

CITY OF BRANSON, MISSOURI
ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

RULE NUMBER 24 REFERENCING ARTICLE 1 OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANUAL

A RULE PERTAINING TO **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Section 1. Purpose

The City of Branson seeks to provide a means for an employee or volunteer to respectfully and professionally express and report their concern or dislike of a work related matter that is perceived as wrong in a way that does not result in any reprisal or punishment for that employee for voicing a complaint in good faith with the City of Branson in a reasonable, business-like manner.

The employee may not always attain the desired results by exercising the Open Door Policy, but it is a powerful tool for him or her to use, and it should never be used frivolously, nor should it be used to bypass normal communication channels with supervisors.

Section 2. Procedure

If an employee believes that he or she has a legitimate work-related problem, whenever possible, the employee is encouraged to resolve the matter directly with the supervisor. If a fear of retaliation or punishment by the direct supervisor is present, the employee may attempt to resolve the problems at whichever higher level of supervision that employee deems necessary. In going to a higher level of supervision, the employee has the responsibility to cite that the issue is being presented under the rights afforded by this Open Door policy. Employees bringing to light issues they believe to be wrong may have another employee accompany them to any discussion with the supervisor.

All matters will be kept in confidence, except as is necessary to investigate the complaint, to take appropriate corrective action, or to respond to any legal and/or administrative proceedings arising out of or relating to the report.

Supervisors have a responsibility to listen and respond to the work-related matters that an employee perceives as wrong. They should always afford the employee the dignity and respect of listening intently with the aim of fully understanding the matter prior to making any decision. Under the Open Door policy, whichever level of supervisor is contacted, that person has time limits to respond (see Rules 6 and 14) from the time the complaint is discussed, barring extenuating circumstances, and to communicate back to the employee the status of his or her issue. Of other matters not relating to a grievance or harassment, the supervisor has five working days to respond. If satisfaction is not achieved at this level, the employee may escalate the matter to the attention of a representative in the Human Resources Department or to the City Administrator.

The employee should provide any and all written documentation on the matter. The City will attempt to resolve the matter within a reasonable period of time while preserving the confidentiality and privacy of those involved to the extent feasible.

Exceptions: If the matter involves illegal or unethical activity, the employee should immediately contact, their supervisor, another member of management, a representative in the Human Resources Department or the City Administrator's office.

Section 3. Resolution

Barring the original issue being based on any illegal or unethical behavior, once the matter is resolved at the highest level, the supervisor has the responsibility to communicate the outcome to the employee and the employee has the responsibility to accept the decision. There shall be no retaliation against the employee by any level of supervisor, as in adverse employment action based solely on this issue, assignment to an undesirable work schedule, etc. for bringing the issue to light, nor shall there be any unfavorable mention of the issue in any performance reviews or consideration for advancement or promotion.

Section 4. Enforcement

Supervisors have a responsibility to listen and respond to the work-related matters employees bring to them where the employee perceives the matter as being wrong. Should the supervisor fail in this responsibility, by either violating privacy/confidentiality or by retaliating against the employee, the supervisor may be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in Rule 4. The above procedure should not be construed, however, as preventing, limiting, or delaying the City from taking disciplinary action against any individual, up to and including termination in circumstances where the City deems disciplinary action appropriate.