

SECTION 2. ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

SECTION 2. ETHICS, FRAUD, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 2.01** As a Harris County employee, you must maintain the highest standards of ethical behavior. Always act with honesty and integrity, respect, confidentiality, and fairness in the execution of your job.
- 2.02** Be professional in the workplace and any time or place you are engaged in work-related activities. Protect the County's assets and its reputation through professional and personal conduct and avoid circumstances that create an appearance of impropriety.
- 2.03** Harris County is the custodian of many types of information, including information that is confidential and private. If you have access to such information, be familiar with and comply with all applicable laws pertaining to access, use, protection, and disclosure of the information.
- 2.04** Fraudulent behavior is strictly prohibited. Fraud is broadly defined and may include any type of intentional deception for the purpose of personal or business gain or damage to an individual or organization. Examples of fraud include lying on an employment application, falsifying records, or providing false receipts for mileage or travel reimbursement. You must be a good steward of the resources entrusted to you and exercise due diligence to prevent and detect criminal conduct and non-compliance with laws and policies. Fraud, waste, abuse, or non-compliance must be reported to an appropriate supervisor, manager, or to the Harris County Human Resources & Risk Management designee identified below. Engaging in acts of fraud may result in disciplinary action or civil or criminal liability.

- 2.05** Department Heads are responsible for overseeing their employees and ensuring compliance with these standards, including:
- a.** Conducting appropriate post-offer background checks on applicants to minimize the risk that employees will commit fraud or other illegal acts in the performance of their duties; and
 - b.** Effectively communicating these ethical standards to all employees and allowing employees to participate in periodic ethics training, whether provided within the department or through HRRM Career Development (which offers video and online ethics training available 24-7 and live ethics training provided quarterly as well as at each new employee orientation).
- 2.06** Any employee who believes he or she has witnessed any suspected ethical violation or fraud must immediately report the allegations to:

Employee Relations Manager
Human Resources & Risk Management
713-274-5421
HRRMEthics@bmd.hctx.net

HRRM will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation HRRM will refer any suspected criminal activity to the District Attorney or an appropriate law enforcement agency. HRRM will report its findings to the appropriate Department Head. **Employees who report suspected ethical violations or fraud can do so without fear of retaliation. Retaliating against any employee for reporting suspected ethical violations or fraud is strictly prohibited.**

- 2.07** Department Heads are responsible for administering appropriate discipline to any employees found to have committed an ethical violation to prevent similar offenses in the future. The appropriate discipline should be based on all the facts and circumstances surrounding the situation and may range from an oral or written warning, re-training, suspension, demotion or transfer, up to immediate dismissal.
- 2.08** Ask your supervisor if you have questions about ethics or confidentiality