigned) or use of profane or abusive language toward fellow employees, customers, or others while in the employ of the Company.

5. Absence from duty without notice or permission from Management, except in case of sickness, accidents or other cause beyond one's control of a character that prevents his/her giving notice.

6. Neglect or carelessness resulting in damage to company property or equipment.

7. Intimidation or coercion of one employee by another because of membership or non-membership in any church, society, fraternity, lodge, union, or other labor organization.

8. Introduction, possession or use while on duty for the Company, or while on Company premises, of intoxicating liquors, illegal drugs, or reporting for duty or proceeding to work under the influence of liquor or drugs.

9. Gambling while on duty or on Company property.

10. Intentional or willful refusal or negligent or careless failure to follow Company rules or established customs or procedures of the Company's customers regarding the use and handling of materials and property of the Company or its customer. This shall include, but not be limited to, the removal of any personal property belonging to the customer from the premises of the customer without specific authorization by the customer.

11. Starting rumors, making false, vicious or malicious statements about any employee, customer, the Company or its service.

12. Disclosing or listening in on telephone conversations - The Company recognizes that monitoring of circuits to determine their proper operation is sometimes necessary however intentional listening in and/or disclosure of conversations is not permitted.

13. Engaging in personal business or pleasure while on duty, or using Company vehicles or equipment for personal use, except as such use may be in conjunction with a specific authorized program or assignment.

14. Violation of established Company policies or procedures.

D. 4 steps in the Disciplinary Process:

1. Verbal warning - Any subsequent violations after a verbal warning within an 18-month period, will lead to a written warning.
2. Written warning - Any subsequent violations after a written warning within a 24-month period will lead to suspension.
3. Suspension - Any subsequent violations after being suspended within a 36-month period will lead to termination.
4. Termination

DRESS STANDARDS AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE

A. NEMR prides itself on presenting a dignified and professional appearance to the public at large. We enjoy an excellent reputation among our current and prospective customers. While there are many reasons for this reputation, one of the ways to help maintain it is for all staff to present a professional image to the public. It is important that the public has confidence in our employees and that our employees have confidence and pride in themselves when transacting business. It is also essential to the safety and security of both employees and customers that our employees are easily identified as such when working outside company facilities.

B. To help present a professional image, foster public confidence, and enhance safety and security, employees must comply with certain styles, hygiene, and appearance standards. Professionalism and safety are of the utmost importance when it comes to customer contact.

C. Clothing - Other than the logo apparel requirements as stated below, supervisors are responsible for determining what attire is appropriate for their department and communicating their expectations to employees. Appropriate dress may vary within and between departments according to job duties, specific occasions, etc. All employees will wear clean and well-maintained attire, appropriate for the type of work that they do. Shoes are required. Because of varied work assignments and working conditions, it is not practical to establish specific and absolute criteria as to what is or is not appropriate dress. Supervisors will interpret and administer this policy and address inappropriate dress or appearance with individual employees.

D. Casual Office Attire - The regular dress policy for office employees is casual. This promotes a relaxed work environment, which should be more conducive to the type of work we do. While we enjoy a casual environment, we do intend our dress to reflect respect for the daily interaction among customers, employees, and other visitors.

E. Some examples of inappropriate attire for all employees include:

1. Torn pants or jeans;
2. Revealing attire, such as halter tops, crop tops;
3. Sweatsuits, warm-up suits, and sweat pants;
4. Garments/hats with inappropriate slogans or advertising; and
5. Visible undergarments.

F. Company Logo Apparel - Employees are required to wear NEMR logo shirts provided by the company at a minimum, one day per week.

G. If you have company logo apparel that you no longer want or no longer fits, please share clean non-personalized company logo items with your co-workers or bring them to the office where they will be available to any employee on a first-come, first-served basis. If clothing is worn or damaged, please put it in the clothing recycle box located at the Green City business office to be picked up by High Hope.

H. Personal Appearance, Hygiene, and Grooming - Appropriate standards of grooming and personal hygiene must be maintained. Hair and facial hair should be clean, combed, neatly trimmed or arranged, and conform to professional

standards of style and color. NEMR may require employees to cover any tattoo or body alteration/modification that is deemed to be inappropriate for our business environment.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

A. NEMR recognizes that drug abuse and alcohol abuse is not only a safety and security hazard, but also a health problem that interferes with job performance. Thus, it shall be the policy of NEMR to maintain a workplace that is free from the effects of substance abuse.

B. Employees are prohibited from the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, use of or being under the influence of illegal drugs and narcotics or alcoholic beverages on NEMR property or work sites during work related activities.

C. No employee may operate a NEMR vehicle at any time when “under the influence” of alcohol, marijuana or other intoxicants.

D. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and they will also be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Violations include, but are not limited to, possession of illegal drugs, marijuana and/or narcotics (prescribed or non-prescribed) or alcoholic beverages at work; being under the influence of such substance while working; using them while working; or dispensing, distributing, or illegally manufacturing or selling them on NEMR property or work sites.

E. Employees may be required to take a test for just cause at any time to determine the presence of drugs, narcotics, or alcohol, unless such tests are prohibited by law. In addition, pursuant to the Department of Transportation Workplace Drug Abuse Regulations, employees in safety sensitive positions and others may also be required to submit to a drug test on a periodic basis. Testing positive for drugs or alcohol is a violation of this policy. Pre-employment and random drug testing will be conducted by NEMR.

F. Supervisors should report immediately to their Department Manager any employee who demonstrates an unusual behavior pattern. The supervisor shall prepare and sign a document describing the unusual behavior pattern he/she observed. The Department Manager, in conjunction with the General Manager, will determine whether the employee shall be tested for drugs and/or alcohol. If a determination is made that an employee should be tested, the Department Manager will arrange testing. The Department Manager shall also arrange for the employee’s safe transportation home. Pending the test results, the employee shall be suspended with pay.

G. Employees who must use prescribed narcotics during work should report this fact, along with credible medical documentation, to their Department Manager. A determination will then be made as to whether the employee should be able to perform his/her job safely and properly.

H. Employees who are experiencing work-related problems resulting from drug, narcotic or alcohol abuse or dependency may request, or be required to seek, counseling or other assistance. An employee who voluntarily identifies himself/herself and seeks help with a drug or alcohol problem will not be subject to disciplinary action based on the decision to seek help.

I. If NEMR has made a good-faith effort to assist an employee in obtaining help and the employee still has a drug or alcohol problem, termination of employment may be the only alternative.

EMPLOYEES’ TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICE

A. Employee will be provided telecommunication service under the rules and regulations specified in their employment agreement.

EXCUSED ABSENCE

A. All employees shall be granted excused absence with pay as outlined in their current employment agreement.

HOLIDAYS

A. All regular full-time employees shall be entitled to the Holidays as specified in their employment agreement.

INSURANCE

A. Health, life and long-term disability insurance shall be provided by the Company to qualified employees as specified in their employment agreement.

JOB DESCRIPTION

A. The General Manager shall establish and maintain a comprehensive, up-to-date job description for each job title or classification. Each description shall include minimum qualifications, desirable knowledge, skills, abilities, examples of work, and related information as needed and determined by the General Manager.

B. Job descriptions are descriptive and not restrictive. They are intended to indicate generally the kinds of activities to be performed routinely by employees. Due to the size of the Company, number of employees and changes occurring within the industry, employees may be required to perform duties not defined in a job description.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

A. A leave of absence without pay is a pre-determined amount of time off work, which has been requested by the employee, recommended by the employee's Department Head, and approved by the General Manager. Such leave shall not extend beyond 60 days but may be extended with the written approval of the General Manager.

B. The fact that such leave is possible does not mean that the requested leave must be granted. A leave of absence deprives the employee's department of the services of an employee, who it is assumed is needed if the department is to properly perform its services. Leaves of absence without pay, except in the case of disciplinary leaves, should be considered a privilege, and the best interest of the Cooperative's service must be the determining factors in whether such leaves are granted or not.

C. When an employee is granted a leave of absence without pay, the Department Head will make a commitment to allow the employee to return to work at the end of the leave to the same duties and the same salary that the employee was performing and earning when the leave commenced. Employees, who are on leave of absence without pay due to either conducting business for the Union or are elected or appointed to an office in the Union, shall continue to accumulate seniority according to provisions contained in the current union contract.

D. When granted a leave of absence without pay, the employee makes a commitment to return to work at the end of the leave. Failure to contact the Department Head at the end of the leave shall be grounds for automatic dismissal.

E. During the absence without pay, the employee:

1. Does not receive any pay from the Cooperative.
2. Does not accrue any leave.
3. Must utilize all accumulated vacation leave (except in case of disciplinary action when such leaves may be used to offset the action).
4. Employee must pay employee's share of retirement contributions, if applicable. Employer's contributions to the retirement plan will be suspended during the period that an employee is on leave of absence without pay.
5. Must pay all premiums falling due during any month the employee is not on payroll for group hospitalization, life insurance, dental insurance, and long-term disability insurance.
6. Shall, upon return to active duty, carry over accrued and unused sick leave and other benefits earned prior to commencement of leave without pay.

LIVING REQUIREMENTS

A. Full-Time employees must live and retain residence in areas that NEMR serves.

MATERNITY LEAVE

- A. Disabilities caused or contributed to by pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, and recovery there from are, for all job-related purposes, temporary disabilities, and shall be treated as such under applicable provisions of these rules. Accrued leaves may be granted for preparation for, or recovery from such situations. In addition, a woman anticipating maternity, may be entitled to a leave of absence.
- B. All employees requesting such leave shall notify the Department Manager significantly in advance of the anticipated date of delivery, and employees may remain on the job if health permits.
- C. Management can approve a leave of absence without pay for a pre-determined time to allow for prenatal necessities and post-natal childcare, but all vacation and sick leave must be exhausted before this request can be granted.
- D. At management's discretion, use of accrued leave for maternity leave in excess of 8 weeks may be denied, unless employee can provide a physician's statement certifying the need for a longer maternity leave.
- E. Management reserves the right to request written certification from a licensed medical physician certifying the physical ability of the employee to perform the work before an employee on maternity leave of absence shall be reinstated to her former job.

NEPOTISM

- A. No person shall be employed by the Cooperative who is related to another employee or to one of the Board of Directors. Related, for the purpose of this policy, is spouse, co-habitant, significant other, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew including adopted, step and in-law or any other person residing in the same household.

ON THE JOB INJURY PROCEDURES

- A. Any employee who is injured on the job shall report the incident as soon as possible to their immediate Supervisor. Employee's Supervisor shall notify the General Manager promptly and prepare the appropriate reporting form(s).
- B. An employee injured on the job to the extent that absence from work is required, and deemed eligible for Workers Compensation, will be paid according to their employment agreement.
- C. An employee injured on the job and requiring medical attention may be referred to a physician of the Company's choice for examination before returning to work. In this instance, the Company will reimburse the employee for all out-of-pocket medical expenses incurred, if any.

PENSION PLAN

- A. The Cooperative shall offer a pension plan to qualified employees as specified in their employment agreement.

PHONE TRAP/TRACE PROCEDURE

- A. A phone trace is to be initiated on a subscriber's line only after a request has been made by a subscriber whose line is being traced and the Sheriff or Prosecuting Attorney of the county of residence of the subscriber. And then only with the General Manager's authorization after he/she has received a statement of request signed by the subscriber and the Sheriff or Prosecuting Attorney.
- B. The statement authorizing the phone trace will contain the telephone number affected, the authorized personnel which information can be released to, and the duration of the trace.
- C. The initiation of a trace will be made by command of the computerized telephone switching equipment by authorized personnel only.
- D. When the customer receives a suspect call, they should contact the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department will contact company personnel and instruct them to notify the company that a call was made and ask for a printout of all calls made to the subscriber on that date.

E. Provide the trace information to authorized personnel only. Do not allow any customers in the Central District Office to observe trace. Do not furnish the trace information to the requesting subscriber. Retain a copy of the trace information for our records.

F. Forward the trace information to the General Manager as soon as practical.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

A. Employees shall be encouraged to participate in public service activities in the operation area of the Cooperative. The activities of the employee and use of company equipment should be limited so as not to jeopardize the efficient operation of the Cooperative. No Telephone Company equipment is to be used for other than official company business without receiving prior approval from the General Manager or President of the Board.

RELEASING TERRITORY

A. The Company will not release any territory, or any premises within its certificated service area, to any other company for the purpose of receiving telephone service.

B. The Company is willing, ready, and able to serve anyone within its certificated boundaries who will comply with our Rules, Regulations and Tariffs.

C. No exception will be made to this rule. It is the contention of this Company that all subscribers will be treated equally and that the release of subscribers or territory could render telephone plant unusable and affect the long-term planning as well as the profitability of the Company.

RETIREES' HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE

A. All employees retiring shall be permitted to participate in the Company's health and life insurance plans. The retired employee shall reimburse the company monthly or quarterly as stated in their employment agreement.

SAFETY

A. The safety objectives of the NEMR are to save lives, prevent injuries, promote the safety of the public and well-being of its employees and members. Safety rules, established from time to time by the Safety Committee as appointed by the Plant Superintendent and approved by the Board of Directors, shall be followed by all employees. All OSHA regulations will be adhered to. Safety videos and training materials are provided to NEMR employees by the General Manager on a periodic basis.

EMPLOYEES AFFLICTED WITH SERIOUS DISEASES

A. It shall be the policy of NEMR that employees with infectious, long-term, life-threatening, or other serious diseases may work as long as they are both physically and mentally able to perform the duties of their job without undue risk to their own health or that of co-workers or others. Such serious diseases include, but are not limited to, cancer, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, hepatitis, tuberculosis, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome ("AIDS").

B. Employees afflicted with a serious disease are to be treated the same as any other employee. In addition, if the serious disease affects their ability to perform their assigned duties, such employees are to be treated like other employees who have disabilities that limit their job performance.

C. Employees who are diagnosed as having a serious disease are to inform their supervisor or Department Manger of their condition as soon as possible. Supervisors and Department Managers should respond with compassion and understanding. In addition, they should review with the employee NEMR policy on such issues as leaves, available benefits, any accommodation the employee may request and the Company's response to that request, and the Company's continuing expectation regarding the employee's performance and attendance.

D. Employees who have a serious disease are to provide their Department Manager with any pertinent medical records needed to make decisions regarding job assignments, the ability to continue working, or ability to return to work. The Company may require a doctor's certification of an employee's ability to perform his/her duties safely.

E. NEMR will attempt to maintain the confidentiality of the diagnosis and medical records of employees with serious diseases, unless required otherwise by law. Information relating to an employee's serious disease will not be disclosed to other employees unless the information is, in the opinion of the Company, necessary to protect the health or safety of the employee, co-workers, or others.

F. Employees concerned about being infected with a serious disease by a co-worker or other person should convey this concern to their supervisor or Department Manager. Employees who refuse to work with a person known or suspected to have a serious disease, without first discussing their concern with their supervisor or Department Manager, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

SICKNESS, DISABILITY AND EMERGENCY LEAVE BENEFITS

SICKNESS AND DISABILITY LEAVE BENEFITS

1. All employees shall be granted sickness and disability leave benefits as outlined in their current employment agreement.
2. An employee who reports to work and is released from duty because of illness shall be paid for the balance of the hours scheduled for the day the absence occurs and said hours paid but not worked shall be charged against the employee's accumulated sick leave.
3. An employee unable to show up for their regularly scheduled work duty and wishing to be paid under the sick leave provision shall notify their Supervisor, or in his/her absence, another member of management, of their inability to report and reason why. Payment of benefits may be denied if not reported in this manner.
4. On the job accidents or injuries of any nature whatever shall be reported immediately by the employee to his or her Supervisor. Affected Supervisor and employee shall then, as soon as practical record all pertinent information necessary to complete a Report of Injury form for the Department of Labor.
5. Sick leave benefits have no cash value except as stated in the union contract.

EMERGENCY LEAVE BENEFITS

1. The management of the Cooperative shall, at its discretion, grant emergency leave on a per incident basis.
2. The Cooperative shall require a physician's statement (if applicable) that the emergency status extended through the second and third day. This statement is not required for the first day of an emergency unless requested by management on a case-by-case basis.
3. Each accident or illness will be limited to one 3-day period of emergency leave.
4. Emergency leave will not be allowed in the following instances:
 - a. Scheduled visits to a doctor or dentist for any reason.
 - b. Return trips to a doctor or medical institution of any kind for follow-up routine treatment after being dismissed from a hospital stay, resulting from a serious accident or illness.
 - c. Any type of rehabilitation treatments.

SOCIAL MEDIA & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

A. Excessive personal use of social media during the workday can interfere with employee productivity. Social media should only be used during scheduled breaks or lunch periods. NEMR employees are expected to always represent the company in a positive manner. Employees social media posts, shares, comments, etc. should not reflect negatively on NEMR in any way.

B. Artificial intelligence or AI may be used from time to time to enhance job functions. Inputting proprietary, confidential or financial information about NEMR, its employees or customers into an AI application is strictly prohibited.

TERMINATION PAY

A. No termination pay shall be provided by the Company to any employee unless so stated in his/her employment agreement.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

A. The Company will provide each employee with the necessary tools and equipment to promptly and efficiently carry out their duties.

B. Employees are required to exercise all due care to protect tools and equipment and Company property. Employees may be required to replace items of Company property when lost, stolen, or destroyed and in the reasonable judgment of the Company there was negligence on the part of the employee.

C. The following is a partial list of observances:

1. Each employee is responsible for checking his tools and equipment periodically for the safety of each item.
2. All tools will be kept clean and free from rust.
3. Any tool or piece of equipment that has a case or cover will be put in its proper place and covered at the end of each workday.
4. Unauthorized use of Company tools and equipment or the use for which they were not intended is prohibited.
5. Vehicles and work equipment shall not be used for any other purpose than operation for the Company unless authorized by the Manager of the Company.
6. Any purchase over \$150, must be approved by a supervisor. Employees purchasing tools or equipment shall sign their name to the original ticket or invoice and specify the reason for the purchase or designate the proper account code or classification on the ticket, to assist in the proper accounting. All tickets or invoices not handled in this manner or not legible may be returned without payment.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

A. The Company may require employees to attend training and development programs designed to meet the current and future needs of the Company. These development programs may consist of in-service training seminars, short courses, lectures, reading materials, formal course work, films, tapes and so forth. Training enabling an employee to meet the primary responsibility level of a position may be required at any time in the employee's service.

B. Such training programs shall be considered as benefits to those individuals interested in continued employment with the Company, and approval of an individual's participation shall be relative to the employee's present or probable future company position.

C. When employees are required to attend training or development programs at locations other than those within the Company, they shall be compensated at the appropriate rate of pay for travel time to and from the location.

D. If an employee is assigned to report for training at a distant location and is authorized to drive his/her personal vehicle in lieu of flying or taking other means of public conveyance, upon management's discretion, the employee may only be reimbursed for the hours he/she would have had he/she flown, and the amount of the air travel tickets for expense reimbursement. This would apply to traveling both ways. Employees may at times be authorized to drive a company vehicle to school in lieu of either of the above. When an employee is assigned a company vehicle for any reason, all motor vehicle laws, including speeding laws, shall be observed, and no vehicle shall be driven after or when consumption of alcohol has occurred.

E. Employees required to attend training/development programs on Company time shall be reimbursed in full for course and travel costs.

F. Employees will be provided with a Company vehicle for transportation or will be compensated for mileage at the current IRS deduction rate for the use of their personal vehicle. The cost of travel by commercial or charter airline shall be paid for by the Company. The mode of transportation to be used shall be determined by the Company.

G. Lodging location and arrangements will be made by the Company in advance and either paid directly by the Company or by the employee, who shall be reimbursed by the Company.

H. Employees shall be reimbursed by the Company for reasonable meal expenses incurred while attending training/development programs.

I. Employees who are required to attend programs which require extensive travel and are of a duration of four consecutive weeks or more, shall be eligible for special considerations to reimburse them for expenses incurred. This special consideration shall consist of: (1) payment of a per-diem in sufficient amount to cover costs as can be expected in the specific city or area the school is located, to be paid to the employee in advance, to compensate employees for daily meal expenses. This will be paid to employee in lieu of item D above: (2) reimburse employee for travel expenses incurred to visit with their family one time during each eligible training/development program: (3) reimburse employee for reasonable laundry expenses incurred. Any employee requesting these, or other special considerations shall make their request directly to the General Manager for prior approval.

J. All expenses submitted to the Company for reimbursement shall be properly documented with receipts whenever possible.

K. An Employee will not be reimbursed for personal expenses incurred; including, but not limited to, the following: Movies or shows, personal phone calls, tours, sporting events, gifts, etc.

UNCOLLECTIBLE ACCOUNTS

A. Bad or uncollectible accounts will be pursued for collection according to procedures established by the General Manager. After due procedure, these accounts may be dropped from the accounts receivable at the discretion of the General Manager, subject to Board approval.

UNION ACTIVITIES

A. Since work time is for work, there will be no Union activity during working time except that necessary with the processing of grievances, or as provided for by law.

VACATIONS

A. All regular full-time employees shall accumulate vacation according to the schedule and rules outlined in their employment agreement.

B. An employee who resigns will be paid according to their current employment agreement.

VEHICLES

GENERAL

1. Subject to the required use of certain vehicles for commuting purposes, no Company vehicle shall be used for personal purposes, other than de minimis personal use, i.e., stopping for a meal while engaged in regular business activities on behalf of the Company, or call out or overtime when the Company owes the employee a meal at Company expense according to the Union Contract.
2. This policy establishes the Company's requirements as to the car and responsibility for assigned vehicles; record keeping requirements to be followed by employees using Company vehicles; and income tax consequences, if any, to employees for their use of vehicles as hereinafter set forth.

ASSIGNMENT OF VEHICLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. The General Manager, or his/her designee, shall be responsible for the assignment of all vehicles to specific employees.
2. Each employee who has been assigned a vehicle shall be responsible for the maintenance and care of the vehicle (at the Company's expense) and shall maintain maintenance and mileage logs as required by management. Such logs shall be provided to the General Manager, or his/her designee, to become a permanent part of the Company's records on transportation expenses.
3. Routine maintenance, including oil and filter changes and lubrication, shall be adhered to according to the manufacturing specifications. Antifreeze is to be maintained in vehicles year-round.
4. Tools and equipment carried in or on vehicles shall be kept in a neat and orderly manner. Vehicles shall be kept clean and orderly with all refused and unused material removed promptly.
5. The way a vehicle is operated, as well as the appearance of the vehicle itself, is a direct reflection upon the Company. All vehicles are to be kept neat and clean and operated in a safe and courteous manner. All local and state laws shall be adhered to.
6. A fire extinguisher and first aid kit will be provided for all vehicles and shall be kept equipped and in operating condition by the employee to whom the vehicle is assigned or operated.
7. All damage to vehicles is to be reported to employee's Supervisor as soon as possible.
8. Employees shall always remove keys from unattended vehicles.

USE OF CERTAIN VEHICLES FOR COMMUTING PURPOSES

1. Specialized Utility Repair Trucks – Management shall identify those specialized utility repair trucks that shall be driven home by employees to enable them, in emergency situations, to restore or maintain telecommunication service to customers.
2. Other Vehicles Used for Commuting – Management shall also specify other vehicles (that do not qualify as specialized utility repair trucks) that are required to be driven home by employees for bona fide, non-compensatory business reasons.

VOTING TIME

A. The Company encourages employees to vote. Any employee eligible and registered to vote shall be entitled to leave from duty (if on duty), with pay, to vote in a municipal, county, state, or national election. The employee's Supervisor may specify the time which an employee may be granted for voting leave. Employee shall return to work immediately after voting.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

A. It is known that harassment in the workplace can create an offensive and even hostile work environment for employees. To protect its employees, it shall be the policy of NEMR to not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another employee's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile environment.

B. It shall thus be the policy of NEMR to prohibit all harassing or offensive conduct in the workplace, whether committed by managers, supervisors, or nonsupervisory personnel. Such conduct includes:

1. Unwanted touching or striking;
2. Verbal Abuse
3. Threats; and
4. Degrading words to describe an individual.

C. While all forms of harassment are prohibited, it is the policy of NEMR to specifically emphasize that sexual harassment is prohibited. Each supervisor or manager has a responsibility to maintain the workplace free from any form of sexual harassment. No supervisor or manager is to threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the employee's employment, evaluation, wages, assigned duties, shifts or any other condition of employment or career development. In addition, no supervisor or manager is to favor, in any way, any applicant or employee because that person has shown a willingness to perform sexual favors for that supervisor.

D. Other sexually harassing or offensive conduct in the workplace, whether committed by managers, supervisors, or nonsupervisory personnel, is also prohibited. Such conduct includes:

1. Sexual flirtations, touching advances or propositions;
2. Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
3. Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
4. Sexually degrading words to describe an individual; and
5. The display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, including nude photographs.

E. Any employee who believes that the action or words of the General Manager, manager, supervisor or fellow employee constitute unwelcome harassment has a responsibility to report or complain as soon as possible to the appropriate Department Manager, to the General Manager, if the complaint involves the Department Manager, or to the Board, if the complaint involves the General Manager.

F. All complaints of harassment must be investigated promptly and in as impartial and confidential a manner as possible by the Department Manager, General Manager or Board. If an employee is not satisfied with the handling of a complaint or action taken by the Department Manager, then the employee should bring the complaint to the attention of the General Manager. If an employee is not satisfied with the handling of a complaint or action by the General Manager, then the employee should bring the complaint to the attention of the Board, in all cases, the employee is to be advised of the Department Manager's, General Manager's or Board's findings or conclusion.

G. Any employee, supervisor, manager, or general manager who is found, after appropriate investigation, to have engaged in harassment of another employee will be subject to disciplinary action and depending on the circumstances, up to and including termination.

WORK SCHEDULES AND OVERTIME

A. Eight (8) hours shall constitute a regular day's work to be worked normally between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., with one-half hour intermission for lunch except that a workday may also be composed of other specified starting and quitting times when, in the judgment of management, the demands of the service may require changes.

B. The one-half hour lunch period will start and stop at the employee's work site.

C. Employees shall be allowed two 15-minute rest periods, scheduled as near the middle of each session of the daily tour as is practical. The 15-minute rest period will start and stop at the employee's work site.

D. The normal work week will be five consecutive days, Monday through Friday inclusive, except that a work week may consist of any five consecutive days as the demands of service may require. For instance, the Company will normally schedule a skeleton crew to work Tuesday through Saturday inclusive, with Sunday and Monday as days off.

E. Overtime pay will follow employee's employment agreement. All overtime should receive the prior approval of his/her supervisor or the General Manager.

F. Salaried employees shall receive no overtime pay.

Employees should contact their supervisor with any questions regarding this policy. NEMR may change or discontinue this policy at any time. Employees violating this policy may be disciplined, up to and including discharge.