

EXPECTATIONS AND PRINCIPLES FOR DENTON COUNTY CLERK EMPLOYEES

You are to convey a professional image. All clerks must treat every person they come into contact with during the business day with respect and courtesy. In order to help you accomplish this I have provided the following information and policies. While the information may sound as an informal recommendation, it is not. Every employee is held accountable to these principles. Please remember these expectations and principles provide the foundation for every employee to complete their job duties as expected.

Treat all members of the public with courtesy, respect and dignity! A smile goes a long way toward letting people know that we care about helping them. The service they receive while they are here is as important as them getting what they came for in the first place. Good manners are required. Saying “please” and “thank you” are examples of using good manners. Tone of voice and body language that demonstrated when dealing with customers is as important as the words that come from your mouth. Always be willing to go the extra step and make an effort to be helpful. **Be polite.** We are here from 8 – 5 to do a job, please remember this when you have the chance to go out of your way when helping a customer.

Place others first. Be considerate of customers and co-workers. Remember, we are not entitled to coffee breaks – they are a benefit. Do not abuse the privilege of your break. If you take your breaks in the break rooms, please clean up after yourself. Your time away from your duties impacts everyone. You need to take the time during your break to regroup or recharge your courteous and helpful batteries. Your co-workers take up the slack when you are away, just as you do for your co-workers – be cognizant of this. The public and your fellow employees get the short end of the stick when breaks are abused.

Treat co-workers with courtesy, respect and dignity! Rudeness, offensive remarks, insensitive comments and inappropriate joking around will not be tolerated. This means it **is** your responsibility to know what is appropriate language in the office when you talk with your co-workers. The general rule for determining appropriate office talk is asking yourself, “Would I say this to Cynthia Mitchell?” If no, then it probably is out of line to say to one of your co-workers. Taking or borrowing things without asking first is disrespectful and will not be tolerated. Treat others and their belongings as you would have them treat you and your belongings. Please respect others’ space and privacy.

Offer assistance whenever and wherever you can; whether it is a member of the public, a co-worker or another county employee. You are a part of a team. Be a team player. Remember, it is NEVER acceptable to tell anyone “That’s not my job.”

Arrive at your work area on time. You place a burden on your supervisor and co-workers when you are late; late in the morning, late returning from breaks, or late returning from lunch! Be dependable and be on time. Arriving on time means that you are at your workspace ready to work at the designated time, not that you are walking in the door at the designated time.

Do your fair share. Goofing off while others are bearing the workload is selfish and unacceptable. Make sure that you complete your work. We all enjoy having fun while at work, but it is important to have fun while still accomplishing your duties. The supervisors work very hard to create and maintain a pleasant working environment while keeping all employees on task. If you experience disruptions or an environment that is not pleasant in which to get your work completed, notify your supervisor, D’Lynne Shelton or Cynthia Mitchell immediately.

Keep your work area clean and neat. Cleanliness and neatness are important to the overall image of our business. Sloppy work areas and sloppy work habits are unacceptable. Every piece of paper that you will handle in this office directly impacts another person’s life. Every aspect of our jobs entails extremely important documents and you must maintain an organized work area. In order to project a professional image, you must appear professional. Projecting a professional image will help you be treated as a professional from your customers.

Physical well-being. Employees who are sick and unable to perform their duties should not report to work as it creates hazardous conditions for other employees. It is the final decision of the County Clerk or her supervisory staff to determine when an employee is unable to perform his or her duties satisfactorily due to illness. Any time an employee is deemed unable to perform his or her duties or is a hazard to the work place he or she will be sent home. Employees will be required to use benefit time when they are sent home. If the employee does not have benefit time, it will be an unpaid absence.

Breaks are to be taken in break rooms, conference areas or outside the work area. Do not disrupt your co-workers while you take a break. You never leave a customer waiting for assistance because it is break time. Everything has a time and place, and the customers are first. Breaks are secondary.

Take extra care to produce neat, accurate work! You are expected to pay close attention to detail. Again, every piece of paper that comes across your desk affects someone's life. Treat it as such! The work you do is a reflection on the entire County Clerk's office and yourself. A top quality job is our number one priority. You are required to eliminate your distractions to the best of your ability; sometimes this requires asking co-workers to respect your need for quiet.

Attend to personal matters on personal time. We all have multifaceted lives, with many responsibilities. Please be respectful of work time to get your work completed. Our telephones are here to conduct county business and our computers are here to conduct county business also. Exercise good judgment. There is a phone for your use in the break room located in the recording department.

Dress appropriately! The County Clerk's office is a business and that requires business attire. Public perception is that an employee who takes pride in his or her appearance also takes equal pride in their work. Members of the public perceive that you are a competent worker if you convey a professional image or appear professional upon sight. You will command the respect, courtesy and authority that you deserve with the appropriate professional image. Remember that our office adheres to the County Clerk's dress code.

Answer the telephone carefully and correctly. It is required to answer the phone with a courtesy, the name of our office, and **your name**. Common courtesy defines that you let your callers know who they are speaking to which is why it is mandatory when answering our phones. Here are some examples of proper telephone greetings:

- Good (morning). Denton County Clerk's office, this is (Cindy)
- Or Denton County Clerk's Office, this is (Cindy). May I help you?
- Or Office of the County Clerk, this is (Cindy). May I help you?

Provide thorough assistance to telephone customers. It is unacceptable to "pass around" callers. When you do not think you are able to help the caller, ask the caller specifically what they are trying to accomplish; this may help you determine the correct office they need to reach. If you are unsure of the correct department for the caller, put them on hold and ASK someone – your supervisor, someone in administration (ext. 2020), etc... It is best not to just pass a caller to the county's "information" personnel as that may be who placed the caller with your originally. Try your best to assist the caller reach the correct department. It is our responsibility to provide assistance to members of the public. Remember, it is unacceptable to tell someone, "That's not my job..."

Food and Drinks – There should be no eating at your work area, *especially* if you are at an area that provides direct customer contact/assistance. Hot and cold drinks are allowed; however use extreme caution. Drinks need to be in a covered container at all times. We handle very important legal documents. Drink stains are unacceptable. We are very fortunate to have new office space, please keep your drink off the carpet and flooring. Always use good manners: take drinks between customers, not while helping them or answering the phone.

Gum – Chewing gum while waiting on customers in person and on the telephone is rude and unprofessional.

Handling public funds: As an employee of the County Clerk’s office, most likely at some point you will be handling public funds. Exercise extreme caution. Every clerk has the responsibility to collect the correct amount. Please be sure to look closely at what the customer has given you before they get their change/receipt and leave. Problems in this area have necessitated the following policy: **If you are unable to collect the difference from the customer, you will be required to pay it!**

Overages in public funds: Should a customer pay too much, or leave his change, these funds are to be reported to your supervisor. No employees accept tips. Should a tip be left, turn it in. Whenever monies are taken will be treated as theft.

Working in a Court: Should you be an employee that goes to work in a court or goes to support a court or court clerk, understand that you are an employee of the County Clerk’s office. You will be working closely with the judge and staff of the judge. Using common sense is necessary. If the judge has a stricter dress code than that of our office, you will be required to follow the judge’s/court’s dress code. If the judge corrects your behavior, treat it as though your supervisor or I have given you the instruction. Should you have a question about the judge’s policy, you are to ALWAYS bring those questions to your supervisor before making any decisions. We are here to support the courts. Be respectful of the court, its proceedings and your colleagues.

Personal Responsibility/Accountability is a requirement for success with this Office: Each and every one of us makes mistakes; your supervisors are fully aware and acknowledge this as they too make mistakes. You are expected to learn from your mistakes. The only way in which you can learn from your mistakes though is to fully acknowledge and accept responsibility for you making the mistake. By taking responsibility for the error you are able to change your future behavior pattern.

Open Door Policy: D’Lynne Shelton, Chief Deputy, and Cynthia Mitchell, County Clerk, have an Open Door policy for which at any time you are welcomed to utilize. We welcome you to come and talk to us about any questions or concerns that may arise during your time with this office. Of course, if you ever experience any serious problems personally while you are employed with this office, you are expected to immediately notify either one of us in addition to your immediate supervisors. D’Lynne & I have this policy for the express reason to ensure that we create and maintain a positive and pleasant working environment for all employees. Of course, if we are not aware of the difficulty or problem that you are experiencing, we cannot do anything to help the situation improve.

Employee Signature

Printed Name

Date