

evaluator and the employee. This plan shall provide the employee an opportunity to improve the substandard performance.

- Unsatisfactory. Employee consistently fails to meet the requirements of the job. When an employee receives an unsatisfactory performance appraisal, the employee may be terminated or placed on a Performance Improvement Plan.

Merit Pay. Merit pay may be awarded to introductory employees on a schedule prescribed by the County Administrator based upon the performance appraisal system. The amount of funding for the merit pay program, if any, shall be determined by Council during the annual budgetary process.

## **Administrative Separation**

If an employee has exhausted all leaves to which the employee is entitled pursuant to the provisions of this Employee Handbook and is unable to return to work, then the County will terminate its employment relationship with the employee unless the employee has timely requested and the Administrator has granted Administrative Leave to the employee. If the employee has timely requested and been granted Administrative Leave, at the conclusion of the Administrative Leave or, if applicable, an extension of the Administrative Leave, then the County will terminate its employment relationship with the employee. A termination under the circumstances described in this section will be listed as an administrative separation. From the point of administrative separation forward, the person shall have the same opportunity as any other person to apply for County employment.

## **Neutral Reference**

The County's general policy is to provide only neutral references in response to inquiries by prospective employers seeking information about current or former employees. This means that the County normally will provide to prospective employers only the following information: the beginning and ending dates of employment, position(s) held, and confirmation of a former employee's compensation rate or range at termination.

Only the County Administrator (or the Deputy Administrator or the Human Resources Director as the Administrator's designee) is authorized to provide job references or employment-related information regarding current or former employees. Such inquiries must immediately be directed to the Human Resources Department for processing. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Special Note: This policy is not intended to prohibit County employees who are listed as personal references on an application from responding to inquiries from prospective employers, provided the employee who is asked to provide the reference did not/does not supervise, directly or indirectly, the current or former County employee who is the subject of the reference.