

STEVENS COUNTY
NEW EMPLOYEE
ORIENTATION MANUAL

Revised 6/2000

STEVENS COUNTY COURTHOUSE
400 COLORADO AVE.

STEVENS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HWY 9 NORTH

STEVENS COUNTY AMBULANCE SERVICE
HWY 9 SOUTH

STEVENS TRAVERSE
PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING SERVICE
210 ATLANTIC AVENUE

STEVENS COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE
208 ATLANTIC AVENUE

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION TO STEVENS COUNTY

Disclaimer

The information in this manual is designed to give you a basic orientation to our unit of government. Statements in this manual are not to be considered binding upon the County except when they are restatements of terms and conditions of employment contained in bargaining unit agreements or Personnel Rules or Policy Statements. This manual does not constitute a contract.

Information in this manual may be revised from time to time as Stevens County deems appropriate without prior notice.

COUNTY ORGANIZATION

About the County:

Stevens County was established on February 20, 1862. It is named after statesman Isaac Ingalls Stevens, who had this county named for him seven years after a legislative clerical error denied him that honor in 1855 for Stearns County.

A Board of five elected County Commissioners, represents the citizens of the county as its governing body. This central governing authority is responsible for the plans and functions of all Stevens County Departments. The 1990 population of Stevens County was 10,634.

Other entities located within the Courthouse are the courtrooms, judges chambers and administrative staff of the Stevens County District Court. While housed here, it is a unit funded completely by the State of Minnesota as part of the 7th Judicial District Court takeover project.

The Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Stevens County (“Stevens County HRA” or “HRA”) and its three employees are housed in the Courthouse. They are responsible to the HRA Board. The HRA Board is appointed by the County Board.

FUNCTIONS OF STEVENS COUNTY DEPARTMENTS

Ambulance Service (Highway 9 South)

This department provides ambulance service to Stevens County and some areas near the county line. The Director oversees a staff of part-time, on-call E.M.T's and Paramedics, who operate the three ambulances and Emergency Response Vehicle, providing emergency care, advanced life support and inter-health care facility transportation of patients.

Assessor (Courthouse Upper Level)

The Assessor's Office coordinates and oversees equality of the assessments of property in the 16 townships and 5 cities of the county. The Assessor supervises local assessors who make appraisal of real property. This office is the first link in the chain of property tax administration.

Attorney (109 E. 6th Street)

The Office of County Attorney is established by Minnesota Statute as an elected position and is charged with the responsibility to prosecute all felonies in the county and misdemeanors which occur outside the City of Morris. The Attorney also serves as civil counsel for the County in all matters.

Auditor-Treasurer (Courthouse Upper Level)

The Office of Auditor-Treasurer collects and disburses real estate taxes and is the fiscal manager of all funds. The Auditor-Treasurer also distributes hunting and fishing licenses; administers all county-wide elections; serves as the budget manager for the county and administers the payroll.

Building Maintenance Department (Courthouse Lower Level)

The Building Maintenance Supervisor is responsible for overseeing maintenance on all county buildings, and for supervising one full-time and one part-time Courthouse Custodial positions.

Coordinator (Courthouse Upper Level)

The Coordinator serves as the chief administrative officer for the county. The Coordinator serves as clerk to the County Board; serves as the County's Personnel Director; and serves as the Planning and Zoning Administrator.

County Engineer (Highway 9 North)

The County Engineer is appointed by the County Board to a four year term. The Engineer is responsible for overseeing the construction and maintenance of the county's road system, and supervises the county crews who provide these services.

Information Services Director (Courthouse Upper Level)

The Information Services Director oversees the internal computer system or AS400, internal network, and pc and related hardware and software systems.

Environmental Services Coordinator (Courthouse Upper Level)

This office provides oversight and coordination of the county's solid waste program, including recycling and feedlot permitting of 1,000 animal units or less. It also administers the county's comprehensive local water plan.

Extension Service (208 Atlantic Avenue)

This cooperative effort between the County and the University of Minnesota provides educational programs and information in the areas of agriculture and horticulture; 4-H youth development; natural resources education; family living and home economics.

Public Health Nursing Service (210 Atlantic Avenue)

This department has the responsibility to assess the health of the community and to assure that policies and programs which promote good community health are available to residents of the county. To assist individuals, the service offers programs such as WIC, and immunizations for children.

Recorder (Courthouse Upper Level)

The elected Office of County Recorder is the repository for all land records in the County and is responsible for the accurate and official recording of various land-related transactions and ownership certification. The office also provides recording of other public records vital to individuals and the public good.

Sheriff (Courthouse Lower Level)

The Sheriff is elected to a four year term as the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the county. The Sheriff supervises the deputies, the dispatch center and coordinates with the court system in providing courtroom security (bailiffs) and transportation of prisoners. Additionally the Sheriff's Office is responsible for the service of civil process and warrants.

Human Services Department (Courthouse Lower Level)

This department offers a variety of public assistance programs and social services to county residents who need this type of help and are eligible. Income Maintenance staff provide services of AFDC, general assistance, medical assistance, Minnesota supplemental aid and food stamps. The Human Services staff assists families and individuals in the areas of child protection, adult protection, chemical dependency, day care, foster care, and other related services.

Veterans Service Officer (Courthouse Upper Level)

The V.S.O. provides information, referral and direct benefit services to Armed Forces Veterans and the veteran-related population of the County. This office is an authorized agent of state and federal veteran benefit programs, and is required by law.

WORK HOURS

The County's general work hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. September through May at the Courthouse; the June-August hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The County Extension Office and Public Health Nursing Office in the Colonial Square complex, hold hours of 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. year around.

The Stevens County Highway Department office hours throughout the year are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The Ambulance Service office hours are 8:30 - 4:30 p.m.

All office schedules are for Monday through Friday. Full time employees have a one hour lunch break and two 15 minute work breaks per day.

COURTESY AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE

As you perform your duties, many of you have direct contact with the public we serve. All of us have direct contact with other employees. As you go about your duties, treat your customer/client with the same respect and courtesy you would want and expect if you were the customer. Help your fellow employees; give them the respect they and you deserve.

Your personal appearance can strongly influence a taxpayer's opinion of County efficiency. A sloppy employee indicates a sloppy department. The County recognizes that the many different types of jobs in our system require different types of clothing; but all of us can be well groomed.

TELEPHONE COURTESY

Many times during each work day, Stevens County Employees do their work through telephone contacts. Remember that a first impression, whether heard or seen, is a lasting impression. Whether it's negative or positive depends on you.

Because your telephone customer cannot see you, his/her opinion depends entirely on your manner and tone of voice. Be business-like but don't be afraid to let your personality show. A few suggestions:

1. Answer the telephone promptly;
2. Identify yourself and your department;
3. Keep a note pad handy, jot down the caller's name and use it during the conversation;
4. If you must leave the line to check information, be sure to let the caller know what you are doing. If the delay will be longer than two or three minutes, offer to call back.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Use of County telephones for personal long-distance calls should be avoided when possible. Such calls when unavoidable, should be charged to one's residence telephone, personal credit card or should be noted and reimbursed to the County Auditor.

SECTION II COMPENSATION BENEFITS

PAYCHECKS AND PAYROLL PERIODS

You are paid twice monthly. Paychecks are issued by the Treasurer's Office to your department as soon as they are ready on the 16th of each month. That usually means you have your paycheck by noon that day. If the 16th falls on Saturday, you are paid on the Friday preceding it. If it falls on Sunday, you are paid the following Monday.

The second paycheck of the month is issued at approximately 3:00 p.m. on the last working day of the month. Direct deposit is an available option through the payroll office.

AUTOMATIC AND VOLUNTARY PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Medical/Hospitalization Insurance

To be eligible for County benefits, an employee must work at least 80% of full-time hours. The County contributes a monthly amount towards a core package for insurance for employees working a minimum number of hours. The core package includes \$1,000 deductible single health insurance, \$15,000 single life insurance and \$140 short term disability insurance. The employee may increase or include other options. Other options for health insurance include \$500, \$250 deductible or PPO health insurance for the employee and family. The employee may also increase and include family life insurance and increase short term disability. A flexible spending account is also available for out-of-pocket health care expenses and daycare expenses, on a pre-tax payment basis. Also on a pre-tax basis, an employee may defer income through VALIC, NACO or Security Benefit Life. These are long-term savings plans.

Other available options include other life insurance, long term disability, cancer and intensive care insurance through MN Benefits, PERA, The Mutual Group, AFLAC and Fortis Benefits. Dental for employee and family is available through PEAK. Premiums above the Cafeteria contribution will be deducted from the employee's paycheck.

Union/Council Dues

If you have been hired into a position certified as a union/bargaining council, you have the option of joining that union/bargaining council, or you may decline the opportunity to join. If you join, monthly dues will be withheld from your paycheck. If you choose not to join, the county will withhold from your paycheck an amount deemed to be a fair share deduction. This is required by state law. Contact your union Steward to enroll as either a voting member or fair share member.

Federal and State Income Tax

The amount deducted for Federal and State withholding taxes is determined by the number of dependents and your salary after pre-tax payroll deductions. At the end of the year you will receive a W-2 form which shows your total wages and deductions.

Retirement Program

As a public employee, you are required to become a member of PERA (Public Employees Retirement Association). You will be enrolled in that program on your first day of work. For this retirement plan, 4.75% of your salary will be deducted through payroll deductions, with the County contributing an additional 5.18% of your salary.

Also through payroll deductions, 7.65% of your salary will be deducted for Social Security/Medicare with the County contributing an additional 7.65%.

Deputy Sheriff/Patrol Officer employees are required to become a member of Public Employees Police and Fire Fund. Six point two percent (6.2%) of the salary will be deducted through payroll deductions; Stevens County Contributes 9.3% of the salary. All newly hired Patrol Officers also contribute 1.45% to Medicare, with the County contributing an additional 1.45%.

After three years of service with the County, you will become eligible for retirement benefits at legal retirement age. Some part-time, temporary or short-term employees are excluded from PERA membership. To contact PERA for more information regarding your fund, call: 1-800-652-9026.

Salary Ranges & Increases

The amount of salary you receive and any increases are governed by the appropriate bargaining unit agreement, or the Personnel Practices established by the County Board. All jobs are assigned to the appropriate salary range. The present system calls for most positions to be eligible for advancement through the various steps within the salary range.

Holidays

Employees eligible for Holiday pay must be in paid status the day before and the day following the holiday.

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King	3rd Monday in January; AFSCME; Highway; Non-union
President's Day	3rd Monday in February
Good Friday	.5 day - AFSCME; Highway; Non-union 1.0 day - LELS
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	1st Monday in September
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	4th Thursday in November
Friday after Thanksgiving	(in lieu of Columbus Day)
Christmas Day	December 25

For employees whose normal work week is Monday through Friday, when a holiday falls on a Saturday the preceding Friday shall be observed as a holiday. When a holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday shall be observed as a holiday.

Sick Leave

Sick leave with full pay shall accrue for permanent employees at the rate of 1 day per month to a maximum of 100 days or 800 hours. Once the maximum number of days/hours has been reached, any further accrual of sick leave will be split; one-half recorded as sick leave and one-half recorded as accrued vacation time.

Vacation

Annual leave is accrued in accordance with the length of service at the following rates for permanent employees:

Non Union; AFSCME; Highway

0- 5 years of service	1.00 day per month
6-10 years of service	1.25 days per month
11-15 years of service	1.50 days per month
16-20 years of service	1.75 days per month
21-25 years of service	2.00 days per month
26-30 years of service	2.25 days per month
31-35 years of service	2.50 days per month
36+ years of service	2.75 days per month

LELS

0- 5 years of service	1.25 days per month
6-10 years of service	1.50 days per month
11-15 years of service	1.75 days per month
16+	2.00 days per month

Employees in probationary status may, depending on bargaining unit provision, be unable to use vacation leave.

Time Off To Vote

MN Statute 204C.04 provides for the ability for employees to be absent from work in order to vote during certain elections. Please review the statutes or talk to the Personnel Director for information. "Every employee who is eligible to vote at a state general election or at an election to fill a vacancy in the Office of United States Senator or United States Representative has the right to be absent from work for the purpose of voting during the morning of election day, without penalty or deduction from salary or wages because of this absence. An employer who refuses, abridges or interferes with this right shall be subject to the penalty provisions of Section 210A.141" (MN Statute 204C.04)

If you wish to vote during working hours, you must arrange for time off in advance so that your department activities are not disrupted.

SECTION III. EMPLOYMENT

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Public announcements of job vacancies are posted on bulletin boards maintained on each level of the Courthouse. Employees shall be free to make application for any position for which they believe they may be qualified.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

The probationary period or working test period shall be regarded as an extension of the examination process and shall be utilized by supervisors and department heads for closely observing the employee's work and for rejecting employees whose performance does not meet the required work standards.

Every person hired to a permanent position shall be required to successfully complete a probationary period. This probationary period shall begin immediately upon appointment and shall continue for six months, except for Sheriff Deputies, who shall serve twelve (12) months. The probationary period for an individual employed for or promoted to a supervisory position shall also be twelve (12) months.

See Section VIII of the Stevens County Personnel System for PROBATION in its entirety.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Stevens County Employee Assistance Program is a professional counseling and referral service for employees. The program is a cost-free, voluntary, confidential, professional assistance program to help employees and their families resolve personal or work problems. It focuses on assessment, short-term counseling and referral to cost-effective community resources.

Examples of problems the program deals with include:

- Alcohol and other drug abuse
- legal problems
- parenting issues
- health concerns
- financial worries
- death of a loved one
- personal career issues

The program assures that all counseling services are provided on a private and confidential basis. Program records do not become a part of the employee's personnel record. Employees wishing to utilize this service, should call MCIT at 1-800-550-MCIT.

TRAVEL AND EXPENSE REGULATIONS

County cars will be kept parked at the Stevens County Highway Garage shop. Employees should contact the Highway Garage to schedule their useage. Keys are kept in the ignition. Please abide by the following rules:

1. If you plan to leave with a car before 8:00 a.m., the key to the garage must be picked up on the previous day. See your department head to make these arrangements.
2. Try to schedule the car as much in advance as possible.
3. Before departure and upon return, enter mileage information in the travel log kept in each vehicle.
4. Fill the car with gas and wash windows before returning the vehicle to the garage.
5. Remove any debris (cups, paper, etc.) that may accumulate in the car.
6. If you are using a County vehicle and experience mechanical problems, call the Highway Garage (320-589-7430), then one of the following procedures must be used:
 1. Call a towing service if necessary, and have the vehicle repaired at the nearest service station; and/or
 2. Rent a car from the nearest dealership.

SECTION IV. EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND HEALTH

INJURY ON THE JOB; INJURY TO CLIENTS OR THE PUBLIC

Any employee injured on the job must report the accident to his/her supervisor immediately, but no later than 24 hours after the incident if circumstances prevent immediate reporting.

Should a client or a member of the public be injured on county property, each employee shall render immediate assistance to that person, including the notification to the proper emergency response personnel if warranted. Injury to the public on county property needs to be reported immediately to the County Auditor.

COURTHOUSE SECURITY

In some jurisdictions threats against elected officials, public employees, and public property are becoming all too common. While it is critically important that the public have access to county offices during regular working hours, it is also prudent to establish basic policies and procedures to limit the potential risk to employees in the building during non-working hours.

All exterior doors to the Stevens County Courthouse will be locked after normal working hours. Employees seeking access to the building after it has been closed should use the front door equipped with a camera, identify themselves to the dispatcher on duty, and indicate the office in which they will be working. Others requesting admittance to the building should identify themselves to the dispatcher on duty, and state the reason of their visit. The County Coordinator may issue keys to exterior doors to employees and officials demonstrating a continuing need for access to the building after normal working hours. In these instances, individuals entering the building should notify the dispatcher on duty of their presence in the building. Dispatch shall maintain a log of all after-hours use of the building.

Hallway doors to individual offices and work areas should be kept locked after normal working hours. A key to the Stevens County Law Library will be maintained at dispatch to provide access for attorneys and/or their staff needing to use the library when the building is otherwise closed.

From time to time it is necessary to schedule meetings, hearings or other events related to county business after normal working hours. In these instances, both dispatch and the Building Maintenance Supervisor should be notified so that comfortable

temperatures are maintained in meeting spaces and adequate provision is made for opening and closing the building.

Anyone aware of unauthorized entry or suspicious behavior in or around the courthouse should immediately report it to the dispatcher on duty who will notify law enforcement.

HAZARDOUS WEATHER

When an employee is permitted to go home from work because of weather conditions, or cannot make it to work because of such conditions, he/she will have an option of using sick leave, vacation, for up to three (3) days, or making up the time in such a manner it will not qualify as overtime as approved by the Department Head.

The Stevens County Courthouse shall always be considered open during regular work hours. All effort should be made to arrive at work during inclement weather with the understanding that the safety of employees and the general public is a priority.

SMOKING IN COUNTY FACILITIES

All Stevens County owned and operated facilities are designated smoke-free, including County vehicles, trucks, patrol cars, equipment, garages, previously designated smoking areas, and all other office, hallway, and bathroom areas within County facilities. Only County property surrounding County buildings; private vehicles used on County business, unless in the presence of non-smoker(s), are permitted smoking areas. Violation will result in disciplinary action.

SECTION V. STATE AND FEDERAL MANDATES

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act establishes guidelines for the release of data or information as follows:

PERSONNEL DATA: "means data on individuals collected because the individual is or was an employee of or an applicant for employment, performs services on a voluntary basis for, or acts as an independent contractor with a state agency, statewide system or political subdivision or is a member of an advisory board or commission." (Minnesota Statutes 13.43, Subd. 1)

TYPES OF PERSONNEL DATA:

Public data is practically all data kept on employees. It must be released to any person on request. The following data on current and former employees, volunteers, independent contractors, and members of advisory boards or commissions must be given to anyone who asks for it:

- name
- gross salary
- salary range
- contract fees
- gross pension
- value and nature of employer-paid fringe benefits (except reason for use of sick leave)
- basis for and amount of any added payment, including expense reimbursement (in addition to salary)
- job title
- job description
- education and training background
- previous work experience
- first and last date of employment
- status of any complaints or charges against the employee, whether or not the complaint or charge resulted in a disciplinary action, and supporting documentation
- work location
- work telephone number
- badge number
- city and county of residence (this does not include street address)
- honors and awards received
- data which accounts for individual work time (except if time-sheet data reveals employee's reason for the use of sick or other medical leave)

Private data can be released only if the employee authorizes it in writing or if the court orders it. Examples of private data

include the following:

- performance appraisals
- Social Security number
- medical information
- Employee Assistance referrals/information
- home address and phone number

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: Stevens County is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristics will not be tolerated. Specifically, sexual harassment is a violation of both Federal and State statutes, and is strictly prohibited. Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Any employee who is a victim or has knowledge of an incident of unlawful harassment should promptly report the matter to his/her supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should immediately contact the County Coordinator or the Chair of the Board of Commissioners.

See Section XXXV., of the Stevens County Personnel System, for the SEXUAL HARASSMENT policy in its entirety.