

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA  
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# Employee Handbook

## Welcome

I am pleased to welcome you as a new partner in ministry. Though we may work for different agencies or offices, we are all part of the ministry and mission of the Christian Reformed Church. God is doing great and wonderful things in bringing about his kingdom through our varied efforts.

The position to which you have been appointed is a vocation—a calling to serve God in and through our work as the church. It is our hope that you will not only find a place of service but that you will also find encouragement and support as you use your God-given gifts and talents.

Each of us has been called to be part of transforming lives and communities worldwide. Together we have the opportunity to make a difference in this world, and I look forward to working with you.

Blessings,

Executive Director of the CRCNA

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*As a denomination we know it's wise to set a course. Our mission statement defines what we are about, and our vision statement paints a picture of where we*

*hope to go. With God's strength and leading, we can work toward fulfilling that picture.*

## **Our Mission**

*As people called by God, we gather to praise God, listen to him, and respond. We nurture each other in faith and obedience to Christ. We love and care for one another as God's people. We commit ourselves to serve and to tell others about Jesus. We pursue God's justice and peace in every area of life.*

## **Our Vision**

*The Christian Reformed Church is a diverse family of healthy congregations, assemblies, and ministries expressing the good news of God's kingdom that transforms lives and communities worldwide.*

## **Our Calling**

The ministries of the Christian Reformed Church share Christ's love with millions of people around the world. Our agencies of evangelism, education, relief, and development are active in 40 countries, and our radio and television broadcasts blanket the globe.

We undertake these ministries in obedience to the Great Commission: *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”* The support of our members through prayers, offerings, gifts, and Ministry Shares (an assessment of about six dollars per week that churches are asked to submit on behalf of each active adult member) makes this possible.

We group our denominational ministries into five “streams” that we think of as Our Calling.

## **Faith Formation**

*As a community of believers, we seek to introduce people to Jesus Christ and to nurture their faith through all ages and stages of life.*

**Faith Formation Ministries** encourages and equips congregations in their ministry of helping believers of all ages to grow in faith as disciples of Jesus Christ.  
[crcna.org/faithformation](http://crcna.org/faithformation)

**Calvin College** is a top-ranked liberal arts college in Grand Rapids, Mich. that prepares students to be Christ’s agents of renewal in the world. Through rigorous academic study and intentional Christian community, students learn to think deeply, act justly, and live wholeheartedly in everything that they do.  
[calvin.edu](http://calvin.edu)

## **Gospel Proclamation and Worship**

*Believing that faith comes through the hearing of God’s Word, we proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ and worship him in all that we do.*

**Calvin Theological Seminary** prepares people to lead in ministry for Christ’s church and his kingdom. Founded 140 years ago, Calvin Seminary continues to live out the values of its legacy in which all teaching and formation grow from a shared understanding of God’s Word as articulated in the Reformed confessions.  
[calvinseminary.edu](http://calvinseminary.edu)

**Worship Ministries** seeks to develop networks for sharing creative gifts already present in our churches; finding and creating resources, and helping churches to deepen the questions they ask around worship. Worship Ministries also works closely with partners such as the Center for Excellence in Preaching at Calvin Seminary and the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship at Calvin College.  
[crcna.org/worship](http://crcna.org/worship)

## **Global Mission**

*Called to be witnesses of Christ’s kingdom to the ends of the earth, we start and strengthen local churches in North America and around the world.*

**Back to God Ministries International** is a media ministry that proclaims the gospel through evangelism and discipleship resources in 10 major world languages. Using a wide variety of media tools, BTGMI is reaching people in more than 180 countries. Through ReFrame Media, BTGMI produces English-language resources online and on the air to help people see God's story in their lives.

*backtogod.net*

North America is rapidly becoming one of the largest mission fields in the world. **Christian Reformed Home Missions** is committed to joining God's mission in neighborhoods and churches to cultivate community and build relationships on a gospel-centered foundation, so that people are brought to Christ and welcomed into the community of faith.

*crhm.org*

For more than 125 years, **Christian Reformed World Missions** has been helping Christian Reformed churches fulfill the Great Commission. World Missions joins with congregations to provide prayer, care, finances, and other resources. More than 200 missionaries serve in more than 50 countries, working in the areas of Christian education, leadership development, evangelism and discipleship, and transforming communities.

*crwm.org*

*NOTE: Synod 2015 approved the joining of Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM) and Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) into a single mission agency that transcends geographic boundaries. The process of implementing this new mandate is underway.*

## Servant Leadership

*Understanding that the lifelong equipping of leaders is essential for churches and ministries to flourish, we identify, recruit, and train leaders to be servants in the kingdom of God.*

The **Candidacy Committee** provides leadership in the process of training and ordaining pastors to serve in our churches.

The **Chaplaincy & Care Ministry** supports and develops chaplains to serve in institutional settings such as hospitals, workplaces, prisons, and the military.

**Pastor-Church Resources** supports congregations and their leaders who are going through times of transition or discernment.

**Sustaining Congregational Excellence** offers grants and other resources to foster the health of smaller churches.

**Sustaining Pastoral Excellence** seeks to support and strengthen Christian Reformed pastors so they can build vital congregations.

## Mercy and Justice

*Hearing the cries of the oppressed, forsaken, and disadvantaged, we seek to act justly and love mercy as we walk humbly with our God.*

**World Renew** is compelled by God's deep passion for justice and mercy to respond to poverty, hunger, disaster, and injustice around the world in Jesus' name.  
*worldrenew.net*

**Aboriginal Ministry** (Canada) promotes healing and reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

**Disability Concerns** helps churches welcome and enfold persons with disabilities and their families so that they can participate fully in the life of the church.

**Race Relations** assists the denomination, churches, and members in eliminating the causes and effects of racism within the body of believers and throughout the world.

**Safe Church Ministry** equips churches in abuse awareness, prevention, and response.

The **Office of Social Justice** and the **Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue** seek to educate CRC members about and encourage their engagement in social justice issues, presenting a voice of faith in Canadian and American public life and promoting justice, hope, and reconciliation in North America and beyond.

## Other Ministry Programs

The CRC has a publishing ministry under the brand **Faith Alive Christian Resources**, which provides materials for Sunday school, Bible study, outreach, and worship. Faith Alive also provides resources to a sister denomination, the Reformed Church in America.

*FaithAliveResources.org*

We also publish **The Banner** as our denominational magazine.

[thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org)

**The Network** is an online forum connecting people across the CRC who are engaged in ministry in their local churches and elsewhere.

*crcna.org/network*

Through **ServiceLink**, the CRC connects volunteers with opportunities for service locally and globally.

*crcna.org/servicelink*

The **Christian Reformed Church Foundation** serves the church by funding priorities that enable us to pursue our mission and ministry in new and adaptive ways.

*crcna.org/foundation*

The **CRC Loan Fund, Inc.** offers low-cost loans to CRC churches in the United States for various projects, primarily for facilities.

*crcna.org/loanfund*



In addition to these ministries there are others with whom we work in close partnership. These include the youth agencies that support the **Calvinist Cadet Corps** program for boys and **GEMS** program for girls as well as **Youth Unlimited**, which provides leadership for ministries to teens and young adults.

Christian colleges, such as **Dordt College** in northwest Iowa, **Redeemer University College** in southern Ontario, **The King's University** in Edmonton, Alberta, and **Trinity Christian College** near Chicago offer university-level liberal arts and science education that is scripturally directed and explores the relation of faith, learning, and living from a Reformed Christian perspective.

The **Institute for Christian Studies** in Toronto, Ontario, prepares leaders for church and society by means of graduate programs.

The **Barnabas Foundation** (U.S.) and **Christian Stewardship Services** (Canada) promote stewardship.

In Canada, deacons banded together to create **Diaconal Ministries Canada** to pool resources and provide training.

**Friendship Ministries** serves persons with intellectual disabilities by providing weekly one-on-one discipleship and mentoring programs in congregations throughout the CRC and beyond.

**Partners Worldwide** is an initiative that seeks to partner North American business knowledge with enterprises in the developing world.

The **Timothy Leadership Training Institute** provides biblical training for leaders already in ministry so as to develop them further for church leadership.

## Philosophy of Employment

The Christian Reformed Church in North America, as well as its agencies and educational institutions, affirm the following statements:

- a. God, who gives his people the ability to work, intends that work be performed with joy, satisfaction, and to the best of a person's capability.
- b. Every position is important; no position is without purpose.
- c. Each employee is an image-bearer of God and deserves to be treated as such by:
  - being provided with the opportunity to perform meaningful work,
  - being affirmed as a person with dignity and honor,
  - being provided an antiracist work environment,
  - being provided the full privilege and responsibility of his/her position,
  - being encouraged to pursue professional and spiritual growth,
  - being protected from harassment and discrimination,
  - being compensated with a fair wage, and
  - being provided the opportunity for balancing work with other life activities.
- d. All employees are to be contributors to the achievement of excellence in the strategic ministries of the CRCNA by using their God-given gifts. All employees are expected to have and use the expertise and talent that enables them to excel.
- e. It is our desire that all employees profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. All employees are required to be supportive of the work of the denomination. All employees are encouraged to be members in a congregation of the CRCNA. Certain designated positions require membership in a CRC congregation as well as explicit commitment to the authority of Scripture for all of life; to the confessional authority of the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort; and to the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church.

## Philosophy of Compensation

The Christian Reformed Church in North America considers all employees image-bearers of God and critical to the ministry of the organization. The CRCNA is concerned with treating all employees fairly. In this context, all employees are provided the opportunity to be justly rewarded for their efforts in furthering the ministries and strategic objectives of the CRCNA. The compensation system is designed to faithfully reflect the principles of good stewardship and to support the CRCNA's Philosophy of Employment.

Compensation is a combination of wages, other financial benefit programs, and a wide variety of nonfinancial programs designed to enable employees to fully develop and utilize their God-given gifts and talents. The primary focuses of the CRCNA's compensation program are to provide employees with a fair wage, with comparable pay for comparable work, and with greater pay opportunity for higher job complexity, responsibility, and impact. The CRCNA also rewards employees based on performance; differences in performance will be reflected in pay. While the philosophy of compensation is transparent and public, individual salaries are not.

The CRCNA looks to the broad market as well as the not-for-profit sector for guidance in determining compensation. The CRCNA does not attempt to compete with the private sector for all jobs, especially executives. At the same time, there are positions that the CRCNA cannot fill (generally in technical jobs where demand strongly exceeds supply) unless the CRCNA fully reflects external market pressures.

The CRCNA compensation program provides equity in three major areas:

**Internal Equity**—so that the compensation differentials between jobs of varying responsibilities and accountabilities within the organization can be perceived as fair; neither too small nor too large. Some jobs are inherently bigger than other jobs due to the innate requirements and skills that the job

necessitates. The pay grade of a position relates to the inherent requirements of the job and not the incumbent's performance or God-given gifts and talents.

All jobs at the CRCNA shall be systematically compared and a hierarchy developed based on:

- the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the work;
- the degree of creativity and innovation required by the work; and
- the opportunity to favorably impact the ministries and strategic objectives of the Church.

**Individual Equity**—so that compensation compares fairly among individuals in the same jobs within the organization. As with the Philosophy of Employment, the Philosophy of Compensation of the CRCNA demands that each person have all the rights and privileges of their position. No one person or group of persons will receive significantly more or less for fulfilling the same or similar tasks as others in the organization at a similar level of proficiency.

**External Equity**—so that the total compensation for a particular position compares fairly with similar jobs in similar organizations nationally and within organizations in the same geographic location as where the job exists.

The CRCNA will attract, develop, and retain persons who are faithful stewards of the accountabilities, responsibilities, and resources entrusted to them and capable of performing their respective roles at the highest level of excellence. An individual's work performance and contribution to the ministries and strategic objectives of the CRCNA within the framework of his or her current position will be regularly evaluated. Exceptional service and performance will be recognized and rewarded.



## EMPLOYMENT

### **Nature of Employment**

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) and its employees are expected to comply with the policies of this handbook. This handbook provides employees with general information and guidelines. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the policies and procedures described. For that reason, if you have questions you should address these to your supervisor and/or the Human Resources Department. In order to retain the flexibility necessary for administering these policies and procedures, the CRCNA reserves the right, at any time, and without prior notice, to change, revise, or eliminate any of the policies and/or benefits described in this manual. Furthermore, the only valid deviations from the stated policies are those expressly authorized by the executive director or his/her designee. In addition, where insurance or retirement plans are concerned, the terms of the policies or official plan documents control, regardless of any statement in this handbook to the contrary.

Synod 1995 approved a provision that makes all U.S.-based CRCNA staff “at will” employees. As an “at will” employer, we operate under the provision that employees have the right to resign their position at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause, for any or no reason. We, the employer, have the same right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause. Neither this handbook nor any other CRCNA document confers any contractual right to remain in the CRCNA’s employ, nor does it guarantee any fixed terms or conditions of employment. No supervisor or representative of the CRCNA, except the executive director, has the authority to enter into any agreement contrary to the above, and any change authorized by the executive director must be in writing and signed by him or her.

This handbook is not a contract and is not enforceable in civil courts or governmental agencies. However, the CRCNA takes seriously its staff commitments and human resources philosophies, and it strives to establish clear and sensible guidelines for regulating the employer/employee relationship. If you have any questions about any policy or procedure, please see your supervisor or a member of the Human Resources Department.

This handbook is designed to set forth expectations and guidelines for all employees of the CRCNA. In some cases, for employees working outside the state of Michigan, some rules or policies may be handled differently due to a particularity of state law. In all cases of conflict, valid and applicable law will govern. Note: A different handbook applies to CRCNA staff in Canada.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The CRCNA is an equal opportunity employer. It does not unlawfully discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, height, weight, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, or any other category or characteristic protected by law or by the CRCNA’s values and philosophies of employment. Further, the CRCNA, in concern for social justice, endorses anti-racist and anti-discrimination policies that affirmatively promote equality of opportunity for all persons, in harmony with the teachings of Scripture. This policy applies to all policies and procedures relating to recruitment and hiring, compensation, benefits, termination, and all other terms and conditions of employment.

The CRCNA is a Christian organization primarily engaged in serving the interests of Christians who wish to carry out their Christian ministry. As such, the CRCNA has determined that it is essential to its mission and operations to exercise discernment in the area of Christian faith, religious affiliation, and biblical conduct in its employment policies and practices. Such discernment shall be exercised in accordance with the best interests of the denomination and

applicable state and federal law permitting the use of “bona-fide occupational qualifications” for religious organizations.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

The CRCNA is committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). The CRCNA will not discriminate against any qualified employee or applicant in regard to any terms or conditions of employment because of an individual's disability or perceived disability, so long as the employee can perform the essential duties of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to those individuals who have a known need, provided such an accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on the CRCNA.

Employees with a disability who believe they need a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of their job should contact the Human Resources Department. Michigan law requires notice of the need for accommodation to be made in writing within 182 days after the employee knew or reasonably should have known about the need for accommodation. Each request will be evaluated based on its own circumstances. The accommodation process is an interactive one, and employee participation and cooperation are therefore extremely important.

## **Anti-Harassment, Discrimination, Bullying Policy**

The CRCNA expects its employees to treat one another with dignity and respect at all times and is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and harassment as well as retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report related to discrimination or harassment.

The CRCNA does not permit harassment or discrimination whether engaged in by fellow employees, supervisors, managers, customers, vendors, or other non-employees who conduct business with the denomination. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

**Harassment** is serious or pervasive unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, height, weight, marital status, veteran status, disability, or other protected characteristic.

Harassment includes:

1. Sexual Harassment—Making submission to unwelcome sexual advances, submission to requests for sexual favors, or submission to other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature as an expressed or implied condition of any person's continued employment or association with the CRCNA, or making expressed or implied submission to, or rejection of, such conduct the basis for employment decisions affecting any person.
2. Hostile Environment Harassment—Unwelcome verbal or other conduct, made directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment based on protected characteristics or cultural differences. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:
  - graphic, suggestive, or derogatory comments,
  - negative stereotyping, jokes, gestures, slurs, epithets,
  - graffiti, posted, shared or circulated materials,
  - improper use of e-mail and/or social media,
  - stalking, bullying, threats, intimidation, or physical acts.

**Discrimination** is unjust or prejudicial treatment of any person especially on the grounds of race, age or gender, or any other characteristic protected by law, which is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive such that it unreasonably interferes with, denies, or limits an individual's

employment access, benefits, or opportunities and is based on power differentials or on that person's actual or perceived membership in a certain group or social category, in a way that is worse than the way people are usually treated.

**Retaliation**, also called "retaliatory harassment," is virtually any material adverse action taken against a person because of the person's participation in a complaint or investigation of harassment or discrimination of any kind. Retaliation against an individual for alleging harassment, for supporting a complainant, or for assisting in providing information relevant to a claim of harassment is a serious violation of this policy.

**Note:** Appropriate performance reviews, counseling, or discipline by your manager do not constitute harassment or discrimination.

**Workplace Bullying** is defined as unwelcome or unreasonable behavior that demeans, intimidates, or humiliates an individual or group of individuals. Some examples of bullying include:

- unreasonable insults or criticism,
- teasing and/or spreading rumors,
- trivializing or mocking work or achievements,
- exclusion or isolation.

**Microaggressions** are verbal or nonverbal slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to an individual or group based solely upon their group membership, e.g. age, ethnicity, gender.

### **Complaint Process for Harassment, Discrimination, Retaliation, Bullying or Microaggressions**

The complaint process may be initiated in any of the following circumstances:

- if you believe you have been discriminated against, harassed, bullied, or a target of retaliation for reporting such,
- if you believe you have witnessed discrimination, harassment, bullying, or retaliatory behavior toward another person,
- if CRCNA management believes that discrimination or harassment has taken place.

In any of these circumstances, the complaint process may be initiated by resolving the situation informally or through the formal procedure. While the use of these procedures is strongly encouraged (because they provide CRCNA the best opportunity to effectively address the underlying issue), any supervisor or management representative who receives a complaint of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should refer it immediately to Human Resources regardless of any perceived deficiency or deviation in the reporting process.

**Note:** Employees may use either procedure to report unwelcome behaviour, or both procedures, consistent with their comfort level. The CRCNA will take all reports seriously, investigate them, and take prompt action to address them, prevent their reoccurrence, and remedy their effects. No employee will be subject to any form of retaliation for using either procedure in good faith.

#### Informal Procedure

The informal procedure may be commenced in one of the following ways:

- confront the individual personally or in writing, pointing out the unwelcome behavior and requesting that it stop; or
- discuss the situation with the individual's supervisor or Director, or discuss the situation with your supervisor or Director and develop a plan to address the individual; or
- discuss the situation with one of the specifically designated "Safe Coordinators" and develop a plan to address the individual.

The staff member is requested to complete an incident form including steps taken and resolution. The form should be submitted to the Human Resources Director, who will keep the form for information.

If you are asked by a co-worker to stop a behavior which they consider unwelcome, you should assess your behavior carefully. Even if you did not intend to offend, your behavior has been perceived that way and you should change your conduct. An apology to the offended person may also be appropriate. Failure to change your conduct may expose you to investigation and disciplinary measures. If you feel the concerns of your co-worker are unfounded or made in bad faith, you should report this to your supervisor or Director or one of the specifically designated "Safe Coordinators" and follow the same procedures as outlined above.

If the concern is not resolved through the informal procedure, or if an employee opts not to use the informal procedure, the formal procedure outlined below should be followed:

#### Formal Procedure

The formal procedure is commenced by making a written complaint. The written complaint should first be discussed with your supervisor (unless they are personally involved or the employee is otherwise uncomfortable reporting to the supervisor) and then submitted to the Director of Human Resources or one of the specifically designated "Safe Coordinators." CRCNA encourages each written complaint to include:

- the approximate date and time of each incident reported;
- the name of the person or persons involved in each incident;
- the name of any person or persons who witnessed each incident;
- the steps that have already been taken with respect to the complaint;
- a full description of what occurred in each incident; and
- a statement that the information contained in the complaint is true and complete.

Written complaints and/or details of the complaint may be provided to the person complained about in the course of the CRCNA's investigation.

#### Investigation

Investigations will be commenced whenever the formal procedure is invoked (as noted above, the CRCNA may conduct investigations in response to informal complaints as well). Investigations will generally follow the process outlined below. However, the CRCNA reserves the right to vary the following procedure depending on the nature of the incident/s in question.

Investigations will be carried out by a director, executive director, the Director of Human Resources (unless directly involved), or a designee. Investigations should not be carried out by the direct supervisor of the parties involved in the dispute. The investigator should not be someone in a position to have any direct power or influence over the career progress of the parties involved, and must be at arm's length from parties involved.

Depending on the circumstances complained about, the CRCNA may engage the services of an outside investigator. The decision about whether to do so will be made by the executive director, with the same rights of appeal as exist in the Grievance Resolution Process (below).

Any concerns about who conducts the investigation, including concerns about the identity of the investigator, whether they are internal or external, and any other fairness or bias concerns, may be raised by the complainant and any time before the investigation process begins.

Investigations will generally include:



- informing the accused individual(s) of the complaint;
- interviewing the person making the complaint, any person involved in the incident, and any witnesses named or identified (generally, the person/s complained about will be given an opportunity to understand the nature of the complaint prior to being interviewed);
- interviewing any other person who may have knowledge of the incident/s complained about or any other similar incident/s;
- receiving detailed written, signed, statements from persons being interviewed. Written statements shall ordinarily be signed and include a statement that the information contained in the statement is true and complete; and
- receiving a written report outlining the investigator's conclusions. Written reports outlining the investigator's conclusions will be kept by Human Resources for a period of no less than 7 years.

Management personnel must cooperate with each other in order to facilitate an investigation.

At any time during the investigation of a complaint the parties may, by mutual agreement, explore different options for resolution including mediation, restorative justice practices, or other alternative dispute resolution methods.

If necessary, a complainant may request reasonable support to ensure a safe working environment. Requests may include, but are not limited to, requesting an alternative reporting relationship during the investigation, or working in a different area/ department during the investigation. Requests should be made to the director, the executive director, or the designee carrying out the investigation. However, the CRCNA reserves the right to reject requests depending on the nature of the incident(s) in question and the reasonableness of the requests being made.

#### Representation

Throughout all of the steps of the complaint process, a complainant may choose to have another person accompany them as an advocate and/or for support and assistance

#### **Disciplinary Measures**

If it is determined by the CRCNA that any employee has been involved in discrimination, harassment, or retaliatory harassment against another employee, immediate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination of employment.

It is important to realize that unfounded allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation may cause both the accused person and the CRCNA significant damage. However, disciplinary measures will never apply to a complainant for bringing a complaint (Unless a complaint is brought with malicious intent and the evidence supporting this is compelling and undeniable).

No one involved in the complaint process in good faith, including as a complainant, witness, adviser, representative, investigator, or such decision maker, will be subject to any negative consequences for involvement.

## Confidentiality

All complaints, reports, or evidence regarding discrimination, harassment, or retaliation will be kept in strict confidence, except as follows:

- disclosure of certain information may be necessary to effectively investigate the allegations;
- disclosure of certain information may be necessary to respond to any legal or administrative proceedings arising out of or relating to the report;
- disclosure of certain information may be necessary to prosecute or defend any legal or administrative proceedings arising out of or relating to the report; or
- disclosure of certain information may be required by operation of the law.

## Violence in the Workplace

Violence in any form (physical, sexual, emotional, etc.) harms people, destroys trust, erodes the integrity of a person, and is contrary to God's intentions for human relationships. Accordingly, the CRCNA has adopted a policy of zero tolerance for any threatening, intimidating, harassing, abusive, or coercive behavior, whether overt or implied, as well as any improper, harmful, or offensive physical contact initiated by an employee.

We likewise prohibit the possession/use of firearms, knives, or other weapons on our time or property, including weapons that may be stored in any vehicles that come onto our property. This policy also applies at all times and in all places when an employee is on CRCNA business. This policy applies whether or not the person is licensed to carry the weapon, concealed or otherwise.

Any employee who witnesses any conduct from a co-worker, business partner, or visitor that violates this policy shall immediately advise the agency or department director. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to immediate discipline, up to and including discharge.

## Position Postings

Open positions will be posted internally through normal communication methods, (e.g. the CRCNA intranet). Current employees may apply for any position for which they are qualified and are strongly encouraged notify their current supervisor of their application. Positions will also be posted externally through various methods, including the CRCNA website, notices to churches, etc. Applications must be received by the posted deadline to ensure consideration.

## Employment Categories

All positions are classified as exempt or non-exempt based on the type of work that is performed, following the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

**Non-Exempt** employees are those to whom the CRCNA must pay wages and overtime for hours worked, as applicable under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

**Exempt** employees are those who are not covered by the FLSA. Exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis and are not eligible for overtime. Specific tests must be met to qualify as exempt.

Employees will also be classified in one of the following categories:

**Regular Full Time**—employees who are classified as such and work a regular schedule of 30 or more hours a week.

**Regular Part Time**—employees who are classified as such and work a regular schedule of less than 30 hours a week.

**On-Call**—employees who are hired to work on an occasional fill-in or on-call basis, or where hours are not regularly scheduled but rather are sporadic. If a regular schedule is followed for more than 3 months, the employee will be moved to a regular part- or full-time status. On-call employees are not eligible for benefits, other than those legally mandated (i.e. worker's compensation, Social Security, etc.) Those hired to fill a position on a part- or full-time basis that will last 3 months or less will be considered temporary employees.

**Temporary**—employees engaged to work full time or part time for a period of three months or less. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits, other than those legally mandated (i.e. worker's compensation, Social Security, etc.)

**Interns** are employed for a time-limited basis, typically for a summer, school semester, or year, or for a specific term mission assignment, in order to receive job experience in their field of interest. Interns are not eligible for benefits, other than those legally mandated (i.e. worker's compensation, Social Security, etc.). The nature of an internship is to provide a learning environment and, therefore, interns will not typically hold the same level of job responsibility as an employee.

## **Introductory Period**

New employees are hired to a six-month introductory period, which gives them the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the position meets their expectations. It also allows the CRCNA to evaluate employee capabilities, work habits, and overall performance. All new, rehired, and promoted employees will have a six-month introductory period and receive a performance evaluation at its conclusion.

## **Employee Medical Examinations**

To help ensure that employees are able to perform their duties, a medical and/or psychological examination may be required for certain positions. Such an examination may be requested by a health professional of the CRCNA's choice and at no cost to the employee after an applicant has been offered employment. The assignment to duties is contingent upon the results of the examination. Current employees may be sent for a medical exam where it is job-related and consistent with business necessity. Information about an employee's medical condition or history will be kept separate from other employee information and maintained confidentially.

## **Transfers/Promotions/Demotions**

Employees of the CRCNA may apply for any posted opening for which they are qualified. Selection will be based on evaluation of all applicants, their qualifications, attendance, length of service, general performance record, and other factors the CRCNA considers relevant in each case.

A "demotion" is defined as an involuntary change to a position in a lower classification. A demotion may be a result of performance concerns or due to organizational restructuring, work reduction, and/ or other business-related reasons.

If an employee moves to a position at a lower level pay grade, their salary will be decreased to the corresponding level in that pay grade.

## **Employment Resignations/Terminations**

Termination of employment will generally fall into one of the following categories:

- Resignation—voluntary termination, initiated by an employee.

- Involuntary termination—including terminations for job performance and/or misconduct related reasons, as well as layoffs due to reduction, reorganization, or elimination of a position.
- Retirement-voluntary termination—initiated by an employee who is leaving all employment with the CRCNA and is eligible to access retirement resources such as Social Security, retirement funds, etc. Ordained staff must also process their retirement through their classis. Those desiring to continue working in a different position or status within the CRCNA are deemed to have transferred, not retired.

Employees electing to resign or retire are asked to provide notice in writing to their immediate supervisor with as much advance notice as possible (minimally two weeks), so as to allow for a smooth transition.

Employees appointed by an agency board, or whose appointment was ratified by an agency board, the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA, or a board's appointed officers, may not be involuntarily terminated without prior consultation with that agency board, the Board of Trustees, or its appointed officers.

An employee who fails to report to work for three consecutive days without informing their supervisor of the qualified need for an absence will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned unless an acceptable explanation is provided as to why the employee was unable to inform their supervisor of the qualified need for the absence.

Accrued, unused vacation time will be paid out at termination. The employee's last day of work will be used as their termination date, and will not be extended by any unused vacation days. Unused sick time and/or an unused floating holiday will not be paid at the conclusion of employment.

Information related to continuation of health insurance (COBRA), any conversion options, and disbursement of retirement savings will be provided at the time of termination. Employees will also be expected to return any agency-owned property at termination. All access to CRCNA owned property, including computer files and e-mail, will cease when an employee terminates.

## **Layoffs/Reduction of Hours**

When layoffs/reduction of hours are required, the individual or individuals will be laid off or have hours reduced after the following factors have been considered:

- needs of the organization
- performance records
- length of service
- other factors or circumstances found to be relevant

All layoffs/reduction of hours must be reviewed by the agency or department director in consultation with the affected staff's manager. The CRCNA reserves the right to make all final determinations regarding work-force reductions. Employees will be given as much advance notice of layoff/reduction of hours as is reasonably possible.

Employees who are given notice of layoff may apply for other posted positions. That work may result in a different pay rate.

The right to recall an employee is limited to the position from which an employee has been laid off. Employees on layoff status will be recalled before an outside person is hired for their position. Refusal of a recall request constitutes a voluntary termination. If employees who have been laid off are recalled within 12 months after their layoff date, their length-of-service record, vesting percentage, vacation allotment, and so on will be maintained without interruption. Recall rights

expire 12 months after the layoff date or if the laid-off employee fails to maintain a current address and telephone number with the Human Resources Department and therefore cannot be contacted for recall.

## Rehire

Former employees of any agency, institution, or congregation who are rehired by the CRCNA within 12 months of the termination date of their last employment with CRCNA will be eligible for benefits (in terms of their length of service) according to their original date of hire, adjusted for the gap in employment with CRCNA. Former employees of the CRCNA who are rehired after 12 months or more from their termination date will be considered new employees, and benefits will accrue from the new date of hire.

## Employment Reference Checks

All requests for employment verification or employment references for current or former employees should be directed to the Human Resources Department. Responses to such inquiries will confirm only dates of employment, wage rates, and position(s) held, unless the CRCNA has been provided a proper release signed by the individual who is the subject of the inquiry.

## Performance Review

Supervisors and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, day-to-day basis. Supervisors should meet with employees periodically to review progress on previously set objectives.

A formal, written performance evaluation is required at the end of an employee's introductory period and as part of the organization-wide annual process thereafter. Formal performance reviews provide a time for supervisors and employees to meet together to discuss job tasks, recognize and encourage strengths, identify weaknesses and/or areas of growth, and together to write purposeful objectives for the following year. Supervisors are encouraged to seek 360-degree feedback (e.g. the employees' self-evaluation, and feedback from peers, subordinates or other partners) for each performance review, and minimally should solicit this feedback every third year. The written performance reviews will be kept as part of the employee's personnel file.

## Employment of Relatives

The employment of relatives may cause serious conflicts and problems with favoritism, perceived or actual conflicts of interest, and/or employee morale. Therefore, a relative of a current employee may not be employed by the same agency, nor may an employee hold a position of accountability to a relative. For the purposes of this policy the terms "relative" and "related individual" shall include employees' spouse, employee or their spouses mother, father, child, grandchild, sibling, step parent, step child, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew, or one whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of a relative.

Whenever a relative of any current employee is being considered for employment **within another agency or department of the CRCNA**, a discussion must occur with Human Resources prior to any interview to assess any possible concerns. If the Human Resources Director judges there could be a concern or conflict, an additional conversation will occur with the Executive Director before proceeding.

If a circumstance arises that creates a new direct supervisory relationship, or family members working in the same agency, e.g. marriage, reorganization, etc., one of the related individuals may be reassigned to another appropriate position.

## **Social Security Privacy**

It is the policy of the CRCNA to protect the confidentiality of Social Security numbers obtained and used in the course of business. All employees are expected to rigorously adhere to this policy.

Social Security numbers will be collected from applicants and employees as required in order to meet federal and/or state reporting requirements. Except for verification and reporting uses, no Social Security number will be used in the conduct of the company's business. No Social Security number will be used in open computer transmissions, company distributions, or through the company intranet except where such transmission of information is by secure connection or is encrypted. As examples, reporting of payroll withholding taxes and benefit plan participation require such data; thus, such transmissions of data will be handled through secured computer transmission only.

All documents containing Social Security numbers shall be stored in locked secured areas. All computer applications containing Social Security numbers shall be maintained on secured, authorized-access computer stations only. Only persons who have a legitimate business reason will have access to Social Security numbers.

When documents containing Social Security numbers are no longer needed and are to be discarded, such documents will be disposed of in a manner that ensures the confidentiality of the numbers.

Violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## **Length of Service**

For purposes of benefits coverage, vacation entitlements, and "service awards" only, seniority will be based on the employee's original hire date with the CRCNA or an Affiliated Organization, adjusted for the length of the gap, provided that employment with the CRCNA or an Affiliated Organization has continued without a break of more than 12 months. If an employee is hired following a break in employment with the CRCNA or an Affiliated Organization of more than 12 months, seniority for purposes of benefits coverage, vacation entitlements, and "service awards" will only be recognized from the employee's most recent hire date.

For purposes of these provisions, an Affiliated Organization shall include the following:

- Calvin College
- Calvin Theological Seminary
- any recognized Christian Reformed church or classis within the Christian Reformed Church in North America

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND RECORDS

### Work Schedules

Regular office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Friday. The normal 8 hour work day will be from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. with a scheduled one-hour lunch break. Certain positions may require work outside of normal office hours, and/or for a shorter period of the day. Hours for each position will be set by the supervisor and communicated to the employee at hire. Any required changes to a schedule will be communicated with as much notice as possible. Supervisors will advise part-time employees of their individual work schedules. Any requests for a variation to the work schedule must be agreed upon in writing with the employee's supervisor, and a "Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement" must be in the employee's personnel file. Employees must notify their immediate supervisor in advance if they will be late or unable to work as scheduled.

Hourly employees are paid for hours worked. At the discretion of his or her supervisor, an hourly employee may make up time lost as a result of being late or having to leave early. Employees should receive their supervisor's approval before arranging to work through a meal period or beyond regularly scheduled work time in order to make up for lost time.

### Timekeeping and Pay Dates

Non-exempt employees must accurately record their hours worked for any given day. Breaks or lunch periods of 30 minutes or more are not counted as work time. Any hours worked over 40 in a week (Sunday–Saturday) will be paid as overtime for non-exempt employees. The CRCNA will adhere to specific state laws as applicable.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action. It is the employee's responsibility to verify his or her time records to certify the accuracy of all time recorded. The supervisor will review and approve the time record before submitting it for payroll processing. Employees are paid bi-weekly on Friday. Completed time records must be submitted by the Monday morning prior to payday.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck. In the unlikely event that there is an error in the amount of pay, the employee should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of his or her immediate supervisor so that corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

Improper deductions from salaries of exempt employees are not to be made. If an employee believes an improper deduction has been made they are expected to immediately report this information to the Human Resources Department, and it will be promptly investigated and any appropriate corrections will be made.

### Rest and Meal Periods

Hourly-paid employees receive a 60-minute lunch break during an 8-hour work day. Supervisors will schedule meal periods to accommodate operating requirements. Employees will be relieved of all active responsibilities during meal periods and will not be compensated for that time.

An employee will be provided reasonable break time to express breast milk for her nursing child during the first year of the child's life. If the break is for less than 20 minutes it will be paid time. CRCNA will provide a private room in the office building in which the employee may express breast milk. Employees may opt to use a private office area if they prefer.

### Access to Personnel Files

The Human Resources Department maintains a personnel file for each employee. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's resume, offer letter, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals and salary increases, and other employee records. Two separate confidential sections are maintained, one with any medical records, and the second contains any material related to reference or background checks.

Personnel files are the property of the CRCNA and access to the information they contain is restricted. In general, only supervisors and other executive staff who have a legitimate reason to review information in the general section of a personnel file are allowed to do so. An employee may request to review the general section of their own personnel file in the presence of a Human Resources staff member. Employees may not remove any items from their file, but may request copies of items contained in the general section of their file.

## **Personnel File Retention**

Notes kept by supervisors are considered part of the employee's personnel file. Should information on an employee be subpoenaed. When a staff member leaves employment the supervisor should review their notes to determine if there are any notes related to disciplinary action or performance concerns that led to the staff's departure. These notes should be given to Human Resources, where a decision whether or not to add them to the formal personnel file will be made.

Human Resources will maintain all personnel file information for seven years after an employee's end date. More detailed information will be kept related to noted disciplinary issues, and/or when performance concerns existed when an employee left. Digital records of employment dates, position, salary, etc. will be kept permanently.

New policy November 2019

## **Change in Personal Information**

Employees are responsible to keep their personal information up-to-date with the Human Resources Department. This includes mailing address, telephone numbers, dependents, emergency contact, additions/deletions for benefits, educational accomplishments, and so forth.

## **Emergency Closing**

At times, emergencies caused by power failures, severe weather, etc. can disrupt work operations at one or more of the office locations. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require a delay in opening, closing early, or not opening a particular work facility at all. Information regarding any office building's delayed opening or closing will be available by 6:30 a.m., when possible, via local radio and television channels.

When the decision to close for an entire day is made, time off from scheduled work will typically be paid. In the rare case that an office must close for multiple days, the executive administration will make and communicate a decision regarding whether time off is paid or unpaid. Salaried employees are expected to continue to work remotely when an office building is closed. Some hourly employees may be required to work remotely (e.g. facilities, IT, payroll, HR) to cover essential functions and will be paid at their hourly rate for additional hours worked. If time off is unpaid, employees may use available vacation time, coordinate with their supervisor to make up lost work time, or may be able to do some work from home with supervisor permission.

If the building is open but an employee arrives after their scheduled start time, or leaves early, that time is charged to the employee's vacation time or is unpaid if vacation time is unavailable. Employees may work with their supervisor to adjust their schedule to make up this time, but it must be within the same work week.





## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

### Holidays

Employees working in a regular part-time (20–29 hours/week) or full-time (30–36 hours/week) position are eligible for paid holiday time. Regular full- and part-time employees receive 10 paid holidays a year, including one personal holiday (for those hired by October 1 of that year). The paid holidays are as follows:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day following
- Christmas Day
- Floating Holiday (date scheduled each year by the CRCNA)
- Personal Holiday

Those working a 36-hour work week will receive 8 hours holiday pay at their regular rate of pay on days where the Holiday falls on a Monday-Thursday. Holidays on a Friday will receive 4 hours holiday pay.. Eligible employees working at least 20 hours/week will receive a prorated amount based on their regular schedule, (e.g. an employee working 20 hours/week would receive 4 hours of paid holiday time). Employees not normally scheduled to work on a holiday may elect to take another day off that week or receive the extra holiday pay. If an hourly employee is required to work on a holiday they will be paid at a rate of 2 times their hourly rate. Employees are required to use their personal holiday during the year in which it is earned. Unused personal holidays are forfeited at the end of the year.

### Vacation Time

Employees working in a regular part-time (20–29 hours/week) or full-time (30–36 hours/week) position are eligible to accrue vacation time. Vacation time begins accruing at hire, and employees are eligible to use vacation time as it is earned.

The CRCNA provides paid vacation for employees to take time for rest and recuperation. Employees are encouraged to use their available vacation time for these reasons. Vacation time may not be cashed in for pay in lieu of time off. Vacation time will accrue up to a maximum of 6 weeks. The maximum allowed accrual is prorated based on the employee's regular work schedule, e.g. 216 hours maximum for an employee working 36 hours per week, 108 hours maximum for an employee working 20 hours/week. Vacation hours will stop accruing once the maximum is reached. Vacation time accrues based on actual paid time each pay period, thus those working variable hours will accrue based on actual reported time worked.

Vacation time begins accruing at hire, and employees are eligible to use vacation time as it is earned. *If a staff member does not have vacation time accrued they may request to take unpaid time off, but are not allowed have a negative vacation balance.* Vacation is accrued according to the schedule in this policy. All employees who are actively at work, or on paid leave using vacation or sick time, will continue to accrue vacation time. Employees on unpaid leave, or receiving workers' compensation or disability payment, will not be eligible to accrue vacation time during the leave.

Vacation Accrual Schedule based on 36-hour work week

Category	Years of Service	Hours per year (based on 36 hr/wk)
Pay level O – J	0 – 7 years	108 hours (3 weeks)
Pay level N – J	After 7 years	144 hours (4 weeks)
Pay level I and above	At hire	144 hours (4 weeks) and above

To schedule vacation time, employees must submit a request to their supervisor in advance. The supervisor will inform the employee if the request is approved or denied. If denied, the supervisor will provide a reason for the decision.

Vacation will not normally be extended, nor additional vacation time scheduled, due to an employee's illness during a vacation. In cases of major illness or accident, supported by a physician's statement, the agency or department director may approve sick days to be used in lieu of scheduled vacation days consistent with the number of vacation days lost.

Employees are responsible to record vacation time used, in the payroll time keeping system, as it is used. Staff paid on an hourly basis may use vacation time in ¼-hour increments. Those paid on a salary basis must use ½- or full-day increments.

When employment is terminated, accrued unused vacation leave that has been earned through the last day of active employment will be paid at the employee's base rate of pay at termination. If employment is terminated and the vacation balance is in the negative, the employee agrees to reimburse the company for the cost of the vacation advance.

## Sick Leave

Employees working in a regular part-time (20–29 hours/week or more) or full-time (30–36 hours/week) position are eligible to accrue paid sick time. Full-time employees working 36 hours/week will accrue 36 hours (1 week) of sick time per year. Those eligible employees working at least 20 hours/week will receive a prorated amount of sick time based on their hours worked. The amount of sick leave may be accumulated to a maximum of 144 hours (prorated hours for those working less than 36 hours/week). Accumulated sick leave time will not be paid upon termination of employment or upon retirement.

Sick leave is granted for an employee's personal illness/injury or when the employee must provide care for a dependent child, spouse, or parent due to their illness/injury. Sick time may also be used for the employee's doctor/dentist or other health care provider appointments when it is not possible to schedule them during non-working hours. Sick leave used for health care provider appointments, which are not medically urgent, must be scheduled in advance and approved by the supervisor. An employee may be required to provide evidence, satisfactory to the employer, of the illness/injury or the inability to return to work after an illness/injury. Ordinarily such evidence will consist of a statement from the attending physician, who specifically addresses the employee's inability to work on the day(s) in question, and states when the employee or family member was examined by the physician, and will be required for any illness that extends beyond 3 days. Sick time cannot be combined with other disability payment.

Employees are responsible to record sick time used, in the payroll time keeping system, as it is used. Staff paid on an hourly basis may use sick time in ¼-hour increments. Those paid on a salary basis must use ½- or full-day increments.

An employee who needs to be off work for more than 3 consecutive days, or on a regular basis due to a health condition, must provide a note from a medical provider indicating the need for their absence. The note must indicate the reason for the absence, an estimation of the duration of the absence, and any limitations/restrictions that will be in place upon return to work. Any limitations/restrictions listed must be discussed with the supervisor to assure they can be accommodated, including if the restriction allows certain duties to be performed from home.

Note: For those employed in California, the CRCNA complies with California law requiring all employees to accrue 1 hour paid sick time for every 30 hours worked.

Revised November 2018  
Revised April 2019

## **Urgent Need Time**

In addition to the above Sick Time policy employees working in a regular part-time (20–29 hours/week or more) or full-time (30–36 hours/week) position are eligible to accrue 8 hours (1 day) of Urgent Need time per year. Those eligible employees working at least 20 hours/week will receive a prorated amount of Urgent Need time based on their hours worked. The amount of Urgent Need time may be accumulated to a maximum of 36 hours (prorated hours for those working less than 36 hours/week).

The Urgent Need bank may be used for urgent, unexpected or immediate needs that a staff member might have that are not illness related, yet may also be the same as sick time. Some examples might be an immediate need for a home or vehicle repair, a child's snow day, need for a self-care day, etc. As noted in the name Urgent Need is not intended for regular vacation use including preparing for or extending a vacation, or for a planned absence. Staff will be expected to communicate with their supervisor in the same way they do if needing to use sick time.

Accumulated Urgent Need time will not be paid upon termination of employment or upon retirement.

New April 2019

## **Health, Dental, Vision Insurance**

Employees who regularly work 20 or more hours per week qualify for health, dental, vision, and life insurance. Health, dental, vision, and life insurance coverage is provided through plans selected by the denomination. Specific plan information is available through the Human Resources Department and online. Coverage for eligible employees is effective the first of the month coincident with or following their hire date. These benefits are available for the employee, their spouse of the opposite gender and their legal dependents. Information regarding dependent eligibility is available through the Human Resources Department and is also contained in the summary plan descriptions.

Eligible employees have the option to enroll in health, dental, and/or vision insurance and will be required to pay a portion of the premium cost. The premiums will be deducted in equal amounts two times per month (24 pay periods annually) on a pre-tax basis. Eligible employees have the option to waive health, dental, and/or vision coverage at hire or during the annual open enrollment period. Those choosing to waive benefits will not have another opportunity to elect them again until the next open enrollment period or if they experience a qualifying "life event."

Some common life events include change in employment status, birth/adoption, marriage, and divorce. In these circumstances the election change must be made within 30 days of the event.

Employees remain on the health/dental insurance through the end of the month in which their employment terminates. CRCNA voluntarily offers continuation of health/dental insurance under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989 (COBRA). This offers the opportunity for continued coverage at the former employee's expense, for a defined period of time. Terminating employees are notified of this option and the associated costs at the time of their termination.

For detailed information on insurance plans, please visit [reformedbenefits.org](https://reformedbenefits.org).

## **Life Insurance**

Basic term life insurance coverage and coverage for Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) are provided for employees who regularly work 20 or more hours per week. Supplemental life insurance, without AD&D, for employee, spouse of the opposite gender, and their legal tax dependent children through age 26 is available upon application at the employee's expense.

Life insurance coverage, including AD&D, ceases when employment ceases for whatever reason, including retirement. Employees are offered the option to convert their life insurance plan(s) to an individual plan at their own expense.

## **Short Term Salary Continuation**

Employees who work 30 hours or more per week in a regular position are eligible for short term salary continuation after completing one year of full time employment. A statement from a health care provider is required to certify that the employee is unable to work, or to work less than their regular scheduled hours, for a qualified medical reason. Employees must first use any accrued sick and urgent time benefits. No payments will begin (and/or continue) without proper health care provider documentation.

Short term salary continuation benefits will begin on the 8th day of an absence due to sickness, or the 1st day of an accident or hospitalization, again subject to first exhausting all available sick and urgent time benefits. If an employee off work due to illness or injury does not have enough sick and/or urgent time to cover the seven days, they may elect to use any accrued vacation time. Paid sick and/or urgent time and short term salary continuation could apply for up to a total of 180 calendar days of a disability. Coverage will not apply for disability resulting from elective or cosmetic surgery.

Employees meeting the eligibility criteria for short term salary continuation will receive 100% of pre-disability income for the first 30 calendar days of short term salary continuation and 75% of pre-disability income for the remainder of the time off, up to a total of 180 calendar days of disability, including paid sick time. Employees receiving worker's compensation, or benefit payments from another source, will not be eligible for salary continuation. If an employee returns to work part-time (with a doctor's written permission), the employee will receive prorated salary continuation benefits for the balance of salary/wages according to the employee's regular working hours prior to disability.

An employee must be returned to work for 2 full weeks to re-qualify for short term salary continuation benefits. Employees receiving short term salary continuation will not accrue additional vacation or sick time. All other benefits will continue during an approved short term salary continuation period with the employee required to pay the regular portion of any elected insurance premiums.

Maternity leave will typically be covered for 6 weeks (8 weeks for a caesarean section) under this plan. This salary continuation coverage is for medical conditions only and does not provide leave time for childcare.

Receipt of short term salary continuation does not guarantee the employee's position will be held open, nor is the employee guaranteed a return to the same position, or any position, other than as stipulated in other leave policies (e.g. Family Medical Leave). An employee on short term salary continuation may not engage in other employment while receiving these benefits.

From time to time, the CRCNA may require independent medical verification of an employee's illness or injury and/or their limitations and restrictions resulting from illness or injury. In which case, CRCNA will not obtain details of the employee's diagnosis from the independent medical practitioner reviewing the medical records. An employee who wishes to receive short term salary continuation is required to cooperate with the CRCNA and its selected medical practitioner if an independent medical verification of the employee's illness or injury is requested. Such cooperation includes providing required authorizations for the independent medical practitioner to obtain any and all relevant medical records.

## **Long Term Disability Insurance**

Employees who work 30 hours or more per week in a regular position are eligible for long term disability (LTD) insurance on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month after hire. Ordained CRC ministers enrolled in the Ministers' Pension Fund receive LTD insurance in connection the Ministers' Pension Fund. The CRCNA will assist an employee in filing a claim if it appears a medical leave will extend beyond 180 calendar days. Any benefit payment will be determined by the LTD carrier.

## **Retirement Plans**

### **Non CRC-Ordained Employees**

All regular employees who are not ordained as a Minister of the Word with the CRC are eligible to contribute to the Employee Savings Plan (ESP). Employees working at least 20 hours per week will be auto-enrolled in the plan, and will receive notification about the plan at hire. Employees working in a regular position at least 20 hours per week are eligible for the employer match upon enrollment, and employer contribution after one continuous year of employment. An employee must retire completely in order to take a distribution and must have a complete break of service of at least 90 days before being eligible to apply for rehire. A summary plan description which outlines eligibility and benefits is available in the Human Resources Department.

### **CRC-Ordained Minister of the Word**

The CRCNA will pay the full contribution to the Ministers' Pension Plan for full time employees ordained as a CRC Minister of the Word. Part time employees are eligible to participate; however, the full contribution must be paid. For part time (20–29 hours/week) employees, the CRCNA will pay 50% of the contribution if the employee agrees to pay the other 50%. See the Ministers' Pension Plan Information Booklet available from the Pension Department.

## **Medical Leaves of Absence**

Some requests may fall under Family Medical Leave (see below). Employees who do not qualify for FMLA may request a leave for their own medical condition. Leave requests will be evaluated

based on various factors including length of time requested, needs of the department, length of service, etc. Employees on an approved medical leave must use any accrued sick and vacation time before beginning an unpaid leave. Any unpaid leave must also comply with the Leave Without Pay Policy.

## **Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) Overview**

In compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the CRCNA will provide eligible employees leave for covered family and medical reasons. Employees are eligible if they have been employed for at least one year, have worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, Family and Medical Leaves may be granted for up to 12 weeks within a 12-month period for qualified reasons, including a serious illness of the employee; birth or adoption of a child; to care for their spouse, parent, or dependent child with a serious illness; military exigency; to care for a family member who is a member or veteran of the Armed Forces, etc. All time off for a qualified reason will be counted toward the allowance.

Time off under the FMLA will be paid according to applicable CRCNA policies for time off. Employees on an approved leave for their own medical condition or to care for a family member who is ill are required to utilize any accrued sick time, if applicable, per sick time policy, and then any unused vacation time before beginning an unpaid leave. Full time employees may be eligible for Short Term Salary Continuation pay, which would begin after sick time is exhausted. For those not eligible for this benefit, available vacation time must be used prior to beginning an unpaid leave. Additional vacation and sick time will only accrue on paid sick or vacation time during a leave. All FMLA qualified absences will be counted toward the 12-week allowance, whether or not the employee specifically requested a Family and Medical Leave.

All benefits in place prior to a leave will be maintained during a qualified Family and Medical Leave on the same terms as when the leave began, unless the employee does not intend to, or cannot, return to work at the expiration of the leave. Employees will be required to pay the regular portion of any elected insurance premiums during the leave.

Family Medical Leaves are granted for those employees who intend to return to work at the conclusion of their leave. It is expected that an employee will return to their same status for at least 2 months. If an employee elects not to return after a leave, or requests to return to a different status, they must notify their supervisor as soon as possible. Employees who have received sick time and/or short term salary continuation pay may be required to repay all or a portion of this paid time off and all or a portion of the full health/dental insurance premium, if they elect not to return from an approved leave (other than due to medical necessity).

Specific details regarding FMLA are contained in the full CRCNA Family and Medical Leave Policy is available [HERE](#) or from the Human Resources Department. An employee on a qualified Family Medical Leave are responsible to read and adhere to the requirements of the FMLA.

## **Maternity/Paternity Leave**

### Maternity Leave

Any female employee will be eligible for two weeks paid time off (pro-rated for those working less than 36 hours/week) after giving birth to a child or for the placement of a child in her home for adoption. Beyond the two weeks of maternity pay, employees will be required to utilize any available sick time.

Full time employees who qualify for time off under the Short Term Salary Continuation policy will receive additional payment per that policy. Those who do not qualify for this benefit may utilize vacation time, or if all paid benefit time is used up, may request additional time off as unpaid time.

#### Paternity Leave

Any male employee who becomes a new father will be eligible for up to one week of paid paternity leave, to be taken within 3 months of the birth of their child or placement of a child in his home for adoption. Employees may request additional time off and will be required to use available vacation time before taking time off without pay.

New Policy May 2018

## **Bereavement Leave**

All employees are allowed paid time off to make arrangements for and to attend the funeral of the deceased. Up to three (3) consecutive business days off from regularly scheduled duty will be granted with regular pay in the event of the death of the employee's (or employee's spouse's) father, mother, son, daughter, grandchild, brother, sister, stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, stepsister, stepson, or stepdaughter. Up to ten (10) consecutive business days may be granted for the death of a spouse or dependent child. To be eligible for paid bereavement leave, the employee must attend the funeral of the deceased relative.

Employees are allowed one day off from regular scheduled duty with regular pay in the event of the death of the employee's (or employee's spouse's) aunt, uncle, grandparent, niece, or nephew. To be eligible for paid bereavement leave, the employee must attend the funeral of the deceased relative.

Employees may request time off in addition to what is listed above, or to attend a funeral of an extended family member or friend, and will be required to use any available vacation time, and then unpaid time.

## **Leave With Pay**

Regular full-time and part-time employees will be granted a leave with pay of up to three consecutive work days due to a major fire or flood in a principal residence.

Other requests for a leave with pay may fall under policies for that specific reason, e.g. Jury Duty, Bereavement, Maternity or Paternity, etc.

Revised June 2018

## **Leave Without Pay**

Employees must submit a request to their supervisor in writing, stating the period of leave time requested and the reason for the request. Requests of more than 5 days must go through two levels of administrative approval. All requests for a leave will be considered on an individual basis and could include factors such as: the reason for the request, previous leaves, availability of suitable replacement staff, the time of the year, the employee's length of service, the employee's intent to return to their same position, and so on.

Those requesting an unpaid maternity leave because they do not qualify for FMLA will typically be granted up to 6 weeks (8 weeks for a caesarean section) leave of absence (inclusive of any available sick or vacation pay).

Employees must use any available vacation time prior to beginning a leave without pay.



Vacation and sick time will not accrue during an unpaid leave. Health/dental/vision insurance will continue until the end of the month in which an unpaid leave begins, and the employee will be responsible to continue any contributions for insurance premiums under the same arrangements that were in place prior to their leave. The employee will be provided the option to continue any health/dental/vision insurance beyond that time at their own expense. Life and Long Term Disability insurance may be continued up to 3 months for an approved unpaid leave. Employees will be given the option of converting their life insurance to an individual policy if a leave extends beyond 3 months. Any unpaid leave request beyond 3 months must be approved by the executive director.

## **Military Leave**

The CRCNA will conform to all applicable laws regarding military leave and reinstatement.

## **Sabbatical and Work Reassignment Policies**

Sabbatical in this policy is defined as a break from regular work and a regular schedule, which includes some “down time” to reflect, study, and be renewed.

The CRCNA understands the significance of allowing leadership staff dedicated time away from their regular duties to devote to innovation, creativity, and overall renewal to enhance their work. Time spent on a sabbatical is neither an extended vacation, a reward for service, nor to be viewed as a response to burnout, but rather time dedicated to a specific outlined purpose.

### **Purpose**

It is the policy of the CRCNA to allow eligible employees to take a paid sabbatical leave to focus on self-development for a specified period of time that will provide benefit for both the individual and the organization (e.g. research, writing, study, self-improvement, etc.). Employees eligible for sabbatical leave will be held accountable for the activities they choose to conduct, or materials they create, during this leave. All intellectual property created during an employee’s sabbatical leave will be deemed property of the CRCNA.

### **Eligibility**

Employees at director levels, as well as certain exempt/salaried employees who are responsible for areas requiring dedicated research, innovation, or development as determined by the agency/ministry level director, and those designated as international employees, are eligible to apply for a sabbatical leave after seven continuous years of full-time service as an employee of a CRCNA agency/denominational ministry/department. These employees may apply for a sabbatical leave of up to three months at full pay or 4–6 months at 50% pay.

Employees on approved sabbatical leave will receive their regular pay (or 50% pay) and continued benefits during the periods of approved leave. Employees on sabbatical leave are not eligible for tuition reimbursement specific to activities of the sabbatical leave. (See Education Assistance policy for reimbursement related to degree programs). Sabbatical leave is not intended for pursuit of a degree program, e.g. writing one’s thesis or dissertation, or to take college coursework. Employees may request a reduction of hours or an unpaid leave to complete such education endeavors.

### **Procedures**

Eligible employees who wish to apply for sabbatical leave are required to submit a detailed proposal to their immediate supervisor, describing the reason for the sabbatical, specific time frame requested, and anticipated activities during sabbatical. Some examples of activities during sabbatical include writing a book or peer-reviewed publication, conducting focused research in the employee’s particular area of expertise, engaging in an enriching study or project, pursuing

structured and intentional exploration and reflection, etc. The proposal must also include any requests to cover costs of sabbatical-related activities, e.g. conference, workshop, research materials. Travel, lodging, and meals will not typically be considered for reimbursement. Only expenses approved with the proposal will be paid and/or reimbursed.

The submitted proposal will be approved by the agency/department director and endorsed by the Human Resources Director and by CRCNA's senior leadership. Sabbaticals will be granted based on a variety of factors including the number of requests, satisfactory work performance, and commitment to serve in the employee's existing role for two years after completion of sabbatical, as well as agency/department budget and available staff coverage. The request must include how the staff members' current duties would be covered, including any additional staffing or other allocations required. An employee on sabbatical is to be relieved of all of their regular duties and responsibilities.

Ordinarily a request must be submitted at least 6 months prior to the start of the fiscal year in which the sabbatical would occur.

After an employee's return from sabbatical leave, the employee will be required to produce a report to their supervisor on the activities conducted and how they met the objectives approved for the sabbatical. In some instances, this may mean the submission of a written report of findings if conducting research during this time, an outline for a new program, or other evidence of the work completed. Failure to produce a satisfactory reporting of meeting the approved objectives during this period will result in the employee becoming ineligible to participate in future sabbaticals. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action if they fail to achieve the level of performance expected for sabbatical outcomes during this period.

Employees on sabbatical leave will not be required to use any accrued vacation time during this period, and will retain their current accrued hours. Employees will not, however, accrue any additional vacation or sick leave during their sabbatical. Employees on sabbatical who are enrolled in the group benefits plan will continue to have pre-tax deductions made from their pay during the paid sabbatical period.

### **Work Reassignment**

Work Reassignment is defined as a specified time period when a staff member is relieved from all (or most) of their regular duties to focus on specific research, a task, or a project, either required by the agency/ministry or one that would provide additional benefits and is aligned with agency and CRCNA priorities.

Work reassignments are designated and assigned by the agency/department and approved by the agency/ministry level director. The work reassignment may replace all or a portion of the staff member's regular work for a specific period of time, and must be work that is relevant and necessary for the continued work of that agency/department (e.g. in-depth research around a specific health need in a third world country, developing a leadership curriculum, etc.)

A staff on a work reassignment is expected to work their regular schedule of hours (e.g. 36 hours/week for full time), and will continue reporting to their supervisor regarding work that is being done. Vacation or sick time would be reported, if used. A work reassignment of this nature should be viewed as a temporary job change, with the intent that the staff member will return to their regular duties at its conclusion. All aspects of employment, including benefits, remain the same during the assigned period.

Work Reassignment is not intended to be used for pursuit of a degree program, e.g. to write one's thesis or dissertation, or to take college/university coursework. Employees may request a reduction of hours or an unpaid leave of absence to pursue such education endeavors.

## **Employee Support Program**

There are times when CRCNA employees go through difficult or crisis situations, often resulting from health or medical conditions, such as an accident, extensive surgery, serious illness, death in the family, etc. An Employee Support Program has been created to assist with providing a means to coordinate assistance for staff members experiencing significant or serious needs. An Employee Support Committee, to include the Executive Director, the Director of Ministry & Administration, the Director of Finance and Operations, and the Director of Human Resources will be responsible for coordinating assistance for those who seek and/or could benefit from support. Any staff member may submit a need; however, a need will only be considered after receiving approval by the named staff member (or in certain circumstances by a family member). Respect for confidentiality will be maintained, and specific information will not be shared without permission, except where the employee may constitute a danger to self or others.

Assistance could be provided in the form of consultation and assessment, meals, transportation, childcare, and/or financial support, and is made available through voluntary gifts by fellow staff members. All gifts given to and received from the Employee Support Program are made confidentially. The Program and corresponding funds are managed by the CRCNA through the designated Committee.

If an employee has exhausted their available paid time off, a request will be made known that CRCNA employees may "donate" some of their accrued vacation time (note: only vacation time may be donated). Those wishing to donate will be asked to sign a form authorizing the number of hours they wish to donate. The donated hours will be used in the order they are received. Employees will be informed if their donated hours were used, and any unused hours will be returned to them.

## **Service Trip/Project**

Employees who have worked at least one year in a regular position (minimally .5 FTE) may request paid time off to participate in one specific mission trip/volunteer project within any given two-year period of employment. Up to one week of paid time off, based on their regular hours of work, could be granted to participate in an approved mission trip or volunteer project with a group associated with the Christian Reformed Church in North America or the Reformed Church in America. Time off for this purpose cannot be accrued. The emphasis is on allowing time off for one project/trip, versus a specific number of hours per employee spread over multiple projects. Employees can request time off for a longer trip but would be required to utilize available vacation time or unpaid time for the time off beyond one week.

Requests should be made in writing to the employee's immediate supervisor, and will require two supervisory levels of approval. Requests will be viewed similar to a vacation request and will be subject to timing, work load, adequate coverage during the employee's absence, etc., and will only be approved once within any two-year time period. Employees making a request will also be asked to commit to remaining employed with the CRCNA for at least 6 months beyond their trip. All expenses such as travel, lodging, etc. will be the employee's responsibility.

## **Jury Duty**

Employees are encouraged to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving on jury duty when required. Employees will receive their regular pay during hours they were scheduled to work while serving on jury duty, provided that any payment they receive from the court (except mileage or food reimbursement) is turned in to the Finance Department. Employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits, (e.g. if an employee who works 8:00 a.m –5:00 p.m. is released from jury duty at 11:00 a.m., they are expected to report to work for the remainder of their regular work day).

## **Time Off to Vote**

The CRCNA encourages employees to vote, and will comply with all state election law requirements with respect to providing employees, when necessary time off to vote. Generally, if an employee has three hours either between the opening of the polls and the beginning of their workday or from the end of their workday to the closing of the polls, it will be deemed that the employee has time outside normal working hours to vote. If the employee has less than three hours either before or after their work day, he/she may request paid time off to vote not to exceed two hours, and only at the beginning or end of their work day, except as otherwise required by state law. Any request must be made in advance of the election day.

## **Witness Duty**

Employees are encouraged to appear in court for witness duty when subpoenaed to do so. If employees have been subpoenaed or otherwise requested to testify as witnesses by the CRCNA, they will receive paid time off for the entire period of witness duty. Employees required to appear as a witness at the request of a party other than the CRCNA will ordinarily be granted time off and will be required to use any available vacation time. The employee is expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.

## **Social Security**

### **Non-ordained Employee**

The CRCNA, as required by law, will equally match mandatory payments that are made to the Social Security system by employees.

### **Ordained Ministers**

Ordained ministers serving in a ministerial capacity are classified by the Social Security system as self-employed and are required to make payments under the Self-Employment Contribution Act (SECA). These payments are more than twice the amount that would be paid by other employees. Thus, the CRCNA will reimburse ordained ministers for a portion of the net required payments in each paycheck.

## **Unemployment Insurance**

As a church, the CRCNA does not participate in unemployment insurance. Therefore, employees who are involuntarily terminated, or experience a reduction in hours worked, are not eligible to receive unemployment benefits through the state in which they are employed.

The CRCNA will, nonetheless, attempt to provide benefits comparable to those under unemployment insurance provisions for eligible involuntarily terminating employees. This will be spelled out in a separation agreement with the employee, which will detail the criteria to receive payment, the amount of payment, conditions under which payments would cease, and so forth.

## **Workers' Compensation and Work-Related Injuries**

The CRCNA carries Workers' Compensation insurance for all employees. All work-related injuries must be reported to the Human Resources Department immediately, regardless of significance. An incident report must be completed by the individual involved, or someone who witnessed the incident. An employee seeking medical treatment must indicate that the injury is work-related. In the event of a work-related injury or condition, Workers' Compensation insurance may compensate an employee directly for lost time, medical expenses, and loss of life or dismemberment from an injury arising out of or in the course of work.

## **Adoption Assistance Program**

As part of its commitment to family, the CRCNA assists agency employees who desire to have children through adoption. Adoption assistance is available to CRCNA employees who are enrolled in the CRCNA health insurance plan.

The CRCNA will reimburse employees for eligible adoption expenses related to the adoption of a dependent child not to exceed the amount typically provided by the CRCNA's medical insurance plan for a single-birth delivery. Eligible expenses include attorney fees, court costs, adoption fees, and travel expenses including food and lodging.

## **Absences for Denominational Church Meetings**

Full-time employees may request time off with pay to serve at CRCNA synod, classis, or related committee meetings. Note: current employees may not serve on the Council of Delegates or any agency or educational institution board or ministry advisory committee unless by virtue of the position they serve as staff consultant or ex officio to the board/committee. If an employee is a member of another denomination, consideration will be given for an equivalent type of meeting.

Before agreeing to be nominated for or accepting to serve in one of the above-mentioned roles, employees are requested to discuss this matter with their supervisor to determine if there is a potential conflict of interest and to assure requested time off will not negatively impact their work. Current employees must receive the approval of the executive director before accepting appointment by classis to serve as a delegate to synod.

## **Medical Retirement Insurance**

Retirees and their spouses, age 65 or older, may be eligible to purchase the CRNCA Medicare eligible retiree health/dental insurance at the time of their retirement. See the Human Resources Department for more information.

## **Early Retirement Medical Insurance**

Early retirement is defined as terminating employment after attaining age 55 but before attaining age 65 with at least 10 years of service with the CRCNA. Retired employees who take early retirement may be eligible to continue medical insurance for themselves and their eligible dependents through the denominationally offered coverage at their own expense, until they are eligible for Medicare. See the Human Resources Department for more information.

## **Staff Development**

The CRCNA recognizes the importance of staff development and the benefit for employees to attend training seminars, workshops, classes, conferences, etc. to remain abreast of best practices, to enhance knowledge and skills, or increase effectiveness in their work. Regular full-time and part-time employees who have completed 6 months of continuous service are eligible for this benefit.

Employees should complete a “Request for Staff Development” form and submit it to their supervisor for approval. The training must relate to the employee’s current position or one which may lead to a promotional opportunity. Approval for associated costs must be secured in advance from the employee’s supervisor, and will typically cover registration expenses and travel (according to CRCNA Travel Policy). Any exceptions to this will be identified for the employee in advance. Approval will be subject to the agency/department budget established for training.

## **Educational Assistance**

Employees working a regular full-time (36 hours/week) schedule who have completed two years of continuous service are eligible to request reimbursement for tuition costs that are approved by the organization. Employees must be accepted into an approved college/university/seminary program or classes as a regular student. The course of study must be related to the employee’s current job duties or a foreseeable future position in the organization. Reimbursement does not include costs for books, materials, travel, or other associated fees, nor for time spent studying or in class. This benefit is only available for full-time (36 hours/week) employees. However, eligible full-time employees may request a temporary reduction of hours or a short-term unpaid leave of absence to pursue an approved course of study. While additional education is expected to enhance the employee’s performance and professional ability, there is no guarantee that participation in formal education will entitle the employee to advancement, a different job assignment, or an increase in compensation.

Assistance is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the required course and a passing grade of “C” or better. Employees must secure approval from their supervisor and agency or department director before beginning a study program for which they are seeking financial assistance. In addition, the approval of any request for educational assistance is subject to the availability of funds budgeted by the agency and will be considered separately for each fiscal year.

Employees are required to complete a “Request for Educational Assistance,” which includes a “Tuition Reimbursement Agreement.” Employees receiving educational assistance agree to remain with the CRCNA for two years from the date of receipt of any educational reimbursement. If an employee voluntarily terminates employment at any time within two years of receiving reimbursement under this program, the employee agrees to repay CRCNA all or part of the education assistance received on a prorated basis. For example, an employee terminating one year after receipt of assistance would be obligated to repay 50% of the monies received.

## EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

### Attendance and Punctuality

Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees in the workplace. Occasionally, an illness or something beyond one's control may cause an employee to be absent or late to work. In these situations employees must notify their supervisor as soon as possible and in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence.

Employees may be asked to provide a physician's statement for absences due to illness. For absences of three or more days due to illness, a physician's statement is required and employees may also be asked to provide a physician's statement releasing them to return to work.

It is a violation of the policy not to notify your supervisor when you will be absent or late to work. Disciplinary action may result if an employee is repeatedly absent and/or late to work, or does not provide adequate notice. The CRCNA will consider it a voluntary termination should an employee not call their supervisor or report to work for three consecutive days.

### Dress Code

It is management's intent that work attire should complement an environment that reflects a professional organization. The overarching guideline for staff working in the office environment is to remember that what you wear reflects on the CRCNA and our professionalism. Please dress for the day that you will have.

Typically, this will mean "business casual" attire for most normal business operations, e.g. dress slacks/khakis, blouses, collared shirts, sweaters. If you are conducting interviews, meeting with donors, or doing other work where more formal business attire might be appropriate, please dress accordingly.

Similarly, we recognize that some days may involve brainstorming, office retreats, or a "casual Friday" which might warrant more casual dress, such as jeans. In these cases, your attire should still reflect a sense of overall professionalism. Remember that even if you intend to spend the entire day working on your own, staff and guests to our offices may see you. Shorts, ripped jeans, logo t-shirts, and athletic wear are not appropriate business attire even on a "casual" day.

The key point to sustaining an appropriate business attire program is the use of common sense and good judgment. If you question the appropriateness of the attire, it probably isn't appropriate.

Revised July 2018

### Conflict of Interest

CRCNA employees are expected to exercise the utmost good faith in all transactions involved in their duties, and they shall not use their positions with the organization, or knowledge gained through their position, for their personal aggrandizement. The interests of the organization must have the first priority.

Employees are expected to act prudently, to adhere to high ethical standards, and to conduct their affairs in such a manner as to avoid any actual, potential or perceived conflict between their personal interests and those of any aspect of the CRCNA. An actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest exists when the loyalties or actions of a person are divided between the interests of the CRCNA and the interest of the person. It occurs when a person is responsible for promoting the interest of the ministry at the same time he or she is involved in a competing personal interest (financial, business, personal or relational). This may result from a person being in a position to influence a decision that creates a personal or financial gain, the accrual of an inappropriate benefit for themselves, a relative, and/or close friend or an adverse impact on the CRCNA as a result of the agency's business dealings.

Both the fact and the appearance of a conflict of interest should be avoided. All employees are required to disclose any possible conflicts of interest to their immediate supervisor and director as soon as it becomes known and through an annual disclosure statement as part of the performance review process.

All information will be reviewed by at least two levels of leadership, and a decision will be documented and reported to the staff member.

Revised July 2019.

## **Confidentiality**

All records and information related to the work of the CRCNA are considered confidential and for use for CRCNA work-related purposes only. No information, including documents, notes, files, records, (except in the ordinary course of performing ones duties) may be removed from the premises without permission. The contents of such records and documents may not be disclosed to anyone, during or after employment, except when required for a CRCNA business purpose. Employees must recognize the responsibilities entrusted to them in preserving the strict confidentiality of all information, and will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement on an annual basis.

## **Whistleblower**

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee of the CRCNA who reports an activity in good faith that he/she considers to be illegal or dishonest to their supervisor or the Director of Human Resources. Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state, or local laws or fraudulent financial reporting.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas—confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, and to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense. The CRCNA will not retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments. Any whistleblower who believes he/she is being retaliated against must contact the Director of Human Resources immediately. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

## **Intellectual Property Policy**

Any creation of intellectual property, including publications or productions, by employees that are completed as part of, or for the purpose of, the individual's work assignment and any income or royalties derived from these, whether they are commissioned or initiated by the employee, are the property of the CRCNA agency/department. The intellectual property created by an employee in performance of their job duties shall be deemed "work-made-for hire" under the Copyright Act of 1976. As such, the CRCNA retains all rights to the use, duplication, distribution, and sale of all such materials.

## **CRCNA Property Policy**

Employees are responsible for items issued to them by the CRCNA or items that are in their possession or control, such as credit cards, computers, cell phones, or other equipment. Employees must return any property upon request or upon termination of employment. The CRCNA reserves the right to access, inspect, or retrieve all property that has been assigned to employees. This includes, but is not limited to all files, documents, e-mail, voicemail, and so forth. All property must be returned to the CRCNA on or before the employee's last day of work.



## Honorarium Policy

Employees who represent the CRCNA at speaking/preaching functions or in any other capacity will be reimbursed for their expenses. Any income or honorarium received for agency-paid trips must be turned in and become the property of the agency.

Note: Representing the CRCNA includes functions for another agency/department within the CRCNA, e.g. an employee of Resonate leading a retreat for BTGMI. No honorarium should be paid by a CRCNA agency to a CRCNA employee regardless of agency.

Employees who speak/preach without representing the CRCNA and do so on their own time are entitled to retain payment or honorarium received. Any expenses incurred in accepting such commitments are the employee's responsibility. Employees should discuss with their supervisor the nature and extent of any engagement or contract offer that may be a direct result of knowledge derived from employment with the CRCNA.

## Safety

In an effort to maintain a safe and healthful work environment for employees, customers, and visitors, the Human Resources Department has developed a workplace safety program. A safety team is made up of employees throughout the organization. Safety team members receive regular CPR and First Aid training and are instructed to assist other employees when emergencies arise.

All entry doors to the Grand Rapids office building are to remain locked all day, with the exception of the main entrance, which unlocks at 7:45 a.m. and locks at 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Outside of regular work hours, employees may access the building as designated by the access allowed through their ID badge and, when accessing, are responsible to assure all exterior doors close securely behind them.

Emergency fire pulls are located at every exit and fire extinguishers are in numerous places around the building. An alarm will be sounded with oral instructions, should there be either a fire or severe weather, directing staff and visitors to safety. Automated External Defibrillators (AED's) are located throughout the building. First aid kits containing bandages and medications are available at the building receptionist's desk for minor injuries that do not require professional medical services.

In the case of an accident that results in injury to an employee, volunteer, or guest, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees must immediately notify the Human Resources Department. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and to initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefits procedures.

In addition, all employees, board members, and regular volunteers will be issued a picture ID badge and are expected to wear their badge at all times when they are in the building. Everyone will know at a glance who is an employee or authorized visitor. Employee ID badges will also include technology to allow entrance at locked exterior exits.

## Crisis Communications Guidelines

When any member of the CRCNA staff becomes aware of an issue or potential crisis that could adversely affect the denomination or its ministry, the following questions should be considered:

- Does this compromise our values?
- Does this place our mission in jeopardy?

- Does this put our brand, reputation, or image at risk?
- Does this violate an organizational or ministry policy?
- Will the situation be of concern to CRC members, churches, or church leaders?

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” the matter must be brought to the attention of the employee’s immediate supervisor or Director and the Executive Director of the CRCNA.

The Executive Director will evaluate these questions according to the following criteria:

- Could this be detrimental to our ministry on a large scale?
- Is there potential for negative media exposure?
- Will this damage our relationship significantly with one or more key audiences: donors, employees, local church leaders, classes, congregants, or partners?

If the answer is “yes” to any of these questions, the Executive Director will activate the Crisis Communications Process in conjunction with the designated facility emergency coordinator for each denominational office.

## Visitors in the Workplace

All visitors should be directed to the building’s reception area. Authorized visitors must obtain a guest badge and must be escorted to their destination. Employees are responsible for the conduct and safety of their visitors. If an unauthorized individual is observed on the premises, employees should immediately notify their supervisor or direct the individual to the reception area. Visitors should not be directed to find an office or meeting room on their own, or allowed to find their own way out of the building.

## Electronic Systems and Technology Use

The term “electronic systems” is defined as all computer and data systems as well as the data utilized by the CRCNA in the course of its operations. Electronic systems include but are not limited to software applications, data, Internet services, Internet access, social media, computers, networking systems, telephones (whether office-based or cellular), all infrastructure and services used by the CRCNA to create, store, analyze, or transmit electronic data.

All electronic systems are the property of the CRCNA. In addition, all messages created, sent, stored, or retrieved via these systems are the property of the CRCNA. Thus, the CRCNA reserves the right to access and monitor all messages, files, and data in the CRCNA’s electronic systems, on CRCNA-owned equipment, and on devices owned by the employee when said device is used to access the CRCNA’s electronic systems. Employees should not assume that electronic communications over the CRCNA’s electronic systems are private.

All employees can access the CRCNA Electronic Systems and Technology Use Policy, the CRCNA BYOD (bring your own device) Policy, and the CRCNA BYOA (bring your own application) Policy, using the links below, and are required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of these policies annually.

[CRCNA Electronic Systems and Technology Use](#)  
[Bring Your Own Device](#)  
[Bring your Own Application](#)

## Social Networking and Media

This policy provides guidance for employee use of social media, which includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including blogs,

social networking or affinity sites, message boards, or any other site or service that permits users to share information electronically.

Employees are responsible for what they post online. Your online presence reflects on the CRCNA. Be aware that your actions captured via images, posts, or comments may appear to reflect those of the CRCNA. Before creating online content, employees should consider some of the risks and rewards involved and recognize that conduct that adversely affects job performance, the performance of other employees, or otherwise adversely affects the CRCNA may result in disciplinary action.

The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of the CRCNA as well as personal use of social media which might reflect on the work or ministry of the CRCNA:

- Employees need to know and adhere to the Code of Conduct and all employment policies.
- Employees should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their image, as well as the CRCNA's image. The information that is posted electronically may be public information for a long time.
- Employees are not to publish, post, or release any information that is considered confidential. If there are questions about what is confidential, employees should check with the Human Resources Department.
- Employees should get appropriate permission before referring to or posting images of current or former employees.
- Except when acting in an official work capacity, employees should not represent themselves as a spokesperson of the CRCNA. If you post anything online related to the work you do, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of CRCNA. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and may not represent CRCNA positions, strategies, or opinions."

Social media use should not interfere with regular work duties. CRCNA computer systems are for business use, and personal use of social media networks on work time is discouraged. Do not use CRCNA email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

## **Smoking**

In keeping with the intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoking is prohibited throughout the workplace. At the Grand Rapids Office, smoking is prohibited anywhere except for the designated smoking area on the east side of the building by Dock One.

## **Drug and Alcohol Use**

The CRCNA desires to provide a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. While on CRCNA property or engaged in CRCNA business, employees may not (1) be under the influence of alcohol or a prohibited substance, have a detectable level of alcohol, marijuana where legal, or a prohibited substance in their system, or have the odor of alcohol or a prohibited substance on their breath or body; (2) use, distribute, store, or sell alcohol, marijuana where legal, or a prohibited substance; or (3) be convicted of using, selling, or possessing prohibited substances or any other violation of federal or state drug and alcohol laws. Violation of this policy will result in discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

"Prohibited substances" include illegal drugs (under either federal or state law), controlled substances, hemp products, and any other substance that affects or may affect employees' ability to competently or safely perform their job duties (regardless of any claim that the substance is for medicinal purposes).

The CRCNA reserves the right to require drug and alcohol testing as consideration for employment or whenever the CRCNA has reasonable suspicion to believe that the employee has used or is under the influence of alcohol or a prohibited substance.

Failure or refusal of an employee to cooperate fully, sign a consent/release form or any other required document for testing, or submit in full to any inspection or drug test as provided, will be grounds for discharge. Substituting or adulterating any body substance or specimen submitted for testing, or falsely representing that the body substance or specimen is the employee's own sample, likewise will be grounds for discharge.

"Reasonable suspicion" includes but is not limited to: observation of behavior such as slurred speech, unsteady walking, abrupt mood swings, breath or odor, needle marks, sudden nosebleeds, frequent illness unexplained by medical conditions, absenteeism, declining productivity, excessive tardiness, and other articulable activity suggesting possible involvement with prohibited substances in violation of this policy.

The CRCNA may, in its discretion and without precedent, offer individual employees alternatives to discharge under certain circumstances. Such alternatives might include Last Chance Agreements, rehabilitation programs, or other measures.

No prescription medication may be brought upon CRCNA property by any person other than the person for whom the drug is prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner, and such drug shall be used only in the manner and quantity prescribed. Employees using prescription medication, including medically prescribed marijuana, or over-the-counter medication that may affect their ability to safely and effectively perform their job must report this to their supervisor. Such reports will be treated as confidential. Employees must be able to perform the essential functions of their position, with or without accommodation, when using prescribed medications.

Revised November 2018

## **Use of Equipment and Vehicles**

When using CRNCA-owned property, employees are expected to exercise care and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines. Employees must notify their supervisor if any equipment or vehicles appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use of equipment or vehicles, as well as excessive or avoidable traffic and parking violations, can result in disciplinary action.

## **Mobile Device**

It is well supported by accident statistics and studies that using a mobile device, either a hand-held or a hands-free model, while operating a motor vehicle distracts a driver's attention from traffic conditions. To help reduce the possibility of vehicle accidents in connection with the use of mobile devices, CRCNA has adopted a mobile device policy that is applicable to all employees/volunteers while driving any vehicle (rented, borrowed, or one's own vehicle) while conducting CRCNA business. This includes (but is not limited to) any travel to any off-site location and/or between CRCNA offices.

- Employees/volunteers must comply with all federal, state/provincial, and local laws and regulations regarding the use of mobile devices while driving.
- Sending or reading text messages or e-mails; dialing mobile phones; viewing television, videos or DVDs; inputting data into laptop computers, personal digital assistants or navigation systems; or any other use of a mobile device that distracts the employee from traffic conditions, without using hands-free technology, is prohibited while driving.
- Calls, messages, texts, etc. on any handheld device, whether incoming or outgoing, are not allowed while driving.

- Mobile devices should be set to store any incoming calls and messages while driving.
- Making mobile device phone calls using hands-free technology while driving is strongly discouraged. To minimize the impact of distraction, calls, if any, should be brief. Extended conversations should be made while not driving.
- Retrieval of any messages should be made after the vehicle is safely parked.
- Accidents incurred while an employee is using a mobile device may be considered to be preventable, and the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### **Business Travel**

Employees are reimbursed for reasonable business travel expenses incurred while on assignments away from the normal work location. All business travel must be approved in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor, and all travel arrangements should be in compliance with the CRCNA corporate Travel Policy.

Employees who are involved in accidents while traveling on business must promptly report the incident to their immediate supervisor. Vehicles owned, leased, or rented by the CRCNA may not be used for personal use without prior approval. With prior approval, a family member or friend may accompany employees traveling on business, when the presence of a companion will not interfere with successful completion of business objectives. In general, employees are also permitted to combine personal travel with business travel, as long as time away from work is approved. Additional expenses arising from such non-business travel are the responsibility of the employee.

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### **Standards for Employee Travel**

These standards are applicable to the business-related travel of all staff of the CRCNA. Standards must be adhered to and supervisory approval is needed when making plans and financial commitments for travel. Financial components (e.g., submission of receipts, etc.) are derived from financial standards and policies of the CRCNA.

1. Use of the appropriate agencies designated in Canada and in the United States for air travel is required; more information is available on the [CRCNA Travel site](#).  
Rationale: These agencies are aware of our policies, allow centralized information in event of emergencies, and often garner additional cost savings and/or benefits for us such as:
  - Travel coupons to save expense on future travel (different from and in addition to personal frequent flier points earned—see below).
  - Note: trip cancellation insurance they offer should be declined

- One piece of checked luggage is allowable. If the airline does not offer the first piece at no charge, reimbursement is permissible.
2. Use of preferred vendors, when applicable, for vehicles and lodging is desired (and is often available when using the appropriate designated travel agency); more information is available at the [CRCNA Travel site](#). Rationale: Contracts and agreements with such preferred vendors entail cost savings and convenience.
  3. Our corporate AMEX card that is used by the travel agencies designated on the CRCNA travel site provides \$100,000 accidental death insurance with every airline ticket they issue. Therefore, the purchase of additional flight insurance is a personal expense to the traveler and is not reimbursable.
  4. Use of corporate credit cards for expenses related to travel is compulsory except in situations when cash advances or reimbursement is the only option. Rationale: extra insurance (e.g., waiving car-rental offered insurance is therefore possible and preferable) and other benefits most often accompany such use.
    - Use of cash advances; reconciliation must occur within 5 business days upon completion of travel.
    - Cash reimbursement; submission of receipts must occur within 10 business days upon completion of travel.
  5. All expense reimbursement must comply with regulations of the Internal Revenue Service and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for accountable plans. The accountable plans requirements include all three of the following elements:
    - Expenses must have a business connection
    - There must be an adequate accounting by the employee to the employer for these expenses with proper receipts
    - Excess cash advances or reimbursements must be returned within a reasonable period of time.
  6. Submit expense forms and receipts within 10 business days, writing names, purpose and date on receipts. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in an employee having to claim as personal income the costs incurred by the agency for his/her business-related travel.
  7. Travelers may retain any travel incentive awards. However, options that would entail a fee or higher expense in order to attain such awards may not be used unless the additional net cost is paid from personal funds.
  8. *Use of personal vehicles.* Travelers are encouraged to use a rental car when they are driving more than 200 miles/kilometers per day. Personal vehicles may be used when driving less than 200 miles/kilometers per day and mileage will be reimbursed at the rate established by the Ministries Leadership Council based upon the prevailing Internal Revenue Service rate for travelers originating in the U.S., and the per kilometer rate advised by Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for travelers originating in Canada.

In addition to mileage or kilometer reimbursement, travelers are also reimbursed for parking fees, road tolls, and any other expenses directly related to the trip. Travelers are not reimbursed for car repairs, parking tickets, traffic violations, fuel purchases, or insurance claims.

Airline or rail transportation should be used for long-distance travel. If a traveler elects to drive for long-distance travel, the mileage/car rental reimbursement should not exceed the average cost of a ticket to that destination or the average cost of a daily rental plus fuel for the duration of the travel, whichever is most applicable.

9. *Spouse Travel.* A spouse (or any family member or friend) may accompany the traveler on business trips. However, any additional costs incurred because of these additional travelers are non-reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses.

Employees whose jobs require extensive travel (definition: being away from home more than 35% over the course of the year) may request CRCNA payment of expenses for their spouse/family member to accompany them. All provisions of these Travel Standards apply. Approval must be secured in advance from the agency's director for agency employees, from the Director of Ministries and Administration or the Canadian Ministries Director for congregational services, or from the executive director for all other employees. *Note:* All costs of spouse travel paid by the CRCNA will almost certainly be taxable benefits under Canadian and U.S. tax law and regulations.

10. *Travel Among Countries.*

- Information about passports for Canadian and U.S. residents is found at the FYI site under Travel.
- The cost of securing and renewing a passport will be reimbursed for CRC employees whose positions require them to travel internationally. All requests outside of these guidelines are at the discretion of agency directors (January 2008 MC minute 07-136).
- CRCNA has purchased specific workers' compensation, auto accident and liability insurance to cover any employee traveling outside of Canada or the U.S.. Employee's are also reminded to check with their medical insurance carrier to find out what is available should they become ill while traveling. Specific information can be found on FYI under Travel.

For further information, go to the travel policy found on the CRCNA Travel site for additional information about situations involving personal property and damaged luggage, guidelines when involved in an accident with a rental car etc.

Revised February 2020

## **Solicitation/Distribution**

The CRCNA prohibits the solicitation, distribution, and posting of materials on or at CRCNA property by any employee or non-employee, except as may be permitted by this policy or applicable law.

Non-employees may not solicit employees or distribute literature of any kind on CRCNA's premises at any time. Employees may only admit non-employees to work areas with management approval or as part of a CRCNA-sponsored program. These visits should not disrupt workflow.

Employees may not solicit other employees during the working time of either employee, or physically distribute literature of any kind during working times or in working areas, except in connection with a CRCNA approved or sponsored event. "Working time" does not include an employee's scheduled break or lunch period, or just before or after a work shift.

The posting of materials or electronic announcements are permitted with approval from Human Resources.

## **Outside Employment**

Employees are free to seek additional employment outside of their work for the CRCNA, provided that employment meets these conditions:

- does not prevent the employee from fully performing their work for the CRCNA, including required hours of work;
- does not have an adverse impact on the ministry of any agency of the CRCNA;
- the work is not in violation of any CRCNA policies, or in conflict with the mission or goals of the CRCNA.
- may not involve the use of the CRCNA's time, property, materials, or equipment.

## **Progressive Discipline**

The intent of progressive discipline is to correct most employee problems at an early stage, benefiting both the employer and the employee. The purpose of progressive disciplinary action is to correct a problem, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future. This policy is designed to ensure that disciplinary actions are prompt, uniform, and impartial.

Progressive disciplinary action may call for any or all of the following steps: (1) verbal warning, (2) written warning, (3) probation, (4) suspension with or without pay, and (5) termination of employment. The step(s) chosen depends on the severity of the problem, the number of occurrences, the harm to the denomination, the employee's prior work record, and other relevant factors. Circumstances may justify skipping one or more steps, including the imposition of suspension or termination for a first offense for more serious infractions. While it is impossible to list every type of behavior that may be deemed a serious offense, any attempted list would include theft, dishonesty, insubordination, harassment or discrimination, illegal or immoral behavior, violence, breach of confidentiality, use or possession of alcohol or a prohibited substance, and non-compliance with published rules and policies. All rules and policies apply while employees are on CRCNA property or engaged in CRCNA business. They also apply when employees are off work or away from CRCNA property to the extent that such behavior harms the denomination's reputation, renders the employee unable to fully perform his or her duties, or leads to the reasonable refusal, reluctance, or inability of other employees to work with the offender.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to make the employee aware of the details that make his or her actions unacceptable. The employee should take the steps necessary to correct any identified shortcoming.

Nothing in this policy changes employees' employment status as established in this handbook.

## **Grievance Resolution (Appeal Process)**

The CRCNA is committed to encouraging an atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question may be openly discussed. In many situations, employees should use informal discussions to resolve issues of conflict. However, in some cases such discussions do not produce satisfactory resolutions. If an employee believes that his or her rights have been violated, the employee may express his or her concerns through the grievance resolution procedure. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for filing a grievance/appeal or



voicing a complaint in a reasonable, business-like manner or for using the grievance resolution procedure.

The grievance resolution procedures can be utilized relative to issues of employment related to dissatisfaction with a policy, procedure, or practice; a dispute over a disciplinary action, including termination; a performance evaluation, or some other perceived unfair action or treatment. All grievance requests must be made in writing and must specifically state the area of dispute and the desired outcome.

This policy will apply to all eligible employees of the CRCNA except those specifically excluded by a decision of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and/or the synod of the CRCNA.

### **Procedure**

Before beginning a formal grievance procedure, employees should discuss the concern with their supervisor. The grievance procedure may be denied if prior discussion between the employee and supervisor has not occurred.

An employee who fails to file or appeal a grievance within the designated time limit for each step will be assumed to accept the action or grievance response at the previous step, unless the time limit has been expressly waived or extended in writing. The CRCNA's failure to respond to an appeal within the designated time limit will result in the employee's right to proceed to the next step in the process, unless the time limit has been expressly waived or extended in writing.

*Step 1:* A formal grievance must be presented in writing to the Director of Human Resources within ten (10) business days after the incident occurred. The Director of Human Resources will facilitate the grievance process. The grievance must state specifically what it is the employee is appealing or grieving, and the desired outcome.

The next-level supervisor of the employee will review the information received, which could include meeting with all of the parties involved. This supervisor will reply in writing to the employee within ten (10) business days of receipt of the grievance. The employee must then decide within ten (10) business days whether to pursue the grievance to the next step. The employee must again provide a written notice to the Director of Human Resources if they wish to pursue the next step.

*Step 2:* Step 1 is repeated up through the organization's line of supervisory authority until the next level supervisor is the Executive Director.

*Step 3:* If a satisfactory resolution is not reached at step 2, the employee may make a written appeal to the Executive Director within ten (10) business days after receiving the response in step 2. The grievance must be sent to the Director of Human Resources, who will forward it to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will review the information received, which could include meeting with all of the parties involved. The Executive Director will reply in writing to the employee within fifteen (15) business days of receipt of the grievance. Except as provide below, the Executive Director's determination is final and binding on both the employee and the CRCNA.

*Step 4:* Employees at a director level or above may take an additional step for the simple reason that they may report directly or indirectly to the Executive Director, may be protesting a decision by the Executive Director, and may not have a meaningful appeal opportunity if the Executive Director is their only available recourse under this policy. As a result, employees at this level who are not satisfied with the response in step 3 may make a written appeal to the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA within 10 business days after receiving the response in step 3. The executive committee of the board will appoint a committee of the board to conduct a review within

10 business days after receiving the written appeal. The committee will review the information received and will meet with the appealing employee and all other parties involved.

The appealing employee and the employer's staff members shall each be given an opportunity to amplify the written materials. However, because this is an appeal hearing, no new information may be introduced without the specific permission of the committee. The committee shall make its recommendation to the Council of Delegates (or its executive committee) and then the Council of Delegates (or its executive committee) shall issue its decision in writing within 10 business days after receiving the review from the committee.

### **Representation**

At all the meetings described in these procedures, another person may accompany the employee for support and assistance. However, only the employee shall speak for him or herself and the accompanying person may not function as an advocate.

Time limits in this procedure may be waived only by written agreement. Absent compelling circumstances, an employee's failure to file or process an appeal in a timely fashion shall constitute a waiver to the right of appeal.

### **Effect of Decision**

This appeal procedure is an employee's sole and exclusive remedy in all cases of employment termination. The decision produced by this procedure in any particular case is final and binding on the employer and the employee.

## **Commitment to Compliance**

This handbook is written broadly and flexibly because we cannot cover every practical or legal contingency, and so we offer general guidance on the main features of the CRCNA's employment policies and benefits. But every provision in this handbook is intended for business application (whether or not we have identified specific business reasons or examples), and no provision should ever be read to interfere with—and should never deter you from—the full exercise of your legal rights, which the CRCNA respects and will protect regardless of any interpretation of the language of this handbook.