

INTRODUCTION

The Governor is charged with executive direction and supervision of the general administration of the State. In this capacity, he sees that the laws are faithfully executed, supervises the official conduct of executive officers, acts as commander in chief of the state military and appoints officials as prescribed by law.

The Governor is responsible for the presentation of a balanced budget to the Legislature and approval or veto of legislation passed by the Legislature. He may call extraordinary sessions of the Legislature when he deems it necessary.

The Governor's Office provides staff assistance and liaison in all areas of state government administration and researches agency programs and policies.

The Governor's Offices are located in three buildings: the New State Capitol, the Woolfolk Building, and the Governor's Mansion.

The purpose of this handbook is to systematically formulate and standardize policy and procedural matters coming within the preview of the Governor's Office, to serve as a guide and to provide the Governor's Office assistance in conducting an efficient operation.

When a policy or operating statement is issued, it is considered to be in effect as of the date of issuance. All personnel are expected to comply with the policies and operating procedures of the Governor's Office.

The established policies and operating procedures are subject to periodic and routine review. Any staff member may recommend a revision by preparing written comments to the Director of Administration.

REFERENCE GUIDE

SUBJECT

Agriculture
Appointments to Boards and Commissions
Appointments to fill Elected Official Vacancies
Appointments with Governor
Child Care Issues
Civil Rights
Commendations
Communication
Community Block Grants
Citizens and Community Services
Corrections
County Issues
Drug Issues
Economic Development
Education
Energy & Transportation
Environmental Issues
Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator
Extraditions
Pardon/Parole
Governor's Personal Correspondence
Governor Press

Health Issues
Housing Information Request
Inmate Correspondence
Legal Issues
Legislation
Literacy
National Governor's Association
Natural Resources
Photo Requests
Photo Session Requests
Planning Issues
Policy Issues
Political Strategy
Proclamations
Public Safety
Regret Letters
Resumes
Southern Governor's Association
Southern Growth and Policy Board
Welcome/Greetings Letters
Welfare Issues
Work Force Training

STAFF

Michael Boyd
Kathy Fortenberry
Kathy Fortenberry
Jill Jumper
Armerita Tell
Armerita Tell
Kim Gross
Lee Ann Mayo
Steve Hale
Armertia Tell
Peyton Prospere
Armerita Tell
Peyton Prospere
Steve Hale
Kelly Riley
Kelly Riley
Michael Boyd
Felicia Gavin
Gloria Arnold
Peyton Prospere
Marilyn Byrd
John Sewell, Lee Ann Mayo
and Phillip Kinney
Wanda Smith
Armerita Tell
Peyton Prospere
Peyton Prospere
Michael Boyd
Kelly Riley
Michael Boyd
Michael Boyd
Wesley Ellis
Wesley Ellis
Felicia Gavin
Michael Boyd
Phillip Kinney
Kim Gross
Peyton Prospere
Ginnie States/Jill Jumper
Felicia Gavin
Kelly Riley
Armerita Tell
Kim Gross
Armerita Tell
Armerita Tell

EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The Governor's Office is an equal opportunity employer. The goal of the office is to administer its employment policies in order that all qualified persons are accorded equal opportunity for employment and/or promotion without discrimination due to race, religion, national origin, physical handicap, sex, age or other protected group.

It further is the policy of the Governor's Office to recruit staff that collectively possesses the skills, education and experiences necessary to successfully perform the tasks required.

ETHICS STATEMENT

All employees must avoid actual or potential conflicts between their public responsibilities, duties and their private interests. Every effort should be undertaken to minimize even the appearance of any such conflict.

Employees shall constantly guard against using or appearing to use their positions inappropriately. An employee shall not use his/her position to obtain pecuniary benefit (in the form of money, property, commercial interest or any other economic gain).

Employees are not permitted to accept gratuities from individuals or groups who conduct or seek to conduct business with the State of Mississippi or from individuals or groups whose interest are affected by this office's functions.

Be keenly aware that employees are forbidden to accept any type of compensation or honorarium monetary or otherwise-that may be offered to them. If compensation is offered, employees should graciously refuse it and report the offer as soon as possible to the Chief of Staff or Director of Administration.

Strict compliance is required.

OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION POLICY

OFFICE PHONES, CELLULAR PHONES AND PAGERS

Cellular phones and pagers used and/or issued by this office are to be used for conducting the business of the Governor's Office. Personal cell calls are to be kept to a minimum unless the best rate plan selected allows for free airtime. Local personal calls using the office phone are to be kept to a minimum and are at the discretion of the employee's supervisor. Long distance calls are allowable for official business.

PURCHASES

Employees must complete a Purchase Requisition Form and have it signed by the Division Director and Director of Administration. This is to be done prior to any purchases.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Any time, political assistance on behalf of a candidate or party, whether actual work or endorsements, must be in the name of the individual. Employees are responsible for assuring that their employment with, and/or the name of the Governor's Office, is not associated to any degree with their political activities.

At no time are employees of the Governor's Office to engage in partisan political activities during working hours or use property or equipment of the Governor's Office in any such activities.

MEDIA RELATIONS

The Press Office shall be responsible for coordinating the Governor's Office's relationship with all members of the press. Any contacts with, or requests from, the news media are to be referred to the Press Office. Decisions will be made after referral as to the appropriate representative to make press statements.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The Governor's office shall offer to its staff all benefits attendant to employment with the State authorized by state law.

A. FLEXIBLE BENEFITS/CAFETERIA PLAN

A flexible benefits/cafeteria plan is offered to employees of the Governor's Office. Participation in the Plan is strictly voluntary. The Plan Document, Adoption Agreement and Administration Agreement are filed under separate cover with the Payroll Office and are available for inspection by all staff during normal business hours. The Plan allows an employee to pay for certain insurance premiums, along with child/dependent care expenses before-tax rather than after tax.

The Plan consists of two parts:

1. STATE LIFE, EMPLOYEE AND DEPENDENT HEALTH

A. State Life Insurance – Conseco Life. The minimum amount of coverage offered is \$30,000 and the maximum amount is \$100,000. As a covered active employee, the amount of your life insurance is equal to 2 times your annual salary, raised to the next higher thousand.

B. Health Insurance- Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The State pays 100% of the premiums for eligible employees. Employees may purchase coverage for spouse and/or dependents.

2. CAREFLEX. Careflex is a plan under which you may allocate before-tax dollars for such expenses as dependent care. The plan is generally beneficial for

employees who have substantial dependent care expenses and whose family income exceeds \$24,500. The maximum yearly allowable expense is \$5,000.

Premiums for all insurance offerings are payroll deducted, but claims for benefits are considered a private matter between the employee and the provider. It is the responsibility of the employee to file claims and collect benefits.

B. CONTINUATION OF HEALTH COVERAGE

Under certain circumstances, employees or their family members may be eligible to continue group health insurance coverage for a limited time following employment termination, divorce, separation or upon a dependents child's reaching an age that would otherwise make the child ineligible. Likewise, the Medicare ineligible family of a retired employee may be able to continue insurance coverage. This "continuation coverage" option is a result of the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA).

C. RETIREMENT

All employees of the Governor's Office under the age of sixty years old, at the time of employment, must become members of the state retirement system as a condition of employment. The retirement system is managed by the Public Employees' Retirement Systems (PERS) of Mississippi for the purpose of providing retirement allowances and other benefits to state employees and their beneficiaries.

The Governor's Office will deduct from the salary of each employee 7.25 percent of the employee's average compensation for each payroll period. This deduction, along with a State contribution of 9.75 percent of salary will be credited to the employee's retirement account. The sum of all contributions, both employee's and employer's will be accumulated for the length of time the employee is in state service. In addition to the contributions deducted from compensation for retirement benefits, any state employee may make additional contributions to purchase a larger annuity (referred to as Deferred Compensation). The amount the employee defers and the investment earning on that amount are allowed to accumulate without being taxed; no income tax is paid until the deferred amount is returned to the employee either at retirement or when the employee withdraws from the plan.

D. UNEMPLOYMENT AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The Governor's Office as an employer pays unemployment taxes to provide for unemployment compensation for employees. The Office also purchases Workers' Compensation insurance coverage on all employees. Workers' Compensation generally provides for fixed awards to employees or their dependents in case of

disability or death of an employee from injury or occupational disease arising out of and in the course of employment, without regard to fault.

The employee may be entitled to compensation for medical expenses, state income lost because of the injury or illness, and certain other related benefits. Workers' Compensation also provides pension benefits for dependents and compensation for funeral expenses, in case of death due to a job-connected accident or illness. The amount of compensation in all cases depends on the severity of the disability. Notice of an on the job injury should be given immediately to the Director of Administration. A claim of compensation must be filed with the Governor's Office within thirty days.

E. HOLIDAYS

In the discretion of the Governor, the Office will observe the following legal holidays (See Code Section 3-3-7, legal Holidays). In those instances where staff works on a legal holiday, the staff will be entitled to compensatory time in accordance with the Governor's Office Leave Policy.

Holiday	
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King's/Robert E. Lee's Birthday	3 rd Monday in January
George Washington's Birthday	3 rd Monday in February
Confederate Memorial Day	Last Monday in April
National Memorial Day/Jefferson Davis' Birthday	Last Monday of May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	1 st Monday in September
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	4 th Thursday of November
Christmas Day	December 25

Any other day proclaimed as an official state holiday will be observed as a legal holiday. If any holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the following Monday will be observed as the legal holiday.

DRESS CODE

Employees are expected to dress professionally at all times. No blue jeans, shorts, or halter-tops are permitted. This list is not intended to be inclusive. Ladies are allowed to wear sandals with hosiery when wearing a dress. Ladies are allowed to wear sandals without hosiery when wearing pants. Men are expected to be clean-shaven.

LEAVE POLICY

Employees are expected to work a forty-hour week. All employees are expected to work from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day unless the appropriate supervisor has approved other working hours. Employees have one hour for lunch. No compensatory time is given for working through lunch.

GENERALLY

Employee leave policies of the Governor's Office are based on state laws governing leave for all state employees. State laws allow employees ample time off, with pay, for vacation, for sickness, to participate in required military training and to fulfill certain civic responsibilities such as jury duty. The types of leave available to employees are administrative, major medical, maternity, military, personal and compensatory.

1. Minimum Amount of Leave
The minimum amount of any type leave that can be taken by an employee is one hour. Each absence is independent of other absences.
2. Leave Accrual and Transfer
Leave is accrued and accruals are calculated after the employee has worked a full month. An employee who returns to work after a break in service loses any leave balance he or she may have accrued from previous periods of employment with the Governor's Office or any other state agency. On the other hand, individuals employed by the Governor's Office who come directly from another state agency with no break in service shall be allowed to transfer all accrued personal and major medical leave and to continue earning leave at the same rate.
3. Requests for Leave
Employees may request accrued leave at any time, but the granting of leave is at the discretion of the appropriate supervisor. Supervisory personnel have both the authority and responsibility to review and question any request for leave.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

Administrative leave may be granted to employees when extraordinary circumstances occur. Requests for such leave are to be sent to the Chief of Staff and the Director of Administration.

The Governor may grant administrative leave with pay on a local or statewide basis in the event of extreme weather conditions or in the event of a man-made technological or natural disaster or emergency.

When work related circumstances prevent an employee from voting before or after working hours, the employee must make the necessary arrangements to be excused to vote during working hours.

1. LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

Leave without pay should be requested only in emergency situations and never for routine time off. Except in extraordinary circumstances, leave without pay in excess of five consecutive days shall be granted only through prior approval of the Chief of Staff and the Director of Administration. Payment for holidays occurring during the time any employee is on leave without pay shall not be allowed. If an employee has no accrued personal leave, the first eight hours of an employee’s absence due to illness or injury shall be charged to leave without pay or compensatory leave.

2. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A leave of absence is an extended absence from duty (not to exceed one year) without pay that may be granted to employees for special reasons such as a prolonged illness or taking advantage of specialized training or educational opportunities. The Chief of Staff and the Director of Administration must approve any leave of absence.

MAJOR MEDICAL LEAVE

Major medical leave entitles an employee to be absent from duty with pay in the event of personal illness, injury or a death in his/her immediate family. Immediate family is defined as spouse, child, stepchild, parent, stepparent, sibling, grandchild, grandparent, son or daughter-in-law, mother or father-in-law and brother or sister-in-law. Major medical leave is also available for maternity leave.

1. Accrual of Major medical leave- each full-time employee shall accrue major medical leave for each completed month of employment. Part-time employees shall accrue major medical leave on a pro-rata basis.

All full- time employees shall accrue major medical leave as follows:

Continuous State Service	Accrual Rate- Monthly	Accrual Rate- Annually
1 month to 3 years	8 hours	12 days
37 months to 8 years	7 hours	10.5 days
97 months to 15 years	6 hours	9 days
Over 15 years	5 hours	7.5 days

There is no limitation on the number of days off major medical leave that can be accumulated.

Part-time employees accrue major medical leave on the following pro-rata basis:

Months of Employment
Accrual Rate

Hours Worked per Week & Hourly

	32 HPW	30 HPW	25 HPW	24 HPW	22 HPW
1 MONTH TO 3 YEARS	06	06	05	05	04
37 MONTHS TO 8 YEARS	06	05	04	04	04
97 MONTHS TO 15 YEARS	05	05	04	04	03
Over 15 Years	04	04	03	03	03

Accruals for employees working part-time hours different from those shown above may be obtained from the Payroll Office.

2. Use of Major Medical Leave

Major medical leave shall not be granted to or used by any employee prior to the date and time earned. Personal leave may be used to supplement major medical leave, but major medical leave may not be used to supplement personal leave.

Major medical leave may be used for illness or injury of an employee only after the employee has used eight hours of personal leave for each absence due to illness. However, major medical leave may be used without prior use of personal leave to cover regularly scheduled visits to a doctor's office or a hospital for the continuing treatment of a chronic disease as certified in advance by a medical doctor. Routine visits for dental and medical check-ups are not counted as major medical leave. When an employee is absent due to illness for more than 32 consecutive hours, a medical doctor shall authorize major medical leave only upon written certification of the employee's illness.

In the event of a death in an employee's immediate family (as defined above) requiring his/her absence from work, the employee may use up to three days of earned major medical leave in any calendar year. No qualifying time on use of personal leave will be required prior to use of major medical leave for this purpose.

No payment for accrued major medical leave can be made at the time of termination from state service, unless such termination is a result of illness or injury of the employee. Such payment may not exceed 120 days of earned major medical leave. All unused major medical leave at the time of separation

shall be counted as creditable service with the Public Employees Retirement System of Mississippi.

MATERNITY LEAVE

For provisions see Major Medical Leave.

The Director of Administration should be notified of the last day the employee plans to work and the date when she will return to work.

MILITARY LEAVE

An employee is entitled to 15 days military leave per calendar year while serving on active duty with a guard or reserve unit of the United States Armed Forces. Such leave may be for annual or other training. An order or statement from the appropriate military officer must accompany the request for leave. During such leave, the employee is entitled to a leave of absence from duties with pay.

Military leave used in excess of the 15 days allowed may be charged against accumulated personal leave or may be taken as leave without pay.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Personal Leave entitles the employee to be absent from duty with pay for numerous personal reasons including, but not limited to, vacation time and attending to personal business. The appropriate supervisor must approve requests for personal leave in advance.

1. Accrual of Personal Time

Personal leave is accrued on a monthly basis with no limitation placed on the number of days accumulated. Each full and part-time employee shall accrue personal leave for each completed month of employment. Part-time employees shall accrue personal leave on a pro-rata basis. Personal leave is accrued while an employee is on medical or personal leave, but is not accrued while on leave without pay.

All full-time employees shall accrue personal leave as follows:

Continuous State Service	Accrual Rate- Monthly	Accrual Rate Annually
1 month to 3 years	12 hours	18 days
37 months to 8 years	14 hours	21 days
97 months to 15 years	16 hours	24 days
Over 15 years	18 hours	27 days

Employees hired prior to July 1, 1984, who have continuous service of more than five years but not more than eight years, shall accrue 15 hours of personal leave each month.

Part-time employees shall accrue personal leave on the following pro-rata basis:

Months of Employment Hours Worked Per Week & Hourly Accrual Rate

	32 HPW	30 HPW	25 HPW	24 HPW	22 HPW
1 Month to 3 Years	10	09	08	07	07
37 Months to 8 Years	11	11	09	08	08
97 Months to 15 Years	13	12	10	10	09
Over 15 Years	14	14	11	11	10

Accruals for employees working part-time hours different from those shown above may be obtained from the Payroll Office.

2. Use of Personal Leave

Personal leave shall not be granted to or used by any employee prior to the date and time earned. Once earned, it shall be used for the first eight hours of an employee's absence from work due to illness. Personal leave must be used when the employee is absent from work due to illness of member of his/her family.

3. Pay for Accrued Personal Leave

When an employee retires or terminates employment on a voluntary basis, the use of accrued personal leave will be limited to 60 days within a six-month period prior to separation. On the date of separation, an employee shall be paid for up to 30 days of accrued personal leave. All leave in excess of 30 days will apply toward credit with the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi. Salary for all accrued personal leave shall be paid in a lump sum to the designated beneficiary or estate of a deceased employee.

COMPENSATORY TIME

When determined and pre-approved by the immediate supervisor or the Director of Administration that it is essential that an employee work before or after normal working hours (8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.), the employee MAY receive credit for compensatory leave. No employee will be given credit for more than five (5) hours of compensatory time per week. Exceptions include traveling out of town on official Governor's Office business, the Governor or Chief of Staff requests your presence at a meeting after normal work hours, hours worked during a regular or special Legislative Session, or time worked on special projects assigned by your immediate supervisor, the Governor, or Chief of Staff.

When determined and pre-approved by the immediate supervisor or the Director of Administration that it is essential that an employee work on an official state holiday, the employee shall receive compensatory time for each hour worked.

Compensatory time may be used subject to the pre-approval of the immediate supervisor.

A maximum of 240 hours of Compensatory Time may be used for leave of absences. The remaining leave of absence must be paid using medical or personal leave.

Upon separation of employment, voluntary or involuntary, unused compensatory except 80 hours, will be forfeited and not paid.

In compliance with the FLSA, each state agency shall identify each employee of that agency as either non-exempt from the requirements of the FLSA or exempt. All staff of the Governor's office is exempt.

REQUESTING LEAVE

Requests for any type leave are to be approved in advance by the appropriate supervisor. Notice is also to be given to the Director of Administration. However, it may be necessary for an employee to take personal or major medical leave without approval in advance. In such instances, it is the employee's responsibility to provide notification at the first opportunity.

TRAVEL AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

The following travel policies apply to Governor's Office employees who are required to travel in state or out-of-state on official government business.

A "Governor's Office travel Request Form" needs to be completed and submitted to the Director of Administration for approval before arrangements are made. If this form is not submitted and approved prior to the departure date, your request for reimbursement of travel expenses will not be processed. This form must be completed for any travel where you anticipate any reimbursement costs.

ALL travel, including driving trips, need to be pre-approved by your Division Director AND the Director of Administration in writing via the Travel Authorization Form. For driving trips, when it is more cost efficient to rent a car as opposed to driving, that is what the employee will be required to do. This will most likely include trips to the Gulf Coast and to North MS. The Director of Administration will advise the mode of transportation upon signing the Travel Authorization Form.

Expenses incurred by employees that are incidental to official travel are reimbursable. Any out-of-state travel must have prior approval of the Director of Administration. These out-of-state requests are to be submitted at least two weeks in advance and three weeks in advance when flying commercially.

Travel related expense accounts are to be prepared on prescribed forms and submitted to the Director of Administration, whose approval is required for payment. Receipts are necessary to document overnight lodging, meals, gas (when renting a vehicle or when driving personal vehicle in lieu of renting a car), travel by public carrier, and conference or convention fees.

When out-of-state travel requires a travel advance, the employee is to work out the arrangement with the Director of Administration. The travel advance must be submitted at least seven days in advance of the date needed but not more than ten days. An employee will be allowed only one outstanding travel advance in any one month and any travel advance must be cleared up immediately upon your return from travel. A travel advance will not be given for in-state travel.

CONFERENCE ROOM

The Governor's Office Conference Rooms, located on the 15th floor of the Woolfolk Building, are available to members of the Governor's Office, as well as other state agencies. To reserve the conference rooms, arrangements must be made through the Governor's Office Receptionist, located on the 15th floor. A reservation form is available from the Receptionist also.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Request to Reserve 15th Floor Conference Room

DATE OF REQUEST: _____

DAY AND DATE OF MEETING: _____

CONFERENCE ROOM REQUESTED: LARGE _____ SMALL _____

BEGINNING TIME: _____ ENDING TIME: _____

STAFF MEMBER/AGENCY: _____

PURPOSE OF MEETING: _____

CONTACT: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

NOTE: There may be times when the Governor will need the conference rooms on short notice. When this occurs, the affected party will have to locate an alternate meeting site. Contacts are responsible for notifying the 15th floor receptionist whenever a scheduled meeting is cancelled.

Date confirmed: _____

By: _____