

***SECTION 6***

**EMPLOYEE CONDUCT  
GUIDELINES**

## ***PERSONAL APPEARANCE***

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the image we present. Employees should exercise discretion in style of dress and behavior, which is essential to the efficient operation of the Conference. Employees are, therefore, required to dress in business casual or business attire as appropriate and conduct themselves in a professional, businesslike manner. Please use good judgment in your choice of work clothes, and remember to conduct yourself at all times in a way that best represents you and the Conference.

Employees failing to adhere to proper Conference standards with respect to appearance and conduct may be subject to corrective action.

## ***ATTENDANCE***

To maintain an efficient and productive work environment, the Conference expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on your fellow employees and on the Conference and its staff. In the rare instance when you cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, you should notify your supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated lateness or absence.

When an employee has used all accumulated sick/personal time, any subsequent absences will be recorded by the supervisor. Poor attendance and/or excessive tardiness are disruptive and may lead to disciplinary action.

Flextime is available for assisting employees with temporary variations in work schedules. See Work Schedules on page 13.

## ***GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE CONDUCT***

As an integral member of the Conference team, you are expected to accept certain responsibilities, adhere to acceptable business principles in matters of personal conduct, and exhibit a high degree of personal integrity at all times. This not only involves sincere respect for the rights and feelings of others, but also demands that both in your business and in your personal life you refrain from any behavior that might be harmful to you, your co-workers, and/or the Conference.

Whether you are on duty or off, your conduct reflects on the Conference. You are, consequently, encouraged to observe the highest standards of professionalism at all times.

Types of behavior and conduct that the Conference considers inappropriate include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Falsifying employment or other Conference records.
2. Violating the Conference's nondiscrimination and/or sexual harassment policy.
3. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness.
4. Excessive, unnecessary, negligent or unauthorized use of Conference supplies, telephones, mail system, etc. particularly for personal purposes.
5. Reporting to work intoxicated or under the influence of nonprescribed drugs, and illegal manufacture, possession, use, sale, distribution or transportation of drugs.
6. Bringing or using alcoholic beverages on the Conference property or using alcoholic beverages while engaged in Conference business off the Conference's premises.
7. Fighting or using obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures; boisterous or disruptive activity.
8. Theft of property from co-workers, or the Conference.
9. Unauthorized possession of dangerous materials, explosives or firearms on the Conference's premises or while on Conference business.
10. Disregarding safety or security regulations.
11. Insubordination.
12. Failing to maintain the confidentiality of Conference data or information.

Should your performance, work habits, overall attitude, conduct or demeanor become unsatisfactory in the judgment of the Conference, based on violations either of the above or of any other Conference policies, guidelines or regulations, you will be subject to corrective action up to and including dismissal.

### ***SMOKING***

In keeping with the Conference's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoking in Conference structures is prohibited. In situations where the preferences of smokers and nonsmokers are in conflict, the preferences of nonsmokers will prevail. The Conference reserves the right to designate appropriate outdoor areas for smoking.

This policy applies equally to all staff and visitors.

### ***USE OF PHONE, MAIL, ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS, FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT***

Employees should practice discretion in using Conference telephones when making local personal calls and may be required to reimburse any charges resulting from their personal use of the telephone for long distance and toll calls.

To assure effective telephone communications, employees should always use the approved greeting and speak in a courteous and professional manner. Please confirm information received from the caller, and hang up only after the caller has done so.

The mail system is reserved for business purposes only. In general, employees should refrain from sending or receiving personal mail at the Conference facilities.

The Conference's E-mail, Voice-mail and Internet access systems are to be used primarily for Conference business.

Any transmission (whether inbound or outbound), or any other use of E-mail, Voice-Mail, the Internet or other communication method that contains sexually-explicit images, messages or cartoons, ethnic slurs, racial epithets, or anything that may be construed as harassment or offensive to others based on actual or perceived race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious or political beliefs, or the like is against Conference policy and is strictly prohibited.

Chain letters, circular jokes or spam E-Mail (unsolicited, widely distributed E-Mail) may not be initiated or forwarded because they are disruptive and consume Conference resources unnecessarily. Also, unconfirmed E-mail virus warnings must not be forwarded to anyone. If there is a real virus concern, the Director of Computer Services or his/her assistant will take steps to notify the appropriate users. The Director of Computer Services should be contacted if a suspected virus hoax, scam, or chain letter is encountered. Further, because of the potential for computer viruses and other malicious software, externally-originated unsolicited E-Mail, and particularly attachments on such E-Mail, should not be opened without first verifying with the sender that such E-Mail and attachments were intended for the recipient.

The Conference reserves the right to access E-mail, computer, voice-mail or any saved files at any time with or without advance notice or consent. Such access may occur before, during, or after working hours by any supervisor, or security personnel designated by them. All E-Mail messages are automatically stored on the computer's backup system, and the "messages delete" function does not necessarily restrict or eliminate the Conference's ability to receive and review E-Mail correspondence. All E-mail and Voice-Mail correspondence is the property of the Conference.

The Conference reserves the right to monitor all access to the World Wide Web. The Conference recognizes accidental access to undesirable sites may be unavoidable or occasional access to non-Conference-business-related sites may be reasonable; however, prolonged or repeated access to such sites will be construed as an intentional violation of Conference policy and can result in corrective action.

Facilities and equipment may be used by staff after approval from the location supervisor when it does not interfere with the regular facility or program operation. Damage to or loss of equipment or facilities during personal use is the responsibility of the staff member.

Violation of this policy may lead to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

### ***SAFETY***

The Conference provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, and memos.

Employees and supervisors receive periodic workplace safety training. The training covers potential safety and health hazards and safe work practices and procedures to eliminate or minimize hazards.

Some of the best safety improvement ideas come from employees. Those with ideas, concerns, or suggestions for improved safety in the workplace are encouraged to raise them with their supervisor, or with another supervisor or manager.

Each employee is expected to follow safety rules and exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, who cause or fail to report hazardous or dangerous situations, may be subject to corrective action.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how minor the injury may appear, employees should immediately notify their supervisor. Such reports are necessary to initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefits procedures.

### ***PROBLEM RESOLUTION***

The North Central New York Conference of The United Methodist Church is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question can be discussed.

The Conference strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. Supervisors and employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. Employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism.

If employees sincerely disagree with policies, practices, or other operating conditions that affect them, they can express their concern through the problem resolution procedure. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with the Conference in a reasonable, business-like manner, or for using the problem resolution procedure.

If you have a problem, question or complaint related to your job, it should be taken directly to your supervisor.

Your supervisor will evaluate the situation and circumstances involved and will coordinate an investigation and examination of the facts and meet with you to respond.

Should informal attempts at resolution not be satisfactory, a staff member may then utilize the formal problem resolution procedure. The statement of problem must be in writing, signed by the staff member, and submitted to the appropriate location supervisor and Director of Connectional Ministries within ten working days of the occurrence which gave rise to the problem or issue, the date the staff member had reason to know of the occurrence, or of the informal conversation.

The written statement should identify the policy which is alleged to have been violated, should contain a concise statement of the facts surrounding the issue, and should contain the remedies sought.

Within five working days from receipt of the written problem, the location supervisor and Director of Connectional Ministries shall schedule a future meeting with the staff member, and any other individual he/she determines shall assist in the investigation and resolution of the problem. A written summary of the meeting shall be made by the Director of Connectional Ministries or his/her representative, signed by all participants, and maintained on file.

In the event the problem is not resolved at this step, the staff member, within five working days from receipt of the answer at first step, may file a written appeal to the NCNY Personnel Team.

The Team shall review the statement and the written summaries and shall render its decision in writing to the staff member within 10 working days with copies to the appropriate location supervisor and Director of Connectional Ministries. The decision of Team shall be final and binding on all parties.

This process should not be construed, however, as preventing, limiting, or delaying the Conference from taking corrective disciplinary action up to and including termination, in circumstances (such as those involving problems of overall performance, conduct, or others) where the Conference determines this action appropriate.

Actions taken to resolve a particular problem or question are based solely on the specific circumstances involved in each situation and should, in no way be construed as establishing precedents or changing policies and procedures.

Not every problem can be resolved to everyone's total satisfaction, but only through understanding and discussion of mutual problems can we work together to promote an efficient and harmonious work environment.

## ***DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE***

It is the policy of the North Central New York Conference of The United Methodist Church to create a drug-free workplace in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. The use of controlled substances is inconsistent with the behavior expected of employees, subjects all employees and visitors to our facilities to unacceptable safety risks, and undermines the Conference's ability to operate effectively and efficiently. In this connection, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, sale or use of a controlled substance in the workplace or while engaged in Conference business off the Conference's premises is strictly prohibited. Such conduct is also prohibited during non-working time to the extent that, in the opinion of the Conference, it impairs an employee's ability to perform on the job or threatens the reputation or integrity of the Conference.

Periodically, employees may be required to attend training sessions at which the dangers of drug abuse, the Conference's policy regarding drugs, and the availability of counseling will be discussed. Employees convicted of controlled substance - related violations in the workplace (including pleas of nolo contendere, i.e., no contest) must inform the Conference within five days of such conviction or plea. Employees who violate any aspect of this policy may be subject to corrective action up to and including termination. At its discretion, the Conference may require employees who violate this policy to successfully complete a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program as a condition of continued employment.

The Conference recognizes that employees may wish to seek professional assistance in overcoming drug or alcohol problems. Please contact the Director of Ministry Support for more information about the benefit potentially available under the medical benefit program and any possible Employee Assistance Program referral sources.