



ACE Newsletter

November 2022

State Government Agency Work Rules and Policies

Several ACE members and union representatives have raised concerns about how work rules are handled across state agencies, both in general and for the many employees working remotely. The following addresses those concerns, based on our examination of state law, human resources policy, and agency level policies and procedures at the Department of Corrections and the Department of Health Services. DOC and DHS were selected in order to obtain information about office employees, employees working in institutions requiring 24/7 staffing, and remote work for those who are able to do so. The

experience in other agencies will likely be similar in many instances, but that may not always be the case.

1. Since state human resources positions have been merged into the Department of Administration, have personnel work rules been rewritten to reflect this centralization?

Yes. Since 2016, work rules and disciplinary procedures for state employees have been uniform for all state agencies and are contained in Chapter 410 of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*. The Handbook lists 25 work rules whose violation "may result in disciplinary action ranging from a suspension to discharge, depending on the seriousness and frequency of the infraction." These can be found on the DOA website and are readily available to the public (View [HERE](#)).

2. Does each agency still have its own work rules?

Yes and no.

Work Rule #2 lists "Failure to comply with written agency policies or procedures" as a violation that may result in disciplinary action, giving "agency policies and procedures" the same authority as the more general statewide work rules. For example, DOC's Executive Directive #2 on employee discipline includes a number of specific requirements relating to tardiness, unexcused absences and refusal of ordered overtime without medical verification. A violation of any agency policy or procedure could be considered a violation of Work Rule #2.

3. How consistent are work rules and the related policies and procedures, both across and within state agencies?

While the work rules themselves are the same for all state agencies, state agency policies and procedures may include additional requirements and consequences that differ broadly within and between state agencies, depending on their responsibilities and work needs, and have the same effect as work rules.

Policies and procedures may also vary from one work area to another within an agency. For example, a DOC HR Program Officer told us that "Everything we do is

covered by a policy and any violation of those would be considered a WR2 violation."Each of the facilities operated by the Department of Corrections has its own set of procedures for implementing every DOC policy, which their HR Program Officer estimates to number in the thousands.

Attendance policies and procedures are one area that varies considerably from one agency to another.Statewide Work Rule #6 regarding "Unexcused or excessive absenteeism or tardiness" explicitly authorizes agencies to develop more specific attendance policies.

4. Are there separate requirements that apply to remote work?

Remote workers are subject to the statewide work rules, to their agency policies and procedures, and to their agency's policies and procedures specific to employees working remotely.

Remote work rules can be extensive. For example, the Department of Health Services' Remote Work Policy is 15 pages long and covers such topics as:

- Eligibility for remote work.
- Roles and responsibilities of the remote worker, supervisor, and agency administration.
- Procedures for requesting, approving, and modifying or terminating remote work.
- Requirements relating to work schedules, responsibility for expenses, technology, the remote worksite, information security and more.
- Signed remote work agreements.

5. How are work rules monitored or enforced in the remote work environment?

Enforcement of work rules and agency policies and procedures may vary both between and within an agency and from one supervisor to another.

6. Are work rule monitoring and enforcement handled the same way in each work unit?

No. Although work rule monitoring and enforcement does still vary by agency, position, and supervisor, the adoption of uniform work rules statewide encourages some general consistency.

7. How do agency employees access work rules from their office and remote work location?

Agency policies and procedures, including the statewide work rules, are generally posted on an agency's intranet and can be obtained from its human resources department.

8. How can prospective employees or others find out what work rules, policies and procedures an agency operates under?

Prospective employees can find the general work rules on the Department of Administration website. Information about agency policies and procedures may be obtained by contacting the agency's human resources department or the supervisor for the position the prospective employee is considering.

For More Information about ACE

- To Join ACE Click [HERE](#)
- To View our Website Click [HERE](#)
- To View our Facebook page Click [HERE](#):

Donate to ACE:

Mail donation checks to
Association of Career Employees
P.O. Box 44008
Madison, WI 53744-4008

If you found this information helpful [forward to a friend](#) and ask them to consider joining ACE

Copyright © 2022 Association of Career Employees

CONTACT: ace@wiscow.com /
608.848.9008

Our mailing address is:
ACE, P.O. Box 44008
Madison, WI 53744

[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)