



# **Employee Handbook**

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**NO POLICY OR PROVISION IN THIS HANDBOOK IS INTENDED TO CREATE A CONTRACT BINDING THE EMPLOYEE OR THE EMPLOYER TO AN AGREEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT FOR A SPECIFIC PERIOD OF TIME. A WORKER'S EMPLOYMENT CAN BE TERMINATED BY EITHER THE EMPLOYEE OR THE EMPLOYER AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY REASON, WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE. NO REPRESENTATIVE OR AGENT OF THE EMPLOYER, OTHER THAN THE CLINIC DIRECTOR AND THE HEAD VETERINARIAN, CAN AUTHORIZE OR SIGN AN EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT CONTRARY TO THE ABOVE TERMS OR OTHERWISE MAKE ANY BINDING OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT FOR A SPECIFIC TERM. THE NATURE, TERMS OR CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT CANNOT BE CHANGED BY ANY ORAL REPRESENTATION, CUSTOM, HABIT OR PRACTICE.**

Dear Employee,

Welcome to Aspen Grove Veterinary Care!

We are excited to have you as part of our Aspen Grove Veterinary Care\* team. You were hired because we believe you can contribute to the success of our business, and share our commitment to achieving our goals as declared in our mission statement.

Dr. Bobby and Jaime Cawthron opened Aspen Grove Veterinary Care in 2006 to serve the pet care needs of Fort Collins and Northern Colorado. We are a full-service small animal hospital dedicated to excellence in veterinary medicine, compassionate care and convenience. We offer a wide range of veterinary services to our patients, as well as boarding and grooming. As part of the team, we hope you will discover that the pursuit of excellence is a rewarding aspect of your time here.

We value our employees and encourage them to make productive suggestions. Your role at Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is vital to our success and we want you to succeed at your job. We want to build lasting relationships with our clients, and we encourage each individual not only to be committed to their work, but also to be committed to people and their pets in general.

This employee handbook, sets forth the key policies, goals, expectations and benefits of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care as well as other useful information.

Use this handbook as a reference as you pursue your career with us. Keep in mind that policies change over time and Aspen Grove Veterinary Care may amend such from time to time, with or without notice, and we shall also reserve the right to deviate from the policies herein at our sole discretion. When there is a change in a policy we will update this Handbook as soon as possible. Feel free to discuss with us any questions you may have about this Handbook or about your employment with us.

To your success here!

Sincerely,

Bobby Cawthron, DVM  
Owner

Jaime Cawthron  
Owner, Clinic Director

\* Aspen Grove Animal Clinic, P.C. d/b/a Aspen Grove Veterinary Care

**Aspen Grove Veterinary Care Summary**

Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is a full service veterinary hospital for small animals offering limited exotic medicine for common household pets such gerbils, hamsters, ferrets, etc. Most of the business, however,

is focused on the care of dogs and cats. Aspen Grove Veterinary Care offers the following products and services:

- Preventative healthcare;
- Internal medicine;
- Extensive soft tissue and orthopedic surgery;
- General dentistry;
- Dermatology;
- Ophthalmology;
- Geriatric care;
- Reproductive services;
- Full service pharmacy;
- Prescription Diets;
- Health and behavior related retail
- Boarding and Doggie Day Care

### **Mission Statement**

Aspen Grove Veterinary Care provides a family-friendly environment while fostering excellence in veterinary medicine, compassionate care, and convenience.

### **Keys to Success**

- **Client Loyalty:** We strive to sustain and grow the existing loyal clientele through high quality medicine, and maintaining a consistent level of customer service, and compassionate and empathetic care.
- **Client Education:** Clients need to feel secure and comfortable when making medical decisions. Our doctor(s) and staff will always ensure that clients fully understand the medical condition of their pets and are aware of all possible treatments. In addition, clients will be provided with a handbook of what to expect and how to care for their pets following surgery and other invasive treatments.
- **Convenience:** Hours of operation are Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 5:30 pm and Saturday 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. We also provide an after-hours hotline for clients to call and receive advice when they have an after-hours emergency.
- **Proactive Client Recall System:** For the convenience of the clients and the success of the business, receptionists will be charged with actively pursuing and scheduling annual appointments through postcard reminders and follow-up phone calls.

## **SECTION 1 CODE OF ETHICS**

### **1.1 Relations.**

In our relations with others, veterinarians, and staff alike, we should speak and act on the basis of honesty, fairness, and respect. Veterinarians and staff should seek for themselves and our profession the respect of colleagues, clients, coworkers, and the public through courteous verbal exchange, considerate treatment, professional appearance, professionally acceptable procedures, and the utilization of current professional scientific knowledge. It is our responsibility to offer

the highest level of education to our clients so they may make the best medical decisions for their pet(s). Our focus is not to sell, but rather educate.

**1.2 Patient First.**

Veterinarians should consider first the welfare of the patient for the purpose of relieving suffering and disability while causing a minimum of pain or fright. Benefit to the patient should transcend personal advantage or monetary gain in decisions concerning therapy. Veterinarians may choose whom they will serve. Once they have undertaken care of a patient they must not neglect the patient. In an emergency, however, they should render service to the best of their ability.

**1.3 Conflict Avoidance.** Neither veterinarians nor staff should employ professional knowledge of attainments or render services under terms or conditions that tend to interfere with the free exercise of judgment and skill or tend to cause a deterioration of the quality of veterinary medicine.

**1.4 Professionalism.** Veterinarians and staff should respect the rights of clients, colleagues, and other health care professionals. No one shall belittle or injure the professional standing of another member of the profession or unnecessarily condemn the character of that person's professional acts in such a manner as to be false or misleading.

**1.5 Advertising.** Advertising or solicitation of clients by veterinarians and staff should adhere to the Advertising Regulations of the AVMA, and should, in no case, be false, misleading, or deceptive.

**1.6 Community.** The responsibilities of the veterinary profession extend not only to the patient but also to our society. We must strive to give back to the community in any way we can. Veterinarians should observe all laws, uphold the honor and dignity of our profession, and accept its self-imposed discipline.

## SECTION 2 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

**2.1 Confidentiality.** As the result of your employment at Aspen Grove Veterinary Care, you may acquire and/or have access to confidential information belonging to Aspen Grove Veterinary Care of special and unique value. This includes such matters as the Aspen Grove Veterinary Care's personnel information, trade secrets, client and patient files, suppliers, procedures, cost of merchandise, sales data, price lists, financial information, records, business and marketing plans, prospect names, business opportunities, confidential reports, customer lists and contracts, as well as other information specific and/or proprietary to Aspen Grove Veterinary Care ("Confidential Information").

All such Confidential Information is the exclusive property of the Aspen Grove Veterinary Care, and you will not at any time disclose to anyone, except in the responsible exercise of your job, any such Confidential Information whether or not it has been designated specifically as "confidential". As a condition of your employment, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care may require you to sign a separate confidentiality agreement further clarifying this policy.

If you are ever unsure of your obligations under this policy it is your responsibility to consult with the clinic director for clarification. Failure to comply with this policy could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- 2.2 Attendance and Punctuality.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care believes that employee punctuality and a good record of attendance are essential to the proper functioning of the hospital, and therefore are expected. Employees are expected to be reliable in reporting to work as scheduled. You are expected to arrive at work at least 10 minutes before you are scheduled to start your shift and be at your workstation by your scheduled start time. Excessive absenteeism and tardiness places an added burden your co-workers and contributes to low morale.

In rare instances when you are unable to report for work on time, or unable to remain at work until the end of your shift, you must notify your direct supervisor a **minimum of (1) hour in advance**. Text messages are not an acceptable form of communication and will not be recognized as notification. You must speak directly to your supervisor, who may require to you find someone to cover your shift. Attendance records are reviewed on a continuous basis. Any requests for time off from work are addressed under Section 4 of this handbook.

Poor attendance and excessive absences/tardiness may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- 2.3 Dress Code.** As an employee of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care, you must maintain a clean and professional appearance while in the clinic or on its premises, whether clocked in for work or not. Your attire should be consistent with the type of work you are performing (see below) as well as being appropriate for the position you hold and the image of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care. Clothing must be neat, clean, and wrinkle free. Good personal grooming and hygiene are also essential and should contribute to a professional appearance. Hair should be styled in a professional manner. If hair is colored, natural coloring is required (i.e. blonde, brown, red or black). While piercings and tattoos are permitted, visible piercings (except in the ears) and tattoos are not part of the accepted dress code and must either be removed or covered. Employees who appear for work inappropriately dressed will be sent home and directed to return to work in proper attire within 30 minutes. Failure to return in a timely manner could result in the loss of your shift without pay. Under such circumstances, employees will not be compensated for the time away from work.

- a. **Uniform.** Employees are expected to purchase and maintain all required uniforms such as scrubs and/or professional attire.
- b. **Nametags.** Nametags are a required part of your daily work uniform. Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will provide one nametag for each employee. If an employee loses or damages their nametag it will be replaced and the cost of \$15 will be payroll deducted.
- c. **Aspen Grove Logo T-shirts:** All staff will be provided 1, black logo t-shirt. For front desk staff and technicians, this t-shirt may only be worn on Friday's.
- d. **Job-specific Dress Code.**

### **i. Veterinary Technician/Assistance.**

**Scrubs:** All veterinary technicians/assistants are required to wear solid and matching (same color) scrub tops and bottoms. A white, black or gray t-shirt may be worn under the scrub top. If a t-shirt is worn under the scrub top it must be clean and tucked in. Graphics on the t-shirt should not be visible above, below, or through the scrub top. A solid white, black, or gray long sleeve shirt under your scrub top during cold weather is acceptable. Scrub bottoms are to be floor length (not shorter and not longer).

**If you get cold:** logo fleece jackets are available and hanging in the boarding prep area. These jackets are property of the clinic and are not to be taken home.

**Shoes:** Closed-toed, full shoes are required.

**Casual Friday's:** Every Friday, technicians wear blue jeans (clean and without holes or "worn spots.") and their black logo t-shirt.

**Unacceptable variations** to this dress code include:

- t-shirt tails hanging out the bottom of your scrub top
- torn, stained, worn, or faded scrubs
- scrubs with another company's logo
- scrub bottoms that are too long
- hoodie sweatshirts or any other jacket other than the logo fleece

### **ii. Receptionist/Front Desk Staff.**

Business Casual attire is required. If you are unfamiliar with Business Casual you can Google the term for examples. Blue jeans are acceptable as long as they are clean and without holes or "worn spots." During warm weather, capri pants that go past the knees are acceptable.

**Shoes:** Acceptable Business Casual shoes include loafers, dress heels, boots, flats or conservative leather shoes. Flip-flops and athletic shoes are not considered casual professional dress.

**Unacceptable variations** include

- flip flops, and athletic shoes
- shorts
- tank or spaghetti-string tops,
- hoodie sweatshirts
- excessively tight or low-cut tops
- Logos such as sports teams or clothing brands

### **iii. Kennel Staff.**

All kennel staff are required to wear an Aspen Grove logo t-shirt and closed-toe shoes. Blue jeans are acceptable as long as they are clean and without holes or "worn spots."

**Cold weather:** Staff should wear the Aspen Gove logo jackets or fleece and black hats and gloves. All winter gear is property of Aspen Grove and are not be worn home.

**Warm weather:** Khaki shorts (to the knee, cargo is acceptable) are acceptable.

### **iiii. Associate Doctor**

**Scrubs:** All doctors are required to wear solid and matching (same color) scrub tops and bottoms. A white, black or gray t-shirt may be worn under the scrub top. If a t-shirt is worn under the scrub top it must be clean and tucked in. Graphics on the t-shirt should not be visible above, below, or through the scrub top. A solid white, black, or gray long sleeve shirt under your scrub top during cold weather is acceptable. Scrub bottoms are to be floor length (not shorter and not longer).

**White Coat:** All doctors are required to wear a clean and pressed long white coat. It is the doctor's responsibility to ensure their coat is bright white (not dingy) and stain free. You are encourage to keep an extra coat at the hospital.

**Unacceptable variations** include

- t-shirt tails hanging out the bottom of your scrub top

- visible t-shirt graphics
- torn, stained, worn, or faded scrubs
- scrubs with another company's logo
- dingy, worn or stained white coat
- hoodie sweatshirts or any other jacket other than the logo fleece

## 2.4 Use of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care Property.

- a. Equipment.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will provide you with the necessary equipment to do your job. Company equipment (medical or office) is not to be used for personal use at any time, nor should any equipment be removed from Aspen Grove Veterinary Care work premises unless approved by your supervisor. Use of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care's stationery, office supplies, or postage for personal use is strictly prohibited. Personal use of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care's supplies and equipment may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- b. Computers and electronics.** Employee use of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care computers, printers, peripherals, and electronic equipment is for job-related or approved activities only. **Employees have no expectation of privacy for their work email accounts or Internet history.** Inappropriate use of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care computers, which may be defined from time to time at the discretion of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care, and generally includes any activity non-work related, may subject you to discipline, up to and including termination. Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited, to the following:
- i. Use of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care computers to send or receive messages, pictures, or computer files which are illegal, pornographic, sexist, racist, harassing, or discriminatory. If you receive such material, you should notify your supervisor immediately;
  - ii. Loading software that is not approved in advance by management;
  - iii. Making illegal copies of licensed software;
  - iv. Using software that would provide unauthorized access to Aspen Grove Veterinary Care's computers or would disrupt our equipment in any way;
  - v. Personal use.
- c. Telephones.** The telephone lines must remain open for business calls to service our customers. Personal use of company telephones is discouraged, but personal telephone calls are allowed on a limited basis and must not interfere with daily job performance and tasks. Toll or long-distance calls not related to work are strictly prohibited.
- d. Cost to Repair Damaged Equipment.** When our medical or office equipment is damaged or broken during the normal course of business operations and duties, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will incur all costs to repair or replace it. However, if office or medical equipment is broken due to an employee's failure to follow all safety rules and/or Aspen Grove Veterinary Care policies and procedures, both written and oral, then the cost to repair and replace the damaged or broken equipment will be borne by the employee. Such cost will be deducted from that employee's paycheck, the cost to be paid



in full in ninety (90) days. Any exceptions are at the sole discretion of Aspen Grove management.

- 2.5 Cell Phones.** Cell phone use during working hours must be kept to a minimum and must not interfere with one's tasks or productivity of the clinic. Cell phones should never be used when in the presence of a client and are not allowed in exam rooms. Ring tones should be quieted and not distracting, and cell phones kept in the front of the clinic and in the reception area must be silent or set to vibrate.
- 2.6 Eating and Drinking.** Eating and drinking in the treatment area, reception area or around computer stations is strictly prohibited. All eating and drinking is to be done in the break room. Exceptions to this rule may only include staff meetings and are at the sole discretion of Aspen Grove management.
- 2.7 Smoking.** Our goal is to provide a healthy and pleasant work environment for all employees. Aspen Grove Veterinary Care prohibits any form of tobacco use on Aspen Grove Veterinary Care premises. In accordance with Fort Collins law, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is a smoke free establishment. Local law also prohibits smoking within 20 feet of doorways, passageways, operable windows and/or ventilation systems of smoke free areas. Employees are allowed one 15-minute unpaid smoke break per 4 hours of consecutive work. Employee must obtain advanced permission of a supervisor and go off the clock for any smoke break taken. Breaks should be taken when business is slow and should not interfere with one's tasks or productivity of the clinic. All employees who smoke are expected to wash their hands and freshen their breath before returning to work.

### SECTION 3 POLICIES AND RULES

- 3.1 Personal Information.** It is important that the personnel records of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care be accurate at all times. In order to avoid problems with your benefit eligibility, tax liability, or our ability to communicate with you regarding shift changes and the like, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care requires that you will promptly notify your supervisor of any change in your name, home address, telephone number, number of dependents, or any other information pertinent to your employment with Aspen Grove Veterinary Care.
- 3.2 Employment Classification.** As an employee of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care, YOUR EMPLOYMENT IS AT WILL and you are an at-will employee at all times. This means that either you or Aspen Grove Veterinary Care may choose to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice. The employment at-will policy should not be interpreted to mean that termination will occur only for "just cause". THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTATION DO NOT CREATE AN EXPRESS OR IMPLIED CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT FOR A DEFINITE AND/OR SPECIFIC PERIOD OF TIME between you and Aspen Grove Veterinary Care, or otherwise create express or implied legally enforceable contractual obligation on the part of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care concerning any terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. At-will employment will not and shall not be altered or amended and this policy shall prevail despite any documents or statements, written or oral, prior, current, or future that conflict with the employment at-will policy.

- a. **Provisional Employee** – This is the first 90-120 calendar days of employment for a new staff member during which time they are ineligible for any employee benefits. A personal interview will follow 90-120 days after commencement of employment at time there will be a review of the employee's performance of reviewed and their employment status determined.
- b. **Regular Full-Time** - An employee who has no termination date and who is regularly scheduled to work a minimum of thirty five (35) hours per week. Regular full-time employees may be either non-exempt (hourly) or exempt (salaried) employees and are eligible for benefits and paid time off.
- c. **Regular Part-Time** - An employee whose position has no termination date and who is scheduled to work ten (10) or more hours, but less than thirty-five (35) hours per week. Part-time employees have limited benefits and no paid time off.
- d. **Temporary Part-Time** - An employee who is hired for a certain length of time and who is scheduled to work less than 34 hours per week. Temporary part-time employees are paid hourly and do not receive any benefits or paid time off.

**3.3 Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care promotes and maintains a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity. All employees have the right to work in an environment free from any type of illegal discrimination or harassment. Any employee found to have engaged in any form of discrimination or harassment, whether verbal, physical, or otherwise arising out of the work environment, and whether in the work place, at work assignments off-site, at work-sponsored social functions, or elsewhere, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Aspen Grove Veterinary Care's harassment policy is designed to ensure that all individuals can work in an environment that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, veteran or family status, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws.

**a. Harassment.**

**i. Sexual Harassment.** Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to or rejection of this conduct by an individual is used explicitly or implicitly as a factor in decisions affecting hiring, evaluation, promotion, or other aspects of employment; or (2) this conduct substantially interferes with an individual's employment or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, unwanted sexual advances; demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment or continued employment; repeated sexual jokes, flirtations, advances, or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies; leering; whistling; touching; pinching; assault; coerced sexual acts; suggestive insulting; obscene comments, gesture, and emails; and display in

the work place of sexually suggestive objects or pictures. Employees, especially management and supervisory employees, must be sensitive to acts of conduct that may be considered offensive by fellow employees and must refrain from engaging in such conduct. Any employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to immediate discipline, up to and including termination. It is also expressly prohibited for an employee to retaliate against employees who bring sexual harassment charges or assist in investigating charges. Retaliation is a violation of this policy and may result in discipline, up to and including termination. No employee will be discriminated against, or discharged, because of bringing or assisting in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment. Employees are encouraged to report any instance of sexual harassment to the Manager, whether they witness the act(s) or are victims themselves. Animal Care Centre shall investigate such incidences, involving both employees and clients, and will work to resolve the issue appropriately.

**ii. Racial Harassment.** Racial harassment is defined as all inappropriate conduct and activity taken against an individual because of his or her race and/or national origin. Examples of racial harassment include, but are not limited to, racial comments, racial jokes or emails, treatment of an individual differently because of his or her race, and all other activities defined by Title VII of the U.S. Civil Rights Acts of 1964.

- b. Discrimination.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is a multi-cultural company and we must all be sensitive to and tolerant of the background of others. When in doubt, don't say it or do it.
- c. Reporting Harassment of Discrimination.** If you believe that you have been the victim of sexual or other harassment or discrimination in the work place, you should take the following steps:

- 1) Report and discuss the matter with your supervisor.
- 2) If you believe your supervisor or manager to be the source or a participant in the harassment, report this to another supervisor or member of management.

Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will investigate and attempt to resolve your complaint, as well as take any warranted disciplinary action, as soon as possible. If for any reason you believe this has not occurred within a reasonable period of time, refer this problem to any other supervisor or to one of the owners of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care.

Retaliation against any individual who makes a good faith complaint, or who cooperates in the investigation of any complaint, is strictly prohibited and should be reported immediately.

- 3.4 Equal Opportunity Statement.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against employees or job applicants on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, veteran or family status, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws, except where a bona fide occupational qualification applies. This policy extends to all aspects of the employment

relationship, including, but not limited to, recruiting, interviewing, job assignments, training, compensation, benefits, discipline, use of facilities, participation in Aspen Grove Veterinary Care -sponsored activities, termination, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

**3.5. Immigration Law Compliance.** In accordance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), Aspen Grove Veterinary Care only employs individuals who are legally authorized to work in the United States. Furthermore, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care does not continue to employ any individual whose legal right to work in the United States has been terminated. CIS Form I-9 is used to verify an individual's identity and employment eligibility. Individuals who are hired as employees must complete the employee section of Form I-9 and provide the required documentation supporting the individual's identity and employment eligibility before he or she may begin working.

**3.6 Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance.** (Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is committed to compliance with applicable state and federal laws governing the treatment of qualified individuals with disabilities. Accordingly, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants and employees who have permanent or temporary disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is designed to assist an employee in the performance of his or her job without placing an undue hardship on Aspen Grove Veterinary Care or posing a direct threat to others. The clinic Director will determine whether accommodations are reasonable on a case-by-case basis. It is the employee's responsibility to inform his or her supervisor that an accommodation is needed to perform essential job functions. The reasonable accommodation request must be specific. Requests for such accommodations as "less pressure," "reduced stress," or an "allergen-free environment" are too vague. Once Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is aware of a disability, it will take measures to accommodate that disability in accordance with legal requirements. Aspen Grove Veterinary Care reserves the right to request written documentation from any employee seeking an accommodation. The documentation can be from a doctor, psychologist, rehabilitation counselor or other professional with knowledge of the employee's limitations. All medical information received by Aspen Grove Veterinary Center will be treated as confidential. Together, the Clinic Director and the employee's direct supervisor will be responsible for reasonably accommodating an employee's disability, and will review the following factors to determine the reasonableness of an accommodation:

- what type of job the employee holds,
- what essential functions make up the job,
- what architectural modifications are required,
- whether there are alternative ways to perform the tasks,
- whether furniture or work areas can be rearranged,
- whether the requested accommodation is temporary or permanent, and
- what the proposed accommodation will cost.

If a reasonable accommodation cannot be made for the employee in his or her current job, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will consider:

- offering a reasonable accommodation in a vacant position in the same job classification within the same department; or
- placement outside the department in a vacant position and job classification for which the employee is qualified.

Employees have the right to appeal the denial of a request for reasonable accommodation. Appeals must be filed with the Clinic Director within 20 business days of the denial.))

- 3.7 Performance & Wage/Salary Reviews.** Each new or promoted employee will be given a written job description that details the requirements and expectations of the position. Performance reviews will normally be conducted at the end of your provisional period, and every twelve (12) months from the date you were hired, or on an “as-needed” basis at the sole discretion of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care. Employee reviews are generally based on job description, work performance, and attitude.

Wage increases will be based upon reviewing these results as well as the following: dependability, attendance, cooperation, professionalism, ability to follow rules and policies, and any warnings or disciplinary actions that may have been taken. Wage increases are not guaranteed on an annual basis. Before an employee can be considered for a wage increase, they must hold their position for a minimum of 1-year. During your review, a supervisor will discuss with you your hourly wage or salary and your job position and expectations.

- 3.8 Staff Meetings.** Employees are required to attend all staff and training meetings, even if they are scheduled outside normal business hours. (Staff meetings will be held once a month and are mandatory for all employees. In addition, meetings may be called among particular staff members (i.e. receptionists, technicians, kennel) at any time to discuss procedure changes, resolve problems, or for training. If an employee is unable to attend a meeting, they must speak with the Manager to be excused. Written notes and other material will be given to each employee following the meetings. *Remember, we cannot continue to move forward unless everyone is trained in the same manner at the same time.*

#### **SECTION 4** **COMPENSATION & BENEFITS**

- 4.1 Payroll.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care employees are paid every other Friday. A pay period/pay day schedule will be provided at the beginning of each year and when an employee is hired. A copy of the schedule is also available on the employee section of the website ([www.AspenGroveVet.com](http://www.AspenGroveVet.com)). Paychecks may be mailed or picked up from the Aspen Grove Veterinary Care during normal business hours; direct deposit is available at no charge and is strongly encouraged.

If there is an error in your pay check, notify the Clinic Director immediately. Every effort will be made to remedy the discrepancy as quickly as possible. If your pay check is lost or stolen, notify the Clinic Director immediately. A new pay check will be issued after payment has been stopped on the original check. Bank fees incurred for such action are the responsibility of the employee and will be deducted from the employee’s next-issued paycheck. Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will not be obligated to indemnify an employee for any monetary loss suffered as a result of a lost pay check if we are unable to stop payment on the original check.

Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will withhold employee’s portion of federal social security and Medicare taxes, state and federal income tax, as well as and court-ordered and any other required withholdings from your payroll check each pay period.

**4.2 Benefits.** Provisional employees are not eligible for any benefits. Pet care and training benefits are for **employee pets only**. For a pet to be considered an "employee pet" it must meet the following criteria: **1)** Must live with the employee and does not share resident with another party **2)** The employee must be able to make any and all medical decisions for the pet without consultation from another party. **3)** The doctor/professional providing care does not have to speak with any other party other than the employee. **4)** The employee is solely responsible for financially supporting the pet. **5)** A medical record with the employee as the only owner must be provided. Pet's who are shared between an employee and another party do not qualify for the Pet Care Benefit.

- a. **Pet care benefits. Eligibility:** *Regular full-time and regular part-time employees only*  
Free professional fees for up to two (2) employee pets. This benefit does not include after-hours emergency fees. Exceptions are at the sole discretion of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care Management. Services under this paragraph are provided at convenience of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care, with the understanding that client appointments always take priority. Abuse of this benefit (including weekend and after-hours phone calls to the doctor) will result in the benefit being taken away from the abusing employee, and is at the sole discretion of Aspen Grove Management.
- b. **Product Benefits. Eligibility:** *Regular full-time and regular part-time employees only*  
Other products including, but not limited to, food, supplements, medical supplies and medications are be available to eligible employees at cost plus 10%.
- c. **Dog Training Benefits. Eligibility:** *Regular full-time employees only*  
Two, free 1-hour training sessions for one (1) employee dog. The cost for additional training sessions will be payroll deducted from the paycheck for the period which the service was provided. The cost for additional dog training sessions is \$40 per hour.
- d. **Payment of Account.** Employees are responsible for payment of all additional costs and fees and are required to make payment in full for products and services within 30 days. If any portion of your account remains unpaid after 30 days, the balance will be deducted from your paycheck unless prior arrangements have been made and approved by the Clinic Director.
- e. **Retirement. Eligibility:** *Regular full-time employees only*  
Aspen Grove Veterinary Care offers a Simple IRA retirement plan to regular full-time employees, who are over 18 years old, and have been continuously employed for 1 year. Aspen Grove will match employee contributions up to 3% of employee's annual salary.
- f. **Group Health Insurance. Eligibility:** *Regular full-time employees only*  
Aspen Grove will pay half of your health insurance premium, the remainder of your premium cost will be payroll deducted. Group Health is provided by Kaiser Permanente.
- g. **Life Insurance. Eligibility:** *Regular full-time employees only*  
Full time employees receive, at no cost, \$15,000 of life insurance. Employee is responsible for filling out proper paperwork and designating beneficiaries.

- h. Dental/Vision Insurance. Eligibility:** *Regular full-time employees only*  
Group dental and vision insurance is available at the employees sole cost. Cost will be payroll deducted.
- i. Other Conditions.**
  - i. Boarding.** Employees must pay full price for boarding. Holiday boarding must have prior approval from Clinic Director prior to scheduling.
  - ii. Day Care.** Day Care benefits are offered only when the employee is on the time clock and the employee's dog is on the schedule. The number of employee dogs in day care is not to exceed 4 dogs. Scheduling is at the discretion of employees. If an employee chooses to leave their dog(s) when they are not working, they must pay the full day care price.

#### 4.3 Work Schedule and Reporting.

- a. Schedule.** Each employee will be assigned a work schedule. Any changes to an employee's schedule must have prior approval by their direct supervisor. See policy 4.7 for details on Switching Shifts.
- b. Time Clock/Time Cards.** Employees must clock in at the beginning and clock out at the end of each shift, recording any unpaid breaks (i.e. lunch, medical, etc.). Employees are expected to accurately keep track of their hours. Employees must notify the Clinic Director immediately if there is a mistake with the time clock. The Clinic Director is the only person authorized to change a time clock. You are not allowed to clock in/out another employee. Failure to clock in and out may result in loss of pay for unverifiable work. Falsifying your time clock, clocking in and then leaving work or failing to clock out for lunch or breaks is the same as stealing from the company and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- c. Lunch.** Employees are allowed a daily one (1) hour unpaid lunch break. Lunch breaks will be determined by your direct supervisor and will generally be taken on a staggered schedule so that your absence from work does not create a problem with the day-to-day operations of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care. Any other breaks during the work day, including smoking, must be approved in advance by your supervisor and shall also not be paid.
- d. Overtime.** For hourly (non-exempt) employees, overtime work must be approved by the Clinic Director. You are expected to work necessary overtime if/when requested to do so, and you will receive time and one-half regular pay for time worked exceeding forty (40) hours within one work week (Monday-Sunday). Failure to work additional hours when needed and requested by Aspen Grove Veterinary Care may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- e. **Leaving During Shift.** Leaving the clinic during a shift and without permission of the Clinic Director/supervisor or not returning to work after a break will be considered a voluntary resignation by the employee.
- f. **Records.** Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of each employee. It is also each employee's responsibility to inform their supervisor before they reach overtime hours. Failure to receive prior approval for overtime may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- g. **Full-Time Best Efforts.** Full-time employees must be available to work during business hours. Unavailability may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- h. **Computing Hours Worked.** For purposes of calculating overtime pay, only hours actually worked are counted. Time off from work, such as holidays or jury duty, is not counted as hours worked, even if you are paid for such time off.

4.5 **Holidays.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is closed, and employees are not paid, for the following holidays unless a request for PTO is pre-approved: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

4.6 **Time Off**

- i. **Paid Time Off (PTO).** *Eligibility: Regular full-time employees only*  
PTO may be used for vacation, holidays, or sick leave, and is available after ninety (90) days of employment. PTO time is accrued by the hour at an accrual rate of .02.

Years of Service	Estimated Annual Paid Time Off with a 40 hour work week
1	40 hours (5 days)
3	80 hours (10 days)
10	100 hours (15 days)

For scheduling purposes, PTO may only be taken in a minimum increment of 4 hours. Prior approval for both paid and unpaid time off is required. Except for sick leave (see **Sick Leave** below), all requests for time off shall be submitted to employer using the online Request for Time Off form at least two (2) weeks in advance. Every effort will be made by Aspen Grove Veterinary Care to accommodate requests for time off; however, business circumstances may not permit all requests to be honored. If your request is not approved you will be required to work your shifts. If you call in sick during the time period that was denied in your request, a doctor's note is required to avoid disciplinary action up to and including termination. **After 1 day of unauthorized absence, and if we receive no acceptable explanation, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will assume that the employee has voluntarily resigned.** Unauthorized absence can be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

If you plan on missing work either for sick time or vacation, it is your responsibility to find another employee to cover your shift(s).



PTO does not carry over to the next year. Aspen Grove Veterinary Care operates under the “use it or lose it” principle. Upon termination of employment, unused paid time off will expire immediately and will not be paid to employee.

**ii. Unpaid Time Off.**

Unpaid time off may be used for vacation, holidays, or sick leave and must be requested two (2) weeks in advance using the online Request for Time Off form. Both regular full and part time employees are limited to 3 unpaid days off per calendar year.

Every effort will be made by Aspen Grove Veterinary Care to accommodate requests for time off; however, business circumstances may not permit all requests to be honored. If your request is not approved you will be required to work your shifts. If you call in sick during the time period that was denied in your request, a doctor's note is required to avoid disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**4.7 Switching Shifts.** Asking another employee to cover your shift, without you taking one of their shifts within the same work week is not considered switching shifts, it is considered time off and must follow the Time Off policy (4.6). To switch shifts with another employee, you must actually switch shifts within the same work week (Monday - Sunday). This is to avoid overtime or forcing a part time employee to work over 35 hours per week. Switching shifts must be approved with your supervisor through a Request to Switch Shift form available online. Employees are expected to work their scheduled hours. Excessively switching shifts can cause hardship on co-workers and effect overall moral. Excessive shift-switching can be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**4.8 Sick Leave.** Sick leave is considered time off; see policy 4.6 Time Off for more details. Employees who call in sick to work are required to submit a Request for Time Off form on the day they return to work.

Employees who are scheduled to arrive at work between 7:00 am - 8:00 am are expected to make every effort to notify their supervisor the evening prior to their absence so a replacement can be found. Text messages are not an acceptable form of communication and will not be recognized as notification. You must speak directly to your supervisor. If your supervisor is unavailable, proceed in finding a replacement. If you are unable to find someone to cover your shift, you are expected to arrive at work as scheduled.

Aspen Grove Veterinary Care permits use of available sick days for absence due to the birth or adoption of a child to an employee.

Industrial accidents and illness are covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance pursuant to the requirements of the laws in the state(s) in which Aspen Grove Veterinary Care operates. The sick leave policy outlined above does not apply to those illnesses or injuries that are covered by a worker's compensation policy.

**4.9 Maternity Leave.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care employees who regularly work a minimum of thirty-five (35) hours per week and have been employed by Aspen Grove Veterinary Care

continuously for twelve (12) months are allowed up to six (6) weeks of unpaid leave after they have given birth to or in conjunction with the adoption of a child. Additional time may be allowed under unusual circumstances and with the permission of your supervisor. The employee is expected to give ample notice so a temporary replacement can be found and trained.

- 4.10 Funeral Leave.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care allows three (3) days off each year without pay for a death in your immediate family. Immediate family is defined as parents, spouse, children, siblings, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparents, and grandchildren. For unusual circumstances you may request up to two (2) additional days. Funeral leave for the death of anyone other than an immediate family member will require prior approval from your immediate supervisor.
- 4.11 Jury Duty.** If you are summonsed for jury duty, please provide a copy of the summons to your supervisor as soon as possible. In accordance with Colorado law, for the first three (3) days of employee's jury services, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will continue to pay regular employee wages, not to exceed \$50/day. Beginning on the fourth day of jury services, you will be compensated fifty dollars (\$50) per day by the State of Colorado. You will retain your job and any other benefits you had prior to this time, if any.
- 4.12 Time Off For School Conferences.** Unpaid time off, up to a maximum of sixteen hours (16) hours each year is available to all employees for attending school conferences and activities, and preschool activities which cannot be scheduled during non-working hours. The employee must provide reasonable prior notice of the leave and make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so as not to disrupt the operations of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care. All time off, including unpaid, must be pre-approved through a Request for Time Off form.
- 4.13 Personal Time Off.** There may be an occasion when you need a short period of unpaid time during your regular work schedule to attend to personal matters, such as closing on a home loan, obtaining transportation after an auto accident, coping with a family emergency, etc. The decision to grant any personal time off is at the discretion of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care management and must be approved through a Request for Time Off form prior to taking the time off.
- 4.14 Voting.** At Aspen Grove Veterinary Care, we encourage our employees to vote. We also encourage our employees to vote by mail. However, if necessary, you will be permitted a reasonable period of time off, unpaid, to do so.
- 4.15 Military Service.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will allow unpaid time off work for employees in the National Guard or Military Reserves who take approved leave for training purposes. Employees may apply for PTO for this period if they choose.
- 4.16 Inclement Weather.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care provides vital care/services to hospitalized patients and boarders that cannot be interrupted by inclement weather conditions. While it is understood that during such conditions employees may have difficulty arriving and departing work, it is essential that each employee, regardless of position, report to work on time so that patient care is continued without interruption. Employees not scheduled to report to work during a storm period are expected to call to see if their services are needed. PTO is not permitted during inclement weather. See the Administrative Procedures handbook for exact steps to take during inclement weather.

## SECTION 5 WORKPLACE SAFETY

- 5.1 **Workplace Rules.** The safe, orderly, and efficient operation of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care requires that employees adhere to certain work rules and standards of conduct at all times. It is impossible to list each and every type of conduct that might be deemed inappropriate in the workplace. However, the specific activities and behaviors listed below serve as examples of the types of conduct that are unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action up to and including the immediate termination of employment.

Whether conduct is acceptable, and the appropriate level of discipline in any given situation, will be determined by management. Nothing in this policy alters, or is intended to alter, the at-will nature of employment. You have the right to terminate your employment at any time, with or without reason, and the Aspen Grove Veterinary Care maintains the same right.

Aspen Grove Veterinary Care reserves the right to establish additional policies as it deems necessary, and supervisors may set up particular rules to govern employees' conduct when deemed necessary by operational requirements.

- 5.2 **Safety and Accident Rules.** Safety is a priority at Aspen Grove Veterinary Care. We strive to provide a clean, hazard-free, and safe environment in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

As an employee, you are expected to take part in maintaining this environment. You should observe all posted safety rules; adhere to all safety instructions provided by your supervisor, and use safety equipment when required. It is your responsibility to learn the location of all safety and emergency equipment, as well as the safety and/or emergency phone numbers.

You may be required to purchase and maintain some of your own safety equipment. Any problems with Aspen Grove Veterinary Care-provided safety equipment should be reported to your immediate supervisor. If it is not safe to work for any reason, report the problem to your supervisor immediately.

Should you get hurt while performing your normal work activities, you are required to **inform your supervisor immediately and complete Incident Report**. Failure to complete a report may result in the loss of benefits.

- 5.2 **Worker's Compensation.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is committed to meeting its obligations under applicable workers' compensation acts which provide medical, rehabilitation, and wage-replacement benefits to individuals who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses while working. All work-related accidents are covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance pursuant to the laws of the state of Colorado. All work-related accidents, injuries, and illnesses must be reported **immediately**. **The failure to promptly report an accident, injury, or illness may result in the loss of coverage under workers' compensation insurance.**

## SECTION 6

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

**6.1 Substance Abuse Policy.** As part of its commitment to safeguard the health of employees, to provide a safe place for employees to work, and to promote a drug free community, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care has established a drug and alcohol free workplace prohibiting the use or abuse of alcohol and drugs by employees. In the spirit of safety, employees are expected to support our drug free workplace. Substance abuse, while at work or otherwise, seriously endangers the safety of employees, our patients and clients, the general public, and creates a variety of workplace problems including a decline in the quality of products and services provided. Employees injured in the course and scope of employment that test positive on drug or alcohol tests may forfeit medical and indemnity benefits under Colorado's Workers Compensation. Refusal to take drug or alcohol tests may also result in forfeiture of medical and indemnity benefits under Colorado's Workers Compensation and automatic termination of employment. Violations of the Substance Abuse policy are not tolerated and result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

No employee is allowed to consume, possess, sell, or purchase any alcoholic beverage, marijuana or marijuana-related items or illegal drugs or substances on any property owned by Aspen Grove Veterinary Care, or in any vehicle owned or leased by Aspen Grove Veterinary Care. No employee may use, possess, sell, transfer, or purchase any alcohol, drug or other controlled substance that may alter an individual's mental or physical capacity while on duty for Aspen Grove Veterinary Care, this includes prescription and/or over-the-counter medications.

Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will not tolerate employees that are impaired by or under the influence of alcohol or drugs while working, whether prescribed or not. Any prescribed or over-the-counter medication should be brought immediately to the attention of Aspen Grove management; that employee may be asked to leave work while impaired. Any such loss of work will be unpaid.

As a part of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care's policy to ensure a drug and alcohol free workplace, within the limits of applicable federal and state laws, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to test any employee for drugs and/or alcohol. Some such situations may include, but not be limited, to the following:

- In conjunction with an offer of employment with Aspen Grove Veterinary Care;
- Where there are reasonable grounds for believing an employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- As part of an investigation of any accident in the workplace in which there are reasonable grounds to suspect alcohol and/or drugs contributed to the accident;
- On a random basis, where allowed by state law;
- As a follow-up to a rehabilitation program, where allowed by state law;
- As necessary for the safety of employees, customers, or the general public, where allowed by state law.

All tested employees will be able to receive a copy of the laboratory results that certify the results or the testing done. It is a condition of your employment with Aspen Grove Veterinary Care that you always are in compliance with this Substance Abuse Policy.

Any employee who refuses a drug or alcohol test will be presumed to have abused drugs and/or alcohol. Such individuals are in violation of the Substance Abuse Policy and will face disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

## SECTION 7 DISCIPLINE, RESIGNATION AND TERMINATION

**7.1 Disciplinary Action Policy.** Employees who choose to violate any of the policies and procedures, whether written or oral, of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care are subject to disciplinary action at the sole discretion of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care management. Employees who perform acts of misconduct may be terminated without notice and may be prosecuted if appropriate. Disciplinary action may be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Clinic Director depending on the infraction. The following disciplinary actions may be taken as a result of employee misconduct:

- a. Verbal warning
- b. Written warning
- c. Termination

If an infraction is severe enough, an employee may be terminated from Aspen Grove Veterinary Care without advance warning.

**7.2 Resignation - Termination of Employment by the Employee.** As an at-will employee, and not being subject to an employment contract, you may choose to end your employment with Aspen Grove Veterinary Care at any time, with or without cause. An employee who voluntarily ends employment with Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is required to submit a written two (2) week notice of resignation to the Clinic Director and must continue to work their scheduled hours for the remaining two weeks. The employee's account balance for veterinary care and clinic services must be completely paid off by the employee's last day of employment. If it is not, the account balance will be deducted for the employee's final paycheck.

**7.3 Termination - Termination of Employment by the Employer.** Aspen Grove Veterinary Care may terminate employment of an at-will employee at any time and for any reason or for no reason at all, regardless of your work performance or compliance with the rules set forth in this Handbook. The employee's account balance for veterinary care and clinic services must be completely paid off and cleared upon termination. If it is not, the account balance will be payroll deducted on the employee's final check. Accrued vacation time and/or sick leave may not be compensated upon termination.

**7.4 Exit Interview.** Upon termination of employment, whether voluntary (by the employee) or involuntary (by the employer), with or without cause, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care may choose to have an exit interview with the departing employee.

**7.5 Return of Files.** Upon termination of employment, whether voluntary or involuntary, the departing employee shall return all files of any kind, keys, tools, and any other property of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care. Unless otherwise prohibited by applicable state or federal law, final settlement of an employee's pay will not be made until all property owned by Aspen Grove Veterinary Care is returned in satisfactory condition. The cost of replacing any items not

returned will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck, or, if this is not possible due to legal restrictions or otherwise, legal action may be taken to recover any property or monies due to Aspen Grove Veterinary Care by the former employee.

- 7.6 **Departing Employee Unpaid Account.** Any balance left of the employee's account for retail or professional services will be deducted in full from the employee's final paycheck.
- 7.7 **Layoff And Recall.** There may be occasions when it becomes necessary for management to reduce staff at Aspen Grove Veterinary Care due to certain business conditions or for other reasons. On such occasions, Aspen Grove Veterinary Care will make decisions on the basis of business needs related to employee job functions and their performance. Your supervisor will speak to you personally about your employment status as needed.

## SECTION 8 COMMUNICATION POLICY

- 8.1 **Communication Policy.** Any questions with respect to any of the provisions of this Employee Handbook should be addressed to your immediate supervisor.

You are entitled to express your point of view on work-related matters in a constructive manner, as well as to make any productive suggestions in any of the communication avenues available within Aspen Grove Veterinary Care.

### **Acknowledgement Form**

This Employee Handbook has been prepared for your understanding of the policies, practices, and benefits of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care; it is important to read this entire Handbook. We reserve the right to make changes at any time without notice and to interpret these policies and procedures at the discretion of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care. This Employee Handbook supersedes all prior Handbooks and previously-issued policies.

After you finish reading this Employee Handbook, please sign, date, and return this Acknowledgement Form to your supervisor within seven (7) days of your receipt of the Employee Handbook.

You agree to keep this Handbook in your possession during your employment and to update it whenever new information is provided to you. You acknowledge that this Handbook remains the property of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care and must be returned immediately upon request, or upon the termination of your employment.

Employee Acknowledgement:

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the policies outlined in this Employee Handbook. I agree to comply with the policies contained in this Handbook and to read and understand any revisions to it and be bound by them. I understand this Handbook is intended only as a general reference and is not intended to cover every situation that may arise during my employment. I

acknowledge that this Handbook is not a full statement of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care policy. Any questions regarding this Handbook can be discussed with my supervisor or the Clinic Director.

I acknowledge that this Handbook is not intended to create, nor shall be construed as creating, any express or implied contract of employment for a definite or specific period of time between myself and Aspen Grove Veterinary Care or to otherwise create, express or implied legally enforceable contractual obligations on the part of Aspen Grove Veterinary Care concerning any terms, conditions, or privileges of employment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee name (print legibly)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

TO BE FILED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL RECORDS