

BAKER COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

Personal Use of District Resources

Summary

In general, Baker County Library District (BCLD) employees and agents may not use public resources in any form for personal benefit or gain, or for the benefit or gain of any other individuals or outside organizations. This policy ensures that all resources provided by the BCLD are used strictly for public and district purposes, in alignment with Oregon Government Ethics Law, and to maintain public trust.

Reason for Policy

Oregon Ethics Law:

All District employees and volunteers must know that as public officials, they are held personally responsible for complying with the Oregon Government Ethics law. This law prohibits public officials from using or attempting to use their positions or offices to obtain a financial benefit for themselves, their relatives or businesses they are associated with through opportunities that would not otherwise be available but for their position or office.

In Oregon, public officials include individuals who hold their positions through employment, appointment, election or volunteering. Oregon Government Ethics law prohibits every public official from using their role to obtain a financial benefit that would not otherwise be available to them.

Prohibited financial benefits include opportunities for gain or avoidance of expense.

[ORS 244.040(1)]

Public Trust:

BCLD employees and agents must consistently be mindful of the public trust they uphold. This requires conducting themselves with high ethical standards and avoiding any actions that may be viewed as violations of the public trust. As custodians of resources entrusted us by the public, government entities, and private donors, employees should responsibly manage these resources and ensure they are used solely for District purposes, except as authorized in this policy.

Accountability and Liability:

While accountability to the public is essential, the District also recognizes employees' need to balance work responsibilities with personal life demands. This balance requires guidance to weigh these obligations effectively. Employees who are granted authority to borrow District property for personal use must sign a release of liability form in advance.

Policy Statement

The use of BCLD resources and services for non-official purposes is permitted only in compliance with the following criteria:

- **Negligible Cost:** Personal use must incur only minimal, incidental costs that do not require additional purchase of supplies or result in significant wear and tear on District property.
- **No Interference:** Personal use must not interfere with an employee's obligation to fulfill District duties effectively and in a timely manner. Time spent on personal use is not considered District work time.
- **No Undermining of District Purposes:** Personal use must not compromise the availability of resources for District operations or activities.

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- No Sponsorship or Endorsement: Personal use must not imply sponsorship or endorsement by the District.
- Legal Compliance: Personal use must comply with state and federal laws regarding obscenity, libel, political activity, marketing, and other inappropriate actions.
- Auditing Awareness: Employees should understand that District resources may be subject to audit or inspection by administrative staff for compliance purposes at any time and without prior notification.

Application:

Each case will be evaluated based on specific circumstances and factors such as materiality or reasonableness. The employee's supervisor will have the final authority to assess and approve personal use requests, based on direct knowledge of the employee's role and needs.

Appropriateness of Practices:

Employees are encouraged to consult with their supervisor or the Library Director if they have any questions about appropriateness of a specific personal use. A supervisor's approval cannot override other District policies or statutes that may restrict personal use beyond the guidelines outlined here. For example, use of public resources for certain types of political advocacy is prohibited by law.

Resource-Specific Guidelines:

Copy, Print and Mail Services:

Postage stamps and mailing materials are to be used exclusively for District-related business. Personal use is prohibited. Employees may use district-owned copy and printing resources for personal use during their non-work time at a discounted fee rate established by the administration provided the usage does not impede public services or district operations.

Facilities:

Access to non-public areas of District facilities is allowed only for official or authorized use. Employees and agents may not access District facilities solely for personal reasons during closed hours.

Telephones, Mobile Phones, and Computer Resources:

District telephones and fax machines are for business purposes only. Personal calls may not be charged to District phone lines or calling cards. Long-distance personal calls may be made from District landline phones only if placed as credit card, collect, third number (non-District) calls, or reported to District administration within 14 days for reimbursement arrangements.

District-issued mobile phones and IT equipment are provided for official use. Limited personal use is permitted if it does not interfere with District duties, incur additional charges, or violate District policies. Employees must monitor personal data and call usage to stay within plan limits. Personal texting should be minimized, and mobile data usage should primarily support District business. Any personal usage resulting in additional costs must be promptly reported and reimbursed by the employee.

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Vehicles:

No employee may use a District vehicle in a manner inconsistent with the District's Personnel Policy on the Use of Vehicles.

Examples of Non-Compliance

Typical examples of misuse of government resources include, but are not limited to:

- Misuse of Financial Resources: Using public funds to purchase goods or services solely for personal use.
- Misuse of IT Resources: Using a workplace computer for extensive personal use, such as running a private business, or recreational activities un-related to one's duties.
- Misuse of Vehicles: Using a district vehicle solely for personal reasons such as private errands, projects, or travel.
- Time Theft: Using paid work hours for personal activities such as shopping, gambling, games, recreation, or excessive socializing.

No Expectation of Privacy

Employees should understand that there is no expectation of privacy when using government-owned technology resources. All data created, stored, or transmitted on government devices may be subject to monitoring, auditing, and retrieval to comply with public records requests.

Reporting Misuse of District Resources:

Employees are required to immediately report any knowledge or suspicion of financial or resource misuse, including improper personal use of District resources, to the Library Director or Human Resources Manager.

Consequences:

Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to job termination, as well as mandatory restitution, and in some cases, fines and criminal charges.