

**Lakes Environmental Association**  
**SEASONAL EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK –**  
**March 2024**

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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed as a guide to LEA policies and general information that you will find helpful during your employment. These guidelines should not be interpreted as a contract. LEA is an "at will employer" which means that the employment relationship may be discontinued at the will of either the employee or the employer, at any time, for any reason, and without notice.

All employees are responsible for complying with the policies, practices and procedures outlined in this manual and as communicated to them by management. Please direct any questions you may have about these policies and procedures to your supervisor.

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### Equal Employment Opportunity

LEA provides equal opportunity for applicants and our employees relating to all terms and conditions of employment without regard to age, color, race, religion, sex, sexual preference, national origin, genetic information, physical or mental disability, or any other protected status. Discrimination based on any of these criteria will not be tolerated. We are an equal opportunity employer.

If you feel you have been harassed or discriminated against, or if you feel that because of a disability you need a reasonable accommodation in order to complete the essential functions of your position, contact the Executive Director. All complaints and requests will be handled promptly in as confidential a manner as possible.

### Freedom from Harassment

#### *A. Sexual harassment*

Sexual harassment on the job is illegal. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- b. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of sexual harassment may include suggestive or lewd remarks, unwanted hugs, touches, or kisses, offensive or degrading jokes, name calling or slurs, unwelcome touching or pulling on a person or their clothing, graffiti, posters, photographs or book covers, notes or cartoons, insults, threats, intimidating conduct, or violent acts.

*B. Other prohibited harassment*

We also prohibit other forms of harassment based upon a status protected by law, including sexual orientation, race, creed, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, veteran status, status as a recipient or former recipient of workers' compensation benefits, whistleblower status, status as one who has used the protection of fair employment laws, or harassment based on other status protected under state or federal law.

Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct related to the protected status of a person constitutes prohibited harassment when:

- a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- b. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of such harassment may include offensive or degrading jokes, name calling or slurs, graffiti, posters, photographs or book covers, notes or cartoons, insults, threats, intimidating conduct, or violent acts, because of or arising out of the person's protected status.

*C. Policy and commitment*

We take all complaints of harassment seriously. It is the policy of LEA that all employees be free from sexual and other prohibited harassment by any person in any form while at work. Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action including suspension or termination. Any employee who experiences or observes sexual or other prohibited harassment of another person should report it immediately to the Executive Director. If the person involved is the Executive Director, please contact the Board President or Vice President.

*D. Investigation*

All complaints will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. Information obtained during the investigation process will be kept as confidential as possible under the circumstances. When the investigation is complete, we will advise the person who brought the complaint and the alleged harasser of the outcome of the investigation. If an investigation results in a finding that this policy has been violated, we will take whatever appropriate corrective action is warranted under the circumstances, which may include discipline and/or termination.

Individuals who knowingly provide false information in an investigation, or refuse to cooperate in an investigation without good cause, may also be subject to disciplinary action.

*E. Retaliation Prohibited*

We strictly prohibit retaliation against any employee on the basis of his/her good faith report of harassment or participation in an investigation related to alleged harassment. If you feel you are being retaliated against because you have reported harassment or participated in a harassment investigation, please report it immediately to one of the persons listed above.

If you believe that you are being harassed and your complaint can not be resolved internally, Maine law allows you to file a complaint with the Maine Human Rights Commission (telephone 207-624-6050) or through an online form available at <https://mainehumanrightscommission.formstack.com/forms/intake>, within six months of the alleged unlawful act or unlawful discrimination. The Maine Human Rights Commission will investigate to determine whether there are reasonable grounds to believe that unlawful discrimination has occurred.

Please note that you cannot be discharged or otherwise punished or penalized because of any action you have taken to assert your rights under the Maine Human Rights Act.

### Violence

LEA will not tolerate any form of violent or threatening behavior in the workplace. Any employee who engages in violence or threats while on business property or while engaged in any business activity is subject to immediate discharge.

### Drugs and Alcohol

It is the policy of LEA to provide a work place where all employees are free from impairment from the effects or use of alcohol or illegal drugs. Any employee impaired due to the use of alcohol or illegal drugs can have a substantial detrimental effect on the organization by jeopardizing the health and safety of coworkers or clients; damaging our relationships and/or reputation in the community; and increasing the cost of conducting our business through lowered productivity and increased absenteeism.

All employees are expected to report to work and remain at work "fit for duty" and free from impairment from substances of abuse, including alcohol and illegal drugs. "Illegal drugs" broadly refers to all forms of marijuana, heroin, hashish, cocaine, hallucinogens and depressants or stimulants, unless otherwise prescribed for current medical treatment by a licensed physician. An employee may not use, possess, or distribute any illegal drug or alcoholic beverage on LEA premises or during work hours. An employee may possess, use, or be under the influence of a prescription medication on LEA premises or during work hours only in accordance with the medication's lawful prescription.

### Smoking

To protect non-smokers from potentially irritating or harmful effects of side stream smoke, smoking is prohibited in all LEA office environments, all grounds and all work locations.

### Personal Use of Work Time

With the exception of making short telephone calls for simple personal matters requiring a matter of minutes, paid staff shall not conduct personal business while at LEA offices or LEA work sites without permission from their supervisor.

### Non-Disparagement.

Employee hereby agrees not to defame or disparage any of Lakes Environmental Association's respective officers, directors, members, partners, or employees. Employee shall not, directly or indirectly, make (or cause to be made) any comment or statement, oral or written, including, without limitation, on social media, in the media or to the press or to any individual or entity, that could reasonably be expected to adversely affect the reputation of Lakes Environmental Association or the conduct of its business.

### Performance feedback and evaluation

Water Testing Interns, MLSC Lab Interns, Milfoil Control Crew, Trail Interns, and Communication and Outreach Interns will receive mid-season performance feedback and evaluation by their direct supervisor. Courtesy Boat Inspectors will receive performance feedback from their supervisor or another individual assigned to the task by their supervisor as needed.

### Use of LEA Property

Employees are prohibited from unauthorized possession or use of property, proprietary information or supplies belonging to LEA, including intangible property such as mail and email lists, and voice mail and email content.

All LEA-furnished equipment, furniture, cabinets, desks, computers, telephones, cellular phones, voice mail systems, email and all other like items and systems are considered LEA property and are furnished to employees for LEA business use purposes. This prohibition includes LEA vehicles, boats, trailers and dive equipment.

## **WORK SCHEDULE**

### Normal Work Hours

LEA work hours are 8:00 AM until 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Specific positions or assignments may require a different work schedule such as weekend or evening times. In such instances, modified schedules will be considered as normal working hours and a condition of employment.

### Breaks and Lunch

All employees are entitled and encouraged to take an unpaid, half hour lunch break each day. Non-exempt employees who work during lunch shall be paid for that time. However, the employee's supervisor or the Executive Director may require that the employee's work day end early or that the employee take a longer break during the same week to avoid the accrual of overtime hours.

## **SEASONAL EMPLOYEE TYPES**

### Non-Exempt Employee

All LEA seasonal employees are considered **non-exempt employees**.

Definitions:

**Non-Exempt Employee:** A non-exempt employee is an employee who is paid an hourly rate and does not meet the qualifications for exemption from the overtime requirements of the FLSA. For non-exempt employees, an accurate record of hours worked must be maintained. LEA will compensate non-exempt employees in accordance with applicable federal and state law and regulations.

It is the policy of LEA to restrict payable overtime eligible activities. **Non-exempt employees may not work overtime hours unless such hours have been expressly approved in advance by the Executive Director.**

Courtesy Boat Inspector (CBI): A CBI is a part-time seasonal employee that may take shifts between May 15 and October 31 if available, and is managed by the CBI Coordinator.

Water Testing Intern: A Water Testing Intern is a part-time or full-time seasonal employee, and is managed by the Field Technician.

MLSC Lab Intern: A Lab Intern is a part-time or full-time seasonal employee, and is managed by the Research Director.

Milfoil Control Crew: Milfoil Control Crew is a part-time or full-time seasonal employee that may take shifts between May 15 and October 31 if available, and is managed by the Milfoil Control Coordinator.

Trail Intern: A Trail Intern is a part-time employee, whose manager is TBD.

Communication and Outreach Intern: This intern is a part time employee, whose manager is TBD.

Chain of Command for Seasonal Employees: If a seasonal employee is having an issue of any kind with the job duties or another LEA employee, he or she should begin with their immediate supervisor (listed above) who will either help solve the issue or determine if the Executive Director or a designee should become involved. If the seasonal employee does not feel comfortable discussing an issue with his or her supervisor, the LEA Office Manager or Executive Director or may be contacted directly.

## COMPENSATION

### Payroll

LEA has a biweekly payroll system. Each employee is required to keep track of his/her actual hours worked time card covering each two-week pay period, which is to be completed and submitted to the appropriate seasonal employee manager (see chain of command) on the last Friday of the pay period. You will receive owed pay every other Thursday for the two-week period ending the previous week. Seasonal employees must participate in direct deposit as the form of payment.

### Eligibility to contribute to LEA 401k retirement plan

Employees who are at least 21 years old and have worked 500 or more hours in three consecutive years at LEA are eligible to contribute to a 401k retirement plan through Lakes Environmental Association. Beginning in 2025, the eligibility requirement to contribute to the plan will be 21 years of age, and 500 or more hours of employment in two consecutive years. If you qualify, this allows you to start saving for your retirement while at LEA. However, you will not receive any employer contributions to your 401(k) account. This means that the entire balance in your account will be made up of your own contributions and any investment gains or losses

associated with those contributions. If you qualify for this benefit and are interested in setting up and contributing to a 401k retirement plan, please contact Jenny O'Connor at 207-647-8580 for more details.

## **SAFETY**

It is the responsibility of each employee to perform his or her job in a safe and responsible manner. Employees must report to their supervisor any potentially hazardous situation, i.e., spills, faulty equipment or any other safety concerns. The guidelines set forth by all Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be followed where applicable. Employees must wear the proper clothing, footwear, and protective gear for the job he or she is performing.

### **Additional Safety Considerations for specific positions:**

#### Courtesy Boat Inspectors (CBI)

- Your safety is more important than anything else. Please remember this at all times.
- Remember boat inspections are voluntary. If a boater is uncomfortable with an inspection or refuses an inspection, quickly thank them for his or her time and walk away. If there are plants visible on the boat and the boater refuses an inspection, please call the Maine Warden Service at 207-287-8000 and note the boat registration number.
- Stay clear of the boat and vehicle! Backing up a trailer and boat can be difficult and the driver often has limited visibility. It is your responsibility to stay clear from the vehicle, boat and trailer when in motion.
- Do not try to help or direct a person loading or unloading a trailer. Your directions could be misinterpreted and things could go wrong. It is the boater's job to launch the boat. You are there to inspect it only.
- Try not to touch the boat or trailer unless you have to.
- If a boater or visitor is harassing you or you feel you may be in danger, please call the police immediately at 911 and LEA at 207-647-8580.
- While we encourage you to give the boater your first name, please do not give out any personal information about yourself.
- To report illegal or dangerous behavior on the water please call the Maine Warden Service at 207-287-8000 and let your supervisor know as soon as possible.
- Please let family or friends know when you are expected to return from work.
- If there is a thunderstorm, please go to and stay in your car until it is over.
- See CBI handbook for more information.

#### Water Testing Interns/MLSC Lab Interns

- Your safety out on the water is more important than anything else. Please remember this at all times.
- Your supervisor (see above list of managers) will provide your itinerary for the day and let you know what time you are expected back at the office; you may be asked to be in contact with the supervisor via voice call or text.
- If you work on and around the water, or use LEA boats, it is recommended that you read and adhere to [\*The Boater's Guide to Maine Boating Laws and Responsibilities\*](#) and take a boater safety class. LEA will cover for any fees associated with safe boating course and pay for time to take the course. If you are operating a power boat at work, successful completion of a Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife approved boater safety course is required.
- Always wear your life vest when out on the water. No exceptions.
- Do not go out if there is thunder or lightning. If you hear thunder or lightening when out on the water, please head back to the car as quickly as possible and stay in the vehicle or head back to the office for the duration of the thunderstorm.

- Do not go out if there is high wind. Wind is considered “high” when sustained speed exceeds 10mph. This is dangerous for you and the data will likely be inaccurate.
- To report illegal or dangerous behavior on the water please call the Maine Warden Service at 207-287-8000; observed behavior should be reported to your supervisor as soon as possible.
- Be careful of all ropes and lines to make sure they do not get entangled with your clothing or gear.
- Bring water and food with you.
- Water testing should always be done in teams. It is your responsibility to make sure your water testing partner is also safe.
- Dress for the outdoors. In the spring, you can easily get cold if you do not have appropriate layers on. Bring bug spray or bug nets in the black fly season and protect your skin from the sun by wearing sunscreen.
- If you are not comfortable doing the work that is asked of you, or you have questions about any lab procedures, chemicals, or materials, please relay your concerns immediately to your supervisor.
- It is your responsibility to wear lab personal safety equipment (lab glasses, gloves, lab apron, etc.) as instructed during trainings by LEA staff.
- Familiarize yourself with SDS (Safety Data Sheets) for any chemicals you use and know where the SDS are kept in the lab. If you don’t know where they are kept or have questions about any of the chemicals or materials you are using, ask the Research Director or Staff Researcher.
- Report any chemical spills to the Research Director or Staff Researcher (or if neither is available, other full-time LEA staff) immediately.
- Get training from LEA staff and familiarize yourself with lab safety components, including the eye-wash station, fume hood, chemical cabinet, fire extinguishers, and defibrillator, depending on lab location.
- Do not operate any equipment or tools without proper training from LEA staff.
- All mileage is calculated from the LEA Main Street Office or the Maine Lake Science Center.

### Milfoil Control Interns

- Your safety out on the water is more important than anything else. Please remember this at all times.
- Milfoil removal work is always done in teams. It is your responsibility to make sure other members of your team are also safe.
- As a tender your primary responsibility is the safety of the diver.
- Never swim or dive near a moving boat.
- If you work on and around the water, or use LEA boats, it is recommended that you read and adhere to [\*The Boater’s Guide to Maine Boating Laws and Responsibilities\*](#) or take a boater safety class. LEA will cover for any fees associated with safe boating course and pay for time to take the course. If you are operating a power boat at work, successful completion of a Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife approved boater safety course is required.
- Do not go out if there is thunder or lightning. If you hear thunder or lightening when out on the water, please head back to your vehicle and wait out the storm or discontinue work for the day.
- Be especially careful when surveying around marinas. Always have a spotter who is nearby and not in the water. Electrical current in the water, can cause temporary muscle paralysis and lead to drowning. Have a team member nearby and out of the water available to assist. Always contact the marina staff before snorkeling, diving or surveying around marinas.
- Realize that many boaters do not know what a dive flag is or what it means.
- Be aware of your body temperature and come out of the water and warm up if you are cold. If you are regularly cold, please let the crew captain know so he or she can get you additional wetsuit layers.



- Be aware of the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning. These include: headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. These symptoms are often described as “flu-like.” If you or the crew have any of these symptoms, turn off all motors and engines and assess the situation and/or ask for help.
- Bring water and food with you every day.
- Dress for the outdoors. Bring appropriate layers depending on the season and protect your skin from the sun by wearing sunscreen. Synthetic fabrics will keep you warm even if they get wet. Cotton will not – instead it will pull the heat from your body and cool you down more.
- If you are not comfortable doing the work that is asked of you, please relay your concerns immediately to the crew captain.
- All mileage is calculated from your assigned worksite (Sebago Cove Estates, the Point on the Songo River, Mast Cove Campground, Northwest River Cove, LEA Main Street Office, or the Maine Lake Science Center)

### Trail Interns

- Your safety is more important than anything else. Please remember this at all times.
- Your manager will provide your itinerary for the day and let you know what time you are expected back at the office; you may be asked to be in contact with the via voice call or text.
- Do not go out if there is thunder or lightning. If you hear thunder or lightening when out on the trails, please head back to your car as quickly as possible and stay in the vehicle or head back to the office for the duration of the thunderstorm.
- If you don’t understand or don’t feel comfortable using any piece of equipment, please let your supervisor know immediately.
- Check yourself daily for ticks after you have been out in the field.
- Bring a first-aid kit with you at all times when in out the field.
- If you feel you may be in danger, please call the police immediately at 911 and LEA at 207-647-8580.
- All mileage is calculated from where you start your work day in the morning (ie: LEA Main Street Office, the Maine Lake Science Center, the Holt Pond Preserve or Highland Research Forest)

### Communication and Outreach Intern

- Your safety is more important than anything else. Please remember this at all times.
- If you feel you may be in danger, please call the police immediately at 911 and LEA at 207-647-8580.
- All mileage is calculated from where you start your work day in the morning (ie: LEA Main Street Office, the Maine Lake Science Center)
- If you are uncomfortable with a situation in the office or field, please contact your direct supervisor or another year-round employee as soon as possible.
- If you work on and around the water, or use LEA boats, it is recommended that you read and adhere to [\*The Boater’s Guide to Maine Boating Laws and Responsibilities\*](#) and take a boater safety class. LEA will cover for any fees associated with safe boating course and pay for time to take the course. If you are operating a power boat at work, successful completion of a Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife approved boater safety course is required.
- Always wear your life vest when out on the water. No exceptions.
- Bring water, food, appropriate clothing and footwear when working in the field

### Employee Accidents/Injuries

All injuries or accidents, no matter how minor and regardless of whether medical treatment is necessary, that occur while an employee is working must be reported to the supervisor. In addition to verbally reporting the injury or accident, every employee who experiences a work-related injury or accident must complete an employee accident report as soon as possible. This form should be obtained from the Office Manager. Such reports should be completed thoroughly with as much information as possible. All completed employee accident reports must be given to the Office Manager or designee as soon as they are completed.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Lakes Environmental Association	207-647-8580
230 Main Street	
Bridgton, ME 04009	

Maine Lake Science Center	207-647-3318
Physical Location: 51 Willet Road, Bridgton, Mailing address: 230 Main Street	

Executive Director: Colin Holme	<a href="mailto:colin@mainelakes.org">colin@mainelakes.org</a>
CBI Coordinator: Mary Jewett	<a href="mailto:mary@mainelakes.org">mary@mainelakes.org</a>
Milfoil Control Coordinator: Michael Flannery	<a href="mailto:michael@mainelakes.org">michael@mainelakes.org</a>
Limnologist: Maggie Welch	<a href="mailto:maggie@mainelakes.org">maggie@mainelakes.org</a>
Field Tech: Rachel Harper	<a href="mailto:rachel@mainelakes.org">rachel@mainelakes.org</a>
Research Director: Ben Peierls	<a href="mailto:ben@mainelakes.org">ben@mainelakes.org</a>
Planning and Land Use Manager	<a href="mailto:lauren@mainelakes.org">lauren@mainelakes.org</a>
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