

# Lowcountry Women's Specialists Employee Handbook

*Updated: January 12, 2021*

**Hello and welcome!** Thank you for joining Lowcountry Women's Specialists, where we strive to Take Care of You for Life! We can't wait to see what you will achieve with us. This employee handbook defines who we are and how we work together. We will do everything possible to create a fair and productive workplace, but we need your help. We've created this handbook to guide you.

This handbook isn't a contract or a guarantee of employment. It's a collection of our expectations, commitments and responsibilities. This policy manual is NOT a static document. Rather, it is dynamic in nature in that it will change and grow as we change and grow as an organization.

Your input to improving this practice is highly valued. It is our expectation that you will make suggestions and recommendations for change during your tenure with LCWS. If you encounter problems that you can solve, please do so. If you feel you need resource support, please ask.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION THOROUGHLY. IT HAS BEEN PREPARED TO ANSWER MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION, PLEASE DIRECT THEM TO YOUR SUPERVISOR OR TO THE PRACTICE MANAGER.

## ***Getting to know our company***

Started in 1991 by a group of local community doctors, Lowcountry Women's Specialists is committed to providing **EXCELLENCE IN WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE**, by providing quality, compassionate care for every phase of a woman's life. We are united in pursuit of this goal and understand that in order to provide Excellence in Women's Health Care, each and every employee in this practice must also be committed to this vision and willing to accept and meet this challenge. Each employee is expected to provide for the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of women for every phase of their lives.

Our commitment to you, the employees of Lowcountry Women's Specialists, is to create an environment and organizational structure that allows each employee to reach his or her potential thereby providing our patients the superior health care they deserve. We also encourage employees to be successful in their personal, professional, and spiritual lives.

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## EMPLOYMENT

### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENT**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists provides equal opportunity in employment and prohibits all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment. All employment decisions, policies and practices comply with applicable federal, state, and local anti-discrimination laws.

Lowcountry Women's Specialists will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities, unless doing so would result in undue hardship.

We remind you that, in the U.S., employment is "at-will." This means that you or our company may terminate our employment relationship at any time and for any non-discriminatory reason(s).

Employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisors or administrators. Employees can raise concerns without fear of reprisals.

### **AUTHORIZATION TO WORK**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not lawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility.

### **EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION**

Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions of any information or data may result in Lowcountry Women's Specialists excluding the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

### **EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES**

**FULL-TIME** An employee regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 30 hours in the full-time schedule for his/her unit.

**PART-TIME** An employee regularly scheduled to work at least 20, but fewer than 30 hours per week. These employees are eligible for some benefits sponsored by Lowcountry Women's Specialists, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

**TEMPORARY** An employee hired as an interim replacement to temporarily supplement the work force or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. While temporary employees receive all legally mandated benefits (such as Worker's Compensation Insurance and Social Security), they are ineligible for all of Lowcountry Women's Specialists's other benefit programs.

**PER DIEM** An employee who works sporadically as the workload demands of the facility require. This employee does not work a regular schedule. Per Diem employees are not eligible to participate in benefits offered to other employment categories.

Employees are also designated as either NONEXEMPT or EXEMPT from federal and state wage and hour laws.

NONEXEMPT employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws.

EXEMPT employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. For employees who are EXEMPT, rate of pay is salaried and is not tied directly to hours worked per week.

## **LICENSURE, REGISTRATION AND CERTIFICATIONS**

Many positions within Lowcountry Women's Specialists, especially those that involve direct patient care, require state or national licensure, registration, or certification. If an employee is working in a position with a license, certification or registration requirement, it is his/her responsibility to make sure he/she is current and renewed prior to expiration. Employees are fully responsible for the expense of securing and maintaining these requirements. If an employee's licensure, registration or certification expires, he/she is prohibited from performing any duties that require it until it is renewed. Each employee is also responsible for supplying his/her supervisor and Practice Manager with a copy of his/her current licenses, registrations, and certifications for his/her official personnel file, unless otherwise restricted by state law.

## **PERSONNEL RECORDS**

LCWS must maintain accurate and current personnel records. It is each employee's responsibility to notify the Practice Manager of any changes that are pertinent to their records and/or benefits. This includes, but is not limited to, changes in name, address, phone number, marital status, dependent status, tax information, etc.

## **INITIAL EMPLOYMENT PERIOD**

All employees hired into this practice will participate in a 90-day probationary period. During these 90 days we will have an opportunity to observe your performance and your compatibility with our practice. Also, during these 90 days, you will have the same opportunity to observe the practice and determine whether this position and this practice are right for you.

At the end of the 90-day probationary period, we will discuss your performance and come to one of three conclusions:

1. Your performance and compatibility with this practice is satisfactory and we both agree on the terms of your employment. A job offer is extended.
2. One or both parties disagree on performance and/or compatibility and no job offer is extended.
3. The probationary period is extended.

Benefits and seniority accrual begin when a job offer is extended and accepted following the 90-day probationary period, or the extension thereof unless altered by contractual agreements.

## **PATIENT/CUSTOMER TREATMENT**

Every Lowcountry Women's Specialists employee has a primary responsibility to our patients and customers. Lowcountry Women's Specialists employees must always respond in a professional manner, treating them with dignity and respect and giving them the highest possible quality of care and service. Any employee who abuses a patient or who intentionally neglects a patient will be terminated immediately.

All patient complaints should be directed to the appropriate Supervisor or to the Practice Manager. An employee should never get into a debate or be rude to a patient. It is not an employee's responsibility to handle an irate patient or that patient's family and friends.

## **EMPLOYMENT OF FAMILY MEMBERS**

All applicants for employment with Lowcountry Women's Specialists will be considered and evaluated solely upon individual work-related qualifications. Employment is considered except in the following circumstances:

- There is a direct reporting relationship between the family members.
- The employment would result in family members reporting to the same supervisor.
- The employment would create a potential conflict of interest between their roles and the Company.

Such situations will be resolved on a case-by-case basis. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT STATEMENT**

Employees must not engage in activities that impede their job performance or conflict with the business interests of Lowcountry Women's Specialists.

Employees are hired and continue in Lowcountry Women's Specialists's employ with the understanding that Lowcountry Women's Specialists is their primary employer and that other employment or commercial involvement, which is in conflict with the business interests of Lowcountry Women's Specialists, is strictly prohibited.

Employees are requested to seek further clarification from their supervisor on issues related to the subject of acceptable standards of operation to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In addition, no employee may solicit gifts, money, services or anything else of value, or accept gifts or services valued at more than \$25.00 from any competitor, supplier, vendor, contractor or subcontractor of the Company.

## **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

It is the intent of Lowcountry Women's Specialists to provide all employees an annual assessment of their individual job performance through an objective evaluation process. The goal is to provide all employees candid and thoughtful comments describing how task and specific job responsibilities were completed throughout the review period. This effort attempts to maintain effective job performance and to motivate all employees with performance improvement suggestions to enhance the employee's individual job skills.

The performance review process allows each employee to know how well they are doing, set goals for the future, give and receive formal feedback, clarify job responsibilities and talk openly about their job performance with their immediate Provider, Supervisor and Management Team.

Performance reviews are normally done annually; however, this may be conducted on a more frequent basis at the discretion of the immediate Provider, Supervisor, or Practice Manager.

Any and all excessive tardiness incidents and leave without pay incidents will be considered during the evaluations, whether or not they have been previously discussed with the employee. Any and all other disciplinary actions previously taken will also be considered during the evaluations. ALL incidents have great bearing on the outcome of the employee's performance review.

Pay raises or other issues of compensation may be included in the evaluation process, however, all performance reviews are not considered as or do not imply an immanent wage increase or any other additional compensation.

All employees will receive a copy of their evaluation at the conclusion of the evaluation process and are encouraged and will have the immediate opportunity and up to 10 days after the conclusion of the evaluation to submit additional comments in writing to be included with the final evaluation report.

Every employee is expected to sign the final evaluation report verifying the completion of their individual performance evaluation. An employee's signature does not imply or represent an agreement or disagreement with the contents or any other information provided in the final evaluation report. An employee's signature does however imply that the evaluation has been reviewed and completed with the employee.

All information to include job performance, goals for improved performance or issues of compensation that result from the employee evaluation is strictly confidential. Under no circumstances should any individual employee or a designated representative of the employee disclose or otherwise discuss information from the evaluation process. Any violation may result in counseling, verbal or written reprimands, immediate forfeiture of any pay increase, or employee termination.

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

### HARASSMENT POLICY STATEMENT

Lowcountry Women's Specialists employees have a right to work in an environment free from all forms of illegal discrimination. Consistent with Lowcountry Women's Specialists's respect for the rights and dignity of each employee, harassment, by any supervisor, co-worker, patient, or vendor based on race, sex, national origin, citizenship, religion, color, marital status, disability or impairment, age, sexual orientation and any other characteristic protected by law, will not be sanctioned nor tolerated. All employees should therefore be aware of the following:

1. Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited. Sexual harassment has been defined by government regulations as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature...when submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment... (when) submission to or rejection of such conduct...is used as the basis for employment decisions affect such individual or ...such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work performance or creating an offensive, intimidating, hostile work environment."
2. Harassment on the basis of any other protracted characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that:
  - a. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment;
  - b. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance;
  - or
  - c. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on Lowcountry Women's Specialists's premises or circulated in the workplace.
3. All employees are responsible for reporting any incidents of sexual or other unlawful harassment to their supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or if the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, immediately contact the Practice Manager. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisals.
4. In addition, any employee who believes that he/she is, or has been, the subject of sexual or any other form of harassment by anyone at Lowcountry Women's Specialists, or by any person who does business with Lowcountry Women's Specialists, should, and is encouraged to, bring the matter to the attention of his/her supervisor.
5. All supervisors and managers are responsible for assuring that no employee is subjected to conduct that constitutes sexual or any other form of harassment. Knowledge of harassment should immediately be reported to the Practice Manager or the supervisor.
6. Lowcountry Women's Specialists will take every step to investigate all sexual harassment complaints promptly and to educate employees on sexual harassment and its consequences. To the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action, any complaints of harassment will be treated as confidential. Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
7. Lowcountry Women's Specialists will not, in any way, retaliate against an employee, potential employee, or former employee, who, in good faith, makes a complaint or report of harassment or participates in the investigation of such complaint or report. Retaliation against any individual for, in good faith, reporting a claim of harassment or cooperating in the investigation of it will not be tolerated and will itself be subject to appropriate discipline.

Lowcountry Women's Specialists will take all appropriate steps to enforce this policy.

### VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Lowcountry Women's Specialists recognizes that employees are entitled to work in a safe environment that is free from hazards. Violence in our workplace will not be tolerated or condoned. Therefore, Lowcountry Women's Specialists has adopted a Zero Tolerance Policy for workplace violence. Consistent with this policy, acts or threats of physical violence, including intimidation, harassment and/or coercion, which involve or affect Lowcountry Women's Specialists or occur on Lowcountry Women's Specialists property, will not be tolerated and may be grounds for immediate dismissal.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All Lowcountry Women's Specialists records and information relating to Lowcountry Women's Specialists or its patients and employees are confidential and employees must, therefore, treat all matters accordingly. No Lowcountry Women's Specialists or Lowcountry Women's Specialists-related information, including without limitation, documents, files, records, computer files or similar materials (except in the ordinary course of performing duties on behalf of Lowcountry Women's Specialists) may be removed from Lowcountry Women's Specialists's premises without permission from Lowcountry Women's Specialists.

## **GIFTS FROM PATIENTS AND OTHERS**

Employees are forbidden to accept any personal gifts, loans, tips or gratuities from patients, their relatives or their friends. Only Lowcountry Women's Specialists supervisors have the authority to accept gifts from patients or their friends and family, and only on behalf of the Company.

## **EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists expects each employee to act in a responsible and professional manner at all times, while on our premises or away from our premises conducting Company business or attending continuing education programs. In accepting employment with Lowcountry Women's Specialists, each employee acknowledges a personal responsibility to the Company and to his/her Company-workers for assuring that workplace behavior, job performance and professional practices conform to standards of expected behavior.

Although it is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable, the following are examples of infractions that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

1. Gross misconduct, including but not limited to, falsification of records and/or information, dishonesty, theft or willful destruction of property, and insubordination.
2. Breach of confidentiality, including but not limited to the improper disclosure of PHI while on the job or away from work.
3. Threatening or intimidating behavior, or actual verbal or physical abuse of patients, visitors or other employees, or fighting.
4. Intentional or deliberate use of social media to spread false or inaccurate information, make embarrassing or unkind comments about his/her company or co-workers, patients or competitors while on the job or away from work.
5. Job incompetence or willful neglect of job duties.
6. Abandonment of position.
7. Possession or use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs on company-affiliated grounds, reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or an illegal substance.
8. Possession of firearms or concealed weapons.
9. Any other offense the Company deems serious and subject to immediate termination.

Employees of LCWS are expected to maintain a high level of moral and ethical standards in a professional, caring and pleasant manner when working with other LCWS employees, patients and those that come in contact with this practice.

Each employee is responsible for monitoring his or her own behavior.

All employees are responsible for identifying, dealing with and/or reporting inappropriate behavior which can affect our ability to provide the very best in women's health care. Complaints of physical, psychological or other guaranteed safe working incidents should be reported immediately to the employee's direct supervisor or Practice Manager.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists has a counseling and progressive disciplinary procedure which can be used to alert employees when performance and/or conduct are unacceptable and must be corrected. It may involve verbal or written counseling, probation, suspension, or termination.

Because of poor performance or behavioral problems, you can at any time be placed back on probation for a period to be determined by your Supervisor and the Practice Manager. During this probationary period, you will not earn benefits.



## **PROBLEM RESOLUTION**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists promotes an atmosphere whereby employees can talk freely with members of the management staff. Employees are encouraged to openly discuss with their supervisor any problems, so appropriate action may be taken. If the supervisor cannot be of assistance, the Practice Manager is available for consultation and guidance. The Company is interested in the success and happiness of all our employees. We, therefore, welcome the opportunity to help employees whenever necessary.

If, however, an employee believes that a condition of his/her employment or a decision affecting him/her is unjust or inequitable, he/she is encouraged to present the problem in writing to the department head within five (5) calendar days of the supervisor's decision.

## **COMPENSATION**

### **TIME RECORDS/PAYROLL PROCEDURE AND DEDUCTIONS**

It is the responsibility of each employee to record honestly and accurately, on a daily basis, all hours worked along with time taken for paid leave. The employee is the only person authorized to record his/her attendance.

Exempt employees should check with supervisors and follow rules that apply when completing time sheets.

The following rules apply to recording time for all non-exempt employees:

Non-exempt employees should sign or punch in at the beginning of each shift. Also sign or punch out at the end of a shift. Each time a meal break is taken, non-exempt employees must sign or punch out when leaving and sign or punch in when returning. This must also be done each time employees are away from work during assigned shifts, except for scheduled rest periods.

### **WORK SCHEDULES**

By nature of our business, employees may be required to perform their jobs at both Lowcountry Women's Specialists locations. Any questions regarding work schedules should be directed to your supervisor.

### **OVERTIME PAY**

Depending on departmental work needs, employees will be expected to work overtime when requested to do so. Prior approval of a supervisor, however, is required before a non-exempt employee works overtime. If overtime is worked without prior approval, disciplinary action may be initiated.

### **REST AND MEAL PERIODS**

Rest periods and meal periods are scheduled for non-exempt employees for rest and relaxation. They should be enjoyed away from work areas. Employees will be given one (1) ten (10) minute rest period or coffee break for every four (4) hours they work. They will also be given thirty (30) minute meal periods or lunch breaks for every eight (8) hours they work. Employees are paid while on rest periods but not while on meal periods.

Employees should make sure jobs are covered while others are away from work areas. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action if they are repeatedly late in coming back to work from rest periods or meal periods.

## BENEFITS

### EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Benefits and seniority accrual begin when a job offer is extended and accepted following the 90-day probationary period, or the extension thereof unless altered by contractual agreements.

Benefits are paid holidays, paid time off, health insurance, participation in the 401K retirement plan and voluntary supplemental insurance policies.

### HOLIDAYS

There are six paid holidays each year. These holidays are as follows:

1. New Year's Day
2. Memorial Day
3. Independence Day
4. Labor Day
5. Thanksgiving Day
6. Christmas Day

### JURY DUTY

Lowcountry Women's Specialists encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. A leave of up to two weeks to serve as a juror or witness will be granted to any full-time or part-time employee who is notified to serve. The employee may take their accrued PTO to cover the days or may take LWOP. An employee on jury duty is expected to report to work any day he/she is excused from service.

The employee should immediately notify his/her supervisor when called to serve. Additionally, a copy of the notice to serve should be attached to the employee's time record for attendance purposes. Upon the employee's return, he/she should notify the supervisor and submit a signed Certificate of Jury Service.

Any applicable state laws regarding payment for jury duty will take precedence over this policy, and this policy will be changed accordingly. As legally required, Lowcountry Women's Specialists will continue to provide health insurance benefits, and Personal Leave will continue to accrue for the full term of the jury duty absence.

Either Lowcountry Women's Specialists or the employee may request an excuse from jury duty if, in Lowcountry Women's Specialists's judgment, the employee's absence would create serious operational difficulties.

### LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Employees are difficult to replace on a temporary basis, and for this reason, extended leaves of absence are generally not granted.

When an employee has an unscheduled time off from work, (i.e. sickness) they should notify their immediate Supervisor as soon as possible. When the employee returns to work, it is their responsibility to complete an "Unscheduled PTO/LWOP" form for personnel records and payroll. - NO EXCEPTIONS. These forms should be turned in on the day the employee returns to work. Failure to do so may result in employee not receiving compensation for the days missed from work and the days absent from work being considered an unexcused absence (time off without pay).

Under special circumstances, however, the following brief leaves of absence may be approved.

1. **Leaves of Absence required by law:** all employees are eligible from the first day of employment for leaves of absences required by law. Approvals are granted for:
  - Military
  - Jury duty or witness duty

- Other legally required leaves

Unless specifically provided otherwise, these LOAs shall be available only on an unpaid basis.

2. **General Leaves of Absence:** Full-time employees who have worked for Lowcountry Women's Specialists for at least one year and have worked at least 1,250 hours within that year may request brief unpaid leaves of absence.

An employee is granted up to five (5) days or portions thereof, within a 12-month period. Each day or portion of a day more than 5 days can result in a disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

An employee having no time accrued for extended leave does not earn any benefits during that time. This includes accrual of vacation days and paid holidays. The employee may elect to continue insurance coverage but is responsible to pay their regular payroll insurance deductions and the practice will still cover their portion. The employee will begin to earn all benefits when they return to work.

When an employee is out for FMLA or Worker's Compensation, all PTO time must be used first. Once the PTO is exhausted, the employee will not accrue benefits while out without pay (i.e. PTO and holiday pay).

The employee should file a request for a General Leave of Absence with the Practice Manager at least four (4) weeks in advance so arrangements can be made to cover job responsibilities. Supervisors and management, at their discretion, may grant approvals for educational and personal leaves.

3. **Bereavement Leave:** In the event of a death or serious illness in the immediate family, for which a leave is not required by law, a full-time or part-time employee may request approval for an emergency or bereavement leave of up to three (3) paid days. The employee may use their accrued PTO to cover the days or may take leave without pay (LWOP).

Immediate family of the employee is defined to include:

- Spouse,
- Parents, step-parents, and grandparents that served as the employees legal guardian,
- Children, including biological, step, adopted, and legal guardians,
- Brothers and sisters of the employee

For non-immediate family, defined as aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws, grandparents, the full-time or part-time employee may request approval for a bereavement leave of one paid day.

#### 4. **Inclement Weather Days**

Inclement weather Days are used for days when the weather is not safe for LCWS to open its doors. Weather days include, but not limited to: Hurricanes, Snowstorms, Floods, Etc. The employee will be able to use their accrued PTO to cover any days out or LWOP may be taken.

### **LEAVE UNDER THE FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT ("FMLA")**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides eligible employees with up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons during a 12 month period. During this leave an eligible employee is entitled to continued group health plan coverage as if the employee had continued to work. At the conclusion of the leave, subject to some exceptions, an employee generally has a right to return to the same or to an equivalent position.

**Employee Eligibility Criteria:** To be eligible for FMLA leave, an employee must have been employed by Lowcountry Women's Specialists;

For at least 12 months (which need not be consecutive) and worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 month period immediately prior to the commencement of the leave; and

At a work location, (a) with 50 or more employees; or (b) where 50 or more employees are located within 75 miles of the work location.

#### **Limitations on FMLA Leave**

When both spouses are employed by Lowcountry Women's Specialists, there may be special limitation on FMLA leave for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child, for aftercare of the newborn or newly placed child, and to care for a parent (not in-laws) with a serious health condition.

### **Intermittent or Reduced Work Schedule Leave**

Intermittent leave is leave taken in separate blocks of time. Contact Practice Manager for definition of intermittent leave for the care of a newborn or for a newly placed child; leave because of an employee's own serious health condition, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition.

### **Requests for FMLA Leave**

An employee should request FMLA by contacting the Practice Manager and completing the application and appropriate medical forms they will receive.

When leave is foreseeable for childbirth, placement of a child or planned medical treatment for the employee's or family member's serious health condition, the employee is required to provide Lowcountry Women's Specialists with at least 30 days advance notice, or such shorter notice as is practicable (i.e., within 1 or 2 business days of learning of the need for the leave).

### **Use of Paid and Unpaid Leave**

FMLA provides eligible employees with up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave. If an employee has accrued paid leave (e.g., vacation and personal leave) the employee must use any qualifying paid leave first. The substitution of paid leave for unpaid leave does not extend the 12 work week leave period.

While an employee is on FMLA leave they will suffer no loss of paid leave time benefits earned or length of service accrued prior to the commencement of the Leave. However, for the purposes of determining eligibility, no length of service shall accrue during the FMLA leave.

An employee on FMLA leave shall be eligible for holiday benefits only for holidays that occur during the time when he/she is receiving pay for previously earned but unused vacation and/or sick leave. Further, an employee away from work on an approved leave shall be ineligible for income-continuation benefits due to bereavement and service as a juror or subpoenaed witness.

### **Maintenance of Health Benefits**

During FMLA leave an employee is entitled to continued medical, dental, life, long term disability, and AFLAC coverage's under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had continued to work, provided the employee has made arrangements to pay, in a timely manner, the premium portion which he/she would normally be responsible for had he/she remained actively employed.

### **Return from FMLA Leave**

Upon return from FMLA leave, Lowcountry Women's Specialists will place the employee in the same position the employee held before the leave or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. In addition, anniversary dates used for review purposes will generally be moved forward one (1) day for each day leave is unpaid.

### **Limitations on Reinstatement**

An employee is entitled to reinstatement only if he/she would have continued to be employed had FMLA leave not been taken. Thus, an employee is not entitled to reinstatement if, because of a layoff, reduction in force or other reason, the employee would not be employed at the time job restoration is sought.

### **Failure to Return to Work Following FMLA Leave**

If the employee does not return to work following the conclusion of FMLA leave, the employee will be considered to have voluntarily resigned. Lowcountry Women's Specialists may recover health insurance premiums that the Company paid on behalf of the employee during any unpaid FMLA leave except the Company's share of such premiums may not be recovered if the employee fails to return to work because of the employee's or family member's serious health condition or because of other circumstances beyond the employee's control. In such cases, Lowcountry Women's Specialists may require the employee to provide medical certification of the employee's or the family member's serious health condition.

## **LACTATION ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

At Lowcountry Women's Specialists we promote and support breastfeeding and the expression of breast milk by employees who choose to continue breastfeeding when they return to work for a period of one year after your child's birth.

Flexible lactation times shall be established for each employee's specific/individual needs. When possible, the lactation time should run concurrently with any break time already provided. Lactation time beyond the regular break time is unpaid and will be addressed by the employee's supervisor.

A private space available to the employee will include an electrical outlet, comfortable seating and a table top within close proximity to the employee's work area. The lactation area will be determined by the employee and her supervisor.

Lowcountry Women's Specialists will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment of breastfeeding mothers.

This policy will be communicated to all employees who request family leave.

### **PERSONAL DAYS OFF**

The purpose of this policy is to define the conditions under which a person is not at work and how that employee will be compensated for that time.

### **PAID TIME OFF**

LCWS provides annual paid time off for active, full-time salaried and full time hourly scheduled employees. Full time is defined as being regularly scheduled for 36 hours per week. PTO accrual begins after the 90-day probationary period, from date of hire. The amount of paid time off you are entitled to each year is based on your date of hire and the length of your continuous service according to the following schedule.

<b>Years of Service:</b>	<b>HRs earned per HRs worked</b>	<b>Total Hours:</b>
Up to 4 years, 364 days	0.077 hrs./hr. worked	up to 144 Hours (18 days)
5 years to 9 year, 364 days	0.1026 hrs./hr. worked	up to 192 Hours (24 days)
10 years and more	0.1282 hrs./hr. worked	up to 240 Hours (30 days)

PTO earned will be based on the hours worked each week. Any hours worked over 36 are not subject to PTO accrual. PTO is only earned for hours that an employee actually works. PTO is not earned while the employee is on PTO.

Employees are encouraged to use their PTO each year. If not, all used, a balance may be carried forward. However, employees may only carry forward 80 Hours. July 31st is the rollover date. Unused time over the 80 hours will be forfeited. PTO cannot be paid out as salary at any time. (sold back)

PTO is used for vacation hours and sick leave. Vacation hours must be requested and approved by the employee's direct supervisor. The employee must have enough PTO hours to cover the requested time off. When an employee is out sick, PTO will be used to cover any days off. A written doctor's note may be required for sick leave. If an employee has a requested approved vacation on the books and PTO hours had to be used due to illness, the requested vacation may be reduced to only the amount of PTO hours available.

All employees, except providers, should submit paid time off requests to their Supervisor for approval. All providers submit their requests to the Practice Manager.

### **PAID TIME OFF ACCRUAL FOR SHORTENED WORK WEEK EMPLOYEES**

Employees who work an approved shortened work week by taking a half day off every week will not accrue paid time off as regular full time employees. These short week employees will accrue 4 PTO hours less than regular work week employees and must work an average of 30 – 32 hours to accrue these benefits.

Scheduling a Friday as a paid time off day is the equivalent of using one-half a day for hourly and salaried employees, excluding providers. Providers will be charged for one day paid time off when scheduled on a Friday.

### **Shortened Work Week Employee's**

Employees who work an approved shortened work week (32 hours to 35-hours full time equivalent) will earn PTO based on years of employment with the practice. The rate of PTO hours earned are listed below.

<b>Years of Service:</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
Up to and including 4 years, 364 days	up to 128 Hours (16 days)
5 years to 9 years, 364 days	up to 170 Hours (21 days)
10 years and more	up to 213 Hours (27 days)

### **LEAVE WITHOUT PAY, UNAPPROVED**

Leave without pay, Unapproved (LWOPUN) is used in the event an employee calls out sick and has no PTO accrued. Once LWOPUN is used it is considered an offense. An employee is granted up to five days of portions of a day, within a 12-month period. Each day or portion of a day more than 5 days can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

When an employee has an unscheduled time off from work, (i.e. sickness) they should notify their immediate Supervisor as soon as possible. When the employee returns to work, it is their responsibility to complete an "Unscheduled PTO/LWOP" form for personnel records and payroll. - NO EXCEPTIONS. These forms should be turned in on the day the employee returns to work.

Circumstances may arise where LWOP needs to be approved on a case by case basis that does not fit in the other categories. The employee may make a request for LWOP that will then be considered by practice managers.

If an employee is out sick, the employee may be required to have a written medical excuse.

An employee will not accrue additional benefits while absent without pay. Paid benefits will be appropriately prorated.

## **ON-THE-JOB**

### **ATTENDANCE, PUNCTUALITY, AND DEPENDABILITY**

Dependability, attendance, punctuality, and a commitment to do the job right are essential at all times. As such, employees are expected to work on all scheduled work days and during all scheduled work hours and to report to work on time. Moreover, an employee must notify his/her supervisor a minimum of 30 minutes before his/her scheduled starting time if he/she expects to be late or absent. The employee must call his/her immediate supervisor each day of his/her absence, a minimum of 30 minutes before his/her scheduled starting time, until a date of return has been established.

An employee, who fails to contact his/her immediate supervisor for three work days to properly report inability to work, may be considered as having voluntarily resigned. An employee who fails to follow the proper call-in procedures may be subject to disciplinary action. A careful record of absenteeism and lateness is kept by the employee's supervisor and becomes part of the personnel record. Absenteeism and lateness lessen an employee's chances for advancement and may result in termination.

### **PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND CONDUCT**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists expects employees to maintain a neat, well-groomed appearance at all times.

All personnel are in direct contact with patients, families, physicians, and the public, therefore each individual must dress with good taste and accordingly with established guidelines. Each employee should represent the practice and their profession with self-pride and be responsible for reflecting that image.

Cleanliness is a necessary for all personnel in every detail. The following are prerequisites to good grooming:

1. Good personal hygiene, regular bathing, and good oral hygiene.
2. Use of a deodorant.
3. Neat, clean clothing daily. Any article that is too stained or torn should be replaced. Clothing should not be wrinkled or dirty.

**Hair:** Hair must be neat in appearance at all times and must not detract from the total professional appearance. No extreme hairstyles or ornamentation is suitable. Mustaches, beards, and sideburns must be clean and neatly trimmed. Partially shaven facial hair is not acceptable.

**Nails:** Fingernails should be clean, neat, and of appropriate length. Use polish that is not too distracting and extreme.

**Undergarments:** Undergarments are to be worn and styled appropriately. Bras or camisoles, and underwear are to be worn at all times. An appropriate slip must be worn under dress or skirt when needed. Undergarments should not be visible at any time.

**Shoes:** Footwear should be clean, in good repair, and of a style that does not hinder work performance or personal safety. Sandals in good taste are permitted. Uniformed staff must wear white leather tennis shoes or nurse's shoes. Canvas or cloth tennis shoes are not permitted.

**Body Piercing:** There will be no extreme body piercing allowed (i.e. brows, nose, lip & tongue).

### **UNIFORMS**

All employees are expected to dress in a professional manner. Employees wearing uniforms should dress as follows:

Clean, neat, ironed uniforms are to be worn at all times. Uniform pants that are cuffed are not permitted. Nylon or knit pants are not permitted. White socks, white leather tennis shoes or Nurses' shoes are required. Canvas or cloth tennis shoes are not permitted. All white shoes must have white laces.

If you need a cover over your uniform, you may wear a white Nurse's jacket or lab coat. Sweaters of all kinds, other jackets, or different colors are not permitted.

**MEN:**

Shirt with tie to be worn when seeing patients in the office. No scrubs in the office while seeing patients except when seeing a work-in emergency or expecting delivery very soon.

**WOMEN:**

Uniforms as required. Dress slacks, suits, skirt and blouse, dresses.

Stockings unless pants or dress length longer than ¼ distance between knee and ankle. Dress shoes and sandals are appropriate in summer. No tennis shoes except when part of a uniform. There may be extenuating circumstances for shoes when medically necessary.

**UNAPPROPRIATE ATTIRE:**

T-Shirts

Low-Cut revealing blouses or dresses

Sundresses (Backless or Strapless)

Halter Tops or Tube Tops

Shorts

Sweat suits / Sweatshirts

Miniskirts (skirts must be at or below the knee)

Jeans or Corduroys of any color

Articles of clothing with advertising logos, obscene logos and logos promoting alcohol or drugs

Midriff blouses or tops

Capri pants may be worn if length is mid-calf or longer.

Approval for exceptions to the dress code (i.e. Holidays or Denim Day) may be given by the Practice Manager.

MANAGEMENT HAS THE DISCRETION TO SEND ANY EMPLOYEE HOME FOR UNPROFESSIONAL ATTIRE OR PRESENTATION.

**IDENTIFICATION BADGES**

In order to identify all staff to our patients, visitors, and other employees, ID Badges or our monogrammed lab jacket must be worn at all times during work hours. The practice will provide the initial badge issued. Any lost or misplaced badges will be replaced by the practice at a direct cost to the employee.

Questions concerning appropriate dress or personal appearance should be directed to your supervisor. If an employee's supervisor determines his/her grooming or any particular item of clothing to be incompatible with Company policy, his/her supervisor may request him/her to return home to remedy the situation and report back for work. In such cases, the employee will not be paid for time spent away from the office.

You are expected to conduct yourself in accordance with company policies and procedures when in company uniform on or off premises.

## **VISITORS IN THE WORKPLACE**

Access to Lowcountry Women's Specialists facilities is limited to Company employees and those having business with Lowcountry Women's Specialists. Restricting unauthorized visitors protects against theft, ensures security of equipment, protects confidential information, safeguards employee and patient welfare and avoids potential distractions and disturbances. All visitors should be escorted by a Company employee. Visits by friends and family members should be brief and limited to times when they will not adversely affect the performance of the employee's responsibilities. Visits should be limited to public areas such as break room and lobby as to not disrupt service to our patients and co-workers.

Any employee who notices an unauthorized visitor on our premises should immediately notify his/her supervisor.

## **EMPLOYER INFORMATION AND PROPERTY**

The protection of Company business information, property, and all other assets is vital to the interests and success of Lowcountry Women's Specialists. No Company related information or property, including without limitation, documents, files, records, computer files, equipment, office supplies, or similar materials (except in the ordinary course of performing duties on behalf of the Company) may be removed from the Company's premises. In addition, when an employee leaves Lowcountry Women's Specialists, the employee must return to the Company all Company related information and property that the employee has in his/her possession, including without limitation, documents, files, records, manuals, information stored on a personal computer or on a computer disk, supplies, and equipment or office supplies. Violation of this policy is a serious offense and may result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination and/or legal recovery actions.

## **HIPAA POLICY**

In order to comply with all applicable laws and regulator requirements and to ensure the privacy and protection of our patients all Lowcountry Women's Specialists employees will receive HIPAA training during their new hire orientation. All employees of Lowcountry Women's Specialists are required to ensure the privacy of all protected health information of our patients. If an employee is found to be in violation of HIPAA or to have breached patient privacy in anyway, disciplinary actions in conjunction with retraining will be required as determined by the appropriate supervisor.

## **VOICE, E-MAIL AND INTERNET POLICY STATEMENT**

Employees with access are responsible for using the voice, electronic mail (e-mail) and internet systems properly and in accordance with this policy. Any questions about this policy should be addressed to your supervisor.

These communications and information systems are the property of Lowcountry Women's Specialists. They are being provided by the Company for use in conducting Company business. All communications and information transmitted by, received from or stored in these systems are Company records and the property of Lowcountry Women's Specialists.

Employees have no right of personal privacy in any matter stored in, created, received, or sent over the Lowcountry Women's Specialists voice and e-mail systems.

The Company, in its discretion as owner of the voice and e-mail systems, reserves and may exercise the right to monitor, access, retrieve, and delete any matter stored in, created, received or sent over the systems, for any reason without the permission of any employee, and without notice.

Users should routinely delete outdated or otherwise unnecessary voice, e-mail, and computer files. These deletions will help keep the systems running smoothly and effectively, as well as minimize maintenance costs.

Employees are reminded to be courteous to other users of these systems and always to conduct themselves in a professional manner. E-mail and voice messages are sometimes misdirected or forwarded and may be viewed by persons other than the intended recipient. Users should compose electronic communications with no less care, judgment, and responsibility than they would use for letters or internal memoranda written on Company letterhead.

Because electronic records and computer files may be subject to discovery in litigation, employees are expected to avoid making statements in voice, e-mail, or computer files that would not reflect favorably on the employee or Lowcountry Women's Specialists if disclosed in litigation or otherwise.

Any employee who discovers misuse of the voice and e-mail systems should immediately contact their supervisor. Violations of the Company's voice and e-mail policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The Company reserves the right to modify this policy at any time, with or without notice. Use of any aspect of the Company's computer system constitutes consent by the user to all of the terms and conditions of this policy.



## **USE OF BUSINESS EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

The personal use of company business equipment (i.e., telephone, voice-mail, telefacsimile, computers, e-mail, cell phone, and postal meters) for non-business-related purposes interferes with the Company's ability to serve patients and customers effectively and reduces business efficiency.

Therefore, employees are responsible to keep personal telephone calls (incoming and outgoing) to a minimum and, except for emergencies, limit their calls to the meal period and to time prior to and following scheduled work hours.

Employees are discouraged from directing personal mail to their work address. The Company cannot guarantee the confidentiality of personal mail delivered to our business address since such items could be opened by others.

## **USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES**

An employee may use a personal vehicle on Company business only with the approval of his/her supervisor. If approved, the employee is responsible for maintaining appropriate automobile insurance coverage, required by the state in which the vehicle is registered, and possessing a current valid driver's license.

Lowcountry Women's Specialists may require proof of insurance and a copy of the employee's current driver's license before he/she is permitted to use his/her personal vehicle on Company business.

Employees who use their personal vehicle on Company business on a regular basis are required to inform their insurance carrier of this fact, obtain the necessary level of coverage, observe all driver-passenger safety laws, and speed, parking, motor vehicle, and traffic regulations.

Employees are prohibited from operating their personal vehicle on Company business whenever their ability to drive safely may be impaired or diminished for any reason. Employees are not allowed to use cell phone for work related business while operating any vehicle. Under no circumstances may an employee, while on Company business, be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Violation of this policy may result in immediate termination.

Employees using personal vehicles for Company business may be compensated for their expenses on a cents-per-mile traveled basis reimbursed at the current Company specified allowance rate. In addition, the employee may be reimbursed for all "out-of-pocket" expenses (for example, tolls, and parking fees) in accordance with the travel guidelines communicated by the employee's supervisor. All employees using personal vehicles for business travel should contact the Practice Manager to receive the travel guidelines.

Fines for a traffic violation committed while the employee is operating his/her own vehicle on Company business is the employee's responsibility. If the employee's personal vehicle becomes involved in a traffic accident while being used for Company business, the employee is required to, at the earliest opportunity, notify his/her supervisor of the event and provide the supervisor with a copy of the police accident report. The particulars associated with the accident are solely the employee's responsibility and must be addressed through the employee's personal insurance carrier.

Employees should not use their personal vehicles to transport patients.

## **INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS AND SEARCHES**

From time to time, the Company may be required to conduct internal investigations pertaining to security, auditing, or work-related matters. Employees are required to cooperate fully with and assist in these investigations if requested to do so. Management may try to obtain an employee's consent before conducting a search of work areas or personal belongings, but may not always be able to do so. Whenever necessary, at Management's discretion, employees' work areas (i.e., desks, file cabinets, etc) and personal belongings (i.e., brief cases, handbags, etc) may be subject to a search. Employees are required to cooperate.

## **TRAVELING ON COMPANY BUSINESS**

Employees traveling on Lowcountry Women's Specialists business must be sensitive to options that afford cost and time savings. Lowcountry Women's Specialists reimburses out-of-pocket expenses incurred for travel, accommodations, meals, and other business-travel related incidentals. All business travel must be approved in advance by his/her supervisor.

An employee involved in an accident while traveling on business, should promptly report the incident to his/her immediate supervisor and Human Resources. Vehicles owned, leased, or rented by Lowcountry Women's Specialists may not be used for personal use without prior approval from the employee's supervisor.

## **BULLETIN BOARDS/SOLICITATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE**

In an effort to assure a productive and harmonious work environment, persons not employed by Lowcountry Women's Specialists may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose.

Lowcountry Women's Specialists recognizes that employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace, and the company encourages support of charitable and other community organizations and groups. However, employees may not solicit or distribute literature concerning these activities during working time or in working areas. (Working time does not include meal periods, work breaks, or any other periods in which employees are not on duty.)

## **HOUSEKEEPING**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists takes its responsibility to provide a safe and healthful working environment seriously. The public and our patients often visit our offices and facilities; therefore, keeping our buildings, offices and work stations presentable is good business. To assist the custodians, at the end of each day employees should leave all papers, books, and business materials in order.

In making the work environment more personal, employees should be careful of the following:

- Safety always comes first! No object can interfere with workplace safety.
- No display may be derogatory of any person or system of beliefs.
- Objects that hinder work efforts or are inappropriate for the workplace are not permitted.
- Recognize workplace hazards and take precautions to ensure your safety and the safety of others.
- Report hazardous practices or unsafe conditions to your manager immediately.
- Actively participate in the prevention of on-the-job accidents and work-related illnesses.

## **EMPLOYEE PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Each employee is responsible for their own personal property while at work, as well as for taking proper precautions to protect it.

## **PARKING**

Whenever possible, parking is provided for Lowcountry Women's Specialists employees on facility grounds. Employees who work in a facility or department where patients are treated are requested to park away from the main entrances. Adequate parking spaces must be left in these areas for emergency vehicles, physicians, and visitors.

## **HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY**

### **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**

The purpose of this policy is to clearly outline the position this practice takes regarding substance abuse.

LCWS is committed to the following goals regarding substance abuse, both from a humanitarian and professional standpoint:

- \* To maintain a safe, productive, drug free and alcohol free work environment for all employees.
- \* To ensure the safety and well-being of our employees, patients, suppliers and others who enter the practice.
- \* To promote optimum job performance and employee moral so as to ensure our Commitment to Excellence in Women's Health Care.

### **PRACTICE:**

It is the intent of LCWS to maintain a Drug-Free work place. Any illegal act in conjunction with a controlled substance is deemed UNACCEPTABLE and is inconsistent with the behavior expected of employees in this practice.

The sale, purchase, transfer, use, possession or reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on company business or on company premises is prohibited. Any employee who sells, purchases, transfers, uses, possesses or reports to work intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be subject to corrective action which may include termination. This prohibition applies to alcohol and all forms of narcotics (including marijuana), depressants, stimulants or hallucinogenic drugs. The only exception to this prohibition is the use of prescribed drugs under the direction of a physician.

If management has reason to believe that an employee is in violation of the company policy with respect to possession or use of drugs or alcohol, management reserves the right to inspect its property at any time provided such inspection is done in the presence of another employee. Management also reserves the right, when there is reason to believe that an employee may be in violation of this policy, to request that the employee submit to an appropriate test in order to determine compliance.

LCWS is concerned only with those situations where the use of drugs and/or alcohol interfere with an employee's health and job performance, adversely affects the safety and job performance of others in the practice or may be detrimental to our patients who have placed their trust in us to provide safe and professional health care. There is no intent to intrude upon the private lives of our employees. Employees should always remember that they are associated with LCWS and their behavior may directly reflect upon the organization.

### **EMPLOYEE MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

If the situation warrants it, a supervisor may require an employee to provide your supervisor with a physician-signed statement releasing them back to work to perform the essential functions of their job after repeated absences due to illness or injury before returning after being out-of-work on a medical leave.

On occasion, a current employee may be required to take a medical examination to determine fitness for duty. Such examinations will be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and performed at Lowcountry Women's Specialists's expense.

Information on an employee's medical condition or history will be kept separate from other employee information and maintained confidentially. Access to this information will be limited to only those who have a legitimate need to receive copies of employee health files.

### **RIGHT-TO-KNOW**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists complies with all applicable federal and local occupational health, safety, and hazard communications regulations. In accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFT 1910.1200) the Company provides all employees with workplace health and safety information, periodic in-service training, and maintains reference materials which include the procedures to be observed to protect the health and well-being of our employees against the unnecessary spread of certain diseases.

In addition, every facility at Lowcountry Women's Specialists maintains a Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS's) Manual which describes the components contained in chemical products found in the workplace. For more information on these matters, contact your supervisor.

### **SAFETY**

Employees and supervisors receive periodic workplace safety training. The training covers potential safety and health hazards and safe work practices and procedures to eliminate or minimize hazards.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, immediately notify their supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance procedures, such as Workers' Compensation benefits.

Regardless of state laws, all employees, while driving or riding on Company business must use available passenger restraints at all times when the vehicle is in motion. This includes company-owned or personally-owned vehicles, rental vehicles, and public transportation vehicles such as taxis, airport limousines, hotel/motel shuttle vehicles, etc.

Contact your supervisor or the Practice Manager immediately to report any and all accidents in which the employee is involved, as the driver or passenger in the car, while on company business. A police report is to be completed should there be an accident, and a copy of the police report should be made available to the employee's supervisor.

Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken if an employee is observed not obeying traffic laws when driving or riding on Company business.

### **WORKER'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists provides a Workers' Compensation insurance program as required by state law.

An employee who sustains work-related injuries or illnesses should inform his/her supervisor or administrator immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it be reported immediately. This enables eligible employees to qualify for benefits as quickly as possible.

Neither Lowcountry Women's Specialists nor its insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of Workers' Compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by Lowcountry Women's Specialists.

### **SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT**

For health, safety and legal reasons, Lowcountry Women's Specialists prohibits smoking while on Company property and while conducting business on behalf of Lowcountry Women's Specialists. It is everyone's responsibility to help ensure that we continue to provide a smokeless environment for our employees and our patients. If a patient or guest is smoking, please help them understand our policy and ask them to step outside or extinguish their cigarette.

### **FIRE SAFETY**

Employees are expected to know the locations of fire extinguishers in their work location and how to use them. Employees are also responsible for knowing what to do during drills and actual fires.

1. An employee should remove any patient or injured person from immediate danger, when possible.
2. If a fire is suspected or discovered, an employee should call the fire department (911) immediately. Do not wait for the fire alarm signal to sound.
3. Fire extinguishers are located on walls within the building. They are multi-type extinguishers which will extinguish most types of fires. However, employees should only use them if they can safely do so.
4. If ordered to evacuate, employees should follow the corridors to the stairwells. Remain calm and walk; don't run! Do not use elevators under any circumstances. Close all doors in the area.
5. Employees should convene in open parking areas. On site supervisor will determine when it is safe to enter the building.

To prevent fires, remember to follow these basic guidelines:

1. Check electrical cords before plugging them into electrical outlets. Do not use worn, frayed, or damaged cords.
2. Avoid using extension cords, multiple plug adapters, or personal appliances at work.
3. Always store flammable materials in a cool, uncluttered, locked place. Never allow smoking, lit matches, or lights around flammable materials.
4. Heated or hot electrical cords, electrical outlets, or walls mean that there is something wrong with the wiring or electrical equipment. If employees discover such, they should unplug the equipment and tell their supervisors about it immediately.
5. Smoke only in designated areas.

### **DISABLING AND LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES IN THE WORKPLACE**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists does not discriminate against a qualified individual with disabling and/or life-threatening illnesses or a disability with regard to job application, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or other terms, conditions, or privileges of employment.

Further, Lowcountry Women's Specialists the Company recognizes that employees with disabling and/or life-threatening illnesses and other disabilities may wish and be physically able to work a regular or modified work schedule. The Company seeks to accommodate these employees by allowing them to work as long as they are able to perform essential job functions, with or without reasonable accommodation, provided medical evidence indicates that their conditions are not a (direct) threat to themselves or others.

Lowcountry Women's Specialists shall make reasonable accommodation, consistent with the business needs of the Company, for employees with disabling and/or life-threatening illnesses and disabilities. While making those accommodations, however, the Company also recognizes its obligations to provide a safe work environment for all employees. Therefore, an employee with a disabling and/or life-threatening illness may be required to provide his/her supervisor with appropriate medical directions to ensure that the employee's condition does not pose a significant risk of substantial harm to himself/herself or to other employees.

Information attained as a result of a permissible medical examination shall be collected and maintained on separate forms and separated from other medical files the Company may have on an employee. All information shall be treated confidentially, with every effort made to ensure that only those who need to know have access.

All employees are responsible for appropriate behavior in working with co-workers with disabling and/or life-threatening illnesses. Employees are encouraged to contact the appropriate Human Resource representative for additional information about a specific disabling and/or life-threatening illness, guidance on managing a life-threatening illness, or concern about the possible contagious nature, or risk of substantial harm in the workplace of another employee's illness.

## **DISASTER PLANS**

Employees are responsible for being familiar with department disaster plans and are expected to follow them in the event of a disaster. Employees should review disaster plans periodically and are responsible for knowing what to do during drills and actual disasters.

In the event of an earthquake or tornado, remain calm and remember to follow these basic guidelines:

1. Listen for alarms, civil defense horns and similar warnings. Turn on the radio for instructions.
2. Do not leave the building or allow patients to leave the building unless given an evacuation order by the person in charge.
3. Stay inside. If the building starts to shake or move, help get all patients and staff under something very firm. This might be a desk, a well-supported table, an arch, or a doorway.
4. When things seem to quiet down, do not rush around or allow patients to rush about. Caution is the key. If there is significant damage, flooring may be unstable and many things could still fall and cause injuries.
5. Certain natural disasters are unpredictable. Tornadoes have been known to double back; earthquakes always have after shocks. Always continue disaster duties until "all clear" signals are given.

Employees with questions regarding the disaster plan for their department should contact their supervisor.

## **SECURITY**

**COMPUTERS:** LCWS provides anti-virus protection and firewall safety for our computers, which are updated each year. Where necessary, privacy screens are installed on the computer screens for added security.

Downloading of programs, screen savers, etc., without management approval is strictly prohibited. **COMPUTERS ARE TO BE USED FOR BUSINESS ONLY.**

In the event of a catastrophic disaster (i.e. hurricane or tornado), we have an internet based medical software system that is accessible from other locations. Information is saved and backed-up daily.

The medical software system is password protected and only accessible by authorized personnel. There is accessibility after hours limited only to certain authorized individuals. The user passwords require changing after 90 days.

**PHONES:** Our phone software system is also protected by anti-virus and firewall programs.

In the event of a catastrophic disaster (i.e. hurricane or tornado), if our phone system fails to function, patient calls are forwarded to an answering service. This ensures that our patients are still provided for and there is no disruption of service.]

**ADT SECURITY SYSTEM:** Certain individuals have codes to access the security alarm system. These codes are to be kept confidential and will be deleted once employment is terminated. If you suspect that someone has obtained your security code you are to notify management immediately. The code will be deleted and you will be issued a new one.

Entry into the building after business hours must be approved by management. The system is checked periodically for such entrances into the building.

### **ENTRY KEYPAD:**

All employees have a code for the keypad located at the back rear of the building. Your keypad code is to be kept confidential. All keypad codes will be deleted once employment is terminated. If you suspect that someone has obtained your keypad code you are to notify management immediately. The code will be deleted and you will be issued a new one.

Entry of your keypad code does NOT disarm the security system.

### **BUSINESS INTERRUPTION**

At various times of the year, weather conditions, building damage, electrical outages, fire, etc., may interrupt the day-to-day operations; however, all employees are expected to make reasonable efforts to report for work as scheduled. Certain circumstances may occasionally result in management's decision to implement a full or partial closing or delayed opening of the office or practice. Management will choose to close the office or practice when the safety of the staff or patients is perceived to be at risk. Exceptions may be made in some circumstances at the discretion of Management as to the opening or closing of the practice or office. Employees will not be paid during these business interruptions, but do have the choice of using paid time off (PTO) in these instances.

## **SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT**

### **RESIGNATION**

If an employee resigns, it is expected that the employee will provide the Company with a written two-week advance notice. Directors and managers are expected to provide a written four-week advance notice. We appreciate the employee not including vacation days or personal days in the notice period. If the employee's supervisor believes it is advisable for the employee to leave prior to the end of the employee's two-week notice, the employee will be paid for actual hours worked.

A former employee who becomes reemployed by Lowcountry Women's Specialists within 30 days of termination will be reinstated and given credit for past service.

### **INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION**

Lowcountry Women's Specialists employees have the status of "employee-at-will" meaning that no one has a contractual right, expressed or implied, to remain in the Company's employ. Lowcountry Women's Specialists may terminate an at-will employee's employment, or an at-will employee may terminate his/her employment, with or without cause, and with or without notice at any time. Employees dismissed from Lowcountry Women's Specialists will not be eligible for rehire.

Any employee whose conduct, actions, or performance violates or conflicts with the Company's policies may be terminated immediately and without warning. The following are some examples of grounds for immediate termination of an employee. This list is not all inclusive. In the event of termination for misconduct, all benefits cease upon termination with the exception of health and dental benefits which cease at the end of the month. COBRA may not be available to anyone dismissed from the Company for gross misconduct.

- Breach of trust or dishonesty
- Conviction of a felony
- Willful violation of an established policy or rule
- Falsification of Company records
- Gross negligence
- Insubordination
- Fighting or serious breach of acceptable behavior
- Violation of the Drug-Free Policy
- Theft
- Violation of the Company's Conflict of Interest/Outside Employment Policy and/or Confidentiality Policy

## **JOB ABANDONMENT**

An employee who is absent from work for 3 consecutively-scheduled work days without directly contacting his/her supervisor will be considered as abandoning his/her job. Job abandonment is considered to be voluntary resignation. An employee who leaves without notice will forfeit his/her benefits normally paid upon separation.

## **DISMISSALS—OTHER THAN IMMEDIATE TERMINATION**

All employees are expected to meet Lowcountry Women's Specialists's standards of work performance. Work performance encompasses many factors, including attendance, punctuality, personal conduct, job proficiency, and general compliance with the Company's policies and procedures.

If an employee does not meet these standards, the Company may, under appropriate circumstances, take corrective action, up to and including dismissal.

The intent of corrective action is to formally document problems while providing the employee with a reasonable time within which to improve performance. The process is designed to encourage development by providing employees with guidance in areas that need improvement such as poor work performance, attendance problems, personal conduct, general compliance with the Company's policies and procedures, and/or other disciplinary problems.

Employees who have received a formal written warning are not eligible for salary increases, bonus awards, promotions, or transfers during the warning period.

## **TERMINATION PROCEDURE**

Regardless of the reason for separation, it is necessary for all employees to complete the entire Termination Procedure. Whenever possible, the immediate supervisor will schedule an exit interview with the terminating employee on or near the employee's last day of employment. The supervisor will also arrange for the return of Company property including:

- Office keys
- Computers
- Electronic devices
- Company manuals
- All additional Company-owned or issued property

Prior to the Exit Interview, the employee should settle all outstanding travel and expense reports. All Company related materials should be returned prior to the release of the final paycheck. The employee should also download off the employee's personal computer all information related to his/her work on behalf of the Company, its clients, and its prospective clients. This information should be returned to Lowcountry Women's Specialists along with all files, correspondence, documents, charts, drawings, specifications, computer printouts, and other writings which relate to or reflect the Company's business, operations, clients, prospective clients, employees, suppliers, etc., regardless of where such files, correspondence, documents, charts, drawings, specifications, computer printouts, and writings were kept or prepared, retaining no copies.

During the confidential Exit Interview, employees are encouraged to comment on the particular aspects of their specific duties and responsibilities, as well as on the Company in general. The information disclosed concerning reasons for leaving will assist Lowcountry Women's Specialists in evaluating the effectiveness of our employee-relations practices and related human resources programs.

Specific information regarding COBRA will be provided during the Exit Interview.

The final paycheck will be available during the next normal pay period. If there are unpaid obligations to the Company, the final paycheck will reflect the appropriate deductions.

Vacation pay is calculated in accordance with our vacation policy. If the employee took more vacation days than he/she was entitled to under the vacation policy, the time taken will be deducted from the final paycheck.

**UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

Qualifications for Unemployment Compensation are determined by individual state unemployment insurance regulations. To receive benefits, an employee must file a claim with the state's Department of Labor, Unemployment Section. Events surrounding the reason for separation determine eligibility for Unemployment Compensation benefits.

**PTO PAY DUE TERMINATING EMPLOYEES**

Employees leaving Lowcountry Women's Specialists due to voluntary resignation, ceasing to work or dismissal may be eligible to receive payment for PTO that has been accrued, but not used, if they have been employed for at least a year and have given the required written notice for their position. If you receive a set PTO allowance annually that is not accrued, payment upon termination will be pro-rated based on your termination date.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT AND REVIEW OF HANDBOOK**

This is to acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Lowcountry Women's Specialists (Lowcountry Women's Specialists) Employee Handbook.

I further understand that these policies and procedures are continually evaluated and may be amended, modified or terminated at any time.

Sign and date this acknowledgement and return to your supervisor.

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Employee's Name (Printed)

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Employee's Signature

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Date

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ADDENDUM**

This handbook addendum is provided to you for information and immediate reference. Please read it carefully and completely. Policies included in this handbook addendum are subject to unilateral change by the Company from time to time.

Your employment is at will. This means you are free to terminate your employment at any time, for any reason, and the Company retains the same rights.

I have received a copy of this handbook addendum and have read or had it read to me. If I have any questions regarding this handbook addendum, I understand that it is my responsibility to ask my supervisor or the Practice Manager about them. I recognize it is my responsibility to review the policies, practices, standards, and rules it contains, and I agree to comply with them during my employment at Lowcountry Women's Specialists. I further understand that I will be responsible for complying with future changes in such policies, practices, standards, and rules.

Please acknowledge receipt of this handbook addendum by signing and returning this page to my supervisor.

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Employee's Name (Printed)

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Employee's Signature

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Date